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# **World Congress of the FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

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# Good Grounds for Revolutionary Optimism

By Joseph Hansen

The documents included in this special issue of *Intercontinental Press* were discussed and voted on by delegates of the sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International at the movement's Fourth World Congress Since Reunification (the Tenth Congress since the founding of the Fourth International in 1938), which was held in February 1974. Observers were present from various organizations that are barred from affiliating to the Fourth International because of reactionary legislation (the Socialist Workers party in the United States, for instance).

A notable feature of the congress was its size. About 250 persons were present, representing organizations in forty-one countries. The figures for the previous congress, held in 1969, were approximately 100 representatives from thirty countries.

The growth was accounted for in part by the appearance of new groups in countries where Trotskyist ideas were previously little known. These groups, while small, are a significant sign of the expansion of revolutionary prospects internationally.

In addition to the forces brought to the movement by the formation of new groups, steady recruitment was reported by most of the older components of the Fourth International. Some, such as the International Marxist Group in Britain, registered considerable gains in membership since the last congress.

The most spectacular growth was experienced by the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores in Argentina. On a national scale, the PST is now the largest Trotskyist organization in the world. The French Trotskyists held this position at the 1969 congress as a result of their successes in the May-June 1968 events in France. The achievement of the PST was all the more impressive in view of the defection of the official section of the Fourth International in Argentina, the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (Combatiente). The PRT's turn away from Trotskyism had tragic con-

sequences for some of its best cadres and was a serious blow to the Fourth International.

The delegates were of the opinion that swift gains like those in France and Argentina can now be expected in various countries, although in areas that have been hard hit by repression (Chile, for instance) the Trotskyist movement will face a hard, uphill fight for some time to come.

### Under the Blows of Reaction

None of the sections or sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International have reached mass size. To many persons in the radical movement, it may appear that the Fourth International, after thirty-six years of effort, still remains far from its goal of achieving the construction of revolutionary parties capable of leading the proletariat and its allies in a successful struggle for power. The delegates at the congress, however, felt that the current growth presages great new advances for the Fourth International.

To show that this expectation is not unrealistic, the reasons for the previous slow growth of the world Trotskyist movement must be understood.

It can be agreed that possible deficiencies in leadership entered in. Violent repression (Europe under Hitler, the Soviet Union under Stalin) made it difficult in some sections to maintain continuity, which is an important element in stabilizing a leadership team and keeping it at a high political level. In some areas splits that were not politically justified injured the movement, as did ill-prepared unifications. Other errors played a role. In some countries lack of experience led to missed opportunities.

However, the deficiencies in leadership in this or that section were hardly decisive over the years in preventing the Trotskyist movement from gaining adherents on a mass scale. A better leadership might have been able to win a larger number of cadres, but it could not have broken out of the long

isolation in a major way. That isolation was determined by objective conditions.

The correctness of this analysis is confirmed by at least one telling fact—the outcome of the competition among the tendencies apart from the long-established workers parties over the past third of a century. The leadership of the Trotskyist movement was superior to that of all its many rivals standing to the left of the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties in the thirties. The Trotskyist movement survived; the others disintegrated.

In assessing the relationship between the subjective and objective conditions that governed the growth of the Fourth International, a primary consideration must be the aim sought by the movement. This is nothing less than to provide the guidance essential to toppling the world capitalist structure and its allied or buttressing forces, which includes the bureaucratic structure in the degenerated or deformed workers states. The end determines the means; in this case the required means is a mass revolutionary party.

The leaders of the Fourth International accepted isolation for prolonged periods as part of the cost of maintaining the program of building Leninist-type parties that would guarantee ultimate victory. They quite deliberately refused to take the road of either opportunism or ultraleftism. They understood that any numerical gains that might possibly be obtained by giving way to opportunism meant sacrificing the goal of the movement, giving a training to cadres that would make them unfit to lead a revolution, thus destroying the very reason for the existence of the Fourth International. To fall into ultraleftism would convert the movement into a sect or involve it in adventures that could mean swift destruction.

By stubbornly clinging to the objectives motivating the creation of the Fourth International, the Trotskyists became the target of attack by reactionary forces ranging from the Nazis

in Germany to the liberals of the two-party system in the United States—along with the Stalinists, whether located in Moscow, Peking, Belgrade, or Tirana. These forces had state power at their disposal, and they have never hesitated to use it against political opponents, particularly those of revolutionary potential. No other political grouping has been so persistently persecuted on such a wide scale as the Trotskyists.

The strength of reaction and the numerical weakness of the Fourth International reflected an unfavorable relation of forces in the class struggle. The explanation for the prolonged duration of this unfavorable relation is to be found in the receding of the revolutionary wave in the Soviet Union in the early twenties.

The counterrevolution made a partial comeback which was registered by the consolidation of a parasitic bureaucratic caste in the USSR. As the governmental representative of this caste, Stalin—and his heirs after him—followed a policy calculated to maintain the status quo on an international scale, calling this "peaceful coexistence." Thus those resources of the first workers state that should have gone into advancing the world socialist revolution were diverted into helping to sustain the capitalist system and into prolonging its death agony.

In turn, the unexpected aid from this source permitted the capitalists in many countries to stabilize reactionary regimes and to mount fresh assaults on the living standards of the masses. Because of the rise of Stalinism, humanity had to undergo the entrenchment of fascism, a second world war, the invasion of the Soviet Union, imperialist "brush-fire" wars in the colonial and semicolonial areas, new economic crises, and the permanent threat of a nuclear conflict.

The Trotskyists understood that the advance of the Fourth International in any major way depended on a favorable alteration in the international relationship of class forces, and they did what they could to hasten that change. For instance, when German imperialism invaded the Soviet Union, the Trotskyists defended the conquests of the October 1917 revolution with all their energy. A German victory would have given new life to capitalism as a whole for decades if not a century or more.

## Topics and Reporters

The main topics discussed at the congress and the reporters for the different positions were as follows:

1. *The world political situation.* "General Political Resolution"; E. Germain, reporter for the majority of the outgoing International Executive Committee. "The World Political Situation and the Immediate Tasks of the Fourth International"; Jack Barnes, counterreporter on behalf of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. "Why We Reject the Draft Political Resolution, a Question of Method and Contents"; Luigi, counterreporter for the Mezhrayonka Tendency.

2. *Situation in Bolivia.* "Bolivia—Results and Perspectives"; Serrano, reporter for the majority of the outgoing International Executive Committee. "Section Two of 'Argentina and Bolivia—the Balance Sheet'"; Lorenzo, counterreporter for the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction.

3. *Situation in Argentina.* "The Political Crisis and Revolutionary Perspectives in Argentina"; S. Lopez, reporter for the majority of the outgoing International Executive Committee. "Section Three of 'Argentina and Bolivia—the Bal-

ance Sheet'"; Arturo, counterreporter for the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction.

4. *Armed struggle in Latin America.* "Resolution on Armed Struggle in Latin America"; Roman, reporter for the majority of the outgoing International Executive Committee. Joseph Hansen, counterreporter on behalf of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. "On the Orientation of the Fourth International in Latin America"; Willi, counterreporter for the Mezhrayonka Tendency.

5. *Western Europe.* "Theses on Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe"; Livio Maitan, reporter for the majority of the outgoing International Executive Committee. Roberto, counterreporter for the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. Herb, counterreporter for the Mezhrayonka Tendency.

In addition to the above, the temporary statutes, placed on the agenda by the previous congress, came up for consideration. Duret reported on this topic for the outgoing International Executive Committee, and the statutes were adopted unanimously.

Similarly, the Trotskyists defended the colonial revolutions everywhere because these revolutions, even though they might begin under bourgeois nationalist leadership, weakened and unsettled imperialism and tended to develop in a socialist direction.

The Fourth International counted the victory of the Soviet Union in World War II, the victorious worker-peasant uprising in Yugoslavia, and the victory of the Chinese revolution in the aftermath of that war as conquests of historic import. They laid the basis for the favorable alteration in the international class struggle that the Fourth International had forecast and had counted on as a condition for its own triumph.

### Stalinism Doomed by Advances of International Class Struggle

The first effect of these victories, however, was contradictory. On the

one hand, the image of Stalinism was temporarily refurbished—the masses saw Stalin as head of the victorious Soviet armies. They forgot the pact he signed with Hitler and his policy of betraying revolutions. On the other hand, the Soviet victory served to inspire millions of the oppressed.

The succeeding Chinese revolution had similar consequences. The image of Stalinism was further brightened, since Mao paid ardent homage to Stalin. Mao's practice of popular frontism, which had helped keep Chiang Kai-shek in power much longer than need have been, was forgotten, and Mao appeared as the originator of a novel method for winning a revolution. But the victory of the Chinese revolution reinforced the effect of the Soviet triumph in World War II, giving enormous impulse to revolutionary struggles throughout the colonial and semicolonial sector and even within the imperialist countries.



Ultimately the upsurge served to crack the international monolithic structure built by Stalin. Internecine battles broke out among the Stalinist groupings. Titoism and Maoism emerged as separate currents with their own peculiarities.

The most significant development was the victory of the Cuban revolution under the leadership of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. For the first time, Stalinism was bypassed from the left. With fitting symbolism this occurred on the very doorstep of the central powerhouse of world capitalism.

The success of the Cuban revolution heightened revolutionary expectations in other countries, especially in Latin America but also in such contrasting sectors as colonial Africa and imperialist Western Europe. The fresh hope aroused by the Cuban victory was an element in the successive waves of radicalization that swept the youth internationally in the sixties. It helped fire the mood of rebellion against the intervention of American imperialism in Vietnam.

The further alteration of class forces on an international scale was shown in the intensification of the struggles of oppressed nationalities, minorities, and other sectors on all continents. The rise of the Black liberation movement in the United States was an outstanding example as was the women's liberation movement internationally. In Europe the shift took spectacular form in France in the May-June 1968 events, both in the explosive radicalization of students and in the general strike that paralyzed the entire country.

It is clear that compared with the thirties, when Stalinism and the reformist Social Democracy stood as seemingly irremovable buttresses of the world capitalist structure, a great change has occurred. The two buttresses have partially collapsed, and the contradictory internal forces rending capitalism have reached new depth and acuteness. In short, objective conditions have begun to favor the advance of the Fourth International.

### **New Problems in Exchange for Old**

Against this background, the cadres of the world Trotskyist movement have good reason for their revolutionary optimism. Achievement of the great aims to which they have dedi-

cated themselves has moved perceptibly closer. Intensified effort today shows results rather quickly in many countries. It is getting easier to demonstrate how closely the program of the Fourth International fits the real needs of the workers and their allies.

Nevertheless the more favorable objective situation does not mean that the Fourth International has overcome all past difficulties or no longer faces knotty problems. The fact is that the new conditions are of great complexity. In return for some of the old problems, the Fourth International must deal with new ones that are in many respects of greater acuteness. As was to be expected, they are submitting the Fourth International to fresh tests.

To view these problems as merely problems of growth is rather superficial. While quite youthful rebels are included in the membership and may even constitute its most energetic component, the Fourth International is not an adolescent movement. Its founders were leaders and top cadres of the generation that made the Russian revolution and established the Communist International. They represented almost a century of scientific socialism as tested in the greatest revolution history has yet seen.

But with the years, Trotsky's generation and most of those he trained have passed away. The living continuity in leadership has worn thin. This has increased a difficulty faced since the beginning, the difficulty of transferring the heritage (both theoretical and practical) of the founders of the movement to young revolutionists who have either had little serious experience in the struggle of the proletariat or who have not completely overcome the influence of currents opposed to Leninism.

For instance, it has been the view of a substantial and growing minority in the Fourth International since 1969 that the Cuban revolution had a contradictory effect on the world Trotskyist movement. The victory of the revolution opened up new opportunities for some of the sections and sympathizing organizations. Thousands of new members were gained as a consequence. But the emphasis placed by the Cuban leaders on guerrilla war as a "strategy" for winning power fostered an ultraleft and even adventurous outlook that created no small problem for a lead-

ership committed to Leninism.

An example of the difficulties that have been encountered in this respect is provided by the course of the PRT (Combatiente) which was recognized on numerical grounds at the 1969 world congress as the official section of the Fourth International in Argentina. The leaders of the PRT (Combatiente) never succeeded in freeing themselves from the limited guerrillaist formulas of the Cuban revolutionists. Instead of moving toward Leninism and taking up the task of building a mass revolutionary party in Argentina, they moved in the guerrilla direction, setting up a guerrilla organization of their own—the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo—which sought to emulate and if possible outdo the Tupamaros in Uruguay. Convinced that they had discovered a shortcut to victory, these comrades eventually denounced the Fourth International and told reporters of the capitalist press to stop referring to them as "Trotskyists."

The experience with guerrillaism was interpreted in the Fourth International in different ways. Various documents were submitted in the pre-congress discussion dealing concretely with the lessons of Bolivia and Argentina. Only the resolutions on Bolivia and Argentina submitted to the congress by the International Majority Tendency for a vote are included here. The leaders of the IMT rejected the proposal of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction to publish its resolutions on Bolivia and Argentina, maintaining that to do so would require publishing additional IMT documents to answer the points raised. In the case of the Mezhrayonka Tendency, they felt that its size was too small to justify publishing its views on any of the questions under debate.

In the course of arguing over what attitude ought to be adopted toward guerrilla war or "armed struggle," differences developed over various other issues. These included not only tactical questions in areas like Western Europe, but questions of considerable theoretical interest such as the character of Maoism, of the Chinese revolution, of Vietnamese Stalinism, of the struggles of oppressed nationalities, and of women's liberation. The differences were sufficient to lead to the formation of tendencies and factions.

To those accustomed to Stalinist

## Delegates Honor Fallen Comrades

The delegates at the world congress paid tribute to comrades who had died since the previous congress. These included:

● Tomás Chambi, member of the Central Committee of the Bolivian section, killed while leading the La Paz peasant column that took part in the August 21, 1971, battle against the Banzer coup.

● Luis Mamani Limachi, murdered by the Bolivian military dictatorship.

● Eduardo Merlino, murdered by the Brazilian military dictatorship.

● Nelson de Souza Knoll, murdered by the Chilean military dictatorship.

● Luis Pujals, Pedro Bonnet, and other leaders of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores, including the victims at Trelew, slain by the Argentine military dictatorship.

● Peter Graham, murdered in Ireland.

● José Zuniga, peasant leader of

the Frente de Izquierda Revolucionario, murdered in Cuzco, Peru.

● Seki of the Japanese Trotskyist movement.

● Georg Moltved, one of the founders of the Danish Trotskyist movement.

● Renzo Gambino and Libero Villone of the Italian Trotskyist movement.

● Edith Beauvais and Charles Marie of the French Trotskyist movement.

● Joe Baxter, an Argentine militant.

● Lazaris of the Greek Trotskyist movement.

● Maureen Keegan, an Irish Trotskyist militant.

● Kenth-Ake Andersson of the Swedish Trotskyist movement.

● Vincent Raymond Dunne, one of the founders of the American Trotskyist movement.

● Constance Weissman, a longtime militant of the Socialist Workers party in the United States.

monolithism, to the bureaucracy-ridden Social Democracy, or to the dictatorial practices of some of the sectarian groups, the formation of tendencies and factions may appear shocking. What a bad example! In the Fourth International, in contrast, the right to form tendencies and factions on a principled basis is a statutory right. It assures a rich internal life to the movement, maintains a means through which a minority can correct a majority, and makes it possible in the least costly way to replace a majority leadership that may have fallen into routinism or that may have begun to adapt to alien class pressures.

### Broad Area of Agreement

Despite the intensity of the debate on certain questions, all the delegates agreed on some basic issues. For instance, all of them supported the view that the contradictions of the capitalist system are deepening at a rapid rate. No one disputed the evidence of this as shown in the intensification of inflationary pressures, in worsening economic situations in a series of countries, in sudden acute crises such as the one over oil supplies, in the sharpening of imperialist rivalries, and in wars breaking out (as in the Middle East) and threatening to spread to a nuclear level.

Everyone agreed that the deepening of the contradictions of the capitalist system impels the proletariat and its allies into action. The year 1968, the congress was unanimous in noting, marked a major turn in this direction in Western Europe. The trend has continued since then despite inevitable ups and downs. It was accepted by all that in the relatively near future new big convulsions can be expected in the class struggle in the imperialist centers. Preliminary confirmation of this forecast came soon after the congress in the form of the upheavals in Portugal and Greece.

The delegates agreed on the forecast that the ruling class everywhere will resort to violent means as a counter to the explosive social pressures, and that the working class must prepare its own answer if it is to avoid undergoing fresh experiences with fascism or murderous military regimes.

They agreed that the role of Moscow and Peking in the détente with

Washington was a treacherous one, in which the interests of the world revolution and the long-range defense of the Soviet Union and China were sacrificed in hope of short-term gains. And they agreed on the prognosis that the summiters would no more succeed in stabilizing the international political situation than they have in the past.

Similarly the delegates agreed that in the developing class struggle, the sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International will face great new opportunities for fast growth and the achievement of leadership in revolutionary upheavals.

Besides this, all the delegates supported the view that a dialectical relationship exists between the working-class struggles in the imperialist centers, the struggles of the workers and oppressed masses in the colonial and semicolonial areas, and the movement in the workers states toward a political revolution aimed at instituting or reinstating proletarian democracy in accordance with the program of Leninism.

And the delegates agreed that in

supporting the struggles for emancipation in the colonial world and the thrust toward a political revolution in countries like the Soviet Union it is particularly important to build sections of the Fourth International in these areas.

It is necessary to stress the common standpoint taken by the delegates on these fundamental questions. Otherwise the framework of basic agreement within which the differences were expressed could be lost sight of.

The differences centered on concrete ways and means of advancing the Fourth International and taking advantage of the new openings, although they tended to spill over into related questions, including some of general theoretical interest as indicated above.

For instance, in assessing the line adopted at the previous congress opposing views were expressed. Had it led to departures from the methods outlined in the Transitional Program? Had it fostered a tendency to seek shortcuts? The IMT said, no. The LTF, yes. The Mezhrayonka, yes in some instances.

Allusions to this debate will be found



in the documents included here, particularly in relation to "armed struggle," and again in relation to the radicalizing youth ("new mass vanguard") and how best to deal with its components in Western Europe.

The discussion on these points was closed following the vote at the congress but will be reopened during the discussion period preparatory to the next congress, which was scheduled by the delegates to take place in 1976.

## The Opposing Political Resolutions

To determine the majority and minority in the incoming leadership, the contending formations agreed to go by the vote on the general political resolution and counterresolutions.

While the points of difference are not brought out in a polemical way in the two resolutions published here (this was done in supporting documents and in speeches at the congress), they can easily be ascertained in general by comparing the texts. Nonetheless, some comments on an aspect of the two documents that might be overlooked or misunderstood may prove helpful.

On many points the two documents coincide. This is particularly noticeable in their analysis of the general crisis of the capitalist system, its impact on the class struggle, and the resulting rise in revolutionary prospects. Similarly in the tasks they propose for the Fourth International, various items will be found to be almost identical.

The two resolutions nevertheless differ in axis. This need not necessarily have led to great differences had there been no dispute on such questions as "armed struggle." The resolution submitted by the IMT places the emphasis on the conjunctural situation. The LTF resolution, while covering the conjunctural situation, was drawn up from a longer range point of view. It seeks to place the current situation in the broad context of the Fourth International's experience as a whole.

The purpose of this is to provide a

better grasp of some of the problems facing the Fourth International today in establishing the nuclei of parties. Such problems are paramount in countries where new groups have appeared. It can be added that the older sections have far from transcended them.

It would be a mistake to regard this long-range approach, which is also the most realistic, as evidence of "pessimism" or "blindness" to the opportunities now opening up for the Fourth International. Instead, drawing on the experience of a number of generations of revolutionary leaders, it brings into focus the question of how to proceed to convert a small isolated group into a large and effective one rooted in the proletariat.

## Measures to Strengthen Unity

The main leaders of the Fourth International were aware that the differences, if they remained unresolved, could endanger the unity of the Fourth International and even lead to a politically unjustified split. In this, too, our movement has had considerable experience, much of it gained at some cost. Thus well in advance of the congress, discussions were held on the danger and what to do about it.

