The politics of Louis Althusser:

Introduction

Despite the fact that Louis Althusser is a prominent representative of *a* distinct political trend in the French Communist Party, his writings have been debated outside France as though they were *politically* unimportant — the province of academic philosophers alone. We do not propose to follow this practice. If Althusser's work were purely of consequence to the editors of *Telos, Radical America, Theoretical Review,* and the more difficult contributors to *New Left Review* and *Marxism Today,* they would not interest us.

Eurocommunism is Althusser's habitat — that jumble of massive but unorthodox Communist Parties who defy the Soviet Union, discard proletarian dictatorship as an anachronism, drop Leninism from their vocabularies, join bourgeois governments, and, in Italy, hunt down revolutionaries and jail them. From within the French CP Althusser criticizes much of this, yet he not only has stayed in, but frequently has beaten theoretical retreats through self-criticism which, so far at least, has kept his party membership intact.

In this way Althusser provides what seems in some respects to be a defense of Marxist orthodoxy — a left critique of the Euroeommunist mainstream. Marxist militants who cannot stomach .the giant departures of Georges Marchais, or Enrico Berlinguer, or Santiago Carrillo are given a theoretical justification for joining or staying in the Communist Parties. This is not an unimportant task. Were every militant who read and agreed with Marx, and look note of the CPs' departure from his teachings, to leave the CPs as those parties depart from Marxism, their collapse would be imminent.

But some aspects of Marxist orthodoxy are stubbornly incompatible with even the most radical variant of Eurocommunism. Here is where Althusser's genius comes into its own. His Marxism permits one to discard Marx selectively, using an elaborate theoretical construct and an apparent philosophical rigor supposedly methodologically loyal to Marx. If Althusser can withstand attack here, the rest of his system, and its political consequences, may be safe. The *Urgent Tasks* symposium therefore examines both Althusser's politics and the theoretical underpinnings.

Followers of Althusser's writings sooner or later come to an almost inescapable conclusion: Althusser may be the first person who became a Marxist-Leninist philosopher before becoming thoroughly familiar with the teachings of Marx and Lenin.

It is difficult to imagine, otherwise, how he could have gotten himself into so much theoretical difficulty with nearly every stroke of his pen. His latest book *[Essays in Self-Criticism,* New Left Books, London, 1976; translation, Preface, and Introduction by Grahame Lock] is Althusser's attempt to clean up his act, but his attempt to extricate himself from one set of problems is leading him into fresh collisions with Marx and Lenin.

There are some superficial parallels between the careers of Georg Lukacs and Louis Althusser. Lukacs, the Hungarian Marxist philosopher and literary critic, was a creative and innovative thinker who, after daring to test the outer limits of thought in the Communist movement under Stalin, was frequently forced to retreat with a pitiful "self-criticism" which barely preserved his party membership, and perhaps his life, from the wrath of the monolith. Althusser, the eccentric philosopher in the French Communist Party who has invented a whole new theoretical approach to Marxism, has now begun his retreat.

Both Lukacs and Althusser are defenders of Marxist "orthodoxy" during periods when their parties disdain it. Perhaps these similarities explain why the ideas of these two men seem destined to a common fate ~ the growth of a large, vocal, and aggressive following among young intellectuals in the academic world; some measure of recognition by the bourgeois intelligentsia; and a much smaller following among party rank-and-filers.

But there the similarities end. Lukacs was defending the orthodoxy of revolutionary creativity within the confines of a Stalinist straitjacket. Both the creativity and the orthodoxy of Althusser's thought are purely formal — hypermodern Marxism whose complexities and terminological novelty inspire otherwise intelligent people to participate in the dullest enterprise while defending the terms, but not the ideas, that once taught millions how to recognize social revolution when they saw it.

Despite the new book's title, Althusser exhibits no humility in his "self-criticism." This is a truculent book in which Althusser bullies his opponents even as he retreats from most of the theoretical ground on which he made his name.

In the past, for example, Althusser distinguished himself with his claim that theory is a form of practice. "Theoretical practice" was reified into the defiant slogan of the Althusserian camp, and his British followers took that as the title for their political journal. Now that Althusser confesses that his most original assertion was in error (it is "dangerous," he says, and "must be done away with"), his loyal adherents are left holding the bag. But if Grahame Lock's Introduction is any guide, they are shamelessly committed to their man and scarcely disturbed by such trifles.

a symposium

All this confirms that something more (or maybe less) than "philosophy" is involved here. It is difficult to suppose that pillars of basic doctrine can be abandoned at will, but if the changes wrought are actually conducted at a lower theoretical altitude than the Althusserians pretend, they can readily be understood as attempts to shore up a dubious possessory title to certain political turf.

Althusser has played a cat-and-mouse game with his critics for nearly a decade. An essay would appear, and his critics would respond. He would then write, "They don't understand," and would reveal the secret of what he was supposedly driving at in the first place. (When he bothered to answer at all, that is.) The current book continues Althusser's intellectual unscrupulousness masquerading as scholarship by including a lengthy bibliography of his critics, a dozen or so of whom get passing mention in Lock's Introduction, but only one — British Communist John Lewis — is actually debated by Althusser.

Sometimes the ludicrousness of Althusser's responses to his critics is astonishing. For years his philosophy has been called "structuralism," in keeping with its similarities to that of other writers who have so named their approach. Now Althusser writes, the problems in my theory didn't come from structuralism, but from an affinity for Spinoza! — but answers to the substance of the criticisms still don't appear, despite the fact that he knows the debate isn't about political taxonomy.

Lock writes that the purpose of his lengthy Introduction is to allow readers to "get an idea of what kind of politics lie behind Althusser's 'philosophy'." In itself, that ought to be taken as a confession of bankruptcy. If Althusser's previous four books haven't managed to convey his politics somehow, then the claims he made as to the political character of his theoretical work were clearly bogus even before his "self-criticism." Even so, it is interesting that Lock, with Althusser's approval, can write that his politics lie behind his philosophy, rather than the other way around. (It seems likely that had a critic been the first to pose this relationship between Althusser's politics and theory, she or he would have been roundly denounced by the defenders of the faith.)

Althusser insists on your respect. Even if you don't agree with him, he demands that you admire his political courage. We should try to understand, he says, "whatever the risks of what we say," the errors of the world Communist movement. "I shall take the personal risk of advancing this hypothesis now." "It cannot be denied that such an initiative involved great efforts and risks." The problem can be summed up as the effects of a single problem, the "Stalinian deviation." (He rejects the term "Stalinism" because it is a bourgeois or Trotskyist label which "explains nothing.")

Of course, he adds, it is wrong not to recognize Stalin's "historical merits": "He understood that it was *necessary* to abandon the miraculous idea of an imminent 'world revolution' and to undertake instead the 'construction of socialism' in one country." Stalin taught millions of Communists "that there existed *Principles of Leninism."* But there were drawbacks to Stalin too, among them, his "humanism."

Lock makes some of this concrete: "The Polish events [the mass strikes of 1970] demonstrate something important, too. The workers' protest itself was not — contrary to a common opinion — directed against 'Stalinism': rather the opposite." (They were *for* Stalinism??!!) "It is therefore impossible to paint the Stalin period in wholly black or white terms, and it is equally impossible to pretend that its faults can be eliminated simply by 'democratizing' or 'liberalizing' the political structures (for the sake of 'liberty') and 'reforming' the economy (for the sake of 'productivity'). The effects of Stalin's *humanism* and *economism* cannot be rectified by a *more consistent humanism* and a *more consistent economism."*

These lines depart sufficiently from the high road of "philosophy" to the low road of politics that one naturally is led to the search for a motive other than that of academic excellence and intellectual devotion. It is not hard to find. Althusser himself admits he wasn't always so courageous:

"Before the Twentieth Congress [of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956] it was actually not possible for a Communist philosopher, certainly in France, to publish texts which would be (at least to some extent) relevant to politics, which would be something other than a pragmatist commentary on consecrated formulae." But the torrent of criticism that followed the Twentieth Congress attacked "Stalin's errors" from the *right* — "there inevitably followed what we must call an unleashing of *bourgeois* ideological and philosophical themes within the Communist Parties themselves."

The ferment that erupted in the Communist Parties did in fact become part of the general right-wing drift as those parties sought to increase their electoral strength and trade union power in Western Europe and to seek commercial independence from the Soviets in Eastern Europe. In resisting these currents, Althusser emerged as a defender of Marxist "orthodoxy" — a left pole within the French CP. In contrast to the leading political currents, Althusser's criticisms and his terminological loyalty to certain Marxist traditions (for example, his defense of the concept of proletarian dictatorship while the Western European

CPs are jettisoning it) has given him a "revolutionary" aura.

Paradoxically, this appearance actually became an asset to the CP, because it provided a political lure *within* the party for militant workers and radical intellectuals whose leftward drift might otherwise become a threat to party hegemony. His utility is strengthened when his militancy implicitly runs counter to the party line — for instance when he refers to the French events of May 1968 as "the greatest workers' strike in world history." (But his political courage hasn't yet extended to the point of directly attacking the counter-revolutionary role of the French CP during that strike.)

The appearances are deceptive, however. On the most basic level, Althusser clings to the reformist assumptions of his party. His attack on "humanism" is actually a defense of the party and the unions, not a revolutionary departure. Thus: "The humanist line turns the workers away from the class struggle, prevents them from making use of the only power they possess: that of their *organization as a class* and their *class organizations* (the trade unions, the party), by which they wage *their* class struggle." [Althusser's emphasis] One would never guess from this that these workers' "class organizations" played the crucial role of restoring bourgeois authority during "the greatest workers' strike in world history."

Nearly every reformist working class party has someone playing the role we have described here. What has distinguished Althusser has been his attempt to justify his political position in theory. Whereas previous generations of CP intellectuals have rationalized their lines by re-interpreting Marx and Lenin to conform to party doctrine, Althusser has no qualms about rejecting much of Marx's and Lenin's writings on their face as "un-Marxist." He and his followers are not moved by demonstrations that their positions contradict Marxist-Leninist teachings; they simply reply that Marx and Lenin abandoned previously held positions, sometimes unconsciously.

Even so, Althusser is compelled to say that certain texts provide valid guides to political theory, and these provide at least a small plot of common ground on which to apply mutually acceptable standards to political claims. In this book Althusser opposes working class self-activity in theory by asserting, time and time again, that Marx viewed history as "a process without a subject." Yet he also says that "I based myself as closely as possible on Marx's 1857 *Introduction,* and if I used it to produce some necessary effects of theoretical provocation, I think that I did nevertheless remain faithful to it."

Did he remain faithful to it? Is Marx's history a process without a subject? In the 1857 *Introduction* to *Critique of Political Economy,* Marx wrote that "all epochs of production have certain common traits, common characteristics." These traits, "the elements which are not general and common, must be separated out from the determinations valid for production as such, so that in their unity — which arises already from the identity of the *subject, humanity,* and of the object, nature — their essential difference is not forgotten." [Karl Marx, *Grundrisse,* Pelican Marx Library edition, page 85, emphasis added]

In a similar way, Althusser's statement that *"Marxism-Leninism has always subordinated the dialectical Theses to the materialist Theses"* [his emphasis] is clearly in opposition to Lenin's view that "what is decisive in Marxism [is] its revolutionary dialectics." [33: 476] In another instance Althusser writes, "Of course it is not true that everything is always connected with everything else — this is not a Marxist thesis," whereas Lenin's view was the opposite: "The relations of each thing (phenomenon, etc.) are not only manifold, but general, universal. Each thing (phenomenon, process, etc.) is connected with *every other."* [38: 222, Lenin's emphasis]

Clearly Althusser's "theoretical" work in the 1970s isn't much different from that of the 1960s reviewed by Martin Glaberman. Althusser's theoretical system has taken on a life independent of its political utility, and this aspect has gotten nearly all the attention and commentary outside France. As we stated in the beginning, this is a subordinate concern for us.

At the same time we would caution against the urge to write an insurance policy underwriting Althusser's political life. The appearance of flexibility in the Eurocommunist parties is deceptive, and Georges Marchais, head of the French CP, is a tinhorn Stalin. He has already ordered Althusser to stop criticizing the party's electoral strategy.

It seems likely that the rallying point for leftwing Eurocommunism will increasingly focus on Fernando Claudin and his debate with Spanish CP leader Santiago Carrillo. If so, Althusser may become entirely expendable. It will be interesting to see whether his "philosophy" can survive in the absence of a viable political base.

