

# Intercontinental Press

Africa

Asia

Europe

Oceania

the Americas

Vol. 6, No. 21

© 1968 Intercontinental Press.

June 3, 1968

50c

# Revolt in France Deepens



Daniel Cohn-Bendit

**Lessons  
of the French Events**

**French Labor  
and the General Strike**

**New Information  
on Che Guevara's  
Last Two Years**

**From the Paris Barricades to Socialist Revolution**

FRENCH STRIKERS REJECT STALINIST DEAL WITH POMPIDOU

By Les Evans

The de Gaulle regime was dealt a stunning blow by the French working class May 27 when the overwhelming majority of workers voted to continue the general strike and reject the settlement negotiated for them by the Stalinist bureaucrats of the CGT [Confédération Générale du Travail -- General Federation of Labor -- the Communist party-led union federation to which a majority of French workers belong].

The government and the CP expected a "back-to-work movement" in response to the "far-reaching concessions" they had agreed upon. Instead, the strikers continued to occupy the thousands of factories throughout the country that they have held for nearly two weeks. Red flags still fly over the plants. Indeed, the strike has broadened and deepened, much to the concern of the CP bureaucrats who see their tenuous hold on the workers slipping as the masses continue to move to the left.

Barge traffic stopped for the first time on the Seine, the Oise and the Moselle rivers. Workers at the government nuclear center at St.-Paul-lès-Durance walked out, and, to demonstrate their strength, strikers at the nationalized gas and electricity company cut off current in most of the capital for half an hour after lunch.

The strikers in the key industrial plants met in massive factory assemblies to vote on the pact and almost unanimously turned thumbs down in a hand vote.

The CP leaders are especially worried because the general strike was not called by them but began spontaneously in the wake of the continuing demonstrations by revolutionary students. This is the first time the CP has attempted to give the strike direction -- by calling it off!

In Paris defiant workers confronted the Stalinist bureaucrats when they came directly from the negotiating table to present what they had "won." The May 28 New York Times reported that "Georges Séguy, secretary general of the Communist-led General Federation of Labor, and Benoît Frachon, one of the leading members of the Communist party Politburo, were booed and whistled at by 12,000 blue-shirted strikers cramped between pieces of equipment at the Renault plant in suburban Boulogne-Billancourt.

"The workers, who have occupied the plant for more than a week, had followed the negotiations over the radio and

had rejected the outcome even before their leaders appeared to describe the package."

Significantly, the Times reported that "The negative vote came as a surprise to the labor leaders. Mr. Frachon, for one, had declared that the agreement 'will bring to millions of workers a well-being that they had never hoped to attain.' The others had made similar comments."

The workers made it clear that they were not interested in petty reforms from de Gaulle that could be taken away by inflation after they returned to work. They wanted to see an end to the Gaullist regime.

While Séguy was being hissed by the workers at Renault, a mass demonstration of students and workers marched to the Paris stadium where a rally was held demanding the fall of the government. The Times, which has consistently underplayed the size of such demonstrations, put the number of participants at 35,000.

Despite Premier Pompidou's May 25 order "for every meeting to be immediately dispersed," the police meekly granted "authorization" for the mass march. The loudest applause at the rally went to André Barjonet, a top economic adviser and a secretary to the CGT, who had just resigned in protest against the Communist party's attempt to isolate the students from the workers and channel the strike into a mere struggle for parliamentary reform.

"We are in the presence of a revolutionary movement," Barjonet declared. "The workers don't want just higher wages and shorter working hours, though they deserve it. What they want today is power turned over to the workers in the factories and power in the universities turned over to the students."

In Toulouse more than 50,000 demonstrators rallied at the Place du Capitole May 27, demanding "De Gaulle, resign!" and singing the "Internationale."

Events are moving at a terrific tempo as the social revolution unfolds. Only four days after de Gaulle made his first, long-awaited address on May 24 to the nation, proposing a national referendum in June on the "mutation" of social conditions in the country, a series of major events have overshadowed the general's feeble response to the revolutionary crisis.

Even as de Gaulle spoke (on tape) workers and students had assembled in mas-

sive numbers in Paris demanding his resignation.

The most militant student leaders have been singled out for attack. Daniel Cohn-Bendit was a special target of all opponents of revolutionary change. The Communist party called him "the German," and the fascists, "the German Jew." (He was born in France of German-Jewish refugee parents but took out German citizenship when they went back home.)

This campaign reached ridiculous proportions when the French government, apparently on direct orders from de Gaulle himself, barred him from reentering the country May 24 after he went to Brussels and then Amsterdam to speak at student gatherings.

An indication of the terror in which the French government holds "Danny the Red" is the fact that they were prepared to open fire with machine guns on 1,000 unarmed German students at the French border to prevent him from reentering the country.

The May 26 Sunday Times of London described the French government's plan to shoot the students down in cold blood:

"French riot police manning the frontier had been told to shoot the students down with concealed crossfire from machine-guns mounted on hidden lorries just behind the border if they tried to cross by force.

"This 'shoot first and ask afterwards' order by the French was confirmed by a senior West German police official today."

Just before this event George Séguy, Communist party and CGT leader, was quoted by France Soir endorsing de Gaulle's barring of Cohn-Bendit from the country:

"It is not our place to judge the government's decision. But it certainly seems that our warnings, which were made before the Prime Minister mentioned this individual's membership in an international organization, are being borne out."

Meanwhile masses of students and young workers were demonstrating for the immediate readmission of Cohn-Bendit to France, in demonstrations that were brutally attacked by the Gendarmes and the Republican Security Companies [CRS]. The toll for those injured in the two days after de Gaulle's speech was officially put at 1,500, with two dead (there are many press reports of individual students being killed, Life magazine even reporting the total death toll at ten, but only two deaths are officially admitted).

A graphic description of the May 24 encounters appeared in the London Observer, May 26 issue. Our Paris correspondents warn us, however, that descriptions of "guerrilla warfare" on the part of the students are greatly exaggerated by all the bourgeois papers.

"About 1,500 were wounded in Paris alone, and the great courtyard of the Sorbonne was turned into a field hospital. One lecture hall was marked 'surgery,' another 'gas cases.' Ambulances screamed back and forth through the ravaged streets until well after dawn. It was the worst night of civil disturbances Paris had seen since the late 1930's. Appeals for antibiotics were still being broadcast at midday.

"Today [May 25] Alain Krivine, among the most revolutionary student leaders in Europe and head of the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire (JCR), told The Observer: 'It was a near insurrection...'

"The student column, 2,000 strong, which seized the Paris Bourse...was acting under JCR command, Krivine said....

"Several JCR leaders were picked up by the police, and spent the night in the cells. Krivine himself was shadowed by plain clothes men, and thrown into a police van but was eventually released.

"The JCR, a hard-core militant group of Trotskyist inspiration has, in partnership with Daniel Cohn-Bendit, provided much of the political direction of the revolutionary student movement which has swept France in the last three weeks.

"Krivine outlined last night's objective as: (1) to demonstrate that only direct action pays, and it must be mass action; (2) to provide in the student insurrection a model for a wider workers' rising.

"'Yesterday,' he claimed, 'was a decisive day. The vast demonstrations we rallied proved beyond question that the students did not stand alone, but had been joined by large numbers of workers.'"

The Observer claimed to have information that "the Government is likely soon to move against the JCR and other extremist movements. M. Pompidou is known to have a fat file on the JCR leaders and Daniel Cohn-Bendit..."

The machine-gun attempt on Cohn-Bendit, and Pompidou's order to disperse demonstrations indicate the government was planning an armed attack on the student demonstrators. The change in their tone flows from the sharp left shift of the workers. Any governmental terror at this point could very well cement the student-worker unity that they and the CP are afraid of.

## FRENCH LABOR AND THE GENERAL STRIKE

By Pierre Frank

### Paris

The immense May 13 demonstrations ended without any other direction from the union leaders except to disperse. The vanguard which met on the Champs de Mars decided to continue the SNES [Syndicat National d'Enseignement Supérieur -- National University Teachers Union] and UNEF [Union National des Etudiants Français -- French National Student Federation] strike. However, no decision was made for the workers.

On Tuesday, May 14, the workers went into the factories with a higher consciousness and a clearer conception of their power. What would they do? On Wednesday it was learned that an airplane factory, Sud-Aviation in Nanterre, had gone on strike and that the workers had occupied the plant and shut the manager up in his office.

Early Thursday morning, a strike and factory occupation broke out at the Renault plant in Cléon (in the department of Seine-Maritime), then in Flins, Le Mans, and finally, in the late afternoon, in the big factory in the Parisian suburb of Billancourt, the pilot plant for all France, which has about 30,000 workers.

From then on the movement could not fail to spread. Big metallurgical, automobile, and airplane factories followed suit. On Saturday, the trains stopped, along with mail and telegraph service. The postal savings office struck, and the subway and bus lines in the Paris area stopped one after the other. The strike hit Air France, shipping, the mines, etc.

On Sunday, May 19, the Paris sanitation services went on strike. The Paris Opera was occupied by its personnel. On Monday the workers were preparing to strike many other industries and services. This week will see a general strike throughout the entire French economy.

Thus, the determined struggle of the university students and teachers broke down the barriers and unleashed a movement surpassing 1936 and the Liberation.

By its dimensions and power this movement naturally poses the question of power and challenges the system. In a radio broadcast where the CGT [Confédération Générale du Travail -- General Federation of Labor -- the Communist-led union] and the CFDT [Confédération Fran-

çaise et Démocratique du Travail -- French Democratic Federation of Labor] leaders were asked questions by people calling in, most of the questions were of this type: "What is it you want?" "Where are you headed?" And when these leaders answered only by listing demands for higher wages and more fringe benefits, their questioners replied: "But what about the political issues? What is your position on the government?"

Friday and Saturday the CGT and CFDT leaders thought they could get by with only economic and social demands (wage increases, reduction of the work-week, lowering of the retirement age). By Saturday, however, it proved difficult to hold the line there. The CFDT moreover pulled a small fast one on the CGT on trade-union rights in the plants and, in confused terms, workers' participation in management, which in turn forced the CGT to make a slight left turn.

On the political front, after several days, the FGDS [Fédération de la Gauche Démocrate et Socialiste -- Federation of the Democratic, Socialist Left] called for the government's resignation. The CP leadership, however, limited itself to calling on the FGDS quickly to establish a common program with it. Here also the CP leadership hesitated to put forward political slogans, for example to declare itself on the question of the government.

Seeking to prevent the strikes from taking on too dangerous a character for the bourgeois order, the CGT leaders moved abruptly to block the students from going into the factories. The workers, they said, had no need of tutelage -- except of course from the bureaucrats. They waved the scarecrow of police intervention, but in reality what they feared was a linkup between the revolutionary intellectuals and the workers in the factories.

The bureaucrats saw the students occupy the Sorbonne and initiate running debate and workers democracy, letting all political groups display their publications in the Sorbonne courtyard. Pictures of Lenin, Trotsky, Che, Fidel, and Mao were pasted on the walls. And over the Sorbonne floated the red and black flags alongside the flag of Vietnam. Comparisons come easily to mind, the Commune, Smolny...

It was enough to see how the bureaucrats received the students Friday evening to comprehend the magnitude of their fear. A column of 2,000 to 3,000 students headed up by a red flag and singing the "Internationale" marched from the Sorbonne to the Place Nationale in Billancourt, about six

miles. When they arrived in front of the Renault gate guarded by CP stalwarts they were greeted by a CGT official who delivered a colorless little speech:

"We thank you, here are our demands...and we have decided for this and that reason not to let anybody enter the factory." He did not even offer the microphone to the students for them to respond to his greeting.

After about ten minutes, the UNEF leader spoke. He saluted the strikers, expressed revolutionary views, and then called on the students to march around the factory. A line of workers and students formed, two or three times stronger than the column which had come to Billancourt, and it marched around the factory, chanting the slogan "Workers to Power!" It was greeted by the strikers in windows and on the factory walls.

On Saturday evening the pressure was so strong that the CGT leaders began to move toward blocking the movement. They proposed a joint meeting of the CP, the FGDS, the CGT, the CFDT, FO [Force Ouvrière -- the social democrat, pro-American union], and FEN [Fédération de l'Education National -- the National

Teachers Union] to discuss the situation. It was obvious that they wanted to find a common formula of agreement to keep the movement from taking them too far.

Where will the movement go? What will be the results? Will de Gaulle be forced to resign? Or will he replace the Pompidou government by an interim cabinet that will hold elections, which inevitably, under present conditions, will produce an FGDS-CP majority?

The situation will evolve from day to day and some days even from hour to hour. A crucial stage has already begun. In any case, the end of Gaullism as well as an FGDS-CP coalition government are on the agenda.

Fascist reactions or army intervention is not likely considering the relationship of forces and the fact that discontent is great even among the police (there has been talk of the possibility of a police strike).

The week of May 20-26 will decide the fate of the government and perhaps the fate of the Fifth Republic.

May 19, 1968

#### DEMONSTRATIONS IN BRITAIN SUPPORT FRENCH STUDENTS

The ruling classes of Europe are trembling at the specter of the French upheaval. This was clearly expressed in a May 25 speech by Anthony Wedgwood Benn, member of the British Labour government and minister of technology.

"If adjustments are not made to the parliamentary system, discontent expressing itself in despairing apathy or violent protest could engulf us all in bloodshed," Benn predicted mournfully.

As if in confirmation of his words, militant demonstrations broke out in Liverpool and London, as the spirit of Paris seemed to reach across the Channel.

In Liverpool a reported 400 supporters of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign clashed with police in front of a building housing both the French and American consulates.

"The demonstrators," reported the London Observer, "carrying banners in support of Ho Chi Minh and shouting 'Victory for the NLF,' kicked in two panels on one of the building's main doors and then started throwing bricks...."

"Bags of flour were thrown at the police by the demonstrators and detectives were punched and their hats knocked

off...The students, with their arms linked together, retreated after the clashes, followed by marching policemen."

"The demonstrators were mostly students from Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, and York universities. International Socialists were also there."

In London the same day a crowd estimated at 1,000 marched on the French embassy "in support of French workers and students."

Police vans were used to bar access to the embassy, and clashes occurred as demonstrators tried to break through. Twenty were arrested.

Anthony Wedgwood Benn's declaration was hastily denounced by his more staid colleagues, who assured the press that "it could never happen here."

Nevertheless they were worried enough over the possible effects of his remarks to insist that he "should have consulted his Cabinet colleagues, if not those on the national executive committee of the Labour Party," as the one government official said to the London Times May 26.

