

michel pablo

# world in revolution



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## A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Michel Raptis (Pablo) was born of Greek parents in Alexandria, Egypt in August 1911. As a youth and student in different schools and polytechnics in Greece he was an active militant. In 1936 he was deported by the Metaxas dictatorship to an island in the Aegean Sea and later exiled from Greece.

He went first to Switzerland, then to France where he lived for twenty years to 1958. Michel Pablo attended the founding congress of the Fourth International in 1938. He worked in the underground organisation in Europe of the Fourth International throughout the Nazi occupation.

In 1943 he became Secretary of the European Secretariat of the FI and from 1945 to his arrest by the Dutch Police in June 1960, he was Secretary of the Fourth International.

From the very opening of the Algerian Revolution in November 1954 he was intimately linked with it. In 1958, he left France to continue his activity for the Algerian Revolution in liaison with the FLN Federation in France, in refuge in Germany.

In June 1960, he was arrested in Amsterdam for his pro-FLN activities. After 15 months in prison, he went as a political refugee to Morocco, where he continued to work with the FLN.

Shortly after Algerian Independence he went to Algiers, where, at the request of President Ben Bella, he became economic counsellor to the President. In that position, he helped codify and institutionalise self-management in Algeria, and draft the Agrarian Reform Law and economic and social policy in the country between 1962 and 1965.

He narrowly escaped arrest by the Boumedienne military dictatorship which overthrew the Ben Bella government. He actively took part in formation of the revolutionary socialist opposition to the dictatorship.

In recent years he has been actively associated with the emerging resistance movement in Greece itself. During 1968 he visited both Cuba and Yugoslavia.

Michel Pablo was present in France during the May Revolt.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Additional copies of this pamphlet can be obtained from M. Quinn, 25 Amhurst Park, N.16. London.

# THE WORLD IN REVOLUTION

## THE PERSPECTIVES AND NEW DYNAMICS OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION .....

Very important developments marked the evolution of the international situation in 1968.

Some of these developments mean that the programme and perspectives of the Socialist Revolution can be better understood in the advanced capitalist countries, and the developed workers states.

Taken as a whole, the recent changes in the world situation confirm and strengthen the following basic concept: the relative stability which has been established over recent years in the advanced capitalist countries and in the developed workers states has just been disrupted.

Revolutionary forces which have accumulated inside these two sectors of the World Revolution are now moving into action. As a result, there is now a long period facing us in which very important revolutionary developments may occur.

### VANGUARD ROLE OF STUDENTS

For a whole period, the colonial revolution was the main epicentre of revolutionary struggles. It helped enormously to exacerbate inter-capitalist and inter-imperialist contradictions. It also helped the broad masses now in action in the advanced capitalist countries and developed workers states to develop political awareness.

That the students now play a vanguard role in the West and East is largely a result of the impact of the Colonial Revolution (in particular the war in Vietnam); of the influence exerted by the ideological and practical gains of the Cuban Revolution; and of the example provided by the struggles of the Blacks in the United States.

The present revolutionary developments in the advanced capitalist countries and the developed workers states in turn influence the Colonial Revolution, encouraging the continued struggle against imperialism and reaction.

So, for the first time since World War II, a special world situation has arisen in which the three sectors of the World Revolution are now in total interaction.

This, in turn, has led to an aggravation of the whole international situation.

The revolutionary upsurge in the advanced capitalist countries, seen especially in the explosions in France and the USA, is not the result of a major economic crisis, but rather of the growing conflict between the new needs and aspirations of the masses in "neo-capitalist" society, and the limitations put on their fulfillment in economic, political and cultural fields, in this society dominated by the monopolist bourgeoisie.

Revolutionary crises have arisen from the contradiction between the economic and cultural development of this society, and the social relations in which it occurs

and which limits and distorts its development.

Because broad layers of this society have achieved a high economic and cultural standard, they have developed new needs and aspirations in economic, political and cultural fields. These new needs and aspirations impel them to challenge "neo-capitalist" society which is subservient to the monopolies and their State.

This is something historically new in the growth of capitalism. For now the revolutionary challenge to the regime arises from its own economic and cultural development as such.

Moreover, never has the fact that the dialectical interaction between the superstructure and the material base of society determines conscious revolutionary process, been so clearly and radically illustrated. As well, the falsity of the vulgar "economist" concept of Marxism has been exposed.

