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Brian Aarons continues his discussion of the principles of socialist strategy in current conditions of capitalist crisis, especially in reference to the Labor Party and the dilemmas of those within it proclaiming adherence to socialism.

Paul Nursey-Bray analyses the background of Portuguese colonialism in Africa, and the causes and effects of the winning of independence by these colonies, particularly in relation to the general struggle against imperialist oppression in Africa and the South African racist regime.

Jean Chesneaux, marxist, Professor of History at the Sorbonne and eminent writer on Asia, discusses the class nature of the ecology movement which continues to arouse debate within the left.

Varying opinions on the literary and political merits of Solzhenitsyn’s book ‘The Gulag Archipelago’ continue to be expressed. Roy Medvedev, a communist and outspoken critic of repression in the Soviet Union makes a particularly perceptive and well-informed analysis.

Detente between the superpowers and the attitude of the left to be adopted to it continues to raise controversy. Although it first appeared over two years ago, an editorial from the Vietnamese Communist paper Nhan Dan remains a very important contribution to the subject.

Alastair Davidson, specialist in the study of Gramsci, writes on the background of the rise of the factory councils in Italy after the First World War, and Gramsci’s attitude to them.
A rising tide of workers' struggles, threats of a "rural revolution" against the cities, unions and Labor government, talk of formation of right-wing vigilante and paramilitary groups, an incessant campaign against wage rises, unions and the left in the capitalist media, and a disoriented Labor government. This is the situation in Australia, but not here alone. All over the capitalist world, the long post-war years of expansion, boom, and relative stability are over. The system has entered a new period of instability which will have its ups and downs, but will be long-term. Already the crisis is threatening to topple governments and is even upsetting the normal workings of bourgeois "democracy".

At no time since the depression has the capitalist system globally been in such trouble as now. The economic crisis to which many factors contribute, is marked above all by a rise in the power of multinational and national corporations from whose economic strength and behaviour inflation largely stems, and by the higher prices of raw materials, particularly oil, as more and more third-world suppliers assert rights. But the economic is not the only objective crisis facing the system nor the only problem exercising people's minds. There are also the ecology/environment/resources crisis and growing discontent because of it; the crisis of power relations and authority in all social institutions; the crisis
of traditional inter-personal relations expressed particularly but not only by the women's liberation movement, and the crisis of ideology and values of the whole social system which capitalism has constructed around the profit motive. None of these are yet acute, but all are developing, permanent and potentially explosive.

Thus, the objective contradictions of capitalism, maturing slowly and in new ways during the period of post-war expansion, are once more asserting themselves. Once again, capitalist social development will be marked by sharp conflict of social and political forces expressing the strivings of contending classes and interest groups.

Particularly noticeable is the sudden mass loss of confidence and feeling of security so important to the normal workings of any social system and the continued hegemony of its ruling class. This is despite continued "prosperity", low levels of unemployment compared with pre-war years (before, during and after the depression) and, so far at any rate, continued if slower economic growth. Uncertainty even extends to some ruling class circles, and especially to some reformist circles -- witness the deep pessimism of Willy Brandt about the future of the West in the few months before his resignation as West German Chancellor.

The continued decline of Britain, oldest and weakest major capitalist power, continues apace. Objectively, it is a weak link in the global system; subjectively, the socialist forces are still weak although growing. The most significant event so far in the social and political crisis of British capitalism has been the "GB 75" affair. The revelation of a plan to counter a large, or general, strike by an ex-Colonel of the Special Air Services, and involving top business executives, shows that the system's defenders are mobilising to meet the social and political threats which may arise from the developing crisis. While this rightist mobilisation should not be exaggerated (and it is possible that there is an element of scare tactic in media publicity about it) nor should it be underestimated.

Western Europe is striving desperately to save itself by even closer economic and political integration, with the leaders of the two most powerful nations, France and West Germany, leading the way in seeking to hammer out a "plan" which will overcome the hostility and competition of the various national-capital groupings. West Germany has emerged as the leading force in Western Europe, and also as the most stable and most viable of the western capitalist grouping, at least for the moment inflation is low, reserves and exports are high, the economy sound and the working class well-integrated.

The Americans, despite huge investments in Europe, are "out in the cold" and anyway have their own preoccupations with internal economic and political problems in the post-Nixon era and pressing problems of empire and police-beat in the various trouble spots of the third world. One of President Ford's major tasks will be to re-establish the links with Europe and Japan with the same old American domination within the imperialist "family" -- a difficult task given the decline in both actual and realisable US power relative to Japan and Western Europe.

Watergate reflected a crisis of confidence, direction and unity within the US ruling class. It could not have taken place in the pre-Vietnam era when the system was functioning "normally" -- the ruling class would have been able to cover up and would have done so. But Watergate did follow the Vietnam debacle, and in at least one sense Nixon joins Johnson as a casualty of Vietnam's heroic struggle and its echoes among the American people. (It is not surprising that the Pentagon Papers affair should have intruded into Watergate via the sordid raid on the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist. The workings of capitalist power structures exposed by the Pentagon Papers provided a "model" for the journalistic investigation of Watergate.)

All left commentators have pointed to the unfortunate fact that the absence of an effective mass left force meant that the Watergate crisis was within the ruling class and not matched by a similar crisis for that class. This demonstrates once again the difference between "objective" and "subjective"
aspects of the social process and between “objective” and “subjective” crises. The system can have all the objective troubles and crises in the world, but these are not inevitably reflected in the minds of the people, and if they are not there will be no revolutionary development.

Then there is the growth in wealth and power of the Arab oil producers, with the multi-nationals lurking in the background. There is a complete reversal in the current account reserves situation between these nations and the advanced capitalist world, while Kuwait and Iran have become the arbiters of Britain’s immediate fate and are rapidly gaining an important economic hold on its future via a share in the North Sea oil. The world monetary system has been dislocated by massive flows of reserves to the oil producers and away from the industrial nations, and this could even bring down, or make a farce of, the whole system.

Internationally and nationally, bourgeois politicians are desperately seeking to resolve the above problems and find a new equilibrium for the system. However, the problems stem more than ever from the system as a whole, that is, from the totality of social relations. Yet they seek solutions within the system and to preserve it, thus guaranteeing that the “solutions” will at best be temporary, partial and patchy. Increasingly, it is the whole system which needs “doctoring”.

This root of the crisis in the very nature of the system, and the consequent inability of those who insist on working within it to find permanent solutions, together ensure that the crisis will be enduring and “insoluble”. Certainly, there will be temporary recoveries, perhaps even transitory equilibrium will be instability and continuing crisis, varying only in intensity and scope. It is possible that at some future date a new point of stability and expansion similar to the post-war years will be found. This is unlikely, if only because of the ecology/resources crisis which on most analyses will come to a head some time around the end of the century. In any case, the most likely form of a new equilibrium would be “corporate fascism” — outright domination of the multi-nationals via authoritarian rule or fascism. Hardly “stability”.

In Australia, as in most other capitalist states, working class and mass consciousness lags behind objective developments. Despite loss of confidence in the system, reformist thinking and solutions still dominate workers’ minds. Individual solutions rather than class and social solutions are the most popular — indeed the economic militancy of many workers is based on a realisation that those who fight hardest get the biggest slice of cake. Unfortunately, this tactical truth is seen more from within the structures and values of the capitalist system than from an alternative, socialist perspective.

The key to the outcome of capitalism’s difficulties will be the role of the working class and other oppressed strata. Whether these together can develop a socialist consciousness, see the need to overthrow the system and be prepared to take decisive action towards these ends, or whether they will remain trapped within the system’s structures, ideas and values will decide the future course of events. Political passivity and continued hegemony of capitalist ideas and further decline of human society or combativity around a clear alternative program for socialism — this is the basic choice confronting workers and all those whose real interests lie in the system’s overthrow. Which choice they make will largely determine the future of Western society.

With this in mind it is instructive to examine the policies and actions of the Labor government and of the various groupings and tendencies within it and the labor movement as a whole. For if it is true that in the long term the choice of the working class will be a key factor, it is also true that the clash of policies, programs and ideologies within the political and industrial leadership of the labor movement is the key to immediate events.

The bourgeoisie is well aware of this and the capitalist media have been a study as they conduct a ceaseless and well-directed campaign against the unions, the left, and the left in the government. Editorial after
editorial in recent weeks, while in most cases being designed to undermine Labor’s credibility and prepare the way for the return of Liberal-Country Party rule (the possible exception being ‘The Australian’), also hedge the bourgeoisie’s bets by seeking to pressure the government further to the right and to adopt a full-blooded, openly pro-capitalist course. Heaps of advice are given to the government as a whole, but there are also special and open appeals to the right, and most pointedly to Whitlam. They fear the recent rise of Cairns (due to his superiority over Whitlam in economic matters) – but they don’t fear Cairns all that much. He is not vilified nearly so much as when he was out of power and leading Moratorium marches in Bourke Street, and is even quite popular in some business circles. In examining the reasons for this, and in analysing the policy clashes within the labor movement it is useful to look at the evolution of Cairns and the dilemmas he faces in the present situation.

It would be easy to take Gough Whitlam as the mark for an analysis of the ideology and policies of reformism. Yet Whitlam’s stand and policies are no surprise - - the best that could ever be said for him is that he has an enlightened view and takes a liberal stand on some social questions such as abortion and homosexuality. He has always been the perfect centre-right, technocratic reformist, for whom the exercise of power within the system (and the attainment of limited ends) is the main aim in life. A revealing remark of his (published about two years ago in ‘Nation Review’) to the chief GMH Executive was to the effect that the trouble with people like Laurie Carmichael was that they could never “make it” higher up the system’s ladder (and so could not be tamed and integrated). That people might have quite other aims in life besides self-advancement appears strange to such a perfect “politician” as Whitlam. In a real crunch, there is little doubt about which way Whitlam would go. He has not yet personally indulged in “union bashing” but his setting up of Egerton to do so shows his inclination.

Much more revealing of the plight of sincere and honest reformism in the face of the system’s problems is the evolution and present stance of Jim Cairns. In the mid-sixties he was a critic of the performance of the first Wilson Labor government in Britain and said he hoped a future ALP government would not take the same course. Despite this he now finds himself in a very similar position to that of Wilson’s earlier government – and every day finds him closer to responding in the same way that Wilson’s and other reformist governments did and do.

Events and the logic of the system have overtaken Cairns, just as they have most of the government members. The heady days of the first few months following Labor’s election in December 1972 are over. The reforming and renovating work on the social shambles left by twentythree years of Liberal rule has now run into a basic obstacle: the workings of the capitalist economy. In early 1973 it was easy to adopt a “radical” and liberal posture, and set out to right the wrongs left over from the era of conservative domination. But in 1974 the room for manoeuvre has been drastically reduced by problems which are virtually outside government control, since they lie basically in the economic system. And the possibility of worsening crisis, and of a political crisis arising out of the economic and social ones, threatens to cut the manoeuvre space even further.

Basic choices have to be made. The interests of business and workers cannot be so easily “harmonised” as a year ago, when both profits and real wages were rising. Policies now have to favour one or the other. And the sad fact is that Cairns, despite misgivings and reluctance, seems to be following in the footsteps of Whitlam, Cameron and Crean: rather than take a stand against big business and profits, they join or fail to combat the media campaign that “wage rises cause inflation”.

In recent weeks, Cairns has made a number of speeches to business leaders, stockholders and economists which reflect an almost complete acceptance of the framework set by the system and consequently he is reduced to the measures which are “possible”.

Speaking to “business and financial leaders” in Sydney on August 26, he said
that “workers must accept wage restraints because fast-rising incomes were now the key factor in inflation”. (‘The Australian’, August 27). Further: “Unions have to understand that advances beyond certain points in incomes can only be achieved at the expense of their fellow-unionists and the old, weak and defenceless people.” It is doubtful whether Cairns has any proof of the first statement -- indeed the advice he reportedly received from Charles Levinson, secretary-general of the International Federation of Chemical and General Workers’ Union, was that “modern inflation is a virus carried by the multinational corporations”. It would be interesting to see whether Cairns could produce evidence showing that the division of wealth between capital and labor had altered in the latter’s favour -- which one would expect were his contention true.

But in any case, his second statement shows that Cairns accepts the existing division of wealth. Unions can only achieve gains at the expense of other workers and exploited people -- there is no thought given to the possibility that living conditions of all workers could be improved at the expense of profits. One need only take the profits of Royal Dutch Shell -- $250 million in the first three months of 1974! -- to see the possibilities. Yet Cairns, although he speaks of the multinational and national corporations in other contexts, has virtually never mentioned their soaring profits.

Moreover, Cairns is coming close to a laissez-faire, pluralist solution to the problems. In his speeches, powerful unions are compared to powerful multi-nationals and both apportioned “blame” for inflation. In his August 26 address, he said that he didn’t want the government “to intervene in the system any more than necessary”. He hadn’t wanted governments to intervene against demonstrations about Vietnam, and now he didn’t want intervention “against unions or business”. Apart from the false parallel between demonstrations (a democratic right) and the substantial workings of the system which clearly need and warrant planning and “intervention”, this remark (repeated in different form in later speeches) shows two things: an acceptance of business as a legitimate “interest group”, an equation of business with unions, and an almost utopian wish for a return to laissez-faire market conditions where problems were solved by the interplay of interest groupings and “market” forces.

Yet Cairns is not unaware that the system is the basic cause of inflation and other problems. In the above-quoted address he spoke of this and said there was a need to reshape the system, but that this couldn’t be done because of resistance and conservatism in the community. And here lies the basic explanation for Cairns’ policies and behaviour. Although retaining genuine socialist ideals, he cannot even see the way clear to substantially reshaping the existing system, let alone attaining socialism. Therefore, his response is to work to achieve what he can from within, no matter how limited these achievements might be.

This is most clearly expressed in his further interview with ‘Digger’ (No. 36). Speaking of unions that criticise the government and don’t accept the present distribution of income, he says: “I’m talking in terms of simple economic facts. You can’t change the distribution of income so that it will impose conditions on GM or BHP that they won’t accept. They will close down or reduce activities and put people off, and we can’t have unemployment. We will go out if we have unemployment. The point is that I’m not just saying that wage increases of 25 per cent a year can spill over into inflation. I am also saying that they can cause unemployment ...... it won’t be GM or BHP that will lose the next election, it will be us..... Well, maybe it doesn’t matter that much. What I am pointing out is the consequences, whatever one thinks of them.”

This reflects both Cairns’ understanding of the dominance of capital and the profit rate in the workings of capitalist society, and his blindness and capitulation to the interests and power involved. Blindness
because, in fact we have unemployment now which can lead to the government's defeat. Capitulation to the demands and needs of capital will neither save the government nor serve the workers it claims to represent.

The fundamental problem is therefore one of general outlook and strategic orientation. And indeed the general ideas and principles governing Cairns' specific policies and behaviour may be found in his general writings on society -- specifically in "The Quiet Revolution". In this he puts forward in various places an almost classic rationalisation and justification for the reformist approach to social change. Many of the analyses and ideas put forward in this book would be agreed to by revolutionary socialists -- indeed they are not particularly original, most being basic to socialist and/or new left thought. Perhaps the only real surprise is that someone so high in the ALP should put them forward -- a credit to Cairns' integrity and beliefs. However, the flaw in his whole theory of social change and consequent political strategy emerges when he says on the second last page of the book:

"Those who seek power in capitalism today, by whatever means, are limited to what the working class the people, will accept. Starting from there the first concern must be to obtain power wherever it can be got, but to work all the time to advance the people to a higher stage of understanding and participation in economic, social and political life. It is only by actual participation that real power can be obtained by the people."

This thought is repeated in more concrete form in an interview Cairns gave to 'Digger' (No. 32) soon after being elected Deputy Prime Minister:

"Well, I don't want to see the recent Australian government tackle more than it can effectively politically digest. And I think that we have to do a lot of education, education of public opinion, before we can digest much more than the present position the Prime Minister has taken." (on US military bases in Australia).

And further on:

"I don't think a government can ever get very far ahead of the masses ........."

No serious socialist could disagree that it is necessary to win the majority of people to socialist ideas before the power of capitalism can be broken, to "educate" them and involve them in experiences which will help them change. Nor would revolutionary socialists believe that small elite groups or government can achieve change "ahead" of the masses.

Nor should they overestimate the level of working class consciousness nor underestimate the difficulties of changes, especially in a country like Australia.

But what IS wrong is the conclusion Cairns draws from these general truths, the way he puts the issues and his whole conception of the way social change occurs.

Essentially, Cairns puts forward a gradualist and determinist view which treats mass opinion as a slowly changing entity with "laws of evolution" all its own, virtually immune to outside influences. There is little consideration of the role of conscious socialist forces who can utilise social conditions to win people to a radically different world view. The socialists are from the very start "limited to what the working class, the people, will accept".

Cairns goes even further in his determinism, subscribing to a technological determinist view:

"The working class, the people, are of decisive importance in the struggle for a better society and against a bad one. But it is of equal importance to realise that results depend upon the actual conditions of life, and these conditions are changed mainly by technical development. Technical change is now producing a new type of people -- humane, non-violent, radical and 'cultured'," ("The Quiet Revolution", p.170).
No marxist would deny the importance of the "actual conditions of life" in shaping consciousness, nor the important role of technical change in altering these conditions. But the sum total of Cairns' above statements adds up to a view which downgrades the role of the "conscious element" in social change -- the role of political actors with a world view and the willingness to fight for it. In an analysis typical of reformist determinism, Cairns sees the political actors as circumscribed by what the mass of people are "ready" for, and that what they will "accept" is in turn determined by "actual conditions of life" which ultimately depends "mainly" on "technical change".

Thus in the end socialists who want change are at the mercy of changes in technique and technology -- or more generally, at the mercy of gradual social changes in which they play little part. A clearer exposition of the traditional rationalisation for reformism would be harder to find.

Yet this view is in some senses contradicted by statements Cairns makes just one page later in his book. On the last page of the book he sets out the tasks of those who want change:

"They must take power when it can be won but remember that their main role and purpose is to advance the understanding and effectiveness of the people. There is no other way to reach a good society, revolutionary or otherwise.