In April 1973 leaders of the IMT and the LTF agreed on the conditions that had to be met to assure an authoritative congress, putting these down in a joint document that was adopted unanimously by the United Secretariat.

Again in September 1973 they agreed on recommendations to be made to the delegates at the world congress to counteract the centrifugal tendency evident in some countries and to strengthen the unity of the movement. This, too, was adopted unanimously by the United Secretariat.

Finally at the congress itself a nine-point agreement, which included the April and September agreements, was adopted unanimously by the Presiding Committee and approved by an overwhelming majority of the delegates.

Among the measures agreed upon were the following:

- On the questions voted on at the congress, to close the discussion for one year.

- On certain other points, to continue the discussion in a monthly internal bulletin not to exceed forty-eight pages. The points were (1) the "cultural revolution" and China; (2) youth radicalization; (3) women's liberation; (4) Middle East; (5) Vietnam; (6) Eastern Europe.

- To hold the next world congress within two years.

- With regard to Fourth Internationalist groups existing in a country on a separate basis, to bring the united moral authority of the Fourth International to bear for their earliest possible fusion on a principled basis.

- To empower the International Executive Committee to recognize groups of that kind as a section if they succeed in fusing before the next world congress.

- At the congress, Fourth Internationalist groups already existing separately were recognized regardless of their size as sympathizing groups; but this exceptional measure was not to be regarded as a precedent. "It is not the purpose of these measures to encourage splits by giving minority groups the hope that they will receive recognition from the International if they leave a section and set up a public formation."

A series of other measures sought to eliminate organizational disputes that might stand in the way of a free political discussion at the congress. Others were intended to assure roughly proportional representation on the incoming leading bodies without denying the majority the right to assure itself working control.

At the closing session of the congress, representatives of both the IMT and the LTF took the floor to express their hope that tensions could be ameliorated, and they pledged to do their utmost to maintain the unity of the Fourth International and to strengthen it. □

# General Political Resolution

# General Political Resolution

The world situation in the 1969-73 period was dominated by a number of interrelated factors: the aggravation of the crisis of the international imperialist system; the deepening of the crisis of bureaucratic management of the economy and the state in the bureaucratized workers states; the precipitous new rise of workers struggles in many imperialist countries; the renewal of the revolutionary thrust of the masses in many colonial and semicolonial countries; the broadening, on an international scale, of a new mass vanguard composed of workers and youth acting independently of the traditional bureaucratic apparatuses of the Socialist and Communist parties, the unions, and the petty-bourgeois leaderships in the colonial countries. These factors will continue to dominate the world scene in the years immediately ahead of us.

For some twenty years following World War II, the colonial revolution stood almost alone in carrying forward the world revolution, while the workers movement in the advanced capitalist countries passed through a period of political stagnation, and the process of political revolution against the bureaucracy made only very slow progress. Beginning in 1967-68, the massive entry into action by the workers of the European capitalist countries opened a period characterized by a considerable revolutionary upsurge (see the theses on building revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe). While making adjustments for the various phases (including phases of stagnation or of temporary retreat) that develop in this period, depending upon the country, the International and its sections must maintain an overall view of the period. Its principal feature is a *new rise of world revolution* in which the proletariat and its specific forms of struggle and organization have a major weight within the world revolutionary process. It is a period that can, at given times,

precipitate revolutionary crises that objectively place the question of power on the agenda. *This is the fundamental tendency underlying the evolution of the world political situation since the Ninth World Congress.*

All the changes that have occurred since then must be viewed in this general framework. The reaction to this tendency—the agreements between Washington and Moscow and between Washington and Peking—demonstrate a desire to maintain the worldwide status quo but are characterized by the partners' lessened capacity to impose such a status quo by force. For this reason the accords have so far had a limited though not insignificant effect. Direct and concerted counterrevolutionary action has been put into effect only against the JVP [Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna—People's Liberation Front] in Ceylon. Through mutual neutrality, a counterrevolutionary operation is at present scoring successes in the Middle East. On the other hand, however, the counterrevolution has shown itself incapable of halting the Indochinese revolution, notably as a result of the political autonomy of its leaderships, an autonomy that is itself conferred by the strength of the revolutionary upsurge of the masses.

Such agreements are in general the consequence of a weakening rather than a strengthening of both imperialism and the bureaucracies of the bigger workers states. Although they try to use such agreements to slow down this process of weakening and to halt the upsurge of the world revolution, neither imperialism nor the ruling bureaucracies currently have at their disposal the means to achieve their goals effectively. *Only serious defeats of the masses in key sectors of the world revolution today—notably in the large countries of capitalist Europe, in Japan, Vietnam, or Argentina—could decisively modify the world situation, enabling imperialism to return to an all-out offensive and impose*

*its own solutions to the structural crisis shaking its system, i.e., establishing reactionary dictatorships, sharply lowering the masses' standard of living, and organizing and launching new, far-reaching counterrevolutionary wars.*

*For the next several years the fundamental tendency (which does not exclude temporary ebbs or partial setbacks) is neither such an ebb in the revolution nor such a reconsolidation of imperialism. On the contrary, the underlying tendency is toward a continuation of the revolutionary rise; an increase in capitalist crises of all sorts; and an increase in powerful thrusts by the mass movement, moving toward the cre-*

This resolution was submitted by the International Majority Tendency. The vote was for 142, against 124, abstentions, 4.

*ation of situations of dual power or passing straight over this threshold.* The revolutionary Marxists, while warning the proletariat and the vanguard layers that this revolutionary rise cannot continue indefinitely, and that the absence of a radical proletarian solution to the crisis owing to the betrayal by the traditional leaderships would result in tiring out the masses and enabling a capitalist counterattack to assert itself, should stake everything on the present rising dynamic of proletarian struggles. They should seek to sharpen the struggles' objectively anticapitalist cutting edge, and, if possible, make them consciously anticapitalist. They must try to stimulate all organizational forms of struggle that enable the proletariat to begin creating soviet-type organs of independent organization. They must seek to advance along the path of building increasingly stronger revolutionary parties with more and more influence in the mass struggle, for this is the only way to insure the victory of the present rising wave of world revolution.

## I. Deepening Crisis of the World Imperialist System

### 1. The Worsening Situation of the International Capitalist Economy

The evolution of the world economic situation since 1969 has fully confirmed the political resolution adopted at the Ninth World Congress with respect to the end of the postwar period of relative stabilization and accelerated growth of the international imperialist economy.

The recession of 1969-71 hit the majority of imperialist countries—although in varying degrees and not, in any pronounced way, all at once. Since 1972 it has been followed by a new, accelerated expansion

of production, except in Italy. But this is a typical inflationary boom marked by an acceleration of the inflationary process, which is worrisome for capital, and by a burst of speculative fever, especially in the flow of raw materials and in the price of gold and real estate. As was foreseen, this inflationary boom was only a short-term one, and the recession that will follow it, in 1974 or 1975, will be even more synchronized than the upswing of the business cycle in 1972-73, which itself caught

up practically all the imperialist countries in its wake.

The crisis of the international monetary system, symbolized by the fall of the dollar and the elimination of its convertibility into gold for several years, is the result of the inevitable consequences of the use, for a quarter of a century, of inflationary techniques to stimulate the economy in the United States and the growth of world commerce. The repeated setbacks the imperialists have encountered in their attempts to create a new international monetary system reflect both the deepening of the interimperialist rivalry and American imperialism's inability to force the other im-



perialist powers to accept the solutions that best correspond to its own particular interests. The long-term repercussions of the crisis of the international monetary system can only exert pressure in the direction of deepening the instability and the crisis of the capitalist system as a whole, even if on a much shorter range they seem to artificially stimulate the economy by accelerating inflation.

At the base of the worsening of the economic situation of world capitalism is the reemergence of the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist mode of production, which were temporarily attenuated during the two decades that followed the second world war. The long-term decline in the rate of profit of the large trusts; their inability to finance their gigantic investment plans through self-financing alone; the decline in the portion of world commerce going to the colonial and semicolonial countries; the appearance of excess productive capacity in a number of "crucial" sectors of industry; the reappearance of massive unemployment in several imperialist countries—all these symptoms make it possible to predict recessions during the 1970s that will be much more serious than those of the 1960s.

The fact that in Western Europe and Japan these recessions will meet with an organized force, a rise in combativity, and an anticapitalist level of consciousness among the proletariat unequaled in the past will make the social and political situation exceptionally serious and explosive for capitalism. One can already predict that important layers of the proletariat in the advanced countries who have up until now refused to pay the costs of inflation will also refuse to pay the costs of unemployment that will be added on in the future. Extremely sharp struggles involving the occupation, takeover, and expropriation of factories will break out in the course of the recession that is brewing.

The "oil crisis," as well as the increase in the prices of a number of other strategic raw materials like bauxite, cannot be viewed as simply a result of the incontestable greed of the big monopolies, nor as merely the product of a conspiracy against consumers. They reflect, in the realm of prices and profits, two long-term tendencies that began to appear several years ago and serve as an additional signal of a basic reversal of the long phase of postwar economic boom.

On one hand, the bourgeoisie in a number of semicolonial countries is seeking to take advantage of the rise of the colonial revolution in order to modify in its favor the division of the surplus value extorted from the world proletariat (especially from the proletariat of the colonial and semicolonial countries). This is carried out at the expense of the imperialist bourgeoisie, above all the bourgeoisies of Europe and Japan, which depend far more than the

U.S. bourgeoisie on imported oil. The imperialist bourgeoisie counters by making the working masses bear a part of the cost of this operation. For the moment, it has little possibility of avoiding the redistribution of surplus value, since a decisive military intervention is politically and socially beyond its scope at the present conjuncture.

On the other hand, the long phase of decline in the prices of raw materials (1952-70) relative to the price behavior of manufactured goods has induced growing imbalances in the distribution of capital between various sectors, leading to bottlenecks and shortages that stem not from natural causes but basically from the anarchy of the international capitalist economy. In the framework of an economy of this kind, giddy rises in prices and profits like the one that is filling the coffers of the oil trusts today are the "normal" mechanism for redirecting capital toward these sectors and for stimulating investment and production in them, thereby

eliminating these imbalances.

The fact that the working masses of the imperialist countries will have to pay the bill while the trusts appropriate new riches—and that the populations of numerous semicolonial countries (like those of the Indian peninsula!) will suffer both from the increased price of oil and from the rise in the price of manufactured goods that it will bring about—should stimulate revolutionary Marxists everywhere to indict capitalist wastefulness and to focus the indictment on the demand for expropriating all sources of energy and placing them under workers control, and on the need to pass over to socialist planning of the world economy.

However, the overall effect of the "energy crisis" and the rise in the costs of other strategic raw materials will be to reduce the rate of profit of manufacturing industry in the imperialist countries and thus to accentuate tendencies toward a marked slowdown of growth in the 1970s.

## 2. The Deepening of Interimperialist Contradictions

The years that followed the second world war were characterized by the nearly absolute dominance of American imperialism within the capitalist world. This hegemony was based on the technological and productive superiority of the American economy; on the American monopoly of nuclear arms; on the primacy of the dollar; and on the dependency of the other capitalist powers on the flow of American aid to rebuild and reconsolidate their economies and their states, which were seriously shaken by the war and the limited revolutionary rise of the years 1944-48. The establishment of a series of political and military alliances around the world—NATO, CENTO, SEATO, and OAS—all based on the hegemony of American imperialism, crowned the imperialist world system after 1945.

This situation has been profoundly modified in the course of the last few years. The spectacular reconstruction of the imperialist powers of Western Europe and Japan brought the law of uneven development into play at the expense of the American bourgeoisie for the first time in the history of capitalism. The U.S. economy experienced an erosion of its productivity advantage over its principal rivals. The effort to simultaneously assure the extension of its exports of capital, the underwriting of the costs of its role as world cop of the imperialist system, and the purchase of relative stability on its home front by accepting the maintenance of and even a modest growth in the standard of living of the organized industrial proletariat surpassed the resources of the American bourgeoisie. It resulted in a permanent deficit in the balance of payments and

a rampant crisis of the dollar. The acceleration of inflation, caused especially by the war in Vietnam and by the need to pull out of the prolonged recession of 1969-70, ended up by producing the decline of the dollar and the international monetary system created at Bretton Woods. This was the symbolic expression of American imperialism's loss of its nearly absolute hegemony within the capitalist world.

Of course, American imperialism continues to occupy a position of relative superiority among the imperialist powers. While its rate of growth in material production and productivity are lower than those of, say, Japan and the German Federal Republic and its share of world trade is a great deal less than that of the European Common Market, its industry and revenues still greatly surpass those of capitalist Europe taken as a whole. It still has more capital invested abroad than all the other imperialist powers put together. Above all, the military superiority that it continues to exert within the imperialist alliance is out of proportion with its economic and financial weight.

But the worsening of the interimperialist contradictions—which is a function not just of the change in the relationship of forces within the imperialist alliance, but also of the worsening of the structural crisis of world capitalism—has an inexorable tendency to pass from the commercial, industrial, and financial sphere to the political and even the military sphere. American leadership is seriously challenged and undermined within the world imperialist alliance, although no other power is in a position to present itself as a



replacement. Some of the defensive countermeasures of American imperialism—such as the attempt to shift a portion of the total imperialist military costs to the countries of capitalist Europe and Japan, or the blackmail threat to withdraw American armed forces from Europe—contribute to fostering tendencies toward first a European, then a Japanese, nuclear force that might eventually express on the political and military level the change in the relationship of forces that has already occurred on the economic and financial plane.

The efforts of American diplomacy are aimed at replacing a bipolar strategy (i.e., the two "big powers" of the postwar period) by a strategy that corresponds to a more complex constellation: three "big powers" (United States, USSR, China—the latter not yet being quite so "big"), Japan, and a capitalist Europe without political unity. These efforts are aimed at defending America's position within the capitalist world and not at bringing about a fundamental reversal of alliances. The class interests of capital as a whole continue to take precedence in the long run over considerations of rivalry, and there are tangible material reasons for this. The loss of capitalist Europe or Japan would be a deathblow for the American bourgeoisie. It will therefore remain fundamentally tied to the international imperialist alliances—while striving to modify the relationship of forces within that alliance, as its European rivals and partners have done for years.

Thus on the political plane, the deepening of the interimperialist rivalry is expressed, in the last analysis, by a crisis of leadership within the international bourgeoisie, which can reestablish a unity of views and responses only at the price of more and more laborious negotiations. The reservations of the European bourgeoisie with respect to the American policy in Vietnam and the Middle East; the difficulties in reconstructing any international system whatsoever; the blows and counterblows that the different imperialist powers are dealing each other in the chase after raw materials and the markets of the Eastern bloc countries, or in their relations with the bourgeoisies of Latin America—these are only some of the signs of this crisis of leadership, a crisis that is seriously weakening the capitalist system as a whole.

The EEC [European Economic Community—Common Market] is going through a marked crisis as a result of the aggravation of the international economic situation of capitalism and the exacerbation of interimperialist rivalry. This crisis in no way expresses any increased power of American capital in Europe, paralyzing the formation of an integrated imperialist power. On the contrary, it expresses the still considerable strength of tendencies within each European bourgeoisie to withdraw into protectionism and

nationalism as soon as its economic situation deteriorates—in other words, the still limited degree of interpenetration of capital on the European scale. However, just as in the past it was wrong to describe as "irreversible" the tendency toward economic and political unification of capitalist Europe, it is equally wrong to count today on the "inevitable" disintegration of the Common Market. The decision will no doubt be taken at a time of serious

### 3. The New Counterrevolutionary Strategy of Imperialism and the Fate of the Vietnamese Revolution

Faced with the rise of all these economic, social, and political difficulties on a world scale, the fundamental strategy of imperialism was perceptibly modified in the course of the last few years. During the 1960s, it was centered above all on direct American intervention aimed at halting and smothering new revolutionary outbreaks. The counterrevolutionary war of intervention that American imperialism unleashed in Indochina was the most striking expression of this strategy.

It ended in failure. U.S. military intervention not only failed to crush the Indochinese revolution, but the financial and political price paid for carrying out the operation proved to be higher and higher and threatened to shake the relative stability of bourgeois society in the United States itself. To repeat a war of the Vietnam type in the short run in another country seems impossible for the American bourgeoisie.

The global counterrevolutionary strategy of imperialism has evolved under these conditions toward combining the creation of *regional counterrevolutionary stand-ins* without direct intervention of U.S. troops (although with a more and more ample military aid from imperialism) with *negotiations with the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies* to get them to step up their role as a brake inside the mass movement—with a view to preventing the revolutionary uprisings that could no longer be tolerated within the framework of capitalism—in exchange for de facto recognition of their power over the countries they control.

The principal local instruments that this strategy is based on are the Brazilian army in Latin America, the Israeli army in the Middle East, the Iranian army in the Arab-Persian Gulf, the South Vietnamese and Thai armies in Southeast Asia, and the South African army in Africa. But the effectiveness of the South Vietnamese army is more than doubtful; the course of the revolutionary process in Indochina could lead to its gradual disintegration. The rise of the student and workers movement is undermining the effectiveness of the Thai army. Since the effectiveness of the Israeli army has been

generalized recession which will necessitate in one way or another a still stronger intervention of the bourgeois state in the economy. If the interpenetration of capital on a European scale proves to be predominant, only a "European superstate" will be able to meet the needs of the European monopolies. If this state does not come into being, then a withdrawal into national-state protectionism seems inevitable.

called into question by the Yom Kippur war, it is likely that American imperialism will seek at least a supplement to it from the reactionary Arab regimes. And there are two other gaping holes in this system. On the one hand, Japanese imperialism is encountering great political difficulties in the effort to build up its military forces to the point of being able to substitute for American armed forces in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, in Western Europe the bourgeoisies' effort to create a full-scale counterrevolutionary striking force is encountering even greater difficulties, which has caused, among other things, the spectacular reversal of the Gaullist politicians in France, who today call loudly for the maintenance of the American military presence in Europe.

The effectiveness of some of these counterrevolutionary instruments should not be underestimated. The Brazilian army and the Israeli army have undoubtedly been a major factor in stopping the development of revolutionary situations in their respective regions. In the countries of Western Europe in which the tensions are manifested most sharply, the bourgeoisie's strengthening of its machinery for civil war involves preparing the national armies for the struggle against "internal subversion." This preparation, while not necessarily leading in the short run to the abolition of conscription, implies an increase in the weight of the professional sector of the army, a sector that is specially trained on both the material and ideological level to take charge of the struggle against the internal enemy. The training of the army for the tasks of civil war must be vigorously fought by the workers movement. Nevertheless, in its totality this counterstrategy depends on the outcome of the rise of the mass movements now taking place. Without a very serious political and social defeat of the Japanese and European proletariats, one cannot see how imperialism would be able to create a stable and effective military force in these key regions of the world.

In another connection, the ability of the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies to impede or effectively betray powerful revolutionary mass movements in exchange



United States bombers over Vietnam.

December 23, 1974



for a *modus vivendi* with imperialism does not depend solely on their intentions—which certainly run in that direction—but also on the strength of the revolutionary rise, on the relationship of forces between the treacherous old leaderships and the new vanguards within the mass movement, on the degree of control that Moscow and Peking and their respective agents exercise over this mass movement, on the repercussions of the changed relationship of forces in the mass movement inside the Communist parties themselves, etc. From this point of view, the situation today is fundamentally different from that of the 1944-47 period. The force, the cohesion, and the degree of control of the Stalinist apparatus—to say nothing of the Maoist apparatus—over the international workers movement are much smaller, while the power and the autonomy of the mass movement are much greater. That is why it is entirely out of place to speak of a new Yalta, in the sense of the ability of Washington, Moscow, and Peking to divide the world into spheres of influence and maintain the status quo.

The fate of the Indochinese revolution is in a way the synthesis of all these trends that dominate the development of the world situation today. The force of the revolutionary thrust of the Vietnamese masses is such that it defeated American imperialism's systematic, ten-year effort to crush it with the strongest concentration of firepower ever known in such a small area. The mass opposition to the pursuit of this counterrevolutionary war acquired such a scope within the United States that it forced American imperialism to withdraw the bulk of its infantry forces from Vietnam.