Picking up after Martin Glaberman's review of the bulk of Althusser's theoretical works, Don Hamerquist explores the political implications of Althusser's recent articles and examines his place in the tableau of Eurocommunism. Though all conclusions are necessarily tentative, the article explores the tensions between Althusser's growing criticism of the French CP and his own theoretical roots. Hamerquist considers the direction of Althusser's political drift incompatible with his "scientific," "anti-humanist" theory. Indeed, if Hamerquist's optimism about Althusser's political future is justified, it is likely that Althusser will undergo an "epistemological break" of his own. Whether or not this will amount to a "philosophical revolution" remains to be seen.

Jasper Collins
for the editors

Althusser: the action of large masses is determinant

Below are excerpts from a four-part series of articles by Louis Althusser which appeared in *Le Monde* last April, sharply critical of the French Communist Party in the wake of its electoral defeat. As the final installment appeared on April 28, party leader Georges Marchais announced that the political debate within the party was closed.

it is interesting to note that Althusser departs from some of his own political and theoretical ground rules here. For example, he uses the term Stalinism, which he had previously rejected as a bourgeois/Trotskyist term. More significantly, his reference to the self-emancipation of the proletariat would appear to undermine his definition of history as "a process without a subject."

These articles constitute Althusser's strongest political commentary on the CP and its leadership to date, and they may be his last words on these subjects for some time to come — especially if he values his party membership.

Translation is by Renee Rosenfeld, Noel Ignatin, and Ken Lawrence.

A little historical awareness is enough to make one see that there exist as many forms of political practice as there are classes in power or struggling for power. Each governs or struggles according to the practice which best corresponds to the constraints of its battle and its interests.

We can, for example, thanks to bourgeois history and theoreticians, affirm that the role of the bourgeois practice of politics consists of *making sure of its own domination through others.*

* * *

Against this bourgeois practice of politics, Marxist tradition has always defended another thesis — the proletariat must "emancipate itself." It can count on no class or liberator besides itself; it can count only on the strength of its organization. It has no other choice, no exploited to manipulate. And since it must of necessity make lasting alliances, it cannot treat its allies as *other people,* as forces at its mercy that it can dominate at will, but must treat them as *true equals,* whose historic personality it must respect.

* * *

How then is bourgeois political practice reproduced in [the proletariat's] ranks? By treating the militants and the masses *like others,* whom the leadership, in the purest bourgeois style, gets to implement its political line. It is sufficient to allow free rein to the internal mechanism of the party, which spontaneously produces the separation between the leadership and the militants and the separation between the party and the masses.

* * *

Because in the party, on the basis of the Stalinian tradition, theory is the "property" of the leaders (and those who might not agree would learn at their expense what the cost is today), and because this "property" of theory and Truth hide other "properties" — one of the militants and one of the masses themselves, [the bourgeois practice of the party] should not be interpreted in individual terms, but in terms of the system. The style of the individuals changes; the Stalinism of our leadership has become "humanist," even "open." That doesn't matter. What counts is that everything that has just been pointed out as tending toward bourgeois political practice in the party is *the existence of a system which functions on its own,* independently of the individuals who find their place in it, but which compels those individuals to be what they are: *both used by and taking from the system.* When someone says that the party functions on authority from above, one should not look at authority as a personal passion of a leader, but *in the machinery of the apparatus,* which at every level hides responsibility for the conduct of authority and its results: an automatic source of secrecy, suspicion, distrust, and cunning. * * *

If a party and a line are needed, it is to aid the working class in organizing itself as a class or, what is the same thing, organizing its struggle as a class. So the party must no longer be built for its own sake, nor the working class organized for its own sake; this would be to fall into isolation. The working class exists in the midst of large masses of exploited or oppressed people, as the part of the masses most capable of organizing itself and of showing the way to all the other exploited.

Marxist tradition holds that it is the action of large masses that is determinant, and that it is necessary to conceive of the action of the working class in terms of this determining role. It is from large masses that historic initiatives of revolutionary import come: the invention of the Commune, the factory occupations of 1936, the popular triumphs of the Liberation Committees of 1944-1945, the prodigious surprise of May 1968 in France, etc. And *a party judges itself in the first place by its capacity for attention to the needs and the initiatives of the popular masses.*

Attempts to subordinate history to the CP

An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Montreal, Canada, August 27, 1974, and published in the September 1975 issue of The Review of Social Theory.

By Martin Glaberman

When the writings of Louis Althusser began to be translated into English, interest in the French Communist philosopher grew tremendously. Today there are indications that that interest has begun to decline. Althusser, however, remains an important figure because, in the first place, he is associated with a powerful international political movement and because, in the second place, his ideas have a certain attraction to middle class intellectuals who prefer their Marxism in forms that are compatible with the empirical scientism of traditional academic disciplines.

Althusser's attraction, I believe, stems from three elements of his work. The first is the apparent freedom of his writing from the kind of rigid, monolithic doctrinairism associated with Stalinism. Althusser is willing to praise and criticize a wide range of Communists and non-Communists in ways that would not have been tolerated in the Stalinist period. He is even willing to criticize Marx, to invent new terms, and, in general, to behave like a free-thinking philosopher. (I shall attempt to show that this view is superficial, that fundamentally Althusser's philosophy is Stalinist in every significant sense.)

The second is the idealism of his philosophy. Although he constantly refers to himself and his philosophy as materialist, historical materialism, if you please, at every crucial point he attributes to idealistic forms (theory, party programs, ideas) the power to move history. It is an idealism that is concealed by the manipulation of language. For example, he defines practice so broadly that it includes theory. "By theory, in this respect, I shall mean a *specific form of practice,* itself belonging to the complex unity of the 'social practice' of a determinate human society. Theoretical practice falls within the general definition of practice. It works on a raw material (representations, concepts, facts) which it is given by other practices . . .,"[1] etc. By defining concepts, etc., as material, or using words in such a way that the material nature of ideas is implied, Althusser magically transforms his idealism into a materialist philosophy.[2] The attraction of this to many radical intellectuals who would never think of their own philosophical views as idealist is that it places intellectual activities at the center of historical movement, giving intellectuals a role in the transformation of society of which mundane materialism seems to deprive them.

The third is the seeming scientific character of his methodology. Intellectuals, Marxist and non-Marxist alike, have always had difficulty with the Marxian dialectic because it seems to go against the rules of ordinary scientific method. The flouting of Aristotelian logic, contradiction, negation of the negation, historical necessity, interpenetration of opposites, and so on, have only rarely been accepted by social and natural science. By abandoning the dialectical content yet retaining the name, by reducing historical materialism to an ahistorical empiricism, by eliminating historical necessity and the general laws of development of capitalist society, Althusserian philosophy has an attraction to those intellectuals who are critical of existing society, are committed to social change, but who are not prepared to accept the fundamental changes in their methods of thought and in their scientific work which are implied in Marxist theory.

Althusser seems to be speaking to the post-Stalinist, post-World War II world. It is in relation to this world that the validity and the relevance of his ideas must be judged. One element of that world, the colonial revolution which has seen independence won by most of the nations of Africa and Asia, must be left aside, since Althusser does not deal with it except in occasional marginal comments. The other element is the waves of revolutionary activity in the industrial world, in the East and in the West. The Hungarian Revolution of 1956, in which the Hungarian working class destroyed a totalitarian regime and created a new society based on workers councils; the creation of a "New Left," in the United States and in Europe (the appearance of massive war movements, black movements, women's movements, anti-war movements, etc.); these are the landmarks of the post-World War II world that revolutionary theory and revolutionary philosophy have to grapple with. It is in this context that we view Althusser's work.

Althusser's emphasis on how to "read" the Marxist classics throws an interesting light on his ideas, although that subject is only marginal to the purpose of this paper. He has always insisted on the discontinuity of Marx's works, a strange way to interpret any thinker. He designated Marx's works in the following categories:

1840-44: the Early Works.
1845: the Works of the Break.
1845-57: the Transitional Works.
1857-83: the Mature Works.[3]

Althusser's attempts to root Hegel and the dialectic out of Marxism brought him under considerable attack, an attack that was strongly supported by the publication of the *Grundrisse,* which made available to the general public the integrated character of Marx's economic and philosophic ideas. Althusser, however, was not to be put off. He retreated to his final fortress: "When

Capital Volume One appeared (1867), traces of the Hegelian influence still remained. Only later did they disappear *completely:* the *Critique of the Gothe Programme* (1875) as well as the *Marginal Notes on Wagner's 'Lehrbuch der politischen Okonomie'* (1882) are *totally and definitively exempt* from *any* trace of Hegelian influence." [4]

In the whole body of tens of volumes of Marx's works, these two pieces are all that remain that are truly Marxist. (I should note that what an earlier Stalinism attempted to do by the distortion and misinterpretation of Marx and other Marxists, while proclaiming absolute fidelity to the letter and spirit of Marx, Althusser accomplishes much more openly by challenging the texts head on.) For the rest, one dare not take Marx's word for what he says or means. One needs Althusser as a guide. Ordinarily one would not have to take this nonsense seriously. What is interesting, however, is that what is presumptuous and arrogant in relation to studying Marx has a certain validity in studying Althusser, because in fact, it is difficult to take Althusser literally. Althusser, for example, occasionally displays an absence of scruples in dealing with facts, quotations, and ideas. To put it plainly, he is unscrupulous.

For example: "Lenin's 'Without revolutionary theory, no revolutionary practice."[5] And "When Lenin said 'without theory, no revolutionary action'" . . .[6] What Althusser is quoting with such gay abandon is the following: "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."[7] Althusser has taken a statement that a political movement cannot exist without a theory and transformed it into the totally idealist nonsense that practice or activity cannot take place without theory.

For example: "During the Chinese Revolution, the principal force was the workers (even though they were few in number compared to the peasants).[8] This is simply false. From the time of the Long March when the Chinese Communist Party retreated from the cities to the isolated countryside, until after the seizure of power in 1948-49, the contact of the Party with workers was either non-existent or marginal.[9] Althusser simply creates facts to sustain his politics.

Well-known Humanist

For example: "By *practice* in general I shall mean any process of *transformation* of a determinate given raw material into a determinate *product* . . ."[10] "As we have seen, every transformation of a raw material into products . . ."[11] 'What is this but intellectual fakery? Althusser frequently states something and then later refers to it as if proven or generally accepted.[12]

There is one other element in Althusser's writings that needs to be mentioned. There is a distinct tendency toward bombastic writing, toward the invention of new terms to replace perfectly usable old ones, toward phrasing banalities and commonplaces to make them sound like significant principles. The result is an obscurantism which, if not deliberate, nevertheless serves the function of limiting any criticism of his ideas.[13]

Substantively, one of the crucial points of attack on Hegel and the dialectic is Althusser's rejection of the negation of the negation and, in effect, the substitution of criticism and self-criticism. "The same Hegelian influence comes to light in the imprudent formulation in Chapter 32 of Volume One Part VIII, where Marx, discussing the 'expropriation of the expropriators,' declares *'It is the negation of the negation.'* Imprudent, since its ravages have not yet come to an end, despite the fact that Stalin was right, for once, to suppress 'the negation of the negation' from the laws of the dialectic . . ."[14] Along with, and often lumped with, the rejection of the negation of the negation is the rejection of *Aufhebung,* a key concept in Hegel and in Marx variously translated as transcendence, supersession, etc., and alienation. Criticism and self-criticism Althusser has called "the golden rule of the Marxist-Leninist practice of the class struggle."[15] This last was the simultaneous contribution of Mao and of Stalin (through his commisar of culture, Zhdanov).[16]

As is evident from Marx's use of the term, the negation of the negation relates to the revolution itself.[17] It is the logical statement that all significant social categories are torn apart by contradiction (negation), contradiction that is inherent in and internal to the system, and that the ultimate destruction of the system is the result of these internal forces and leads to its transcendence, to the creation of a new category (or system), that, however, embodies the old. In relation to capitalist society, it locates the forces of revolution within the economic structure of society, in the relations of production, in the working class, and defines the revolution as not simply the "inversion" (a favorite word of Althusser's) of capitalists and workers but their mutual destruction and absorption into the categories of a new society based on totally different relations of production. It is this definition of the revolution that is unacceptable to Althusser because it is thereby removed from the absolute control of the Communist Party.