In the United States, the students and intellectuals became politicised and radicalised, and entered into revolutionary action, through the effects of the Vietnam war and the struggle of the American Blacks. And this so-called "opulent" society is and has been passing through an exceptionally favourable economic situation.

### LESSONS OF FRENCH REVOLT

In France, the revolutionary challenge also began among the students and intellectuals in May and June, reaching a very high level, and stirring millions of workers, and thus creating an objectively revolutionary situation. This was not due to an acute economic crisis, but to the interaction of factors arising from the political, ideological and cultural superstructures of present French society.

The weight of the bureaucracy of unions and traditional parties led the union movement to limit itself to wage demands almost exclusively. It did not pose the need for radical change in the proletarian condition in the work-place and in society as a whole.

This is, however, what interests the new generations of educated workers of "neo-capitalism".

Present revolutionary movements in the advanced capitalist countries have arisen due to awareness of the extreme limitations of "neo-capitalist" society as a whole. These revolutionary movements challenge neo-capitalist society and aim to radically change it, independently of the more-or-less satisfying economic situation they may find themselves in.

This accounts for the political quality of these movements and the depth of the growing revolutionary crisis.

If, moreover, the economic situation worsened seriously, then the desirable link between the students and the youth in general, and the decisive working-class, could be aided. Any downturn in the economic situation could help overcome the resistance of conservative and bureaucratic forces in the labour movement opposed to such a link.

The economic situation could worsen because of the social turmoil arising

from the political action of the youth and the working class.

Even now, "full employment" is being encroached upon, with the reappearance of technological unemployment, due to the continued concentration and modernisation of the capitalist economy, which is needed to increase productivity in a situation of greater world competition among the great monopolies to maintain their rate of profit.

At the same time, public, and (above all military,) expenditure is increasing continually, and maintains and worsens inflation.

Inflation is also heightened by the monopolist structure of the economy in the advanced capitalist countries.

This monopolist structure, especially in the US, maintains and requires a monopolist price structure. This in turn increases prices regardless of the increased productivity of labour.

Relative unemployment and inflation affect the material living standards of the working class at a time when its needs arising from life in modern neo-capitalist society are increasing, as is its understanding of the objective possibilities of satisfying them.

The deterioration of the economic situation unevenly spread over a number of advanced capitalist countries, is still unlikely to generalise rapidly into a major world economic crisis similar to 1929-1933.

This is still unlikely due to a series of factors we have previously analysed and emphasised :

- continued modernisation of production, stimulated by the growing scientific and technological revolution which in turn demands continued investment;
- the increased monopolist structure of the economy which has specific effects on prices and markets;
- the budget, fiscal and monetary policies of the State in the service of the monopolies.

Social instability is likely to continue and become worse due to the erratic behaviour of the economy, and the effects of this on the conditions - including the material living standard - of the working class. This interacts with the growing political awareness of the youth, and the new needs of the class.

REVOLUTIONARY CRISES LIKE FRANCE INEVITABLE

Revolutionary crises like the May-June French crisis are objectively possible and even inevitable, not only in France, but also in other advanced capitalist countries.

Leadership is the key, if such crises are to explode and to be victoriously resolved.

The question of leadership has two sides: programme and organisation.

The May-June events in France provided exceptionally valuable theoretical lessons on programme and organisation.

It would still be dangerous to assume too much from the single French experience, which was not entirely a success. But the lessons of France should be thoroughly examined -- for it was, after all, the most important revolutionary event in France since the Paris Commune, and in Europe since the end of the Second World War.

The French revolt points to the following general concept in regards to programme: the new rising generation aspires to a socialised self-managed economy and to a generally democratically self-managed society in all fields -- economic, political and cultural.

A precise transitional programme should, therefore, be constructed for a revolution aiming at such a society.

The French experience clearly points to the fact that a bureaucratic regime of any sort is unsuitable as a "model" of socialism for advanced capitalist countries. For, even if a bureaucratic regime was established after the initial victory, in the first phase, by a coalition of traditional parties and unions, it could well be immediately and violently challenged by wide revolutionary masses.

Thus, for effective mass mobilisation and lasting victory of the revolution, an audaciously democratic programme must be hewn out, even going beyond the Bolshevik experience of Lenin and Trotsky.

This must be done both for the programme and the political organisation of the vanguard.

In economic matters, the programme should not advocate the state management of the major means of production, but their socialisation, that is, their democratic self-management (and not simply control) by the workers' collective. The necessary planning of the socialised economy must be dialectically articulated with the market, and democratically with self-management.

