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THE GEORGIAN QUESTION

CHILE'S 'MARXIST' PRESIDENT

CZECHOSLOVAKIA 1938-48

THE S.L.L.

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Editorial: Chile's president

"It will demand high qualities of political maturity for Chileans to realise that they are now embarking on another variety of democratic experiment and that to refuse the experiment would condemn them to become simply another undemocratic Latin American state." (Financial Times leader, 7.9.70.)

Salvador Allende, the 'Marxist candidate' was elected President of Chile on the basis of a reform programme which pledged to nationalise wide sectors of Chilean industry (particularly copper, the chief source of wealth), banking and foreign trade. His victory resulted from a coalition of social democrats, revisionist communists and radicals. After the election he received the support of the biggest bourgeois party the Christian Democrats and the much rumoured Army threat petered out when the military leaders pledged not to intervene in the 'democratic process'.

This event is worth comment in so far as it is another variety of democratic experiment", ie, of capitalist economic development.

Chile has come to be a definite area of experiment for the bourgeoisie internationally since the early 60's (UNO 'development capital' in Chile is the 4th largest after India, Pakistan and Egypt.). As opposed to most Latin American countries bourgeois politics were developed to the stage where rule by Parliamentary democracy was possible, not military junta. The Christian Democrats under President Frei embarked on a radical reform programme in the early 60's with the blessing of the main imperialist interests in Chile (ie, US, Britain, Germany and France). The Christian Democrats failed to make any serious headway with land reform in the face of strong opposition from the landowners thus effectively failing to clear the way for capitalist development. The Christian Democrats' candidate, Tomic was rejected by the bourgeoisie, both national and imperialist;

"In the context of Latin America Allende's victory must signal the passing of Christian Democracy, a political comet of great brilliance which shot across the political firmament in Latin America in the 1960's... it has not proved an effective instrument in one of the most sophisticated countries of the continent. Latin American economic and social problems have proved too intractable for it. The continuing underdevelopment of the area which made a mock of the Alliance for Progress is producing political radicalisation and demands for even firmer and more left-wing governments... In Latin America today three countries; Cuba, Peru and Chile are taking to nationalistic policies of development with great emphasis on State control. The lesson for the rest of the developing world is obvious." (Financial Times, 8.9.70)

The wider significance of events in Chile are also illuminating especially the light it throws on a major change of US imperialist policy, which has taken place in relation to social reform, and national bourgeois development in the neo-colonies.

The policy of US imperialism after World War II in this sphere, and particularly in Latin America, was to support the landowning classes in their resistance to bourgeois democratic reform. This policy was developed as part of their overall international strategy aimed at the destruction of the anti-imperialist camp led by the Communist movement, in particular the Soviet Union.

This campaign was largely successful following the liquidation of Soviet Power in the USSR and the degeneration of the international communist movement into revisionism so that by the late fifties it was emerging clearly that a major change had occurred in the balance of forces, which totally altered the international situation. Naturally it took some time to disengage from an alignment warranted by one situation (ie, support for the landowning classes) particularly as US internal politics did not favour a radical change of policy (support for the reformists). This in broad outline is what US imperialism's policy has been gradually moving towards in Latin America. Chile and the US response to developments there represents the furthest expression of this policy because the internal conditions suited it most; the days of military intervention against extremely moderate nationalist reformists (as in Guatemala 1954 and the Dominican Republic 1965) are over.

The events in Chile, where major US interests are involved in the copper industry, demonstrate the new imperialist attitude. Allende's govt plans majority ownership of the major copper concerns and is at present negotiating with the US capitalists concerned. With the withdrawal of imperialist support for the landowning class a policy of democratic reform becomes possible without armed struggle of any great proportion. So what on the surface will appear as the results of radical 'Marxist' politics is made possible only by a shift in class forces internally and internationally. This means that the reforms can only serve to consolidate and develop capitalism in Chile not weaken it.

The 'left-wing' is seen in its true light--the most radical wing of bourgeois politics. This is the cause of the interest and support of the capitalist papers for this 'variety of the democratic experiment'.

"British Leyland Motors is to go ahead with its investment in Chile in spite of the Marxist victory in the elections there. In full page advertisements placed in the leading national newspapers British Leyland announced that it has every confidence in Chile." (Financial Times, 29.9.70)

Next month's editorial hopes to deal with the two party conferences and the Industrial Relations Bill.

Palmer & Lawless'

'Anti-Imperialist'

FANTASY

On 3rd September ISRSC (a front organisation of the IS trots) held a meeting to discuss 'the growing repression of Irish militants' by the British bourgeoisie. The first speech came from Palmer. Seven weeks previous, John Palmer's story was that this repression would be based on a mass fascist party created out of the ruins of the old Tory Party after its destruction in the general election. He was as accurate then as he was in this second meeting.

Anyway, his view of the Ulster situation was as follows. The bourgeoisie, having granted a few concessions had to use the mailed fist to avoid giving any more. Now, there have been widespread police searches throughout the UK in connection with the bombing incidents, which are presumably the result of the fragmentation of nationalists, extremist, usually anti-communist, politics. But the most important target of British repression is Stormont, for British Imperialism is clearly determined to see the Civil Rights programme is carried out. For the main force promoting civil rights in Ulster is none other than British imperialism--aided by the 'Unionist moderates' (Chichester-Clark), the Catholic bourgeoisie in Ulster (eg, the new Social Democratic Labour Party) and its radical fringes--Peoples Democracy and its English stablemate, ICRSC (This was pointed out by an ICO member present.)

What is the substance of the Civil Rights programme? J Palmer would have us believe it is a national liberation: "Ireland would control her own resources." In other words, civil rights is a working class demand, which is being opposed by British imperialism. Now the fact of the matter is that civil rights means merely an extension of bourgeois democracy to correspond to the re-integration of the South into the UK market (This is fully explained in the ICO pamphlets Economics of Partition and Birth of Ulster Unionism.). Who opposes the reforms?--only the extreme nationalists. Given the economic situation, of the South being re-integrated into the UK market, nationalism no longer serves the bourgeoisie. Nationalist groups thus have no

long-run future. And where do the workers stand? Clearly the bourgeoisie are only reforming in order to maintain their class rule. If there were a Communist Party, the working class could take a position in relation to the reforms. As there is none, the question doesn't arise; but it is obvious that bourgeois democracy is of only marginal interest to the working class. Yet John Palmer represents these reforms which correspond to the interests of UK imperialism, as representing the interests of the proletariat!

When this was pointed out, he retorted that to say UK imperialism favoured reform was a 'caricature of a socialist position'. Two years ago he may have been able to maintain that--today after Callaghan and Maudling have forced reforms on a reluctant Stormont, it is pure pigheadedness.

Palmer went on to tell us of the 'mini-repression' in Britain against Irish emigrants, students, blacks and last but not least, workers. The bourgeoisie, he told us, are nervous, because of the strenght of the 'left groups'. At a time when the working class movement is full of confusion, and therefore disorganised and politically powerless, it must be marked as an achievement to make the above statement, let alone keep a straight face at the same time, as Palmer did.

Palmer's speech finished with a common piece of trot shilly-shallying about the Labour Party (2 Labour MP's had been invited but did not turn up.) To have come to the meeting, he said, should have been the duty of any Labour MP's who call themselves part of the Labour movement. For their support to be worth anything, they must SPEAK OUT against the repression. To spread the idea among workers that Labour Lefties SPEAKING OUT on their behalf can be of any service to them is blatant opportunism.

Palmer was followed by Bowes Eagan, who neglected the politics of the situation, and merely gave a Private-Eye report on the Police bomb-hunts.