## LESSONS OF THE FRENCH EVENTS

By George Novack

Truly awe-inspiring is the popular upheaval engulfing France these May days. Overnight, virtually without warning, the mass movement has risen up like a fiery volcano from beneath the ground, covering the length and breadth of the country with its lava flow. From the disturbed dignitaries high above to the participants down below, everyone has been astonished by the extent and elemental force of the outburst.

Wave upon wave of protest has rolled on to encompass every significant segment of French society apart from the ruling bourgeoisie. One layer of the people after another has responded "present" to the summons to demonstrate their discontent with de Gaulle's played-out authoritarian regime.

The students gave the signal. After them came the workers. Then the state employees and small farmers fell into line behind them -- and even the police unions have expressed sympathy with the strikers!

The general strike of ten out of fifteen million workers has paralyzed all sectors of the economy. It is the most massive, the most unanimous walkout in the history of the world working class.

This magnificent mobilization is more than a general strike. It is the spontaneous outpouring of an entire nation, declaring in a single voice: "Ten years of Gaullism is more than enough; now things must change." As Premier Pompidou prophetically told the National Assembly on May 22, just before the Gaullist government narrowly escaped a censure vote: "Nothing will ever be exactly the same."

He is right. A manifestation of mass power of such magnitude subjects all theories about the main motive forces and trends of contemporary society to the rigorous test of practical experience. It serves to confirm or disprove the validity of the programs and positions of all political formations which claim to lead the way to a postcapitalist society. The collision of ideas with the realities of the class struggle and the laws of its operation ruthlessly destroys fictions and illusions.

What, then, do the colossal events in France this May already reveal about the worth of the views advanced by the diverse tendencies of the Left? What do the confrontations to date have to teach the young rebels -- and remind their elders -- about the cardinal issues of our time?

They have strikingly verified in life the basic tenets of revolutionary Marxism and the perspectives issuing from them.

The social crisis that has gripped France shows that all the major capitalist powers of this era are not so strong and stable nor so immune to shocks and convulsions as may appear. It further shows that the crucial question of which class will be master of society can be posed without the onset of a severe economic depression. On the eve of upheaval France was comparatively calm, prosperous, and free from entanglement in costly colonialist adventures.

Nevertheless, its social equilibrium turned out to be so precarious that it was upset by clashes between the authorities and students. It was as though the dislocation of a few pebbles let loose an avalanche.

Indeed, the momentum of that landslide quickly exposed the underlying weakness of de Gaulle's government and the domination of the capitalist class. The myth that authoritarian regimes can indefinitely keep the workers housebroken was shattered. For all its mystique, concessions and repressions, ten years of Gaullism did not succeed in reconciling the working class to capitalism let alone breaking its will to resist. Once the opening presented itself, the antagonism of the toilers to the rule of the rich burst out with irresistible vigor.

Their display of strength ought to dispel much of the skepticism so rife these past years in radical circles like the American Students for a Democratic Society regarding the revolutionary potential of the workers in the highly industrialized countries. The fallacious theory that the wage workers had been thoroughly seduced by the consumer culture and inseparably integrated into the capitalist structure was philosophically formulated by Professor Herbert Marcuse, among others. He asserted that the central conclusion of Marxism that the industrial working class was the antithesis, the main adversary, and the predestined gravedigger of capitalism was no longer tenable and that other, more marginal social layers would have to step into the place vacated by the Western proletariat.

Thus, in his popular work on One-Dimensional Man, and still more categorically in a symposium at the University of Notre Dame in April 1966, Marcuse stated that "in the advanced industrial countries where the transition to socialism

was to take place, and precisely in those countries, the laboring classes are in no sense a revolutionary potential."

Over a year later, in a reassessment of Marx's theory of the role of the industrial proletariat at the Third Socialist Scholars Conference in New York City, Monthly Review editor Paul Sweezy propounded the proposition, foreshadowed in his work on Monopoly Capital, that, in sharp contrast with nineteenth-century conditions and the contemporary Third World, the progress of modern technology and its enormous productivity tend to shape a proletariat which is less and less revolutionary in a developed capitalist country.

Rounding out this roster of disqualifiers of the anticapitalist capacities of the industrial workers were Social Democrats like George Lichtheim and liberals like David Bazelon. After proclaiming that Marxism was all wrong in looking to the workers as the prime agency of social transformation, these thinkers have reassigned that leading role to the managers, technicians and intellectuals who in their eyes are better equipped and situated to supplant the capitalist owners as the new directors of "post-industrial society."

The prolonged, steadfast general strike of the French workers attended by their takeover of factories, shops and offices should indicate where the new social power and political rulership must come from. The red flags hoisted over occupied plants, the singing of the "Internationale," the calls for sweeping change betoken their conscious break with the existing order and their resolve to find the way out of its evils. Far from being complete and corrupted captives of capitalism, they want to abolish it in favor of socialism.

What the shortsighted academicians failed to understand was that the passivity of the proletariat over the past two decades was not a permanent but a passing phase. After setbacks and disappointments, they needed time to reorient themselves and recharge their energies. Their revolutionary capacities were built up little by little until these could be transformed from a potential to an active state when the appropriate circumstances and occasion arrived.

The stalemate was broken through the initiative of the new generation of young workers and students who were not bowed down by the betrayals of the past twenty years or conservatized and depoliticized by economic prosperity.

The nationwide upsurge in France likewise exposes the limitations of the prescriptions for the strategy of the

world revolution emanating from Peking and shared by others. This scheme proceeds from the twin premises that for a long time to come the proletarian revolution is postponed in the imperialist countries and that the center of the revolutionary movement will continue to be exclusively confined to the colonial world.

This outlook is in turn tied up with the tacit prospect of a prolonged stabilization of the internal structures of Western imperialism.

This set of propositions has now been put in doubt by the resurgence of the French proletariat in the heart of Europe. As Pompidou has said, "nothing will ever be exactly the same" after this. Those strategists who have too hastily written off the revolutionary capacities of the workers in the imperialist centers should listen to this useful warning from a spokesman of the enemy class.

The workers are obviously the dominant and decisive force in the present revolutionary offensive. But they are not the only element in active opposition. They were preceded by the students who were the first to challenge the state authorities and raise the banner of revolt. That honor cannot be taken from them by the "Stalinist creeps" at the head of the French CP who condemned the audacious initiative of the students and denounced their leaders.

The developments of the protest movement go far to clarify the controversy that has been conducted in many places over the relations and respective roles of the students and the workers in the struggle against capitalist power. They should effectively dispose of two counterposed conceptions which are equally incorrect.

One was the line of thought set forth by such mentors of the New Left as C. Wright Mills, Marcuse and Paul Goodman that, in view of the bankruptcy of the "labor metaphysic" of Marxism and the definitive default of the industrial proletariat, students and intellectuals would assume the front rank as the principal vehicle of revolutionary action and social reconstruction in our time.

On the other hand, Communist bureaucrats of both East and West, who are adamantly opposed to the student rebels, and certain pseudo-Marxist ultraleft doctrinaires have refused "on principle" to accord any progressive vanguard role to the young activists from the universities and high schools or recognize the change in their social weight and composition over the past two decades.

One of the more ludicrous and instructive examples of such dogmatism was provided by the polemic against Rudi Dutschke and the student demonstrators of the German Socialist Student Federation, which appeared in the April 20, 1968, Newsletter of the London-based Socialist Labour League.

It denounced the SDS actions as "nothing more than an idealistic militant form of protest." "Merely to carry placards in West Berlin saying 'after the students come the workers' is totally inadequate," the Newsletter remarked.

Feeling that this diatribe was likewise "totally inadequate," these sectarians went on to say: "Such 'solutions' now create very serious problems within the working class movement because of their ineffectiveness and the ease with which they are broken up by the police and the state. They strengthen conservative, right-wing tendencies who use each defeat suffered on the streets as a means to keep the workers quiet and hesitant of struggle within the trade unions." And the lecturers triumphantly conclude: "The demand that after the students come the workers is in essence revisionist [!] because it excludes the necessity for the construction of the revolutionary party."

After what happened in France where the workers responded to the combats of students with the police by overcoming the resistance of their own officials, these injunctions were obviously out of step with the march of events and articulated a defeatism masquerading as proletarian intransigence.

Against both varieties of one-sidedness, the Marxists have consistently adhered to a dialectical conception of the interplay between the ranks of labor and other dissident elements like the students. This is based upon the inevitably irregular mode of development and readiness for action among the diverse participants in the anticapitalist struggle.

As a rule, the separate social forces do not come upon the arena of open combat all at once or en masse but one after the other and in successive detachments. In the revolutionizing process students, intellectuals, oppressed minorities, peasants, and other oppositional layers actuated by their own grievances, can set the ball rolling and take on the authorities before the mass of workers are ready or able to move. Their first steps, their encounters, their calls for support can spur the heavy battalions of labor into action on their own account.

That is precisely the kind of chain reaction that has taken place in France. What the students started set the

stage for the entry of the workers. Younger workers were the link between the two sectors in the sequence of developments. In the early Latin Quarter demonstrations they came out to contact and aid the students, fought side by side with them against the cops, and then transmitted to their fellow workers in the factories the spirit of resistance and mood of solidarity against Gaullism. They acted as a conduit through which the workers became aligned with the students despite the reluctance of the union bureaucracy.

The mighty upthrust of the workers lifted the anti-Gaullist protest to the level of revolt because they alone possess the power and are in a position to carry the popular offensive to its logical ends: the overthrow of capitalism, the conquest of power, the construction of a new social order.

In order to perform these historical tasks now staring them in the face, the insurgent French workers and their allies require the proper leadership. Their mighty strike has sprung the Gaullist regime into midair where it dangles like a corpse bereft of reliable or substantial support anywhere in the masses. With the present relation of forces in the country, with Gaullism in extremis and the ultraright reaction isolated, with the peasants on the march and the middle classes in opposition, the political and economic props of capitalism could be dismantled and disposed of in short order.

This little scene, reported in the May 25 New York Times, shows how favorable the situation is for a clean sweep of the old rubbish not only in the cities but in the provinces. "The gendarmes peeped out from the entrance of the central administrative building of the Gers Department -- once the Archbishop's palace here in Auch -- as more than 2,000 peasants and workers marched past the moss-covered building freshly daubed with slogans such as 'Everything is rotten -- Revolution!' Some marchers bellowed out parts of 'The Internationale,' the Communist anthem."

The workers can be counted on to embark on a concerted struggle to assure control over the factories and secure command over the state -- once they are given the lead. At present such a struggle could win with a minimum of civil strife and the least number of casualties.

However, between the workers and the prospects of power stand the cowardly and conservative leaderships of the traditional parties and union organizations. Foremost among them are the heads of the Communist party. The full strength of its apparatus and influence has been flung into the breach to slow down and hold



back the workers so that French capitalism can once more be protected and rescued from their socialist aspirations. The CP is trying to split the workers from the students.

The role of the CP is the most important political factor in the further evolution of the present revolutionary situation in France. In a desperate last-ditch effort to preserve his Bonapartist functions, President de Gaulle has asked for a referendum in June to renew the national mandate for his personal rule.

To his request for full powers, the answer of any working-class leadership worthy of the name would be: "No power to the General or any other representative of the ruling class! All power to the workers! Forward to a Socialist Republic based on the workers, farmers and students committees!"

But nothing of the sort can be expected from the Stalinist betrayers. They have no intention of mobilizing the masses for an assault upon the bourgeois state or of expropriating big business. They envisage and propose nothing more than a shift from the extra-parliamentary rule of de Gaulle to the restoration of a bourgeois-democratic government. Under the aegis of the "Popular Front" Communist ministers are to help administer the affairs of state on behalf of a decaying capitalism in disregard of the welfare and wishes of the workers, just as they did in the French government from 1944 to 1947. Except that this time they hope to displace the Socialists as the central faction on the Left in the horsetrading of the National Assembly.

Although they have different ends in view, the Gaullists and Stalinists are each following a common strategy of gaining time. Both bank on letting the revolutionary ardor of the workers ooze away while they haggle over paltry reforms which can be whittled down or snatched back by the bosses and their government with the next turn of the tide.

The question is: will the French CP once again be able to squander and spoil the immense revolutionary possibilities opened up by the vast movement of the masses?

That will depend in large measure

on two factors of a different order. One is the dynamic force and the resistance the workers can exert to counteract the array of adversaries and misleaders who will work with might and main to cripple and crush their offensive. The other relates to the chances of creating an alternative authoritative revolutionary leadership and a mass Marxist party in the sharpening conflicts with the bourgeoisie and the bureaucrats which lie ahead.

The reflexes of the CP tops have freshly demonstrated the incapacities of the Stalinists to take advantage of the most propitious opportunity to settle accounts with capitalism in Western Europe since 1944-1945. On the other hand, the French Trotskyists, and especially its youth contingent in the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire (JCR), have displayed an exceptional ability to offer guidance to the militants in the factories, in the streets, on the barricades and in the universities and high schools.

As the London Observer correspondents on the spot in Paris testified on May 19: "It can claim to have provided the chief inspiration and political direction of the insurrection of the past two weeks, which may justly be described as the greatest success the Trotskyists have ever achieved in Europe."

These young revolutionary Marxists have shown that they are attuned to the temper of the masses and the pace of the present critical stage of the struggle. They are presenting a program of political and industrial action and organization designed to steer the promising beginnings of the movement toward the conquest of power by the workers.

If these two factors -- the revolutionary will of the proletariat and the cadres of the Trotskyist vanguard -- can be fused together in time over the coming period, the emergent revolution can be saved from the bankrupt policies of the Stalinist and reformist leaderships. Victory in France will have to be worked for and fought for. Such an outcome would change the whole course of European and world history.

May 26, 1968

#### H. RAP BROWN SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS IN PRISON

The campaign of U.S. federal and state authorities to "legally" victimize H. Rap Brown, chairman of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, bore its first bitter fruit May 22 in New Orleans. An "integrated" jury did the government's

bidding, finding Brown guilty of violating an obscure 1930's federal gun statute.

The judge imposed a maximum sentence of five years in prison and \$2,000 fine. The decision is being appealed.

FRENCH CRISIS TESTS REVOLUTIONARY VANGUARD

By Pierre Frank

Paris

The powerful movement sweeping France has outflanked the big mass organizations such as the Communist party and the General Federation of Labor [CGT], whose leaderships were firmly committed to a reformist policy. Now, they are making just as much of a turn as is necessary to regain control of the masses and contain them within the bounds of the capitalist system.