In its place we have the "law" of criticism and self-criticism which Zhdanov introduced as the law of

motion of socialist society and which Althusser expands to cover the practice of the class struggle. Why this interest in criticism and self-criticism? To begin with, it replaces a materialist conception with an idealist conception. Instead of placing the source of movement, of development, of struggle, of change, in the objective forces existing in society, it places the source of movement in discussion and debate, in party decisions and programs. (Of course, that is viewing it at its best. In point of fact, criticism and self-criticism has a very specific meaning in the Communist movement — the leadership criticizes and lower levels of leadership and the membership engage in self-criticism.) In short, the proletariat is eliminated as the fundamental revolutionary force (although not, of course, in May Day speeches or Party manifestoes) and replaced by the Party, insuring the conservative stability of the movement. The "suppression" of the negation of the negation is necessary to subordinate history, that is, the revolution, to the Communist Party.

But criticism and self-criticism had a more immediate purpose when it was introduced — to remove the Soviet Union from the functioning of dialectical-historical laws. If dialectics indicates that all change and development stems from contradiction, and that in society contradiction is fundamentally the struggle between classes, what does one do in a "classless" society? The application of dialectics and the relevance of the class struggle is too obvious in a society governed by totalitarian violence. So a new law is invented that brings everything under control and subordinates conflict to the dictates of the Party leadership. Mao found that law useful in China, but also added some trimming: principal contradiction, principal aspect of a contradiction, antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions. All are designed to do the same thing as the law of criticism and self-criticism — turn attention away from the self-development of society, from struggles objectively rooted in class contradiction, and place reliance in the judgment of the Party. It is not surprising that Althusser is warmly receptive to Mao's philosophical innovations and assures us that there is not a trace of Hegel in them.

The same dual concern is involved in Althusser's considerable interest in *Capital.* In the first place, Althusser attempts to "read" Marx and Lenin in such a way that they mean the opposite of what they say. Marx gives him difficulty by acknowledging his debt to Hegel in both form and content in *Capital.* Althusser (whose arrogance is spectacular) takes the bull by the horns and simply defines the "Hegelian" sections of *Capital* as non-Marxist. Lenin also gives him difficulty by insisting that "It is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital,* and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the *whole* of Hegel's *Logic.* Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!!"[19] Althusser reinterprets Lenin so that he was more of a Marxist and dialectician before he studied Hegel than after.[20] But the concern with *Capital* is not simply based on the need to attack the dialectical method which informs it. It is also based on the need to defend the existing structure of the Soviet Union.

In a preface to a French edition of volume one of *Capital,* Althusser proposes that *Capital* not be read as it was written.

> I therefore urge on the reader the following method of reading:
>
> 1. Leave Part I (Commodities and Money) deliberately on one side in a first reading.
>
> 2. Begin reading Volume One with its Part II (The Transformation of Money into Capital).
>
> 3. Read carefully Parts II, III (The Production of Absolute Surplus-Value) and IV (The Production of Relative Surplus-Value).
>
> 4. Leave Part V (The Production of Relative and Absolute Surplus-Value) on one side.
>
> 5. Read carefully Parts VI (Wages), VII (The Accumulation of Capital) and VIII (The So-Called Primitive Accumulation).
>
> 6. Finally, begin to read Part I (Commodities and Money) with infinite caution, knowing that it will always be extremely difficult to understand, even after several readings of the other Parts, without the help of a certain number of deeper explanations.[21]

These distortions of *Capital* have an interesting predecessor. In 1943 there appeared in the Soviet Union an authoritative article entitled, "Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union."[22] The unsigned article, appearing in *Under the Banner of Marxism,* indicated that the teaching of economics had been halted and was now being resumed on the basis of a new approach to *Capital,* one which abandoned Marx's own structure and substituted a new arrangement of the material. The problem was that a straightforward reading of *Capital,* with its emphasis on the social relationships of production and the law of value, was embarrassingly relevant to the nature of Russian society, with its class divisions.[23] Since *Capital* could not be destroyed altogether, the next best step was to distort it into an ahistorical, structural analysis. How important this was is indicated by the fact that the teaching of economics was literally brought to a halt in the Soviet Union until the task of revising *Capital* could be accomplished.

Althusser's concern for the proper reading of *Capital* conforms to his dual interest: to root dialectical materialism out of Marxism and to defend Russian state capitalism as a socialist society.

Very much the same is involved in Althusser's famous (and much overrated) concept of "overdetermination." In his essay, "Contradiction and overdetermination," Althusser lays the basis for his new concept by flagrantly distorting Hegel by a play on the word "simple." Pretending that Hegel's conception of contradiction was simple, Althusser counterposes the Marxist view of a complex social totality, consisting of contradictions on various levels, generally, economic base and superstructure. He then presents Engels' statement in a famous letter to J. Bloch of September 21, 1890. Says Althusser:

> Listen to the old Engels in 1890, taking the young "economists" to task for not having understood that this was a *new relationship.* [The emphasis on "new relationship" is a typical Althusserian distortion — there is no justification for the term in Engels.] Production is the determinant factor, but only *"in the last instance": "More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted."* Anyone who *"twists this"* so that it says that the economic factor is *the only* determinant factor, *"transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, empty phrase."* And as explanation: *"The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure — the political forms of the class struggle and its results: to wit constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and then even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas — also exercise their influence upon the course of historical struggles, and in many cases preponderate in determining their form . . ."* The word *"form"* should be understood in its strongest sense, designating something quite different from the formal.[24]

This last sentence is another example of Althusserian fakery — no one would assume that by form, Engels meant formal — but the issue is confused enough so that there is a chance that one might think what Althusser wants one to think, that form means content. Because what Althusser is doing is taking a widely known correction or modification which simply says that the economic basis is not all, and reinterpreting it to mean that the economic basis is not anything, that the superstructure is all.

> Here, then are the two ends of the chain: the economy is determinant, but *in the last instance,* Engels is prepared to say, in the long run, the run of History. But History "asserts itself" through the multiform world of the superstructure, from local tradition to international circumstances. Leaving aside the *theoretical solution* En-gels proposes for the problem of the relation between determination *in the last instance* — the economic — and those determinations imposed by the superstructures — national traditions and international events — it is sufficient to retain from him what should be called the *accumulation of effective determinations* (deriving from the superstructures and from the special national and international circumstances) *on the determination in the last instance by the economic.* It seems to me that this clarifies the expression *overdetermined contradiction,* which I have put forward. . . . We must carry this through to its conclusion and say that this overdetermination does not just refer to apparently unique and aberrant historical situations (Germany, for example), but is *universal:* the economic dialectic is never active *in the pure state;* in History, these instances, the superstructures, etc. — are never seen to step respectfully aside when their work is done or, when the Time comes, as his pure phenomena, to scatter before His Majesty the Economy as he strides along the royal road of the Dialectic. From the first moment to the last, the lonely hour of the "last instance" never comes.[25]

One stands in awe of such arrogance that in two pages can transform the meaning of Engels into its opposite. Overdetermination, then, is the replacement of the general laws of development of capitalism by the universal law of national exceptionalism. Overdetermination takes the revolution out of the economic system, that is, out of the sphere of the social relations of production, and places it purely in the superstructure, that is, in politics. In doing this, of course, it transforms the revolution from a social revolution to a political revolution and it replaces the proletariat with the Party as the prime mover. (This helps to explain Althusser's astonishing statement of "Marx's principal *positive* debt to Hegel: the concept of a *process without a subject."*[26] How helpful — a proletarian revolution without the proletariat!)

The cause of the revolution has now become the special, unique, overdeterminations of the superstructure, not the class struggle at the economic base. The revolution takes place in a particular place, not because the working class is exploited and alienated in the process of production, but because of exceptional political and ideological circumstances. These exceptional circumstances no longer simply

modify the form that the revolution takes, they determine the fact of revolution itself. The revolution is no longer rooted in objective necessity (material conditions) but in ideal contingencies. Philosophical idealism is restored and, with it, the ruling position of the Communist Parties.

One does not have to search far for the practical political significance of these theoretical distortions. Concluding his essay on "Contradiction and Overdetermination," Althusser says:

> How, then, are we to *think these survivals?* Surely, with a number of *realities,* which are precisely *realities* for Marx, whether superstructures, ideologies, "national traditions" or the customs and "spirit" of a people, etc.? Surely with *the overdetermination of any contradiction and of any constitutive element of a society, which means:* (1) that a revolution in the *structure* does not *ipso facto* modify the existing superstructures and particularly the ideologies at one blow (as it would if the economic was the *sole determinant factor),* for they have sufficient of their own consistency to *survive beyond their immediate life context,* even to recreate, to "secrete" substitute conditions of existence temporarily; [Please note: "temporarily" means 57 years and still going strong and a revolution can take place which does not modify the state (superstructure) at one blow.] (2) that the new society produced by the Revolution may itself *ensure the survival, that is, the reactivation,* of older elements through both the forms of its new superstructures and specific (national and international) "circumstances." Such a reactivation would be totally inconceivable for a dialectic deprived of overdetermination. [How true!] I shall not evade the most burning issue: it seems to me that either the whole logic of "supersession" must be rejected, or we must give up any attempt to explain how the proud and generous Russian people bore Stalin's crimes and repression with such resignation; how the Bolshevik Party could tolerate them; not to speak of the final question — how a Communist leader could have ordered them.[27]

There you have it. If the revolution takes place in the process of production and involves, above all else, a transformation (transcendence, supersession) of social relations in the process of production, and the superstructure (state form) is subordinate to that, it becomes possible to say that Stalin's crimes reflect a counter-revolution, of tremendous violence, which eliminated the Russian working class from any remnants of control over their society. But if the revolution is defined as taking place in the superstructure and is characterized not by transcendence but by a structural break (a favorite expression of Althusser's is "epistemological break"), then one can ignore the historical reality of Russian developments and pretend that socialism consists of nationalization (no matter who controls the nationalized industry) and Soviets (no matter who controls the Soviets). Stalinism is then seen as an aberration on a fundamentally sound structure instead of the *process* of the *counter-revolution* in which economic base (social relations of production) and superstructure (totalitarian state) are reasonably in tune with each other. And, incidentally, a criticism of Stalin is simply the form of a defense of Stalinism.

These are doctrines which support the bureaucratic status quo. Structure replaces historical development ("historicism" is one of Althusser's expletives). Social categories no longer have any life or development. They are ahistorical, eternal. Since the existing social structure is a given (much in the manner of bourgeois sociology), it becomes possible for Althusser to accept or defend the Russian suppression of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Theoretically, revolution in Hungary cannot exist in Althusser's system of ideas. Practically, of course, Althusser simply transforms it into its opposite, calling revolution counter-revolution and counter-revolution, revolution. (It is intriguing that Althusser rejects the dialectical conception of the transformation of categories into their opposites, which might help to explain the transformation of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party, or the modern trade union from organs of working class struggle into instruments of oppression or domination over the working class. Yet he manages to perform the magical transformation in his own undialectical way.)

What directly serves to support the status quo in societies dominated by the Communist Party, indirectly supports the status quo in the rest of the world, if not the specific social structure of capitalist society. An integral part of Althusser's views is his conception of party and organization. In a discussion of the French events of 19GS he wants the rebellious youth "to confront, in precise terms, the problem which at present torments them: the problem of the *necessity of organization* (because they sense, and some of them even know, that no political action is possible without *organization).*[28]

To begin with, two orders of deception are involved here. The first is the distortion of Lenin on organization indicated above.[29] The second is the distortion of historical events. "What happened," in May 1968, says Althusser, "was an historical *encounter,* and not a fusion. An encounter may occur or not occur. It can be a 'brief encounter,' *relatively* accidental, in which case it will not lead to any *fusion* of forces. This was the case in May, where the meeting between workers/employees on the one hand and students and young intellectual

workers on the other was a brief encounter which did not lead, for a whole series of reasons I will mention very briefly and very generally, to any kind of *fusion*."[30] Nowhere does Althusser mention that a significant reason for the limitation of this encounter was the positive intervention of the French Communist Party to seal off the workers over whom they had some influence and organizational control from contact with the students.

But apart from deception there is the matter of methodology. Althusser views historic encounter in purely structural and party terms. How else can he call several weeks of street battles between students and police, followed by the occupation of the factories by virtually the entire French working class — a relatively accidental brief encounter? He cannot see the objective character of massive historical events. He can only see them (positively or negatively) when formally structured, which is to say, controlled by parties and unions. He sees spontaneity as the enemy contained in the dialectic, even the spontaneous formation of organs of struggle or new state forms (Soviets, workers councils). Althusser is all for revolution, (1) provided it does not take place in the "socialist" countries and, (2) provided, in the capitalist countries, that it is not revolutionary. The role of the French Communist Party in limiting and suppressing the revolution of 1968 corresponds perfectly in practice to Althusserian philosophy in theory.