Tariq Ali, of the IMG-Red Mole group of trotskyists, spoke next, suggesting a united front of left groups (as Palmer had done) to counter 'police repression'. So the position was that two trotskyist groups, who had never sorted out their differences, ie, their political reasons for existing as different groups, were now suggesting some kind of co-operation, again without even referring to their political differences. IMG are, it appears now members of ICRSC (The politics of this tactical manoeuvre were not explained.) We see in 'Mole's' editorial: "The harassment suffered by Irish militants active in the Irish Solidarity Movement is on the increase." And: "the increasing repression does rather strongly point out the need for discipline and organisation."

Gerry Lawless' contribution was firstly, the tale that the arms hauls uncovered up and down the country were in fact the property of the Moral Rearmament faction, and secondly the assertion that arms are always introduced into British politics by the extreme Right. Behind this last bit is some sort of petty bourgeois attitude to guns; certainly Lenin did not wait for guns to be brought into Russian politics by the extreme Right before he struck.

Eamon Mc Cann was the last platform speaker. Interestingly enough, he was the only one to give a potted version of the ICO analysis of the reasons for the Northern crisis--naturally without acknowledgement (this of course did not alter his position on the street fighting in Belfast and elsewhere--this was still "mass anti-imperialist struggle.")

John Palmer, of course, has done the same, i.e., used ICO analysis without acknowledgement on more than one occasion, while floundering between trot theology on the one hand and reality on the other; so have the Birch group (CPBML). Indeed it is a common occurrence for as the bankruptcy of their fantastical 'analyses' becomes apparent both to the opportunists and their audiences, they attempt to incorporate the concrete work of the ICO into their fabrications. Never of course do they acknowledge the source of their information, for their object is not to draw attention to the ICO (including the ICO's position on them, the opportunists); but simply to preserve their own position in the mish-mash of opportunist politics.

The other interesting point about Mc Cann is that while verbally he took a different position to Palmer on the Labour Party (he was not surprised the MP's had not come.), in practice he is more opportunist--the organisation to which he belongs is none other than the Derry Labour Party.

One speaker from the floor raised a complaint--we had come to be informed about the state of affairs in N Ireland, and all we had got was International Socialism. Though confused himself, he had an aspect of the truth here--all we had been given was totally at variance with the facts, and designed simply to confuse any serious listener.

DR Stead

On the SOCIALIST LABOUR LEAGUE (1)

Throughout its history the Communist Movement has developed on the basis of continual struggle against the various forms of opportunism with which it has been confronted. In Britain today the three main forms of such opportunism are Social Democracy, Revisionism and Trotskyism. Internationally trotskyism is comparatively insignificant. Although it has existed as a tendency within the Russian working class movement since 1904, (When Trotsky published his first major anti-communist work: "Our Political Tasks"

which the ICO have republished after decades of obscurity,) and internationally since the 1920's, Trotskyism has never attracted any significant number of workers in any country with the peculiar exception of Ceylon.

In Britain this is not now the position. Here, the main trotskist grouping the Socialist Labour League has succeeded in gaining influence over a considerable number of young workers.

The SLL is distinguished from the other Trotskyist groupings by three main features:--

- 1 It has a working class base.
- 2 It has a far greater influence amongst the working class than the other Trotskyist groups.
- 3 Whilst the strategy of the other Trotskyist groups (RSL in the Labour Party, the IS as an amalgam of the tendencies, and the IMG in its mass youth movements) means they have to compromise their politics to some degree, e.g., the RSL infiltrating the LP apparatus, the SLL is consistently pumping basic trotskist theory into the working class at one hell of a rate. None of the other groups touches the SLL at that.

HISTORY

Trotskyism has existed in Britain since about 1930. The present leader of the SLL, G Healy was associated with the early Trotskyist groupings. However, it made little or no headway until the 1940's. World War II led to the expansion of British trotskism. This was due to a reaction against the CPGB and its policy of all-out support for the War which was carried to ridiculous extremes in some cases.

In 1944, the various trotskist groups got together to form the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). The General Secretary of the RCP was Jock Haston who is now a leading right-wing bureaucrat in the ETU. Healy was a member of the RCP leadership and apparently closely associated with Haston.

After 1945, trotskism entered into a state of extreme crisis both in Britain, and internationally. This was due largely to the developments in E Europe and China. According to the gospel laid down by Leon Trotsky:-- Stalin and the other leaders of the International working class movement, were treacherous bureaucrats who were forever betraying the interests of the working class; but, who, at the same time, 'represented' the working class in a 'distorted' way. Trotsky and his disciples were never able to rationalise this paradox. (But then logical analysis was never a strong point with Trotsky who constantly tended to confuse his fantasies and the real world. A good example of this was recently published in the SLL organ 'Workers Press'. This was an article written by Trotsky in 1924 in which he 'proved' that the main contradiction in the world capitalist system was between Britain and the USA and predicted an inevitable war between them! The SLL reprinted this article in order to demonstrate to the world what an outstanding Marxist Trotsky was!)

In the 1940's the Trotskyists were faced with the horrible (for them) reality of the extension of the dictatorship of the proletariat to China and Eastern and Central Europe. This completely contradicted Trotsky's

theories on what should be happening. In this situation, the trotskyist movement began to fragment. One section of it led by Michael Raptis or Pablo and Ernest Germain or Mandel attempted to develop a sort of 'modernised' trotskyism. These were obstructed by the more dogmatic trotskyists led by Healy and by the American trotskyist James P Cannon. Cannon had been a 'personal associate' of Trotsky when the latter was in his well-guarded refuge in Mexico and apparently, from his writings, had various emotional hang-ups about him. Cannon's background had been the American Trade Union Movement, particularly the Industrial Workers of the World and he appears to have had very little grasp of Marxism or of politics generally.

SPLIT OF FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND OTHER TROTSKYIST FRAGMENTATIONS

Eventually in 1953, the so-called 'IVth International' split and Healy, Cannon and their supporters established the 'International Committee' in opposition to the 'Unified Secretariat' controlled by Mandel and his followers.

In Britain the RCP had disintegrated in 1949. Apparently, it dissolved itself when the various tendencies within it could not work out any coherent policy and just decided to give up. In addition to the complications of the international situation, the main bone of contentions was the attitude to be adopted to the British Labour Party. Apparently Healy and his associates favoured a policy of complete and utter submergence withing the Labour Party and demanded the liquidation of the RCP.

From 1949 onwards the Healyites existed in a small group within the Labour Party.

HEALY'S GREAT OPPORTUNITY

The development of Modern Revisionism in the mid 50's provided Healy with his great opportunity. The 20th Congress of the CPSU was held in early 1956. At this Congress, Khrushchev made his notorious 'secret' speech. (In actual fact the only people to whom it seems to have been a secret were the Russian workers.) This speech consisted in the main of personal abuse. The effect of the 20th Congress was to throw the International Communist Movement into complete confusion. The fact that it was so easy to throw it into confusion indicated the extreme theoretical backwardness of its leadership which had been noted by Stalin some years earlier.

The confusion in the British Communist Party was greater than perhaps in any other European Communist Party. The crisis in the CPGB was intensified by the impact of the Hungarian events later in the same year. The CP leadership could give no real explanation of these events. In the absence of such an explanation and completely unable to work things out for themselves, thousands left the party.

Some of these turned to Healy who in common with other Trotskyists had developed a theory about workers trying to overthrow the 'Stalinist Bureaucracy', and set up a 'pure workers' state'. (led by Cardinal Mindzenty, no doubt!)