The movement is such that very small revolutionary organizations obviously cannot lead it. Nevertheless, the interventions of such groups and the positions which they have taken in these events make it possible to judge them politically. This is particularly true in regard to the movements which have developed among the students. These movements have had a not inconsiderable influence and have been able to play if not a leading role often a crucial or decisive one.

While it is still too early to make an overall estimation, let us note initially that the JCR [Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire -- Revolutionary Communist Youth] and its members have been in the forefront of all the struggles and have exhibited a much greater political capacity than all the other youth groups to all the very broad layers in the movement.

In the course of these events, collaboration has developed between the Union Communiste [Communist Union, publishes Voix Ouvrière -- "Workers Voice"] and the PCI [Parti Communiste Internationaliste -- Internationalist Communist party -- the French section of the Fourth International]. An initial public document declared:

"In view of the development of the present situation, which cruelly points up the absence of a revolutionary leadership, and considering that it is essential to unify the struggle carried on by the organizations claiming to be Trotskyist, representatives of the Union Communiste (UC), the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (the French section of the Fourth International) and the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire met on Sunday, May 19, 1968, and decided to form a permanent coordinating committee for their three organizations. This coordinating committee now calls on all organizations claiming to be Trotskyist to join in this move. The three organizations advise their members everywhere to come together to coordinate their activity.

"For the UC: G. Kaldy and J. Morand.

"For the PCI: P. Frank and M. Lequenne.

"For the JCR: A. Krivine and D. Bensaïd."

On the other hand, the line followed by the FER [Fédération des Étudiants Révolutionnaires -- Federation of Revolutionary Students], an organization recently created by the youth who follow the OCI [Organization Communiste Internationaliste -- Internationalist Communist Organization -- the French ally of the Socialist Labour League in England], makes cooperation with this organization impossible at present.

It may be fruitful to make known the role that the FER has played in this movement. In general, it has sought to gain the maximum publicity by means of violent but abstract statements. Its actions, however, far from impelling the vanguard forward and strengthening it have often been aimed at holding it back.

Their basic outlook will come as a surprise to no one. It was expressed in a declaration made two or three days before the start of the action in the Latin Quarter:

"In isolation the students will be defeated." I might add that they expressed an identical pessimism on the international front. A few days before the Tet offensive, the monthly Révoltes [the FER organ] published articles claiming that the military defeat of the National Liberation Front in Vietnam was inevitable because of the Washington-Moscow understanding.

In the early days of the movement in the Latin Quarter, they opposed any show of force by the students in their struggle. Their prime objective was to have the demonstrations outside the offices of the trade-union bureaucracies, in order to have an opportunity to denounce them.

The mass demonstration on May 10 ended in the night of the barricades. Although this was not foreseen, everyone knew that there would be a confrontation with the forces of bourgeois order. It happened that the FER had organized a meeting in the Mutualité for that evening. What did its leaders do when confronted with an unexpected situation? Toward the end of the demonstration, they broke away

to go hold their meeting, at which there were about 1,000 people. Thus far, no serious objections could be raised. But after their meeting, at about 1:00 a.m., they brought their members to the barricades to tell everyone there that it was all an adventure and that they had to abandon the barricades...and then they went home.

In their call for the general strike demonstration of May 13 they insisted on emphasizing that it had been launched by the trade unions. But when the demonstration reached the Place Denfert-Rochereau and the vanguard militants decided to continue the demonstration to the Champs de Mars they again raised the bogey of adventurism and abstained.

They tried to explain at the Sorbonne why they had not been on the barricades. Here, moreover, is what one of their top spokesmen wrote in the Paris daily Combat of May 17: "The irresponsibility of some leaders of the March 22 Movement and the JCR in calling on a few thousand students to retake the Sorbonne unaided, resulted in the organization of a terrible massacre by the forces of order. For, de Gaulle could not let the symbol of the state, the Latin Quarter, bristle with barricades. Twenty or thirty thousand students cannot successfully take on thousands of Gardes Mobiles [Mobile Guards] and CRS [Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité -- Republican Security Companies -- the militarily armed and trained elite state security police]. Therefore, and I am not afraid to write it, we were right, after we had marched to the barricades, to call on the students to break up this demonstration; it was inevitably going to turn into a massacre.

"Here, more than the irresponsibility and backwardness of petty-bourgeois of the Cohn-Bendit stripe, we must blame the reactionary policy of the CP and CGT leadership, who by waiting until May 13 to call for the working class to join the students, left the latter to face formidable concentrations of Gardes Mobiles and CRS alone for eight days." (C. Berg, member of the national committee of FER, Combat, No. 7414, May 17, 1968.)

To top it all off, they denounced the events at the Sorbonne as a "carnival." The sectarians did not understand that despite some excesses of bizarre groups, they were seeing a revolutionary center of the movement, a model for "committees" (soviets), embodying workers' democracy. They totally misjudged the importance of the fact that the many vanguard groups were present in the Sorbonne courtyard and that the members of the CP had to stand beside them, where they usually found themselves on the defensive before their audiences.

I might mention in passing that the pressure of the students was so strong that the pro-Chinese felt themselves compelled to take away their picture of Stalin at the end of the first day.

Thus, the OCI members (who lead the FER), despite their pseudorevolutionary statements, placed themselves outside the militant vanguard which carried the struggle in the Latin Quarter to a very high political level. At the same time, they sought to intervene in the workers movement without taking account of its development, attempting to unmask the leaderships by maneuvers which could not be effective in view of their weakness.

In this manner, while the great mass of students were carrying out monster demonstrations which shook public opinion, forcing the apparatuses to change their course to regain control of the movement, they went to l'Humanité [organ of the French CP] and the Bourse du Travail [the union headquarters] to put the bureaucrats on the spot.

They thought basically that in such circumstances the way to impel the workers movement forward was to make publicity-catching declarations. They did not understand how much the political level could be raised by mass demonstrations. Let me note in addition that when one of their members got a chance to speak on television, he fell into the trap laid by the government, which wanted to scare the public. When asked what his perspective was, he replied in essence: Our perspective is not dialogue; it is civil war.

To our knowledge their militants in the provinces, left more to their own devices, have reacted more healthily. They have not thrown cold water on the demonstrations and yelled adventurism, as in Paris.

Here is what Sauvageot, the leader of the UNEF [French National Students Union], had to say about them in an interview in the paper of the PSU [Parti Socialiste Unifié -- United Socialist party -- the left socialist party], Tribune Socialiste, May 16:

"I have absolutely nothing against the small groups; I criticize the political line of some among them which has not enabled them to adapt themselves to a situation that they have been unable to foresee and which has prevented them from playing a leading role. Take for example the FER or the UJCML [Union de Jeunesse Communiste (Marxiste-Léniniste) -- Young Communist Federation (Marxist-Leninist) -- Maoists]. Although they have different positions, they are united in a common rigidity which has prevented them from

integrating themselves in the dynamic of the movement.

"The militants of the FER quit the field of battle on Friday evening May 10 because they considered the decision to stay in the Latin Quarter adventuristic. Nevertheless, there it was that the fight took place and it was waged without them. Those who over the years have persistently put forward slogans of going over the head of the union organizations, now continually advocate lining up with the positions of the union leaderships, which fall far short of the demands of the moment. It is apparent to what dubious positions this line has led...

"The attitude of other political groups such as the JCR, the ESU [PSU students], the 'March 22 Movement' at Nanterre has been very different. Because these groups have been able to understand the significance of the student struggles, because, despite everything that separates them, they have a common political basis so far as the anticapitalist and anti-imperialist struggles are concerned. For example, they have been able to integrate themselves into the movement, to be driving forces in it, and to approach the problem of extending our struggles in a valid way."

I already mentioned the pessimism they exhibited both about the war in Vietnam and about the struggle of the students. This similarity is not accidental; it is rooted in a single basic conception of the socialist revolution that might be termed "superproletarian."

Proceeding from the essential Marxist proposition that the proletariat

should play the leading role in order to assure victory, they have failed to grasp how, in given conditions, other classes (like the poor peasantry in the underdeveloped countries) or other categories (such as the student youth) can play, before the proletariat has been mobilized in great numbers, either a decisively explosive role (as in the case of great peasant masses) or a role as detonator where students are involved.

They could have found valuable warnings by Trotsky on this point in articles written during the Spanish revolution during the 1930's and reprinted in volume three of the French edition of his writings. The dialectical interaction between the class struggle of the proletariat and the struggle of other classes or social layers is alien to the sectarians. In their eyes, so far as the peasants or petty bourgeoisie is concerned, there can be no socialist revolution unless the workers stand at its head.

Indubitably, the attitude of the members of the OCI and the FER has not served the cause of Trotskyism. Let's hope they will discard the frenzy into which they have plunged, that they will become sensitive to the prevailing atmosphere in the vanguard of the movement, and, finally, that they will come to understand the necessity for the different organizations claiming to be Trotskyist to present to this vanguard the stance of militants, who, while they have disagreements that cannot be glossed over, are nonetheless able to act together on many issues and to discuss in a fraternal spirit.

May 21, 1968

#### NOTED CZECH WRITER PROTESTS 1960 ADMISSION OF TROTSKY'S ASSASSIN TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA

According to an April 21 dispatch from Prague by Agence France-Presse, the admission of Trotsky's assassin into Czechoslovakia has been hotly debated in Prague for the third time this year. The assassin, known as Jacques Mornard, entered Czechoslovakia in 1960 following his release from a Mexican prison after serving the maximum twenty-year sentence.

The noted Czech writer, Jan Prochazka, recently restored deputy chairman of the Writers Union, has published a magazine article in which he asked Vaclav David, former Minister of Foreign Affairs under Novotny, why the murderer of the exiled Russian revolutionist had been given a Czech passport and a plane ticket to Prague by the Czech embassy in Mexico City eight years ago.

(Mornard's present whereabouts and

activities have not been made public.)

Prochazka declared that this step compromised the good name of Czechoslovakia.

So far as is known, this is the first time that the issue of Trotsky's slaying by an agent of Stalin has been publicly raised and discussed in a Soviet-bloc country. The fact that the matter has been so sharply and squarely posed by one of the leading spokesmen for the more militant liberalizers indicates the scope and depth of the anti-Stalinism sweeping Czechoslovakia today.

The protest also foreshadows the likelihood of similar queries about Trotsky, his ideas and his movement in intellectual and political circles elsewhere in East Europe.

"COMMITTEES OF ACTION" -- NOT A "PEOPLE'S FRONT"

By Leon Trotsky

[The following article by Leon Trotsky appeared in The Militant of December 14, 1935. It was written during an upsurge of the French working class that could have shortly developed into a successful socialist revolution had it not been for the betrayals committed by the bureaucratic leaderships of the Communist party and the Social Democracy.

[Of special interest are Trotsky's remarks on the "People's Front," which had just been launched in France and other countries under the auspices of the Kremlin. The Communist party leaders of today in France are again turning to this device in hope of saving capitalism from going down in the present crisis racking the country.

[How contemporary this article by Trotsky sounds today can be gauged by the fact that the slogan he advocated, formation of Committees of Action, is being advanced in France right now by the vanguard of the rebellious students and striking workers. (Notes are by Intercontinental Press.)]

\* \* \*

The "People's Front" represents the coalition of the proletariat with the imperialist bourgeoisie, in the shape of the Radical party and smaller tripe of the same sort. The coalition extends to both the parliamentary and the extraparliamentary spheres. In both spheres the Radical party, preserving for itself complete freedom of action, coarsely imposes restrictions upon the freedom of action of the proletariat.\*

\* Radical Socialist party. This bourgeois party was the traditional party of democratic reform, supported historically by the masses of the petty bourgeoisie. Its chief leaders were Edouard Herriot and Edouard Daladier. The closest corresponding group in present-day France would be the "Federation of the Democratic and Socialist Left," headed by the bourgeois politician François Mitterand. The Communist party has made a coalition with the "Federation," submitting to the bourgeois program of M. Mitterand. (The Socialist party is a component group of this truly nonsocialist "Federation.")

If de Gaulle is the modern equivalent of the Bonapartist regimes of 1934-1936, Mitterand and Co. represent the same "political exploiters" of the petty bourgeoisie that the Radicals did. The Communist and Socialist leaders' policy of alliance with them, rather than independent struggle for workers power, rep-

The Radical party itself is undergoing decay. Each new election gives added proof of the passage of supporters away from it to the right and to the left. On the other hand, the Socialist and Communist parties -- because of the absence of a genuinely revolutionary party -- are growing stronger. The general trend of the toiling masses, including the petty bourgeoisie, is quite clearly to the left. The orientation of the leaders of the workers' parties is no less self-evident: to the right. At the time when the masses by their votes and in their struggle seek to cast off the party of the Radicals, the leaders of the united front [between the Communist and Socialist parties -- IP], on the contrary, seek to save it. After obtaining the confidence of the masses of workers on the basis of a 'socialist' program, the leaders of the workers' parties then proceeded to concede voluntarily a lion's share of this confidence to the Radicals, in whom the masses of workers have absolutely no confidence.

Radicals Dominate People's Front

The "People's Front" in its present guise shamelessly tramples not only upon workers' democracy but also upon formal, i.e., bourgeois, democracy. The majority of Radical voters do not participate in the struggle of the toilers and consequently in the People's Front. Yet the Radical party occupies in this Front not only an equal but a privileged position; the workers' parties are compelled to restrict their activity to the program of the Radical party. This idea is most outspokenly advanced by the cynics of l'Humanité!\* The latest elections to the Senate have illuminated with especial clarity the privileged position of the Radicals in the People's Front. The leaders of the Communist party boasted openly of the fact that they renounced in favor of nonproletarian parties several mandates [to seats in parliament -- IP] which justly belonged to the workers. This merely means that the united front re-established in part the property qualification in favor of the bourgeoisie.

The "Front," as it is conceived, is an organization for a direct and immediate struggle. When struggle is in question, every worker is worth ten bourgeois, even those adhering to the united front. From the standpoint of the revolu-

---

resents the same danger Trotsky described in 1936.

\* l'Humanité. The main paper of the French Communist party.

tionary fighting strength of the Front, the electoral privileges should have been given not to Radical bourgeois but to workers. But in essence, privileges are uncalled for here. Is the People's Front intended for defense of "democracy"? Then let it begin by applying it to its own ranks. This means: the leadership of the People's Front must be the direct and immediate reflection of the will of the struggling masses.