What Althusserian philosophy makes it impossible to see is the dialectical development of working class organization and revolutionary struggle. If the difference between the Paris Commune of 1871, the Russian Soviets of 1905 and 1917, and the Hungarian workers councils of 1956 are simply overdeterminations, that is, historical accidents, then they provide little guide to revolutionary theory. If, however, these differences correspond to stages of development of capitalism and the working class (both of which were essentially international to Marx and Lenin), then they indicate the need to continue the development of Marxist theory and practice. If Lenin's view in *What Is To Be Done?* (even when not distorted) is taken as an eternally fixed absolute, the past, the present, and the future become unintelligible. What does one understand about the nature of Marx's Communist League? Was it simply a mistake? Or was it simply pre-history? And what of the First International, a very different type of organization than the Third International? If Lenin's vanguard party is not an eternal verity, does it become necessary to discuss new forms of organization in terms of the historical necessities (not accidents) that appeared in Hungary in 1956 and in France in 1968?

It is interesting to contrast Althusser's method with the method of Marx and Lenin. The Marxian classics on the state and revolution are Marx on the Commune and Lenin on the Soviets. That is to say, Marx and Lenin started with the spontaneous, creative outburst of the working class and based their theory and the expansion of their theory on that. There is no room in Althusser's philosophy for the historical fact that Paris workers invented the commune before Marx wrote its history, and Russian workers invented Soviets before Lenin wrote *State and Revolution.*

In letters to an Italian Communist, Althusser raises an interesting question in relation to the French events of 1968. He asks, "Why have the Communist Parties, who after all are represented among the students by their own organizations, lost practically all contact with the student youth, to the extent that they were left behind by the latter's spontaneous actions and ideology in May?"[31]

(Let me note parenthetically: the openness and honesty of this question, which is so attractive to non-Party radicals, is deceptive. Nowhere does he attempt an answer, other than to lecture students on their backwardness, petty bourgeois ideology, etc. Nowhere does he ask the crucial companion question: why was the Communist Party of France, which, after all, is represented among the workers by its own organizations and by control of the CGT, one of the major union federations, left behind by the spontaneous actions and ideology of the workers in May?)

It is possible to give a simple answer to the question Althusser asks and the question he does not ask. The Communist Party has become a bulwark of the status quo. In the context of a discussion of Althusser's system of ideas, however, a related and more general question needs to be raised. Is a structuralist version of Marxism a useful tool in analyzing the role of the party in the industrial world? Does a dialectical materialism which acknowledges its debt to Hegel provide a significantly better methodology?

In the confines of a short paper it is easy to give the impression of dialectical materialism as some alternate, monolithic system. Clearly, with any methodology, individuals can reach varying and contradictory conclusions, the validity of which must be tested in practice. I say this by way of introduction to *one* dialectical analysis of the developing role of organization in relation to the working class in capitalist society. I do not intend this example to exclude other possibilities, possibilities which I can not treat within these limits.

In 1948 the West Indian Marxist, C. L. R. James, did an informal study of Hegel and Marxism which was later called *Notes on Dialectics.*[32] Its purpose was to emphasize the continuing relevance of dialectical materialism and its usefulness in studying the problems of revolution and organization. Some extracts will indicate something of what is involved, although these are disconnected fragments. James quotes Hegel from *The Phenomenology of Mind:*

> 'In my view — a view which the developed exposition of the system can alone

justify — everything depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth not as Substance but as Subject as well.'

That is to say, scientific method cannot examine the object alone but must at the same time and equally examine the categories with which it examines the object. . . .

The truth is what you examine it with; both are in process of constant change. What Marxists considered a Workers State, a revolutionary international, a reformist international, in 1871, cannot be the same in 1905, in 1923, and in 1948. . . .

The subject is a constant negativity. It assumes a constant change. When it looks at something it sees it and sees the negative in it which will be positive tomorrow, thus constantly developing new categories, which correspond to the changing object. . . .[33]

Now the Hegelian logic would begin by saying: when you looked at the categories in 1889, at the time that the 2nd International propounded them did you *know in advance* that its categories had within them the inherent power of moving forward in the direction of something new, a new organization of consciousness, a new party, and had at the same time in them the tendency to become their opposite? If you didn't know that, he would say, you don't know the beginning of dialectic. The object was proletarian and, further, revolutionary and socialistic. . . . So that the proletarian categories would be fundamentally proletariat. But they could swing to their opposite, i.e., become permeated through and through with a capitalist content, as far as that was possible without smashing the initial concept of the proletariat as proletariat. Or the consciousness would move further along the road of finding truer, more rich, more clear, i.e., more concrete, categories of its own truly proletarian nature, its unending fight against capital. It would develop its notion of itself, and therefore see the initial stage it had reached more clearly. The 2nd International was one strong knot. After conflict, a new strong knot would be the 3rd International. *But* — a Hegelian would say as soon as the 3rd International was formed, I would *know* that the same conflict of tendencies existed inside of it, and would go on until the proletariat found its true self, i.e., got rid of capitalism, whereupon it would not be proletariat at all, but a new organism. Every new stage marked a wider, deeper, more concrete notion and therefore a clearer grasp of the actual stage of existence of the proletariat. He would know all this in 1889, though he would not be certain when the new organism, *'i.e.,* socialism, would come. But until it came this process would go on.[34]

It is obvious that the conflict of the proletariat is between itself as object and itself as consciousness, its party. The party has a dialectical development of its own. The solution of the conflict is the fundamental abolition of this division. The million in the Communist Party in France, the 2V4 millions in Italy, their domination of the Union movement, all this shows that the proletariat wants to abolish this distinction which is another form of the capitalist division between intellectual and manual labor. The revolutionary party of this epoch will be organized labor itself and the revolutionary petty-bourgeoisie. The abolition of capital and the abolition of the distinction between the proletariat as object and the proletariat as consciousness will be one and the same process. That is our *new notion* and it is with those eyes that we examine what the proletariat is in actuality. . . .[35]

The party as we have known it must disappear. It will disappear. It is disappearing. It will disappear as the state will disappear. The whole laboring population becomes the state. *That is the disappearance of the state.* It can have no other meaning. It withers away by *expanding* to such a degree that it is transformed into its opposite. And the party does the same. The state withers away and the party withers away. But for the proletariat the most important, the primary, is the withering away of the party. For if the party does not wither away, the state never will.[36]

Eight years before the Hungarian Revolution, in which the Hungarian working class as a whole created workers councils, 20 years before the French Revolution, in which the French working class as a whole occupied the factories of France, the Marxist dialectic, informed by a study of Hegel, indicated, in the necessarily abstract forms of theoretical analysis, the general shape of things to come, a shape made concrete by the European working class.

All theory must be tested in practice. It is not too difficult to compare. The theory of overdeterminations leaves Althusser wondering about the crimes of Stalin and why the students of France left the Communist Party behind. A dialectical materialism that accepts its Hegelian heritage finds itself in correspondence with the major social upheavals of the post-World War II world and provides an instrument for the study of the reality of revo-

lution in the modern world.

Early in the paper I indicated that I viewed Althusserian theory as essentially Stalinist. It is, however, a Stalinism that conforms to the needs of the post-Stalin era, the era of "many roads to socialism," of irreparable cracks in the monolithic structure of the Communist movement under Stalin. Althusser provides a theory useful to differing Communist parties. But it remains Stalinist in that it provides theoretical justification for party programs; it seeks to subordinate the historical process to the requirements of party and state organizations; and it resorts to the distortion and manipulation of facts and ideas to maintain its influence. It is deeply conservative. And it puts obstacles in the way of seeing the truly revolutionary currents that exist in the modern world.

Footnotes

1. Louis Althusser, *For Marx,* London (Alien Lane, The Penguin Press), 1969, p. 167.
2. "It should be added that Althusser uses the word 'practice' indiscriminately for all kinds of human activity ('theoretical practice,' 'ideological practice,' 'productive practice,' etc.), without explaining what 'practice' in general means: all he suggests is that it means simply anything that people are doing in whatever domain. One can understand his attempt to explain to the leaders of the French Communist Party that they are wrong to compel its ideologists to participate in 'political practice,' i.e., to distribute leaflets rather than writing, since, he says, to write theoretical works is a kind of 'practice' too. But it seems that it could be explained in another way, without depriving the word 'practice' of specific meaning. The traditional Marxist distinction and the opposition of 'practice' and "theory' becomes obviously pointless if 'practice' means simply any activity. I don't maintain that this distinction cannot be criticized; perhaps it is wrongly conceived. But Althusser does not even try to show that there is something wrong with it. He simply does not seem to realize that this distinction has ever existed in the Marxist tradition." Leszek Kolakowski, "Althusser's Marx," in, Ralph Miliband and John Saville, eds., *The Socialist Register 1971,* London (The Merlin Press), 1971, p. 127, footnote 1.
3. *For Marx,* p. 35.
4. Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays,* London (New Left Books), 1971, p. 90. Emphasis in original.
5. *For Marx,* p. 166.
6. *Ibid.,* p. 168.
7. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?,* in *Collected Works,* Vol. 5, Moscow (Foreign Languages Publishing House), 1961, p. 369.
8. Maria Antonietta Macciocchi, *Letters From Inside the Italian Communist Party to Louis Althusser,* London (New Left Books), 1973, p. 52. (Letter from Althusser to M. A. Macciocchi.)
9. See Ygael Gluckstein, Mao's *China,* London (George Alien & Unwin Ltd.), 1957, chap. XI, and Martin Glaberman, "Mao as a Dialectician," *International Philosophical Quarterly,* Vol. VIII, No. 1, March 1968.
10. For *Marx,* p. 166. Emphasis in original.
11. *Ibid,* p. 184.
12. "Althusser often formulates a general statement and then quotes it later and then refers to it by saying 'we showed' or 'it was proved' . . ." Leszek Kolakowski, *op. cit.,* p. 127.
13. "I will argue that the whole of Althusser's theory is made up of the following elements: 1. common sense banalities expressed with the help of unnecessarily complicated neologisms . . ." L. Kolakowski, *op. cit.,* p. 112. There is a rather interesting resemblance between Althusser's stylistic method and that of the American sociologist, Talcott Parsons, who has also been charged with obscurantism in the pursuit of theoretical justification for the status quo.
14. *Lenin and Philosophy,* p. 91.
". . . for the Hegelian dialectic, too, is teleological in its *structures,* since the key structures of the Hegelian dialectic is the *negation of the negation, which is the teleology itself,* within the dialectic. That is why the question of the structures of the dialectic is the key question dominating the whole problem of a materialist dialectic. That is why Stalin can be taken for a perceptive Marxist philosopher, at least on this point, since he struck the negation of the negation from the 'laws' of the dialectic." Althusser, *Politics and History,* London (New Left Books), 1972, p. 181.
15. *Lenin and Philosophy,* p. 164.
16. See Martin Glaberman, *op. cit.,* pp. 109-111.
17. *Capital,* pp. 836-837.
18. See C. L. R. James, *State Capitalism and World Revolution,* Detroit (Facing Reality), 1969, pp. 98-101.
19. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 38, Moscow (Foreign Languages Publishing House), 1961, p. 180.
20. "Lenin Before Hegel," *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays,* pp. 107,109.
21. *Lenin and Philosophy,* p. 85.
22. An English translation by Raya Dunayevskaya appeared in *American Economic Review,* Vol. XXXIV, No. 3, Sept. 1944.
24. *For Marx,* pp. 111-112. Emphasis in original.
25. *Ibid.,* pp. 112-113. Emphasis in original.
26. *Politics and History,* p. 185.

Emphasis in original.

27. *For Marx,* pp. 115-116. Emphasis in original.
28. *Letters From Inside the Italian Communist Party,* p. 319.
29. For a somewhat fuller statement of the distortion of Lenin on the role of the party, see Martin Glaberman, "Toward an American Revolutionary' Perspective," *Insurgent Sociologist,* Vol. IV, No. II, Winter 1974.
30. *Letters From Inside the Italian Communist Party,* p. 307.
31. *Ibid.,* p. 316.
32. Detroit (Friends of Facing Reality), 1971.
33. *Ibid.,* pp. 47-48. Emphasis in original.
34. *Ibid.,* p. 57. Emphasis in original.
35. *Ibid.,* p. 60. Emphasis in original.
36. *Ibid.,* p. 190. Emphasis in original.