THOSE FOR WHOM THE GOD HAD FAILED and AFTER

The two most prominent members of the CP who joined Healy were Peter Fryer and Brian Behan.

Peter Fryer had been correspondent in Hungary for the 'Daily Worker'. He had reacted in a subjectivist way to his experiences there and written a book on the subject from a petty-bourgeois liberal view-point. Fryer did not last long with Healy; he left the SLL and seems to have disappeared from working class politics.

Brian Behan was one of the leading CP militants in the building industry and had been a member of the party Executive. He soon broke with Healy and was last heard of writing hysterical anti-communist propaganda for the Dublin 'Sunday Press'.

In general, most of Healy's recruits from the CP did not remain with him. Nevertheless they provided him with sufficient impetus to launch the Socialist Labour League in 1959. Healy then attempted to obtain the affiliation of the SLL to the Labour Party. Not only was he unsuccessful in this, but the Labour Party leadership dissolved those constituency Labour Parties (Norwood and Streatham--both near Healy's present HQ in Clapham) which the Healyites had infiltrated.

THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS

From 1960 onwards, Healy found a valuable new source of recruits. This was the Young Socialists--the youth organisation of the Labour Party. It contained many young people who were subjectively opposed to the social-democratic politics of the leadership. In the absence of a Communist alternative they were attracted by the superficially 'militant' phrasemongering of the Healyites.

By 1964, Healy was able to engineer a split in the YS and retain control of a substantial section of them. Members of the Healyite YS are fed a strong dose of anti-Communism disguised as 'anti-Stalinism'. The turnover of membership in the YS is extremely high for various reasons and during the short stay of each member in the organisation he receives a sufficient amount of this anti-Communism to reinforce the basic anti-Communist conditioning he has already received from the bourgeois educational system. This process must be considered as being Healy's main service to the British bourgeoisie. In his efforts in this direction Healy has been greatly facilitated by the complete absence of any Communist opposition.

Since its inception in 1963, the British anti-revisionist movement failed to make any attempt to deal with Trotskyism theoretically. Where it has not actively collaborated with trotskyism as have such individuals as R Birch of the CPB(ML) and M Cooley, it has pretended to ignore its existence. The effects of this policy are only too obvious: the trotskyists are able to sow confusion on issues which were once clear to all Communists, e.g., the Moscow trials. They and their allies are able to present

bourgeois agents such as Bukharin, Tuchachevsky, Vosnesensky etc as 'Innocent Martyrs' murdered by the 'Butcher' Stalin.

This article is intended as a brief historical account of the SLL. It does not attempt to explain the relationships between the various trotskyist groupings in Britain or the relations between the SLL and trotskyist groups abroad. These will be the subject of other articles in this series.

FOR THE NEXT INSTALLMENT....

Part II will deal with some policy documents issued by the SLL showing the basic contradictions underlying them.

Note: It is not possible in this series, to deal comprehensively with the basic theories of trotskyism. Readers looking for an analysis of trotskyism as such are referred to the ICO pamphlet In Defence of Leninism and to the supplements 'On Trotskyism' published in Nos 52, 53, 54 and 55 of the Irish Communist. These give a complete Marxist analysis of trotskyism, dealing with the main points of trotskyist theory--i.e., the bureaucracy, 'Socialism in one country', the 'Deformed Workers State', the Stalin question etc.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In recent articles referring to the Republican Movement, the formulations 'murder' and 'fascist' are not ICO policy positions. This question and also references in the past of a similar nature with regard to extreme Unionism are being investigated by the ICO and a historical analysis of these movements will be published.

Note: the ICO does not regard the official IRA as being in any sense more progressive than the provisional IRA and does not agree with any of the criticism made by the official IRA of the Provisionals.

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(The background to the letter which follows is a controversy between the C.W.O. and Mr A.H. Evans on the Stalin question. Among a multitude of niggling "criticisms" of Stalin - always stated in the form of brief, dogmatic, unsubstantiated utterances - Evans, in his pamphlet "The National Problem", referred to Stalin's "great race chauvinism". In support of this he cited some critical remarks made by Lenin in 1922 of Stalin's handling of an opportunist tendency in the Georgian section of the Bolshevik Party. These remarks were made during Lenin's last illness, when he was out of touch with actual developments. Evans cited these remarks completely out of their historical context, making no reference to the subsequent behaviour of the Georgian opportunist faction. A general review of Evans' "criticism" of Stalin on the national question will be found in the C.W.O. pamphlet "On the National Question in Britain". The letter which follows shows how much to the point was Stalin's criticism of the opportunist faction in Georgia, and how far his position was removed from "great race chauvinism".)

A Reader's letter on the GEORGIAN QUESTION

Dear Comrades,

"On the National Question in Britain"

Despite his protests to the contrary Evans, the Stalin critic, is a most consistent and long-standing opponent of Stalin. See his odd 'asides' about the United Front. But even more, he attempts to split, to divide, the founders of Marxism, and their most adequate representatives.

In your booklet on the National Question, you answer Evans, and his near Trotskyist slander on what is in essence the Georgian question. It may be of interest to you and reinforce your correct criticism, by giving some of the background to this question.

In 1918 the Baku workers established their Baku Commune, but the Tiflis leadership, Makharadze, and Mdivani, M Okujava etc. ignored the instructions of Lenin and Stalin, and refused to prepare to carry out an armed struggle for power in Georgia and Transcaucasia. They surrendered the Tiflis arsenal to the Mensheviks, they also refused to agitate for the Soviet Government among the troops, they advocated for the peaceful transfer of power to the Soviets after the October Revolution... and so on.

These nationalists, deviationists (in the light of subsequent events, this really needs no proving) made their first attack against the national policy of the Soviet Party in 1921. It was on the question of the amalgamation of the railways of Transcaucasia, and the abolishing of the custom and inspection points on the borders between the Soviet Republics of Transcaucasia. This, of course, was essential so as to restore the national economy to build socialism and end the sufferings of the people which had been unimaginable during and after the Imperialist World War.

This again raised the problem of how to establish peace and fraternal collaboration between the peoples of Transcaucasia on a permanent basis. Therefore, Lenin on April 9th 1921 issued direct instructions to set up regional economic body for the Republics of Transcaucasia....this is contained in a reply to Orjonikidze about the desperate economic plight of the Republics...."I urgently demand that a regional economic organ for the entire Transcaucasia be established....."

But because of the nationalists only the railways and Boards for Foreign Trade could be amalgamated. And this was directly because of them. Previously, before the counter-revolutionary governments of Mensheviks, Dashnaks and Mussavatists existed, the most close fraternal bonds existed between workers of these nationalities... Armenian, Georgian, Azerbaijani and Russian. Armed clashes had taken place since the advent of the Mensheviks etc. It should be observed that despite the amalgamation, each Republic had its own currency. The nationalists made the frontier question a discussion point at every opportunity.

At the end of 1921, in view of the situation, the need for a federation of the Transcaucasian Republics was raised at the Plenum of the Caucasian Bureau of the C.C. of the R.C.P. (B). Molotov was the Secretary.

The deviationists, Mdivani, Tsintsadze, Makharadze, etc., openly came out against the federation saying that it was not the opinion of Lenin and Stalin but an imposition of the Caucasian Bureau. But this was a lie. See Stalin's report to the 12th Congress. The real inspirers of the Federation were precisely Lenin and Stalin.

Stalin thought it would be premature to apply the Federation in practice immediately. He wrote to Lenin on this point asking him if he would alter the resolution to read 'several weeks for discussion' to a 'certain period of time'. Stalin goes on.....