How? Very simply: through elections. The proletariat does not deny anyone the right to struggle side by side with it against fascism, the Bonapartist\* government of Laval,\*\* the war plot of the imperialists, and all other forms of oppression and violence. The sole demand that class-conscious workers put to their actual or potential allies is that they struggle in action. Every group of the population really participating in the struggle at a given stage and ready to submit to common discipline must have the equal right to exert influence on the leadership of the People's Front.

#### The Committees of Action

Each two hundred, five hundred, or thousand citizens adhering, in a given city, district, factory, barrack, or village, to the People's Front should in time of fighting actions elect their representative to the local committee of action. All the participants in the struggle are bound by its discipline.

---

\* Bonapartism. As Trotsky said elsewhere, "The essence of Bonapartism consists in this: basing itself on the struggle of two camps, it 'saves' the 'nation' with the help of a bureaucratic-military dictatorship." De Gaulle's Fifth Republic, like the regimes immediately preceding the establishment of the People's Front, is a Bonapartist regime. Trotsky added that such regimes are characterized by "independence of the government from the parties and programs, liquidation of the legislative power by means of plenary powers, with the government taking its place above the battling factions, that is, in point of fact, above the nation, so that it may play the part of 'arbiter.'" (Whither France, pp. 10 and 126.)

\*\* Pierre Laval. Leader of the bourgeois Independent Center Republican party. He played a prominent role in the series of Bonapartist regimes in 1934-1936. Foreign minister under premiers Doumergue and Flandin in 1934-1935, he became premier himself, ruling by decree from June 1935 to January 1936. He was followed by Sarraut, who tried to maintain a "left" Bonapartist regime that nevertheless gave way in June 1936 to the People's Front government of Blum.

The last Congress of the Communist International in its resolution on the Dimitroff\* report expressed itself in favor of elected Committees of Action as the mass support for the People's Front. This is perhaps the only progressive idea in the entire resolution. But precisely for this reason the Stalinists do nothing to realize it. They dare not do so for fear of breaking off collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

#### Influence over Middle Class

To be sure, in the election of Committees not only workers will be able to participate but also civil service employees, functionaries, war veterans, artisans, small merchants, and small peasants. Thus the Committees of Action are in closest harmony with the tasks of the struggle of the proletariat for influence over the petty bourgeoisie. But they complicate in the extreme the collaboration between the workers' bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie. In the meantime the People's Front in its present form is nothing else but the organization of class collaboration between the political exploiters of the proletariat (the reformists and the Stalinists) and the political exploiters of the petty bourgeoisie (the Radicals). Real mass elections of the Committees of Action would automatically eject the bourgeois middlemen (the Radicals) from the ranks of the People's Front and thus blow to smithereens the criminal policy dictated by Moscow.

However, it would be a mistake to think that it is possible at a set day and hour to call the proletarian and petty-bourgeois masses to elect Committees of Action on the basis of a given statute. Such an approach would be purely bureaucratic and consequently barren. The workers will be able to elect a Committee of Action only in those cases when they themselves participate in some sort of action and feel the need for revolutionary leadership. At issue here is not

---

\* Georgi Dimitroff. Bulgarian Communist leader, famous for his speech at the trial on the Reichstag fire, was a stalwart supporter of Stalin. At the 1935 Congress of the Comintern, he gave the key report marking the international turn away from the policies of bureaucratic adventurism of 1929-1934, that had led to the German catastrophe of 1933. Instead came the era of class collaboration by CP's all over the world, through "People's Fronts," policies that turned the Comintern into a variant of the reformist Second International of the Social Democracy. Dimitroff was Stalin's spokesman at the head of the Comintern through the war, after which he briefly headed the Bulgarian "Democratic People's Republic."

the formal democratic representation of all and any masses but the revolutionary representation of the struggling masses. The Committee of Action is an apparatus of struggle. There is no sense in guessing beforehand precisely what strata of the toilers will be attracted to the creation of Committees of Action: the lines of demarcation in the struggling masses will be established during the struggle itself.

### Danger of Sporadic Outbreaks

The greatest danger in France lies in the fact that the revolutionary energy of the masses will be dissipated in spurts, in isolated explosions like Toulon, Brest, and Limoges, and give way to apathy. Only conscious traitors or hopeless muddleheads are capable of thinking that in the present situation it is possible to hold the masses immobilized up to the moment when they will be blessed from above by the government of the People's Front. Strikes, protests, street clashes, direct uprisings are absolutely inevitable in the present situation. The task of the proletarian party consists not in checking and paralyzing these movements but in unifying them and investing them with the greatest possible force.

The reformists and Stalinists fear above all to frighten the Radicals. The apparatus of the united front quite consciously plays the role of disorganizer in relation to sporadic movements of the masses. And the "Lefts" of the Marceau Pivert type\* serve to shield this apparatus from the indignation of the masses. The situation can be saved only by aiding the struggling masses to create a new apparatus in the process of the struggle itself, which meets the requirements of the moment. The Committees of Action are intended for this very purpose. During the struggle in Toulon and Brest the workers would have created without any hesitation a local fighting organization had

\* Marceau Pivert. Leader of a "left" current in the Socialist party, of whom Trotsky said in 1936: "In this situation the worst role is played by pseudo-revolutionists of the Marceau Pivert type who promise to overturn the bourgeoisie but not otherwise than with the permission of Léon Blum." Pivert formed his "revolutionary left" grouping at the very time in 1935 when the Trotskyists were being expelled from the SP, his aim being to hold as many left militants as possible within the reformist organization rather than have them go with the Trotskyists. Pivert entered Blum's cabinet for a time in 1936. In 1938 he was expelled from the SP, and formed the "Socialist Workers' and Peasants' party," which disintegrated on the eve of the war. After the war he rejoined the SP.

they been called upon to do so. On the very next day after the bloody assault in Limoges the workers and a considerable section of the petty bourgeoisie would have indubitably revealed their readiness to create an elected committee to investigate the bloody events and to prevent them in the future. During the movement in the barracks in the summer of this year against Rabiot (the extension of the term of military service) the soldiers without much ado would have elected battalion, regimental and garrison committees of action had such a road been suggested to them. Similar situations arise and will continue to arise at every step -- in most cases on a local but also often on a national scale. The task is not to miss a single situation of this kind. The first condition for this is a clear understanding of the import of the Committees of Action as the only means of breaking the antirevolutionary opposition of party and trade-union apparatuses.

### Parties and Soviets

Does this mean that the Committees of Action are substitutes for party and trade-union organizations? It would be stupid to pose the question in this manner. The masses enter into the struggle with all their ideas, traditions, groupings, and organizations. The parties continue to exist and to struggle. During elections to the Committees of Action each party will naturally seek to elect its own adherents. The Committees of Action will arrive at decisions through a majority (given complete freedom of party and factional groupings). In relation to parties the Committees of Action may be called the revolutionary parliament: the parties are not excluded but on the contrary they are necessarily presupposed; at the same time they are tested in action and the masses learn to free themselves from the influence of rotten parties.

Does this mean then that the Committees of Action are simply -- soviets? Under certain conditions the Committees of Action can transform themselves into soviets. However, it would be incorrect to call the Committees of Action by this name. Today, in 1935, the popular masses have become accustomed to associate with the word soviets the conception of power already conquered; but France today is still considerably removed from this. The Russian soviets during their initial stages were not at all what they subsequently became, and in those days they were often called by the modest name of workers' or strike committees.

Committees of Action at their present stage have as their task to unite in a defensive struggle the toiling masses of France and thus imbue these masses with the consciousness of their own power for the coming offensive. Whether matters will reach genuine soviets depends on whether the present critical situation in France

will unfold to the ultimate revolutionary conclusions. This of course depends not only upon the will of the revolutionary vanguard but also upon a number of objective conditions; in any case the mass movement that has today run up against the barrier of the People's Front will be unable to move forward without the Committees of Action.

### Workers' Militia

Such tasks as the creation of workers' militia, the arming of the workers, the preparation of a general strike will remain on paper if the struggling masses themselves through their authoritative organs do not occupy themselves with these tasks. Only Committees of Action born in the struggle can assure a real militia numbering fighters not by the thousands but the tens of thousands. Only Committees of Action embracing the most important centers of the country will be able to choose the moment for transition to more decisive methods of struggle, the leadership of which will be rightly theirs.

### Conclusions

From the propositions sketched above there flow a number of conclusions for the political activity of the proletarian revolutionists in France. The cardinal conclusion touches upon the so-called "Revolutionary (?) Left" [Pivert's group]. This grouping is characterized by a complete lack of understanding of the laws that govern the movement of the revolutionary masses. No matter how much the centrists babble about the "masses," they always orient themselves toward the reformist apparatus. Repeating this or that revolutionary slogan, Marceau Pivert subordinates it to the abstract principal of "organizational unity," which in action turns out to be unity with the patriots against the revolutionists. At the time when it is a life and death question for the masses to smash the opposition of the united social-patriotic apparatuses the left centrists consider the "unity" of these apparatuses to be an absolute good which stands above the interests of revolutionary struggle.

Committees of Action will be built only by those who understand to the end the necessity of freeing the masses from the treacherous leadership of the social patriots. Yet Pivert clutches at Zyromsky,\* who clutches at Blum,\*\* who in turn

---

\* Jean Zyromsky. Leading "left" bureaucrat in the French Socialist party, who headed a pro-Stalinist current within the SP. During the war he joined the Communist party.

\*\* Léon Blum. The most prominent leader in the Socialist party, who headed the

together with Thorez\* clutches at Herriot,\*\* who clutches at Laval. Pivert enters into the system of the People's Front (not for nothing did he vote for the shameful resolution of Blum at the last National Council meeting!) and the People's Front enters as a wing into the Bonapartist regime of Laval. The downfall of the Bonapartist regime is inevitable. Should the leadership of the People's Front (Herriot-Blum-Cachin\*\*\*-Thorez-Zyromsky-Pivert) succeed in remaining on its feet in the course of the entire approaching and decisive period, then the Bonapartist regime will inevitably give way to fascism. The condition for the victory of the proletariat is the liquidation of the present leadership. The slogan of "unity" becomes under these conditions not only a stupidity but a crime. No unity with the agents of French imperialism and of the League of Nations. To their perfidious leadership it is necessary to counterpose revolutionary Committees of Action. It is possible to build these committees only by mercilessly exposing the antirevolutionary politics of the so-called "Revolutionary Left" with Marceau Pivert at the head. There is of course no room in our ranks for illusions and doubts on this score.

November 26, 1935

---

People's Front government in a coalition with the Radicals. When he took office, June 1936, he announced the necessity of staying within the limits of the capitalist order.

\* Maurice Thorez. Top leader of the French Communist party for many years. He presided over the Stalinization of the CP in the late 'twenties; helped keep the workers in the capitalist framework during the People's Front; and after World War II, served as vice-president in de Gaulle's government of "national reconstruction," helping persuade the workers to rebuild capitalism rather than transform it. After his death in 1964, he was succeeded as head of the CP by Waldeck-Rochet.

\*\* Edouard Herriot. With Daladier, the chief figure in the Radical leadership. Before 1934 he had been, variously, premier and foreign minister. Lukewarm to the People's Front development, he consistently supported the Bonapartist regimes of Laval, etc. Saved from electoral defeat in May 1936 by Communist and Socialist support, he was elected to the presidency of the Chamber of Deputies by Communist and Socialist votes.

\*\*\* Marcel Cachin. French Communist leader and head of his party's parliamentary group in the Chamber of Deputies.



DE GAULLE'S FOND RECOLLECTIONS OF THE SERVICES OF MAURICE THOREZ

It has often been said that capitalist politicians appreciate the role of the Moscow-oriented Communist parties in heading off workers revolutions in times of capitalist crisis, in the interests of continued "peaceful coexistence." It is rare, however, in light of the necessary fictions on both sides, that the head of an imperialist state pays public tribute to a Communist functionary for performing such a service.

The relationship between de Gaulle and the French CP has been a notable exception to this rule. In 1964, at the death of Maurice Thorez, long-time chairman of the French CP, General de Gaulle sent a letter of condolence to one of Thorez' sons, and even authorized its publication.

In the letter he stressed he had "not forgotten" Thorez' key role in diverting the French workers from revolutionary measures during the mass upsurge at the end of World War II. The letter read as follows:

"I offer you and your family my sincere condolences in your grief over the death of your father. For my part, I have not forgotten that at a decisive time for France, President Maurice Thorez -- whatever may have been his actions before and after that -- in response to my appeal and as a member of my government contributed to maintaining national unity. Please accept, Sir, my deepest regards." (Thorez was vice-president in de Gaulle's postwar "reconstruction" government.)

In this letter de Gaulle only summarized what he stated elsewhere even

more explicitly. In his memoirs, entitled Le Salut, appears the following passage:

"Taking into account previous circumstances, events since then, the necessities of today, I hold that the return of Maurice Thorez as head of the Communist party can yield more advantages at present than difficulties...

"Inasmuch as in place of revolution, the Communists seek preponderance in a parliamentary regime, society runs less risk...

"As for Thorez, while trying to advance the affairs of Communism, on many occasions he was to serve the public interest. On his return to France, he helped put an end to the last vestiges of the 'patriotic militia' whom some of his people obstinately sought to maintain in a new underground. Insofar as the gloomy, hard rigidity of his party permitted him, he opposed the attempts at encroachment of the liberation committees and the acts of violence to which the overexcited groups turned. Among the workers -- they were numerous -- particularly the miners, who listened to his harangues, he did not stop advocating the slogan of working to the utmost and of producing, cost what it might. Was this simply a political tactic? It's not my business to figure it out. It was enough for me that France benefited." (pp. 100-101.)

Will Waldeck-Rochet repeat the services to French capitalism rendered by his bureaucratic predecessor? The situation is different, the working out of a betrayal less easy, but we can be sure Waldeck-Rochet, too, will strive "not to be forgotten" by de Gaulle.

DARK DAYS FOR THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY

By George Cunvin

London

The British Labour party is going through its darkest days since 1931. Indeed, many persons question whether the party can survive the devastating defeats it suffered in the local government elections during the second week of May.

In the parliamentary by-elections of the past twelve months, the working class manifested their loss of confidence in the Wilson administration by staying away from the polls.

In the local government elections, the disturbing feature is that a considerable number of working-class votes went to the Tories.