But the relative international isolation in which the Indochinese revolution found itself and the fact that the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies doled out their aid through an eyedropper while relentlessly stepping up their pressure for a compromise did not allow the revolution to pursue realistically the perspective of a military victory against U.S. imperialism's air war. Nixon's trips to Peking and Moscow contributed to demobilizing the antiwar movement in the United States. In these conditions, the fact that the cease-fire put an end to direct imperialist military intervention in Vietnam and was followed by a similar cessation of intervention in Laos and Cambodia doesn't mean the immediate and automatic victory of the permanent revolution in Vietnam.

It means that the Indochinese revolution is continuing within an improved relationship of forces. Direct American intervention has been halted, and this halt has not been accompanied by a demobilization or disarming of the forces of the South Vietnamese NLF, or by a halt in North Vietnamese aid to the revolution in the South. And these forces as a whole are not

letting up in their efforts to overthrow the puppet Thieu regime. But the cease-fire means that the course of the revolution will take time; that for a period it will avoid full-scale frontal battles with Thieu's army. The emphasis will move to expanding the agrarian revolution; to consolidating the new organs of power set up in the countryside; to attempting to bring about the political and social disintegration of the counterrevolutionary army; to breathing new life into the struggle in the cities, especially through the struggle for the liberation of political prisoners, for the reestablishment of civil liberties, against the high cost of living and speculators, and for the right of refugees to return to their village of origin.

The victories that the revolutionary forces have won in Laos and above all in Cambodia facilitate the unfolding of the permanent revolution in Vietnam toward victory. On the other hand, the march toward vic-

tory is being held back by the threat of renewed American bombing, the extensive aid Washington continues to provide the puppet Thieu, and the "moderating" and capitulatory pressures that Moscow and Peking continue to exert on the Indochinese revolutionaries. In the last analysis, everything depends on the entry into action of living class forces in the area, on their relationship of forces, on their willingness to fight, and on the orientation and resolve of their leaderships. For an entire period, the situation will remain one of dual power from top to bottom in a large part of South Vietnam. The outcome of the revolution will without doubt be decided by its ability to extend this dual power toward the cities and above all toward greater Saigon. There again, the autonomous intervention of the proletariat, with its own forms of organization and action, will probably mark the final phase of the Indochinese revolution.

#### 4. The Resurgence of Workers Struggles in Western Europe

The resurgence of struggles of the Western European proletariat since the May 1968 bombshell in France is the most spectacular expression of the leading role the working class occupies within the present revolutionary upsurge, compared with the upswing of 1949-67, which was based above all on the colonial revolution.

The breadth of these struggles, their increasingly anticapitalist objectives, and their growing political implications—which on several occasions have led to objectively posing the question of power—coincide to place several of the key countries of capitalist Europe once again on the threshold of a prerevolutionary crisis.

Beginning in 1968 *Italy* passed through a very deep social and political crisis that, in the second half of 1969, culminated in a prerevolutionary crisis. The working class and other toiling layers were mobilized for years on end in struggles of a very broad scope, with a potentially anticapitalist dynamic. This thrust, which acquired a markedly united class nature, was characterized by egalitarian demands, by significant experiences tending to raise the question of workers control (control over the pace of work, the size of the work force, etc.), by a challenge to the whole concept of management rights, and by the emergence of new bodies of proletarian democracy (workers delegates and councils of delegates). The occupation of Fiat-Mirafiori, the largest factory in Europe, and of other factories in Turin five years after the beginning of the new phase and at the end of a hard-fought six-month battle for the new metalworkers contract is the most eloquent indication of the depth of the working-class radicalization in Italy, which has yet to run out of steam.

The *French* proletariat, which in May-June 1968 went through the inspiring experience of a general strike that included factory occupations involving about 10 million workers, has not witnessed any decline in its struggle since then. Its upsurge took place in the context of the decomposition of the Gaullist regime. Seeking to channel this upsurge onto a reformist path, the Communist and the Socialist party leaderships have established a Union of the Left with a "Common Program." They claim that a parliamentary victory by this bloc would open up a "short phase leading to a transition to socialism." After a temporary lull before the March 1973 elections, the upsurge gained new strength immediately afterward despite the electoral defeat of the Union of the Left. This is shown not only in sharper struggles but also in demands that challenge the authority of the bosses and in the appearance of forms of independent organization of the masses in struggle, partially outside the monolithic control of the old leaderships and traditional organizations. The revolutionary upsurge is spreading to the most diverse realms of society (education, the family, the army, and the judicial system). The new vanguard, which is still mostly unorganized, has taken on mass dimensions since May 1968; it includes increasingly broader layers of young workers and already represents a significant factor on the political scene.

In the period since the strikes against the death sentences the Burgos War Tribunal handed down against Basque militants in 1970, the *Spanish* working class has experienced an increasing politicization of its struggles. Even when they break out over questions of wages, these struggles tend to raise political demands (freedom

for political prisoners, trade-union rights, etc.) and to be transformed into a direct confrontation with the forces of repression and the Franco regime. Thus the relevance of the slogan of the revolutionary general strike—which our Spanish comrades were the first to counterpose to the Spanish CP's orientation toward a peaceful general strike aimed at liberalizing the regime without affecting its capitalist structure—was revealed in a succession of experiences in Ferrol, Vigo, San Adrian, and Pamplona when such general strikes actually broke out on a local scale as a reaction to the repression of strikes that had been purely economic at first. Under these conditions, propaganda for the preparation of a nationwide revolutionary general strike is finding a growing receptivity among the vanguard of the Spanish proletariat.

In *Britain*, millions of workers have put up fierce resistance to the attempts by the Wilson government, and later by the Heath government, to smash the workers' militancy by passing antiunion legislation and by increasing unemployment. The miners strikes, with their use of massive pickets around the electric power stations, and the political general strike of May 1, 1973, against the incomes policy, mark what are so far the high points of these battles, which have resulted in a pronounced radicalization within the unions and the left wing of the Labour party, as well as a notable growth of political currents to the left of the Labour party.

The resurgence of workers struggles has had an impact even in *West Germany*, where the proletariat entered the period opened up by the end of the long post-war boom with a very low level of class consciousness (the result of the victory of fascism, the war, the division of the country, the disastrous effects of the Soviet occupation, the triumphant anticommunism of the cold-war period, and the unexpected economic successes of capitalist reconstruction). From the wildcat strikes of 1969 to those of the summer and fall of 1973, the renewal of the West German proletariat's combativity is undeniable, even if it still lags behind that of the other large European capitalist countries in breadth and depth.

These phenomena have also occurred,

## 5. The Rise of Japanese Imperialism and Its Contradictions

The spectacular expansion of the capitalist economy of Japan is one of the most important of the phenomena that have modified the world situation in the course of the last twenty years. Rebuilt by American imperialism to be a counterweight to the strength of the USSR in Asia and to the victory of the Chinese revolution; nourished by the effects of the Ko-

even if at a slower pace and with a more reduced scope, in the smaller European countries like Belgium and Denmark. They mark a general tendency that will spread under different forms to most of the capitalist countries of Europe, especially if the breakthrough toward a revolutionary crisis is achieved in some important countries.

The appearance of a temporary situation of dual power in Northern Ireland in the course of struggles for civil rights and the situation of endemic civil war that continues there are equally revealing of the degree of instability in the situation facing big business in Western Europe.

Three features indicate particularly clearly the importance of the present resurgence of workers struggles in Europe: first, the fact that in Europe, workers demands and actions are taking an increasingly anticapitalist character, most clearly expressed by the different variants of the demand for workers control; second, the workers' instinctive thrust toward the independent organization of struggles (strike committees, elected strike committees, general assemblies of strikers controlling the strike committees), i.e., their more and more distinctly antibureaucratic character; finally, a synchronization of the rise of workers struggles in all the large countries of Europe, a synchronization that did not occur in 1919-20, 1923, 1936, or 1945-48, and that largely prevents one or another of the large bourgeois states from playing the role of cop on a European scale. Immigrant workers form the most exploited layer of the proletariat in a number of European countries and are the target of the first massive attacks of big capital on both the economic level and the political level (i.e., the rise of extreme right-wing racist demagogy). Their role in internationalizing the struggles, above all in their most radical forms, should be particularly noted.

All these indications point to a single conclusion. They enable us to foresee the occurrence in the near future of one of the most important revolutionary waves that the proletariat of capitalist Europe has ever known, prepared and stimulated by the prerevolutionary situations that have existed several times since 1968 in several countries and that the bourgeoisie did not succeed in crushing.

rean war and the second Indochinese war; having the advantages of the most modern technology in such important industrial sectors as metallurgy, naval construction, the precision industries, and electronics, Japanese imperialism exploited to the hilt the industrial reserve army it still had in the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, to throw itself into a commercial and then

a financial offensive on the world market.

As a result of that offensive, it largely dominates the economies of South Korea and the Philippines; it is plunging toward the "peaceful" conquest of Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Thailand; it is the number one commercial partner of the People's Republic of China and Australia; and it is beginning to penetrate the Pacific coasts of the United States, Canada, and Mexico—while already achieving annual capital investments in Brazil greater than those of the United States. This commercial expansion corresponds not only to the need to find outlets for its giant industry and fields of investment for its excess capital but also to its haunting poverty in raw materials, which had already launched it on the road to expansion—at that time military—in the period before the second world war.

However, the rapid economic expansion of Japanese imperialism ran up against limitations resulting from the interaction of two factors. On the one hand, the decline of the hegemony of U.S. imperialism in the political and economic system of international imperialism robbed this expansion of the monetary basis (a stable dollar) and the political basis (U.S. hegemony in the Far East) on which it rested. On the other hand, a number of internal factors that fueled the rapid economic growth of the past decades have also been exhausted.

The decline of the fundamental stimulants of past growth has plunged the Japanese bourgeoisie into serious economic difficulties. This has already been expressed by the dramatic reversal of Japan's balance of payments and the consequent fall of the yen, which, following its spectacular rise after the Nixon declaration of August 1971, is now closer to its previous value.

In this situation, the decline of the political dominance of the LDP [Liberal Democratic party] has proceeded at an accelerated rate. Ever broader layers of the Japanese masses are parting ways with the LDP government and its policies. This tendency promotes the increasingly independent and militant mass struggles that are beginning to develop and also pushes the Japanese Communist party toward the center of the political stage. What is really happening is that the wave of radicalization can no longer be contained within the framework of a center-left bloc (Socialist party/Democratic Socialist party and Komeito [Clean Government party]). The deepening of the crisis in a context of growing combativity on the part of the working masses promotes the advancement of a popular-front type solution by the Socialist and Communist parties. It is therefore possible to anticipate a confrontation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat



in the period ahead; and the struggle against the tendency toward a popular

front becomes an increasingly urgent task for revolutionary Marxists.

## 6. The Decline of American Hegemony and the Crisis of Bourgeois Society in the U.S.

Of all the important imperialist countries, the United States is the only one in which the proletariat has not yet participated in the spectacular resurgence of struggles in recent years. Revolutionary Marxists should assign particular importance to the theoretical and political analysis of the causes of this delay, which is linked to the great historical delay in the development of the political class consciousness of the American proletariat, without, however, being identical with it.

During the postwar period, North American capitalism has enjoyed a stability unparalleled by any other important imperialist power. This situation can to a large degree be explained by the international hegemony of American imperialism and by the advantages of its economy's edge in productivity, which allowed a constant rise in American workers' standard of living.

This prolonged period of political prosperity weighed heavily and negatively on the development of the combativity and class consciousness of the North American proletariat. The economic margin of maneuver of the North American bourgeoisies allowed them to grant real concessions to the working class while generally avoiding violent and direct confrontations with important sectors of the organized labor movement. This situation, particularly in the years after the second world war, was to allow the crystallization of an ultrareactionary trade-union bureaucracy that in many cases won its stripes through militant anticommunism and the role it played in the witch-hunt during the cold war, as well as the consolidation of a broad, ultraconservative labor aristocracy that was always willing to sacrifice the interests of the North American proletariat to the maintenance of its own privileges.

A number of factors have begun to shake this relative social stability: the Black revolt; the Indochina war; and the economic weakening of American imperialism in relation to the other imperialist powers. The political readjustments undertaken by the Nixon administration are the expression of this shake-up in foreign and domestic policy (abandonment of most of the social programs of previous administrations, severe cutbacks in social expenditures, wage and price controls, a more or less generalized offensive against the standard of living of the working class, etc.). The decline in American hegemony in the world, along with the accelerated change in the conditions within which capital investments are carried out

in the United States, has undermined the stability of U.S. bourgeois society. Among other things this society in the last ten years has experienced a massive revolt against its basically racist structure, the largest mass movement ever seen in any country against a counterrevolutionary war being carried out by its own bourgeoisie, and a massive shake-up of the classical value system of the bourgeoisie. Although the bourgeois two-party system was able to "co-opt" these successive waves electorally—basically because the bulk of the proletariat has not yet entered into action, and because the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies powerfully aided Nixon in demobilizing the antiwar movement—the traditional power structures have been as severely shaken objectively as they have been in the eyes of the masses.

Far from being a passing accident, the Watergate scandal is the clearest expression of this shake-up. American big business is encountering growing difficulties in adapting its traditional methods of government to rapidly changing social and economic conditions, both nationally and internationally. By raising itself above the Republican and Democratic coalitions and electoral machines, the Nixon administration was beginning in earnest the destruction of the equilibrium of bourgeois political forces. Those sectors of the American bourgeoisie that feel this enterprise might be carried out at their expense have seized upon the Watergate scandal to try to bring Nixon back into line, without, however, calling into question the long-term trend toward the strong state. But this anti-Nixon offensive could seriously undermine the confidence of the American masses in the entire bourgeois political system.

Added to the effects of this crisis of political institutions on the working class are the effects of the economic difficulties of American capitalism. The objective factors that contributed to the social and political passivity of the proletariat for the last twenty-five years are playing less and less of a role. The American economy's advantages in the realm of productivity have been pared down or have disappeared. The real wages of the American proletariat taken as a whole have stopped rising since the beginning of the escalation of the war in Vietnam. The difference in the standard of living in comparison with Western Europe is gradually diminishing. The bourgeoisie's offensive against the working class's standard of living is being carried out in a diversified but systematic way: a combination of nominal wage increases with speedup and overtime, a di-

rect attack on real wages through inflation, and cutbacks in social expenditures that affect the most exploited layers of the proletariat (notably the national minorities). The energy crisis offers an additional pretext for a whole range of rationalizations and layoffs in certain sectors of the economy. Up until now this offensive has not given rise to any massive response on the part of the American working class, in large part because of betrayal by the trade-union bureaucracies, who have given their de facto assent to the overall economic policy of the American bourgeoisie.

However, the strikes in recent years by public employees and farm workers, the hard-fought strikes and occasional wild-cat walkouts in heavy industry, and the appearance of trade-union caucuses in opposition to the old and traditional bureaucratic leaderships all indicate that discontent is far from nonexistent in the American working class, even if it has not yet reached the point of expressing itself in a massive and generalized way. This lack can be partially explained by the absence of a layer of advanced worker militants sufficiently numerous and organized to promote an effort to outflank the powerful bureaucratic apparatuses in actions that have more than a local or sectoral influence. There is, however, a molecular radicalization, particularly among young, Black, and Latino workers. It is fueled both by the change in the economic situation and the ideological residue of the social movements of the late 1960s. This is an undeniable reality and will have an impact on the emergence of a workers vanguard.

Consequently, the most probable variant for the immediate future in the United States is neither the continuation of the present momentary decline of the movements of mass revolt, nor the rapid evolution of the country toward a military or police dictatorship, or a regime of the fascist type. On the contrary, the most probable variant is for a new surge of the mass movement, this time centered more on workers struggles launched in reaction to inflation, employment, and the deterioration of living standards, working conditions, and the environment—phenomena that will become aggravated in the course of the coming recession. The revolt by important sectors of the proletariat against the trade-union bureaucracy's policy of class collaboration, against its acceptance of successive clampdowns on wages and of a policy of wage controls, will stimulate this renewal of workers struggles, give it a more pronounced anticapitalist and antibureaucratic character, and deal heavy blows to the bourgeois two-party system, placing workers independent political organization on the agenda once again.

Canada has enjoyed a period of economic prosperity as prolonged as that of the United States, thanks to its basic role under the North American division of

labor as an exporter of raw materials, its privileged commercial ties with the United States, and the overall satellite character of its economy in relation to that of the United States. And it has experienced a much greater overall political stability. Canada's position as a subordinate (though largely autonomous) component of a continental economy dominated by U.S. capital worked to its advantage during almost the whole period between the end of the second world war and now. But because of this dependent relationship, Canada's political, economic, and social stability rest, to a degree unparalleled in any other imperialist country, on the good health of the U.S. economy. The difficulties the latter has encountered have had almost immediate repercussions on the Canadian economy. At the present time a whole range of factors linked directly or indirectly to this dependence on the United States is helping to undermine the stability of the Canadian state and is making increasingly obvious its artificial and unviable character as a distinct capitalist state. Its extreme dependence on foreign trade (especially with the United States and certain countries in the European Economic Community) makes its economy highly vulnerable to protectionist measures. The weakness and distortions of its manufacturing industry; the growing national consciousness of the Acadians, the French-speaking population of Ontario, and the native peoples; the extreme regional fragmentation that characterizes its economy, social structure, and political system—a fragmentation that is reflected in the absence of a solidly based political team capable of expressing the interests of the Canadian bourgeoisie as a whole—all these things tend, given the present conditions and above all the possibility of an international recession, toward a sharp domestic crisis that could well call into question the entire internal cohesion of the Canadian state.

Although the Canadian working class as a whole has not yet experienced massive mobilizations on a national scale, it has been possible to observe a notable increase in working-class militancy over the past few years, as well as an increase in sharp confrontations between important sectors of the workers movement and various levels of the Canadian state (federal or provincial). Examples of this are the rail strike, the massive mobilizations of the trade unions in British Columbia, the teachers in Ontario, the post office workers, and the hard-fought exemplary strikes in light industry that have given rise to broad mobilizations of worker militants on a local scale. For a small but growing number of trade-union militants, these confrontations are beginning to pose the problem of violent intervention by the state. Fundamental concepts about the urgent necessity of organizing workers

self-defense are beginning to emerge.

In all North America it is only in *Quebec* that workers mobilizations have taken on a massive character almost in one leap. The general strike of the public employee unions' Common Front—along with the semispontaneous and more or less generalized walkouts in May 1972, the experiences of workers control, and the occupations of towns—constitutes the most significant mobilization of any sector of the North American proletariat in the last twenty-five years. Far from being decisively crushed by the defeat of the Common Front, working-class militancy was demonstrated all during 1973 by a wave of strikes in the private sector. The burden of national oppression, the extreme combativity of the proletariat, the economic crisis that has been endemic since 1964, the weakened economic and political state of the *Quebecois* bourgeoisie, the weakness and heterogeneity of the trade-union bureaucracy, and the intensity of the social contradictions make *Quebec* the weak link in the chain of North American imperialism.

The greatest subjective obstacle on the path toward the *Quebecois* revolution is

## 7. The Struggle of the Semicolonial Proletariat for Its Class Autonomy

One of the most striking features of the development of the colonial revolution over the last few years has been the growing weight of workers struggles tending toward independent action—including political action—on the part of the proletariat in an increasing number of colonial and semicolonial countries. This phenomenon results from the interaction of a number of factors, among which the quickened pace of industrialization in these countries and the open bankruptcy of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships play a preponderant role.

The weight of the proletariat, and more especially of the industrial proletariat, is increasing in several semicolonial countries, even if the neocolonial or dependent industrialization—partial, skimpy, and dominated by the multinational trusts—has scarcely reduced the massive unemployment and the misery of the shantytowns. The conflicts between the proletariat and not only the foreign capitalists but also the "national" capitalists and governments, even those with an anti-imperialist veneer, are tending to increase. At the same time, the inability of the governments to resolve the fundamental problems of an underdeveloped society and economy, along with the ties they maintain with imperialism, compel them to make the masses bear the burden of the industrialization that is under way. Inflation, the high cost

of living, unemployment, crises in housing and basic public services, illiteracy, stagnation if not decline in living standards, suppression of civil liberties, wage freezes, the prohibition of strikes—such are the problems the workers and poor peasants still find themselves faced with in these countries.