Louis Althusser

A tension between the theory

By Don Hamerquist

Louis Althusser, the French Communist Party philosopher, has been an important influence on Marxist theory for the past fifteen years. Though his reputation rests on a series of theoretical essays, Althusser is also a political figure of importance. He represents a left tendency within the phenomenon called Eurocommunism.

Althusser's politics, and certainly his theory, are complex and difficult. This article, an attempt to explore the relationship between the two, is made additionally difficult because at some points Althusser's political stance and his theoretical position are in tension, perhaps even in contradiction. Thus my intentions are limited to opening up some areas of investigation and posing some questions.

My point of departure is Althusser's running commentary on French Eurocommunism. This commentary is contained in a speech on the significance of the 22nd Congress of the French Communist Party (PCF) *(New Left Review,* No. 104); and in a series of critical articles which appeared in *Le Monde* this spring. The *Le Monde* articles were part of the debate over the poor showing of the so-called "Union of the Left" in the recent French general elections. (The.selection from Althusser in this issue of *Urgent Tasks* is an excerpt from the *Le Monde* series.) Though these articles deal with issues of general relevance, some knowledge of the crisis of the international Communist movement, an important part of the political environment of the French intellectual left, is helpful in understanding them.

Crisis of the International Communist Movement

The crisis came into the open with Khrushchev's famous critique of Stalin at the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956. Within a matter of months this was followed by the Polish and Hungarian uprisings and then the first rumblings of the differences which eventually led to the Sino-Soviet split.

From the beginning the crisis has had two aspects. Both involve critiques of the Soviet Union: as a model of socialist construction; as the leader of an international revolutionary movement; and as the interpreter of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy. One center of the crisis has developed around the pole provided by the "Chinese road" and "Mao Tse Tung Thought." Another center, emerging somewhat later, can be roughly characterized as Eurocommunism.

Though there are some parallels between these two centers of opposition to Soviet hegemony in the world communist movement — more in the later period — they are commonly defined by their differences. In fact, until relatively recently they have been more opposed to each other than to the USSR. The initial Chinese polemics were formally directed against "Comrade Togliatti." the Italian communist leader, who was the first prominent advocate of "poly-centrism," the initial manifestation of Eurocommunism.

The Eurocommunists have always been concerned with extending and deepening the critique of Stalin and the Stalin period of Soviet and communist history, while Stalin has come off fairly well in the Chinese attack on the "Khrushchev restoration of capitalism." His dubious policies towards the Chinese Revolution are scarcely mentioned in order to emphasize the errors of the Soviet leadership in the post-Stalin period. Finally, Eurocommunism questions two principles of Marxism-Leninism: the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the related conception of socialism as a transitional period of sharp class struggle. It

is well known that the Chinese view any move away from these positions as the essence of modern revisionism.

Most non-communist revolutionaries, particularly outside of Europe, identified with the Chinese position throughout the sixties and early seventies. Chinese opposition to Soviet policy and theory was seen as left and revolutionary; that of the large European parties (notably the Italian) was seen as liberal and reformist. Even within the large communist parties of western Europe there were elements which identified with China. Althusser had such a position. He makes laudatory references to Mao as a philosopher in some of his best-known essays *(For Marx,* pp. 94, 101, 182, 194-195). In his reply to criticisms from John Lewis, the British communist, he asserts that the only genuine "left" critique of Stalinism — as opposed to liberal, "humanist," bourgeois critiques — is that "implied by the course of the Chinese Revolution."

On a more substantial level, Althusser is an important figure in a theoretical tendency on the French left which includes non-PCF and anti-PCF intellectuals such as Charles Bettelheim and Nicos Poulantzas. This tendency is known for its opposition to "economism" and to the so-called "theory of the productive forces."* This, of course, is the line of the Chinese criticism of Soviet society and Soviet Marxism.

Needless to say, the situation has changed with regard to China. It is becoming increasingly difficult to see it as a revolutionary alternative to the Soviet Union and Soviet Marxism. The serious French intellectuals who were attracted by aspects of Maoism, by the Cultural Revolution, and by the critique of modern revisionism, are moving towards different political ground. Bettelheim has resigned from thu Franco-Chinese Friendship chair. Debray and Poulantzas are joining with elements of the PCF (Jean Elleinstein) and the left section of the Socialist Party to revitalize the political weekly, *Politique Hebdo.* For his part, Althusser is taking up a clear position as a left-wing opposition (possibly not a fully "loyal" opposition) within the Eurocommunism of the PCF. It must be stressed that while Althusser has taken a left stance within Eurocommunism, this is not akin to the pro-Soviet stance of the Portuguese or the U.S. Communist Parties. It took Althusser a long time and much agonizing to break with the old C.P. verities concerning Stalin and the U.S.S.R., but he appears to have made the break. In my view his leftism is more clearly opposed to the Soviet model than is the Eurocommunism of the French and Italian Parties. (See *NLR,* No. 104, pp. 9-10.)

Estimate of Eurocommunism**

In this country it is easy to interpret Eurocommunism as the final

*Bettelheim's work on the history of the Soviet Union is cast into this framework. The same is true of Poulantzas' book on fascism. While Althusser is not quite so explicit because the object of his writing is philosophy, the parallel is evident in his critical remarks about the Soviet use of the "very ambiguous and (alas) famous *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859). . . . I also note that, unfortunately for the same International Communist Movement, Stalin made the 1859 *Preface* his *reference text . . ." (Lenin and Philosophy,* p. 96).

Althusser's criticism of these few paragraphs is that they are very susceptible to an evolutionist interpretation, not to mention their flavor of technological determinism. Stalin, of course, brought all this out in the crudest way and declared it the official historical materialism. (See *Dialectical and Historical Materialism,* pamphlet version, pp. 16-40.)

**Even though it is not relevant to this article, one feature of Eurocommunism which is apparently shared by all of the trends in it must be mentioned. By its very title, Eurocommunism raises the spector of Eurocentrism. One of its themes is the potential for socialism in "advanced" metropolitan societies where there is allegedly no need for Preobrazhensky's famous (or notorious) phase of "primitive socialist accumulation." The assumption is that the huge economic advantage of the imperialist metropolis over the rest of the world will continue well into the period of socialist construction.

In the first place, there are real questions about whether any political tendency which lays claim to being revolutionary and internationalist *should* have such a perspective. In the second place, it is questionable whether it rests on an accurate assessment of economic trends. In any case, the notion that the wealth of the imperialist centers "belongs" to the workers who accidentally happen to live within the favored nation's borders has been properly handled by Arghiri Emmanuel *(Unequal Exchange,* pp. 424-426).

In order to maximize the appeal of the "socialist goal," the Eurocommunist parties deny the importance of the struggle for economic equality on a world scale. Any talk of the internationalist responsibilities of the metropolitan working classes, in this view, limits the appeal of the affluent socialism which is the main propellant of mass revolutionary consciousness. Clearly the left Eurocommunists would be less likely to descend to complete opportunism on this question as on all. others. However, they show little concern about the danger.

descent into social democratic parliamentarism for the major Western European C.Ps. Documents like the Joint Statement of the French and Italian Communist Parties, and, certainly, the commentaries on these documents by such U.S. supporters as Max Gordon, support such a view. (This statement and Gordon's introduction are available .as a reprint from *Socialist Revolution).* Eurocommunism is presented as the fetishism of bourgeois parliamentarism; the strategic rejection of armed struggle as a means to power; and, underlying these points, the rejection of the content of the Marxist theory of the state.

How is it, then, that a position such as Althusser's (or Fernando Claudin's for that matter), which is arguably left and revolutionary, can function within such a right-wing framework? The answer is that this official stance is only part of the picture of Eurocommunism. There are distinctions and differences between the French, Spanish, Italian and Japanese variations which allow some latitude for struggle within and between Eurocommunist organizations. Althusser, for example, continually uses the fact of public airing of differences in the Italian party as leverage for his struggle within the French Party. *(See NLR,* No. 104, p. 20.) In addition, certain valuable concepts and approaches have been incorporated into Eurocommunism. For example, the Spanish and the Italian Parties have obviously learned from Gramsci's conception of the struggle for hegemony through a "war of position" (see *Prison Notebooks,* particularly "State and Civil Society"), however onesided they might be in their understanding of Gramsci.

However, the basic reason why Eurocommunism might well have a positive historical impact is that it completely undercuts Soviet domination of the interpretation of revolutionary theory and working class anti-imperialist history. The liberation of Marx and Lenin (Trotsky, Gramsci, Lukacs, and Luxemburg as well) from Soviet Marxism, along with the liberation of the real history of the working class and anti-imperialist movement from Soviet historiography, is a fact of tremendous importance. It holds the opportunity for the working class to begin to regain its own history and intellectual heritage. Maoism and the Chinese Revolution never really had this potential because along with its challenge to Soviet hegemony was a claim for hegemony for its own position and views. These, in turn, were determined by the requirements of the exercise of power in China, which, unfortunately, do not align exactly with the interests of the world revolution.

Official Eurocommunism, like reformism and revisionism of any type, faces definite problems and limitations. Banishing the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat does not end the reality of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Even if Eurocommunist parties get their coveted place in capitalist governments, and even if some of their policies are enacted, it will not fundamentally alter the condition of the masses of working people spelled out in the famous passage in *Capital:*

> ... all methods for raisins: the social productiveness of labour are brought about at the cost of the individual labourer; all means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers; they mutilate the labourer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated toil; they estrange him from the intellectual potentialities of the labour process in the same proportion 'as science is incorporated in it as an independent power; they distort the conditions under which he works, subject him during the labour-process to a despotism the more hateful for its meanness; they transform his life-time into working-time, and drag his wife and child beneath the wheels of the Juggernaut of capital. But all methods for the production of surplus-value are at the same time methods of accumulation; and every extension of accumulation becomes again a means for the development of those methods. It follows therefore that in proportion as capital accumulates, the lot of the labourer, be his payment high or low, must grow worse. *(Capital,* Vol. I, p. 604 [Moscow ed.]) Taking into account the objective limits on reformism of any type, it is my opinion that the positive value of Eurocommunism's loosening of the dead hand of Soviet domination of revolutionary politics will be more important than the reformist and revisionist form and content which currently dominate it.

Althusser on the 22nd Congress of the PCF

Althusser seems to have a similar conception of the potentials of Eurocommunism, but his conception of its limits is studiously vague. One of the most diplomatic passages from the very diplomatic presentation in the *New Left Review* article illustrates this point:

> That is why there is little doubt that in the "abandonment," or rather *symbolic sacrifice* of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the 22nd Congress was killing two birds with one stone. While adopting a new strategy of democratic socialism (a *different* socialism), it in fact adopted a new position with respect to a decisive aspect of the crisis of the international Communist movement (relations with the USSR). The advantage of this new position is that the 22nd Congress gave reasons for think-

> ing that it is now at least in part possible to get out of this crisis and its dead ends. Despite its immediate limitations, this initiative may bear fruit. In this perspective, the "abandonment" of the dictatorship of the proletariat has played its part as a symbolic act, making it possible to present in spectacular fashion the break with a certain past, left vague verbally, while opening the road to a *different* socialism from that reigning in the USSR.

All this obviously took place "over the head" of the concept; i.e., of the theoretical meaning of the dictatorship of the proletariat. For the "abandonment" of a theoretical concept (which, need it be said, cannot be thought by itself, all alone, but is bound up with a set of other concepts) cannot be the object of a political decision. Since Galileo every materialist has known that the fate of a scientific concept, which is the objective reflection of a real problem with many implications, cannot be the object of a political decision. The dictatorship of the proletariat can be "abandoned": it will be rediscovered as soon as we come to speak of the state and socialism. *(NLR,* No. 104, p. 10) Of course Althusser realizes that the abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat is not so innocently symbolic — that it holds consequences for Eurocommunist politics which go beyond the PCF's attitude towards the USSR. Indeed, he quickly "discovers" these consequences when he moves to a consideration of the PCF's conception of socialism as "... a society governed by generalized democracy and the generalized satisfaction of needs." *(Ibid.,* p. 15) Althusser criticizes this conception as a mixture of economism and utopianism. As an alternative he argues that *so* cialism is "... a contradictory period of transition between capitalism and communism." *(Ibid.)* His point is that without a conception of the transitional nature of socialism (and thus the continuation of class struggle within it), the hostility of Marxism to all states — the state as such is repressive and oppressive — is lost. From here it is not so far to the Soviet position. "With us, the withering away of the state is achieved via its reinforcement." *(Ibid.,* p. 18) Thus the PCF abandonment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, offered as a break with Soviet Marxism on the level of theory, conceals premises about the nature of socialism and the role of the state that are not so far removed from Soviet practice.