From every part of the country came the same sorry tale. Sheffield, ruled by Labour for forty-one years, is now under Tory control. In the working-class London Borough of Islington, where Labour ruled for thirty-four years and where, until the vote of May 9 was counted, there was not a single non-Labour councillor, there are today forty-seven Tories, three independents and only ten socialists. In one solidly working-class ward the swing to the Tories amounted to forty-five percent.

In 1964 the British workers gave Social Democracy one more chance. They voted for a government which they believed would prove more sympathetic to the legitimate demands of the working class than

the Tories. Above all, they expected the trade unions and the government to be in rapport; they counted on progressive social reforms, a general improvement in working-class standards of living. Never since World War I has a Social Democratic victory at the polls aroused greater hope; never has there been such a complete let-down.

Wilson's government acted almost like a textbook example of the Social Democracy in action. It undertook the task of saving British capitalism.

But British capitalism, lagging behind its transatlantic, continental and Japanese rivals in technology, could only compete in the world market by cutting the real wages of the workers. To do this effectively, the power of the trade unions had to be curbed. The Tories could not easily undertake this task for the British capitalists. Only a Labour government, returned on false electoral promises, could even attempt this.

Right from the start, the organised workers resisted the government's efforts to cajole and coerce them into supporting the "Prices and Incomes Policy" that meant a wage freeze. Even some of the trade-union leaders saw a threat to their own positions in this attempt to draw them even more tightly into the state machinery. The first reaction of the workers was to withdraw their political support from the Labour party by not voting in the parliamentary by-elections and in the county council elections. Now it is estimated that more than thirty per cent of the Labour vote went to the Tories.

The British working class have tried Social Democracy. Now, thoroughly disillusioned, they seek alternatives. A minority, clinging to long-established parliamentarism, see no other way but to vote for the "opposition," the Tories.

The majority are thinking in terms of industrial action, eschewing politics for the time being.

It is the tragedy of the British Labour movement that at this historical moment there is no mass revolutionary party to which the workers can turn.

But it is not only the British working class who are turning away from the Labour party. British capitalism is also becoming convinced from another viewpoint that the Social Democracy cannot deliver the goods -- a tamed and chastened working class. The ruling class also look to the Tories as a viable first alternative. But the more farseeing elements are also preparing the way for other methods of dealing with the situation should the parliamentary road lead to nowhere.

The racialist speech of the ex-Tory minister Enoch Powell at Birmingham April 20 was a deliberate bit of kiteflying. In the acute crisis confronting British capitalism it will be necessary to divert attention from the root causes.

The coloured immigrants from India, Pakistan and the West Indies provide convenient scapegoats. If there is a housing shortage, this is pictured as caused by the immigrants. If there is no room for your children at school, this is blamed on the immigrant children. If you are unemployed, you are told that probably a coloured worker is doing your job.

There can be no doubt that this naked appeal to the basest emotions has met with an unexpectedly big response. The ruling class now know that should they need a fascist movement in its crude Hitlerite form, a certain base is present.

Should this be a too crude and dangerous solution to be tried in the immediate future, the ruling class has other irons in the fire. Waiting in the wings is Desmond Donnelly, the ex-Labour M.P. for Pembrokeshire, who has all the makings of a peculiarly British-type fascist leader of tomorrow.

In Scotland there are two strands to the growing nationalist movement -- one progressive, with a solid working-class base, and the other reactionary.

With the present demoralisation in the ranks of the Labour party, it is doubtful that the Wilson government can survive the three years it still has to run. The parliamentary party is bound to reflect the fissures now opening in the party organisation. Already the trade-union M.P.'s are finding themselves torn by conflicting loyalties.

But before it goes, the Labour government must perform one last task for the capitalism it has tried so faithfully to serve. It must force through the Prices and Incomes Policy so that its Tory successors can carry on with the task of saving British capitalism unhindered by trade-union demands for higher pay to meet the rapidly increasing cost of living.

Wilson, by threatening to dissolve Parliament and call for a new election that would mean loss of office for a big percentage of M.P.'s, will be able to count on a majority vote.

There can be no doubt, however, that there will be massive resistance on the part of organised labour. The Wilson government, elected in a euphoria of hope in 1964, will pass from the scene in the midst of some of the fiercest industrial struggles this country has known since the general strike in 1926.

NEW INFORMATION ON CHE GUEVARA'S ACTIVITIES BETWEEN 1965-67

[The French publishing house of Seuil was scheduled to release a book about Ernesto "Che" Guevara in the middle of May written by one of the martyr's Argentine friends, Ricardo Rojo, who is closely associated with the Montevideo weekly, Marcha.

[The final chapter of this book was published in the original Spanish in the May 10 issue of Marcha. It contains information of extraordinary interest about Che Guevara's activities in the two-year period of 1965-1967.

[The editors of Marcha do not indicate what the plans are to publish the book in Spanish and in English. We hope that it will be forthcoming in these languages in the near future. Meanwhile, the following review of the final chapter, based on what appeared in Marcha, will serve to indicate the value of the book.]

\* \* \*

Ricardo Rojo begins by recounting how in 1958 he introduced the Argentinian journalist Jorge Masetti to Che Guevara and how Masetti then joined Fidel Castro's guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra and became a dedicated revolutionist.

"In 1959, when Castro took power, Guevara invited Masetti to Havana and entrusted him with the task of organizing Prensa Latina, whose principal function was to disseminate Cuban news.

"But in 1963 Jorge Masetti was to attempt a bold revolutionary operation which I heard him discuss with Che many times: the establishment of a guerrilla focus on Argentinian territory from a base developed in Bolivia. [Emphasis in original.]

"In June 1963, Jorge Masetti was in Bolivia with three Cuban officials from Che's general staff. In Emboroza, near the Argentinian border, the first men gathered who formed the EGP [Ejercito Guerrillero del Pueblo -- Peoples Guerrilla Army]. The emblem of the guerrilla movement was a sun on a red and black background: 'Red for the blood of the revolution and black as a symbol of mourning for the sufferings of the people,' Masetti explained to me."

But the political situation did not develop as hoped for and Masetti came to realize that the Cuban model would not be repeated in Argentina.

"At the end of September, Masetti and his small force crossed over the Bolivian frontier into Argentine territory. An open letter to President Illia, pub-

lished in Buenos Aires by the press of the Peronist left wing, drew attention to the EGP. In any case Masetti's voice seemed strikingly weak.

"Although the former journalist had clearly evaluated the situation, he did not give up. In reality, he felt caught in a trap but he did not want to break his promises to Guevara. He could have pointed to unfavorable changes in the situation, but he did not. He wanted to stay 'second in command,' a title which constantly reminded him that there was another commander in chief, for the moment absent, Che.

"Life in the virgin jungle of Bolivia and afterward in the Argentine province of Salta turned out to be much harsher than expected. Some Cuban veterans of the Sierra Maestra discovered this when they ate a wild fruit similar in appearance to the Cuban malanga. In the Argentine jungle this fruit is extremely poisonous and produces violent convulsions. Some of the guerrillas who tried it were made invalids for the rest of their lives.

"The rigorous discipline which Masetti imposed was heightened in the inverse proportion to the demoralization of his men. When a 24-year-old draftee, Adolfo Rotblat, called Pupi, talked about deserting, he was tried, condemned to death, and executed.

"Nonetheless the volunteers remained: students, construction workers, mechanics, and bank employees arrived from Buenos Aires after passing through a thousand adventures. Even a nephew of an admiral who had commanded the capital police force and a merchant sailor barely eighteen years old joined the guerrilla movement.

"The Cuban captain Hermes was entrusted with the military training of this motley force. But in February 1964, the growing demoralization among the members of the expedition touched off another crisis. Groswald, nicknamed 'Nardo,' one of the volunteers from Buenos Aires, was tried for insubordination, lack of revolutionary morale, and carelessness in the handling of weapons. Nardo, a Jew and a former bank employee, was one of those who came to the guerrillas full of enthusiasm. He was so fervent that he tore out his toenails to keep them from becoming imbedded in his feet during the long marches through the wild jungle. In any case, he was sentenced to death.

"This youth, scarcely nineteen years old, asked that he be shot in his guerrilla uniform, the black beret, the leather belt, and sunglasses. Three guer-

rillas made up a firing squad and Captain Hermes finished him off with his Luger. Was this the kind of guerrilla warfare that Guevara and Masetti had dreamed of to transform Argentina? Certainly not.

"In the meantime, the secret services had infiltrated two of their agents among the young recruits of the EGP. They intrigued to create incidents, and once they had been successfully infiltrated it can be said that the guerrilla action was finished. In the following days, many guerrillas were captured by the paramilitary border police guarding the Argentinian-Bolivian frontier. Three guerrillas died of hunger after trying to live off wild plants.

"The only real encounter took place in the middle of April 1964. On that day Captain Hermes and one of his comrades attacked an advanced police post and killed a soldier. The same day the guerrillas were spotted, surrounded, and killed.

"Fourteen men from the EGP were already in the hands of the police. They were tortured in the most bloodthirsty way. Dragged by the hair, five of them were suffocated in the opened bellies of those already dead.

"In the meantime, Masetti wandered deeper into the dense wild jungle of Yuto, an inferno of disease and ferocious animals, an oppressive and tortuous labyrinth of high thick vegetation where the sun cannot be seen the whole day long. Jorge Masetti did not return. The primitive jungle devoured him."

Ricardo Rojo speculates over the conclusions Guevara might have drawn from this experience, in regard to his theory of the "revolutionary focus." But Rojo notes that the tragedy was the most veiled in the whole history of Latin-American guerrilla struggles.

"The Argentine press mentioned it only in passing. The great urban masses were not even aware of the existence of the EGP. The peasants to whom the guerrillas' appeal was directed did not learn of it.

"But, on the other hand, the Argentine adventure of the Masetti column did show that an insurrectionary group could roam for months through the south of Bolivia and northern Argentina with impunity. Masetti had to send an open letter to the Argentinian government for the security services to admit the existence of the guerrilla movement. Doubtless this was one of the positive features of the tragedy of the Masetti group in Guevara's eyes."

Rojo then describes Che's polit-

ical tour of Africa in 1965, which made him into the emissary of the third world revolution.

He returned to Havana on March 14, 1965, being met by the entire general staff but without great circumstance. Later he talked in private with Fidel Castro for almost four hours running.

"Did they have a dispute? Guevara never made the slightest allusion to a conflict. But a little later he wrote a letter to his mother in Buenos Aires in which he told her that he intended to give up his post as a revolutionary leader in Cuba. He was going to work for a month in the sugar-cane fields and then spend five years in a factory to study from the inside the functioning of one of the many industries which he had commanded from the top.

"The letter held furthermore an important element for anyone interested in this most obscure and decisive period in Che's life. In fact, he told his mother not to come to Havana under any circumstances.

"With the political discipline characteristic of him, he went into 'seclusion' in Havana from March 20 to late July 1965. He did not communicate with anyone and was virtually incognito.... During this period, his mother Celia wrote him a letter from Buenos Aires which showed the ties of esteem and frankness that united them." Rojo quotes this interesting letter as follows:

"Buenos Aires, April 14, 1965

"My Dear:

"Do my letters seem strange to you? I don't know if we have lost the freedom we used to have in our relations or whether we never had it and we have always spoken to each other in that mildly ironic tone indulged in by inhabitants of banks of the Plata, aggravated still more by our own family code, which is still more withdrawn.

"A serious concern however makes me drop this ironic tone to speak more directly. It seems then that my letters become incomprehensible and you find them strange and enigmatic.

"This diplomatic tone which you have adopted for our correspondence forces me to read between the lines and interpret the hidden meaning. I read your last letter like reading the news in La Prensa or La Nación, picking out or trying to pick out the real meaning and implication of every sentence.

"Today I am plunged in a sea of uncertainty and seized by a still greater

anxiety.

"I am not going to use diplomatic language. I am going to be very frank. It seems madness to me for the few individuals capable of taking on the task of organization in Cuba to spend an entire month cutting sugar cane when there are so many good cane cutters among the people. If they do it as voluntary work in the hours they normally devote to rest or amusement, that is another matter. It also makes sense to do it a whole day to demonstrate conclusively the advantages and the need for using machines to cut cane. For, the foreign exchange that Cuba needs will come from the harvest and the sugar tonnage obtained.

"A month is a lot of time. There must be other reasons I don't know about. Let's take your personal situation. If you really intend after this month to devote yourself to running a factory -- a task which Castellanos and Villegas are carrying out quite successfully -- it seems to me that this madness borders on absurdity, above all if you want to take on this work for five years and with the intention of becoming a real 'specialist.'

"Since I know your mania about not missing a single day in the ministry, and when I saw your trip abroad stretch out so, I wondered: Will Ernesto still be the minister of industries when he returns to Cuba? Who was upheld, who won the argument on the questions which motivated this decision?

"I half guessed the answers. If you are going to head an enterprise, it is because you are no longer the minister. I only need know who they are appointing in your place to know if the quarrel was solved with the wisdom of Solomon. In any case, your spending five years running a factory is too much of a loss of time for someone like you. And I do not say this as your mother. I say it as an old woman who hopes to see the whole world socialist. I think that if you stick to your decision you will not be serving the cause of world socialism.

"If for one reason or another, your path is blocked in Cuba, Ben Bella in Algeria would be very happy to have you come to organize his country's economy and contribute your advice to this task, and the same for Nkrumah in Ghana. Yes, you will be a foreigner. This seems to be your destiny forever.

"What a letter! A regular sermon. I wanted to tear it up, but the same thing kept coming out. I was delighted to get the pictures of your family. All your children are adorable, although not one reminds me of your features or your expression. I am glad you decided to stop 'production.' I was very worried during

Aleida's latest difficulty.

"Yes, I am disconsolate that I can't go to Cuba today. I would be so happy to be near you, if only to say to you every morning, 'Have a good day, old boy,' and 'So long, old boy.' Such words said every day would have some value. I would like to meet Celia and little Ernesto and listen to Aliusha's baby chatter. Another time it will be...

"An embrace, a big embrace for you and yours. -- Celia."

Shortly after this, the health of Guevara's mother took a turn for the worse.

On May 16 the doctors considered her death imminent. "I called Havana, but I could not locate Guevara. On the eighteenth, I sent a telegram: 'Comandante Guevara. Minister of Industries. Havana. Your mother is gravely ill and wants to see you. An embrace -- Ricardo Rojo.'