"Involved in these conclusions are at least two factors! An impelling need for people to take responsibility for what they do and for what is done; and confidence in reason strong enough to overcome the appalling difficulties always in the way of progress."

In the abstract these statements seem to restore the role of conscious social forces and the need for these to work actively to "transform the people". But the real test of which view Cairns places most emphasis on are his own statements and actions in government. The interview in 'Digger' and his recent economic policy statements show clearly that the need to "transform the people" has been far outweighed by the consideration of "what is possible". And this basic orientation has led to Cairns becoming more and more the prisoner of the system -- so much so that he can in one day (August 26) speak out against "the old Draconian methods" of solving inflation - unemployment etc. - and a few days later (September 9) announce that the government's policies to slow inflation and economic crisis would lead to unemployment!

Cairns has become one more example of a sincere reformist setting out to use the system to good ends becoming trapped by the very logic of that initial choice. The important question remains as to what real choice someone like Cairns has -- is there an alternative?

Ironically, Cairns' own experience with the anti-war movement shows that there is another way, that socialists and radicals with principles and ideals are not limited to what the people will "accept" at any given moment but can seek to change, by propaganda and action, the things which are or are not "acceptable". Then out of power, Cairns, along with a then small band of socialists and other radicals, took a principled stand and fought out the issues surrounding the Vietnam war, amongst the people. He did not accept their initial racism, jingoism and blind following of ruling class propaganda, but struggled courageously and intelligently to change their opinions. The battle was hard, but because the conditions were right (America's inability to win the war because of the skill and heroism of the Vietnamese) it was won, and moreover brought him the recognition and standing he has today.

But he does not apply the lessons learnt in that campaign to the current situation. Admittedly, the present problems are great and complex, since they bear on the much wider issues of the whole structure and nature of society. Yet precisely because of that the opportunities are also much wider if only they are seized upon and utilised. However, Cairns' choice of political strategy now virtually precludes him from taking those opportunities unless he is prepared to set out boldly to propagandise socialist solutions and build a mass base for socialism -- using his present position but being prepared to go outside it if necessary.

Unfortunately, the signs are that he is becoming more and more the prisoner of the system, more and more its manager and more and more identified with and
discredited by it. All this follows the logic of his belief that, since socialism is not on the agenda, one must opt for the only alternative: to work for whatever can be achieved within the system.

Undoubtedly, Cairns has used his position of power to some useful ends. He can and does use his position to help people to alleviate some excesses of the system. Yet, recalling the Cairns of the Moratorium days, it is surprising just how little his much greater power can in fact be used, not to speak of the weakness of his will to use it. The example of his unwillingness to make a sharp break with the now overthrown Salazar regime in Portugal and with South Africa shows this. In many ways Cairns in power has less room to manoeuvre, less ability to fight for and achieve a radical change in policy, than Cairns out of power. This is in part due to his own pessimism as to the possibilities in the situation, but is also due to the constraints which the system places on anyone who chooses to use it for their own ends. If you choose not to work for the winning of a basic mass force against the system and for socialism, then not only does this very choice reinforce the system itself, acting as a self-fulfilling prophecy, but it also leads inexorably to more compromises and a drift to the right.

And, indeed, this has clearly happened to Cairns, who is now more used by than using the system. In his period as Minister for Secondary Industry, Cairns achieved remarkable popularity in business circles, no doubt due to his ability and efficiency, and most importantly to his identification with the cause of Australian capital against the multi-nationals and foreign capital. As Deputy Prime Minister, he has, by virtue of Whitlam’s ignorance of economics, become more powerful. Yet he is more the victim than the master of that power as seen from his current policies.

I do not wish to give the impression that Cairns is a helpless victim of the system, unable to do anything else. If that were so, he could scarcely be criticised except for being there at all. The fact is he could do better, even given all the constraints placed on him by the system and by the centre-right majority in Cabinet and Caucus. He could have done better on relations with South Africa and Portugal. And he could publicly slam the multi-nationals and local monopolies instead of unions and workers. This is the way to carry out the task of “transforming the people”, not to reinforce bourgeois ideological hegemony, the importance of which for the system’s functioning he knows, (as shown by his book) by joining their propaganda campaign.

Not unexpectedly, Cairns is the prisoner of his own reformist beliefs and strategic choices made on the basis of those beliefs. Future possibility of a change in these cannot altogether be excluded, though the direction of development is at present quite the other way. The task of the left, of course, is precisely to set out to change workers’ consciousness by explaining the real roots of the growing crisis.

The strategic principles on which this effort should be based I have attempted to set out in the previous ALR. The difficulties are many, compounded by the smallness and fragmentation of the left, but the opportunities are great also. Whatever the result of the coming class struggles, history, theory and common sense alike say that the attempt to build an independent mass force for socialism is the essential direction of effort.
africa without portugal:
prospects for liberation

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For more than a decade, Portugal has been engaged in a bitter struggle with nationalist guerrilla forces in the African territories of Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique. This struggle, in support of a seemingly anachronistic colonial policy, has drained men and resources from a country which is the most economically undeveloped in Europe. Over half of Portugal's budget has been committed solely to defence. Needless to say, this effort was not made simply to satisfy the pride of an imperial past. It is true that since the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese national poet, Camoens, celebrated the voyages of Vasco da Gama, the theme of empire has been a dominant one in the national ideology of Portugal. But it is also true that there were sound economic reasons for Portugal's continued colonial presence in Africa. Increasingly, however, with the continuing success of the guerrilla forces, particularly of the Party for the Independence of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC), and of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), it became clear that the costs of a continuing colonial presence were outweighing its benefits. (1)

In the final analysis, a military command, weary of defeat, pessimistic regarding the
possibility of any military solution, and exasperated by the policies of a government that could not perceive the need for change, took matters into their own hands. The coup which toppled Dr. Caetano, and brought to power a reformist military junta headed by General Spinola, thus marked the beginning of a new era for the Portuguese colonies in Africa. The new government of Portugal has committed itself to ending the wars in Africa, and has offered full independence to those countries it has sought for so long to dominate. Thus, even while the situation in Portugal is still in a state of flux, the date of Guinea-Bissau’s independence has come and gone (September 10), negotiations are under way between FRELIMO and Portuguese officials, and plans for the future of Angola are being framed.

In the light of all these developments it perhaps seems precipitate to attempt an analysis just now. However, despite Portugal’s withdrawal, this does not mean, unfortunately, that the goals of the liberation movements can be immediately realised in all cases. For Portugal’s relationship with its erstwhile colonies cannot be considered in isolation from the global pattern of capitalist relations. Portuguese colonialism intermeshed with the general framework of imperialist relations in Africa, most particularly in Southern Africa. Thus, while the coup will signal Portugal’s departure from the scene, it will not signal the end of the broader imperialist pattern. An analysis of the specific nature of Portuguese colonialism, and of the predominant underlying relationships that will emerge more clearly with the latter’s demise, may aid us in charting the parameters of future development. (2)

PORTUGUESE COLONIALISM

It was the Portuguese who were instrumental in ‘discovering’ Africa in the fifteenth century. They were quick to realise that profit was to be had from traffic both in precious metals and human beings. The first cargo of slaves and gold arrived in Lisbon in 1441. Portugal continued as one of the chief European exploiters of the continent throughout the succeeding centuries. The Portuguese presence, until the nineteenth century, was based, in the main, on coastal trading stations. However, the territorial division of the continent in the latter part of that century gave the hinterlands behind these trading posts to Portugal. It must be noted that Portugal gained territory not in proportion to her economic or military strengths, but as the result of bargaining between the great colonial powers of that time, Britain, France and Germany, each unwilling to cede more territory to the others than was necessary. Thus Portugal, a country of some 35,000 square miles in area, entered the twentieth century controlling some 800,000 square miles of Africa, but in a position of weakness relative to the other colonial powers. It is precisely this weakness that accounts for the contemporary nature of Portuguese colonialism.

The changing pattern of global economic and political relations after 1945, coupled with a rising tide of nationalism in the colonial territories, dictated new strategies for the colonial powers. The grant of political independence, while stilling nationalist protests and removing the increasing burden of garrisoning distant colonies, left untouched, or even improved, the economic benefits accruing to the industrialised capitalist world. Thus, the transition from colonial to neo-colonial relations was effected with rapidity. As this process continued, Portugal appeared increasingly anachronistic in her attitude of intransigence towards any demand for independence from her colonial possessions. But her position was not based simply on a reactionary attitude towards empire, but on her weakness, a weakness that precluded her choice of the neo-colonial option. Portugal, with her undeveloped economy, without a substantial financial or industrial infrastructure, was in no position to compete with America, Britain or France as a neo-colonial power. Yet, at the same time, Portugal needed the contribution made by Africa to her balance of payments. Without the ‘overseas provinces’ she would have been in considerable economic difficulty. In addition the Portuguese ruling class would not willingly have foregone the profits to be obtained from the diamonds, iron ore, and other resources of ‘Portuguese’ Africa. Thus, since to have granted political independence to her colonies would have meant...
giving over those economic advantages to a stronger power, Portuguese colonialism remained unchanged. As Amilcar Cabral, the revolutionary theorist and leader of PAIGC noted on this point in 1965:

"The main characteristic of present-day Portuguese colonialism is a simple fact: Portuguese colonialism, or if you prefer the Portuguese economic infrastructure, cannot allow itself the luxury of being neo-colonialist." (3)

Portugal's continued colonial presence in Africa has not, of course, prevented the penetration of international capital. On the contrary, British, American and South African interests are heavily involved in Mozambique and Angola. The principal banking operation in these two countries is jointly controlled by the Portuguese Totta-Aliquanza and the Standard Bank of South Africa. Gulf Oil operates in Mozambique, in Angola and, most importantly, in the enclave of Cabinda, where a series of strikes since 1966 seems likely to make it the most important oil producing region south of the Sahara. The Anglo-American Corporation, based in South Africa, but chiefly involving British capital, controls Angolan diamond production, and owns the Benguela railway which transports Zambian copper to the Angolan port of Lobito. The Sena Sugar Estates in Mozambique represent yet another British investment. However, this penetration of foreign capital meant no lessening in Portugal's interest in retaining control over her African colonies. For, while Lisbon was the centre of empire, the capital that was flowing into Africa brought benefits to Portugal. Contracts had to be made through the Portuguese authorities, and joint activities involved Portuguese capital in lucrative ventures. If political independence replaced colonialism in Africa then Lisbon's role as middleman would disappear, and there would be a real possibility that Portugal would be excluded from the economic benefits of the operations in Angola, Cabinda and Mozambique.

Portugal, then, unable to take up the neo-colonial option, had continuing reasons for retaining a colonial presence in Africa. But there was another side to the picture.

Due to the operation of nationalist guerrilla forces in all of Portugal's African territories, the cost of maintaining that presence was escalating continually. The armed struggle in these territories was directly engendered by Portugal's refusal to regard independence as politically negotiable. The first resistance erupted in Angola in 1961, led by the Union of the Angolan Population (UPA). Within six months 25,000 Portuguese troops were in the process of reconquering the areas that had been lost to the freedom fighters. Since that time, the situation in Angola has been one of fluctuating fortunes for the nationalist forces, linked to fratricidal conflict between competing nationalist groups. The main groups involved in a struggle for power have been Holden Roberto's National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), successor to the UPA, Jonas Savimba's National Union for Total Independence (UNITA) and, the most radical of the three, Dr. Agostino Neto's Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). The conflicts between these groups have involved not only party splits, but also fruitless clashes between the military wings of the parties. Obviously, this internecine struggle has been of great value to Portugal, and has enabled her to attain a greater measure of military success in Angola than in any other area. Nevertheless the constant threat of guerrilla activity has tied down a Portuguese army of 70,000 men in the country.

The position in Guinea-Bissau has been discouraging in the extreme for the Portuguese. The PAIGC, under the leadership of Amilcar Cabral, has achieved great progress since armed struggle began in January 1963. [Cabral, however, was assassinated in 1973 by Portuguese agents.] At the time of the coup in Portugal, the PAIGC controlled 60 to 70 per cent of the territory of Guinea-Bissau and administered over 50 per cent of the population. Portuguese control has effectively been reduced to the capital and certain garrison towns. In the liberated areas the PAIGC embarked on a great program of political mobilisation and social reform, setting up co-operatives, schools and hospitals and introducing innovative agricultural techniques. In their attempt to maintain control, the Portuguese stationed 40,000
men in the country. The basic reason for the continuing Portuguese commitment to Guinea-Bissau was one that derived from the domino theory applied by the US to South-east Asia. There was little profit to be had from Guinea-Bissau in the first place, and nationalist success made it an enormous and increasing liability. But it was argued that if independence were given to Guinea-Bissau it would be difficult to resist similar demands from Angola and Mozambique. However, given the position on the ground, it is hardly surprising that, in the wake of the coup, Portugal has almost immediately recognised the country’s independence.

In June 1963, three exiled Mozambiquan parties merged to form FRELIMO and, after two years of political preparation, they launched a military campaign. The front has had a continuing history of military success. Just prior to the coup, Marcelino Dos Santos, Vice-President of FRELIMO, estimated that FRELIMO controlled 24 per cent of the territory of Mozambique, (In the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Tete in the north of the country) and one million people from a population of seven million. In the liberated areas of Mozambique, as in Guinea-Bissau, various programs of political mobilisation and of social and educational reform have been introduced. Repressive activities by the Portuguese military, recently highlighted by the disclosure by missionaries of massacres in Mozambique, have only served to mobilise and politicise the people. Thus, despite a commitment of over 60,000 troops, despite aid, both direct and indirect, from Rhodesia and South Africa, the position of Portugal has been growing increasingly untenable in Mozambique. The chief area of conflict in latter months has been in Tete province and, in particular, the site of the Cabora Bassa dam on the Zambesi River. This hydro-electric project, financed by a consortium headed by South Africa, aimed at the provision of electric power that would be fed directly into the South African national grid. This highlights both the involvement of South African interests in the region and the conflict between those interests and nationalist activity, a point that will be developed later.

In general then, the military situation of Portugal in Africa at the beginning of this year was rapidly deteriorating, and the immense cost of continuing the struggle against the forces of nationalism was outweighing the benefits of upholding the structure of colonialism. As William Minter has noted:

“The military effort, moreover, has proved an increasing strain on Portugal’s resources, financial and human. By 1970 the total number of Portuguese troops in Africa was estimated at about 160,000, or more than double the 1964 level. In proportion to Portugal’s population, this is a troop level more than five times that of the United States in Vietnam at its highest.” (4)

It was this situation, and the contradictions and tensions to which it gave rise in metropolitan Portugal, that directly engendered the coup.

Two other aspects of Portuguese colonialism need to be recorded. Firstly, it must be noted that the Portuguese military effort has been supported, not only by obvious allies like Rhodesia and South Africa, but by the Western military alliance in general. Without NATO arms, NATO supplies and NATO training it is doubtful whether Portugal could have sustained its military effort at the level of past years. Far from expressing any disapproval at Portugal’s use of resources provided by NATO, the latter indicated at least its complacence by moving NATO Command HQ to Lisbon in 1967. Secondly, note must be taken of the fact that, in order to help maintain control of Angola and Mozambique, Portugal encouraged the settlement of Portuguese in these territories. Currently, there are approximately 550,000 Europeans in Angola and approximately 200,000 in Mozambique. Their presence in these areas is of crucial importance in considering possible future developments.

AFTER THE COUP:
THE BASIC CONTRADICTION

Clearly the main concern of the Portuguese now is to divest themselves of the burd-
en of their African colonies as rapidly as possible, and to turn their attention to the problems of development and social change in Portugal itself. What then of the future of their erstwhile colonies? Such a question brings us to a consideration of the relationships and contradictions that will determine the broad pattern of future events. They are relationships and contradictions that have been lying below the surface of a Portuguese colonial presence that has, in the past, tended to mask their significance. The chief contradiction, at least in Southern and Central Africa, is between the forces of African nationalism on the one hand, and of the hegemony of South African capitalism, linked as it is to the continuance of white supremacy, on the other. This contradiction, mediated and masked by the Portuguese presence, will, with Portugal's withdrawal, now become more obviously the chief factor conditioning political and economic developments in the region.

It is necessary to examine both sides of this contradiction in more detail. The focus of attention will now be exclusively on Southern Africa. Guinea-Bissau in West Africa, small, virtually controlled by the nationalist movement for some years past, lacking a settler community and having no immediate economic resources to tempt international capital, lies outside the main concentration of the present discussion. A newly independent Guinea-Bissau, with its exemplary history of revolutionary nationalism will, no doubt, have much to contribute to the development of a continent in sad need of new directions and encouraging social experiments. But, given its geographic position, and the specific nature of its national struggle, it will not figure in the Southern African context, where future struggle lies.

Two opposing tendencies emerge from the contradiction in this region. On the one hand the interests of South Africa dictate the necessity of a neo-colonial solution to the problem posed by the collapse of Portuguese colonialism. South Africa has a hegemonic position in Southern Africa, and what has been variously described as the 'Southern African Fortress' and the 'Southern African complex' includes Angola and Mozambique, as well as Rhodesia, South-West Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. South Africa's interest lies in securing the stability of this region under her continued control. Thus, from her standpoint, the administrations which succeed the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique must be capable of being controlled from Pretoria, directly or indirectly, and must see their interests as congruent with those of South Africa. On the other hand the nationalist groups, most particularly FRELIMO and MPLA, have, in the course of the extended struggle against the Portuguese, become increasingly radicalised. They are clearly aware of the dangers of neo-colonialism, and are committed to a revolutionary nationalism that demands the overthrow of capitalism as a "logical" conclusion to the struggle for independence. (5)

South Africa represents a major area of investment by the capitalist world. In 1970 Sterling Area investment stood at 1,983 million pounds. (6) Five hundred British companies and three hundred American owned subsidiaries operated within South Africa, and between 1965 and 1970 she received a net total of 982 million pounds from Western capitalist countries. (7)

In short, as Arrighi and Saul have pointed out, the Southern African complex represents the most important region in Africa to Western capitalist interests. Its developed industrial and technological infrastructure, its mineral wealth and its plentiful supply of cheap labor make it an attractive proposition for investment. (8) At the same time, it provides a base from where Western capital interests can penetrate upwards into the rest of Africa. As Arrighi and Saul note with regard to the implications of this position: "In consequence, their [Western capitalist interests] main concern vis-a-vis independent Africa is to prevent the growth of strong politico-economic systems independent of Western capitalist hegemony in the countries bordering on the Southern African complex (Congo, Malawi and Tanzania) which could, among other things, seriously threaten (through their support for the increasingly radical liberation movements) white rule in Southern Africa." (9) What is true for coun-
tries bordering the ‘Southern African Complex’ is obviously axiomatic for countries such as Angola and Mozambique that are part of that complex.