That is why the political credit that the traditional nationalist leaderships enjoy—thanks to some real, even though partial, gains from the anti-imperialist struggle—is gradually running out. The loss of prestige of the "reformist" military regime in Peru (which, among other things, has broken workers strikes with harsh repression); the decline in influence of the post-Nasserite leadership in Egypt, not to speak of the Baath in Syria and in Iraq; the exposure of the Bandaranaike regime in Sri Lanka; and the difficulties of the Ramanantsoa regime in Madagascar and the Ngouabi regime in the Congo (Brazzaville) are some illustrations of that general tendency. It is probable that Peronism's return to power in Argentina will provoke a crisis in the influence of this current among the broad proletarian masses and the radicalized student youth of Argentina.

All the changes that have been described reflect a gradual transformation of the political and social situation in North America. This will provide historic new opportunities for a revolutionary intervention within the proletariat of this continent.

the *Parti Quebecois*. Given the absence of independent working-class political organizations, this bourgeois-nationalist party has won the allegiance of the overwhelming majority of the organized workers movement. The intensification of the class struggle, however, is tending slowly but surely to detach a growing number of advanced workers from the influence of the *Parti Quebecois*, paving the way for violent actions outflanking the bureaucratic and nationalist movements. To date, the struggles of the *Quebecois* proletariat have had an influence only on a few isolated vanguard militants in the Canadian working class. But as social tensions increase in Canada and the United States, the example of the *Quebecois* working class will be followed by broader layers and will constitute an important radicalizing factor.

The case of *India* is particularly characteristic in this respect. After Nehru's death and the appearance of a massive famine in important sectors of the subcontinent, the hold of the Congress party



on the Indian masses underwent a pronounced decline. The ultraopportunist policy of the CPI [Communist party of India] and the CPI(M) [Communist party of India (Marxist)]—a policy of governmental collaboration, alliance with the possessing classes and their parties, repression of popular movements, use of violence against other tendencies of the workers movement—fragmented the promising rise of the masses especially in West Bengal and Kerala, served as a brake on their mobilization, and eliminated the perspective of an alternative solution to the Congress party on a national scale. Thanks to several adroit maneuvers within the country (the break with the most corrupt politicians of the "syndicate") and abroad (support to the war of national liberation in Bangladesh and the victory over Pakistan), Indira Gandhi was able to restore the Congress party to the highest degree of political hegemony it had known in ten years.

But this restored semblance of stability was of only short duration. The new difficulties in grain supplies that broke out in 1972 revealed that none of the causes of the crisis of 1965-66 had been eliminated. New fissures have appeared within the Congress party. Social differentiation on the village level, and the poverty and the lack of perspectives for the agricultural workers, the untouchables, and the small farmers, are becoming increasingly worse. In these conditions, the initiative can again pass to the side of the proletariat.

The proletariat is instinctively seeking to overcome the effects of the divisions in the trade unions, a fact attested by the appearance, for the first time, of a system of factory delegates. The working class is even beginning to manifest an active solidarity with the village poor, as shown in the strike by the workers of Bombay in solidarity with the Maharashtra agricultural workers. The outcome of the Indian proletariat's movement to take the political initiative within the process of permanent revolution will depend on the building of a new revolutionary proletarian leadership, and on the capacity of this leadership to take a correct orientation toward the agrarian revolution. But the progress made along this route by the spontaneous surge of the masses will greatly facilitate the building of this leadership if the revolutionary Marxist nuclei follow a correct policy and intervene in the struggles of the masses with a spirit of initiative and a sense of responsibility.

In a more general way, the clearly proletarian forms taken by mass struggles in numerous semicolonial countries have become pronounced: strikes by metalworkers in Egypt and the Ovambo workers in Namibia, union agitation and strikes by the Black proletariat in South Africa,

the general strike with factory occupations against the Bordaberry putsch in Uruguay, the Popular Assembly in Bolivia, etc. The setbacks suffered were the product of the inadequacy of a new revolutionary leadership, which above all implies inadequacies in the creation of organs of dual power of the soviet type, in the arming of the masses, and in allying with the working peasantry. But the progress achieved toward the proletariat's playing an autonomous role within the process of the colonial revolution underlines the fact that the solution of these shortcomings is today easier than it was before and permits a prediction of somber perspectives for imperialism in several colonial and semicolonial sectors.

The entire evolution in *Latin America* confirms the absence of any objective basis for an even slightly prolonged period of bourgeois democracy once the mass movement enters an impetuous upswing. Of course, the vigor of this movement can force the "party-army" of the bourgeoisie to temporarily replace bloody dictatorships with so-called reformist regimes. But if these are not successful in channeling and turning back the combativity of the masses, armed and bloody repression is soon on the agenda once again. That is what happened in Bolivia in 1971, and in Uruguay and Chile in 1973. It will also occur in Argentina.

Furthermore, the effects of a serious defeat of the proletariat by the army can be more prolonged and have weightier consequences than foreseen, as is shown by the example of Brazil, where for nearly a decade imperialism and the forces of "national" reaction have been able to create a relatively stabilized sector of Latin America that serves as a counterrevolutionary pole for the entire continent and attracts important capital investments for that very reason. But this results in a considerable numerical and social strengthening of the industrial proletariat, which will ultimately undermine the conditions of this temporary stability.

Since the Zionist victory in June 1967, the *Arab revolution* has above all been marked by the armed struggle of the Palestinian people within the framework of the resistance movement. This represents an important and qualitative step forward, for the Palestinian resistance took part in the general development of an independent movement of the Arab masses— independent relative to the nationalist leaderships that have had hegemony since the mid-1950s. But this actual independence has not been given conscious political expression within the resistance movement, since the leadership of this movement itself originates in the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalist movement and continues that political tradition while leading the Palestinian struggle. As a result, the Palestinian resistance has generally been con-

finned within the narrow limits of an anti-Zionist perspective, propagating the illusion that the Palestinian "people's war" will suffice to liberate Palestine from Zionist colonization. Citing the national character of its struggle, it refrains from putting forward a revolutionary social program, thus precluding any possibility of mobilizing the laboring masses of Palestinian workers and peasants—as well as the Arab working masses who support the Palestinian struggle—and likewise ruling out any possibility of developing an anti-Zionist working-class movement in Israel itself.

This policy of the Palestinian resistance movement's official leadership explains the defeat suffered by the Palestinian people's armed movement, beginning in 1970 in Jordan, and its gradual strangulation by the Lebanese regime. But at the same time, and independently of all existing leaderships, the rise of the Arab mass movement did not come to a halt but continued inexorably, attaining new heights in Egypt. This upswing is the result of a combination of deep economic and social crisis in the bourgeois Arab regimes and the growing political weight of the so-called neither-war-nor-peace situation resulting from the Arab defeat of 1967.

The Arab regimes launched the October 1973 war to check this upswing and destroy its effect as a political catalyst. They were trying to restore their nationalist facade, which has steadily eroded since 1967, and to provoke the intervention of the great powers, mainly American imperialism. The Arab bourgeoisies know that Washington is the only power capable of exerting effective pressure to obtain an Israeli retreat from the territories occupied since 1967. At the same time, the Arab regimes are closing their ranks under the patronage of Saudi Arabia, the direct tool of American imperialism.

Today the Washington-sponsored liquidation of the Arab peoples' struggle against Zionism—known as the "peaceful solution"—is well under way. The official leadership of the Palestinian resistance has taken a decisive step toward total degeneration by expressing its desire to participate in the diplomatic settlement. It is obvious to genuine revolutionists and anti-Zionists that all the proposed formulas for a settlement—the Hussein plan for a Hashemite federation as well as the plan for a Palestinian ministate—are nothing less than liquidationist proposals.

The application of a "peaceful solution," no matter what the variant, will create a political situation comparable to the national humiliation of the Arab regimes in 1948. As a result, it will favor the long-term development of a genuinely revolutionary movement of the Arab masses that can only be more far-reaching than its predecessors because all the nationalist leaderships, even the most radical ones,

have been discredited and because the deepened social crisis more and more injects class consciousness into the revolutionary national struggle. A new page of the Arab revolution is being turned, a page in which revolutionary Marxist militants will have to lay the foundation for the revolutionary communist party that will lead the Arab socialist revolution. That is a task that only the Fourth International is capable of carrying out.

In *Black Africa*, thirteen years of neocolonial independence have led to a deepening of the economic crisis that is exacerbating the social and political contradictions. Industrialization, though limited and weak, has given rise to a young and stable proletariat that is more and more asserting itself in struggles such as the one at the M'Bao refinery in Senegal, the Donala strikes in Cameroon, and the strikes in Mauritania or the demonstrations in the Congo. There is also a radicalization among the student youth (Senegal, Madagascar, Ghana, Niger, etc.). Finally, and to a similar extent, the peasant masses have been drawn into the radicalization (Madagascar in 1971, Chad, Nigeria, etc.).

The petty bourgeoisie involved in managing the imperialists' holdings has undergone an accelerated differentiation over the last thirteen years. A certain stratum has been able to establish an initial accumulation of capital through patronage from the state apparatus. Although the economic sectors in which this African capital is developing remain marginal and secondary, this differentiation within the ruling class produces political conflicts that aggravate the chronic political instability of these regimes. The African bourgeoisie remains economically and politically incapable of throttling the mass upsurge despite the growing use of repression. In this context, a new revolutionary generation is taking shape, a generation that is drawing lessons from the defeats of the nationalist movements and taking up the task of building revolutionary Marxist cadres.

The liberation struggles in the countries dominated by a white minority—and especially those struggles unfolding in the Portuguese colonies—play an important role in the radicalization of all African youth.

Apart from the political lessons these struggles point to, there is also the strategic and economic importance Southern Africa and the Cape Verde Islands have for imperialism. Imperialism has extended diplomatic, economic, and military support to Portugal in exchange for Lisbon's growing concessions with respect to participation in the pillage of the colonies. Too weak economically to support a war effort of this scope, Portugal has to accept in particular the intervention of South Africa, the region's strong link in the chain of imperialism. The keystone of this alliance is to be found in such eco-

nomic and military projects as the Cabora-Bassa dam or the Kunene project.

However, Guinea-Bissau's declaration of independence and the progress that has been made by the MPLA [Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola—Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola] and Frelimo [Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique—Mozambique Liberation Front] pose political and strategic problems whose solution will determine the future of these struggles. When push comes to shove, the centrifugal forces may become stronger or weaker, depending on the influence of various contradictory factors.

In the context of the imperialist powers' readjustment of their strategy in Southern Africa, the furtherance of the process of permanent revolution through internationalizing the conflict in the entire region can only be carried out on the basis of a clarification within the MPLA and Frelimo (revolutionary nationalist movements holding a multiclass concept) as regards the pace of development of the world revolution, and as regards the situation in central Africa. Victories in Angola and Mozambique will thus take place within the broader framework of a revolutionary crisis in all of Southern Africa, and of a sweeping new rise of the African revolution. In Guinea-Bissau, the most important evolution in the situation in the recent period concerns the changes the liberated zones underwent with the election of the People's National Assembly, which was the principal factor in the proclamation of an independent state. However, the absence of a clear formulation on the social nature of the Guinean state, the pressure from the neighboring states and the Soviet Union, and the multiclass perspective of the PAIGC [Partido Africano da Independencia da Guine-Bissau e Cabo Verde—African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde] constitute major obstacles to the possibilities of definitively overthrowing capitalism in that country unless an indispensable political clarification and differentiation takes place. The isolation of this struggle and the weakness of international support partially account for the danger of the PAIGC's falling back on the myth of the "national-democratic state on a noncapitalist path." Under these conditions, the revolutionary struggles in all the Portuguese colonies deserve consistent internationalist support from revolutionary Marxists.

The new relationship of forces created by the heroic struggle of the Indochinese people is gradually spreading across all *South Asia*. The political defeat experienced by American imperialism, a defeat symbolized by the forced withdrawal of its troops from Indochina, represents a harsh blow for the anticommunist regimes in Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and South Korea, regimes that have founded and maintained their dictatorships on the

basis of military, political, and economic backing from American imperialism. The state of emergency proclaimed in the fall of 1972 in South Korea and in the Philippines has been extended indefinitely and represents these dictatorial regimes' most recent effort to face up to the crisis.

When Japanese imperialism stepped up its neocolonial exploitation of this region in an effort to fill the vacuum created by the weakening of U.S. imperialism, this in turn accelerated an explosion in the radicalization of the workers, poor peasants, and laboring masses.

The October 1973 revolt in Thailand, which overthrew the Thanom-Prapas military dictatorship; the struggle of the South Korean masses against Park and against Japanese imperialism, which was set off by the kidnapping of Kim Dae Jung by the South Korean CIA in Japan and lasted from October to December 1973; the anti-Japanese riots in Indonesia at the time of Tanaka's visit there—all of these events show that the crisis in East Asia has entered a new historic phase. The explosions of popular discontent will undoubtedly spread to the rest of these countries, above all to the Philippines.

These explosions are marked today by a nationalist political content. The task of revolutionary Marxists is to transform them into struggles that are both anti-imperialist and anticapitalist, that is, into a process of permanent revolution. The question posed is: Who is capable of organizing such a qualitative leap forward in these struggles, and with what orientation? The Maoist bureaucracy has already come out in open opposition to this new phase in the Asian peoples' struggles, as has the Soviet bureaucracy. It is thus essential that strong sections of the Fourth International be built in Asia and that the solidarity movement with the Indochinese revolution be strengthened in order to promote the struggle to overthrow the footholds of U.S. and Japanese imperialism and of the puppet regimes throughout this region.

## 8. Tragedy of Chilean Revolution

From 1970 to 1973, Chile witnessed a process of intensification of the class struggle and mass revolutionary initiatives that was in many ways the most advanced in Latin America since the victory of the Cuban revolution.

The origins of this revolutionary rise are to be found in the gradual rise in the strength of the working class and of workers organizations since 1938, owing to the fact that the Chilean bourgeoisie had to allow this movement to develop and to use it against the landowners in order to begin the process of industrialization. Despite the predominantly reformist character of the leadership of the workers movement and the resulting general acceptance of





Santiago, Chile, after Pinochet coup.

the "stages" theory of revolution, the Chilean proletariat nevertheless acquired an independent political organization that differed from similar experiences occurring during the same period in such countries as Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, etc.

The process culminated in the 1950s. A final neoindustrial bourgeois layer—the product of a shift in imperialist investments—appeared on the scene. This sector found its political expression in Frei's Christian Democracy. A few reforms were carried out—especially in the countryside—which stimulated a radicalization of important layers of the peasantry. But the effects of these reforms on the whole of Chilean society were limited. That led to a social and political class polarization that was expressed in Allende's victory in the 1970 election campaign.

This victory occurred in the context of a stormy rise in the mass movement that left the bourgeoisie with no other immediate perspective than to permit the inauguration of the Allende government. This was made easier by the fact that the Popular Unity program did not go beyond the limits of a bourgeois-democratic program of nationalizing a few key sectors—mainly those dominated by imperialism—and carrying out an agrarian reform that was bolder than Frei's. At most, the Popular Unity program held out the perspective of nationalizing a few Chilean monopolies, thus enlarging the area of state capitalism. The bourgeoisie's real fear was not over these reforms, but over the combativity of the masses. That is why it made its acceptance of the Allende government conditional on Allende's acceptance of the Statute of Democratic Guarantees, which maintained intact the entire mechanism of the bourgeois state—especially its judicial and repressive apparatus. The leaders of the Popular Unity were quick to accept these conditions and to proclaim their determination to attain socialism by the "legal" and "constitutional" road without disturbing the bourgeois state apparatus.

The working masses, however, interpreted the installation of the Allende government as signifying a favorable change in the relationship of forces. They stepped up their militancy and activity, and their pressure accelerated the implementation of the Popular Unity program. Within a year the copper mines were nationalized, many landholders were expropriated, and state control was extended to a number of private industrial enterprises.

The interaction between the stepped-up combativity of the masses and the achievement of reforms promised by the Popular Unity—reflected in particular by a rise in the standard of living of the poorest layers of the population—led to a still greater political and social polarization in Chile. Part of the Christian Democratic electorate was won over by the Popular Unity, which

received more than 50 percent of the votes in the April 1971 municipal elections. Another part went over to the extreme right. It was clear that the time for bourgeois-democratic reforms had passed, that a socialist revolution was on the agenda, and that in response to the revolutionary upsurge, feverish preparations for the counterrevolution were under way.

There was no agreement among the bourgeoisie on the methods to be used. The Christian Democracy launched a counter-offensive in the courts and parliament aimed at forcing the Allende government to repress the mass movement and to place strict limits on the part of the economy that had been wrested from private ownership. American imperialism organized a halt to international credit and a de facto blockade of the Chilean economy. The pressure of the working class, its encroachments on private property, and the government's hesitation to approve the revolutionary action of the masses—or rather its paralysis before the bourgeois threats—disrupted the productive apparatus and accentuated the economic crisis. Chilean employers encouraged runaway inflation, the sabotage of investments, and the organization of a black market. The right and the far right organized terrorist gangs and openly called for a military dictatorship.

Faced with this general offensive by the bourgeoisie, the Popular Unity government remained a prisoner of its concept of a "constitutional road toward socialism" and its criminal illusions about "the armed forces' respect for the constitution." It lost the initiative and began to retreat. It began to repress the masses, who were seizing the land and occupying the factories. The economic apparatus became paralyzed. Production, which had increased significantly in 1970, stagnated and declined.

The masses, however, refused to accept these retreats and continued to take action. They took the initiative of organizing numerous street demonstrations, notably in Concepcion, where the attempt to create a Popular Assembly led in the direction of forming an alternative leadership. When the bourgeoisie launched the truck owners strike in October 1972 and the government made new concessions, the proletariat took an enormous leap forward. It began to build its own organs of power—the *cordones industriales* [assemblies of rank-and-file workers in a local industrial concentration] and the *comandos comunales* [community commands]. At that moment the situation in Chile ceased to be merely prerevolutionary. Elements of dual power appeared. The Chilean revolution had begun.

The Popular Unity leaders' response to the increased polarization between revolution and counterrevolution was to ask representatives of the army to enter the

government as arbitrators. The Stalinist and reformist leaders thus directly opened the road toward the September 1973 counterrevolution. By hailing the "neutrality" of the bourgeois army, by themselves connecting the army with the government, by permitting the vote on the arms-control law that allowed the army to carry out searches in the factories and working-class neighborhoods, the Popular Unity leaders created the ideal psychological, political, and technical conditions for preparing the military coup. The myth of the "legal road to socialism" led directly to the "legal road to counterrevolution."

The upsurge in the mass movement, however, continued with increasing vigor. In the face of economic sabotage by the bourgeoisie, the government found itself compelled to "legalize" an increasing number of factory occupations and take-overs. At the same time, the JAPs [Juntas de Abastecimiento y Control de Precios—Supply and Price Control Boards] began to appear, and instances of workers control were extended and increased. Dual power took on a more precise form throughout the country.

In these conditions of extreme polarization and growing economic difficulties the Popular Unity still won 43 percent of the vote in the March 1973 parliamentary elections. This should not be interpreted as proof of mass support for Allende's reformist policy but rather as an expression of the will of the masses to defend their conquests, to eliminate the judicial and parliamentary obstacles with which the bourgeoisie continually blocked their initiatives, and to confront the counterrevolutionary threats of the bourgeoisie, including in the electoral arena. At the same time, the scope of the masses' extraparliamentary actions continued to increase, reflected in a growing differentiation within the Popular Unity itself.

A right-wing pole formed around the Communist party, the right wing of the Socialist party, MAPU-Gazmuri [Movimiento de Accion Popular Unitaria—Movement for United Popular Action], and the Radical party; a confused and contradictory left took shape around certain currents of the SP, the MAPU-Gareton, and the Christian left. The Chilean SP played a peculiar role within this framework. A sui generis "mass centrist party," its leadership (Altamirano) made use of radical language without doing anything to back it up with action, while the rank and file sought empirically for a revolutionary solution. Outside the Popular Unity, on the other hand, the MIR [Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria—Movement of the Revolutionary Left], despite its political limitations (centrism, ambiguity in regard to the Popular Unity, etc.), played a dynamic role alongside other political forces both inside and outside the Popular Unity through its "mass



fronts," by occupying land and factories, and by criticizing reformist illusions about "the peaceful path toward socialism."