"There was no answer and on May 19 Celia de la Serna de Guevara died in Buenos Aires. At the burial, relatives and friends cast wondering glances at each other: 'Where in the devil is Guevara?' Since he had not answered his mother's last call, it was apparent that he knew nothing of what had happened. It was clear that wherever he was there was not only no telephone but even no mail or newspapers.

"I do not think, however, that Che was a prisoner. It was an act of political discipline, a long perfectly willing session of self-criticism, whose rules had been set by Guevara himself in agreement with Castro. These rules must have had an absolute rigor since they were not even violated for Celia's death.

"In June 1965, still during Guevara's isolation, Ben Bella, the head of the Algerian revolution, was ousted by Colonel Boumedienne. The Cubans thought that the African revolution was in danger, undermined by neocolonialism and anarchy. Then Guevara accepted the grave responsibility of going to the heart of the black continent to offer his personal aid to the rebellion and to keep the revolution afloat.

"On October 3, of the same year, Fidel Castro publicly read the letters in which his comrade-in-arms renounced his Cuban nationality, his post of minister, and his grade of commander.

"The reading of these letters revealed that Guevara very quickly gave up his idea of 'returning to the source.' Going to work in the sugar-cane fields and in the factories could not hide the ideological and tactical dispute which

had broken out between himself and Castro. In disagreement with the latter over the direction to be given to the revolution, Che, like the old Communists, preferred finally to resign rather than oppose the socialist government. He came within an ace of becoming another Trotsky. Then, he followed the principle that when the fate of the revolutionary government is at stake, individual points of view take second place.

"But after this he could not remain on the island, stripped of all his titles and functions and at the risk of causing grave harm to the revolution internationally. He had to leave. He had to choose a better moment.

"His departure for Africa was carefully prepared by the G2, the Cuban political police. The G2 moved in such a way as to convince the foreigners that Che was in Santo Domingo during the military uprising and that he had been killed in a street battle in the sector controlled by Colonel Francisco Caamaño.

"In the meantime, in the greatest secrecy, Guevara arrived in the Congo, where the armed groups of Mulele and Sumialot were fighting Moïse Tshombe's white mercenaries. Tshombe, moreover, also had in his service a well-trained team of anti-Castro Cuban fliers.

"Guevara met in Brazzaville with President Masemba-Debat. There were already some Castroite Cubans there who were training a military force to take on the neocolonialist mercenaries. In the following weeks, other Cubans joined their compatriots, but they never came up to the fantastic number of several thousand cited by journalists. In reality Cuba only sent about two hundred men to the Congo; the majority were paramilitary commando instructors."

After spending about nine months in the Congo and taking part in several battles against white mercenaries, Che returned to Cuba.

Rojo speculates that Che had to leave due to pressure from Peking, the Maoists wanting to get the Cubans out of the struggle in Africa. He indicates that others believe the pressure came from Moscow and was exerted on Castro. Still another version was that Che left because of local intrigues.

"In the second week of September 1966 Guevara entered Bolivia. He had left Havana on a regular Iberia flight, stopped off in Madrid, and from there he went to São Paulo, Brazil. He continued his journey by train to Corumba, crossing over into Bolivian territory.

"Che's return to Cuba after his

Congolese adventure was tinged with a certain bitterness. He was convinced that his departure from Africa had been forced by a Soviet diplomatic maneuver, and that Moscow and Washington were in secret agreement as to the main lines of their African policies. Clearly an agitator like Guevara had no place in this program.

"Then Che returned to his old dream of rousing the peoples of Latin America to rebellion from Bolivia and northern Argentina. The operation was to be essentially the same as Jorge Masetti's expedition two years earlier; but this time Guevara proposed to profit from the unfortunate experience of his 'second in command.'

"In spite of important differences, Guevara's adventure is somewhat reminiscent of Lenin's in Poland. Both operations revealed not only an overly superficial political analysis but also grave failings in military preparation.

"In any case, the organization of the guerrilla movement was the joint work of Che and Castro. Lenin risked the Polish adventure so that capitalist Germany would have a common frontier with socialism. Guevara and Castro likewise sought a Latin-American border for Cuba.

"We know how this ambitious project ended. Che's guerrillas soon found themselves militarily and politically isolated. They were not able to attract the interest of the people, and the politicalized Bolivian cadres (CP and MNR) decided to abandon the guerrillas to their fate. Like Masetti two years before, Guevara and his men were alone in the jungle.

"Nonetheless, they had some encounters with Barrientos' soldiers. On April 10, 1967, the guerrilla column again confronted the army in Iripiti near Nanchahuazú. Eleven soldiers died in the clash, seven were wounded and eleven (including an officer) were taken prisoner.

"After this battle Che decided to get his two friends, the Frenchman Régis Debray and the Argentinian Ciro Bustos, out of the sector. Debray, arriving from Havana, was in Nanchahuazú for essentially journalistic motives. He hoped to be able to spread the news of the existence of the Bolivian guerrillas in the European press and confirm that Che was their leader. Ciro Bustos, for his part, was invited to attend an important political meeting. He completely shared Che's ideas but disagreed with the way in which the expedition had been prepared. Since he respected and admired Guevara, the discussion was painful.

"Guevara thought that he could get the Frenchman and Argentinian out of the

threatened encirclement through the village of Muyupampa. We know now that this was imprudent. On April 20, Debray, Bustos, and a third man, the English photographer George Andrew Roth, fell into the hands of the army and were on the point of being executed out of hand by the army.

"Two weeks later, the guerrillas killed two men in Taperilla. Later they attacked a second time and killed three soldiers, one of them an officer.

"At this point in the operations, Guevara and the Bolivian leader Roberto Peredo circulated the first declaration of the guerrillas to the Bolivian people, which said:

"'We have lived like foreigners in our own country. Any Yankee imperialist has more rights than we on our national territory. Our lands do not belong to us. Our natural riches go to enrich foreigners. There are no schools, there are no hospitals for our children. We live like slaves, deprived of our rights and our conquests, oppressed and mocked by force.

"'The Army of National Liberation expresses its faith and confidence in the final victory against the Yankees, the invaders disguised as "advisers." We will not rest until the last trace of imperialist domination has been effaced. It is better to die than live as a slave. Death to Yankee imperialism and its military camarilla. Long live the guerrillas.'

"For all practical purposes this proclamation did not circulate in Bolivia, except in restricted political circles. It crossed the frontiers and was printed in various countries. But this did nothing to change the general impression of the most penetrating observers: the guerrillas had fallen into a trap.

"I arrived in La Paz on July 12 as defense attorney for Ciro Bustos in his trial before the military tribunal. The guerrillas had just occupied the locality of Samaipata for a few hours. They cut the telephone lines, arrested the local officials, and addressed the peasants in the plaza. This affair was much discussed in Camiri and the region but as something not directly concerning the population.

"Nonetheless, the army and the government were made to look ridiculous. Spurred on by this atmosphere of daily mounting hostility, the army strove for revenge. From the month of August on it constantly held the initiative. Guevara's force suffered losses and on September 26, after a long battle near La Higuera the guerrillas found themselves compelled to divide up into several small detachments. On October 8, a peasant informed the soldiers that he had heard voices in the

wild canyon of El Yuro. Around 1:30 p.m., the rangers fell on a marching group and opened fire. The man in front was the Bolivian miner Simón Cuba, an exceptional marksman. Behind him was Che, who also answered the fire but was hit in the legs by several bullets.

"Simón Cuba, in a heroic gesture, tried to carry the wounded man on his shoulders but another volley wounded Che again, carrying away his beret. Cuba put him on the ground and began firing.

"In spite of his desperate situation, Guevara attempted a final resistance. Supporting himself against a tree with one hand, he used the other to fire his M2, but another bullet struck his right leg. Another knocked his gun out of his hands before burying itself in his upper arm. The rangers surrounded him and took him prisoner.

"Ernesto Guevara was taken to La Higuera, twelve kilometers from the battle. Although he had several wounds, his life was not in danger. His fate depended on men: Captain Gary Prado Salgado, chief of the ranger company, Colonel Andrés Selnich, the commander of the Third Tactical Group and Prado's superior.

"While Guevara was kept in a bare room in the village school, there were discussions for several hours. The atmosphere among the officers was tense. It is known that Major Nino Guzmán wanted to take Guevara to Vallegrande in his helicopter and fought over this with Selnich.

"On October 9, 1967, in the morning the discussions ended. It had been decided to execute Che immediately in the place where he was being held.

"He was seated on the floor, breathing with difficulty, and he did not see the men who entered immediately because of the darkness.

"Captain Gary Prado Salgado approached from behind and fired a machine-gun volley in the prisoner's back. Four bullets passed through Che up and down his body. Colonel Andrés Selnich fired a single shot from his 9 mm. revolver. It passed through Che's heart and lung. Ernesto Che Guevara was dead.

"When they brought the body out from the place where the crime was committed, the two murderers saw that Che had his eyes open and his expression was calm. On his lips could be read all his contempt for them and all the love which he felt for the rest of humanity."

ROMAN ROSDOLSKY -- A GENUINE MARXIST SCHOLAR

[The following article has been translated from the April issue of Quatrième Internationale, the official magazine of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

Roman Rosdolsky, who died in Detroit, Michigan, last November, was the last survivor of the founders of the Communist movement in the western Ukraine and one of the most remarkable Marxists of recent decades.

Rosdolsky's fate was characteristic of that of a whole generation of European revolutionists; it was exceptional only in that he was able to survive the persecution attendant on home-grown fascism, Nazism, and Stalinism.

He was born in the city of Lvov (Lemberg) in 1898. At that time, this Ukrainian city belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After 1918, it was annexed by Poland. In September 1939 it was conquered by the Soviet army. In 1941, it was occupied by the Nazis. In 1944 it was liberated by the Soviet army and from then on merged into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Rosdolsky's father was a well-known Ukrainian scholar; and he passed on to his son an acute national feeling for his oppressed national group. While still in high school, the young Rosdolsky became a socialist and an internationalist. Drafted into the Austro-Hungarian army in 1915, he participated in the formation of an underground socialist organization to fight against the imperialist war. This group expressed solidarity with Austrian socialists like Friedrich Adler in rebellion against social patriotism. He published a little journal and became an enthusiastic supporter of the October revolution from its outset.

Rosdolsky joined the international Communist movement at the time it was founded. He was one of the initial organizers of the Communist party of the western Ukraine, whose entire Central Committee was exterminated by Stalin during the infamous purges of the 1930's. In 1925, he refused to vote for the condemnation of Trotsky and the Soviet Left Opposition because he lacked sufficient information to make a judgment. He was not yet a "Trotskyist" at the time but sympathized rather with the Bukharin tendency. He was expelled from the CP at the end of the 1920's.

In the meantime, he had come to live in Vienna where he became a correspondent of the Marx-Engels Institute in

Moscow; he was charged with preparing the scholarly edition of the complete works of Marx and Engels (Marx-Engels Gesamt Ausgabe) under Riazanov's direction. He had the task of searching in the Austrian archives for documents relating to Marx, Engels, and the beginnings of the socialist movement. It was during his stay in Vienna that he became convinced of the correctness of Trotsky's criticism both of the Stalinist policy in the USSR and of the Communist International's catastrophic course which was to lead to Hitler's seizure of power in Germany.

The suppression of the Austrian workers movement by Dolfuss in February 1934 forced him to leave Vienna and return to Lvov. He joined the Trotskyist movement there and was one of the editors of a Trotskyist journal in the Ukrainian language, which was circulated chiefly among the oil-field workers in eastern Galicia.

The outbreak of the second world war forced him into a long and tragic odyssey, in the course of which he was imprisoned in the concentration camps of Auschwitz, Ravensbruck, and Oranienburg, ending finally in the United States. Although he held a doctor's degree and had served as a professor at the University of Lvov shortly before the second world war, the "cold war" atmosphere closed the doors of the American universities to him. He worked chiefly as a publicist and received some fellowships for his scholarly studies.

By education and personal inclination, Rosdolsky was first of all a Marxist historian. Combining a complete knowledge and grasp of Marxist methodology as it had been applied by the masters of Marxist historiography -- Marx himself, Mehring, and Trotsky -- with a mastery of the academic techniques, he was able to write several books which will progressively come to be appreciated as classics of their kind.

In the 1930's, he wrote a study of the village community in Galicia as well as a two-volume history of serfdom in the same province, which was published only in 1959 in Poland. In the 1940's, he wrote a profound study of the incorrect positions which Frederick Engels and the Neue Rheinische Zeitung adopted toward the small Slavic nations during the revolution of 1848. This study was published only in 1964. In the 1950's, he wrote a book on the great fiscal and agrarian reform of the Austrian emperor Joseph II, which was published in 1961 by the Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. In the last years of his life, he was collecting material for a book on a subject of great historical im-



portance: the Austrian workers' reaction to the appeals for world revolution launched by Trotsky during the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations and the reasons why revolution did not break out in Austria and Germany in January-February 1918.

Of all these works, there is no doubt that his book Frederick Engels and the Problem of the Peoples Without a History\* can be considered the most brilliant.

Applying the Marxist analytical method to the writings of Marx and Engels themselves, Rosdolsky demonstrated convincingly that the two founders of scientific socialism were led into error by an insufficient analysis of the social forces active in the revolution of 1848. As a result, he showed, they were led to formulate negative judgments in regard to nationalities such as the Czechs, Croats, Ukrainians, and Slovaks, condemning them in a group as "counterrevolutionary."

Rosdolsky proved that in certain regions like Galicia the political division between the "revolutionary" Poles and Hungarians on the one hand and the "counterrevolutionary" Croats, Czechs, Slovaks, and Ukrainians on the other represented a class division between the landed nobility and the peasantry. This peasantry was not predestined to go over to the camp of the counterrevolution. To the contrary, it had sent revolutionary representatives to the Vienna Assembly who were ready to join the revolution if the peasants' principal demand, "land to the peasantry," were satisfied. But the "revolutionary" landed nobility obstinately refused to give them satisfaction. Thus, despairing of the cause, the peasants were thrown into the arms of the emperor.

This book should be translated into many languages as a classic example of Marxist historiography, a book as honest as it is profound.

Although Rosdolsky was a historian by training, his scholarly interests turned to the realm of political economy in the last twenty years of his life. Having landed in New York as an emigré right after the second world war, he discovered there by accident one of the three or four copies of Marx's Grundrisse [Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy] which had thus far reached the West.\*\* This

monumental "preliminary sketch" of Capital, which had been unknown until then to all Marx specialists, fascinated Rosdolsky to the end of his days. As he was to write himself, it enabled him to get a glimpse into the laboratory where Marx developed the discoveries which would shake the world.