The agency for securing the ends of Western capital is the state apparatus of South Africa. But South Africa is not simply a client of Western capital, for indigenous South African capital has been increasing in strength for some time past. South Africa has “developed its own industrial base by setting up government corporations in basic industries, by investing in infrastructure, and by forcing or enticing foreign capital to accept a measure of local participation and control”. (10) Increasingly South African capital has been involved in development projects in Southern Africa, alone or in conjunction with foreign capital. There is a degree of autonomous industrial development occurring that suggests parallels with Brazil. And as Brazil is to Latin America, so South Africa is to Africa, a developing sub-imperialist power, capable of taking the initiative in terms of the expansion of its capital and provision for its security. Clearly, the interests of South Africa in this respect are coincidental with the interests of Western capitalism, and require a continuing South African dominance of Southern and Central Africa. The idea that South Africa’s ‘natural hinterland’ extends well beyond its physical boundaries is one that is frequently alluded to by South African politicians. This notion was concretely, if less subtly, expressed in the journal ‘Africa South’ in 1968:

“Our economic and political objectives in Southern Africa are to harness all natural and human resources from Table Mountain to the border of the Congo River.” (11)

Yet, while South Africa seeks to maintain her dominant position in Southern and Central Africa, she is also desirous of minimising her open conflicts with independent African countries, and with liberation movements based on their territory. While South African ‘police’ have been fighting alongside Rhodesian forces in the Zambesi valley, South African diplomats have been making friendly overtures towards black African states. The reason for such apparently ambiguous behaviour is not hard to find. The natural market for the products of the expanding South African economy, and the natural outlet for both South African capital, and foreign capital based in South Africa, all lie to the north of the Zambesi. The general position is well summarised by First, Steele and Gurney:

“...South Africa’s own reasons for expansion and an aggressive strategy against independent Africa coincide happily with the interests of Western investors and Western powers in general. They are anxious to avoid confrontation with liberation movements; above all, they want a political climate in Southern and Central Africa in which penetration by outside capital can be pursued without opposition.” (12)

It is this general strategy that accounts for the low profile South Africa has adopted with regard to current events in Angola and Mozambique. But this should not be taken as any indication of a lack of concern, nor of an unwillingness to intervene to secure her interests in the region. Those interests demand, and will continue to demand, a neo-colonial settlement in Angola and Mozambique.

South Africa’s interest in securing the accession to power in the former Portuguese colonies of moderate and manipulable leaders, stemming from the nature of the broad socio-economic situation, is heightened considerably by strategic considerations relating to counter-insurgency. To date South Africa has been insulated from guerrilla attacks by the buffer zones of Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia. In effect this has meant that South Africa has been able to gain experience in counter-insurgency operations, fighting ZANO/ZAPU (13) and ANC (14) forces along the Zambesi River marking Rhodesia’s northern frontier. But many hundreds of miles have separated this activity from the towns and farms of the Transvaal. Meanwhile in Angola and Mozambique the Portuguese were relied on to contain guerrilla activity, and to protect the flanks of the white fortress of Southern Africa.

Despite the success of FRELIMO forces in the northern provinces of Mozambique,
the line of their advance has been held at the Zambesi. The geographical position of Mozambique is such that the southernmost areas of the country extend to within 200 miles of Johannesburg and Pretoria. Obviously, no South African government could view with equanimity the prospect of guerrilla forces operating in such close proximity to the major industrial and population centres of South Africa. It is thus provided with an additional incentive, if one were indeed required, to ensure that the future government of Mozambique will be of a character that will preclude this possibility. A similar set of considerations apply to the Angolan flank. Already South Africa has to contend with the activities of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), fighting against its continued illegal occupation of Namibia. A radical African government in Angola, to the immediate north of South West Africa, would mean a weakening of South Africa's strategic position in this area. In the light of all this, one could suggest that a litmus test of the type of settlement finally agreed to for Angola and Mozambique will be whether or not the guerrillas are permitted to base themselves in these countries. It is hard to be sanguine about the prospects of such an arrangement.

Dr. Mulder, South Africa's Minister of the Interior and Information said in Salisbury on August 30, 1973: "South Africa prefers the front line against terrorism to be the Zambesi rather than the Limpopo." It is a preference that is unlikely to change.

But, if the general character of South African hegemony in Southern Africa creates pressures for a neo-colonial settlement in Angola and Mozambique, another contradictory pressure is present, particularly in Mozambique. The years of guerrilla struggle, necessitated by Portuguese intransigence, have engendered a maturation of political consciousness in the nationalist parties that were involved. This is particularly true of the PAIGC and FRELIMO. These movements will not so readily fall prey to the pitfall of neo-colonialism as did so many other African nationalist movements of the 1950s. Amilcar Cabral wrote in 1965:

"The neo-colonial situation...... is not resolved by a nationalist solution, it demands the destruction of the capitalist structure implanted in the national territory by imperialism, and correctly postulates a socialist solution." (15)

John Saul, in his article in 'Socialist Register 1973', has charted the way in which the liberation struggles in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique have led to the creation of a revolutionary nationalism "very different from that earlier brand of nationalism which brought formal independence to African territories north of the Zambesi." (16)

"In the case of Portugal's African colonies, then, we see not merely a struggle for independence -- but a revolution in the making." (17)

Even in Angola, where inter- and intra-party conflict in the nationalist movement has tended to retard development, there have been signs of an increasing commitment to revolutionary nationalism in Neto's MPLA, as it has increased its military control over areas of Eastern Angola. But the maturation of a revolutionary consciousness and growing commitment to socialist goals is most apparent in FRELIMO, where the leadership "have been increasingly firm about distinguishing revolutionary nationalism from its less savoury look-alikes, and communicating this distinction to the populace." (18)

In a recent interview, Marcelino Dos Santos, the Vice-President of FRELIMO, made clear FRELIMO's commitment to revolutionary nationalism, and indicated that the aim was to transcend neo-colonialism in achieving a socialist solution. He noted that nationalism within FRELIMO had moved from a primary to a secondary stage, and that "the point of departure" between the two stages was the idea of a society where there was no exploitation of man by man.

"In the particular conditions of fighting against Portuguese colonialism, revolutionary attitudes are not only possible, but necessary...... If our organisation maintains a true revolutionary leader-
ship the special circumstances of the process of our liberation open up real possibilities for an advance from liberation to revolution.” (19)

In Mozambique, as in Guinea-Bissau, new social structures have been created in the liberated areas. Schools and hospitals have been established, and reforms in agriculture have been initiated. A new spirit of national struggle, transcending the old tribal antagonisms, is active among the people. It is a familiar story that parallels the Chinese, Vietnamese and Cuban experiences. A guerrilla war is not just a military enterprise, but a political activity that mobilises and educates. As Robert Taber has noted: “The guerrilla fighter is primarily a propagandist, an agitator, a disseminator of the revolutionary idea, who uses the struggle itself – the actual physical conflict – as an instrument of agitation.” (20) Dos Santos echoes these sentiments when he notes:

“The armed struggle can only be launched when the conditions are ripe for it. Even now the basic problem is not guns; the Portuguese have guns too but that does not make a revolution. The problem is the man. It is not because you give a Mozambiquan a rifle that he becomes a revolutionary, the basic problem is a political one. Political consciousness is the base.” (21)

Thus, in Angola and Mozambique, the years of struggle against Portuguese colonialism have witnessed the rise of a species of revolutionary nationalism that is in complete opposition to pressures for a neo-colonial settlement. This contradiction, between revolutionary nationalism and South Africa’s capitalist interests, is recognised by the nationalist leaders. Dos Santos was interviewed prior to the coup in Portugal, and thus before the possibility of formal independence was on the agenda. Yet he clearly foresaw the present position.

“Perhaps we should look further to the content of independence. I think that a stage will be reached in which the main problem will not be whether a country becomes formally independ-
ident of FRELIMO are among FRECOMO's leaders. Simango was expelled from FRELIMO in 1970 for advocating that an independent Mozambique be confined to the north of the Zambezi. Both Gumane and Simango are representative of those elements of FRELIMO which were committed to the capitalist system, and were willing opportunistically to compromise with imperialist forces. As noted, the party purged itself of these elements in the late 'sixties. Their re-emergence to prominence at this stage speaks for itself. Reports suggest that South African and European business interests in Mozambique provide financial backing for FRECOMO.

Obviously the settler communities in Angola and Mozambique are of considerable importance in the present situation. They represent a source of reaction to African revolutionary nationalism, which they see as threatening their position, that can readily be exploited by South Africa. It is significant that race riots led by Europeans greeted news of the coup in Luanda. There is always the possibility of a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) on the lines taken by Rhodesia. It is a threat that has been in the air for some years past, repeated whenever Portugal's will to continue seemed to be faltering. Now that that will has ceased to function, UDI, or at least some degree of independent action by the settlers, was almost bound to occur.

There are reports that mercenary forces are being recruited, through settler organisations, to prevent a takeover by FRELIMO in Mozambique. Colonel Mike Hoare and Jean Pierre Rene, both of whom were active mercenaries in the Congo, are two names that have been mentioned. Recently there was reported to have been a 'reunion' in Rhodesia of No. 5 Commando, the group Hoare commanded in the Congo. In a recent interview, Hoare denied that he had received any requests for assistance. But when asked if he would get "a good and quick response" if he set out to reactivate No. 5 Commando, he replied:

"Most definitely. Many of the old No. 5 Commando boys would rally immediately. I've had a flood of telephone calls from chaps - including a lot of old hands asking if I was recruiting for Mozambique or Angola." (23)

Within Mozambique a mercenary force could expect to receive support from the settlers in general, and in particular the business community. Senhor Jorge Jardim, an influential European businessman, has been involved in the formation and financing of both GUMO and FRECOMO. He was responsible previously for organising a commando force to fight FRELIMO. A friend of Jardim's, General Kaulza de Arriaga, is reported to be organising forces that could link up with the mercenaries.

Clearly, key figures are involved in organising an anti-FRELIMO front. It is significant that Jardim, Simango and other members of FRECOMO have all advocated the partition of Mozambique along the Zambezi. This, it is hoped, would safeguard European business interests, since the chief plantations, towns and ports (Biera and Lourenco Marques) and European settlements are all south of the Zambezi. In addition, any partition agreement would inevitably include the Cabora Bassa dam within a southern state. Thus, FRELIMO would be confined to the liberated areas of northern Mozambique. Moreover further plans along these lines suggest the incorporation of northern Mozambique with Malawi. It is presumably in response to such plans that FRELIMO has reportedly discussed with Portugal a delayed independence, and has clearly stated that it wants time to expand its political base and mobilise people south of the Zambezi. Whether FRELIMO's opponents will allow time for such expansion and mobilisation is obviously a moot point.

In Angola the rifts within the competing nationalist groups continue to undermine their position. Although Agostino Neto's MPLA and Holden Roberto's FNLA have reached a tenuous agreement, no basis for a united political front has yet been reached with Joseph Savimba's UNITA. More importantly, the large settler community in Angola is a stumbling block to any attempt to establish a progressive, radical African administration. The United Resistance of Angola (RUA), initially formed in 1961 in response
to guerrilla activity, and drawing its membership from working class whites, has recently reappeared. Reports suggest that its leader, Captain Jose Mendoza, a former officer in the Portuguese army, is working in collaboration with former members of the DGS, the Portuguese security service disbanded after the coup, and is taking orders from South Africa. The RUA could obviously be linked with a UDI movement in Angola. The future of oil-rich Cabinda is also of obvious concern to many parties, not least South Africa, who, lacking oil reserves of her own, is dependent on the expensive oil from coal process for her strategic reserves. South Africa, and the three nationalist parties of Angola are in agreement on one issue at least, that Cabinda be considered part of Angola. But their views on the future of Cabinda/Angola are obviously rather different.

Thus, overall, although the details that are emerging from Southern Africa are incomplete, a broad outline of present trends can be perceived. It would appear that in furtherance of her interest in preserving the Southern African Complex free from revolutionary nationalism, South Africa is at present backing white settler groups and opportunist black elements in Angola and Mozambique. Such a method of operation is, of course, in keeping with South Africa's desire to keep a low profile, and avoid, if possible, open involvement. South Africa would seem to be relying on settlers' groups to deploy their own and mercenary forces against the nationalist forces, presumably with her financial assistance. It has been suggested that one of the aims of such groups is to attack their African opponents through punitive border raids aimed at bases and key installations in Zaire, Zambia and Tanzania. It is difficult not to see the hand of South Africa in such a plan which implements a threat that has been made, at least sotto voce, for years by South African leaders. It would be convenient to have such operations conducted by groups ostensibly unconnected with South Africa.

Given the position of South Africa, then, we must presume that if the present tactics fail to stem the tide of revolutionary nationalism, more direct South African intervention cannot be ruled out. It is not that South Africa has any particular interest in the establishment of settler regimes in Angole or Mozambique. In Rhodesia, Mr. Smith, and the settlers he leads, have proved as much an embarrassment and liability as an asset. South Africa would probably be well satisfied with African governments in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, so long as they were compliant and her control was unaffected.

But at the present time South Africa's desire to defeat revolutionary nationalism, while avoiding direct confrontation itself, is best served by support for settler or other groups equally interested in a neo-colonial settlement.

Any discussion of the pattern of future events must, of course, be speculative. However, given the present disposition of economic power and military force in the Southern African complex, it would seem that, in the short term, some type of neo-colonial settlement is inevitable for Angola/Cabinda, and for at least a large area of Mozambique. The corollary of this, of course, is that the struggle waged by the forces of revolutionary nationalism will continue, not only in Angola and Mozambique, but in all the countries of Southern and Central Africa that South Africa seeks to dominate. The demise of Portuguese colonialism has not opened the way to immediate liberation. But it is a great victory for the progressive forces of African nationalism, and it will serve to heighten the contradictions within the Southern African complex. As such, it is an important step on the road to complete liberation.

**FOOTNOTES**


2. In discussing the nature of Portuguese colonialism the present author is in-


9. Ibid., p. 49/50.


11. Quoted in First, ibid., p. 293.

12. Ibid., p. 293.

13. The Zimbabwe African National Union and the Zimbabwe African People’s Union, the two nationalist parties of Zimbabwe, operating since 1972 under a joint military command.

14. The African National Congress, the banned nationalist party of South Africa.

15. Cabral, op. cit. p. 86.


17. Ibid., p. 310.


22. Ibid., pp. 52/53.

23. ‘Newsweek’, August 26, 1974, p. 56.
L.S. Do you think the ecology movement will become more or less class-based in the future?

Prof. Chesneaux:
Many people consider ecology a bourgeois issue. It’s not. Environmental decay affects working and middle classes. The middle classes have become aware of ecological problems earlier than the workers, but that’s true of most issues and only illustrates the ideological oppression of the working class. There are both working class and middle class solutions to ecological problems. So far, the middle class have tended to control the issues, with their compromise tactics, but the fact that they have, to date, been predominant does not make it a purely middle class issue.

L.S.: Could you outline the differences in approach and in solutions that distinguish working class from middle class ecological action?

Prof. Chesneaux:
The reformist approach emphasises protection of nature by and for those
who can afford week-end cottages in the country, at the coast, etc. It emphasises middle class comforts and use of leisure based on individual escapism. The explanation of the ecological crisis typical of this approach puts the burden on individual guilt, not on the nature of the economic system. It is a non-political approach which suggests that if only every human being was more ecologically conscious we would have no ecological crisis. The reformist style is to work through negotiations and committee work rather than to use direct action. Because reformists are optimistic about the machinery of the bourgeois state, the courts, etc., they believe that all that’s needed is more information. So they compile more and more technical, scholarly books. These reformist tactics leave genuine radicals defenceless because the reformists are co-opted by the government and the bureaucracy. They open foundations, publish journals, and so on. All of which slows down the actual tackling of the crisis, keeps the debate within the confines of the capitalist system and strengthens and enlarges the bureaucracy by giving it more money. ‘There is cash in all that trash’, as an American businessman said. So, the ecology issue must be rescued from reformists and conservatives.

L.S.: How can radicals best do this?

Prof. Chesneaux:
A radical analysis of the issue leads to the conclusion that pollution is a by-product of capitalism, a society based on profit and expansion. ‘Stationary capitalism’ is a contradiction in terms. Reinvestment is basic to capitalism. The ecology crisis is an indictment of the capitalist system. Radicals must work to increase awareness of this analysis of the nature of the crisis. In practice, the revolutionary struggle must question the whole society and bring those involved in ecology into contact with the nature of the capitalist system. True radical ecological action will lead to conflict with all organs of the established order; bureaucracy, courts, police, etc. Radicalisation should evolve from ecological involvement.

L.S.: What are the theoretical underpinnings for a radical analysis of ‘the ecological crisis’?