The treatment of the PCF's position on this question follows the general pattern of Althusser's article. Beginning from an asserted agreement with the official PCF stand, he moves more or less quickly to questions and arguments which cast doubt on the significance of the "agreement." After welcoming six "historical initiatives," he manages to point out some element of basic error with each of them. In no instance does he say that the error compromises the "initiative," although in most of the cases, e.g., the one treated above, this would seem to be the case.

The political (in the bad sense) approach of the article is demonstrated most clearly in the section dealing with the PCF itself, the 6th, and final, "initiative." Presumably this "initiative" is advanced ironically, since Althusser's argument is that it is notable mainly through its absence. "The 22nd Congress spoke the language of freedom for the outside, but remained silent about the inside." *(Ibid.) ".* . . [T]he same Communist party that speaks so generously and amply of liberty for the people, remains silent about the current practices of democratic centralism, i.e., the concrete forms of the liberty of Communists in their own Party." *(Ibid.,* p. 9) As mentioned earlier, Althusser makes the same point by noting with obvious approval that, ". . . in certain neighboring Communist Parties, the leaders themselves at Central Committee meetings publicly confront their different and sometimes divergent opinions on the policy to be pursued." *(Ibid.,* p. 20)

These observations sound like a promising beginning for an analysis of the structure and function of a revolutionary party. Unfortunately, with the exception of one isolated passage which we will consider later, Althusser does not even move in that direction. Instead, as soon as the questions of open debate and "liberty" raise the issue of factionalism, Althusser collapses.

A frequent criticism of Althusser's theoretical work is that there is all sorts of tedious substantiation of relatively minor points, while some major points rest on nothing but bald assertion. Here we have an example. With no substantiation or elaboration whatsoever he asserts that "Lenin was against factions." *(Ibid.)* This is the key to his entire argument. There is nothing else advanced to support the conclusion; i.e., factions are out, as are "organized tendencies," because, "Today, the party expects something else, and it is right." *(Ibid.,* p. 21) What is Althusser's remedy for the lack of discussion and debate? It is nothing but "real discussions." However, we are moving ahead of ourselves. How valid is Althusser's attempt to call on the prestige of Bolshevik tradition to support his view? In fact, it is not valid at all. Of course, Lenin opposed factions whose political positions were, in his opinion, wrong. But the thrust of the opposition was directed at the position. He also was in opposition to narrow factional methods of work, because these methods inhibited the broadest possible participation of the party in debate. Finally Lenin did support the ban on factions that the Soviet Communist party enacted in 1921, almost four years after the revolution, but Althusser does not view

this ban correctly.***

Of course, Lenin's positions are not decisive. Althusser has lots of company in his opposition to factions, and his argument must be dealt with on its merits. Althusser asks, "Shall we say: factions, no; tendencies, yes?" After a bit of soul-searching he answers, "Not

organized tendencies, but real discussions which are not confined to Congress periods**** but go on, as a function of Congresses and the problems they pose." *(Ibid.)*

Althusser's position is Utopia. The PCF is a substantial organization. There is something real and important at stake in its contests over policy and personnel questions. It is absurd to expect that the entrenched leadership of the Pep would allow it to become an organizational embodiment of pure reasoned debate when a possible outcome is the undermining or even the overthrowing of their political

(continued on page 44)

***For substantial periods of time in pre-revolutionary Russia, the Bolsheviks were the Bolshevik *faction* in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. Perhaps this might be viewed as an accidental and transitional situation, but there were also factions within the Bolsheviks. Lenin participated in a faction during the split with the "Ostvosists," who were also Bolsheviks. Lenin's position was a small minority within the Bolsheviks at the time of the famous April Theses in early 1917. Both then and a few months later when he was also in a minority on the question of seizing power, Lenin operated in a manner that can only be regarded as factional — developing a group around his position, taking his minority positions directly to the party rank and file, and even outside of the party to the working class, threatening resignation, etc.

The framework for such activity was laid out ten years earlier in Lenin's brief article, "Unity of Action and Freedom to Criticize" *(Collected Works,* Vol. 10, pp. 442-443):

> The principle of democratic centralism and autonomy for local Party organizations implies universal and full *freedom to criticize* (including outside of the party — d.h.), so long as this does not disturb the unity of *a definite action,* (p. 443)

This guideline is ambiguous. It can be debated whether or not — or to what degree — open criticism will undermine the implementation of decisions. Lenin's tendency, however, was to lean towards the "freedom to criticize" side.

It can be argued that Lenin's views changed when the Bolsheviks had to deal with the problems of civil war, socialist construction, and imperialist encirclement. After all, Lenin did support the ban on factions imposed by the 10th Party Congress in 1921. It is a mistake, however, to draw general conclusions from this without examining the actual debate. After all, during the same period we can find Lenin saying, "Industry is indispensable, democracy is not." *(Ibid.,* Vol. 32, p. 27) History demonstrated that this was Stalin's position, but it was not Lenin's.

A reading of the resolutions and the debate at the 10th Congress indicates the outline of Lenin's position. First, his conception of what constitutes a faction is much narrower than the conception of current Marxist-Leninist parties. Second, he explicitly argues that the measures for dealing with factions (point 7 of the draft resolution on party unity) were extraordinary and temporary. *(See Ibid., p.* 258.) They have since become routine even for parties that are insignificant pressure groups operating in complete legality. Third, his opposition to factionalism always stressed that the danger posed was the elimination of open discussion and debate, not just the undermining of "iron unity."

> Analyses of the Party's general line, estimates of its practical experience, check-ups on the fulfillment of its decisions, studies of methods of rectifying errors, etc., must under no circumstances be submitted for preliminary discussion to groups formed on the basis of "platforms," etc. (factions — d.h.) but must in all cases be submitted for discussion directly to *all the members* of the party. *(Ibid.,* p. 243) (d.h. emphasis)

Fourth, Lenin's overriding concern with bureaucracy in the Soviet state apparatus and in the party made him aware of the danger of factionalism, not just from minorities and oppositions, but on the part of the official leadership. A leadership faction is the routine mode of functioning for present-day Marxist-Leninist organizations. Althusser makes this very criticism of the PCF leadership in the recent articles in *Le Monde.*

However, the clearest demonstration that Lenin did not view the ban on factions as an absolute principle is to be found in his response to Ryazanov's attempt to amend the resolution on party unity to prohibit members of the Central Committee from appealing a Central Committee decision to the party membership; and to prohibit elections to future Central Committees based on factional platforms. Lenin specifically opposed both aspects of Ryazanov's amendment and it was defeated. Of course, the substance of the Ryazanov amendment was actually instituted despite its formal defeat.

****Most, if not all, Communist Parties only allow debate and discussion on policies for a specified period (perhaps a couple of months) immediately prior to a Congress. Congresses usually are supposed to occur every two years, but are often held less frequently. During this period special procedures for internal discussion are established, directed through the central apparatus.

Fascism: some common misconceptions

By Noel Ignatin

A specter is haunting the U.S. left: the specter of fascism. Where is the measure taken by the party in power that is not branded as fascist? Welfare cutbacks, legislation to abolish compulsory union membership, the passage of a bill curtailing the legal right of dissidents to organize, efforts to ferret out and suppress those responsible for the bombing of public buildings in the center of large cities, the establishment of a professional army, moves to coordinate autonomous local police departments — all these measures and others which represent the ordinary functioning of government in a society dominated by bourgeois social relations are described as "fascist," or at the very least as steps toward fascism, by many left-wing organizations.

> cial social bloc. … It does not have a fascist party through which the dominant bourgeois sector articulates and centralizes its leadership of the process. The political police do not serve as the most powerful branch of the repressive apparatus. The Chilean military dictatorship . . . is far .from having the strength, vitality or potential of the fascist states of past decades."[1]

This clear statement, from one of the groups most widely and highly esteemed by the U.S. left, has had no deterrent effect in this country.

There can be no serious objection if all that is involved is the use of a word — "fascism" — which is not meant to be taken scientifically but is simply intended to call forth a strong reaction from those hearing it. The fear is that more is involved. The indiscriminate use of a term which is meant to apply to a specific form of rule that arises in definite circumstances can and does obscure the reality of modern society and the forms of social motion which appear within it, including the emergence of a revolutionary social bloc.

"Properly speaking, what has been installed in Chile is not a fascist state..." (MIR)

It is a curious fact that the willingness on the part of many leftists to throw around the "fascist" label is not shared by some of the groups in other countries where there is a lot more justification than here for use of the term. For example, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) in Chile has stated,

> Properly speaking, what has been installed in Chile is not a fascist state, but rather a military or gorilla dictatorship with fascistic aspects. . . .
>
> It is not a fascist regime in the exact sense of the word for a variety of reasons. Its base of support does not come from a permanently mobilized mass movement. It does not have . . . the support of a cru-

Current left thinking on fascism is shaped by lines that were worked out in the Third International (Comintern) following the death of Lenin, and especially in the early and middle nineteen thirties. The influence of that period has been transmitted to the present generation by means of three books: Fascism *and Social Revolution* by R. Palme Dutt, first published in June 1934, reprinted in several editions through the next two years, long out of print and now reprinted by Vanguard Press, the publishing house of the Communist Labor Party; *Lectures on Fascism* by Palmiro Togliatti, first delivered in Moscow in 1935 and now gathered and published by International, the Communist Party publishing house; and *The United Front,* consisting of the main report and closing remarks by Georgi Dimitrov to the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in August 1935 together with various speeches and articles written by him over the next two years, first published in 1938 and since reprinted by both the CP and the CLP.

Of the three, Dimitrov's has had by far the greatest impact. It has never really been out of print, was a major influence on the thinking of the Black Panther Party at the time of the United Front Against Fascism Conference in 1969, has been read by the largest number of people. It is also the least valuable of the three books. Like most reports to Party and Comintern congresses during that period, it is lacking in any explanation of the considerations that led to the adoption of the current line and is limited to setting forth the official policy in a way that ensures its diligent implementation by Party members who are likely to do better when not encumbered by the realization that the official policy was selected from several conceivable alternatives.*

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*The Dimitrov book, and the Seventh Congress generally, are (associated with the notion of the ("Popular Front," which was originally set out as a new "tactical orientation" but which very quickly became the keystone of CP

Both the Dutt and the Togliatti books were written during that brief moment in 1934-35 when the Comintern line was in transit from "ultra-left" to right opportunist. Consequently, in accordance with the well-known principle that even a stopped clock is right twice a day, they come nearest of all the official Comintern pronouncements to an appreciation of the true origins and nature of fascism. Thus, they manage to avoid the sectarian exaggerations of the "third period"** without falling into the rightist deviations of the "popular front" period, during which the independent interests of the proletariat were totally liquidated within the alliance of all "democratic forces."

The Dutt and Togliatti*** books are not without serious flaws, however, and we shall mention a few in the course of this essay. But the first point that cries out for recognition is the irony contained in their current popularity. Whatever else Comintern policy in relation to fascism was, it was not a success. From 1921 up to the eve of World War II, to the rhythm of accelerating drum beats, the working class of one country after another witnessed its trade unions, established parties and cooperative societies fall before the advance of the fascists and their allies. The communists were not spared the general fate of the class; as Claudin puts it:

> During the gloomy spring of 1939, after Franco's entry into Madrid and Hitler's into Prague, the only substantial section of the Comintern that remained on its feet in Europe was the French party. Apart from this, only the small Communist parties of Scandinavia, Britain, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland, whose political impact was almost nil, remained legal. All the other European sections had been reduced to clandestine existence after suffering heavy defeats. Soon after this the French party was to undergo the same fate: and the Second World War would begin.
>
> . . . Thus, the Comintern had failed in the main aim it set itself at the outset of its existence — to wrest the working class from reformism and organize it politically and trade-union-wise on revolutionary principles."[2]

It is undeniably the case that the fortunes of the Communist parties picked up with the outbreak of the War. But by that time, the Dutt, Togliatti and Dimitrov books were gathering dust on the back shelves; and one bit of evidence to show how useless they were as a guide to the future can be seen in the fact that in those areas of Europe where fascism held sway and where the Soviet Army did not pass, the outcome of the War was neither of the alternatives envisioned in the title of Dutt's work.