The CP took a far-right position in the Popular Unity. Its attempt to return to private ownership the factories seized by the workers in October 1972 (the Milles project) provoked a violent reaction by the left wing of the SP and the MAPU. The initiative passed more and more from the hands of the Popular Unity parties to the cordones industriales, but the latter lacked centralization. The absence of a revolutionary party—a party capable of unifying the forces of the workers and the other laboring masses who instinctively wanted to carry through to completion the process of socialist revolution that was already under way—was cruelly felt. Without such a party even the most daring actions of the working class remained diffuse and insufficient for taking decisive initiatives at the level of state power.

This was shown more clearly during the first, unsuccessful military coup of June 29, 1973, which revealed that thousands of workers in the main centers of the country were ready to fight, arms in hand, against the rising counterrevolution. But the enormous combativity of these forces was dispersed in frequent clashes with small gangs of reactionary shock troops during the numerous new occupations of factories and in the attempts to arm the rank and file. In the absence of centralized organizational structures, they were unable to assemble the necessary forces to stand up against the September coup, which was prepared in close cooperation with imperialism.

The bourgeoisie, far from dividing into disparate factions, sought to reunite its forces. Nevertheless, the extraordinary power of the workers movement undermined the bourgeoisie's base of power by developing its own organs of power, thus preventing the bourgeoisie from attaining its objective through the "normal" political channels. That is why the bourgeois army, the last bastion of bourgeois power left intact, had to enter the scene to carry through what the bourgeois parties were incapable of attaining.

The feeling that the decisive confrontation was imminent only led Allende and the leaders of the CP once again to make sorry attempts to reach a conciliation with the Christian Democracy. New and criminal concessions were made to the putschist officers. These included tolerating the officers' repression of the sailors at the Valparaiso arsenal who had begun to denounce the preparations for the putsch. The differentiation within Popular Unity became sharper still, leading virtually to its disintegration on the eve of the putsch. Thus, with the disintegration of the old reformist leadership and the delay in the formation of a new revolutionary leadership, a vacuum was created

in the leadership of the proletariat. This vacuum made it easier to carry out the coup by decreasing the possibility for an immediate, centralized response by the masses.

The putsch confirms once more the rule formulated by Trotsky in *Lessons of October*. When there is a revolutionary situation in a country, when a decisive test of strength between the classes is in the offing, the side capable of taking the initiative in the struggle for power gains a decisive advantage. The relationship of forces can be transformed in twenty-four hours. That is what happened in Chile.

The ferocity and cruelty of the Chilean counterrevolution, which call to mind the Versailles [the counterrevolutionary forces that defeated the Commune in 1871], the Franco regime, and the Indonesian hangmen of 1965, can be explained by the depth of the preceding process and indicate the degree to which the bourgeoisie feared losing power. The counterrevolution goes further than anything Latin America has known since the time of the Mexican revolution, and, in its own way, is a tribute to the revolutionary ardor and combativity of the Chilean proletariat. At the same time, however, it constitutes a no less eloquent indictment of the criminal policy of the Chilean CP and SP leaders who wasted that enormous potential and led the Chilean masses into a tragic and bloody defeat.

This indictment must have a clear central axis. It would be completely out of place to make the presence of bourgeois political groupings inside the Popular Unity or the presence of bourgeois ministers within the Allende government the axis of our criticism of the Popular Unity. Neither objectively, nor subjectively in the eyes of the masses, could the presence of these insignificant political forces be considered an excuse for the compromises and the successive capitulations of the Stalinist and reformist leaders. Such a criticism leads to slogans like "Out with the bourgeois ministers," or "For a CP-SP government," but in the eyes of the masses the Allende regime was already such a government. They in no way saw it as a coalition government with the bourgeoisie. They did not need a new experience to understand the bankruptcy of *working-class reformism*. This was already spread out before their eyes. Our indictment of the Popular Unity leaders should be focused precisely on this bankruptcy of reformism, the bankruptcy of the "peaceful and legal roads to socialism," the reactionary utopianism that says it wants to free the masses from capitalist exploitation by leaving intact the bourgeois state and its repressive apparatus.

The central slogans revolutionaries should have fought for among the masses

in the crucial months before the putsch correspond to this analysis and critique. These slogans should have been: Build the organs of dual power everywhere—the cordones, the JAPs, the commandos comunales—with regional and local centralization; Call a national congress of these councils; Spread workers control throughout the entire economy; For the seizure of hoarded food and merchandise by the JAPs, to be distributed under workers control; For the completion of the agrarian reform; For the elaboration of an overall socialist plan to overcome the economic catastrophe organized by imperialism and the Chilean bourgeoisie; For the general arming of workers and poor peasants; For the formation of a central command of workers and peasants militias; For the disarming and dismantling of the reactionary officer caste. The central governmental slogan should have been "All power to a national congress of the cordones, the JAPs, and the commandos."

In this situation, the appropriate initiatives for a united front between the revolutionary Marxists, the MIR, and the left wings of the SP and the MAPU were those that would have speeded the achievement of such a program of action—a program on which the fate of the Chilean revolution depended.

The serious defeat experienced by the Chilean workers movement and working class has important ramifications. It is premature, however, to see it in the same light as the defeat of the German proletariat in 1933 or of the Indonesian masses in 1965. Everything still depends on the international context, on the possibility for new revolutionary upsurges in neighboring countries to win important victories, on the vanguard's capacity to regroup its forces, organize the resistance, and give confidence to the masses with a banner and a program unstained by the Popular Unity experience. The growing economic difficulties the junta is encountering and the renewal of economic struggles by the masses can favor this perspective. The CP's ultrareformist perspective of forming a bloc with the "left" Christian Democracy undoubtedly hinders it.

The right-wing orientation of the Stalinists, and the near disintegration of the SP, the MAPU-Gareton, and the Christian left, make the MIR today an important axis of the revolutionary resistance to the junta. While continuing to differentiate themselves politically and organizationally from the MIR, revolutionary Marxists in Chile should consider it to be one of their central tasks to carry out united-front activities with it, with the aim of forming a credible pole in opposition to the recalcitrant, capitulationist, and paralyzing reformists.

## II. Deepening Crisis of the Bureaucratic Regimes in the Bureaucratized Workers States

### 9. The Contradictions of Economic Reforms in the USSR and the People's Democracies

On the whole, the economic difficulties encountered in different degrees and at different rates in the "people's democracies" and the USSR stem from one central factor: the impossibility of running an increasingly complex planned economy in a highly industrialized country without a system of democratic and centralized management in which the major decisions are made by the workers themselves and applied and adjusted under their control.

The monopolization of management tasks by a privileged bureaucratic layer—a layer that subordinates the collective interest to the defense of its own privileges and to the power on which these privileges are based—causes immense waste and constant imbalances in the economic development of the bureaucratized workers states. Periodically, this wastefulness and these disproportions cause declines in the rate of growth that lead to difficulties in supply and threaten what has been the regime's main safety valve since Stalin's death: the nearly constant, even if modest, increase in the masses' standard of living.

The hybrid combination of different forms of planning, of bureaucratic centralization and decentralization through the vehicle of the market—without the mass of workers having any real possibility of democratic control and inspection over the establishment and execution of the plan, the level of supplies, and the flow of production—tends in general to substitute a number of new contradictions for those that each reform seeks to alleviate. In place of the Stalin era's "narrow self-centeredness of the factory" (i.e., of the bureaucrats on the factory level, whose privileges depended on the realization of the plan in physical quantities), the Khrushchev reforms substituted "regional self-centeredness" within the *sovnrkhozi* [state farms]. The Liberman reforms reintroduced "self-centeredness of the factory" without seriously increasing the effectiveness of the bureaucrats' management. The latter's revenues were tied to "profit" but they were unable to set prices or modify the total amount of wages.

The main contradictions of the various attempts at reforms have appeared at two levels: On the one hand, all decentralization based on strengthening the laws of the market, all attempts to make factories

"profitable" in the context of the laws of the market, and all increases in the factory managers' decision-making power aimed at encouraging "profitability," have led—as their central consequence—to attacks on the working class's job security and standard of living. This is all the more true inasmuch as such reforms are generally accompanied by a certain "liberalization" of prices that in point of fact ends up in an immediate increase in the cost of social services, housing, transport, and consumer goods—costs formerly kept rather low by administrative decree. Here the application of these reforms has collided with the reactions of the workers, who defend their working and living conditions against obvious attempts to worsen them.

The second contradiction of the reforms is bound up with the relative political liberalization they impose, at least at the level of the technical and scientific intelligentsia, whose support and initiatives the bureaucracy seeks in order to apply the reforms. The example of Czechoslovakia testifies to the grave dangers that threaten the central political bureaucracy once "liberalization" begins to have repercussions in the society as a whole and stimulates not only the aspirations of the intelligentsia, but also demands for workers democracy at all levels.

In the face of these contradictions, there is no single response from the bureaucracies of the different Eastern European countries. It all depends, at any given time, on the degree of autonomy attained by the technocratic layers that develop as a by-product of the reform, on the previous traditions of the working class and how organized and conscious it may be, and on the scope of opposition from the intellectuals. In every case, the bureaucracy is essentially concerned with keeping the opposition by the intellectuals from affecting the working class, basically by preventing these movements from linking up with each other. To accomplish this, the bureaucracy plays on a number of factors, including attempts to corrupt the intelligentsia through economic privileges and certain political privileges (travel, a certain freedom of expression); propaganda oriented toward the working class aimed at provoking workers' hostility toward privileged students; economic concessions to the workers, combined with

the development of a "consumer society" ideology aimed at sidetracking workers from asking questions about the government; and fierce political repression against all attempts at organized opposition, using amalgams and other well-known police methods. The weight assigned to the use of this or that factor depends upon the situation.

Since the early 1960s, the economy of the *Soviet Union* has been in a continual crisis. Despite the good harvest of 1973 and massive investments in agriculture, the agricultural sector remains vulnerable and low in productivity. This permanent crisis is reflected in declining growth rates in heavy industry (especially noticeable in the sphere of consumer goods); by a crisis in investments (a great number of uncompleted industrial projects); and by an insufficient growth in productivity, which is related to a growing technological lag in comparison with the Western countries. The bureaucracy has thereby revealed its incapacity to ensure the transition from extensive to intensive development, and to reverse the traditional order of priority between means of production and consumer goods.

Given these characteristics, the crisis of the Soviet economy is essentially a crisis of underproduction—not overproduction, which is the type of crisis the capitalist economies suffer from periodically. The bureaucracy has made various efforts at reform without getting to the real roots of the crisis. The Liberman reform, which was launched with caution, was quickly halted when it became clear that these measures gave rise to phenomena that were getting out of the control of the central bureaucracy.

Confronted with the same problems that it faced ten years ago, the bureaucracy is today searching for a way out through collaboration with the most powerful capitalist country. Of course, the rapprochement with the United States is also explained by other factors, especially political ones: the Soviet bureaucracy's desire to slow down the dynamic of the Indochinese revolution and to prevent it from accelerating the revolutionary process in all of Southeast Asia; the desire to "neutralize" imperialism, indeed to obtain its tacit support, in the event of a possible military conflict with China.

But the rapprochement with the United States can be considered the equivalent of a new economic reform. The Soviet bureaucracy hopes to gain two advantages that will break through the bottlenecks that are retarding economic growth



in important areas: help in overcoming its technological backwardness with respect to the imperialist countries in certain sectors (the automotive, electronic, and chemical industries); and help in obtaining the investment capital necessary for accelerating the economic development of Siberia. Since agricultural production barely suffices for feeding the country, and since industrial consumer goods are not of the quality necessary to be sold on a sufficient scale in the West, the sole massive compensation that the Kremlin can offer for large-scale imports of machinery produced in the imperialist countries is the export of raw materials. This kind of export corresponds, moreover, with the present needs of the international capitalist economy and creates the objective basis for the present rapprochement in trade.

But the scope of these East-West exchanges should not be exaggerated. The Soviet raw-material resources available for export to the imperialist countries on the short or medium term are limited, and this restricts the export of commodities from the capitalist countries to the USSR. This trade will not account for more than a few percentage points of the total foreign trade of the imperialist countries, i.e., a negligible fraction of their national product.

Genuine penetration of the USSR by American and international capital would confront objective difficulties no matter what the subjective intentions of the bureaucracy are. The reasons for this are inherent in the noncapitalist social structures of the Soviet Union. Unless there is a complete capitulation of the bureaucracy to the imperialists' demands—which is completely improbable given the social nature of the bureaucracy—the accords between the USSR and the United States will therefore remain on a very small scale. In any event, they will never resolve the structural contradictions of the Soviet economy.

From the political standpoint, Brezhnev's current line of presenting economic collaboration with the imperialist countries as a panacea for all the defects from which the economy is suffering, is at any rate quite hazardous. This policy has already provoked deep dissension in the top layers of the bureaucracy, where there is a faction that is more or less openly up in arms against the "sellout of national resources." Moreover, the hopes for a rapid rise in the standard of living that this policy may give rise to among the masses are liable to be quickly shattered. This in turn may sooner or later give rise to serious discontent.

An "ideological clampdown" and systematic repression against oppositionists represent the bureaucratic response to present difficulties. At the same time, the leader-

ship team is striving to reintroduce economic reforms. The most recent is the formation of large "industrial trusts" endowed with significant power while at the same time being more closely linked to the central bureaucracy than the previous economic units.

However, the bureaucracy will think twice before launching a frontal attack on such working-class gains as job security. Thus, for example, the Ochechino experiment, which anticipated setting the overall wage base without regard to the number of workers and was intended to encourage the factory managers to "rationalize" their use of labor power, has not been adopted as quickly as the bureaucracy wished because of pressure from the workers.

The logical consequences of economic reform have appeared most clearly in the "people's democracies." Aided by the defeat of the working class in 1956, the Hungarian bureaucracy was the first to take the plunge into reform. Nowhere else (with the exception of Yugoslavia) has the attempt at reform gone so far; nowhere else has it lasted so long. From this point of view, the Hungarian economic reforms can be considered a model whose lessons are being studied attentively in the neighboring countries. Applied fully during the 1960s, the economic reforms first benefited from the slack provided by an unbalanced economy—the essential characteristic of this lack of balance being a shortage in the most essential consumer goods, coupled with massive investment in heavy industry. If at first the reforms succeeded in satisfying the masses' needs for consumer goods, they very quickly led to contradictions that boded ill for maintaining the social and political status quo.

By favoring a widening of wage differentials, relaxing control over certain professional activities (the liberal professions and the crafts), permitting certain "real prices" (especially where they benefited the peasantry), and relieving the state of responsibility for certain social investments (notably housing), the Hungarian reform unleashed a powerful process of social differentiation. The principal victim of this process was the working class, whose standard of living came nowhere near increasing at the same pace as that of other layers of the population (technicians, peasants, privately employed artisans, and doctors). While the resistance of the working class has not been expressed directly through an appreciable increase in the number of strikes, it has taken form more specifically among the working-class youth, whose many forms of resistance and revolt testify to their profound distrust of the regime.

In the last analysis, the evolution of the situation will depend on the political

choices made by the bureaucracy. In any case, there is no doubt that if the bureaucracy decides to continue the process of economic reform, it will at the same time be compelled to intensify repression against all the discontent aroused by these reforms. That is a very dangerous road to follow, however, because it can revive unfortunate memories in the consciousness of the masses in return for uncertain results. The Polish events of December 1970 showed clearly that the possibility of a working-class explosion with all its corresponding risks can never be completely dismissed. It is this fear of another Polish December that determines the bureaucracy's present policy and introduces deep cleavages within its ranks. Under the pressure of the "orthodox" elements most sensitive to the danger, an important step backward has already been made in the application of economic reforms. The economic reform today is at a crossroads. The future resistance of the working class is the factor that will determine either its second wind or its death.

The economic reform the bureaucracy is beginning to apply today in Poland is the second attempt—this time much more cautious—in that direction since the serious failure of the first reform of 1956-57.

To remedy the catastrophic situation that developed in the consumer goods market during the 1966-70 five-year plan, the Polish bureaucracy attempted to reestablish "real prices" in December 1970. This approach consisted of a 30 percent increase in the price of basic provisions and a lowering of the price of luxury items, thus representing an attack on the living standards of working-class families.

The workers revolt of December 1970 was a direct response to this attempt at economic reform. Faced with the upsurge of mass struggle on the Baltic coast and in the industrial center of Lodz, and with the continuing mobilization of the working class, the Gierak team had to consent to a number of important concessions to the main social layers. These concessions tended at the same time to introduce divisions between the intelligentsia and the other social layers. These measures were accompanied by propaganda for an individualistic, typically petty-bourgeois consumerist ideal that emphasized and justified the social inequalities.

All these facts—which are linked to a real but limited increase in the standard of living of the working class, and to the hopes of the technocratic layers for an improvement in the economic situation through the application of the new reform—have contributed to an increase in the Polish bureaucracy's margin for maneuver, giving it breathing room without, however, resolving a single one of these fundamental contradictions.



Aftermath of 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary.

December 23, 1974



## 10. The Antibureaucratic Opposition Movements in the USSR and the People's Democracies

The interaction between the deepening of the objective contradictions, the growing differentiation within the apparatus, and the entry of the masses into action, has in each case been the mechanism determining a loss of control by the bureaucracy over entire social groups (workers, students, intellectuals). It was not, in general, the working class that first went into action (except in the German Democratic Republic in 1953 and Poland in 1970). The movements of intellectuals are generally ambiguous and often serve as a vehicle not only for demands moving in the direction of socialist democracy but also for demands of economic "liberalization" and "rationalization" that may express the preoccupations and material interests of the technocratic wing of the bureaucracy, interests that are clearly hostile to the class interests of the proletariat and resented as such by it. Where the influence of Stalinism has been the greatest, Marxism has been the more discredited as a "state religion" in the eyes of the critical youth, ideological confusion has become deeper, and reactionary tendencies are more able to emerge within the intelligentsia and other oppositional layers alongside tendencies that are genuinely communist and close to revolutionary Marxism.

As soon as broad working masses move into action, however, it is not confused ideological motivations but objective class interests that determine the social nature of their movement. Nowhere has the proletariat shown the slightest inclination to demand that the factories it built at the price of enormous sacrifices be ceded or sold to private owners, or to support demands tending in that direction on the part of other social groups. Nowhere has it called for broader rights for the factory directors or for the supervisory personnel. Nor does it call for a spread in the range of salaries or a growth in social inequality. Apart from improvements on the level of consumption, including housing, leisure time, holidays, and social benefits, the fundamental tendency of these demands focuses on the democratization of the structures of power and planning.

*The events in Poland since 1970* mark a rebirth, still exceptional at this mass level, of proletarian activity.

After the revolt of 1970, the persistence of working-class combativity was the determining factor in the Polish political situation. During the December 1970 strikes, the Polish working class formulated the elements of a political platform. Its demands—e.g., for the cancellation of price increases, real autonomy for organs of workers control, elimination of wage inequalities between workers and bureaucrats in the factories, accurate news re-

porting—demonstrate its political maturity and its capacity to organize itself (consider, for example, the important role played by the strike committees).

The struggles of 1970 resulted in a partial victory; the freezing of food prices and the change in the ruling group in Poland were seen by the working class as a result of its mobilization. The strikes that occurred later (the Silesian-Rybnik miners, the Lodz textile workers) show that important sectors of the working class have become aware of their strength. It is in the wake of the preventive strikes of 1972 that the price freeze was maintained. The bureaucracy, however, has not made any concessions to the workers' political demands. By way of contrast, certain concessions to the intelligentsia (higher wages, but also possibilities for trips abroad) were aimed at defusing their demands.

The intelligentsia, which in March 1968 waged an isolated struggle for freedom of expression and was muzzled by repression, did not support the workers struggles of 1970. Nevertheless certain signs, such as the hostile reactions of the student milieu to the government's tightening of the reins on the youth organizations in 1973, are evidence of new possibilities for struggles in this milieu.

*Some recent signs of a renewal*—though still partial—of working-class activity in the Soviet Union should also be stressed. The discontent of the Soviet working class has primarily been centered on questions of low wages, poor living conditions, price increases, and the harsh regime in the factories. Still unable to organize itself in trade unions or other independent organizations, and still lacking a real possibility of expressing its class interests, the Soviet working class has seemingly remained passive.

Any form of organized opposition around generalized demands is obviously difficult in the context of a factory regime that maintains detailed files on each worker, where each worker must carry a "labor book" that records job changes and work-related incidents, where a broad system of informers on the shop floor keeps the secret police constantly informed of opinions expressed by each worker, and where every attempt at organized opposition is met with savage repression.