Prof. Chesneaux:
The nature of the crisis can be understood within the theory of the contradictions of capitalist society. But we need to go beyond Marx’s writings. Marx did write in Vol. 1 of CAPITAL that capitalism is progress in the art of destroying the worker and impoverishing the land, that capitalism exhausts both land and worker, the basic sources of wealth. But Marx didn’t dwell on or emphasise this problem. Why? Partly because eighteenth and nineteenth century thought had stressed the domination of man over nature and the idea that there was an unlimited supply of nature at man’s disposal. Partly because it wasn’t necessary in Marx’s time to explore the way capitalism exhausted and exploited the land. Emphasis was on exploitation of workers. Marxist thinking in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries therefore developed in a distorted way. It saw a mechanical relationship between the three levels of social life, the productive forces, the mode of production and the ideological superstructure, and emphasised the irresistible power of the productive forces. This led to a fetishism for unlimited growth, obvious in the practice of the USSR and post-Soviet socialist states. USSR rivers are just as polluted as American rivers because of concern with growth as an end in itself rather than with selective growth. The French Communist Party is also imbued with this productivist mentality, this insistence on freedom of expansion for productive forces. But we must now see the relationship between productive forces and socialist economics in a different way - the relationship between man and nature should be seen as dialectical, rather than as one of dominance.

L.S.: Do we need a ‘new socialism’?

Prof. Chesneaux:
There’s a new contradiction today in capitalism. It cannot survive without expansion. But resources are finite. Therefore unlimited growth is not only
unnecessary but harmful. So a definition of socialism more appropriate to our time would stress that collective control of the means of production is not enough. We need a society where man can control his own future. This obviously requires the abolition of private profit. But that's not enough. We must have a society of selected growth which assesses 'progress' in the light of available resources. This differs from the technocratic concept of zero growth, in which the rich are OK, but the poor lose out. China has attempted to see things differently. Social needs are not seen in terms of individual advantage. There is collective use of TV, collective means of transportation, etc. and nothing is left unused. Have a look at the Chinese delegate's statement to the Stockholm environmental conference.

L.S.: What future developments are likely in the ecology movement?

Prof. Chesneaux:
Ecology as a movement is part of the political struggle against capitalism. It is a 'people's issue' rather than a working class or middle class issue. It must combine with other crisis areas of society which are in acute struggle -- women, aborigines, workers. Overlap of issues is important and makes the movement more dynamic and powerful. We must explore the potential links with the working class, counter-culture, peace movements, etc.

L.S.: What relationship to, and relevance for, the poor countries does the ecology movement have?

Prof. Chesneaux:
Our working class is certainly privileged relative to the working class of Asia and Africa. The fight against pollution at home may lead to a shifting of the burden to the exploited, under-developed countries. Polluting factories, for example, may be shifted from Europe and the US to poor nations where there's less awareness of the dangers and less organised resistance. This is a serious problem. But we can't be defeatist, we can't slow down the struggle for 'strategic' reasons. We must fight, but be prepared for such consequences and act accordingly. The more progress is made in the west in the ecology struggle the more urgent is the need for cooperation with revolutionary movements in Asia and Africa. It's all connected. For example, Dow Chemicals make napalm and household chemicals. They are destroying nature and people -- for profit...........
Under-developed countries will soon make the necessary connections between ecology and capitalism, e.g. Malaysians can observe the effects of the tin industry on their earth. So pollution is not just a problem for the rich. It's a world-wide problem.
No one has better credentials to make a critique of Solzhenitsyn and his book ‘The Gulag Archipelago’ than Roy Medvedev. Himself a courageous dissident within the Soviet Union, Medvedev is an historian and author of the book ‘Let History Judge’. It was following efforts to have this work on Stalin published in the Soviet Union that Medvedev was expelled from the Communist Party in 1969. Medvedev was expelled from the Communist Party in 1969. He has been without permanent employment since 1971.

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In this article I shall try to provide an evaluation of Solzhenitsyn’s new book. The assessment can only be a brief and preliminary one -- not merely because ‘Gulag Archipelago’ is only the first of three or four volumes of a single work, but also because even by itself it is too considerable to be adequately appraised straightaway. The book is full of frightening facts: it would be difficult to grasp even a much smaller number of them immediately. Solzhenitsyn describes in concrete detail the tragic fate of hundreds of people, destinies both extraordinary and yet typical of what has befallen us in the past decades. His book contains many reflections and observations that are profound and truthful, and others which may not be correct, but are nevertheless always born from the monstrous sufferings of millions of people, in an agony unique in the age-old history of our nation. No man who left that terrible Archipelago was the same as he who entered it, either in body and health or in ideas about life and people. I believe that no-one who has read this book will remain the same person as he was when he opened its first pages. There is nothing in Russian or world literature in this respect which I can compare with Solzhenitsyn’s work.
A certain I. Soloviev has written in ‘Pravda’ (14/1/1974) that Solzhenitsyn’s facts are unreliable, fancies of a morbid imagination or mere cynical falsifications. This, of course, is not so. I cannot agree with some of Solzhenitsyn’s judgments or conclusions. But it must be firmly stated that all the main facts in his book, and especially all the details of the life and torment of those who were imprisoned, from the time of their arrest to that of their death (or in rarer cases, their release) are perfectly correct. Of course, in an ‘artistic investigation’ on such a huge scale, based not only on the impressions of the author himself but also on stories told (and retold) by more than two hundred former prisoners, some inaccuracies are inevitable, particularly as Solzhenitsyn had to write his book in complete secrecy, with no possibility of discussing it before publication even with many of his close friends. But the number of these errors is very small in a work of such weight. My own calculation, for example, of the scale of the deportations from Leningrad after the murder of Kirov in 1934-35 is lower than that of Solzhenitsyn. Tens of thousands of people were deported, but not actually a quarter of the population of a city of 2,000,000. Yet I do not possess exact figures either, and base myself simply on fragmentary reports and my own impressions (I have lived in Leningrad for over 15 years). It is also difficult to believe the anonymous report that Orzhonikidze could talk to old engineers with two revolvers on his desk, at his right and left hand. To seize former officials of the Tsarist regime (not of course, all of them but mainly functionaries of the judiciary or gendarmerie), the GPU had no need to use random notes of casual informers. Lists of such officials could be found in local archives and in published reference books. In my view, Solzhenitsyn exaggerates the number of peasants deported during the years of collectivisation, which he estimates at 15 million. However, if one includes among the victims of those years peasants who died from starvation in 1932-3 (in the Ukraine alone not fewer than 3 to 4 million), it is possible to arrive at a figure even higher than that suggested by Solzhenitsyn. After Stalin’s death, there were not ten but about a hundred officials of the MGB-MVD who were imprisoned or shot (in some cases without an open trial). But this was still a negligible number compared with the quantity of criminals from the ‘security organs’ who were left at large or even given various responsible posts. In 1936-7 Bukharin was no longer a member of the Politbureau, as Solzhenitsyn claims, but was only a candidate-member of the Central Committee.

But all these and a few other inaccuracies are insignificant within the immense artistic investigation which Solzhenitsyn has undertaken. On the other hand, there are other ‘shortcomings’ in the book which Solzhenitsyn himself notes in the dedication: he did not see everything, did not recollect everything, did not guess everything. He writes, for example, about the arrest of repatriated and amnestied Cossacks in the mid-1920s. But the campaign of mass terror against the Cossacks in the Don and Ural regions during the winter and spring of 1919 was still more terrible in its consequences. This campaign lasted ‘only’ a little over two months, but it prolonged the Civil War with all its excesses for at least another year, providing the White Armies with dozens of new cavalry regiments. Then, too, there was the shooting of 500 hostages in Petrograd which the ‘Weekly Review’ of the Cheka mentions in two lines .... To describe it all, many books are still needed; and I trust that they will be written.

If ‘Pravda’ tried to argue that Solzhenitsyn’s facts were untrue, ‘Literaturnaya Gazeta’ by contrast (16/1/1974) sought to persuade its readers that Solzhenitsyn’s book contained nothing new. This is not true, either. Although I have been studying Stalinism for over a decade, the book told me a great deal that I had not known before. With the exception of former inmates of the camp, Soviet readers – even those who well remember the 20th and 22nd Congresses of the Party – know hardly one tenth of the facts recounted by Solzhenitsyn. Our youth, indeed, does not know even a one hundredth of them.

THE QUESTION OF VLASSOV

Many of our newspaper have written that Solzhenitsyn justifies, whitewashes, and even lauds Vlassov’s Army. This is a deliberate and malignant distortion. Solzhenitsyn writes in ‘Gulag Archipelago’ that the Vlassovites became pitiful hirelings of the Nazis, that they ‘were liable to trial for treason’, that they took up the enemy’s weapons and fought on the front with the despair of the doomed. Solzhenitsyn’s own battery was nearly annihilated in East Prussia.
no comparative experience from which its leaders could benefit. It was impossible to weigh up every eventuality beforehand, and only then take careful decisions. Events could be predicted at most for days or weeks ahead. Fundamental decisions were made, and methods of revolutionary struggle adopted or corrected, only in the vortex of events themselves. Lenin was well aware of this, and often repeated Napoleon’s maxim: ‘On s’engage et puis on voit’. No revolution can be made without taking risks – risks of defeat, and risks of error. But a revolutionary party is also risking a great deal if it does not give the signal for revolution, when a revolution is possible. It is not surprising that Lenin and his government committed a series of mistakes and miscalculations. The mistakes prolonged and exacerbated the Civil War. The miscalculations initially increased the economic disarray in the country, and delayed the transition to NEP. Lenin’s hopes of an imminent European revolution that would come to the technical and cultural aid of Russia did not materialise. The Soviet government went too far in restricting democracy in our country.

The list of such errors and miscalculations could be extended. But no cybernetics will ever be able to prove that the armed uprising of 24 October 1917 was historically a premature action, and that all the future misdeeds of Stalin’s regime followed from this fatal mistake by Lenin. For after Lenin’s death the party still had to choose paths explored by no predecessor. Unfortunately, those who succeeded Lenin at the head of the party did not possess his wisdom, his knowledge, or his ability usually to find the right solutions for difficult situations. They did not make even minimal use of the opportunities which the October Revolution had created for a rapid advance towards a genuinely socialist and democratic society. Today we still remain far from that objective. Stalin not only did not ‘follow exactly where footsteps made before him led’. Such footsteps do not exist in history. In fact, Stalin swiftly rejected the few guidelines left by Lenin in his last writings.

In conditions of Revolution and Civil War, no government can dispense with forms of violence. But even the most objective historian would have to say that already in the first years of Soviet power the reasonable limits of such violence were frequently overstepped. From the summer of 1918, a wave of both White and Red terror broke over our country. A great many of these acts of mass violence were quite unnecessary and harmful to the logic and interest of the class struggle itself. Such terror merely brutalised both sides, prolonged the war and generated further superfluous violence. It is unfortunately true that in the early years of the Revolution, Lenin too used the verb ‘shoot’ much more often than existing circumstances demanded. Solzhenitsyn cites Lenin, without actually distorting his words, but always with a disoblising comment. Nevertheless, would anyone today approve, for example, of the following order sent in August 1918 by Lenin to G. Fedorov, head of the local Soviet in the province of Nizhni Novgorod: ‘No efforts to be spared; mass terror to be introduced, hundreds of prostitutes who have intoxicated our soldiers, and former officers, etc., to be shot and deported’.*

Deport – yes, but why kill women?

Such abuses of power must be regretted and condemned. Yet the terror of the Civil War did not pre-determine the fearful terror of the Stalinist epoch. Lenin made not a few mistakes, many of which he admitted himself. There is no doubt that an honest historian must take note of his errors and abuses of power. However, we remain convinced that the overall balance sheet of Lenin’s activity was positive. Solzhenitsyn thinks otherwise. That is his right. In a socialist country, every citizen should be able to express his opinions and judgments on the activity of any political leader.

THE EXAMPLE OF KRYLENKO

In his book Solzhenitsyn does not spare any of the revolutionary parties in Russia. The SR’s (Socialist-Revolutionaries) were terrorists and babblers, ‘with no worthy leaders’. The Mensheviks were naturally only babblers. But it is the Bolsheviks whom Solzhenitsyn condemns most fiercely; although they were able to seize and hold power in Russia, in doing so they gave proof of excessive and needless cruelty. Among the Bolshevnik leaders, Solzhenitsyn singles out in particular N.V. Krylenko, the Chairman of the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal and Procurator of the Republic, the chief prosecutor in the ‘show’ trials of the first years of the Soviet regime. Solzhenitsyn devotes nearly two whole chapters to these trials (‘The Law – a Child’, ‘The Law Matures’). Krylenko’s name also makes a frequent appearance in other chapters.
General Steiner -- this episode is an indisputable historical fact. Nearly all the 'Vlassovites' were sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment. They never received any amnesty and virtually all of them perished in captivity and exile in the North. I share the view that this was too harsh a penalty for most of them. For Stalin was far more guilty than anyone else in this tragedy.

Solzhenitsyn has been accused of minimising the evil of Nazism and the cruelty of Russian Tsarism. It was not Solzhenitsyn's task to provide an account of the 'German Archipelago', although he frequently cites Gestapo tortures and the inhuman treatment of Russian prisoners of war by the fascists. But Solzhenitsyn does not depart from the truth, when he writes that Stalin unleashed mass repressions, deported millions of people, used torture and fabricated trials long before Hitler came to power. Moreover all this continued in our country many years after the defeat of German fascism.

Naturally, in this respect the Russian Tsars could hardly equal Stalin. Solzhenitsyn tells us a great deal about Tsarist prison and exile in his work, as this was a frequent topic of conversation among the prisoners, especially if there was an Old Bolshevik among them (prisoners belonging to the other socialist parties had nearly all died before the war). In such talks, prison and exile in the 'ancien regime' seemed like a rest-home to those who were in camps in the 1940s. As for the scale of repression ...... In 1937-8 Stalin's apparatus shot or starved to death in camps and prisons as many workers, peasants and artisans in the course of a single day, as Tsarist executioners killed in a year at the time of the 1905 revolution and the reaction which followed it. There is simply no comparison.

I suspect that different readers will find that different chapters of Solzhenitsyn's book make the most powerful impression on them. For me the most important were 'Blue Edgings' (Chapter Four) and 'The Supreme Penalty' (Chapter Eleven). In these the author achieves an exceptional depth of psychological insight into the behaviour of prison guards and their victims. Solzhenitsyn is profounder here than Dostoyevsky. I do not mean by this that Solzhenitsyn is a greater artist than Dostoyevsky. I am not a specialist on literature. But it is clear that the Stalinist prisons, camps, transit centres and exiles that Solzhenitsyn traversed a hundred years after the arrest and exile of Dostoyevsky, gave him ten times as many opportunities for study of the various forms of human evil as the author of 'The House of the Dead'. There is no doubt that Solzhenitsyn has acquitted himself of this task as only a great writer would.

'Gulag Archipelago' contains many penetrating and accurate, although incidental, remarks about Stalin's personality. Solzhenitsyn considers, however, that Stalin's personal role in the historical catastrophe which struck our country, and even in the creation of the Archipelago, was so unimportant that many of these remarks are dropped outside the main text, relegated to parentheses and footnotes. Thus in the footnote on the penultimate page of the book, we read: 'Both before and during my time in prison, I too used to believe that Stalin was responsible for the disastrous course taken by the Soviet State. Then Stalin died peacefully -- and has the direction of the ship changed in the least? His own personal imprint on events was merely a dreary stupidity, an obtuse vanity. For the rest, he simply followed where footsteps made before him led'.

Solzhenitsyn treats only very briefly in his second chapter the repressions of 1937-8 (why give details of 'what has already been widely described and will frequently be repeated again?') when the core of the party leadership, intelligentsia, officers and commissars of the Red Army, and the majority of prominent economic administrators and Komsomol leaders, were liquidated in the cellars of the NKVD, and when the top State leadership together with senior ranks of the security apparatus, the diplomatic service, and so on, were violently reshuffled. Solzhenitsyn comments, again in a footnote: 'Today the evidence of the Cultural Revolution in China (also 17 years after final victory), suggests in all probability the operation here of a general law of history. Even Stalin himself now begins to seem a mere blind and superficial instrument of it'.

It is difficult to agree with such a view of Stalin's role and importance in the tragedy of the thirties. It would, of course, be a mistake to separate the epoch of Stalinist terror completely from the revolutionary period that preceded it. There was no such precise or absolute boundary line either in 1937 as many believe, or in 1934 as Khrushchev main-
tained, or in 1929 as Solzhenitsyn himself once thought, or in 1924, when Lenin died and the Trotskyist Opposition was broken up, or in 1922 when Stalin became the General Secretary of the Party. Yet all these years, and also others, marked political turning points that were extremely real and demand special analysis.

Obviously, there exists a continuity between the party which took power in October 1917 and that which governed the USSR in 1937, in 1947, in 1957, and in 1967 when Solzhenitsyn was completing ‘Gulag Archipelago’. But this continuity is not synonymous with identity. Stalin did not always follow in ‘footsteps made before him’. In the first years of the revolution he certainly did not always follow in Lenin’s footsteps; in fact, even then, with every step he led the party in another direction. Outer similarities marked very great inner divergences, and in some cases even polar opposites; and the road to these was in no way predetermined by an inevitable law of history. A deeper and more scientific analysis of the events discussed by Solzhenitsyn in his artistic investigation, will in the future incontrovertibly show that even within the framework of the relations between Party, State, and society created in Russia under Lenin, Stalin effected sharp turns and fundamental reversals, merely preserving the outward shell of so-called Leninist norms and the official vocabulary of Marxism-Leninism. Stalinism was in many respects the negation and bloody annihilation of Bolshevism and of all revolutionary forces in Russia: it was in a determinate sense a genuine counter-revolution. Of course, this does not mean that the Leninist period and heritage in the history of the Russian Revolution should be exempted from the most serious critical analysis.

It was not Solzhenitsyn’s purpose to study the phenomenon of Stalinism — its nature and specificity, its evolution and presuppositions. For Solzhenitsyn, the very concept of Stalinism is apparently non-existent, since Stalin merely ‘followed where footsteps made before him led’. In his book there is nothing which one might call an historical background.

The work begins with the chapter entitled ‘Arrest’ — a device wherewith the author stresses at the outset that he will investigate and describe only the world of the prisoners, the realm of the rejected, the secret and terr-

urable region of the archipelago, its geography, its structure, its social relations, its written and unwritten laws, its population, its manners, its customs, its potentates and subjects. In fact, Solzhenitsyn has no need of an historical background, for his Archipelago appears on the map already in 1918 and thereafter develops according to a kind of internal law of its own. This one-sidedness, occasion-ally offset by a few very profound remarks, dominates the whole volume. Solzhenitsyn is, of course, perfectly entitled to treat his subject in this way.