In political matters, the programme should advocate political self-management, at all levels -- local, communal regional, national, federative and confederative.

Socialist democracy implies the right to more than one party within a framework of constitutional socialist legality, and full rights of association of any kind, free expression, etc., within the constitution. It stipulates independence of the parties, unions, press, news media from the State and the leading majority political organisation.

### SELF-MANAGEMENT AT ALL LEVELS

In cultural and social matters, socialist democracy prescribes as well as implies independence in relation to the State and majority political organisation, self management at all levels by workers and consumers of the various social services (education, health, housing, town planning, leisure, etc.,) The fundamental aim of the regime should be to develop the direct management of society at all levels by producers and citizens, and not to allow privileged strata to assume this management by delegation.

A real effort must be made from the beginning to apply the following principles :

- payment for work on the basis of work carried out by each person, that is by his individual and collective contribution to wealth produced or the material equivalent of social services rendered;
- continuing political, general and professional education of the workers to constantly lessen the gap between them and the culturally privileged.

Such a genuine "cultural revolution" would occur through a serious effort to do it from the start.

To develop, and above all successfully apply such a programme, a suitable vanguard organisation is needed.

What is needed is a new type of revolutionary political organisation suited to the new historical situation in advanced capitalist countries.

It is not a question of putting forward the need for such an organisation or the historical validity of a Bolshevik Party as outlined by Lenin.

It is rather a question now, in the light of a very rich experience, of redefining its role and operation.

Any attempt to present the "Party" as a restricted, closed elite habitually substituting itself for the class, "directing it", and ruling in its name by more or less permanently taking over the power of the class, and then calling it a "workers" state, taming the unions, and all mass organisations and institutions, must be categorically rejected.

The revolutionary organisation of the vanguard aims only to aid the working class to fully play its role, and being its main catalyst and ally in its creative democratic action.

The revolutionary vanguard organisation will, through its very high ideological and practical level, operate in the working class and its organisations and bodies, which express the creative democratic activity of the class.

If the revolutionary vanguard organisation is to be of this type, it must be itself built in a very democratic way, aiming continuously to raise the ideological and political awareness of its members, and recognizing in practice the right of ideological tendencies, and free (including public) discussion of all questions where there is no specific security involved.

Discipline is absolutely needed in revolutionary action against anti-revolutionary forces. But it will be more the result of the high level of organisation and its really democratic internal operation than restrictive constitutional rules.

If there are, however, important and lasting political differences between the various tendencies of the vanguard organisation, the right to form separate organisations must exist.

In revolutionary action, unity is restored not by trying to impose the leadership of a single organisation, but by the formation of revolutionary councils, in which all tendencies are represented, thus giving a precise political picture of the democratic thinking of the working class at any given time.

That will allow regroupment of larger vanguard forces, to eventually join into a single organisation.

That alone can avoid maintaining the fragmentation of the vanguard into a multitude of mini-groups, in which political and organisational sectarianism acts as an obstacle to formation of a mass revolutionary leadership.

#### BUREAUCRATISATION AND SELF-MANAGEMENT IN WORKERS STATES

In the workers states, problems of democratisation and overthrow of the bureaucratic regime are posed in almost the same way.

Given their economic and cultural progress and the present world situation, the process of "political revolution" (the democratisation of the political system and the birth of genuine socialist democracy) and its implications, has reached a higher level.

It is no coincidence that this process has occurred with particular force in the most developed workers states: Czechoslovakia, East Germany and the USSR itself.

The Czechoslovak crisis is in a sense the counterpart of the French events.

It yields very valuable lessons concerning the general lines of the "political

revolution" to be carried out in these countries.

Questions of a socialised self-managed economy; a self-managed society from top to bottom in all fields; the right to formation of more than one party within a framework of constitutional legality; political organisation of the democratic vanguard distinct from the State with the recognition of the right of tendency and the aim of helping the class directly manage society --- all these concepts were brilliantly confirmed during the historic events, signalling the Czech renewal.

Other important ideas of our Tendency were also confirmed by the Czech events.

The structural heterogeneity of the bureaucracy was, in particular, confirmed. Under mass pressure and demands arising from the higher economic and cultural level, the bureaucracy was differentiated into what may be schematically classed as the "stalinist" right, a centre, and a "liberal" left.