The Dutt, Togliatti and Dimitrov books represent, in a certain sense, an official blueprint of failure. Yet, a generation later, they are rediscovered and, what is more, enjoy a certain vogue. It is as if a doctor were to gain increased popularity owing to the fact that every one of his patients is known to have died directly following his treatment, or at the very least wound up as a

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strategy. This is not the place for a consideration of the methods of combatting fascism, which will be dealt with in a planned future article on revolutionary alliances. I cannot resist pointing out, however, that the Dimitrov book was published only one year before the Nazi-Soviet pact, when the line changed from the united front against fascism to — the united front with fascism. That odd timing has not seemed to hurt the book's popularity.

**It was the so-called third period (1928-34) that contributed the immortal concept "social fascism" as the summary of the true nature of social democracy. The theoretical basis for this idiocy was most clearly articulated by Stalin when he declared that "Social-Democracy is objectively the moderate wing of fascism. . . . They are not antipodes, they are twins." *(Works,* vol. 6, page 294) This was regarded as somehow more "revolutionary" than the reasonable observation that fascism takes advantage of the reformist illusions fostered by the social democrats. Stalin's formula was endlessly repeated and elaborated, for example by Comintern chief Manuilsky, who declared, "All too obvious mistakes are being made among us: it is said that bourgeois democracy and fascism, social democracy and Hitler's party, are antagonistic." (Report to Eleventh Plenum, 1931) Actually, the line went beyond equating social democracy and fascism: the German CP was insisting up to 1932 that "our political line . . . is to deal the main blow to the SPD (Social-Democrats)." One fruit of this was the formation of a *de facto* bloc with the Nazis, as in the "Red Referendum" of 1931. (See Poulantzas, fn. p. 160)

***The Togliatti book is of interest for reasons that have nothing to do with the subject under consideration. In *The God That Failed* Ignazio Silone recounts how he and Togliatti were the only delegates to a 1927 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Comintern who had the temerity to resist Stalin's request that a certain document written by Trotsky be condemned without having been read by any of those present. This sort of "bourgeois individualism" led to Silone's expulsion from the Italian CP in 1931. In these *Lectures* Togliatti, who was more pliable, quotes something written by "ex-comrade" Silone. Those familiar with the Comintern personnel policy, especially toward communists in exile from fascist countries, will appreciate the significance of Togliatti's departure from the norm.

quadriplegic!

All three books answer the question What is fascism? by citing the famous definition put forward by the Thirteenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern (1933): "Fascism is the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital." Since this is undoubtedly the most familiar definition, and can often be quoted verbatim by leftists who could not, if asked, furnish the name under which Adolf Schicklgruber achieved world renown, it seems a good idea to check any conclusions reached against that definition. Therefore, we shall return to it later on.

This essay will attempt to consider, separately as much as possible, four topics relating to fascism. The first is — under what conditions does it arise?

At What Stage of the Crisis?

All students agree that fascism makes its appearance at a time of crisis, a period in which the traditional methods of resolving social conflicts are no longer acceptable to any of the parties involved. The problem in analysis comes when the question is posed: at what stage of the crisis does fascism become a real possibility?

Dutt writes that fascism appears at that stage

> when the breakdown of the old capitalist institutions and the advance of working-class movement has reached a point at which the working class should advance to the seizure of power, but when the working class is held in by reformist leadership.[3]

According to this view, fascism is "a species of *preventive counter-revolution."*[4]

This was the standard Comintern line. Thus, Dimitrov sees the drive toward fascism as a "striving to *forestall* the growth of the forces of revolution. . . ."[5] Both Dutt and Dimitrov regard fascism as a defensive response on the part of the bourgeoisie; even when they speak of the fascist "offensive" it is clear that they view it as a counter-attack against the growing wave of the revolutionary offensive.

This is not so obvious as it seems. In his book, *Fascism and Dictatorship,* Nicos Poulantzas writes:

> The beginning of the rise ot fascism presupposes a significant series of working-class defeats. These defeats immediately precede fascism, and open the way to it. . . .
>
> The meaning of this 'defeat' should be clarified. It was not 'the defeat' inflicted in a single day, but a series of defeats in a process marked by various steps and turns.[6]

The period of "relative stabilization" which followed the post-World War I revolutionary crisis in Europe is described by Poulantzas as a "significant weakening of the working class in the relation of forces" which, however, left intact most of the working class' economic gains made during the earlier period when it had the offensive. According to him, fascism was, in part, an attempt by the bourgeoisie to eliminate these gains which no longer corresponded to the real relation of class forces.

To Poulantzas, then, Germany in the years 1929-33 is going through not an upsurge in the revolutionary process, but the last dying gasp of the crisis which the working class had failed to utilize properly in 1923.

Trotsky's position combines elements of both. Writing in 1930, he agrees with the Comintern that the present situation represents "not . . . the conclusion of a revolutionary crisis, but just . . . its approach." At the same time, he points out that "The German Communist Party did not come on the scene yesterday . . . " and that its record of disasters from 1923 to the present is a factor that weakens the ability of the working class to resist fascism.[7]

What difference does it make to the analysis if fascism is seen as rising up as a possibility concomitant-ly with communism on the eve of the revolutionary wave, or if it is regarded as something like a jackal, stalking and finally bringing down the wounded proletarian lion?

The difference is (I admit that this may be stretching too far) in the former case, fascism can be treated purely as the tool of the bourgeoisie, a tool which it wields more or less handily to beat back the workers' movement; in the latter case, fascism must be seen as a social phenomenon to some extent

Troops battle Spartakists, 1919, in first major defeat inflicted on German proletariat following World War I.

independent of the bourgeoisie, a phenomenon which arises out of the crisis of modern society and develops through the inter-action of a number of distinct causes — over-determined, as it were.† This brings me to the second topic I wish to take up: what is the relation of fascism to the bourgeoisie?

Fascism and Finance Capital

The answer of the Comintern is clear and unmistakable: "Fascism is . . . a weapon of finance-capital . . ." (Dutt); "Fascism is the power of finance capital itself." (Dimitrov); ". . . it is the expression of the most reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie." (Togliatti).

The Comintern writers go to great pains to expose the direct links that finance capital established with the fascists prior to the latter's coming to power; they produce volumes of evidence to show the flow of money from the big bourgeoisie to the treasuries of the fascist organizations.

All of this research is entirely irrelevant. The only points in a class analysis of fascism are — to what extent do the fascists serve the interests of capital (or any of its sectors) *and* to what extent is that service merely a by-product of the circumstances under which the fascist regime happens to emerge in a particular time and place.

"Totalitarian movements (here the writer is speaking of a phenomenon not exactly equivalent to fascism, but that does not matter for the present purposes) are mass organizations of atomized, isolated individuals."[8]

At the beginning of the period there is a revolutionary crisis (Italy 1920, Germany 1918-23) during which the working class shows itself unable to stand at the head of the efforts of the nation to reconstruct itself. At the critical moment it acts indecisively, and thus loses its moral authority over the middle sectors, who had rallied to it when it seemed to offer revolutionary solutions. The failure of the proletariat throws the masses, who have been torn from their moorings, into despair. The fascists arrive on the scene and proceed to organize that despair into a powerful force.

"The success of totalitarian movements . . . meant the end of two illusions. . . . The first was that the people in its majority had taken an active part in government. . . . The second . . . was that these politically indifferent masses did not matter. . . ."[9]

The fascists combine the most violent denunciations of the existing order with a ferocious opposition to the Marxist organizations, accusing the latter of having proven their unfitness to head the nation, as they are guided by narrow self-interest and sectarian principles. Thus they are able to wield the homeless and the rootless among the populace, the people who have lost their sense of identification with any of the contending forces, into a solid force.

At first the fascists limit themselves to attacks on the workers' organizations. They break up meetings, burn down headquarters, commit violence against outstanding workers' representatives. At this stage they are tolerated and even encouraged by the bourgeoisie, which sees them as a force to use against the left.

As the social crisis deepens, the appeal of the fascists grows. While loudly proclaiming their revolutionary aims, they are in fact protected by the existing state, which lets their members off while jailing the workers who resist them. At a certain point the fascists become bolder in their aims, are no longer satisfied to act as a goon squad for the employers, but begin to. have ambitions to rule. They expand their activity, and may even enter into genuine popular struggles, as for example the Berlin transport strike of 1932, which they led jointly with the Communists.††

The bourgeoisie is confronted with a choice: on the one hand, sectors among the class (particularly heavy industry) want to utilize the fascists to settle accounts with the working class and also to shift the weight of authority among the ruling circles themselves; on the other hand, the fascists are an unknown quantity, a mass movement and, as such, not entirely predictable. The big capitalists ask for, and receive, guarantees from the fascists: the anti-capitalist propaganda is subtly shifted in favor of a campaign against "non-productive" capital; a fascist party chief who seems a bit too serious about the radical program is demoted. The bourgeoisie's mind is set at rest and the contributions flow freely again.

All this does not take place without a great deal of agonizing and doubt among the bourgeoisie. However, the process is now getting out of control. The fascists have built a mighty mass movement, out of the dregs of society — and, never quite out of mind, there stands the untamed proletariat, still capable of throwing up Soviets and workers' councils should the opportunity present itself. The matter is decided: the fascists carry out their "revolution" and march into power, carrying with them the hopes of the despairing masses and the best

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†There is no doubt that Dutt, for instance, was aware of the importance of "missed opportunity" in preparing the way for the advance of fascism. Thus, on page 126 he writes: "First, the revolutionary wave in Italy was broken . . . not by Fascism, but by its own inner weakness. . . . Second, Fascism only came to the front after the proletarian advance was already broken from within . . . harassing and slaughtering an army already in retreat." He never integrated this awareness into a general theory.

††Togliatti recounts how the Fascist club responds to a complaint from a woman about her husband beating her by summoning the man to headquarters, warning him and ordering him to put a stop to such treatment. (Togliatti, *op. cit.,* p. 143)

Clash between Nazis and Communists in 1933.

wishes of the bourgeoisie.

Trotsky makes the shrewd observation that:

> The strength of finance capital does not reside in its ability to establish a government of any kind and at any time, according to its wish; it does not possess this faculty. Its strength resides in the fact that every non-proletarian government is forced to serve finance capital. …"[10]

The fascists come into power and now begins an exceedingly complex series of maneuvers and readjustments. Their aims are directed first toward smashing the workers' organizations. At the same time, they are forced to rein in their own "left wing" — those plebian forces who take at face value the promises of revolution against the "vested interests." There follow several years of twists and turns, wherein the fascist party is purged of those elements that brought it to power (the famous "Night of the Long Knives" in Germany in 1934). At the same time, the fascists flood the state apparatus, displacing the remnants of the old bourgeois parties, and also place their representatives on the boards of directors of the big corporations. While this leads to an expansion of the prerogatives of the fascists relative to the old bourgeoisie, it also brings the former under some semblance of control, and the fascist regime begins to assume the appearance of an ordinary regime of right-wing dictatorship.

This is the classical pattern, and so far it does not contradict the notion of fascism as a tool of the bourgeoisie.

If matters ended there, the Comintern interpretation would be relatively satisfactory. But matters do not end there. The fascists, while they have been forced by the relation of forces to bow to the wishes of the traditional bourgeoisie, have not lost their character as a "revolutionary" party. They are waiting for the proper opportunity to put their program into practice.

The outbreak of war gives them that opportunity. As is the case in every country, war expands the autonomous power of the state. It makes possible the establishment of all sorts of supervisory boards and the like, which once again tilt the balance of forces back toward the fascist party. For Hitler, the outbreak of war was a golden opportunity to implement the Nazi program of the master race, beginning with the physical extermination of the mentally ill and advancing to the "final solution" of the Jewish question.

Some of these measures are of no consequence one way or the other to the bourgeoisie. But some of them are definitely counter to its interests. For example, the diversion of trains for the transportation of Jews, at a time when German supply lines were dangerously strained, was not in the rational interests of the bourgeoisie. The execution of Polish and Jewish skilled workers, which was carried out on ideological grounds, did not serve the interests of the Krupps and Far-bens, who hoped to use those workers for production. Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of the contradiction between the fascist program and the rational needs of the bourgeoisie was Hitler's plan, in the event of Germany's defeat, to reduce the country to rubble, "to slam the door behind us, so that we shall not be forgotten for centuries."