Paradoxically, however, without ever really speaking of Stalinism and even purporting to deny its legitimacy as a concept, Solzhenitsyn’s artistic investigation of one of the main sectors of the Stalinist regime, helps us to comprehend the whole criminal inhumanity of Stalinism as a system. Solzhenitsyn is not correct when he contends that this system has essentially survived to this day; but neither has it disappeared completely from our social, political, and cultural life. Solzhenitsyn has dealt a very heavy blow to Stalinism and neo-Stalinism with this book. None of us has done more in this respect than Solzhenitsyn.

SOLZHENITSYN AND LENIN

Even when he was a Komsomol, Solzhenitsyn had his doubts about the wisdom and honesty of Stalin. It was precisely these misgivings, expressed in one of his letters from the front, that led to his arrest and conviction. But at that time he still never doubted that ‘the great October Revolution was splendid and just, a victorious accomplishment of men animated by high purpose and self-sacrifice’. Today, Solzhenitsyn thinks otherwise, both about the October Revolution and about Lenin.

Here we shall deal with only two accusations, from among the great number that Solzhenitsyn now levels directly or indirectly against Lenin. Solzhenitsyn contends that in 1917 Lenin was determined to force Russia through a new ‘proletarian and socialist’ revolution, although neither Russia nor the Russian people needed such a revolution, or were ready for it. He also maintains that Lenin misused terrorist methods of struggle against his political opponents. It is, of course, easy to point to mistakes made by a revolutionary 50 years after the event. But the first socialist revolution was inevitably a leap into the unknown. There was no precedent for it,
by Vlassovite fire. But Solzhenitsyn does not simplify the problem of Vlassov’s troops and of similar formations in the fascist army.

Among the multiple waves of Stalinist repression, there were for many of us one that constituted our own special tragedy. For Tvardovsky, for instance, this was the destruction of the kulaks. His father, a poor and conscientious peasant, a former soldier in the Red Army, a defender of Soviet power, fell victim to it. He was deported to the Urals with his whole family. Only an accident saved his son: by that time he was already studying in an urban centre. This son was to become our great poet. But at that time Tvardovsky had to disown his father. He was to write about all this in his last poem ‘In the Name of Memory’.

For my own family, it was the repressions of 1937-8 that brought tragedy upon us, for the purges of those years struck especially at the commanders and commissars of the Red Army. My father, a divisional commander and lecturer at the Military Political Academy, was among those who were arrested and perished. Men like him were utterly devoted to the Soviet State, to the Bolshevik Party and to Socialism. They were romantic heroes to me as veterans of the Civil War, and I never believed that they were ‘enemies of the people’.

For Solzhenitsyn, it was not his own arrest that was a profound personal tragedy, but the cruel and terrible fate of the millions of Soviet prisoners of war, his contemporaries, sons of October, who had in June 1941 formed a substantial part of the cadres of our army. This army was routed and surrounded in the first days and weeks of the war because of Stalin’s criminal miscalculations, his inability to prepare either the army or the country for war, his desertion of his post in the first week of war, and his prior destruction of experienced commanders and commissars of whom there was now an acute shortage. About 3,000,000 soldiers and officers were taken prisoner in this debacle, and a further 1,000,000 subsequently captured in the ‘pincers’ at Vyazma, Kharkov, on the Kerch Peninsula and near Volkov. Stalin’s regime then betrayed these soldiers a second time by refusing to sign the international prisoners-of-war convention, depriving them of all Red Cross aid and condemning them to starvation in German concentration camps. Finally, Stalin once again betrayed those who survived; after victory, nearly all of them were arrested and sent to swell the population of Gulag Archipelago. Solzhenitsyn considers this terrible treason to its own troops to be the most odious single crime committed by the Stalinist regime—one unknown in the millennial annals of our nation. ‘It felt’, writes Solzhenitsyn, ‘that the story of these millions of Russian prisoners would transfix me for ever, like a pin through a beetle’.

Hardly one tenth of our prisoners joined Vlassov units, police sections, labor battalions, or ‘volunteered’ for auxiliary brigades of the Wehrmacht. Most of those who did, genuinely hoped to acquire food and clothing and then go over to the Soviet army or join the partisans. Such hopes soon proved illusory: the opportunities for crossing the lines were too small.

Solzhenitsyn does not justify and does not exalt these desperate and luckless men. But he pleads before the court of posterity the circumstances mitigating their responsibility. These youngsters were often not quite literate; the majority of them were peasants demoralised by the defeat; in captivity they were told that Stalin had disowned and vituperated them; they found that this was true; and they knew that what awaited them was hunger and death in German camps.

Of course, it is not possible to assent to everything Solzhenitsyn says. For example, I feel no sympathy for a certain Yuri E.—a Soviet officer who consciously and without the compulsion of hunger went over to the Nazis and became a German officer in charge of an Intelligence training centre. From Solzhenitsyn’s account, it is clear that this man returned to the Soviet Army only because of the complete rout of the Germans and not because he was drawn to his homeland; he banked on revealing ‘German secrets’, in other words securing a transfer from the German Intelligence to the Soviet MGB. The same figure was apparently also convinced that a new war between the USSR and the Allies would soon break out after the defeat of Germany, in which the Red Army would be swiftly defeated.

As for the violent battle which was fought near Prague between major Vlassovite units and German troops commanded by the SS
Of course, it can be pointed out that the first years of Soviet power were the time of the most desperate struggle of the Soviet Republic for its very survival. If Revolution and Soviet power were necessary, then they had to be defended against numerous and merciless foes; and this could not have been accomplished without revolutionary-military tribunals and the Cheka. But even bearing all this in mind, it is impossible to shut one’s eyes to the fact that many of the sentences meted out in ‘court’ and out of court were unjust or senselessly brutal, and that many extraneous, stupid and mal­evolent elements were active in the Cheka and in the tribunals. Krylenko soon became one of the main ‘directors’ of this repression, playing a role similar to that of the Jacobin tribune Couthon, who sent to the guillotine not only Royalists, but also simple old women of 70 and young girls of 18, revolutionaries discontented with Robespierre, and the eminent chemist Lavoisier (who requested time to complete an important series of experiments before his execution – ‘We do not need scientists’, replied Couthon).

Of course, Krylenko was not an isolated exception within the ranks of the Bolshev­iks. But neither were all the leaders of that party like him. Unfortunately, however, it is not only the most honest and courageous men of their time who become revolution­aries. A revolution, especially during its ascent, also attracts people who are resent­ful, vain, ambitious, self-seeking, men of cold hearts and unclean hands, as well as many stupid and obtuse fanatics capable of anything. But all this is no reason to condemn every revolution and every revolution­ary.

Something else has also to be considered. For the Russian revolutionaries, their great­est test proved to be neither imprisonment nor exile in Siberia, neither reckless attack under fire from White Guards’ machine­guns, nor hunger and cold, but power and especially the practically unlimited power of the first phase of the Soviet regime. It has long been known that power corrupts and depraves even some of the best of men. It must be admitted with sadness that very many Bolsheviks did not withstand the ord­inal of power. Long before their own destruction in the grinding machine of Stalinist per­secutions, the same people participated in many acts of cruel repression against others, which in most cases were unjust, gratuitous and harmful. But it in no way follows from this that these Bolsheviks were equally unjust or cruel, or insensitive to human suf­fering, before the Revolution – indeed that they had not been inspired by the best of motives and by the highest of aims and ideals.

Solzhenitsyn understands the corrupting influence of power. He describes with utter candour how, after a hard and hungry year as an ordinary private, deadened by drill and discipline, bullied by stripling officers, he forgot all this completely the moment he himself became a lieutenant and then a captain. He started to develop a deep mental gulf between himself and his subordinates; he understood less and less the heavy burdens of existence on the front; he saw himself more and more as a man of a different kind and caste. Without giving it a second thought, he availed himself of all the privileges accord­ed to officers, arrogantly addressed old and young alike, harassed his orderly, and was sometimes so harsh to his men that on one occasion an old colonel had to rebuke him during an inspection. Solzhenitsyn confesses: ‘From the officer’s epaulettes that decorated my shoulders for a mere two years, a poisons­ous golden dust filtered into the void between my ribs’. Moreover, Solzhenitsyn nearly became an officer in the NKVD itself: attempts were made to persuade him to enter the NKVD school and had further pressure been applied, he would have consented. Recalling his career as an officer, he makes the merci­less admission: ‘I thought of myself as a selfless and disinterested person. Yet I had meanwhile become a ready-made hangman. Had I gone to school in the NKVD under Yezhov, I would have been fully-fledged under Beria’.

If Solzhenitsyn changed so much during his two years as a junior officer, then what is likely to have happened to Krylenko – who in an even shorter period of time rose, so to speak, from ensign to supreme comm­and in the Russian army and then became President of the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal, Deputy Commissar for Justice and Chief Procurator of the RSFSR? Although Krylenko had finished two academic courses before the Revolution, so much accumulated power made him drunk and stupid beyond recognition.

‘It seems’, Solzhenitsyn writes, ‘that evil has its own threshold of magnitude too. A man may balance and toss between good and
evil all his life, slip down, let go, lift himself up again, repent, then fall into darkness once more -- but as long as he has not crossed a critical threshold of evil, he may yet redeem himself, there is still hope for him. But when the baseness of his misdeeds or the absolute-ness of his power reaches a certain point, he suddenly crosses that threshold, and then he abandons humanity. Perhaps then -- there is no return'.

'Let the reader who expects to find a political indictment here, close this book', writes Solzhenitsyn elsewhere. 'Oh, if everything were so simple! -- if somewhere there were dark men cunningly plotting dark deeds, and it were enough to uncover and destroy them. But the line that divides good from evil runs through every man's heart; and who would destroy part of his own heart? ... In the lifetime of one heart this line is always moving, now compressed by triumphant evil, now yielding space to awakening goodness. The very same man at different ages, in different situations, of his life is often a wholly different person.

At one moment, he may be near diabolic; at another near saintly. But his name does not change, and we attribute all his actions alike to it.' In this profound remark, we can perceive at least part of the explanation for the drama and fall of very many Bolsheviks, who were by no means the smallest of cogs in the early machinery of arbitrary rule, before they themselves became victims of Stalinist terror.

SOLZHENITSYN'S OWN PROPOSALS

But if power corrupts and depraves men, if politics is, as Solzhenitsyn believes, 'not even a form of science -- but an empirical field, which cannot be defined by mathematical formula, subject to human egoism and blind passion', if all professional politicians are no more than 'carbuncles on the neck of society preventing the free movement of its head and arms', then what should we strive for, how can we build a just human community?

Solzhenitsyn deals with these questions only incidentally, in parenthetic remarks, which are not explained or developed in detail. But it is clear from these brief comments that Solzhenitsyn considers the justest form of society to be one 'headed by people who are capable of rationally directing its activities'. For Solzhenitsyn, such people are in the first instance technicians and scientists (workers, in Solzhenitsyn's view, only as assistants to technicians in industry). But who would assume the moral leadership of such a society? His reflections make it clear that for him it is not a political doctrine, but only religion that can fulfill this moral function. Belief in God is the sole moral bulwark of humanity, and deeply religious people alone bore well -- better than all others -- the sufferings of Stalin's camps and prisons.

But such thoughts are a surrender to Utopia, and they are not even very original. Solzhenitsyn hits out violently against every sort of political falsehood. He rightly calls on Soviet people, and above all on Soviet youth, not to assist or collude with lies. But it is not enough only to convince people of the falsity of this or that political doctrine; it is also necessary to show them the truth elsewhere and to convince them of its real value. However, for the overwhelming majority of the Soviet population, religion does not and cannot any longer represent such a truth. The youth of this century are scarcely likely to be guided by faith in God. Indeed, without politics and political struggle, how could engineers and scientists ever undertake to direct the affairs of a society or its economy? Moreover, even if they succeeded, what would prevent such a society from becoming a dictatorship of technocrats? If religion were to gain moral dominance of society once more, would this not eventually reproduce the worst forms of theocracy?

Referring to the repressions of 1937, Solzhenitsyn writes: 'Perhaps 1937 was necessary, to prove how worthless was the world outlook, which they vaunted, while they tore Russia asunder, destroying her bulwarks and trampling her shrines'. Solzhenitsyn's allusions, as may readily be guessed, is to Marxism. But here he is mistaken. It was not Marxism that was responsible for the perversions of Stalinism, and the supersession of Stalinism will in no way mean the collapse of Marxism, or of scientific socialism. Solzhenitsyn is well aware of the fact, which he mentions on another page, that the two-hundred-year-old savagery of the Inquisition, with its burning and torturing of heretics, was eventually mitigated by, among other things, religious ideology itself.

To me, at any rate, Solzhenitsyn's ideals have very little appeal. I remain deeply con-
vinced that in the foreseeable future our society will have to be based on the unity of socialism and democracy, and that it is precisely the development of Marxism and scientific communism that alone can permit the creation of a just human community.

Technicians and researchers should have a greater say in our society than they enjoy today. But this in no way precludes a scientifically organised political system. Such a system would involve, in particular, abolition of all privileges for public leaders, a rational limitation of political power, self-administration wherever possible, increased jurisdiction for local authorities, separation of legislative executive and judicial powers, restriction of incumbency of political positions to limited periods of time, full freedom of thought and expression (including, of course, religious conviction and practice), liberty of organisation and assembly for representatives of all political currents, free elections and equal rights to put forward candidates for all political groups and parties, and so on. Only such a society, free from the exploitation of man by man and based on common ownership of the means of production, can ensure an unimpeded and comprehensive progress of all mankind, as well as of every individual.

So long as we have not achieved full socialist democracy in the USSR, the development of our country will continue to remain slow, partial and deformed, and spiritual giants like Solzhenitsyn will be rare. Before his arrest, Solzhenitsyn considered himself a Marxist. After the terrible experiences described with such implacable truth in 'Gulag Archipelago', Solzhenitsyn lost belief in Marxism. This is a matter of his conscience and his conviction. Every sincere change of belief deserves respect and understanding. Solzhenitsyn did not deceive or betray anybody. Today he is an opponent of Marxism, and does not hide the fact.

Marxism will not, of course, collapse through the loss of one of its former adherents. We believe, on the contrary, Marxism can only benefit from polemical debate with an opponent like Solzhenitsyn. It is obviously far better for Marxism to have adversaries like Solzhenitsyn than 'defenders' like Mikhalkov or Chakovsky.* A 'scientific' ideology which has to be imposed on people by sheer force or the threat of force is worthless. Fortunately, genuine scientific socialism has no need of such methods.

* Sergei Mikhalkov and Alexander Chakovsky: leading functionaries of the Soviet Writers' Union.
An important international political event of profound significance has just taken place at the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries in Georgetown, Guyana. The conference, reflecting the will of almost half the total number of countries in the world with an aggregate population of over one thousand million, focused its discussions and adopted many resolutions on questions relating to the struggle against colonialism and neo-colonialism, against the imperialists' wars of aggression, and for peace and national independence. It accepted as full members the delegation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and that of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia.

The Georgetown conference clearly is a conference of solidarity among nations, first of all the nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America struggling against US-led imperialism and colonialism. Since its first conference, held in September 1961, the movement of the non-aligned countries has witnessed new steps of development both in the number of its participants and the content of its activities. Starting with 25 countries, it now has a membership of 64 countries and 6 national-liberation movements. The voice of opposition to imperialism, colonialism is prevailing more and more over the wrong note, with the tide of national independence now surging in all continents.
The participation of representatives of the South Vietnamese resistance and those of the Cambodian resistance to the conference as titular members is an expression of the warm feelings of other nations toward the just struggles of the Indochinese peoples. It is a strong and precious support for our stand concerning a correct political solution to the problems of Viet Nam and the other countries of Indochina. This support is encouraging the three Indochinese peoples to persist in and step up their resistance against US aggression and for national salvation, till the complete triumph of this stand.

While US imperialism is using the "Nixon doctrine" and taking advantage of the détente among a number of countries to negate the RSVN Provisional Revolutionary Government and the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia, this event reflects the cordial feelings of the Third World nations toward the just patriotic struggle of the nations of Indochina. This recognition is an affirmation of the will of the Third World nations to take their destinies into their own hands and oppose all schemes by the US imperialists to settle international problems with certain countries in disregard of their interests and aspirations.

The movement of non-aligned countries representing the third force made its appearance after the formation in the world of two systems -- the socialist system and the capitalist system. The Third World is made up of those countries that have got rid of colonialist rule or are carrying on their struggle, to achieve full national independence. These countries have in fact become a great anti-imperialist force. The independence movement, developing incessantly, has become a trend of history, which together with two other trends -- the socialist trend and the peace and democratic trend -- forms a mighty revolutionary torrent which is shaking imperialism and colonialism to their very foundations. The storm of revolution is blowing in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The centre of this storm, as recognised in fact by the whole of mankind, lies in Viet Nam and the other countries on the Indochinese peninsula, which has been singled out by US imperialism -- the international gendarme, the enemy number one of all nations and the biggest exploiter and aggressor in the present-day world -- as the main focus of its efforts to check the national liberation movement and to test its various strategies of neo-colonialist war.

The victories of the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia and the defeats of the US aggressors are playing an important role in accelerating the movement of national liberation and the movement for peace and democracy, helping to ensure the security of the socialist countries, and weakening US imperialism.

Because of its position and character, the patriotic struggle of the Indochinese countries has won the sympathy and support of the socialist countries, the working class in various countries, the peace - independence - and freedom-loving nations, and progressive mankind.

In the global strategy US imperialism has been pursuing since the end of World War Two, neo-colonialism forms an important part. US imperialism schemes to replace the old-type colonialism practised by the other imperialist countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America by its own neo-colonialism, and to turn these vast regions of the world into the rear area of the US, a spring-board and a ring to encircle, contain and attack the socialist countries. This strategy of the US, however, is an anachronism born at a time when deep changes have taken place in the world: the socialist system has become the factor that decides the trend of development of human society: imperialism and colonialism, condemned by history, is in a process of crisis and disintegration; and the enslaved nations have risen up to win back the right to live in independence and freedom.