Under these conditions, a large part of working-class opposition takes the form of an opposition of despair, expressed through individual actions such as widespread alcoholism, industrial sabotage, a high level of absenteeism, and shoddy industrial production. The dozens of strikes and other forms of open working-class protest that have occurred recently have remained localized actions, easily isolated

and repressed, even though they indicate what can be expected in the future.

*In Hungary*, where there is great distrust on the part of the workers, political manifestations of the young intelligentsia's radicalization have been the striking features of the recent period. Unmarked by the defeat of 1956, not neutralized by the state stipends that bought off their elders, and stirred by their awareness of the social inequalities stemming from the economic reforms, the young intelligentsia has been at the root of all the political movements challenging the regime over the past few years. It has had the support of high-school students (the illegal demonstration in front of the Greek Embassy in 1971, the spray-painting of the names of Che and Marx on the walls of Budapest in 1970) and of college students (the independent movement in support of the Vietnamese revolution in 1968-69). In particular, it was the force behind the March 15, 1972, demonstration that brought out 2,000 people to honor the memory of [Alexander] Petofi [a poet active in the 1848 revolution]. This young intelligentsia, certain currents of which define their opposition in the light of Marxism, is today the main target of bureaucratic repression. After having tried different methods of repression, the bureaucracy now seems to have decided to take more energetic action, including court prosecutions and police frame-ups.

*In the Soviet Union*, the antibureaucratic struggle has essentially been the work of the intelligentsia, through a left-wing Marxist current that stresses the role of the working class and through the movement for democratic rights. The former has been severely repressed (Grigorenko, etc.). The intelligentsia's isolation, both subjectively and objectively, from the working class is one of the main reasons for its current setbacks. Born of the hopes raised by the twentieth party congress, the civil-rights movement succeeded in mobilizing broad layers of the intelligentsia around such demands as freedom of speech, press, artistic creation, and assembly, as well as respect for the constitution. Through semilegal activities—open letters, petitions, and even demonstrations—it has emerged as the first antibureaucratic opposition movement in the USSR to go beyond the framework of small clandestine circles and, in 1967-69, to win a somewhat wider audience. The absence of a link with more important mass movements—the Soviet working class has displayed relative passivity since the Novocherkassk uprisings in 1962—explains why the intellectual oppositionist current found itself disarmed after 1969, when the bureaucracy began to apply a policy of systematic repression. However, this isolation is also explained by other factors: on the one hand, by the bureaucracy's policy of attempting to isolate the

intelligentsia by erecting a barrier of distrust between the intelligentsia and the working class; on the other hand, by the fact that the demands for civil rights were formulated in such a way that they fundamentally expressed the interests of the intelligentsia as a social layer while ignoring the economic and social rights of the working class and other layers of the population. This latter factor can be explained by the intelligentsia's rather acerbic assessment of the working class's passivity.

In the Soviet Union, where nearly half the population is non-Russian, the national question continues to represent a deep and explosive contradiction, as the riots in Lithuania in 1972 indicate. The national movements in the USSR involve nations that are in different stages of development, have radically different pasts, put forward quite different demands, and vary no less in strength than in their political

character.

In Ukraine and the Baltic republics (the most developed non-Russian republics) the past decade has witnessed the rise of a powerful opposition that includes industrial and agricultural workers in its ranks. The various currents that make up this opposition have put forward demands for democratic self-government in the republics, for the restoration of their national languages as official languages of public administration, for an end to Great Russian chauvinism, and for independent socialist republics.

The struggle to reestablish Leninist norms in the national question is a central task of the political revolution. The demand for self-determination for the non-Russian nationalities, and in particular the demand for an independent socialist Ukraine, is a democratic demand that deserves the support of all revolutionary socialists.

## 11. The Political Crisis in the People's Republic of China

The political crisis that is shaking the Chinese bureaucracy has now lasted nearly fifteen years (since the Lushan Central Committee meeting of the Chinese CP). The ups and downs of this crisis—a crisis caused by the objective problems of beginning to build socialism in a country as backward and as agricultural as China was, by the complication of these problems resulting from the dictatorship of the bureaucracy, by the different solutions to these problems that different factions of the bureaucracy have advanced, and by the entry of vast social forces into action, the relations among them, and their relations with different factions of the bureaucracy—have today led to a situation in which the bureaucratic degeneration of the Chinese revolution has reached a higher level than in the previous stage. Without giving unwarranted credit to the more "left" faction of Lin Piao and Chen Po-ta, it is necessary to stress that it has above all been since the fall of this faction (1970-71) that the conservative features have become generalized in the foreign, domestic, and economic policy of the Chinese regime, features already visible in some respects since the phase of liquidation of the "Cultural Revolution": a spectacular right turn in Chinese foreign policy (Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Iran, Spain, etc.), culminating in Nixon's visit to Peking; reestablishment of a policy centered on "material incentives" in agriculture; reestablishment of the principle of "individual profitability of enterprises" in industry; new accentuation of inequality in wages, which had been reduced during the "Cultural Revolution"; and so on. This impression is confirmed by the return to their former positions in the CCP

apparatus of many old bureaucrats who were detested by the masses for their abuse of power and for the privileges they had amassed during the period from 1949 to 1965, and who were removed during the "Cultural Revolution." Their return was symbolized by the reentry of Teng Hsiao-ping and his associates into the CCP Central Committee.

Of course, to use the term "bureaucratic degeneration" in regard to the Chinese revolution, by analogy with its application by Trotsky to the Russian revolution, requires numerous adjustments. In contrast to the October socialist revolution, the Chinese socialist revolution gave birth, from the beginning, to a workers state that was bureaucratically deformed to an incomparably greater extent than the USSR in the epoch of Lenin and Trotsky. The proletariat in China never directly exercised power by means of soviets. In contrast to the bureaucratic degeneration of the USSR, the bureaucratic degeneration of the People's Republic of China does not thus involve a political expropriation of the proletariat following a political counterrevolution, a Thermidor, but rather an accentuation, first quantitative then qualitative, of the phenomena of bureaucratization.

In another sense, the bureaucratic degeneration of the USSR was the product of an uninterrupted process of ebbing in political activity by the proletariat and of strengthening of the privileged bureaucratic layer, stretching over a dozen years. In the People's Republic of China, on the other hand, the political activity of the proletariat, which had been extremely limited during and after the revolution of

1946-49, became a significant factor for the first time in 1956-57 during the Hundred Flowers movement. A second, much more pronounced rise in proletarian political activity took place in 1965-68, during the ascending phase of the "Cultural Revolution," which reduced the material privileges of the bureaucracy and, in general, the social inequalities in the country. It is all these specific features that give the term "bureaucratic degeneration," when applied to the Chinese revolution, a precise meaning: the breakthrough, if not the triumph, of socially conservative tendencies; the affirmation of the legitimacy of new material privileges; the justification of a policy of class collaboration with imperialism and with factions of the possessing classes in power in the semicolonial countries, under the cover of the need to "maneuver" among the various adversaries of the People's Republic of China. All this testifies to the existence of a bureaucratic layer whose common political interests are asserted particularly against the "anarchist and egalitarian excesses" of the left wing of the Red Guards.

The imperialists' change in attitude toward the People's Republic of China, first shown by European and Japanese imperialism in the 1960s, then by American imperialism in the early 1970s, greatly contributed to putting the Chinese bureaucracy definitively on the road of "peaceful coexistence," in the same way that the changing attitude of the international bourgeoisie toward the USSR, beginning with the Laval-Stalin military declaration, definitively settled the adherence of the Kremlin to the international status quo. The radicalism of Maoism in the 1960s was not solely verbal, but real, as was the case of the ultraleft radicalism of the Kremlin in the Third Period. The passing over to a policy of international collaboration with imperialism corresponds in the two cases to both a new stage of international policies and to a new stage of conservatism of a consolidated bureaucracy.

As for the relationship of forces with the masses, it remains more unfavorable for the Maoist bureaucracy than it was for the Soviet bureaucracy. There is neither apathy nor terror on a large scale in the People's Republic of China today, as was the case in the USSR in the epoch of Stalin. Since Mao, in an alliance with the Lin Piao/Chen Po-ta group, had already played the card of politicization, the present Mao/Chou En-lai leadership is now trying to widen its base by modest increases in the standard of living of the masses. The turn to the right runs up against, and will run up against, political reactions within the youth and the vanguard of the working class, which will be only partially neutralized by the recourse to nationalism and to the argument of the need to find a diplomatic counterbalance to the armed forces the Kremlin has



massed on the Chinese frontier, and to accepting sacrifices for national defense.

The Chinese proletariat, whose numbers have increased tenfold since 1949 and whose level of culture and class conscious-

ness have risen significantly, will struggle against the right-wing course of the Mao/Chou En-lai leadership. This may bring about new tactical maneuvers of "adjustment" by leaders of the bureaucracy.

## 12. The Yugoslav Crisis of 1971-72

The contradictions underlying the Titoist variant of bureaucratic power have begun to ripen in an accelerated manner since the economic reforms of 1965. They reached an explosive degree in 1971-72. These contradictions are basically those between the limited self-management on the level of the enterprise, on the one hand, and the mechanisms of economic centralization that deny self-management (bureaucratic planning and "socialist market economy") on the other hand; and those between the economic self-management on the level of the enterprise, on the one hand, and the bureaucracy's monopoly of political power (absence of real workers power on the political plane) on the other hand.

Since the reforms of 1965, the rapid development of unemployment, the growing social inequality, the soaring of the primitive accumulation of private capital, and the increased ties between the Yugoslav economy and the international capitalist economy have provoked an accelerated sociopolitical differentiation in the country. The technocratic and managerial layers of the bureaucracy, in growing symbiosis with the private sector, undermined more and more openly the rights and powers of the workers within the framework of the self-management system. They sought to reduce these rights and powers to a simple question of distribution of the annual net revenues, working to assert the total power of the directors under the pretex of technocratic efficiency and the primordial imperative of competition. The workers, for their part, rose up more and more against the attacks on their rights and their standard of living, against the privileges of the *nouveaux riches* and the excesses of the "socialist market economy." The number of strikes multiplied. The working class's discontent found a centralized expression at the national congress of Yugoslav trade unions in 1971. A politicized youth vanguard set about formulating left-wing solutions following the university explosion of 1968. A Marxist opposition began to develop openly, rejecting more and more clearly both bureaucratic centralism and the "socialist market economy" in favor of "self-management from top to bottom, responsible among other things for the tasks of democratic planning."

This process of sociopolitical differentiation is combined with a growing tension among the nationalities. The political cadres and technocratic and financial forces of the "developed" nationalities

sought to gradually reduce "their" republics' contributions to the economic growth of the "underdeveloped" republics. The winds of nationalism, stirred by growing social inequality, began to sweep across the country, giving rise to tensions that were quite serious from the standpoint of the survival of the Yugoslav federation.

The aspirations expressed by the Serbo-Croat conflict have been confused owing to the intermingling of several factors. On the one hand, regional and social inequalities have led to the reemergence of old national quarrels. These quarrels, however, have been reinforced by hostility toward the bureaucratic centralist policy of the Yugoslav government, whose administrative and military apparatus is for the most part Serbian. Thus, popular aspirations for greater Croatian autonomy represent, in part, the confused expression of an antibureaucratic struggle. But the main demands that have been put forward in this conflict have been advanced by privileged social layers whose separatist demands have in fact been accompanied by aspirations for a transformation of the present relations of production in the direction of total restoration of the laws of a market economy, along with the entry of Croatia into the world capitalist market. The participation of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois layers, and the support from reactionary clerical and Ustasha currents, testify to the antisocialist character of these movements. Furthermore, these two tendencies (popular nationalist sentiments of an antibureaucratic character and reactionary nationalist tendencies) have become combined with the objectives of local political cadres of the Yugoslav CP who are seeking in this confused nationalist movement a base of support for their own privileges of office by gaining more autonomy in relation to the bureaucracy of the federal state.

The pressure and threats of the Soviet bureaucracy were another element complicating the sociopolitical differentiation. After the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the armies of the Warsaw Pact, reactions of self-defense appeared all over Yugoslavia, as in the People's Republic of China, since the governments of the two countries felt themselves targeted for a possible repetition of the Czechoslovak precedent. The active hostility that had existed between Belgrade and Peking for fifteen years faded away almost overnight. Preparations for a general arming of the people and a massive guerrilla war against possible aggression on the part

of the Soviet bureaucracy were especially effective in Croatia and Slovenia. That provoked a strong reaction by the Kremlin, which took the form of stepped-up pressure on Tito to put an end to the decentralization of political power.

The provisional solution of the crisis that was reached in 1972, resulting from the interaction of all these complex tendencies, is thus not without sociopolitical ambiguity. Tito, basing himself on the central military apparatus and reflecting the interests of the political wing of the bureaucracy, hit the technocratic and managerial wing hard. Without having radically modified the axes of the economic reform, the Titoist bureaucracy applied the brakes to it and initiated a turn. While stimulating real development in the country through a vast campaign of struggle against corruption and the billionaires, and while denouncing the existence of concealed technocratic and financial forces, the Titoist regime has not, for the moment, taken any specific measure calling into question the "socialist market economy" and, in particular, the decentralization of the banking system. For the moment what stands out is essentially the strengthening of the CP's role in all spheres of political and economic activity.

The preparatory documents for the Tenth Congress of the Yugoslav CP show all the ambiguity of the policy still being followed: Like the new amendments to the constitution, they formally take into account a certain number of demands of the Yugoslav left, demands that tend toward democratic planning based on self-management and toward increased political support for self-management. Evidence that this is the case can be seen in the projected efforts toward "integrated self-management" by region or by industrial sector, and in the projected establishment of delegate assemblies representing "labor organizations" at the level of the municipalities and republics. Another indication is the explicit denunciation of the major illusions that have dominated the orientation toward a market economy since the 1965 reform, and of the socially damaging consequences of that orientation. Nonetheless, since the forms of this "integrated self-management" have not been specified, they (as well as the delegations to the assemblies) will undoubtedly be dominated by an increase in the political weight of the Yugoslav CP, either openly or through the trade unions and the factory managers.

Despite all their ambiguity, the denunciations of numerous individuals who have enriched themselves fraudulently, and the plans to increase the weight of self-management in the country's political life, have nonetheless had the immediate result of diminishing the wave of workers' discontent with the regime by giving them the feeling that their efforts have been

crowned with success. However, none of the social problems affecting them (inequality, unemployment, the cost of living) have been resolved. The million Yugoslav workers working abroad—directly threatened by the economic situation in the European capitalist countries—remain an additional factor that promises future aggravation of an economic and social situation already marked by crises.

In this context, political repression represents for the Titoist bureaucracy a second important means for preventing political opposition to its policies from merging with the discontent of the workers. However, the repression has struck not only the right but also the far left. Elements of socialist democracy that seemed to have been won many years before were reduced or suppressed. The relative freedom of public discussion and press were partially reduced. Methods of slander, lying accusations, use of the secret police—even within the Yugoslav CP—and violations of socialist legality were implemented. Centralization and stricter political control by the bureaucracy were assured.

In short, the events of 1968-72 have confirmed that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia remains a bureaucratically deformed workers state. The theory that capitalism has already been restored has proven false in the light of experience. Political power is not in the hands of a bourgeoisie charged with the task of strengthening, stabilizing, and legalizing the sector of capitalist accumulation. Quite the contrary, this sector is only tolerated from time to time, developing for the most part through fraudulent operations; when it does assert itself, it is denounced and repressed.

Thanks to the far-reaching decentralization that has taken place since 1965, the bureaucracy has without doubt gone through a profound internal differentiation. A sector has enriched itself by taking management positions in the key economic sectors and the banks. There can be no question but that this technocracy has identified its interests with the development of the market economy, and has joined the chorus of the bourgeois and aspiring bourgeois calling for the suppression of self-management (as being "economically inefficient"), for the extension of rights to private property (as a "stimulant"), and for the suppression of all economic centralization. This represents a process that is extremely revealing in regard not only to the key points around which the class struggle in Yugoslavia can determine whether or not there will be a return to capitalism, but also to the social forces favoring such a restoration, the working-class struggles that it has provoked, and the orientation the political wing of the bureaucracy has developed toward it.

Not only the trade-union bureaucracy and the rank-and-file militants of the CP, but also the sector of the bureaucracy that directly controls the state apparatus and derives its privileges from that apparatus have—in the light of the crisis—clearly shown their links with the working class, the social basis of their power in a regime born of an anticapitalist revolutionary struggle headed by the Titoist leadership. The recent crisis in Yugoslavia has confirmed, moreover, that self-management by itself constitutes neither a guarantee against bureaucratization, nor a guarantee of socialist democracy. Only the exercise of political and economic power on all levels, including the national level, by the working class through workers councils and their congresses can provide a radical solution to the weight and danger of the bureaucracy. The struggle against the dangers of the restoration of capitalism, as well as the struggle against the power and privileges of the bureaucracy, depend in the last analysis on the independent action of the proletariat. In Yugoslavia, these struggles pose as the central task the development of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard that will fight:

a. For recognition of the workers' right to strike against the bureaucratic deformations of the state and the organs of self-management, against any reintroduction of relations of capitalist exploitation in the factories (the application and protection of the rights of self-management, including in jointly capitalized factories—that is, in factories backed by both Yugoslav social capital and capitalist investors); against any increase in unemployment; and against all attacks on their working conditions and standard of living.

b. Against the financial and banking technocracies that have enriched themselves off the backs of the workers; for

centralization of the entire credit and financial system; for the distribution of loans and investments by a federal congress of workers councils in which all the republics are fairly represented; for all credits to be managed by a central body of the various "labor associations" (self-management bodies representing the various branches of industry and services, and the associations dealing with culture and leisure time).

Against the obstacles to genuine self-management: down with bureaucratic planning; down with the competition among workers under the so-called socialist market economy; down with all-powerful decisions by the CP, through its monopoly of political power. Self-management from top to bottom! Workers democracy inside the CP and in all organs of political life. Organize democratic planning on the basis of an extension of self-management, coordinated on a federal level.

c. Down with privileges; down with social inequalities; down with national inequalities; let the workers set wage norms without reference to regional inequalities and the laws of the market.

d. For Yugoslav socialism to live and develop, the struggle against the reactionary separatist tendencies must involve a vast public debate and a strengthening of the central role of self-management—not police measures!

Down with all restrictions on freedom of expression for political tendencies—both inside and outside the CP—that accept the framework of socialism. Free all political prisoners. Halt all measures of repression against the various Marxist currents in Yugoslavia. Down with all restrictions on the rights of supporters of these currents to work at their professions and to travel abroad. No restrictions on their financial and political possibilities of expressing their ideas.

### 13. The Interaction Between the Rise of the Working Class in Capitalist Europe and the Rise of Political Revolution in Eastern Europe

The rise of the socialist revolution in Western Europe and the rise of the anti-bureaucratic political revolution in Central and Eastern Europe will experience a growing interaction in the years to come. This will mark a break with the more isolated development of the political revolution in the 1950s, symbolized by the isolation of the 1956 Hungarian revolution.

On one hand, the development of a new mass vanguard breaking with Stalinism in the capitalist countries will stimulate massive movements in support of any important development of an antibureaucratic opposition in the bureaucratized workers states, helping to considerably diminish the bureaucracy's margin of

maneuver in carrying out police operations. The greater entry into the political life of their countries by the mass-based CPs of capitalist Europe, along with the loosening of their ties with the Soviet bureaucracy, will also help reduce the latter's margin of maneuver. It is hard to imagine how a repetition of the Czechoslovakia intervention could be carried out in another "Eastern bloc" country without producing a profound jolt to the political power of the Soviet bureaucracy and a deepening of the significant effects of the crisis that the Czechoslovakia intervention has already produced in the Western CPs. This is all the more true since massive protest movements would develop



outside the CPs under the impetus of revolutionary Marxist organizations.

On the other hand, the fact that the military threats weighing against the European borders of the "socialist camp" are being reduced (one of the by-products of the policy of detente being followed by the bureaucracy) and the fact that the borders are becoming more and more open to tourism, to trade, and, in some degree, to the possibility of workers moving about, at the same time that massive forces in struggle for socialism are appearing in Western Europe, will stimulate the development of a radicalization of the working class and the intelligentsia in Central and Eastern Europe.