These are not the actions of a class which is motivated by the drive for profits; they are the actions of a party with a vision. It is true that the Nazis were unable to carry out their entire program; toward the end of the War, even such a top-level personality as Himmler began dismantling the death camps (without informing Hitler) as a step toward reestablishing a more normal situation and making possible negotiations with the West. But if the ideological fascists were unable to realize their entire program, so were the ordinary bourgeois unable to tame them entirely: it should not be forgotten that the famous attempt of the generals to assassinate Hitler — which represented the "sane" wishes of the bourgeoisie — failed, and led to wider purges of the state and a tighter Nazi grip on policy.

These events cannot be explained by means of the Comintern formula for fascism as the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. It is necessary to recognize the relative autonomy of the fascist movement in relation to all classes, as an important feature that distinguishes it from other right-wing governments.

The observation by the contemporary Hungarian writer, Mihaly Vajda, is more accurate than the traditional Comintern view in describing the relations of fascism and

the capitalist class. Vajda writes:

> that on the one hand fascism can only be accounted for if it is treated as a phenomenon of capitalist society, but that on the other hand it cannot be regarded as a movement which is actually launched by the ruling class, and that moreover it openly contradicts the interests of the ruling class in certain cases.[11]

Reactionary, Chauvinistic, and Imperialist

The third point I wish to consider is the "chauvinism" of the fascists. Chauvinism is generally regarded as the extreme nationalism of an oppressor country. A careful study shows that fascism, in its German variety at least, was far beyond anything that had previously been recognized as nationalism. The aim of the Nazis was not the establishment of German supremacy, although they occasionally referred, for mass consumption, to that goal. The aim of the fascists was the establishment of the master race, which they insisted was just beginning to make its appearance, and which would be drawn from the "Aryan" elements of all the peoples of northern Europe. They repeated often that, for them, the conquest of the German state was simply a stage on the path to the reconstitution of Europe^ 'that fascism was a movement not a state. As Hannah Arendt points out, they treated Germany itself as a conquered nation, the first of all the nations of Europe to receive the benefits of their racial purification policies. It is no exaggeration at all to observe that fascism, far from being motivated by nationalist considerations, in fact tended toward *internationalism* — not of the proletarian type, to be sure.†††

Likewise with the label "imperialistic" that the Comintern used as part of its definition of fascism. The First World War was an imperialist war. As has been noted by a variety of observers, including W.E.B. DuBois and Lenin, it was a war for colonies, a war to conquer territories (or defend already-conquered ones) to which the conquering power would profitably *export* capital. The aim of fascism (particularly the German variant) in the Second World War was not the export of capital but instead the annexation of entire territories with their population and natural resources — in other words, centralization of capital, the very opposite of export. Hitler's rule over Europe did not lead to the expansion of capital in the occupied areas, as would have been the case if capital were being exported to them, but to its reduction, as entire industries were dismantled and carted back to Germany and those that remained were reorganized to serve the needs, not of profit but of the war. If this was imperialism, it was a new stage and deserved to be recognized as such, something which the Comintern definition does not do.

Lastly, with regard to the term "reactionary." That is a fairly fluid term, and it may seem unduly harsh to challenge a term so devoid of specific content- Nevertheless, it is part of the Comintern definition of fascism and should not be allowed to pass without scrutiny. If it means anything, the term "reactionary" applies to those who would go back, who would revert to more primitive social and technological conditions. It is precisely the unique character of fascism that it combined the crudest, the most oppressive, the most ahistorical conceptions of the human personality with the most modern methods of mass production and social engineering. The restructuring of the army, the mobilization of all the resources of Germany and the conquered territories, the adoption of the techniques of the Blitzkrieg, the coordination of military efforts with the pro-Nazi movements in every country — these things shattered the traditional ideas of how things were done. They were supported by that sector of the bourgeoisie which was the most advanced, and were resisted by that sector which was the most reactionary — the traditionalists, the old officer corps, the Prussian nobility.

"Terrorist"

In his report to the Seventh World Congress, Dimitrov announced that, "The accession to power of fascism is not an *ordinary succession* of one bourgeois government by another, but a *substitution* of one state form of class domination of the bourgeoisie — bourgeois democracy — by another form — open terrorist dictatorship."[12]*†

The fourth topic I wish to take up is — what is the character of this "open terrorist dictatorship?"*†† There can be no denying the terrorist character of the fascist regime — terror on a scale previously un-

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†††can be pointed out that internationalism does not have to assume a proletarian character. The Catholic Church is also internationalist. So was the Comintern when it called for the proletarians of all countries to identify their class interests with the state interests of the USSR.

*†Perhaps some might observe a difference between this and Manuilsky's remarks of a few years earlier: "The fact that the bourgeoisie will be obliged to repress the workers' movement by fascist methods does not mean that the hierarchy will not govern as before (that is with the participation or support of the social democracy). Fascism is not a new governmental method distinct from the system of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Anyone who thinks this is a liberal." (Quoted by Poulantzas, *op. cit.,* page 149)

*††Gus Hall, in his Introduction to Togliatti's *Lectures,* comments that "Fascism . . . especially tries to cover up the fact that it is 'the open dictatorship of the most reactionary section of monopoly capital.'" (page xi) Is he unconscious of the humor involved in "covering up" what is "open"?

known. But it is not merely the scale of terror that distinguishes fascism from other forms of dictatorship — autocracy, military rule, etc. — even when we allow that the expansion of terror has given it a "qualitatively" new aspect. Previous regimes aimed at the suppression of conscious opponents. Fascism, after the first few years of breaking up the opposition parties, moves toward the establishment of the totalitarian state.

The characteristic of the totalitarian state is not merely suppression of the opposition, but total domination of the lives of the subjects. This is brought about in part through the use of terror. Even this terror has a special character — it is no longer directed at individuals and organizations that have placed themselves in opposition to the regime, but is directed at large groups of the population that have given no particular reason to doubt their loyalty: Jews, Poles, Gypsies, the mentally ill, those with congenital defects, etc. The concentration camps were filled with people who were absolutely "innocent" in every sense except that they had the misfortune to fall into one of the targeted groups.

The second feature of the totalitarian state is that it not merely suppresses the defense organizations of the proletariat; after having smashed up the proletarian organizations and having reduced the population to a grouping of atomized individuals with no ties of group interests, it then proceeds to reorganize these fragmented beings into mass organizations that reach into every sphere of life — the workplace, the school, the community. It is not enough that opposition should be suppressed; the masses must be brought to cooperate with the new regime, to participate actively in its mass rallies, sport societies, re-education sessions. No form of autonomous activity can be permitted; art, music, sport and even chess are of value only to the extent they are "weapons."*†††

Mussolini addresses Milan rally in 1936.

It is well known that the slogan that motivated the Communist Party in Germany right up to — and beyond — the coming to power of the Nazis was — After Hitler, Our Turn! They consistently underestimated the possibility of a fascist victory (a mistake for which they later criticized themselves) but also, even after the victory, underestimated the seriousness of the defeat this entailed. As late as 1935, in his remarks at the Seventh World Congress, Dimitrov was still whistling in the graveyard about how "the Communist Party even in conditions of illegality continues to make progress, becomes steeled and tempered. . .,"[13]

Of all the major figures in the left-wing movement of the time, only Trotsky, to my knowledge, had any appreciation of what the victory of fascism would mean to the working class. In words which all those who snarl when they hear the name "Trotsky" should be forced to read, he wrote, in 1931, *before* the victory of the Nazis:

> The coming to power of the National Socialists would mean first of all the extermination of the flower of the German proletariat, the destruction of its organizations, the eradication of its belief in itself and in its future. Considering the far greater maturity and acuteness of the social contradictions in Germany, the hellish work of Italian fascism would probably appear as a pale and almost humane experiment in comparison with the work of the German National Socialists.
>
> Retreat, you say, you who were yesterday the prophets of the "third period." Leaders and institutions can retreat. Individual persons can hide. But the working class will have no place to retreat to in the face of fascism, and no place to hide. If one were to admit the monstrous and improbable, that the party will actually evade the struggle and thus deliver the proletariat to the mercy of its mortal enemy, this would signify only one thing: the gruesome battles would unfold not *before* the seizure of power by the fascists but *after* it, that is, under conditions ten times more favorable for fascism than those of today. The struggle against a fascist regime by a proletariat betrayed by its own leadership, taken by surprise, disoriented, despairing, would be transformed into a series of frightful, bloody, and futile convulsions. Ten proletarian insurrections, ten defeats, one on top of the other, could not debilitate and enfeeble the German working class as much as a retreat before fascism would weaken it at the very moment when the decision is still impending on the question of who is to become master in the German household."[14]

To what extent did the fascist regime, even in its most completely realized form — Nazism, succeed in subordinating all strata of society to its total domination? There is abundant evidence dealing with this question in relation to the big bourgeoisie, and there the answer seems to be — not very much. As Guerin put it, "The fascist regime . ., never

domesticated the bourgeoisie."[15] It must be remembered, as an explanation of the fascist failure in this regard, that the German bourgeoisie, even though it was undergoing a crisis, was by no means a weak social formation. It is not inconceivable that, in other circumstances, where the bourgeoisie is mortally wounded, the fascist mob could succeed in bringing it under its domination or even eliminating it totally as a class distinct from the heads of the state and the fascist movement. Suppose, for a moment, a situation where the bourgeoisie was exhausted, divided, unable to command any longer the respect of the population, but where the working class is not sufficiently conscious and organised to rule as a class. Could a mob inflamed by radical slogans without class content come to power and proceed to expropriate the bourgeoisie while retaining the essential feature of bourgeois social relations, namely the domination of the living laborer by previously accumulated, congealed, dead labor? Perhaps "fascist" would not be the best term to apply to such a regime, but would it not exhibit many of the features of the fascist state? How would such a regime stay in power? Most likely, it would combine violent denunciations of the old system of private property, resting on the masses' bitter memories of private exploitation, with constant appeals for vigilance lest the old way be restored. It would strengthen the state apparatus, and scornfully dismiss appeals for free speech and press as opening the door for the class enemy to return. Lastly, it would mobilize the population by means of a constant and deafening clamor of propaganda, officially approved mass organizations in every sphere of life,. public rallies and demonstrations, supervised collective study and character re-molding, perhaps through some device like the Catholic confessional or ritual group discussions of individual errors. (I beg to remind the reader that all this is pure speculation, since no such regime ever has existed or could exist anywhere in the world.)

The Working Class

Of course, for us, the more important question is the success of fascism in liquidating the working class. (Recall the words of Mussolini — the working class when it is not organized is not a class but a mob.) The evidence here is sparse. It is obvious that Italian fascism never brought about the total atomization of the proletariat. The situation regarding Germany is not so clear. Several things indicate, however, that the fascist success was not as great as has been alleged. In the first place, there is the large number of German workers who found themselves in the camps. Based on what I said earlier, that the Nazi regime attacked the "innocent" as well as the "guilty," this cannot be offered as conclusive evidence. Second, the rapidity with which the German people set up autonomous institutions to regulate the distribution of allied relief food in the West immediately following the War provides some evidence that the germs of proletarian aspirations had not entirely been stamped out. It may very well be that the very speed of the occupation, especially in the east, where the Soviets moved immediately to establish their control over the police, functioned to prevent the emergence of more visible proof that the German proletariat had, indeed, survived the scourge of Nazism.

To return to the official Comintern definition: I think I have demonstrated that every element in the definition is either mistaken, inadequate or subject to serious questioning. It should be laid to rest.

* * *

FOOTNOTES

1. *The MIR and the Tasks of the Resistance,* Resistance Courier, Special Edition, Number 1, pages 53-4.
2. F. Claudin: *The Communist Movement,* Monthly Review Press, 1975, pages 242-3.
3. R. Palme Dutt: *Fascism and Social Revolution,* International, 1935, page 108.
4. *Ibid.,* page 113 (emphasis in original).
5. Dimitrov: *The United Front,* International, 1938, page 9.
6. N. Poulantzas: *Fascism and Dictatorship,* New Left Books, London 1974, page 139.
7. L. Trotsky: *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany,* Pathfinder, NY 1971, pages 59-62.
8. H. Arendt: *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* Meridian, NY 1958, page 323. I cannot possibly recommend this book too enthusiastically, especially the third section, "On Totalitarianism."
9. *Ibid.,* page 312.
10. Trotsky, *op. cit.,* page 440.
11. M. Vajda: *Fascism as a Mass Movement,* Allison & Busby, London 1976, page 8.
12. Dimitrov, *op. cit.,* page 12.
13. *Ibid.,* page 26.
14. Trotsky, *op. cit,* page 125.
15. D. Guerin: *Fascism and Big Business,* Pathfinder, NY 1973, page 9.