"The point is that in Georgia it is impossible 'to carry through a federation 'from below' by 'Soviet procedure' in 'several weeks' since in Georgia the Soviets are only just beginning to be organised.....I think it necessary to allow two or three for the idea of a federation to triumph among the broad masses of Georgia."

With its formation the Federation aroused furious opposition from the aristocratic, and bourgeois elements, as also from the defeated anti-Soviet parties, They demanded that the Federation be dissolved and that Georgia enter the Soviet Union directly.

E.G. October 21 1922, the Central Committee of Georgia after hearing a report of Kote Tsintsadze on the results of a special commission to Moscow, adopted a peculiar and contradictory decision to dissolve the Federation.....

- 1) To accept the report as a whole.
- 2) Fully accept and undeviatingly carry out the decision of the Plenum of the C.C. of the R.C.P., on the federation of the Soviet Republics.
- 3) To petition the C.C. of the R.C.P. that Georgia be admitted directly to the Union of the Socialist Soviet Republics.
- 4) In the event of the C.C. of the R.C.P. granting the petition of the C.C. of the Communist Party of Georgia for the direct admission of Georgia into the Union of Soviet Republics, to consider the existence of the Transcaucasian Union Soviet superfluous.

As an opportunist document the above would take some beating.

Baku fought for the establishment of the Federation.

At the end of 1922 a further step was taken by transforming the Federative Union into a single Federative Republic, each affiliated republic retaining its independence. Under the N.E.P. the nationalist deviationists lapsed into Menshevik positions both on the national question and general questions. It can be seen from the previously quoted 'resolution' that this nationalism was not so much a tendency to combat Great-Russian nationalism, but against the Armenians.

They wished to utilise the special geographical position of Georgia, particularly Tiflis and Batum, they wished to withdraw from the Federation to get special privileges: They also fought against granting autonomy to the national minorities of Georgia. But if further proof is needed that it was not a question of Great-Russian chauvinism, or if we wish ... 'Great-Race chauvinism'...

On March 31st 1922 a telegram was sent bearing the signatures of Makharadze, Chairman of the Central E.C. of Georgia, and Okujava, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars:

"Rostov-on-Don, to the E.C. copy to the Central Evacuation Board; Novorossiisk, to the E.C. copy to the Chief of the Evacuation Board; Vladikavkaz, to the Chairman of the C.E.C. of the Gorsky Republic, copy to the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars; Batum, to the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Ajaristan, copies to the Chairman of the E.C., the Chairman of the Transcaucasian Cheka, the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of Georgia, the Chairman of the Cheka of Georgia, the Chief of Railways of the Transcaucasian Republic, the Chairman of the C.E.C. of Abkhazia, the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs Georgia:

'As from this date, the frontiers of the Georgian Republic are declared closed: hereafter admission of refugees to the territory of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia is discontinued. We urgently request corresponding instructions to the respective organs. Please acknowledge receipt of this telegram.....

2) Para 1 Persons receiving permission for their relatives to enter Georgian territory shall pay 50,000 rubles for such permits (Georgian notes..one million is equal to ten gold roubles)

Para 2 Government institutions requesting the issuance of entry permits to persons who may be needed because of their special knowledge shall pay 500,000 roubles.

Para 5 Persons who arrived in Georgia after August 13, 1917 and who wish to receive permission to reside in Georgia permanently, shall if their request be granted, pay 1,000,000 roubles for the issue of such permits:

Para 6 Persons who on August 13, 1922 shall have resided in Georgia for five years.....shall pay 1,000,000 roubles for the right of further residence in Georgia...

Para 8 The following persons, who arrived in Georgia after August 13, 1917 shall have the right to remain in the country:

- 3) All members of trade unions who have been members for six months on the day of the issuance of this order.
- 4) Citizens who have business relations with Georgia.

Georgian citizenship shall be lost: by any Georgian female citizen who shall marry a foreigner."

Stalin described this 'cordon decree' including that incredible part concerning a Georgian woman losing her citizenship if she married a person of non-Georgian nationality as "monstrous". And monstrous it was.

With this evidence as Stalin says, and I quote later, we can see that this is open Georgian chauvinism, i.e., aggressive. Not passive, but active. This would have transformed the area into one of international conflict.

The Georgian nationalists also proposed that there be set up branches of the Ottoman Bank in Tiflis and Batum.

Stalin at the 12th Party Congress had this to say:

".....If this nationalism were only defensive, it might not be worth making a fuss about. We could concentrate our entire action, our entire struggle, on Great-Russian chauvinism in the hope that if this powerful enemy were overcome, anti-Russian nationalism would be overcome with it; for I repeat this nationalism is in the long run a reaction to Great-Russian nationalism, a reply to it, a certain form of defence. Yes, that would be so if anti-Russian nationalism in the localities were nothing more than a reaction to Russian nationalism. But the trouble is that in some republics this defensive nationalism is turning into aggressive nationalism."

It should be borne in mind that in Georgia 30% of the population were non-Georgian. The Georgian nationalists, it must be repeated, took a hostile attitude to their own minorities. The Georgian Mensheviks were against granting independence to Finland and the Ukraine. They staged an insurrection in 1924. It failed. It was with these people that so-called Bolsheviks tried to form relationships...did form...and of course the Trotskyite centre did as early as 1923.

Remembering that Stalin was Georgian, therefore he is all the more to be congratulated on his objective attitude.

Who can deny that Stalin was correct after reading the foregoing. In practice the Georgian nationalists proved more dangerous, and more determined enemies of Soviet power than was ever imagined at the time. It is obvious that Stalin was quite as conscious of 'great-race-chauvinism' as his 'critics', even much more so, because he makes an analysis of it, looks at it from all sides. Can this be said of his critics?

One cannot as these critics do, throw out a couple of phrases here and there as asides and then expect them to be taken as the last word in Marxism. Worse, to bring up trivial things....(Stalin once answered, when he was accused of 'rudeness', that he saw no reason why he should be polite to enemies of the working class.)

This is not so 'dead'...nationalism has risen again in the Soviet Republics. And it should be noted that each republic had its 'own' party; yet, the general direction remained under the Central Committee of the Russian Party. This was a dictum of Lenin, from his early fight against the National Jewish Bund. The fight against capitalism had to be united and centralised into one Communist Party in this area of the Russian state.

The final result of the Georgian question was that under the Stalin Constitution, the Federation of Transcaucasia was dissolved and the Republics entered the USSR as Union Republics with full rights. But this was only possible after a long period of preparation, when national culture was enabled to develop, when their economics had reached at least a minimum of industrial agrarian development (when the collective farm movement had succeeded there. In other words certain stages had to be gone through. This we know is fully consistent with Marx and his ideas on federation.).

This is part of the background. But it gives us a picture of what faced Lenin Stalin and the Bolsheviks, and indeed it seems what we still have to face and fight today.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

part 4: 1938-48

(So far in this series, we have given a general political and economic history of the Czechoslovak bourgeois state from its foundation. The extent of communist politics in the working class movement in the 20's and 30's was explained against a background of intense national conflicts, internally.)

In Sept 1938, following the Munich Agreement of Britain, France, Germany and Italy, the Czech govt, was forced to concede the secession of the Sudeten German areas to German imperialism. British imperialism brought the determining pressure on it to capitulate as part of its wider policies of concessions to Germany.