The bureaucracy is perfectly conscious of this and in consequence is stepping up its efforts to accompany the "opening" toward the West in commerce and tourism with more severe ideological and political control over the masses of the countries in which it is in power. The effectiveness of this combination is doubtful. The movements of student revolt of the 1960s in West Germany, France, and Italy have already had a real impact among the students of Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the German Democratic Republic, even if on a modest scale and with differing degrees of politicization from one country to another. And to the extent that they come to be known (in spite of the tight censorship of the press in the bureaucratic states), the forms and the content of workers struggles in the European capitalist countries—and the way they renew the most advanced and

richest tradition of democratic, independent organization of the masses for the purpose of replacing bourgeois society with a society where the workers will be the real masters of their fate in all spheres of social life—will stimulate a renewal of Marxism and communism in the working-class and intellectual vanguard in the European bureaucratized workers states.

One of the greatest obstacles in the path of this rebirth is the fact that Marxism has been degraded to the level of a state religion by the bureaucratic masters of these countries, and that it has been cynically manipulated to justify social inequality and the exclusion of the masses of workers from the direct exercise of power. This perversion of Marxism, the break in continuity resulting from the physical liquidation of the old revolutionary cadres of the working class, and the difficulties in reestablishing discussion and political life under the conditions of bureaucratic dictatorship create enormous obstacles for the young generation of workers and rebel intellectuals, making it extremely difficult for them to rediscover the genuine sources and the essence of Marxism-Leninism and to reacquaint themselves with its tradition. The appearance of a living example of revolutionary socialism and independent organization of the masses in Western Europe would give ten times more effectiveness to the effort to counterpose the true face of socialism to the hideous mask Stalinism has forced on it in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

The major political crises the bureau-

cratized workers states have gone through since their formation confirm the importance of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard for the coming political revolution in these countries. Unless there is a clear consciousness of the lessons of previous crises, the possibilities for partial reforms, and the governmental shufflings the bureaucracy is capable of setting into motion in order to retain the reins of power; unless there is clear understanding of the instruments of repression that the bureaucracy has at its disposal, the underlying tendencies toward the emergence of democratic soviet organs spontaneously pushed forward by the working class will in the end be taken over, channeled, and broken without the proletariat bringing the crisis to a victorious conclusion. The role of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard, even a small one, can be decisive in periods when such situations of "dual power" emerge—periods of overall social crisis. Its role will be to express the demands for workers power felt in a confused way by the masses, to struggle to preserve the genuine independence of organs of workers democracy against any element in the bureaucracy that tries to mislead and demobilize them, to fight for their centralization and self-defense, and to put forward clearly socialist and internationalist objectives leading to a clear understanding of the revolutionary tasks at hand: replacement of the bureaucratic apparatus with a genuine workers government based on workers self-management at all levels of society, for the advance of the socialist revolution.

### III. Crisis of the Traditional Workers Leaderships and the Building of the Fourth International

#### 14. The Evolution of the Communist and Socialist Parties

In the course of the last few years, the crisis of the traditional workers organizations has intensified under the combined effect of the resurgence of workers struggles, the deepened structural crisis of the imperialist system, the crisis of the bureaucratic regime, and the appearance of a new vanguard of a mass character.

The closer collaboration of the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies with imperialism intensifies this crisis even further. For the detente has a contradictory effect on the relations among the traditional workers organizations, and on their relations with the masses. In dissipating the climate of "cold war" and militant anticommunism among the Social Democratic and trade-union leaders and cadres of several imperialist and semicolonial countries, the detente facilitates collaboration and last-

ing agreements between the CPs and SPs in several countries. Despite the strict reformist limits, indeed the class-collaborationist objectives, that the leaders of these organizations assign to agreements of this type, they unleash an objective dynamic of unity in action within the working class and increase workers' confidence in their own strength, thus contributing to the process of raising the combativity and radicalization of the proletariat. The results of this dynamic limit the freedom of maneuver of the traditional leaderships by raising considerably the price they would have to pay in order to carry out a right turn coinciding with a resurgence of struggle.

Thus, for the first time since 1935 a spectacular rapprochement between the Soviet bureaucracy and imperialism has not been accompanied either immediately or in

the short run by an analogous right turn by a number of CPs. As was already the case at the time of the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact armies in August 1968, the present orientation of the French CP, the Italian CP, the Chilean CP, and most of the Stalinist parties in the capitalist countries, while remaining principally determined by the needs of the Kremlin, is put into practice, compared to the past, more as a function of the electoral needs of these parties and the need they feel to "stay close to" their mass base than as a function of the immediate needs of the Kremlin's diplomacy.

The same thing, moreover, applies to the Maoist groups. These groups generally justify—as a whole or with nuances—the right turn of Chinese diplomacy, pointing to the need for Peking to avoid the "encirclement" of the People's Republic of China. But one should not expect that they will mechanically apply, at least for the moment, the same right turn to their own activity in the advanced capitalist

countries and to their relations with the bourgeoisie, even when that bourgeoisie is being courted by Peking.

The effects of the Sino-Soviet conflict and of the deepening crisis of the international Communist movement have the same result. The number of CPs that are keeping their distance from Moscow and Peking alike (the Japanese CP, the CP (Marxist) of India, and to a certain extent the Spanish CP) is increasing and will continue to increase. The criticisms with respect to specific aspects of the Soviet CP's policy, especially its repression against the national minorities and dissident intellectuals, will spread—even if in a prudent and dishonest manner.

What was said above in no way implies the existence of any "leftward movement" in the long-term strategy of the pro-Moscow CPs. To the contrary, the long-term strategy is more than ever neoreformist, revolving around the "electoral road to socialism." The process of "social democratization" of the CPs is continuing. The attempts to dissociate themselves from Moscow's actions generally accentuate this process. What is involved is only a tactical adaptation to the radicalization of the masses within the framework of this reformist orientation, aimed in part at checking the advance of the revolutionary Marxist organizations. Any attempt by the CPs to systematically hold back struggles and oppose themselves to all the workers' anti-capitalist demands and forms of independent organization, even in the face of a tumultuous upsurge, could only accentuate a tendency to go beyond the CPs, and would clearly weaken the hold of the CP apparatus over the masses. Without excluding in advance the possibility that the above could occur in this or that country, the most probable variant is nevertheless one of more flexible maneuvers and adaptations on the part of CPs faced with the precipitous increase in mass struggles. This adaptation will reach its limits and change into an openly counterrevolutionary intervention at the moment the continued existence of the capitalist order is called into question.

A similar remark applies, on the whole, to the mass Social Democratic parties. These remain fundamentally tied to class collaboration, bourgeois parliamentarianism, and defense of the capitalist order, even against workers on strike. The greater influence that members of the bourgeois state's administrative apparatus and the capitalist economy's nationalized sector now have in these parties, as compared to the past, further accentuates the tendency of the Social Democracy to espouse, at certain moments, the positions of the bourgeois state—even against the reformist unions.

But experience has shown that a Social Democratic party that loses an impor-

tant mass base within the proletariat also loses its electoral base and any chance to increase its patronage positions within the bourgeois parliamentary democracy. That is why even the mass Social Democratic parties are also susceptible to the effects of the mass radicalization and the tumultuous rise of workers struggles. This is expressed in the search for a new working-class base, especially by the French SP, the Spanish SP, the Dutch SP,

the Labour party, the West German SDP, the Chilean SP, etc. The repelling effect that Stalinism and the ultraopportunism of the CP continue to exert on newly radicalized layers of the working class, above all working-class youth, contributes to this process. It is likewise expressed by the development of new left-wing tendencies and their radicalization, which is already perceptible in the Labour party in Great Britain and in the Spanish SP.

## 15. The New Mass Vanguard

The appearance on a world scale of a new vanguard of a mass character for the first time since the creation of the Communist International constitutes one of the principal features of the new rise of the world revolution since 1968. It results from the fact that the resurgence in revolutionary struggles on an international scale since the victory of the Cuban revolution has coincided with the deepening crisis of imperialism and the traditional workers parties.

The new mass vanguard can be characterized most succinctly as the sum of forces acting independently and to the left of the traditional bureaucratic leaderships of the mass movement. It is both a social and a political phenomenon: The new vanguard includes the radicalized layers of the youth, the working class, and women—most of whom are unorganized. There is, however, an organized fraction that follows or is part of the far-left organizations: Trotskyist, centrist, Maoist, Maoist-spontaneist, etc.

In itself, the appearance of this new mass vanguard expresses a potential for building much stronger revolutionary organizations than in previous decades as well as the delay experienced in building these organizations. That delay means that revolutionary Marxism does not exercise hegemony over this layer from the outset, that it finds itself in competition with all sorts of centrist and ultraleft currents, and that the often considerable forces of this mass vanguard can be drawn into tragic explosions, isolated from the bulk of the working-class forces. The example of the JVP [Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna—People's Liberation Front] in Sri Lanka is the most typical illustration of this.

The relations between the revolutionary Marxists and the forces of this new vanguard are complex. On one hand, the revolutionary Marxists must carry out an uncompromising ideological and political struggle against the various centrist or ultraleft deviations from Marxism. On the other hand, they must strive toward unity in action around common objectives in the anti-imperialist, anticapitalist, and anti-bureaucratic struggles. It is through this

combination of unity in action and political differentiation that the goal of transforming the bulk of the forces of the new vanguard into a lever capable of qualitatively modifying the relationship of forces with the bureaucratic apparatuses can be attained. It is through this combination that the ability to lead much broader mass struggles, and more advanced forms of mass, independent organization than in the past, can be won. It is also through this combination that pressure can be exerted on the mass trade-union and political organizations themselves to accelerate their process of internal differentiation. Our organization's ability to go beyond the stage of propagandism and to intervene in struggles with proposals for appropriate action will play a determining role in this struggle to win hegemony within the new vanguard and to strengthen our organization quantitatively and qualitatively.

The new mass vanguard was in large measure the product of the progress achieved by the world revolution through the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions. At the same time it was stimulated, to a lesser degree, by the image of the Chinese "Cultural Revolution." The question is posed of whether the right turn of the Chinese leadership, the less-pronounced but nonetheless real right turn of the Cuban leadership, and the cease-fire in Vietnam will have the effect of causing an ebb if not the disintegration of this new vanguard.

The policy of the Cuban leadership continues to be a very important factor in the development of the political situation in Latin America. Faced with the defeats suffered by the armed-struggle movements and believing there was no longer any short-term perspective of revolutionary victory in the other countries of the continent, and faced with the necessity of assuring the survival of Cuba in a region of the world entirely dominated by imperialism and of warding off the consequences of the economic blockade, the Cuban leadership has increasingly stressed its economic and political links with the Soviet bureaucracy and is seeking a margin of maneuver through alliances with and openings toward reformist, self-proclaimed anti-imperialist regimes. Prov-



ing that it is unable to distinguish between the foreign-policy requirements of a workers state and the fundamental requirements of the revolutionary struggle, the Cuban leadership has gone so far as to give uncritical support to the Velasco regime, including characterizing the Peruvian army as a revolutionary army. It has also given support to the Broad Front in Uruguay, a class-collaborationist front headed by a former general of the bourgeois army. In the case of Chile—at a stage where there were real possibilities for revolutionary development—the Cuban leadership gave practically unconditional support to the reformist Popular Unity leadership. The critical remarks Castro made on several occasions were not of a sort to help the maturing of the vanguard and clarification among the masses. At the same time, the Cuban leadership abandoned polemics against the CPs, even though these polemics had been a major feature of the stage of guerrilla warfare in Venezuela, Peru, and Bolivia, and also during the OLAS conference. In effect the Cuban leadership approved, in most cases, the reformist policy of these CPs in forming alliances with the so-called national bourgeoisie. Thus the Cuban leaders called into question their historic and theoretical gains of the 1965-67 period which, despite all their limits, had permitted them to grasp the dynamic of permanent revolution in Latin America. Finally, the close alliance with the Soviet Union was accompanied by an unconditional glorification of the bureaucratized workers states and their leaderships. While it is true that in the meantime the Cuban leadership continued to aid revolutionary movements in certain countries on the Latin American continent, the fact remains that their political and ideological retreat has exercised and continues to exercise a negative influence on layers of the Latin American vanguard, both by stimulating their disintegration and evolution to the right—including their evolution toward the reformism of currents formed under Castroism—and by creating additional obstacles to the indispensable struggle against the centrist concepts and orientations that characterize broad sectors of the new vanguard in Latin America.

Furthermore, the situation of political impasse inside the country weighs on Cuba's foreign policy. The self-criticisms of 1970 have not been followed by real progress toward establishing socialist democracy, in which the workers can express themselves through their own democratic, revolutionary organs and effectively exercise their hegemony. This shortcoming can in no way be compensated by holding a strictly controlled trade-union convention to be concluded with the election of a former Stalinist bureaucrat as top leader (moreover, the congress is not scheduled until 1975).

This new vanguard is basically susceptible to two contradictory pressures. The fact that the resurgence of workers struggles is continuing and even broadening in numerous imperialist and semicolonial countries, and the fact that the crisis of bourgeois society as well as the crisis of the system of bureaucratic power in the bureaucratized workers states is still deepening, unquestionably favor a parallel broadening of the new mass vanguard. The temporary ebb of the student radicalization in certain countries (United States, Japan) is, or will be, compensated by the growth of the working-class radicalization, above all of the working-class youth.

But the right turn of the Chinese and Cuban leaderships and the setbacks to the centrist or ultraleft mass organizations based on the new vanguard (for example, the Naxalites in India!) can cause disarray in its midst and give rise to reabsorption into the traditional organizations at a time when the rev-

olutionary Marxist organizations prove too weak or incapable of filling the void created by these setbacks. The political and organizational initiatives of our own organizations are thus an important factor for the fate of the new mass vanguard. The conditions are favorable for carrying out a successful offensive against Maoism, which was dealt a very grave blow by the right turn of Peking's diplomacy. But this offensive will not profit our own movement on a large scale, i.e., will not end up in a considerable strengthening of our own organizations, unless it breaks out of the ideological arena and is accompanied by initiatives in action that make it possible to galvanize the vanguard as a whole against the reformist and Stalinist apparatuses in the mass struggle. Otherwise, it will be the reformist and neoreformist organizations that will end up profiting from the crisis of the Maoist currents through the decomposition of a part of the new vanguard.

## 16. The Fourth International

Since the Ninth World Congress (third since reunification), the Fourth International has made significant progress, the greatest since its foundation. It now has sections or sympathizing groups in some fifty countries. A dozen of them have increased the number of their adherents fivefold or tenfold between 1969 and 1973. Trotskyist cadres and militants have played an important role in strikes and trade-union struggles of national scope, notably in France, Italy, Spain, Sri Lanka, Argentina, Bolivia, and Switzerland. As in the preceding period, they have played a leading role in the struggles of student youth involving tens and sometimes hundreds of thousands of university and high-school students, notably in France, Belgium, Mexico, Japan, Colombia, and the United States. Revolutionary forces already hardened in combat have joined the Fourth International, notably the ETA-VI [Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna — Basque Nation and Freedom] in the Basque country.

Nonetheless, the numerical forces and the organizational influence of the Fourth International remain quite modest, out of proportion to the confirmation of its program and general orientation by events, and to the far larger influence that revolutionary Marxist ideas today exert in the world. This lag is basically explained by the following factors:

a. A very marked uneven development between the breadth of the radicalization—especially the working-class radicalization in numerous imperialist and

semicolonial countries—and the scope of the general politicization. Despite the very pronounced resurgence of mass workers struggles in numerous countries, the political consciousness of the working class is rising at a much slower pace. The formulation Trotsky used to characterize the crisis of consciousness of the proletariat—the skepticism of the old generation and the inexperience of the new—continues to remain largely valid, although to a lesser degree than in 1938, 1948, or 1958.

b. The appearance of the new mass vanguard since the second half of the 1960s, which favored the more rapid building of the Fourth International, was not in any way accompanied by a process of political homogenization. Given the complexity of the present world situation, the organizational weakness of the Fourth International at the beginning of this new revolutionary rise, the attractive force exerted on student youth by the ideologies identified with victorious revolutions like Castroism and Maoism, the politically organized portion of the new vanguard was found everywhere divided between the Trotskyist, Maoist, and centrist currents and is very often fragmented into a swarm of grouplets. In several important countries, different organizations claiming adherence to Trotskyism sought to win new cadres and militants, in competition and sometimes in violent public polemics against each other, which could not help but increase the confusion of the vanguard during the initial phase of its formation, promoting extreme fractionalization into small grouplets and a prolifera-

tion of variants of sectarianism and opportunism.

c. The rapid growth of Trotskyist organizations, and their being confronted with struggles and responsibilities often out of proportion with their past history and their degree of maturity, have created difficulties for the correct resolution of the many delicate tactical problems that generally appear in mass struggles, not to speak of revolutionary struggles. The process of educating new cadres and mature national leaderships inevitably slows the growth of the organizations, in the same way that the political and organizational strengthening of the international center retarded the growth of the world movement.

d. Many of the organizations of the Fourth International continue to manifest a sectarian attitude on the question of recruitment in not exploiting all the opportunities offered for substantially strengthening their ranks. They underestimate a basic aspect of the Leninist theory of organization, namely the concept that it is only within the revolu-

tionary organization that one can really become a revolutionary militant.

e. Finally, the international bourgeoisie, which considers the Fourth International a real menace to the reign of capital, has for that reason intensified its repression against our movement and has thus erected additional obstacles on the road of our growth.

The effort to come to grips with the obstacles mentioned above is by no means intended to de-emphasize the social obstacles that slow the building of a mass revolutionary international: the weight of capital and the continued domination of its ideology over bourgeois society; the weight of the Stalinist, Maoist, and reformist apparatuses, based on their enormous material resources. The enumeration of the above-mentioned factors restraining a more rapid growth of the Fourth International is above all done with the aim of underlining the factors the revolutionary Marxist forces can take directly in hand, the obstacles they themselves can help eliminate.

## 17. The Specific Tasks of the International Organization

The Ninth World Congress (third since reunification) marked an important stage in the development of the Fourth International. The International became conscious of the fact that changes in the objective conditions (a new rise of world revolution whose center of gravity is shifting toward the industrial proletariat) and the subjective conditions (the appearance of a new mass vanguard and modifications in the relationship of forces between this vanguard and the bureaucracies of the traditional workers organizations) in which it is being built both permit and make extremely necessary its growing over from a propaganda group into an organization on the road toward implantation in the proletariat, an organization capable right now of taking political initiatives that will have repercussions on the class struggle on a national scale.

The construction of the Fourth International is being carried out through the building in different countries of sections and sympathizing organizations that educate cadres, intervene in mass struggles, engage in combat for workers' immediate demands, democratic demands, and transitional demands, as well as for the Transitional Program as a whole, and take the necessary initiatives in action that gradually lead to their being viewed as the nucleus of a new revolutionary leadership that will replace the bureaucratized traditional leaderships in the workers movement. The construction of the Fourth International is thus inseparably linked to the struggle to raise

the level of consciousness of advanced layers of the proletariat and poor peasantry, and to the struggle for the independent organization of the masses under the most varied forms—that is, to the struggles that correspond to the concrete stage the class struggle has attained in each country in the present circumstances.

Beyond these normal tasks of the national organizations of the Fourth International, there are tasks that are specific to the World Party as such, that correspond to the ever more precise demands posed by the internationalization of the economy, of politics, of the class struggle—in the imperialist epoch in general and in the present phase of this epoch in particular. Whatever the shortcomings our movement shows in this regard as a result of its obvious material weaknesses, it is the only one that is conscious of these needs, that readily formulates them, that educates its cadres, militants, sympathizers, and the sectors of the vanguard of the broader masses it can influence. It is the only one that is beginning to accomplish these tasks in a deliberate way within the limits of its possibilities.