As the political representative of the American military-industrial complex, the Nixon clique, the most reactionary and warlike clique of all headed by Nixon, is carrying out a new global strategy called the "Nixon doctrine". This strategy aims at using a policy of equilibrium of forces among the big powers and of division of the socialist countries, starting from their main elements, as a shield which would give US imperialism complete freedom of action in checking, by means of violence, the national liberation movement, first of all in hurling back the patriotic struggle of the nations on the Indochinese peninsula. The offensive and uprising that has been going on without interruption in South Viet Nam since March 30 is breaking the backbone and washing away big chunks of the "Vietnamisation" strategy. The aggressors have had to hurriedly re-Americanise the war by throwing in huge American air-naval forces, going far beyond the limits of
a war fought according to the “Nixon doctrine”. These great material and technological forces and the unprecedented barbarities of the US, however, have failed to stop the heroic fight of the armed forces and people in both zones of Viet Nam. Nor can it check the valiant struggle of the resistance forces in Laos and Cambodia. The complete defeat of the US aggressors is inevitable.

The independence movement continues to rise in various countries while Nixon is leaving no stone unturned to contain it. We have witnessed, in recent years, the emergence of many independent countries: Bangla Desh, Sri Lanka, and many others which swell the ranks of the free nations. The Georgetown conference, held in the neighbourhood of the United States, is a reflection of this new situation. This conference clearly embodies a new trend of the time: the small nations are standing up to shape their own destinies in defiance of all sinister schemes by the imperialists and all manifestations of rightist opportunism and unprincipled compromise.

The victory of the national liberation movement and of the Georgetown conference means indeed the failure of the “Nixon doctrine”. This victory should serve as a severe warning to those who are departing from the great, invincible revolutionary thoughts of the time, and are pitifully mired on the dark and muddy road of unprincipled compromise.

What is the fundamental situation in the world today? Are the revolutionary forces repelling imperialism or is the latter ruling the roost? Is the world revolution on the upswing or is it receding? What force is deciding the trend of development of history? Who is the main foe of the world revolution? On which side is revolution and which side counter-revolution? The answers to those fundamental questions used to be quite simple, but now unhealthy trends have thrown everything into confusion and the crafty imperialists have also interfered to blur the line between right and wrong, between black and white.

For the Vietnamese people and revolutionaries who are fighting on the frontline of the struggle against US aggression, for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism, to clarify the above problems takes on important significance in both theory and practice.
free hand to consolidate their forces, oppose the revolutionary movement in the world, repress the revolution in their own countries, bully the small countries and stamp out the national liberation movement while never giving up their preparations for a new world war.

With regard to the socialist countries, the defence of peace and peaceful co-existence cannot be dissociated from the movement for independence, democracy and socialism in the world. For a country to care for its immediate and narrow interests while shirking its lofty internationalist duties not only is detrimental to the revolutionary movement in the world, but will also bring unfathomable harm to itself in the end. The vitality of marxism-leninism and proletarian internationalism manifests itself in revolutionary deeds, not in empty words. In the present-day world we can find many examples proving that very seldom do genuine national interests clash with the overall interest of world revolution. A principled policy of detente with imperialistic countries must aim at consolidating and strengthening the revolutionary forces, isolating and divinding the class enemy, and aiming the spearhead of the revolutionary forces at the leading imperialist warmongers. To achieve detente in certain concrete conditions in order to push forward the offensive of the revolutionary forces is correct; but in order to serve one's narrow national interests, one is to help the most reactionary forces stave off dangerous blows, one is indeed throwing a life-buoy to a drowning pirate: this is a harmful compromise advantageous to the enemy, and disadvantageous to the revolution.

The struggle aimed at solving this question: "which will win -- socialism or capitalism" in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale is long, difficult and complex, diverse in form and content and in concrete steps. This is a struggle that is both violent and non-violent, one that is at the same time military, political, economic and ideological. The revolutionary waves that are surging up are precisely parts of the process of development of this transitional period. To defend peace, prevent a world war and without yielding on questions of principle, accept those indispensable compromises aimed at increasing the masses' revolutionary potentialities -- such is a truly revolutionary policy.

We hold that the consolidation and strengthening of the socialist forces is an important historical task. In the world, a great many countries still have to bring their liberation struggle to completion and hundreds of millions of workers must still be freed from servitude.

The existence and development of the world socialist system is the factor deciding the trend of development of history; but this trend can only materialise through the unrelenting revolutionary struggle of thousands of millions of people.

Revolution in any one country is part and parcel of the world revolution and the revolutions in various countries impel and support one another.

The triumph of the revolution in one country does not mean the end but is only the beginning of the thousand-league road leading to world communism. Socialism and communism are a thousand times finer than feudalism and capitalism. Proletarian internationalism towers above bourgeois nationalism and national egoism. The revolution is a path strewn with fragrant flowers. Opportunism is a fetid quagmire. We communists must persevere in the revolution and not compromise with our adversaries. Led by our Party, our people have been fighting for decades, successively opposing three truculent imperialisms and their reactionary lackeys. Hundreds of thousands of our comrades and fellow-countrymen have laid down their lives for national independence and freedom, for the emancipation of the working class and of the oppressed peoples in the world. We firmly maintain our marxist-leninist stand, which is also that of patriotism and proletarian internationalism. We fight perseveringly, unyielding and uncompromisingly. The battles now going on in Quang Tri province stand out as a new epic. Our people in both the South and the North are fighting with miraculous strength. The awesome air and naval power of the US imperialists has failed to get the better of our people; on the contrary their aggressive will is being crushed by the latter's strength.

We are resolved to persist in our revolutionary effort in order to build a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic and prosperous Viet Nam.
The Italian nation came out of the First World war in dire economic straits. In 1915 the country was still backward industrially, agricultural production was still all-important to the economy, and it had been ill-prepared for the enormous expense of fighting a war. During the war years, state expenditure had risen enormously from 2,287 million to 30,857 million lire per annum. Simultaneously, the mobilisation of vast numbers of peasants had resulted in drastic falls in agricultural production and consequently in national income from that important sector. In 1915-19, the grain crop had fallen from 52 to 46 million quintals; the maize crop from 25 to 22 million quintals, and the beet sugar crop from 21 to 15 million quintals. (1) In 1919 the result was, as one post-war prime minister, Giolitti, put it, that “the public debt had risen from 13 to 94 billions”, and there was an annual deficit of four thousand million lire. (2) If immediate steps of extreme urgency were not taken, this would conduct the country to ruination. He concluded that the Italians would have to pay their debts themselves, or make their country ever-more indebted to countries like the United States.

Most Italians had suffered economically from the war. The rapid increase in State expenditure had created corresponding inflation. While their money bought less, the cost of living index had risen from 100 in 1914 to 248 in 1918. (3) Wages had not risen commensurately. Even what money there was did not mean corresponding

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This is the first instalment of a two-part article which will be concluded in our next issue. Formerly at Monash University, Alastair Davidson has this year been lecturing in France and the United States.
food to buy, and on occasions the staple, bread and pasta, ran out completely. (4) The result was a populace made poorer by the war and less in a position to pay any national debts than it had been in 1915.

The working class had been subjected to martial discipline in the factories during the war to ensure that production was unimpaired. In cities like Turin, this meant that a traditionally militant working class was obliged to forego practically all its claims for improvements in its conditions precisely at a time when they were most needed to offset increases in prices. Strikes were illegal and the unions, who were led by reformists, many of whom favoured the war effort, could do little to defend the workers' interests. Even organisations like the metalworkers' commissioni interne (shop committees) feared to protest about conditions to the military delegates who ran the factories, as the slightest suggestion of independence could mean the withdrawal of a man from inclusion on the list of reserved occupations, and dispatch to the front. (5) The result was a working class boiling with resentment, which sometimes exploded in rebellion, when, for example, the bread ran out in Turin in August 1917. Like Gramsci, the workers believed that the bourgeoisie was responsible for the war and the miseries it had brought them to and was determined that it would pay. (6) In Turin, in particular, it was very militant, and the local authorities were fearful that its resentment would spill over into rebellion.

The only class in the community which had benefited from the war had been the capitalist class, both in banking and industry. There had been a hothouse growth in industry because of the need for war material. The production of cars had gone from 9,200 units in 1914 to 20,000 in 1918 and the production of aeroplanes from 606 in 1915 to 14,820 in 1918. The profits in the automobile industry had increased from 8.20 per cent to 30.51 per cent in two years and the value of fixed capital from 17 million lire in 1914 to 200 million in 1919. (7) Vast fortunes had been made in industry, and much had been made by the speculation of war profiteers, the pesce cani, whom Gramsci attacked so often in 'Sotto la Mole' in 1916-7. To extend and consolidate their interests, the capitalist class had strengthened the links between themselves and engaged in mergers throughout the war. But they too faced the post-war period ill-prepared to pay national debts. Their plant was old and out-of-date, and it had to be reconverted to peace-time production, profits were bound to fall, and the industries which could not survive except in the hot-house conditions of war would have to be scrapped. To modernise, the capitalists needed huge investments of capital. The steel and heavy machine industries were particularly affected by this problem. (8) None were prepared to tolerate industrial trouble. So, while the attitude of the government was that Italy should pay her debts herself, the mass of the people could not, and would not, do so, and the capitalist class would not do so.

In the last year of the war, the commissioni interne had become the primary organisation through which the Turin metal workers expressed their resentment at the conditions the 'capitalists' war had brought them to. In April 1918, it was agreed by the FIOM and the Automobile Consortium that the commissione interne would decide disputes over piece-work rates in certain cases, and the leaders of the factory organisations spoke together with the union leaders to explain this to the masses. (9) In November 1918, Emilio Colombino, a leading Turin trade unionist, stated to the National Conference of the FIOM that the commissione interna had a leading role to play in defending workers' interests. (10) As soon as the war was ended the FIOM secured the owners' acceptance of the right of the commissione interna to exist in all metallurgical works. The commissione themselves considered the owners' proposals before FIOM accepted them. In March 1919, the agreement was implemented throughout the industry.

At the beginning of 1918, these commissione were little different from the collaborationist organisations which they had been before the war, when the owners used them to resolve labor disputes in the interests of maintaining production, and the union leaders looked on them as transmission belts keeping them in touch first with the organised workers, and then with the unorganised. The union leaders selected their members from among union members only. (11) On the whole, both sides, capitalist and unionist, saw them as a means of smoothing over difficulties of a minor nature, and regarded matters of substance as something to be decided at a higher level in negotiations between their respective bureaucracies.
What must be grasped is that the nature of the commissione interna was changing throughout 1918 as a result of the real pressures placed on the working class economically and socially, and because of the inability of their own union leaders to defend their interests successfully. This change implied a critique of traditional trade union methods including the role in the movement of the grass roots workers’ organisations and of the existing trade union leadership.

The union leaders’ attitude towards the masses was summed up in a speech made by Bruno Buozzi in 1916 in which he stated that the trade union organiser “must see higher and further than the masses” and sometimes use any means to get the masses to do what they did not want. (12) It was innately elitist, dividing the trade union movement into those who were capable of knowing the true interests of the workers and those who were not. It had as a corollary a bitter resentment of any attempt to poach on its preserves, or to challenge its methods. (13).

Their elitism was reflected in the lack of popular participation in the central organisations of the labor movement.

“A tiny minority of members take part in the life of the Leagues and Camera del Lavoro; the majority is regularly absent, though this does not preclude its intervening at decisive moment with a vote which displays a lack of thought .... of men who are not responsible for their acts ....... The leaders acquire an authority and importance which they should not have according to the egalitarian and essentially democratic spirit of those organisations. The leaders make decisions, much, much too often, when they should be purely and simply executive and administrative officers.” wrote Gramsci in October 1918. (14)

The oligarchy of trade union leaders was quite complacent about this state of affairs. In February 1918, at a local union conference, Emilio Colombino complimented himself and his fellow reformists with a report about the good relationships the FIOM had maintained with the bosses in the factories and remarked upon the favourable financial balance of the union.

The militants from the factories did not feel the same. After hearing Colombino’s speech, Maurizio Garino, an anarchist of long standing and a member of the “rigids” attacked the report of Colombino which was, according to him, too mild, stating that it was time to finish with the bourgeoisie, with the industrialists, and that the moment was right to act revolutionarily.”

The union leaders’ reply was to hold a tiny assembly, as was common, and replaced the “rigids” by a firmly reformist leadership comprised of Bruno Buozzi, Mario Guarneri, Gino Castagno and Alessandro Uberti. The rigids, Garino, Fassone, Boero and Parodi, were in a tiny minority for the rest of the year. (15)

As far as the reformists were concerned, they were proud of their reformism, like Buozzi, who stated late in 1918: “I am not ashamed of being a reformist -- nor a coward about it -- I’ve never hid it”, (16) and they saw the commissione interna in a reformist fashion, as an organisation to be run from the top by them. They were not going to have anarchists and syndicalists challenge their line. They represented the workers and that was that. Throughout 1918 they frustrated several efforts of the “rigids” and their anarchist and syndicalist allies to make a comeback in the FIOM.

They thus placed themselves completely out of touch with a workforce which agreed less and less with their conception of the commissioni. Symptomatic of the workers’ new attitude, which was represented best by the ignored minority on the FIOM executive in Turin, were the letters which started to be published in ‘Avanti’ in September 1918. Workers at the Farina coach builders asked: “Should the commissioni interne represent the working class or the union”, and the members of the commissione replied: “We represent the masses in the Farina plant and the union does not, because we were nominated by the masses and the union was not.” (18)
By the beginning of 1919 the union leaders were thus facing a democratic upsurge which challenged their traditional mode of rule. If they were aware of it, they dismissed it as the masses not knowing their best interests. In a vague and inarticulate fashion, the workers were groping towards a notion in which the commissioni, as the organisations which had best survived the war, and which had parallels throughout Europe and in the Soviets in Russia, whose revolution they applauded, could be used to impose their will on the employers. (19)

Some, like Giovanni Boero, drew strength from the commitment of the PSI in December 1918 to the bolsheviks’ methods and saw the commissioni as potentially revolutionary organs. In March 1919, he wrote to ‘Avanti’ asking with characteristic blunt fervour how the hell the PSI was implementing its commitment to make a revolution and suggesting that it concentrate on developing councils of workers, peasants and soldiers, and stop wasting money on electoral campaigns. (20) At this time few would have shared his advanced views. Most were concerned with obtaining a decent wage after several years when wages had fallen behind price rises.

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Gramsci was a stranger to these concerns of the humble and the meek and had been regarded as a maverick by the working class leaders since his faux pas in supporting Mussolini in 1914. He, too, cordially hated some of the “rigids” for the way they had treated him in 1914-15. (21)

However, he was not blind to the implications of the last year of the war and early 1919. His understanding of the October revolution led him to contemplate with interest what was going on in the factories, both outside and inside Italy.

In the article ‘Utopia Russia’ which he published in July 1918, he pointed out that the “war was the economic fact, the practical reality of life which determined the emergence of the new (Soviet) State, which had made the dictatorship of the proletariat necessary”, because on the one hand it had concentrated power in the hands of a tiny minority, and, on the other, it had created a sense of solidarity among vast numbers of people against that minority which would not have occurred in peasant countries without the war. (22) Before the year was out he was writing in almost exactly the same terms about the effects of the war on his own country. In November he wrote:

“Four years of war have rapidly changed the economic and spiritual ambient. Huge work-forces have suddenly sprung up, and the violence innate in the relations between wage-earners and owners appears so striking that it is recognised by even the dimmest minds .... The growth of industry has been made miraculous by this saturation of class violence. But the bourgeoisie has not been able to avoid offering the exploited a terrible practical lesson in revolutionary socialism. A new class consciousness has arisen: not only in the workshop, but in the trenches which has many conditions in common with that of the workshop .... The proletarian movement must absorb this mass ... must educate each individual who composes it to become permanently and organically united with his fellows.” (23)

To this speculation that the war compelled the establishment of a new state power, Gramsci added a renewed interest in the role of spontaneous workers’ organisations, stimulated by both the example of the Russian Soviets and the development of similar organisations elsewhere in Europe. His passing interest in these institutions dated back before the war, when he and Togliatti had started to collect material on their history and development. (24) In either 1916 or 1917, he asked Togliatti to start collecting material on the English shop stewards and on the theories of Daniel de Leon. (25) When the Industrial Workers of the World ‘Liberator’ appeared in March 1918 he started reading it both for the accounts of the Bolshevik revolution and its leaders and for the extensive material on the de Leonite IWW. De Leon became of particular interest to him. (26) He also became au fait with the developments of the
shop stewards committees in the English trade union movement, publishing a long article on their evolution in ‘Il Grido del Popolo’ on 27 April 1918. To this article he appended the decisions of the November 1916 Leeds’ conference of shop stewards’ committees. He indicated in this article how he understood the import of these committees in England. They were necessary for the class struggle at a specific conjuncture; and implied that “the working class must win complete control over production to defend its interests, and must eliminate capital” and they would be the organs of socialist control after the revolution. They were a progression beyond the trade union, which was characterised by an absolute centralised bureaucracy, and which was corporativist in its practice and traditional and conservative. (27)

He put together his items of information in a proposal in March 1919:

“We have seen that the Workers’ Councils are the best organisation; the most sure guarantee of progress towards socialism and its realisation. Well, let us create our own workers’ councils, let us create our own Soviets, in the limits allowed to us.”

One of his followers, casting his attention around at the “limits” in the article entitled “The Dawn of Ordine Nuovo”, (28) concluded that the existing union organisations were too bureaucratised to be much use, while on the other hand, the commissioni interne which had just been extended to all metal works in Turin, offered possibilities.