A new govt led by the right wing, Agrarian Party bourgeois politicians (Beran, Chvalkovsky, Hacha) accepted this contraction of the Czechoslovak state. It could only be a matter of time before Germany would insist on total subjugation in order to continue her Eastern expansion. Between Sept 1938 and March 1939, Hitler worked on preparing the political conditions for dismembering the Czechoslovak state. This he did by encouraging the separatist aspirations of other nationalities in Czechoslovakia. In March 1939, on the pretext of curbing Czech centralism (against the Slovaks,), the German army invaded and occupied the Czech lands, and physically dismembered the Czechoslovak state (granted Ruthenia to Hungary and Teshen to Poland and set up an 'autonomous Slovak state' with the clerical People's Party in the saddle). Bohemia and Moravia were incorporated into the German state as a 'protectorate' under a collaborationist Czech bourgeois regime.

By this time, Czechoslovakia had become the 'cockpit' of an international power struggle between rival imperialist powers (mainly Germany and Britain). From the early 39's the British and the communist leadership of the Soviet Union had evolved tactics to deal with the revival of German imperialism. Since 1934 (when it joined the League of Nations), the Soviet Union sought to achieve united fronts of anti-fascist states against the Fascist Axis (Germany, Italy and Japan). However the non-fascist imperialist powers weren't interested, hoping instead to direct the blows of this Axis against the Soviet Union in the first place. To this end they pursued a policy of 'non-intervention' (Spain, Abyssinia, China, Austria and finally Czechoslovakia). As part of its policy, the Soviet Union concluded Pacts with states threatened by Germany and Japan (China, Mongolia and Czechoslovakia and France). The Soviet-Czechoslovak Mutual Assistance Pact was part of a wider pact involving France, (the power with the most interests in Czechoslovakia as well as traditional links stretching back to Versailles.) The substance of these agreements was that in the event of attack by a hostile power the Soviet Union would come to the aid of the victim of aggression (and vice versa) ,militarily. In the case of Czechoslovakia, however, this depended on France honouring its commitment firstly.

The Munich Agreement signified that the French were not going to honour their commitment to Czechoslovakia. More than that it was the final indication to the leaders of the Soviet Union of the real policy of Britain and France, ie, to facilitate Hitler's expansion eastwards in the hope that Germany would become embroiled in war and so weaken both these powers. Munich released the Soviet Union from its commitment to defend Czechoslovakia and forced her to review her tactics with regard to the imperialist powers whether fascist or democratic. Particularly now in this heightened military situation it had "to be cautious and not allow our country to be drawn into conflicts by warmongers who are accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them." (Stalin: Report to the 18th CPSU Congress, Mar 1939, p 526).

In August 1939 the Soviet Union signed the Nazi-Soviet Non-Agression Pact thus reversing her former policy in the face of Anglo-French intrigue. This put a spoke in the plans of the British imperialists and averted an immediate Nazi-Soviet conflict. In Sept 1939, Britain and France were forced to formally declare war on Germany thus having to pull their own 'chestnuts out of the fire.' This signified that their tactics during the 29's had come to nought. They had been outmanoeuvred.

THE CPCz AND MUNICH

CPCz tactics in this period had to take this international situation into consideration. As the leadership was in Moscow from the time of the outlawing of the Party (Dec 1938) no doubt the closest consultation existed between them and the CPSU leadership and the tactics that emerged reflected this.

Politically, the CPCz opposed the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia. It urged the Czech bourgeoisie to fight and condemned them for not resisting (the Czechoslovak state was a formidable military force equipped from its own armaments industry). In Dec 1938 the CPCz and all its organisations were declared illegal, the communist press was banned and all communists in leading positions in works committees, parliament and local councils were removed by the Czech govt.

It did not organise armed resistance against either the Sept 1938 or March 1939 invasions in the absence of resistance of the Czech bourgeoisie (who had state power and majority influence over the Czech workers and petty bourgeoisie). This was a justifiable position considering the wider context in which it was adopted as well as the internal situation. Armed resistance to the German army in 1938-9 by the Czech communists could only have had suicidal results, without effecting the outcome of that struggle given the balance of forces internationally. Instead it retreated and regrouped underground in the face of overwhelming odds. The Party leadership (Gottwald, Sverma, Slansky and Kopecky) went into exile in Moscow along with many of the CPCz members. Another section went west to Poland first, then France and finally Britain. The multi-national Czechoslovak Communist Party was divided into Czech and Slovak Parties, each separately affiliated to the Comintern, to meet the changed state situation in Czechoslovakia from 1939 on.

During the 1939-41 period of the occupation of Czechoslovakia, the regime ruled with the minimum of repression against the Czechs (Jews and German Communists were vigorously persecuted however.) This situation existed because of a number of factors. Firstly, the primary function of Germany's

domination of Czechoslovakia now became economic, ie, production for the war economy. The policy most conducive to getting the Czech workers to produce was a liberal one. On the part of the Czechs, the main section of the bourgeoisie were openly collaborating and therefore not offering any resistance, hence no need for excessive repression. As regards the Czechs in exile in the west (France, Britain and the US) thought they opposed the occupation formally, they did little to encourage or organise opposition inside Czechoslovakia. Finally the communists were not taking the fight to the Germans for the reasons already explained (the Nazi-Soviet Pact reinforced their position). All this added up to a peculiarly non-repressive occupation.

By 1941, the situation changed internationally and internally. The invasion of the Soviet Union by Nazi Germany ended the brief interlude in the conflict between the most reactionary capitalist power and the socialist Soviet Union. This evoked a new change of tactics on the part of the Soviet Union in its foreign policy. It reverted to seeking an alliance with the non-fascist powers, while defending itself ably against the Nazi army.

Corresponding to this turn in the international situation the CPCz changed its tactics in relations to the non-collaborationist section of the Czech bourgeoisie, led by the Exile Govt in London. This section of the Czech bourgeois politicians had opted for the British and French side in the war, concentrating their efforts while in exile, on getting recognised as the legal govt of Czechoslovakia in the eyes of Britain, France and the US and on having the Munich deal repudiated. By 1942 they had secured these objects and now set about establishing their position in Central Europe in the event of the defeat of Germany and the restoration of the Czechoslovak state. The major factor demanding consideration by them now, was the emergence of the Soviet Union as a major power in that area. In the pre-war Republic, Czech foreign policy was based on hostility to the Soviet Union (dictated by French and Czech right-wing bourgeois politics). This policy was now reversed. Following the Anglo-Soviet Friendship Treaty in 1942, the road was open to a treaty of alliance and friendship. This was embodied in the Czechoslovak-Soviet Union Friendship Treaty of Dec 1943. The CPCz was involved in the discussions leading up to this treaty. This occasion also provided the opportunity for exploratory talks on the future Czechoslovakia with the bourgeoisie accepting the fact of a major communist influence.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA DURING THE ANTI FASCIST WAR 1941-5

One major effect which the German invasion and occupation had was to reverse the inter-war position of the relationships between the different nationalities, ie, the Czechs became the oppressed nation. The position of the Sudeten Germans did not revert to the Austrian-Hungarian situation (where they were dominant). German imperialism determined matters from now on. Politically the Sudeten German Party and increasingly the extreme nationalist wing of it, became the main instrument of Nazi rule. Particularly after 1941 the policies were extreme German nationalist, racialist and anti-working class.

Schemes for the liquidation of the Czech nation were drawn up as relations deteriorated and repression increased. Concentration camps were filled with Communists, Social-Democrats and Jews (4 Central Committees of the CPCz were liquidated and altogether about 25,000 members or one half the CPCz membership of 1937 were killed during the occupation. The Jewish population was decimated from over 100,000 to 30,000. Over 500,000 workers were transported to Germany as forced labour.