From then on the analysis of the Grundrisse and the popularization of its principal arguments became an essential task for him. He wrote numerous articles on this subject for magazines which appeared in publications like Kyklos (Switzerland), Arbeit und Wirtschaft (the magazine of the Austrian trade unions), Science and Society (U.S.), etc. He also published an article on the same subject in the January-February 1954 issue of Quatrième Internationale under the pseudonym of Lerner.

These articles were to lay the groundwork for a magnum opus: Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Marxchen Kapitals [History of the Origins of Marx's Capital].\* This book is an analysis of the Grundrisse -- in fact the second published so far (the first was by a Japanese professor). But it is not just an analysis. It is also a scrupulously thorough examination of the development of Marx's thought in the 1850's; and, in connection with this, it is as well a cogent and effective defense of the basic elements of the Marxist economic theory against attempts to revise it, both in the workers movement and in academic circles.

Rosdolsky modestly called himself a "Marxist scholar," that is a researcher specialized in determining what Marx did or did not mean by this or that concept and in this or that passage in his writings. But his own definition does not do him justice. Few Marxists have penetrated as deeply into the thought of Karl Marx. Far from being limited to a few scholarly notes, his commentaries on the Grundrisse offer real revelations on Marx's general method and the general meaning of his theory.

After his emigration to the United States, Rosdolsky ceased to be active politically; but he never stopped considering himself a sympathizer of the international Trotskyist movement. Although an intimate friend of the deceased Isaac

---

risse appeared in Moscow on the eve of the Nazi invasion of the USSR, only a few copies reaching the West. The second edition in 1953 was better circulated. The first edition in French just appeared in 1967, published by Anthropos.

\* This book will be published in May 1968 by the Europäische Verlaganstalt in Frankfurt.

---

\* This book has been published thus far only in German. [The Verlag für Literatur und Zeitgeschichte, 3 Hannover, Georgstrasse 50 B. It is volume four of this publisher's Archiv für Sozialgeschichte.]

\*\* The first German edition of the Grund-

Deutscher, he did not share Deutscher's hopes for a gradual transition of the bureaucratic dictatorship into a socialist democracy in the Soviet Union. His differences with the Fourth International bore for example on the evaluation of events like the Korean war and the Hungarian revolution. But in the last years of his life these differences crystallized around the question of how properly to define a state in which capitalism has been overthrown but the proletariat does not directly exercise political power.

He believed that the degenerated workers state formula developed by Trotsky thirty years ago no longer corresponded to the reality and that if the socialist revolution continued to be delayed in the advanced imperialist countries the possibility could not be excluded that the bureaucracy would become a class. Occasionally, he used the formula "state socialist" to characterize such states, but with many hesitations and circumlocutions.

The urgency he felt to finish his scholarly works took precedence over his interest in the day-to-day course of politics; however, before his death Roman Rosdolsky witnessed with great pleasure two developments that confirmed his full and complete confidence in the final victory of Lenin and Trotsky's ideas, for which he had not ceased to struggle for a half century: the reappearance of a

left communist opposition in Poland, crystallized by Kuron and Modzelewski's "Open Letter"; and the mass character of the student rebellion against the Vietnam war in the United States itself. His reactions to these events proved that he died as he had lived: a revolutionary of the classical school of internationalist Marxism.

Events brought him a final posthumous justification: the national oppression which the Ukrainian nationality suffered under the Stalin regime is now implicitly recognized by several official Communist parties, and first of all by the Canadian one, a great number of whose members are of Ukrainian origin.\*

In the Soviet Ukraine itself, in spite of all the overt and covert attempts at Russification, the struggle has begun to reestablish the rights of the Ukrainian language as the official language of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Here also Roman Rosdolsky will not have struggled in vain.

---

\* See the January 1968 issue of the Canadian CP discussion bulletin Viewpoint, which published a long report by an official delegation from this party sent to the Soviet Ukraine. The report mirrored the intense debates in progress in the Ukraine itself on the question of the national rights of the Ukrainian people.

### "DE GAULLE, NON!"

[Following are excerpts from an article, datelined Paris, that appeared in the May 26 London Observer. It is signed by Observer reporters Patrick Seale and Naureen McConville. The liberal weekly sees a dim future for de Gaulle, but sees new revolutionary forces, rather than the Communist party, bringing him down. Intercontinental Press's correspondents in Paris warn, however, that reports of urban "guerrillas" such as contained here are exaggerated and possibly provocative.]

\* \* \*

A new revolutionary power, born and grown to manhood in three weeks, has brought to its knees the most majestic Government in Europe. General de Gaulle still battles pitifully on -- for how long? -- but Gaullism has been slaughtered, like a horse, beneath him....

If the crisis of the past fortnight means anything, it represents a violent liberation of the French mind from official control. De Gaulle could think of nothing better than to ask for a renewal of his old sweeping mandate. Shouts of

astonished derision greeted his speech broadcast to the demonstrators in the streets. Suddenly, before everyone's eyes, he seemed a tired and bankrupt politician.

What is being decided in France this weekend is not whether de Gaulle should go, but how he should go. The old bastions of opposition -- the great trade unions, the Socialists, the Communist party itself -- all clamour for his departure, but they want the transfer of power to be effected by constitutional means. But there are younger men who run faster and hit harder.

With bewildering speed, these political guerrillas have been hurtled into politics by an anonymous surge of student unrest. By taking to the streets, they have set themselves against every organized political force in France. Both Government and Opposition last week tried desperately to contain them. Both failed....

This extremist movement is formidable for two main reasons. Firstly, because it cannot be clearly identified.

One or two tiny factions work at its heart -- their leaders, due to the new tell-all television of these revolutionary days, are now better known than most French politicians -- but the movement as a whole has no name, no formal structure, and no detailed programme. It is difficult to get to grips with. It is raw explosive power.

Secondly, it is strong because the students by their revolt detonated a massive unsuspected charge of Gallic rebelliousness, crossing boundaries of class and generation, and ranging over the whole of French life....

There is a traditional hostility in France for the police -- the hated flics. The more fiercely the regime deploys those truncheons and shiny black macs, the more opposition hardens. On Wednesday the Government, surviving a vote of censure, regained a measure of confidence. Police repression then escalated. Terror bred counter-terror.

Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the student leader, was last week banned from France as an undesirable alien. The protest was immediate. 'We are all aliens,' chanted the demonstrators. 'We are all German Jews,' young Algerians were even heard to shout.

Cohn-Bendit's chief supporters are a small, highly organised and fanatically militant group called the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire (JCR) -- a sort of Trotskyist political commando, led by Alain Krivine, a former history teacher, now full-time agitator, and still under thirty.

The whole JCR strategy is to mount short, sharp revolutionary operations to jolt society, shock by shock, down the road to socialism. Across this path stand the Communist party and the Communist-led unions. Last week JCR tactics were to stampede these cautious, lumbering elephants by infecting the younger workers with the virus of rebellion.

They want the students to set an example of militancy which the working class will eventually follow. The irony is that these violent young men have struck a chord of idealism and morality.

The attempt to head off this Trotskyist challenge has caused a grave malaise inside the French CP, even the threat of a split. From the moment Cohn-Bendit raised his unruly red head, the Communist party has tried to cut it off. But younger party members -- and some on the Central Committee itself -- are now violently critical of the timid, blinkered way the party has kept him and the rebellious students at arm's length. In similar protest, a leading party member,

André Barjonet, resigned on Thursday as Economic Adviser to the Communist-dominated Trade Union Federation, the CGT....

This is no academic dispute between obscure sects. It affects the whole issue of an alternative Government to de Gaulle -- now a burning question. The arrangement between Waldeck-Rochet and François Mitterrand is at best a flirtation, still far from a legal marriage. Mitterrand needs the Communist votes to carry him to the Presidency, but he has been extremely careful not to commit himself to sharing power with the Communists, should he get there.

The Communists' fear is that he will ride to the Elysée Palace on their votes, but then look to the Centre for his Government allies....

The behaviour of the Communists has been fascinating to watch. From the beginning of the crisis they have been more concerned to crush the guerrilla challenge on their left than to overthrow M. Pompidou's Government. The CGT paralysed the country by a great wave of strikes to wrest the initiative from the student extremists Georges Séguy, the powerful CGT boss and Politburo member, locked his workers inside the factories to protect them from the revolution stalking outside. On Friday the party felt forced to match the students' demonstrations with a couple of their own.

The students have made clear that their object is to overthrow the Government and in this cause they have battled all night. The CGT does not share these aims. Its immediate objective is the economic betterment of its members. Far from overthrowing M. Pompidou, it agreed to negotiate with him and with the French Employers' Federation.

But under intense pressure from the guerrillas, the Communists are being driven step by step away from this cautious position in the middle of the road. They have not yet fought at the barricades, but their public statements denouncing de Gaulle's referendum and demanding his departure have become so insistent as to be almost indistinguishable from those of the extremists.

This is the measure of the students' triumph: they have shifted the whole spectrum of French politics to the Left. They have given people a taste for direct extraparliamentary action....

The last three weeks have shown that too much of a radical nature has to be done in France for the General, at 77, to be entrusted with its doing.... 'l'Après-Gaullisme' is almost upon us. The General is passing into history.

FROM THE PARIS BARRICADES TO THE EUROPEAN SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

[The following appeal to the workers of France, Europe, and the world was issued May 20 by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. This is the World Party of Socialist Revolution founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938.]

\* \* \*

The barricades of May 10, 1968, in Paris have opened the way for a victorious advance of the socialist revolution in Europe. The West European capitalists thought that they were forever rid of the specter of communism. Because of the failures of the traditional leaderships the workers movement in Europe experienced nothing but political stagnation. A long period of prosperity produced many illusions that so-called neocapitalism had succeeded in overcoming the classical contradictions of the system which Marx disclosed. The mass workers organizations and above all their leaderships were more and more poisoned by reformist gangrene.

In many cases, Social Democratic parties formally renounced the articles in their constitutions defining them as workers parties and committing them to replacing capitalist society by a socialist one. Wilson and Willy Brandt, who came to power when the first symptoms of economic difficulties were appearing, did nothing but implement an antiworking-class policy.

The mass Stalinist parties (France and Italy), guided by the policy of peaceful coexistence in the international sphere and of peaceful, electoral and parliamentary roads in the domestic arena, joined in the reformism of the social democrats and were ever watchful to stifle any current or grouping inside the CP or to its left which advocated the slightest militancy. The very minimal "de-Stalinization" which followed Stalin's death had no other effect for the leaders of these parties than to accentuate the reformist character of their policy. Insofar as possible they maintained the monolithism of their organizations. There was no room for workers democracy in the groups they controlled.

The Social Democratic and Communist leaders did practically nothing to aid the colonial peoples in liberating themselves from imperialism -- when they did not participate in governments organizing the repression of freedom movements.

I.

But neither the years of economic "prosperity" nor the meager improvements in the living standard of the West European workers in any respect altered the

exploitive nature of the capitalist system. In this prosperity, broad layers of workers, above all young workers, enjoyed only marginal means of subsistence. The advance in the standard of living, the level of skills, and culture made still more odious in their eyes a system whose absurdity and inhuman character took on new dimensions at a time when technological progress made possible abundance and the flowering of every human potential.

Imperialism conceded formal independence to most colonies but has continued its exploitation in neocolonialist forms. The courage of the Cuban revolutionists, the impetuosity of the black youth in the United States who have thrown themselves into a struggle for freedom, and the heroism of the Vietnamese people in unswervingly continuing their revolution against the most powerful aggressor army in the world have increasingly inspired a new youth vanguard. And this new vanguard has been wresting the banner of active solidarity with the revolution of the colonized peoples from the hands of the traditional opportunist organizations.

At the first signs of a slowdown in the capitalist economy, of advancing technological unemployment, and increased unemployment among the youth, the contradictions of this artificially stabilized society burst into the open. Neocapitalism imagined that it had a limitless future. The bourgeois, reformist, and neoreformist politicians carefully followed the polls to ascertain what slogans would enable them to gain a few percentage points of the vote. The sociologists and other official pedants put the computers to work to describe the society of the 1980's, the 1990's, or of the year 2000. But what neither the capitalists, the rulers, nor the apparatus men of the workers organizations foresaw came to pass. Revolt surged up spontaneously from the student youth, which in Paris and throughout the whole of France, was immediately supported by the high-school youth and an important part of the young workers.

There has been much talk in recent days of the Gaullist government's errors. Even if it had displayed a little more "finesse" in these May days, the explosion which was gathering force would have occurred sooner or later.

And what a magnificent explosion! This youth whose elders had given it no political example of militancy in the last ten years spontaneously rediscovered all the old lessons of the proletarian revolutions. The red flag was its banner. It had no other. It literally tore the red-white-and-blue flag of the French bourgeoisie to pieces to leave nothing but the red of socialist revolution. It created committees

elected by all the participants in the struggle, without having studied the meaning of the famous "soviets" which, starting from Russia, went round the world a half century ago. It quite naturally instituted the broadest workers democracy, allowing all tendencies to speak. It rejected all the slanders used to stifle the voice of the revolutionary Marxists. It made its judgments on the basis of program and concrete proposals alone, rejecting all carry-overs from the monolithic heritage of Stalinism. This youth showed those who denigrated the romanticism of "grouplets," of this "dozen or so wild-men," to quote the now historic expression of a cynical and disillusioned French minister of education, that at certain times the role of the vanguard can be decisive and that, far from being a thing of the past, barricades can rise anew.

Paris rose up with an irresistible power, just as representatives of American imperialism and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam were beginning their talks. Governments whose conceptions smack more of James Bond than of a historical outlook of the slightest seriousness saw in these events a machination to block the negotiations. Paris and the French working masses are not "neutral" diplomats; they are for the victory of the Vietnamese revolution. By responding to the government's provocations and to the attacks of its repressive forces they have opened the way to realization of the essential precondition for real peace in Vietnam.

The barricades of Paris have broken down the barriers which had contained the socialist revolution in Europe. The call of the barricades will be heard in all the big cities as it was twenty-five years ago. Students in Berlin, Frankfurt, Copenhagen, and London have organized solidarity demonstrations. In Rome the cry has rung out "Create two, three, many Parises." In Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Belgium, students have extended their struggle against the bourgeois university, the bourgeois state, and capitalist society.