In most of the developed "Peoples Democracies" (Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia), the liberal tendency is now, or is potentially in the long term, the most powerful.

It is putting up real resistance to the genuinely stalinist wing, and is not a simple "manoeuvre" for political survival. In some cases it can take extreme forms, directly or indirectly relying on mass support.

This is clearly shown in the Czech crisis. It is not simply a national or passing phenomenon, but a general tendency inside the bureaucracy of the workers states, reflecting the higher level a number of them have reached already.

This tendency also exists in the USSR, despite the strength of the stalinist tendency, based on the centralised role of the State dominated by the Party.

This bureaucratic layer composed of Party "politicians" is the most conservative and the most violently opposed not only to the masses but also to the bureaucratic layer composed of the scientific, artistic and literary intelligensia, as well as the technocratic economic bureaucracy.

### CZECH INVASION DESPERATE REARGUARD ACTION

The sharpness of the conflict between the almost-unanimous Czech bureaucracy and the Soviet bureaucracy is not only a violent clash between two different national bureaucracies, but is also one between two different layers of the bureaucracy. The Czech bureaucracy, which defeated the most stalinist conservative wing with mass support, is opposed to the Soviet bureaucracy, for the moment dominated by its most "stalinist" wing.

Seen in this light, the victory over Czechoslovakia did not show the growing strength of the bureaucracy as a whole, but was rather a desperate rearguard action of the "stalinist" wing of the Soviet bureaucracy, fearful of the progress and final victory of the "Czechoslovak" tendency in the USSR itself.

A distinction must therefore be made between a passing reversal and the basic tendency which, in the long and medium run, is progressing.

The "victory" in Czechoslovakia, far from stabilising the stalinist wing of the Soviet bureaucracy, its allies in the workers states and the Communist Parties, will definitely further aggravate the world crisis of stalinism (now in its final phase).

The Czech crisis can therefore be expected to continue to have sensational effects in other workers states, in the USSR itself, and naturally, in the different Communist Parties.



## CP BUREAUCRACIES IN DIRECT CLASH WITH KREMLIN

We should pay particular attention to the crisis in the Communist Parties.

Several of them, for the first time, have had their bureaucracies enter into a direct and acrimonious conflict with the Soviet bureaucracy. The CP bureaucracies are keeping their distance from the Kremlin under the combined pressure of their own rank-and-file, and the attitude of other workers' states apart from the USSR and its most docile allies.

There is something else new. This development is not moving directly towards an alignment of the CP bureaucracies with their bourgeoisie and the forces of imperialism, but is rather something positive which in turn should be and can be a help in accentuating any ideological differentiation inside the CPs. Thus a wing able to take part in the absolutely necessary regroupment of revolutionary forces may be able to emerge.

For the first time in the history of stalinism, the problem of the bureaucracy in the degeneration of the USSR and other workers states and CPs is being discussed and deeply studied in various Communist Parties.

The CPs may of course degenerate even further into paid agents of the Soviet bureaucracy, or, by detaching themselves from such dependence, differentiate into a social-democrat and left-centrist wing.

From this fact arises the need for revolutionary marxists to adopt, more firmly than ever before, a policy of entrism sui-generis (of a special type), which implies a more dynamic independent sector than ever before. (1).

### END OF STABILITY

The break-up of the relative balance that existed over recent years in both the West and East, following the upsurge of new revolutionary forces, provides new revolutionary perspectives and also worsens international tension.

The international class struggle between the masses and the alarmed bourgeoisie, everywhere trying to go on to the offensive, using "legal" and illegal forms of repression, is a sign of the worsening international situation.

There is a general tendency towards regimes which are "democratic" in appearance, but really dictatorial or bonapartist.

Relations between the masses and the bureaucracy of the workers' states are deteriorating in similar measure.

Finally, this deterioration encompasses relations between the bureaucracy as a whole and imperialism, as the dual nature of the bureaucracy remains. In so far as this bureaucracy draws its main strength from the ever more powerful developing workers' states, this dual character grows more marked. Indeed the inherent contradiction in its nature are exacerbated.

The Soviet bureaucracy's relations with imperialism (and US imperialism in particular) are complex.

On one side, a kind of tacit alliance now exists of "mutual understanding" of their reciprocal "national" interests.

On the other side, such an understanding arises for each from its own position of strength and also requires an attempt to increase that strength.