SLOVAKIA

One effect of the defeat of the Czech bourgeoisie after Munich was to shake Czech control over the Slovaks. The 'autonomous' Slovak state which was set up by the Slovak clerical-fascists (Tiso, Tucha and Mach) though not itself an instrument of Slovak national aspirations, provided opportunities for Slovak nationalism to develop. In the 1939-41 period all classes and political parties except the Communist Party of Slovakia (CPSI) either tolerated or supported the regime. The regime increasingly proved to be little more than a loyal puppet state. As the international situation changed, increasing numbers from all Slovak classes became disenchanted and began to support the developing national resistance movement. This development culminated in the Slovak National Uprising in 1944. The leadership was shared by the CPSI and the Slovak bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists, but with the ending of political control and discipline on an international scale in the communist movement (caused by the physical barriers created by war and the disbandment of the Comintern in 1943), the CPSI leadership in Slovakia (Husak, Smidk^c and Novomesky) began to deviate from the working class position under bourgeois nationalist influence. This expressed itself in the tendency to submerge the CPSI's independence in the united front with the nationalists. Along with this contact and consultation with the CPCz and CPSI leadership in Moscow was allowed to fail, while crucial military decisions in relation to the proposed rising were embarked upon without consultation with the main liberating force in E Europe, ie, the Red Army. The details of this episode will be gone into more thoroughly when we come to deal with the trials of the Slovak nationalists in the CPSI which took place between 1950 and 1954.

LIBERATION AND PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 1945 ON:

The liberation of the countries of Central and Southeast Europe from the oppression of German fascism inaugurated a period of transition from capitalism to socialism in these countries. The class nature of the People's Democratic states which came into being after liberation was proletarian in content.

The following is a quote from Hilary Minc, member of the Politburo of the Polish United Workers' Party (1950), "Peoples Democracies in E Europe" from a selection of articles and speeches on Peoples Democracies in South East Europe and China published by the CPGB in April 1951. pages 6-10)

"The tremendous social upheaval which took place after the war in the countries of Southern and South-Eastern Europe, an upheaval which resulted in the consolidation in these countries of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of the People's Democratic State, had the character of a proletarian revolution which we achieved in special historical conditions differing from those in which the Great October Socialist Revolution occurred."

What did the difference of these conditions consist of?

1 The People's Democracies were liberated by the Soviet Army. The coming of the Soviet Army made possible the growing of the national liberation struggle. Conducted by partisan forces into a national liberation war conducted in state form at the side of the Soviet Union by the entire nation and its regular army which arose with Soviet aid. The working class which led the struggle against the occupiers, now gained extensive possibilities of seizing political power and carrying out a broad struggle for the abolition of the rule of the capitalists and landowners.

2 The revolutionary struggle of the masses under the leadership of the working class and its Communist and Workers' Parties against the landowners and the capitalists was intertwined in the upheaval with the national liberation war against the Hitlerite occupiers...

During the Second World War, Europe was the arena of a great liberation struggle of a number of nations against the Hitlerite yoke. This struggle was closely connected with the great war of the Soviet nation in the defence of its homeland...The working class and its Communist parties closely linked the national liberation struggle with the struggle against the capitalists, and landowners, discredited by capitulation to Hitlerite Germany or collaboration with it--and with the struggle for the overthrow of the rule of the capitalists and the landowners.

3 In the People's Democracies the formation of the People's Democratic State as the organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat took place as a long-term process. The bourgeoisie and the landowners as well as their political organisations were not smashed by a frontal attack of the working class.

The concrete setting of internal and international circumstances often called for an at least partial sharing of the government, on the part of the Communist and Workers' Parties, not only with their wavering allies but also with thoroughly bourgeois parties. Hence, the apparatus of bourgeois power was not broken fully or in all its sectors--and hence, the relatively slow tempo of great social-transformations, etc. In the process of a long and stubborn class struggle, the discrediting and shattering of hostile political organisations, the overcoming of the vacillations of political allies, the forging--through the united front--of the organic unity of the working class; in the process of extending the foundations of a new system among the masses of the nation; the activation of these masses in the ever growing conviction that the new system is their system; in the process of fortifying the apparatus of the new state power and purging it from bourgeois trash, deepening the social transformations, extending the front of the class struggle and directing the fire of this struggle not only against the large capitalists and landowners but also against the village rich; in the process of a long series of difficult but victorious class battles--the new States of Peoples Democracy fulfill the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat in an ever greater scope and with ever greater effectiveness.....(my emphasis, JM)

Thus in contradistinction from the Soviet Union, where the dictatorship of the proletariat was fixed in the form of Soviet power from the first days of the socialist revolution, the chrystallisation of the dictatorship of the proletar-

iat in the People's Democracies took place as a long-lasting and difficult process.

Regardless of the divergence of the social upheaval in the People's Democracies from the October Revolution, this upheaval accomplished the same historical tasks. (H Minc's special emphasis.)

Political power was snatched from the hands of the bourgeoisie and passed into the hands of the working class and the working peasantry. Large and medium industry, banks and transport became the property of the state and the landowners were expropriated. The People's Democracies left the capitalist world and ceased to be subject to capitalism's laws of development, which gave them the possibility of entering on the road to Socialism.

Thus, both in respect to the fulfilled historical tasks and in respect to the driving class forces, the socialist upheaval accomplished in the People's Democracies is the same type as the October Revolution, and possesses all the traits of the proletarian socialist revolution."

This series of quotes adequately sums up the developments in Southern and South East Europe in the post-war years. Czechoslovakia was part of this E European transformation.

NOTE:"In view of the long duration, complicated nature and difficulties of this process, it is clear and understandable why the formulation of the People's Democracy as fulfilling effectively the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat--a formulation which called for the theoretical generalisation of the experiences of People's Democracy--was given by Comrades Dimitrov (leader of the Bulgarian CP and former head of the Comintern) and Bierut (Chairman of the Polish CP at the end of 1948." (ibid, p. 9) In opposition to this Marxist analysis a nationalist interpretation of developments emerged in all E European CPs emphasising the national nature of the People's Democrati^c states; the non-proletarian nature of state power in the People's Democracies and the separate national Roads to Socialism which each state would take. This was the theoretical source of the national 'Roads to Socialism' of the West European CPs (CPGB in particular) in the 50's. A separate article will be devoted to this deviation in a future Communist.

STATE POWER IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA 1945-48

German imperialism destroyed the pre-war Czechoslovak bourgeois state machine in '38-9, replacing it with its own state. The Red Army smashed the core of the occupation state, ie, the German army. The communist led Czech govt quickly removed what remained of the occupation forces and instruments of power sweeping away the whole network of Czech and Slovak collaborationist structure in the police, govt departments. External threats from imperialist intervention, as had occurred in the Russian revolution, were effectively countered by the presence of the Red Army in Central Europe (though Soviet troops withdrew from Czechoslovakia 6 months after liberation.)

Internally the CPCz got control of, or neutralised the main instruments of state power in the govt set up after liberation. The police force came under the direct control of the CPCz (V Nosek, Minister of the Interior).

The new Czechoslovak army though not directly controlled was effectively neutralised at all critical periods through the CPCz's ability to bring pressure on its commanding officers (General Svoboda) and by securing the democratising of the army (soldiers allowed to vote and participate in political controversy, political commissars appointed to all regiments etc.)