In the same month, Gramsci and his friends, including Togliatti, Terracini and Tasca, who had returned from the war, started to hold meetings aimed at the formation of a new paper. Gramsci recalled “The sole feeling which united us, in our meetings, was a vague passion for a vague proletarian culture”, but his other accounts indicate that there was already some other basis for unity with the workers who attended the meetings. (29) Tasca and Gramsci were both still in the thrall of the elitist cultural policies they had held in earlier years and Gramsci was, without doubt, still influenced by “croceanism”. Doubtless, both Togliatti and Terracini were dominated by Gramsci, because he was now so important in the Turin section of the Socialist Party while they had been hors de combat for some years. But, it is a mistake to think that the relationship between Gramsci and Tasca was what was significant. Rather it was his relationship with the workers whom he had got to know since 1916 and who put him in touch with the working class reality and the men who had tenuous contacts with bolshevism, for which he was so enthusiastic.

Aron Wizner, a Polish refugee, a revolutionary socialist of working class extraction, who used to write about Russian and Polish events for ‘Il Grido del Popolo’ in 1918 under the pseudonyms Ez-Dek and Murzyn, had asked one of the people who attended the preliminary meetings of the newspaper why there had been no congress of the commissioni interne in Italy. When a technician suggested that one of the matters the newspaper should study was “the organisation of the factory as a means of production and we must work to make the working class and the party concentrate on that object”, concluding that they should seek to discover whether the Soviets had parallels in Italy, Wizner’s interlocutor remembered the question and replied: “Yes, in Turin there exists the germ of a workers’ government, of the Soviet, it is the commissione interna; let’s study this working class institution, let’s have an enquiry, and let’s study the capitalist factory, too, but not as an organisation for material production in order to have a specialised knowledge which we don’t have; let’s study the capitalist factory as something the worker needs, as a political organisation, as the ‘national territory’ of workers’ self-government.” (30).

Real concerns were impinging on the idealist schemes of the four leaders. Not until after the paper ‘Ordine Nuovo’ first saw the light of day on May 1 did they become dominant. Tasca, who had found the 6000 lire to finance it, and naturally had some influence, pooh-poohed the suggestion that they concentrate on the factory councils and filled the newspaper with his articles.
and editorials of a cultural nature. Gramsci later described it as "...nothing but a rag-bag anthology — a collection of abstract cultural items and a strong leaning towards nasty stories and well-intentioned woodcuts." (31)

He and Togliatti, in daily contact with the "rigid" leaders in factories, began to believe that this propaganda of Tasca's was futile and together with Terracini plotted an editorial coup d'état. This took the form of publishing the article 'Democrazia operaia on 21 June 1919 without Tasca having any knowledge of it in advance. After that date, Gramsci and Togliatti replaced Tasca as the editors of the journal and by the end of the year Tasca had virtually withdrawn from the journal. (32) The contents alone reveal why a single article represented an editorial coup d'état.

It asked:

"How can the immense social forces loosed by the war be dominated? How can they be disciplined and given a political form which has the virtue of developing normally, of continually integrating itself, until it becomes the skeleton of a socialist state in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is incarnate?

"This article is intended as a stimulus to thought and action; as an invitation to the best and most conscious workers to reflect upon this problem, and, each in his own sphere of competency and action, to collaborate in solving it, making their comrades and their associations concentrate their attention upon it. Only through this common, solid work of clarification, persuasion and reciprocal education will be born the concrete action of construction."

The article claimed that the socialist state already existed potentially in the social institutions of the proletariat, and that a true workers' democracy could be counterposed to the bourgeois state if these institutions were organised hierarchically and centrally. This democracy would then be ready to take over from the bourgeoisie.

Socialists should therefore work directly in the "centres of proletarian life": the workshops with their commissioni interne, the socialist clubs, and the peasant communities.

The main aim should be to free the commissioni interne from the limitations imposed on them by the employers, to give them new life and energy because they were already limiting capitalist power in the factories -- "Developed and enriched, tomorrow they will become the organs of the proletarian power which replaces capitalism in all its useful functions of administration and leadership .......

The first step was to organise a congress of the most advanced and class-conscious workers with the slogan: "All power in the workshop to the workshop committees": to which should be linked another slogan: "All state power to the workers' and peasants' Councils."

The socialist clubs should become the coordinating centres for the factory councils in each area, and be composed of elected delegates from all industries in the area. Thus, the area committees of the workers would become the "emanation of the whole working class" and as such able to assume the power spontaneously entrusted to them, to maintain discipline, and, consequently, to bring all work in their area to a halt.

These area committees would grow into city-wide organisations, which would be controlled and disciplined by the PSI and the trade union federations.

Such a system of workers' democracy would be a tremendous educational force, teaching the workers to think of themselves as a homogeneous group capable of political and administrative leadership. Meeting continually, the workers would elect all their leaders and exert influence on their more backward comrades "causing a radical transformation in working class psychology, making the working class better prepared to exercise power, and, through spontaneously generated common historical experience, spreading an awareness of the rights and duties of comrades and workers."

Concrete practical problems would only be solved in practice: "the dictatorship of the proletariat should stop being a mere phrase", the means to attaining it should be actively implemented.
"The dictatorship of the proletariat is the creation of a new state, which is typically proletarian, in which the institutional experiences of the oppressed class flow together, in which the social life of the working and peasant classes become strongly organised and widespread. This state does not pop up by magic: the Bolsheviks worked for eight months to spread and make their slogans concrete: all power to the Soviets, and the Soviets were already known to the Russian workers in 1905. Italian communists must treasure the Russian experience and save on time and labor: the work of reconstruction will alone demand so much time and work that every act, every day must be directed towards it."

While Gramsci specifically indicated that these new organisations were not intended to replace the traditional organisations, and, on the contrary, gave the latter pride of place in the movement, as the "educators", the "focus of faith", the "depository of doctrine and the supreme power", his novel proposals implicitly attacked the PSI and the unions as they were, and explicitly postponed their leading role to a later time, claiming that they could not afford to open their doors immediately to an "invasion of new members who are unaccustomed to the exercise of power and discipline." (33)

In the context of the Turin labor movement, his proposals could only be seen as an attack on what trade unionism was. Both Tasca, long associated with the trade unions, and the reformist leaders, must have seen the article in terms of the speech Gramsci had given only days earlier at the Assembly of the Turin section of the Socialist Party. He had then urged the local socialists to give up their past stupidity and concentrate on direct power; to learn from the Russian and Hungarian revolutions and from "the revolutionary experience of the English and American working class masses who, through the practice of their factory councils, have begun that education in revolution and that change in psychology, which according to Karl Marx, must be considered the greatest symptom of the incipient realisation of communism." (34)

Always fearful of a challenge to their authority, the reformists replied with accusations that developing the commissioni interne would split the ranks of the proletariat, and suggested that it was a "revolutionary-syndicalist" deviation. Despite Gramsci's reply that they would in fact give a stronger basis to unionism and the PSI, the Turin labor leaders saw its implicit critique of their practice and started the opposition which compelled Gramsci down a path of ever increasing intransigency. On the other hand, Tasca, who had hoped that the 'Ordine Nuovo' would work with the unions, could not avoid seeing the critique of his position in 'Democrazia operaia', and tacitly acknowledged the editorial coup d'état. (35)

So the new line of Gramsci, his friends, and 'Ordine Nuovo' at one and the same time brought them into alliance with the workers in the factories and into opposition to the traditional methods of the union and socialist movement. Among the first and most ardent of the supporters of Gramsci's theories was Giovanni Parodi, who had known Gramsci for some time, and was on the "rigid" minority in the FIOM. (36) Parodi organised the first factory meetings after verbal propaganda and started to spread the ideas of 'Democrazia operaia', bringing Gramsci and his friends to give a series of lectures on the factory floor. (37) In this ceaseless contact with the workers, and in the mutual exchange of education, lay the secret of Gramsci's success. Years later he wrote to Togliatti that he had succeeded in linking his position with that of the workers by "never taking action without first sounding out the opinion of the worker in various ways ..... so that our actions always had an almost immediate and wide success, and seemed like the interpretation of a diffuse deeply felt need, never as the cold application of an intellectual scheme." (38) Sometimes he would speak three times in an afternoon, and his staunch followers from the Youth Federation emulated him. (39) Parodi said simply that he completely "proletarianised" himself. (40) On the other hand, the union officials, faced by a cadres' crisis due to the huge growth in union members during the war, unused to consulting the democratic mass, and preferring to play a "double game" through their inefficient corporals, lost contact and control.

'Ordine Nuovo' and its followers found an increasingly militant workforce in which to evolve its ideas. The cost of living continued to rocket upwards in 1919, going from 248 to 300.6 from the 1914 base of 100. At the same time, unemployment figures rose as demobilised soldiers returned and
hot-house industry collapsed. There were two million unemployed in November 1919. Starvation threatened thousands and bread queues were matched by unemployed queues. The workers had started striking again to make up ground lost during the war and the need to defend themselves compelled them to continue. Strikes in 1919 totalled 1663 in industry and 208 in agriculture. Clashes between strikers and the police were frequent. When some workers were killed in a clash in Milan, the PSI conducted a general strike in April. This was accompanied and followed by a strike of the technicians employed in the metal-working industry, and a general lock-out throughout Turin which put 30,000 workers out of work. Such efforts by the employers to create dissension among the working class by penalising the whole workforce in the industry for the strike action of 3000 proved a total failure. Faced by common problems, solidarity was spreading among the workers. This strike was followed in June and July by riots throughout Italy against the cost of living. In Emilia and Romagna, improvised soviets arose as a result of these riots. In Tuscany and the Marches one could speak of a real popular insurrection. The PSI proposed a further general strike for 20-21 July, after meeting with other European labor parties in England. (41)

While the wave of unrest died down temporarily in other parts of Italy after June, in Turin the struggle did not let up. In August-September, the Turin workforce were again on strike “after long months of patient and exasperating negotiations between the Federation and the owners resulted in no improvement in workers’ conditions”, while prices zoomed upwards. (42)

The unrest was spontaneous and usually directed to attaining immediate improvement in economic conditions. It did, however, take on political dimensions of greater and greater import. The Italian political leaders showed no sign of giving Italy the political leadership the country needed. Orlando made a miserable and Italianate hash of affairs at Versailles, returning with a humiliating peace. The bulk of soldiers felt that they had been fighting for nothing. Rumours of a right-wing coup to save the nation spread, and the first fascist outrages started.

The desire among the workers to resolve their difficulties by following the Russian example showed more and more clearly as they flocked into the PSI, which had stated that it would introduce a dictatorship of the proletariat in Italy. Union membership rose from 32,000 in 1914 to 2,300,000 in 1919, and PSI membership from 50,000 to 200,000. In Turin, the membership of the FIOM reached over 20,000 in 1919 and the Camera del Lavoro had 90,000 members in early 1920. Local socialist party membership tripled in 1919. (43)

Despite this remarkable increase in organised militancy, both in Italy and Turin, the bulk of the increasingly militant workforce was unorganised. It was to these unorganised workers that Gramsci’s program first appealed, precisely because he laid down none of the exclusive demands that the union leaders did that all members of the commissioni interne be enrolled union members. He met some opposition at grass roots level, and bitter opposition in the bureaucracy among the organised socialists, except in some factories where he and his followers already had an advantage because of their contacts with the “rigids”, like Parodi, Boero and Garino. Parodi, who was very popular and respected by both the workers and employers for his integrity, was most important to Gramsci despite his lack of culture. One worker recalled him as “the heart” of the movement for factory councils, while Gramsci was “the brains”. (44) Parodi put Gramsci in touch with the organised workers in Fiat, where he worked.

Some of the fundamental themes emerging were:

1) Capitalism tended to atomise the working class, who sold themselves as commodities on the labor market, creating “citizen-individuals” and destroying all the “collective links” which constituted society. Under capitalism all men, and particularly wage-earners were terribly alienated from each other: “Every citizen is a gladiator, who sees in others enemies to be destroyed or to be subjugated to his will. All the higher links of solidarity and love are dissolved, from the artisans’ corporations and classes to religion and the family. Competition is installed as the practical foundation of human association: the citizen-individual is the cell of the social nebula, an uneasy and inorganic element which belongs to no organism”. It was precisely on this lack of social cohesion and disunity and uneasiness that the concept of the sovereignty of the law, a purely abstract concept, rested, as a
potential deception of popular innocence and good faith. This sovereignty of the law was an anti-social concept "because it envisages the 'citizen' as eternally at war with the State", and saw men as the eternal unrelenting enemies of the State, which is "the living plastic body of society", and thus saw men as the enemies of themselves.

2) This whole tendency was counter-vened by the workers' tendency to organise, which was itself "the reaction of society which seeks to recompose itself as a solid harmonious organ, sustained by love and compassion". The workers spontaneously opposed the "comrade" to capitalism's "citizen", and expressed this in organised form. On the basis of these organisations "begins the process of historical development which leads to communism". Therefore "associating men together can and must be assumed to be the essential fact of the proletarian revolution".

3) During the war, and especially in the post-war period, the real naked class oppression disguised by the rule of law had become obvious to all, as the State had emerged as "arbiter of all our destinies", and correspondingly, the huge, solid mass of workers had found new forms to express their need to realise themselves as social beings, and to supplant the trade unions which they had evolved earlier as the expression of the working class conceived of as "a function of capitalist free enterprise", determined from outside the working class rather than from within it, and subject to the laws of the outsiders.

4) The emergence of these new organisations showed the inadequacies of both trade unionism and the Socialist Party itself. Both had accepted the terms of the capitalist state rather than acted antithetically to it. Socialists had "let themselves be absorbed by reality rather than dominated it". They had "believed in the perpetuity of the institutions of the democratic state, in their fundamental perfection". So the "traditional institutions of the movement had become incapable of expressing the exuberant growth of revolutionary vitality", which Italy and the world was demonstrating.

"We are convinced after the revolutionary experience of Russia, Hungary and Germany, that the socialist state cannot continue the forms of the capitalist state, but is a creation which is fundamentally new with respect to these, if not with respect to the history of the proletariat."

This was not an augury, or a prediction, since history was not 'predictable', but, following the 'maieutic' method, it meant working through new organisations which expressed real needs to grasp possibilities; in particular, working through the organisations which tended to replace the capitalist in the administration of industry and thus to make the producer truly autonomous.

"Never has there been a more fervent drive and revolutionary enthusiasm in the proletariat of Western Europe, but, it seems to us that a lucid and exact awareness of ends desired has not been accompanied by an equivalently lucid and exact awareness of the means suitable to attaining that end. The masses are now convinced that the proletarian state is incarnated in a system of workers', peasants' and soldiers' councils. We have not yet formed a tactical conception which can objectively ensure the creation of that state. It is therefore necessary right now to create a net of proletarian institutions, rooted in the consciousness of the great mass..... It is certain that today, in present conditions of proletarian organisation, if a mass movement of a revolutionary nature took place, the results would be a purely formal correction of the democratic state and would end in increasing the power of the House of Deputies (through a Constituent Assembly) and in the assumption of power by bungling anti-communist socialists. The German and Austrian experience should teach us something. The forces of the democratic state and the capitalist class are still immense: we need not hide that capitalism is sustained especially by the work of its sycophants and its lackeys, and the progeny of that genius has not yet disappeared.

The creation of the proletarian state is not, in sum, a thaumaturgic act: it too is a construction, a process of development. It presupposes a preparatory work of propaganda and organisation. We must give the greatest power and the greatest development to the proletarian organisations which
already exist in the factories and see to it that others emerge in the villages, and ensure that the men who make them up are communists aware of the revolutionary mission that the institutions must fulfil. Otherwise all our efforts, all the faith of the masses will not succeed in preventing the revolution ending miserably in a new rogues’ parliament of irresponsible ninnies, and making necessary new and more terrible sacrifices for the advent of the proletarian state.”

As the theoretical expression of workers’ needs and desires, these proposals did not call for an immediate revolution, but emphasised that the first steps in organising for that end be taken. No blueprints were laid down for the future, and it was specifically stated that problems would be resolved by the workers as they came to them. As such, their appeal was much wider than to the communists whom Gramsci hoped would eventually become the leaders in the councils.

FOOTNOTES

5. This information is based on a manuscript written by Tasca and republished in Berti, op.cit., p.47; see also Piero Gobetti, “Le commissioni interne”, ‘La Rivoluzione liberale’, IV, No. 22, 20 September, 1925, p. 134.
13. Tasca in Berti, p. 46.
19. Factory councils were a phenomenon common to most of Europe after 1916. Richard Muller, in “Comment naquirent les conseils revolutionnaires d’Usine”, 1 July 1921 explained the origins of the Berlin workers councils in 1916-18 as the “result of the economic repercussions of the war, of the suppression of all freedom of movement in the working class by means of a state of siege, and of the total lack of power of the trade unions and political parties”.
23. Ibid., pp. 329-332.
25. Togliatti, in Ferrara and Ferrara, p. 44.
31. Ibid., p. 148.
35. Ferrara and Ferrara, p. 54; Battista Santhia, p. 70.
36. Parodi, op. cit.
37. Battista Santhia.
40. Parodi, p. 67.
43. Soave, p. 15.
Unlike Michael Gurdon, I will not purport to be uncommitted on the Palestinian issue — I am unashamedly pro-Palestinian.

Initially, I must concede that, in his article "Arab-Israel Conflict — Where to from here?" (ALR, March/April 1974), Mr. Gurdon distinguishes himself as a proponent of a solution which essentially conforms with declared PLO policy.

However, I do take issue at the perspective from which the conclusion is drawn and unfortunately, the credibility of Mr. Gurdon’s entire article is marred by his feeble attempts to credit the State of Israel with some sort of plausible genesis and motivation. In fact, it almost seems as though he has thrown in the optimum number of palliatives for those who may sense that an injustice has been done to the Palestinians.

Much could be said upon the interpretation of facts but it will suffice to demonstrate just a few of the fallacious propositions presented to the reader by the author.

Quote:- “The Arab-Israeli conflict could feasibly be traced back to the first contact between Jews and Mohammed’s legions in the seventh century.”

This is surely one of the most intriguing of Mr. Gurdon’s many cryptic statements. Just what connection Mohammed’s legions have with the Arab-Israeli conflict must remain a mystery because he does not elaborate.