The factory occupations by the French workers will spur similar actions in several European countries. The struggle against the vicious "emergency powers" laws in West Germany will broaden toward direct action by the workers.

The barricades of Paris and the French factory occupations will also find echoes in the bureaucratically deformed or degenerated workers states of East Europe. They will show that there is only one alternative to these detested conservative bureaucratic regimes and that it does not lie in a "liberalization" and progressive adaptation to the social democratic and "neutralist" mentality of the rising technocratic strata but in a

return to the ideas of Lenin and Trotsky, a return to the program of soviet democracy, of management of the state and the economy by democratically centralized workers councils, and active solidarity with the advancing world revolution.

We warmly salute the new revolutionary vanguard arising in the workers states which, despite a repression of mounting harshness, raises the banner of revolutionary socialist democracy. We salute Comrades Kuron and Modzelewski, who are again in prison. We salute the Soviet comrades who have appealed to progressive and revolutionary opinion in Europe. We pledge to them our support and declare to them that their cause will be taken up by the new revolutionary vanguard in West Europe, that it is in solidarity with them.

## II.

The student uprising and the factory occupations have opened the road to the revolutionary ascent in France. But it must be understood that the battle is not yet won, that maneuvers to cheat the masses of their victory will multiply, that the bourgeoisie still has considerable forces at its disposal to once more prevent the revolutionary energy of the people from finally overthrowing the bourgeois state and the power of capitalism.

Thus far a crushing defeat has been inflicted only on the Gaullist "strong state," from which it indubitably will never recover. But now the question is posed of what will replace it. The French bourgeoisie, one of the most astute in the world, was momentarily disconcerted by the student movement, whose breadth and revolutionary potential it failed to understand. Now it finds itself faced with a mass strike. It will ply its wits to pull all the classic maneuvers to divert this movement, in which it was so successful in 1936 and 1944-46.

One can be sure that the most intelligent bourgeois strata will be ready to make concessions in regard to the purely social demands (higher wages, less working hours, broader rights for social delegations). The crime of the CGT and the CP is that they also seek to divert the movement toward new "Matignon agreements," [made between the unions and the bosses under Blum's Popular Front government in 1936] to which the employers will accede once they are sufficiently frightened by the profound upsurge sweeping France.

On the political plane, the Pompidou government is no more than a corpse whose burial has been temporarily delayed. Whether it is overturned in the Assembly, dismissed by de Gaulle, driven from power by new street demonstrations, or ousted by the anticipated elections, its days are numbered. With it, or shortly following, will

collapse the whole "strong state" which emerged from the military coup d'état of May 13, 1958.

But its replacement is already on the scene: a new popular front government based on the FGDS and the CP. This government would put a legal stamp on the social concessions and the few neocapitalist reforms that the bourgeoisie would grant to calm the discontent of the working and student masses. The objective role of this government -- whatever the intent of this or that grouping within it -- would be to break up the working-class bloc which has today arisen against the regime, to appease the petty-bourgeoisie and the most conservative layers of the working class, to isolate the student and worker vanguard from the broader masses -- in sum, to assure the recession of the revolutionary movement, thereby destroy the masses' acquired confidence in their own strength, and then to unleash a repression against the isolated vanguard.

It is only on these conditions that the impetus can again be broken as it was in 1936 and 1944-46. The revolutionary upsurge would then give way to a period of confusion and retreat. And this time the threat of a dictatorship whose ferocity would mirror the fear which now grips the bourgeoisie would almost certainly shape up.

But, contrary to 1936 and 1944-46, there is a new factor in this revolutionary upsurge: the existence in Paris and many provincial cities of an extensive and resolutely anticapitalist young vanguard which the traditional social democratic and CP apparatuses cannot recapture in the immediate future. The revolutionary Marxist component and influence in this vanguard are growing rapidly.

In these conditions, there is a real chance that the revolutionary upsurge will not be quickly broken. This depends essentially on two factors: first of all that in the initial ascendant phase hostages are taken that remain like so many time bombs in the disintegrating system, and which not even the evacuation of the factories, the workers' resumption of labor, and the fall of the Gaullist government and new elections could disarm. In brief, elements of dual power must be created in the factories and neighborhoods, in the form of committees assuming the powers acquired de facto in the present phase of the struggle, and which the government cannot take away in the immediate future without provoking a test of strength that would lead to a new broadening of the revolutionary upsurge.

These rights on the political plane must be supervision of the French radio and television broadcasting network to assure objective reporting; supervi-

sion of the telecommunications system, the central postal bureaus, the telephone and telegraph system, radio communications; control of the high-school, technical-school, and university systems by the students themselves; the creation of nuclei of armed workers and students popular guard units to protect the offices occupied by the masses against police repression. A major political objective must be the dismantling and dissolution of all the repressive police forces, odious in the eyes of the people, such as the CRS [Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité -- Republican Security Companies -- an elite military state security force] and the Gendarmes Mobiles [mobile paramilitary police], the parallel and secret police, etc.

In the economic sphere, the rights which must be secured are workers control of production; the right of veto by workers committees of all proposals to close plants or lay off personnel; the opening of the company books; the elimination of banking secrecy; the formulation of an economic and social development plan for a socialist France which would guarantee full employment and radical alteration of the consumption standards based on the expropriation and collective appropriation of the major means of production, to be democratically managed by the producers themselves.

To this end, these committees must federate as quickly as possible at the local, regional, and national levels in a national congress of factory committees and peoples committees in the schools and neighborhoods. This will be the core of the future Socialist Republic of France.

This congress must launch an appeal to all the workers and peoples of Europe to begin the socialist revolution and to actively demonstrate their solidarity with the French socialist revolution in progress. All attempts by international finance to strangle the revolution economically, or by NATO to crush it militarily, can be thwarted only if this international solidarity functions in a deep-going way and aims at the establishment of a Socialist United States of Europe.

The other prerequisite for thwarting the maneuvers of the bourgeoisie and the traditional apparatuses of the workers movement which have been coopted into bourgeois society is a rapid coalescence of all revolutionary Marxist forces into a powerful revolutionary vanguard party based on a revolutionary Marxist program. The de facto unity in action of various revolutionary currents which is emerging in the struggle is a promising step in this direction. But provisional accords on fragments of a program do not suffice for the victory of a revolution. Clarity must be shed on all the great strategic and tactical problems posed today for the revolutionary movement. Helped

along by experience in action, this clarification which is in progress can and must culminate in the amalgamation of all revolutionary militants in a united party of the French socialist revolution.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International appeals to all the vanguard militants and to all the workers and students of France and calls on them to display the maximum revolutionary daring. Never forget Saint-Just's words: "Revolutionaries who make revolutions only halfway are bound to dig their own graves." Do not let the fruits of your victory be stolen from you as in 1936 and 1944-46.

There is still a large gap between the revolutionary maturity of the youth vanguard and the level of consciousness of the workers. But with a correct political orientation and a constant exertion in action, organization, and agitation this gulf can be bridged; the majority of the working class can detach itself from the neoreformist line of the French CP which it still reluctantly follows. It

can, in its turn, move into revolutionary action. You have a unique chance to assure the breakthrough of socialism in Europe. Do not let this chance slip through your fingers.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International reminds all vanguard militants and workers in Europe and throughout the world of their historic responsibility. The tocsin of socialist revolution has begun to sound in France. Let us assure that its reverberations will be heard for a long while in all countries.

Long live the French socialist revolution!

Long live the Socialist United States of Europe!

Long live the world socialist revolution!

May 20, 1968

#### BRITISH ENGINEERS STRIKE AGAINST WILSON'S WAGE FREEZE

By Paul Cameron

London

Almost 100 percent support was reported for the strike of the Engineers union which brought large sections of British industry to a grinding halt on Wednesday, May 15. More than three million workers staged a one-day token stoppage in response to a call by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

The nationwide action, in support of demands for £2 a week all-round wage increase, a third week's holiday, higher overtime rates, better sick pay and pension schemes, coincides with the publication of the Labour government's bill to introduce new prices and incomes legislation.

Except for the Ford works at Dagenham and the Massey-Ferguson Tractors of Coventry where the unions conduct their own negotiations with the management, the effect of the strike was total.

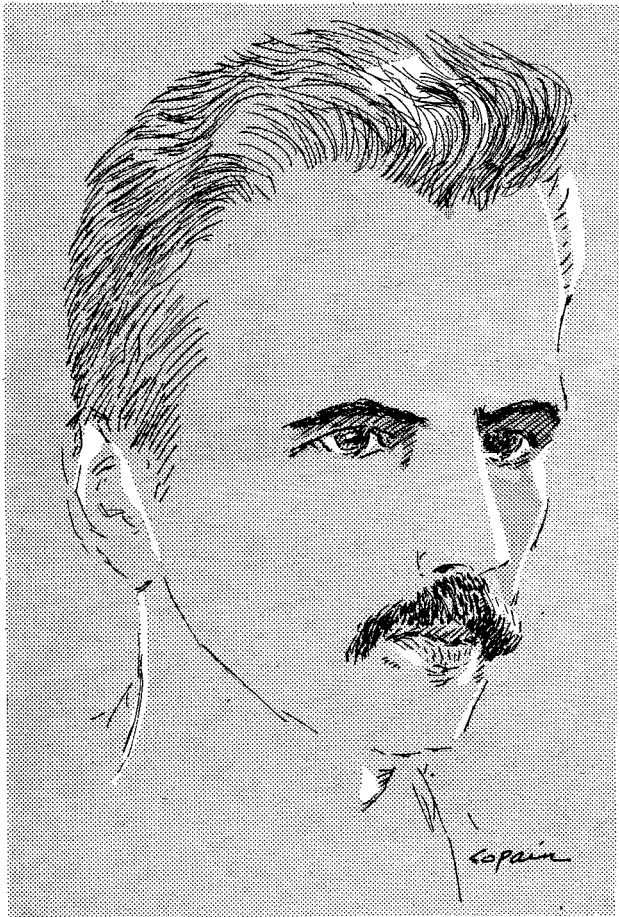
All vehicle production at the giant British Leyland Motors combine in Birmingham was halted with an estimated loss of £2,000,000,000 as 110,000 workers stayed at home. Three hundred factories were affected in Wales with over 40,000 on strike. With 250,000 in the West Midlands and 150,000 in Manchester nearly all industry was at a standstill.

In Northern Ireland where unemployment is highest, 45,000 supported the strike. Workers from shipyards, aircraft factories and engineering shops in Belfast marched through the city. Traffic was completely halted in Birmingham's city centre as workers marched to the civic hall.

The one-day stoppage was promoted by the right wing of the Engineers as a tactic for fighting the employers over the strong objections of Hugh Scanlon, newly elected president of the Engineers, who with the left, called for an unlimited strike until the union won its demands. Scanlon was in a minority in the leading policy-making body of the union.

The bosses are offering productivity-based raises for lower paid workers, and have agreed to continue talks. Representing the unions will be George Barret, general secretary of the Confederation and Hugh Scanlon of the Engineers which is already pledged to smash the wage-freeze. It is certain that the pressure from the ranks for a national stoppage will increase. In London, 300 shop stewards have called for total and indefinite strike action and similar demands are being made all over Britain. The Engineers could make or break the prices and incomes policy of the Labour government with its statutory limit to 3.5 percent on wage increases.

NEW THREAT TO REGIS DEBRAY



REGIS DEBRAY

Imprisoned French Marxist journalist Régis Debray will be transferred from his prison cell in Camiri to a warmer locale, Bolivian dictator Barrientos announced May 15. The move was motivated, Barrientos said, by his government's concern that the chilly region of Debray's present confinement, where winter temperatures range between 35 and 66 degrees, would be bad for his health.

The French authorities, who had been trying to get Debray moved to the more accessible La Paz prison, reacted with some incredulity to the Bolivian junta's avowed humanitarian impulses, raising some serious questions.

To most people in Bolivia today a "warmer climate" does not suggest a health resort but rather the tropical miasma of the upper Amazon region in the east of the country, where large numbers of political prisoners have been sent to a slow, unpleasant, and obscure death.

The prisons in this region are jungle military outposts, often in the midst of swamps infested with crocodiles and pirañas. The detention centers abound with tarantulas and snakes. The air swarms with mosquitoes, gnats, and flies. An insect is found there whose sting can cause death in forty-eight hours.

In this remote area, Debray could vanish without a trace.

In this issue

	<u>Page</u>
DRAWING: Daniel Cohn-Bendit .....	489
French Strikers Reject Stalinist Deal with Pompidou -- by Les Evans .....	490
French Labor and the General Strike -- by Pierre Frank .....	492
Demonstrations in Britain Support French Students .....	493
Lessons of the French Events -- by George Novack .....	494
H. Rap Brown Sentenced to Five Years in Prison .....	497
French Crisis Tests Revolutionary Vanguard -- by Pierre Frank .....	498
Czech Writer Protests 1960 Admission of Trotsky's Assassin to Czechoslovakia .....	500
"Committees of Action" -- Not a "People's Front" -- by Leon Trotsky .....	501
De Gaulle's Fond Recollections of the Services of Maurice Thorez .....	505
Dark Days for the British Labour Party -- by George Cunvin .....	505
New Information on Che Guevara's Activities Between 1965-67 .....	507
Roman Rosdolsky -- A Genuine Marxist Scholar .....	512
"De Gaulle, Non!" .....	514
From the Paris Barricades to the European Socialist Revolution [Statement of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International] .....	516
British Engineers Strike Against Wilson's Wage Freeze -- by Paul Cameron .....	519
New Threat to Régis Debray .....	520
DRAWING: Régis Debray .....	520

INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS,

P. O. Box 635, Madison Sq. Station,

New York, N. Y. 10010



EDITOR: Joseph Hansen. CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, George Novack, TRANSLATIONS: Gerry Foley, George Saunders. BUSINESS MANAGER: Reba Hansen. Published each Monday except last in December and first in January; biweekly in July; not published in August. TO SUBSCRIBE: For 26 issues send \$7.50 to Intercontinental Press, P. O. Box 635, Madison Sq. Station, New York, N. Y. 10010. Write for rates on airmail. PARIS OFFICE: Pierre Frank, 95 rue du Faubourg Saint-

Martin, Paris 10, France. INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS specializes in political analysis and interpretation of events of particular interest to the labor, socialist, colonial independence, and black liberation movements. Signed articles represent the views of the authors, which may not necessarily coincide with those of Intercontinental Press. Insofar as it reflects editorial opinion, unsigned material expresses the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism. Copyright © 1968 by Intercontinental Press.