Politically the dominance of the working class was reflected in the Czech govt and all institutions of political power. One of the immediate blows against the Czech bourgeoisie, ie, disruption of their more coherent and organised political parties was achieved in the course of the democratic revolution thus accounting for the main pre-war bourgeois party, the Agrarians. What remained was the left wing of Czech bourgeois politics (the National Socialist Party and the Czech SDP) and the Slovak Nationalist Democrat Party. They were the less substantial bourgeois politicians, rooted in opportunism and predominantly petty-bourgeois.

STAGE ONE: NATIONAL AND DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

This political dominance was immediately felt in the radical national and democratic changes which took place in the immediate post-war years.

(a) The defeat of German fascism meant the end of the stranglehold German imperialism had acquired over Czech industry. The occupation had radically transformed Czech capitalism from one predominantly based on individual capitalist, light industrial enterprises (textiles, glass, leather etc, see Part I) to one where heavy industrial production (particularly engineering) was dominant. It also became part of the German state war economy. This economic transformation (concentration and re-orientation) provided the basis of all subsequent political changes, ie, nationalisation of the bulk of industry and re-orientation of international economic intercourse from West to East (This will be discussed in the next part) The fact of working class state power ensured that this economic evolution became the basis of socialist development.

(b) Nationalisation. The majority of all key industrial enterprises were taken over (61% of all employed workers came under the initial nationalisation decrees in 1945) as well as all banking and insurance companies. Together with this formal vesting of the 'commanding heights' of industrial production in the state, a system of works councils were instituted. These widespread measures met little resistance from the bourgeois political parties because firstly, of economic necessity arising out of the effects of German occupation; "... the Nazis had scrambled the industry of the country into the economic empire of the Reich and when the empire collapsed it was plainly impossible to unscramble within a framework of private ownership." (Michael Young, 'Economic Planning and Nationalisation' in "Six Studies in Reconstruction"; published by the Fabian Society after the Sept 1946 visit of British MP's Crossman and Cadeghan to Czechoslovakia).

And secondly, prior to the war, the bourgeoisie internationally were faced with the endemic problems of unrestricted laissez-faire capitalism, ie, recurrent economic crises--the severe economic slumps of the 20's and 30's. Side by side with this, their economic thinkers, particularly Keynes, were coming to the conclusion that certain restrictions had become necessary and that the state (ie, the organised bourgeoisie) would need to intervene increasingly to modify the worst effects of the market forces. The war hastened developments forcing a degree of centralisation and intervention by the state

so that after the war many capitalist countries, notably Britain, opted for continuing this policy. The Czech bourgeoisie made virtue of necessity after the war. The political dominance of the CPCz further reduced their ability to moderate the scope of the decrees, while most of light industry and foreign trade remained in private capitalist hands at this stage so not arousing these capitalists immediately.

On the basis of this state sector (plus a further 15% of industry confiscated from the Sudeten capitalists) a short term production plan, the Two Year Plan, 1947-8, was implemented.

Other fundamental reforms which immediately flowed from national liberation were:

Unification and re-organisation of the trade unions. The historic divisions of the working class movement on the economic level were thus finally ended. Trade Union organisation from now on was based on the principle of one organisation in each factory in which all workers irrespective of occupation were organised. Membership was open to all workers irrespective of political outlook or denomination. (See Part II, pre-war Republic). Hitler performed one other major service to the Czech working class by ending the chaotic fragmented trade union structure in Czechoslovakia. Instead of the pre-war set-up he centralised the structure of the unions. It was an easy task for the CPCz to win control after the war over this organisationally unified movement. (The old social democratic grip was broken and dissolved by Hitler while their successors were tainted with collaboration. Large sections of the militant workers came over to the CP on its assuming state power as well, especially with the dissolution of the main bourgeois party, the Agrarians). The Social Democrats remained strong in the unions, but as there was general agreement among communists and Social Democrats in the trade union on the main questions confronting the movement in the 1945-8 period (ie, nationalisation), no serious conflict emerged and the trade union movement acted on all issues as a unified extra-parliamentary pressure group. It had a major say on all economic councils and commissions delegated to draw up policy drafts. Lapotky was the Chairman.

The results of this unification soon became apparent on the economic level in the form of increased wages.

Social Welfare. A comprehensive system of social welfare was established by the government.

It can be seen from this brief outline of the main measures implemented after the war that major inroads into capitalism in Czechoslovakia were made by the working class in this stage of the revolution. When talking about reforms it is important to bear in mind that where the reform emanates from: ie, the bourgeois class in power or the proletariat in power. In a situation where a reform emanates from a bourgeois class firmly in power, its usual effect is to strengthen the dictatorship of capital. In the case where it emanates from proletarian power, as in Czechoslovakia, it served 'to disintegrate' the capitalist class. (The use of 'disintegrate' is Stalin's)

THE SUDETEN GERMAN QUESTION AFTER THE WAR

As a solution to the problem created by Versailles in Central and SE Europe, ie, state boundaries overlapping national boundaries (see Part II) and the resultant

national strife and reaction, from an international working class point of view, transfer was desirable. For this reason, the Soviet Union was first to accept this solution at the Potsdam Conference (July 1945), when the question became an urgent one. During occupation period the conflict between the Germans and Czechs became acute as the Sudeten officials of the regime persecuted and oppressed the Czechs. After Liberation the masses took matters into their own hands and began to evict the Sudeten Germans wholesale. All the allied powers did was to organise the exodus.

Economically, the expulsion had major lasting effects. All German property (except that of proven anti-fascists) was confiscated by the Czech state. In fact this meant about 15% of Czech industry and some millions of acres of land. Over 2 million Czechs and Slovaks (workers, peasants, and petty-bourgeois) moved to the border districts to replace the Germans. In the case of Czech and Slovak peasants given plots of land, this solidified the alliance of the working class and peasantry. The CPCz controlled the resettlement programme through the Agricultural and Interior Ministries.

The effects of the transfer on the Manpower Question. "The physical transfer of 2.1 m. Germans--among whom were nearly 150,000 farmers, over 500,000 industrial workers and day labourers, 40,000 shopkeepers, and more than 100,000 clerical employees--caused a serious labour shortage and brought about a permanent dislocation in the economic structure. Hardest hit were the glass, paper, textile and mining industries, in which the Germans had represented, respectively, 60, 58, 56 and 45% of the total labour force. Before 1938, textiles and glass had been among the chief items of export. The atrophy of these industries tended to shift the country's industrial structure from predominantly consumer goods to capital goods production." Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia, pp 107-8, PE Zinner. Twenty per cent of the country's labour force of skilled workers was lost; thus immediately creating a situation of full employment, indeed scarcity of labour became an acute problem.

THE SLOVAK QUESTION AFTER THE WAR

As already indicated, a widespread national development took place in Slovakia during the war culminating in a national uprising. The pre-war demand for Slovak autonomy was thus strengthened by a vigorous national movement. The SCPCz supported this demand against all sections of the Czech bourgeoisie who wanted to continue their centralised domination over the Slovaks. The Kosice Agreement embodied recognition of the democratic national rights of the Slovak nation making concrete provision for a programme of political autonomy and economic development to equalise development in Czechoslovakia as a whole. The new Czechoslovak state became legally a multi-national state of Czechs and Slovaks (as opposed to the pre-war Czechoslovak state). Uneven investment in favour of Slovakia (60-40 as a proportion of total budget investment) was embodied in the Two Year Plan.