Historians tell us that the Jews were almost totally expelled from Palestine during Roman occupation. Furthermore, we know that well after the commencement of Russian Jewish migration in the late 1800s there were still only 24,000 Jews domiciled in Palestine by the turn of the century (the total population then being 500,000).

Consequently, it is difficult to see any relevance in an encounter between what must have been an insignificant minority group and “Mohammed’s legions”. No doubt Mohammed did command legions, but it is also worthy to recall that Moslems were not colonists and it has been estimated by Glubb Pasha that no more than 25 per cent of new blood was introduced into Palestine as a result of the Arab invasions.

Quote:- “the conflict..... can be said to have arisen out of a confusion of pledges made by Great Britain during the course of the 1914-18 war. Because of this very confusion both the Israelis and the Arabs can and do lay claim to have right and justice on their own side.”
That these pledges were extremely and deliberately equivocal is certainly true. But that native Palestinians have to rely upon a pledge given by Great Britain, even if such were entirely unequivocal, in order to justify their continued occupation of their own land is preposterous in the extreme.

The writer evidently presupposes that “Mr.” Balfour, as he was known, had both the right and the authority to determine the destiny of the 700,000 Palestinians then living in Palestine. Later on, Mr. Gurdon does generously concede — although almost casually — that the Arabs “wanted Palestine simply because they lived there” as if such were hardly a valid enough reason of itself.

Israelis may well use the Balfour Declaration as establishing their credentials, but Palestinians do not credit the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence any such similar merit.

In addition to raising these irrelevancies, Mr. Gurdon then proceeds to imply discredit to the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence anyway by designating the Sherif Hussein as “the ruler of the western part of the Arabian peninsula”. If Hussein was, in fact, merely such a “ruler” then, of course, any reader of even average intellect would have cause to question the significance of Britain’s pledge to this, apparently, obscure chieflain from remote Arabia. In fact, the Sherif Hussein was the Emir of Mecca — the elected Sherif of all Sherifs (direct descendants of Mohammed) and, consequently, the nominal leader of the Moslem Arab world.

Clearly the pledge was just as sacrosanct as were the promises that were given to the Jews, as the writer so eloquently puts it, by “their God, Yahweh, and confirmed more recently by Balfour and the League”. However, as already indicated, none of these “promises” were credible; even supposing that the League of Nations had confirmed God’s promise — which it did not; and even supposing that the prophecy of return was not fulfilled under the auspices of King Cyrus in 538 B.C.

If, indeed, the deceitful Balfour and the discredited League can be equated with God, then there is no end to the improprieties that can be perpetrated in the name of God!

The article then proceeds to inform us, in appropriately vague terms, that Jews had — in any case — already made “large land purchases from the local Palestinian inhabitants”. As it happens, neither of these statements are true.

Firstly, a large proportion of the land sold to Jews was previously owned by absentee landlords from Syria and Lebanon.

Secondly, when British troops occupied Palestine in 1918, Jews owned two per cent of the total land area and even at the termination of the Mandate in 1948, only 5.67 per cent of the land was Jewish owned.

In terms of arable land, the figure given for Jewish land ownership by Chaim Weizmann in 1944 was 0.73 million dunums out of a total of 7.6 million dunums of cropped land.

Finally, to demonstrate the absence of chronological, and therefore coherent, perspective I would draw attention to the following passage:-

“The day following the proclamation of the State of Israel, the armies of six Arab countries launched their offensive. The Mufti of Jerusalem and other Arab leaders exhorted the Arab population to leave their homes and seek refuge behind Arab lines.”

As to whether the Mufti, or any other Arab leaders did actually “exhort” Palestinians to leave their homes is entirely irrelevant. After the savage massacre by the Irgun of 254 Arab men, women and children at Dier Yassin on April 9, 1948, it was quite unnecessary for any Arab leaders to exhort Palestinians to flee for their lives.

In fact, some 200,000 of the 700,000 odd Arabs, who Mr. Gurdon tells us subsequently became refugees, had left their homes prior to the proclamation of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948. This is not surprising when we consider that Zionist forces captured Tiberius on April 18, Haifa on April 21, Safad on May 10, Jaffa on May 13, etc. In other words, all major centres of the Arab population, including the Katamon quarter of Jerusalem and Acre, had already fallen into Jewish hands prior to the proclamation.

Clearly, therefore, the creation of Israel was the culmination of the enforced exodus of Palestinians from their homes.

No doubt the space allotted to correspondence does not permit me to continue this critical appraisal, but suffice to say that I feel that I have, without recourse to commentary, exposed sufficient serious discrepancies in the article to give the reader cause for extreme scepticism.

.............. R. WHITE
Spokesman,
Friends of Palestine.
BOOK reviews

BRADSTOW: A STUDY OF STATUS, CLASS AND POWER IN A SMALL AUSTRALIAN TOWN by R.A. Wild. Angus & Robertson, $11.50 (hardcover) $6.95 (paperback).

Bradstow is the contrived name for a silver-tail Australian country town, real name Bowral—about 80 miles from Sydney in the heart of the Southern Highlands.

The author, Dr. R.A. Wild, a social anthropologist at Sydney University, spent a few years (1967-1970) as a participant observer in the town; he made a virtual one-man assault upon it, gathering his information from the local newspaper (by reading each issue since it began publication in 1884), observing the on-going life of the community, forming friendships, gaining the confidences of cliques, attending meetings of formal organisations (Rotary, Lions, RSL, etc.), joining committees of selected clubs, attending all meetings of local government, over an 18-month period, and conducting surveys and interviews.

The result is a detailed study of life in a small country town (1635 households, 5210 people) with an emphasis upon the inter-relationships between class, status and political power in the town, a study which strips bare any pretensions Australians may have of themselves as forming part of a classless egalitarian society.

Wild’s Bradstow comprises six status groups. On the top are the descendants of the old grazing families and those whose family fortunes were made out of mid-nineteenth century industrial capitalism, Tories to the core, enshrining the conservative values of the English rural gentry, keeping mainly to themselves and, naturally, voting Liberal-Country Party.

Then come the “Grange-ites”, Pitt Street farmers, professionals and the like, wealthy refugees and tax dodgers from the city rat race, living in the best area of town (the Grange)….. large houses, huge lawns, extensive landscaped gardens….. these are the boys and girls who make things move in Bradstow. A simple phone call (or letter, or meeting with) to the Liberal political/fat cat Public Service mates in Sydney or Canberra (remember the study took place before 1972) and they "move mountains" (or millions of bucks of real estate, or frustrate plans for decentralisation, re-zoning, etc.).

Together the Tories and the Grange-ites give Bradstow its political colouring….. right-wing, arch-conservative. It was the Tories who created the town, destroyed the bush and made pastures (planting oaks, beeches, sycamores, chestnuts, willows, to replace the wattle, gum and box); they regard it as their own and together with the Grange-ites – who seek a place in the sun for their new-found wealth and influence – they keep it that way, a sort of twentieth century rotten borough.

Their hold on the town is made all the easier by the sick political apathy of the “lesser” social orders who are kept in their place by a traditional attitude of deference towards the upper class, a hangover from pioneering days when the Bradstow grazing families -- geographically isolated from the mainstream of colonial life -- managed to virtually re-create a feudal system on the Southern Highlands.
The next status group in Bradstow comprises the local bosses, self-made wealthy gents sitting on piles of wealth reaped from commerce since World War II. These lads dominate everyday affairs and local government and are regarded as socially unacceptable by the gentry and the Grange-ites.

Then come the skilled manual workers and the small shopkeepers, followed by the semi-skilled tradesmen (they comprise 40 per cent of the town’s population). And at the bottom of the heap is a tough 4 per cent, totally unskilled, known locally as the “no-hopers”, living in rudimentary circumstances.

“The house is in need of paint and general repairs. The floors are covered with linoleum, and the lights have no shades. The furniture is old and dilapidated and the curtains worn and tattered. The small verandah at the front is full of old wheels, wood chips, blocks of wood, chicken wire, tin cans, tools, old chairs, and innumerable other items.”

Wild tracks his themes of status, class and power through a seemingly endless proliferation of clubs (RSL, Rotary, Lions, Bowling, Country), pubs, organisations (e.g. The Bushfire Brigade, Boy Scouts) and flower festivals. What he comes up with is an eminently readable expose of everyday life in a very conservative, basically right-wing, Protestant (waspish) country town, isolated from the mainstream of society by ‘green belts’ (and few possibilities for expansion), a low population growth, little industry and few foreign immigrants.

Public reception of Wild’s book has been both interesting and sad for reviewers have tended to see Bradstow as a unique comical “freak” of a town. As ‘The Bulletin’ reviewer (July 27) put it:

“Fortunately Australia as a whole is not so stuffy and rigidly compartmented as Bradstow.”

True, but maybe there is more BRADSTOW in Australian society than people think.

Now I’ve worked in ‘Bradstow’ for three years, and during that time lived in a very small country town (population 600) some twenty miles away. And what I’ve seen and heard during that time (especially since 1972 when the federal electorate of which Bradstow is part -- Macarthur -- returned a Labor member, John Kerin, to Canberra) gives me cause for alarm.

Why Labor won is a long story but is basically accounted for by the rapid expansion of the industrial areas to the North and East of the electorate.

The federal election campaigns of 1972 and 1974 revealed the tensions and fears that lie beneath the flower festivals of Bradstow.

Labor Party posters blown to pieces by shotguns; systematic destruction of ALP display material; the local newspaper placed a prohibitive loading on advertising rates when it came to Labor election material; hospitalisation of the pregnant wife of the local ALP Branch secretary resulted from undue campaign pressures; Department of Main Roads intimidation and harassment to prevent ALP signs from going up along the highway; smears of an intimate sexual nature circulated by local liberals against Kerin; Labor Party campaigners refused service in a local pub; an ALP activist threatened with demotion by the local BHP enterprise if he didn’t resign from his executive position in the local branch; talk among the small farmers and orchardists near where I live, out where the Festival of Light movement and the League of Rights are exceptionally strong, of forming vigilante groups and the necessity of taking up the gun if Labor won ....... and the local Liberal candidate (comfortable dairy farmer and local mayor) declared his intention of clearing out for Spain (where he said some of his best friends have established themselves in baronial splendour) if Labor won.

The same sorts of tactics that helped unseat Al Grassby, tactics that reek more than strongly of the Country Party.

The crucial thing to realise about the nature of this opposition, its mealy-mouthed sinister ferocity, is that the losers cannot accept that they have lost. For in their psyches they are the guardians of the Australian way of life, they -- the owners of property, the employers, the managers -- are the trustees of the nation, the best fitted to manage and control ....... they have lost what is “rightfully” theirs.
Living in Bradstow country you get to know the intensity of opposition to the ALP that can exist, an opposition based on ideas typical of this paragraph from a recent letter to the local newspaper:

"I see my Australia, of which I was once so proud, being destroyed into a weak, cringing copy of its former self, destroyed from within and dependent upon others instead of being proud and defiant. I see the Labor Party's intention of destroying completely any individual's attempt to assert him or herself as a separate identity."

My point is that there are other Bradstows around the country, out in the rural areas, the political consciousness of their inhabitants moulded by the Country Party and outfits like the League of Rights, where fear and hatred are more and more coming to the fore and seeking political expression.

And the further you get away from the large centres of population the greater the fear and hatred seems to get, and with that the greater the tendency towards right-wing extremism. Geographical isolation coupled with the human isolation peculiar to farming as a work activity are conducive to the scare tactics of a Doug Anthony, the hatred and fear of a League of Rights, the moral fanaticism of a Festival of Light.

I note it was the Albury Branch of the RSL which initiated the popular move in the NSW branch of that organisation to establish a 100,000 strong uniformed volunteer paramilitary defence force. And from the Western Australian Farmers' Union the call for farmers to withhold livestock from markets and cease payment of income tax to counter what was seen as the "disintegration of the Australian quality of life". (SMH, August 27).

In many ways for the left in Australia, Bradstow is -- and will increasingly become -- the hurdle and frontier that must be overcome and conquered.

-- ROWAN CAHILL.


I found Trotsky's '1905' a stimulating and exciting book. Packed in its pages are a multitude of elements: the broad sweep of the revolutionary crisis, intimate portraits of figures of the times, the psychological dynamics causing people to revolt, generalised theories of revolution and detailed scientific evidence to back those theories.

This Pelican edition of '1905' consists of a core -- 1905 itself written in 1908-9. In addition, there are Trotsky's polemics within the Russian revolutionary movement: "Our Differences" -- an attack on Menshevism, and "On the Special Features of Russia's Historical Development" -- a 1922 polemic with M.N. Pokrovsky. Trotsky's speech to the Tsarist court trying the St. Petersburg Soviet is also included, and finally, a fitting end-piece to the whole work is the adventurous tale of Trotsky's exile to Siberia and his subsequent escape across the snowfields.

Throughout the pages of the book, Trotsky is revealed as someone whose eye for detail and whose "feel" for a situation is remarkable whether at a demonstration in the streets of St. Petersburg or in an Ostyak village during his escape.

He is at once a historian and a maker of history, a theorist and hard-working activist.

The events of 1905 are reported not in the dry progression of many historians but in a way that combines both literary features (scraps of actual conversation, rhetorical flourishes and sustained imagery) and cool political analysis.

The events of 1905 begin on January 9 when Father Gapon led a demonstration bearing religious banners and icons to petition the Tsar. The Tsar's response was to unleash cossacks upon the crowd -- Bloody Sunday. The workers responded with a wave of political strikes that convulsed Russia from one end to the other.

There followed a contradictory period in which political ferment expanded in a
situation combining repression and certain limited freedoms. The universities became islands of free debate and into their quadrangles flooded the proletariat. The worker-student solidarity is vividly described by Trotsky and a strikingly familiar note is struck -- what is it? -- of course, the Sorbonne in 1968.

In September another all-Russian wave of political strikes is touched off, they pause, draw breath and plunge into the far more profound revolutionary crisis in which the Soviets are built.

Trotsky’s activity in the events of 1905 was firmly based on marxism and more particularly, a specific creative development of marxist theory -- the theory of permanent revolution. The basis for this theory can be found in the first four chapters of ‘1905’. Trotsky presents the dilemma of Russia for marxists: the backward feudal agricultural system side by side with the most concentrated industrial works; the monstrous growth of the bureaucratic state which dominated even the bourgeoisie and used “modern technological progress in order to retard the historical progress of its own country”. Russia was a country which defied the theories of dogmatic marxists who saw history and revolution advance in neat mechanical stages: feudalism -- capitalism -- socialism.

Trotsky used marxism in a creative way to advance revolutionary theory about Russia. First, simple observation showed him that “we have never had even a trace of that sturdy middle-class which first lived through centuries of self-government and political struggle, then, hand in hand with the young, as yet unformed proletariat, stormed the Bastilles of feudalism”. In other words, a classic bourgeois democratic revolution was simply not possible in Russia. The belated development of capitalism in Russia was totally under the domination of advanced European finance capital. Technology, too, was imported, like capital, and these features resulted in “combined and uneven development” (Trotsky’s phrase). The role of the State in Russia naturally developed differently from that of European states which Marx analysed -- while it dominated the bourgeoisie, and initiated industries it was, of course, a fierce defender of the status quo.

The consequence of all this for practical politics was that there was no water-tight division between the democratic stage and the socialist stage of revolution -- one grew into the other in a permanent process, in an uninterrupted fashion.

When the state granted even limited democratic freedoms under challenge from mass strikes of the proletariat, an inherently unstable situation was immediately created. The revolutionary dynamic unleashed immediately posed the question of power and of which class would lead the continuing struggle. Either there was a reversion to absolutist state power (which occurred in 1906) or a socialist revolution (a la 1917).

History showed the latter road for fifty days in 1905: the proletariat was organised into a qualitatively new organisation which transcended the trade unions -- the workers’ state in embryo, the Council of Workers’ Deputies, the Soviets. This was a “revolutionary workers’ council of self-management” (Trotsky).

Of central strategic importance was this new creature, the Soviet; yet while Trotsky gives it the importance it deserves, his description of its origins and of the response of the revolutionary left of Russia leaves much to be desired.

I have a small booklet entitled “Democratic Centralism -- the Democratic Aspect”, subtitled “Lenin in 1905” by Marcel Liebman -- it is, I think, reprinted from ‘Monthly Review’, alas no date or source is given. In it is described the attitude of Krasin the Bolshevik representative on the young St. Petersburg Soviet. He demanded officially that it accept the programme of the Bolsheviks in its entirety. He was a non-believer and distrusted characterised the Bolshevik attitude to the Soviets. (The resemblance of attitude of modern revolutionary groups is quite remarkable: today’s crude “bolshevism” is characterised by an expectation of passivity on the part of workers and people and of a manipulative attitude to them).

Yet Trotsky does not mention the Bolshevik’s attitude. He merely states: “On 10th October, at the moment when the largest of the strikes was imminent, one of the two social-democratic organisations of Petersburg took upon itself the task of creating a revolutionary workers’ council of self-management”. Trotsky, whose early allegiance to the Mensheviks is belabored
by stalinism, does not even give fair credit to the Mensheviks.

Above all, Trotsky did grasp the revolutionary significance of the Soviet -- that it was a CLASS organisation, not an industry or craft organisation and that it began to organise and exercise its own authority counter to the regime.

* * *

In describing this period, we have vivid pen-portraits such as of Gapon:

“A spinner of fantasies on a psychological subsoil of adventurism, a southerner of sanguine temperament with a touch of the confidence man about him, a total ignoramus in social matters, Gapon was as little able to guide events as he was to foresee them...”

and of the Tsarist police chief:

“This most foul specimen of the Russian bureaucracy’s foul mores, this thievish official whom even the unforgettable Alexander III himself was obliged to throw out with the energetic words ‘remove this swine’, this Durnovo was now brought out of the rubbish bin ......”

Trotsky’s ‘1905’ is a history written by a literary man -- by a participant in the events described.

In its own way, ‘1905’ reflects the historical and social milieu which gave us the “great” Russian novels. It contains on the one canvas the sweeping vastness of the revolutionary tide and the personal observations of a revolutionary of central importance.

A very good introduction to Trotsky and his style.

-- D. McKNIGHT.