For the moment, the real danger facing the Soviet bureaucracy is "liberalisation" of the Czech type, which threatens to spread to the other countries in Eastern Europe and the USSR itself.

The Kremlin, aware of this danger, has let the Americans know that it will make concessions on Vietnam, the Middle East, Berlin and Latin America, if it is given a free hand in Eastern Europe.

But neither Washington nor the Kremlin are masters of everything they have and use on the world chessboard.

There is still grave danger of one of them making a faux pas.

Look at the way this is shown, for example, in the Middle East.

It is true that the major part of Arab military strength has been reconstituted thanks to Soviet aid, and that the Soviet fleet has been strengthened in the Mediterranean, reinforcing Arab strength even more. Israel has no longer such crushing superiority over the Arabs.

The Kremlin is using reconstituted Arab strength as a means of exerting pressure on Washington in the Middle East an area vital for US imperialism.

Any compromise in the Middle East will depend on how much "understanding" Washington shows on events in the Soviet zone of influence in Europe.

The Berlin problem will be solved on a similar basis.

In any case, the fragile "peaceful co-existence" climate between West and East has been the first victim of the Czech crisis. Broad bourgeois layers now demand the strengthening of military "defence" of their countries and the West in general, and also free spread of nuclear weapons.

A new arms race has begun with all its implications for the economy and the masses' living standards. If this race continues and grows, there will also be an increase in inflation.

### GREAT POSSIBILITIES FOR REGROUPMENT OF REVOLUTIONARY FORCES

Let us then examine our perspectives for the near future, in light of the above.

Great possibilities exist as never before for the regrouping of very important revolutionary forces in the West and the East on a revolutionary marxist platform.

Never before have our basic ideas found such an echo or been taken up on such a scale.

Formerly specifically "trotskyist" ideas on stalinism, the bureaucracy, socialist democracy as we see it, and self-management, now arouse and mobilise very broad vanguard layers - in some places millions of people.

It is a complete triumph, in this sense, of our long ideological struggle.

The main problem still is organisational.

How can these scattered national and world forces be brought together? Here the reply is still not easy or clear.

Many feel the need for a new revolutionary vanguard organisation. But the homogeneity of ideology and programme is not yet sufficient enough for the different forces and individuals to unite and struggle under a single revolutionary banner.

Successive regroupments must therefore occur in a very flexible democratic and open way. "Parties" demanding the exclusive right of revolutionary representation within a narrow organisational framework must be avoided.

The problem is not solved by proclaiming the urgent need for the "Party" (i. e. a revolutionary mass leadership), but by effectively working to this goal.

Better to form Movements and Leagues with other allied forces and individuals, which remain open to a wider regroupment.

Right now, it is necessary to try to regroup the scattered revolutionary forces which have emerged in such a fashion, and to link them with the new revolutionary forces emerging in the workers states, and the most advanced forces of the colonial revolution, especially those of the Cuban and Latin American Revolution, Vietnam and other forces of the Arab and African Revolution.

Despite the unevenness in the ideological understanding of these forces, evident during the Czech crisis, they should and can be regrouped in a broader and more effective way than hitherto.

The immediate future of the great class battles against imperialism, capitalism and the "stalinist" bureaucracy now developing in the world, and their essential interaction so characteristic of the new dynamic of the World Revolution, depends on the timely formation of such a regroupment, in other words, of a mass revolutionary leadership.

MICHEL PABLO, September 1968.

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Notes: (1) "entrism sui generis" refers to the policy adopted by the Fourth International over the past two decades of entry of its forces into the mass workers party of each country.

## A Dossier Publication

This pamphlet is published by the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency of the Fourth International - who also publish the journal DOSSIER.

The Revolutionary Marxist Tendency seriously strives to deal with the problems of the international revolutionary movement in the spirit of the critical, creative and revolutionary marxism of Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, V. Lenin and Leon Trotsky.

In this spirit it seeks to elaborate the revolutionary marxist program relevant to our age. The general lines of such a program are contained in its platform "Marxism and Our Time".

The goal of the Revolutionary Marxists is not to add yet another group to the spectrum of existing revolutionary organisations. Rather it is to bring together the authentic revolutionary forces emerging from the struggle for the socialist revolution and for the real meaning of socialism, and for their subsequent fusion in a single democratic organisation - nationally and internationally.

The Revolutionary Marxists categorically reject sectarianism, opportunism, bureaucratic organisational practices, and conservatism in theoretical matters.