In Slovakia, the bourgeoisie were much stronger politically due to the weaknesses of the CPSl, and the separate Slovak administration became a centre of bourgeois reaction. In 1947 the CPCz moved against one section of the Slovak bourgeoisie when they caught them plotting against the state. In 1944 the CPSl and the Slovak SDP amalgamated under the communist banner. Thus the two main parties after the war were the CPSl and the Slovak Democratic Party (a newly formed party which the Slovak bourgeoisie regrouped in, including many of the fascist elements.) The separate legislature for Slovak affairs, the

Board of Commissioners, came to be controlled by the bourgeois politicians, though they were restricted in their activity by the state power of the CPCz. In contrast to the situation in the Czech lands and even pre-war Slovakia the influence of the Communists suffered a major set-back in the 1946 elections with the Slovak Democratic Party gaining over 60% of the votes. The 1948 consolidation of power ousted the Slovak bourgeois parties.

POST WAR ECONOMY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA 1945-8

The Market continued in this period as the dominant economic regulator. All enterprises, including nationalised industries, operated on a market basis. The market was, however, severely restricted at important points.

- 1) Price controls were continued from the occupation period.
- 2) Consumer goods. There was rationing of available goods due to the dislocation and destruction of industrial capacity during the war was introduced immediately after the war.
- 3) Labour market. The effect of the transfer of the Germans was to reduce the labour force by 20% thus immediately creating a situation of scarcity of labour which weighed the scales in favour of the worker. Added to this a unified trade union movement and works councils controlling conditions of employment severely restricted the market in this sphere.

Measures to eliminate the market and commodity production could not be undertaken until state power was consolidated.

Planning. Along with and based on the nationalisation of industry, a short-term (2 years) recovery 'Plan' was introduced. (The Two Year Plan 1947-8) "The Two-Year Plan was not yet an economic plan, but first and foremost, a production programme. Planning at this point did not yet cover all spheres of economic activity, such as consumption, price formation, etc, much less the social and cultural spheres." (Planned Economy in Czechoslovakia, J Goldmann and J Flek, 1948).

Though the extent of control of production was limited by the existence of a market system (though severely restricted), nevertheless the framework for extending the scope of planning when the political conditions were ripe (after 1948) was created in this period, ie, the planning commissions, and Economic Council advisory to the cabinet)

STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN CZECHOSLOVAK ECONOMY

We outlined in previous articles the endemic structural weaknesses of capitalist Czechoslovakia resulting from the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Briefly :

"Raising the standard of living demands an expansion of the Czechoslovak economy, an accelerated growth of industrial and agricultural production. This expansion, however, is not possible on the basis of the present structure of the Czechoslovak economy, which for the most part has its origins in the great industrial revolution of the latter half of last century, that is at a time when the present Czechoslovak Republic was still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The structure of the Czechoslovak economy, and in particular the structure of its industry, was based on the economic and political requirements of the first Czechoslovak Republic of 1918 to 1938, much less does it satisfy our present requirements.

"It is necessary therefore to shift the main weight of Czechoslovak industry away from those sectors which originally worked for assured markets within the Empire, such as textiles, glass and ceramics, further from those sectors the products of which could during the pre-war period compete in the world markets only on the basis of starvation wages--the manufacture of gloves, toys, etc--towards other industries. These latter must be sectors for the development of which conditions in present-day Czechoslovakia are particularly favourable and which ensure a market for these products abroad. This is above all the metal working sector, heavy engineering and chemicals."

"These structural changes in the Czechoslovak industry are a continuation of existing long-term trends of development. Before the recent war, and even before World War I, certain tendencies appeared which shifted the centre of gravity of industry from commodity manufacture to heavy industry." (The authors quote figures here to illustrate this tendency.) (Goldmann and Flek, p 132 and 133)

The external and internal developments which took place in Eastern Europe in the post war years facilitated the solution of this problem by providing an external market for the heavy industrial products of Czechoslovakia, mainly machines.

Two factors were responsible for this:

- 1 The needs of the other People's Democratic states which were embarking on major development programmes under Communist leadership.
- 2 The only other heavy industrial producer likely to fill these needs was temporarily out of action, ie, Germany.

"The development here outlined is not however only in Czechoslovakia's own interest: it is necessitated also by the requirements of the new democracies in central and eastern Europe. Before the recent war, Germany was the chief supplier of almost all Slav and south-east European states: (figures follow in the original). Imports from Germany made up almost 60% of Bulgaria's and about one third of Yugoslavia's total imports. A substantial portion of these imports consisted of engineering and chemical products, the need for which, in view of the progressive industrialisation of these countries, will tend to increase during the next few years. Rumania and Hungary too, showed a considerable dependence on Germany's imports."

The long-term economic agreements which Czechoslovakia concluded with almost all states with planned economies in eastern and southeastern Europe mean in effect that Czechoslovakia has in part taken Germany's place: that she is becoming the toolroom of the new democracies." (Goldmann and Flek, p 135.)

In 1947 the CPCz submitted proposals to the Economic Commission (where these questions were thrashed out by experts on behalf of the cabinet.) for a new Five Year Plan. Besides proposals for extending nationalisation and agricultural reform the re-orientation of the structure of the economy, involving priority investment in heavy engineering and chemical production were the main changes proposed. These proposals were eventually agreed and incorporated into the new Five Year Plan (1949-53)

CONSOLIDATION OF WORKING CLASS POWER IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The course of developments which culminated in the consolidation of working class power in Czechoslovakia in Feb 1948 were as follows. In carrying through the basic national and democratic measures the CPCz successfully utilised the existing bourgeois structures, ie, Parliament, elections etc, through its close alliance with the Czech social democratic party, which ensured it a majority in all decision-making bodies (to ensure this worked effectively the CPCz led mass rallies, demonstrations and petitions from workers and peasants bringing pressure from below on its 'allies'). When the main national and democratic measures were implemented and more fundamental measures introduced, the opposition of some bourgeois politicians grew and they began to struggle to break the CPCz's grip on the SDP, thus cancelling its parliamentary majority and hegemony at one stroke. They succeeded in ousting the CPCz inclined left-wing social democrats from control of the SDP in Nov 1947.

INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

By 1947 the aggressive 'containment' strategy of the US-led imperialist camp was coming more obvious with every development. The response of the states in the Soviet Union led anti-imperialist camp was a speed-up of the consolidation of power and intensification of the internal class struggle. The Cominform was founded in Sept 1947 and between Autumn 1947 and Spring 1948 all the CP's in central and southeast Europe consolidated state power, ousting the remaining bourgeois parties in the process.

The situation came to a head in Czechoslovakia when a section of the bourgeois politicians resigned from the govt. They hoped to force the CPCz to dissolve the govt and call elections. The CPCz's response was to use the resignations to discredit them and oust them altogether. Through their control of the propaganda media (Information Ministry) they mounted a major campaign exposing the bourgeois politicians opposition to progressive change. Even the Parliamentary formalities were retained. The bourgeois politicians relied heavily on the support of Benes., the President, by appealing to his extra-parliamentary power and influence. He was neutralised by a combination of CPCz pressure and his own common sense and instead of dissolving the govt, he ratified the new govt. A new cabinet was formed made up of the CPCz and the Social Democrats mainly.

Large sections of the working class and peasantry were mobilised in support of the govt so that the ex-Ministers were run out of office in disgrace. (It was this crisis that the workers' militia was formed from the industrial workers out of; and it played an important role in the ousting of the bourgeois politicians, discouraging resistance.) Within their own parties, opposition to their stand grew and formed itself into an organised force, supporting the govt. The workers' militia and the Ministry of the Interior forces closed down their party offices and propaganda organs and discouraged armed resistance by a massive show of force. Altogether it was a most non-violent struggle. Internationally, the bourgeoisie utilised the Feb events to whip up an anti-communist frenzy, when it was clear the the ousted politicians retained little if any following in Czechoslovakia.

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