However, as the process of the Trotskyist organizations' growing over from propaganda groups to organizations on the road to implantation in the proletariat and already prepared to take concrete initiatives in the class struggle becomes more pronounced, the pressure of the specific national features that will

give such initiatives their precise forms will of necessity differ from country to country and especially from one group of countries to another. This sharpens the necessity of strengthening the International center all the more so as to maintain the Fourth International's cohesion and programmatic integrity. The task of the center cannot consist of making authoritative decisions about the tactics of national sections; that is forbidden by the International's statutes. It does consist of the effort to coordinate action and to promote political and theoretical homogenization. In the period ahead this effort will be focused on carrying out specific international tasks such as the following:

a. To continue the campaign of international support to the Indochinese revolution and to other revolutionary struggles under way in the world: the Palestinian resistance, the revolutionary movements in the Portuguese colonies, the Irish freedom struggle, the Chilean resistance, etc.

b. To develop movements of solidarity on a European scale, and if possible on a larger scale, with the strikes and workers struggles that either confront the multinational trusts or have an exemplary thrust that can accelerate the growth of proletarian class consciousness on an international scale (such as the struggle at Lip).

c. To develop a movement of international solidarity, involving the entire workers movement, with the victims of the repression aimed at the revolutionaries of the imperialist and semicolonial countries, such as the campaigns that we have organized for the defense of Argentine political prisoners under the military dictatorship, and against the decree banning the Ligue Communiste.

d. To develop an international movement of solidarity with the victims of the repression that is directed against political dissidents and oppressed nationalities in the bureaucratized workers states.

e. To develop an international campaign against the increasing attacks on the right to strike, on the absolute right of trade unions to negotiate wage settlements, against wage controls, state arbitration of wage conflicts, the growing integration of the unions into the bourgeois state, etc.

f. To expose on an international basis the new betrayals of revolutionary struggles by the Moscow bureaucracy (Cambodia, Iran, Sudan, Sri Lanka, India, Palestine, Vietnam, etc.) and by the Peking bureaucracy (Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Iran, Spain, Vietnam, etc.).

g. To initiate an international discus-

sion of a complete draft program of the Fourth International; the Transitional Program, as Trotsky said, is only a part of this.

h. To develop more fully our theoretical analysis of a number of phenomena that have been insufficiently examined during the last few years, including the precise stage the Cuban state

and society have reached; the reasons why the proletariat in the huge factories of the United States has yet to move into massive action; the agrarian question in India and the response in terms of demands and program that has to be brought to bear on it; the development of a more specific transitional program for the bureaucratized workers states;

and our programmatic response to the general crisis of bourgeois society.

i. To develop the press and publications of the leadership of the International in order to make possible a more rapid flow of information and elaboration for the benefit of the sections and the sectors of the vanguard they already influence. □

# **The World Political Situation and the Immediate Tasks of the Fourth International**



# The World Political Situation and the Immediate Tasks of the Fourth International

## I. Chief Features of the World Political Situation

"The world political situation as a whole," Trotsky wrote in 1938, "is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat." (*The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International.*) Despite the immense de-

velopments since then, Trotsky's judgment still remains valid. In fact the historical crisis of proletarian leadership has grown in acuteness over the years. Today the fate of humanity hinges on resolving that crisis in relatively short order.

are concerned, this means an absolute decline. Moreover, in some countries, particularly those whose relation to the world market has fostered a monoculture, the economies are subject to abrupt and highly dislocating turns. Still more significantly, all such comparisons leave out of account the immense losses and setbacks suffered because of depressions, wars, and preparations for new wars, not to mention the artificial level of scarcity brought about by chaining production to profit requirements and to the limitations of national boundaries.

A more realistic appreciation of how much capitalist productive relations stand in the way of optimum development of the capacities of modern industry can be gained by studying the swift rise of the

### 1. The Ripeness of Objective Conditions

The economic prerequisites for the proletarian revolution were fully met by the turn of the century. World War I came as a warning to humanity of the costliness of delaying that revolution. Further major warnings in the twenties and thirties came in the form of economic convulsions of unprecedented depth and scope, resulting in periodic mass unemployment and sustained pressure on the standard of living of the masses.

Through huge expenditures in reconstructing Europe and Japan after World War II, through increasing government intervention in the economy, and through war budgets of astronomical size, the capitalist ruling class managed for a period to stave off acute economic crises. The overhead cost, however, has been an ever worsening long-range inflation and an accumulation of stresses that have been building toward an acute economic convulsion. The premonitory signs include, among other things, the successive international monetary crises of the past few years and the increasing sharpness of economic rivalries.

One of the clearest indications of the trend of modern capitalism has been the erosion of bourgeois democracy on a world scale. Between the first and second world wars, European capitalism, the most highly developed and cultured sector, gave rise to fascism, the most malignant form of government in history. Fascism has continued to serve dictatorial regimes of various kinds on all continents as a model of ruthlessness and brutality.

The barbarous potentialities of capitalism were given another test run in a second world war, which far exceeded the first in destructiveness and bloodshed. The igniting of atomic bombs over two teeming population centers in Japan served as a harbinger of what is in store if capitalism is permitted to continue until it reaches the stage of a third world war. The hydrogen bomb today stands like

a specter over world affairs, the latest reminder being the nuclear alert called by Nixon during the October 1973 conflict in the Mideast.

A fitting index of the degeneration of capitalism is the heightening of "gunboat diplomacy" to such a point that the Pentagon's bombing of Vietnam exceeded in destructive force the total exploded in all theaters in the six years of World War II.

Another telling index of the regressiveness fostered by capitalism is the use of torture as a systematic weapon of control. Almost half the world's governments have adopted it, and it is rapidly spreading, according to a survey made public by Amnesty International in November 1973.

The productive capacities of the world capitalist economy have undeniably grown in absolute figures compared with selected dates such as 1913 or 1939. The statistics are misleading, however, because of what is left out of account. The growth has been highly uneven. In some countries, particularly in the colonial and semi-colonial sphere, economic growth has not even kept abreast of expansion in the population. So far as per capita figures

This counterresolution was submitted by the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. The vote was for 118, against 147, abstentions 4, not voting 1.

Soviet Union and that of poorer countries, particularly China, where capitalist property relations have been superseded by planned production. Even though the parasitism of a bureaucratic caste has constituted a heavy and unnecessary burden, the experience of these countries testifies to the vast inherent powers of a nationalized and planned economy. It can no longer be honestly denied that economic planning on a world scale could provide abundance for all in a relatively short period.

### 2. Stage of Sudden Breakdowns

While technological improvements in the capitalist countries like automation and computerization have reached such a degree as to warrant, in the opinion of some, the label of "new industrial revolution," they have served on another level to deepen and extend the already existing contradictions of the capitalist system.

This has been shown with remarkable clarity in the "energy crisis." The developing shortage was noted some years ago. A direct consequence of monopolistic policies followed by the oil cartels, it reflected on a deeper level the chaos of capitalism as a whole. A relatively small

withdrawal of oil from the world market in October 1973 was sufficient to precipitate an acute crisis.

In Japan, which in the capitalist sphere stands next to the United States in productivity and which is the world's leading importer of oil, the pinch on oil supplies from the Middle East led in December to a declaration of a "state of emergency," and a government order to cut back oil and electric power to major industries by 20 percent.

In Japanese government circles, the imposition of economic controls like those in force before and during World War

II were under consideration. This would mean rationing oil and all products affected by the oil shortage, the setting of production quotas, the enforcement of import and export restrictions, the imposition of foreign-exchange controls; and, of course, wage "controls."

Japan's export schedules were upset, including essential supplies to other countries in the Far East. Exports to the United States faced an uncertain future because of the rise in costs. Not only were forecasts on profits hastily revised downward, the yen itself was permitted to slump as an emergency step.

In Britain, Heath utilized the energy crisis to issue a decree in December imposing a three-day workweek on most industries. This meant pay cuts for millions of workers, a sharp rise in unemployment, widespread dislocations, and new hardships for the masses. The Conservative government took this "austerity" move after having already decreed a "state of emergency" in November in face of acute pressure for wage increases from more than six million workers. The consequence was a social crisis of unusual severity.

Elsewhere in Western Europe, the sudden oil crisis led to restrictions of varying degree in all countries, some of them reminiscent of the controls of World War II.

In the United States, the stock market dipped erratically. A "voluntary" stage of rationing of oil products and electric power was decreed while more rigorous measures were prepared.

The Common Market administration warned of a possible decline of 2 to 3 percent in gross output of goods and services in the Common Market countries in 1974 that could plunge Europe into its deepest recession since the late forties.

As the Keynesians cast about for new stopgap measures, Wall Street prognosticators speculated about the effect of the energy crisis on the already noted signs of an approaching recession that could coincide in Western Europe, the United States, and Japan.

Along with the increased possibilities of a recession, the energy crisis was immediately followed by a new inflationary leap. In 1970 Mideast oil stood at \$1.80 a barrel. In January 1973 it had risen to \$2.59. By December 1973 this price had quadrupled to \$11.65. In other areas the giant cartels jacked up oil prices still higher. In a chain reaction on a world scale, prices on innumerable commodities skyrocketed within weeks.

In the colonial and semicolonial world, the inflationary consequences of the oil crisis promise to be particularly severe. While those countries possessing extensive oil fields stand to gain temporarily from the price increases, others heavily dependent on oil imports (India, Brazil, etc.)

are placed under heavy strain. Countries not so reliant on oil because of lack of industrial development can be hard hit indirectly.

The price hikes announced by the shah in behalf of the Mideast oil-producing governments were engineered by the Aramco combine—Exxon, Mobil, Standard of California, and Texaco. The move was part of a gigantic scheme to escalate profits in oil and related industries to unheard of levels, to repeal the minimum antipollution measures that have recently begun to be placed on the legislative books in response to public pressure, to do away with safety measures in the coal mines so as to lower production costs, to remove all restraints on strip mining and exploitation of oil-bearing beds of shale, step up the construction of deep ports required for unloading giant tankers, slow down construction of new refineries, rush the construction of hazardous nuclear-powered plants to generate electricity, and squeeze out the independents in the retail marketing of oil products.

The energy crisis was utilized as an excuse by the oil barons and their governmental representatives to deal heavy blows against the ecology movement, an outstanding example being stampeding the U. S. Congress to approve construction of a pipeline across Alaska that can destroy the ecological balance of much of the remaining wilderness there.

Other consequences were to be noted. The predominance of the United States in the world capitalist system received fresh confirmation. Especially striking was the vulnerability of Japan, whose industries are heavily dependent on distant sources of oil dominated by cartels under Washington's control (or, more accurately, that control Washington). The relative weakness and disunity of the West European powers was likewise highlighted. Through the oil cartels, the United States dealt some stinging slaps to its junior partners. An indicator of this was a relative strengthening of the dollar.

The energy crisis is but a single example of what is happening to the world capitalist system. The beef shortages in the United States and Argentina should be recalled, as should the sudden power brownouts and blackouts, the disruption of telephone services, and deterioration of postal systems in various countries. Other shortages or malfunctions are impending that can lead to acute crises. In the United States, for instance, a metals shortage may be next on the list. The colonial world can be hit by a shortage in chemical fertilizers. In Tokyo and other industrial centers pollution levels are dangerously high.

The sudden breakdowns now characteristic of capitalism testify to the deepening

anarchy of the system and the need for restructuring the world's economy on rational lines.

The reverberations of the energy crisis can be cited to show how timely the Transitional Program, proposed by Trotsky in 1938, has become. In the United States the proof was rather dramatic. Within days after the reduction in oil shipments was announced, various circles, despite the well-known political backwardness of the country, were demanding that *the books of the oil monopolies be opened and their profits, production statistics, and secret dealings be made public* so that appropriate action could be taken.

These are progressive demands that should be supported by revolutionists everywhere. They point quite logically to further demands, one of which was soon being advanced in the United States: *Convert the oil industry into a public utility.*

Slogans along this line, of a more and more revolutionary character, can be expected to appear as the energy crisis deepens. Exemplary ones include: *Operate the oil companies under control of the workers instead of the stockholders. Expropriate the oil cartels. Let's plan rational use of energy resources on a world scale.*

The cost to the proletariat of the energy crisis was visible almost immediately in the form of layoffs and reduced employment—on a national scale in Britain with Heath's three-day workweek. The scourge of unemployment was added to that of rampant inflation. The consequence is to be seen in a rise of mass discontent in the main industrial countries. Pressure is already developing, especially in the unions, for remedial action.

The Trotskyist movement had long advocated a *sliding scale of wages* to meet the rising cost of living. Its correlative, a *sliding scale of hours* to meet unemployment, is now becoming timely.

The struggle for such demands, involving the immediate economic situation facing workers, combines logically with the struggle for control, management, and ownership of the oil industry (and related key industries). Out of this line of struggle can emerge a revolutionary challenge to the capitalist parties, the capitalist government, and the capitalist state.

How to advance this challenge is a tactical matter dependent on the level of political consciousness of the masses and the concrete circumstances in each country, particularly the acuteness of the struggle. Sections of the Fourth International should have no difficulty in working out this problem by utilizing the method outlined by Trotsky in *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*.

The energy crisis, it should be stressed, is but a single striking current example



of what is happening within the capitalist system—its growing susceptibility to sudden shocks and breakdowns—and of the new openings that are appearing for initiatives in action to be urged for adoption by the labor movement.

The energy crisis has pointed up in the most emphatic way two basic features of capitalism today: its highly integrated international structure and its imperviousness to rational planning.

The "options" chosen by the capitalists in situations like the energy crisis invariably amount in the final analysis to merely tightening their rule and compelling the masses—sometimes with a few pass-

ing sops—to carry additional burdens. The capitalist class is adamant on retaining power and maintaining the status quo even if the end result is a new dark age or nuclear annihilation.

The masses, however, are growing increasingly dissatisfied. They are no longer inclined to passively accept the dismal perspectives offered by capitalism. Their fears have been heightened by the course followed by the capitalist rulers in the past half century; while their expectations have been aroused by what is manifestly possible through transcending capitalism and establishing an economic order based on modern science, technology, and in-

dustry. Moreover, they have seen that it is possible to break out of the capitalist system and go forward. Highly convincing demonstrations of this have taken place in Russia, China, Eastern Europe, North Korea, North Vietnam, and Cuba.

The combination among the masses generally of heightened expectations, discontent with things as they are, and awareness of the possibility of going beyond capitalism constitutes one of the chief features of the world political situation today. What the masses do not yet see clearly is the correct path to take. They are still far from having resolved the crisis of proletarian leadership.

## II. The World Revolution Resumes Its Main Course

The problem of wresting power from the bourgeoisie was solved in theory at the beginning of this century by two invaluable contributions to Marxism—Lenin's plan for the construction of a vanguard party and Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution. More importantly, as World War I drew to a close, the Bolshevik team they led in Russia solved it practically. The exemplary action of the Bolsheviks still constitutes the best and most enlightening model for study and emulation by revolutionists everywhere.

Lenin's strategy, to which he finally won Trotsky in 1917, was to build a mass revolutionary party capable of providing leadership in every area of the class struggle and organizing the struggle for power. The party provided leadership for the proletariat which in turn provided leadership for the oppressed layers in both the cities and the countryside, including the oppressed nationalities, and the peasantry—the most massive oppressed class force in the Russian empire. With the construction of a party shaped in accordance with Lenin's formula, that is, a revolutionary staff and thousands of experienced cadres bound together by democratic centralism, the workers after toppling Czarism succeeded in conquering supremacy and initiating the world socialist revolution.

Trotsky was the guiding political genius in the military field who assured victory in the armed struggle, not only in the Petrograd insurrection of October 1917 but in the subsequent civil war in which the domestic counterrevolution was backed by expeditionary forces supplied by the Allies, including the United States.

Lenin and Trotsky sought to teach the international proletariat that the main secret to the victory of the Russian revolution—certainly the most significant event in twentieth-century history—was *political*

in nature; it was the construction in time of a revolutionary proletarian party. They launched the Third International in 1919 to promote this task on a world scale.

There was no lack of revolutionary opportunities in the twenties and thirties. Europe was shaken again and again. The Chinese revolution had excellent chances of success in 1925-27.

All of these chances were missed or fumbled by failure to absorb the chief lesson of the victory of the Russian revolution and to apply it in time—construction of a revolutionary party. The principal reason for this default, after the collapse of the Social Democracy, was the rise of a reactionary bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union, owing to the isolation of the Russian revolution, the wearing away of the generation that had made the revolution, and the general poverty and cultural backwardness of peasant Russia. Stalin emerged as the chief political representative of the ruling bureaucracy. With the death of Lenin, the Leninists soon found themselves in a minority in the Bolshevik party they had created. Those who did not capitulate were eventually eliminated, losing their lives, along with countless others, in the great purges of the thirties.

The most pernicious consequence of these internal Soviet developments was the disorientation of the proletarian van-

guard in other countries. Unable to follow or understand the significance of the political struggle in the Soviet Union, the majority took Stalin to be the legitimate representative of revolutionary Marxism and the continuator of Leninism, as claimed by the Soviet government. *Stalinism*—whether in its ultraleft or rightist expressions—thus gained sway over millions of revolutionary-minded workers. Many who were repelled by Stalinism turned back toward the Social Democratic parties, giving these formations fresh vitality after the low state into which they had fallen because of their counterrevolutionary role during World War I and its aftermath. The *class-collaborationist* policies of both the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties, reaching a peak in the ill-fated "people's fronts" of the mid-thirties, doomed the spontaneous mass mobilizations of the workers and their allies that could have toppled European capitalism in those days, given the guidance of revolutionary parties constructed in the Leninist way.

The exemplary action of the Bolsheviks in solving the crisis of leadership became more and more blurred in the minds of the working-class vanguard. The lessons were kept alive only by the small band of continuators of Leninism who stood with Trotsky against the stream and founded the Fourth International on the eve of World War II.

### 1. The Long Detour

The immense betrayal of the working class committed by the Stalinized Communist parties cost humanity a second world war, drenching Europe, North Africa, and the Far East with blood, and setting back civilization by decades.

The United States gained preeminence

among the imperialist powers. As a consequence of the destructive means taken to achieve this, however, world capitalism itself became so weakened, particularly in the German and Japanese sectors, as to permit the Soviet Union—thanks to the fundamental achievements of the October



revolution—to emerge victorious, if badly damaged, despite the counterrevolutionary policies of Stalinism that had paved the way for the German imperialist invasion of the first workers state.

The dual outcome of World War II—the American predominance over a weakened world capitalism on the one hand and the Soviet victory on the other—coupled with the profoundly unsettling effect of the war on a global scale, set the main political framework internationally for the subsequent quarter of a century.

At the close of World War II in 1945, the pundits of American imperialism envisioned a "Pax Americana"—an empire of greater power and stability than anything seen since the days of Rome. Holding a monopoly of the atomic bomb, with both Western Europe and Japan lying in ruins and the Soviet Union devastated by the conflict with Germany, the rulers of the United States set their sights on "finishing the job" by bringing China under the American empire, carrying the Stars and Stripes across Eastern Europe to the Pacific, and opening up these vast regions to the penetration of capital. The first phase of this operation was the "cold war" with Truman's atomic-bomb diplomacy and stated aim of "containing" and "rolling back" communism.

Inside the United States this policy led to McCarthyism, which was given its initial impulse in 1947 under Truman.

Several unexpected developments cut across the early realization of these ambitious plans. First of all, the American troops in Europe and the Far East refused to stay abroad. Spontaneous mobilizations involving contingents on a mass scale testified to the disintegration of these forces as an instrument of imperialist policy. The demand of the GIs to return home had to be granted and new armies had to be constructed to replace them. The most propitious time for striking was thus lost.

In addition, spontaneous upsurges of the masses in Western Europe (Italy and France above all) demonstrated the precariousness of capitalism in that key area. Time had to be taken by American imperialism to shore up capitalism there, this being done under the Marshall Plan.

Although the Stalinist parties played a decisive role through their class-collaborationist policies in betraying the first great postwar opportunities for socialist revolution in Western Europe from Greece to Belgium, they could not contain the colossal upsurge in the colonial sphere that proved decisive in setting back the U. S. imperialist timetable for world conquest.

A breathing space was granted to the Soviet Union that was turned to good account. To the astonishment and chagrin of the Pentagon, Soviet scientists broke the American monopoly of nuclear weapons, exploding an atomic bomb in 1949

and a hydrogen bomb in 1953.

Moreover, in the countries of Eastern Europe occupied by Soviet troops, Stalin in reply to the cold-war offensive carried out a series of overturns of capitalism that further strengthened the Soviet Union, thus indirectly giving another impulse to the revolutionary aspirations of the masses, especially in the colonial and semicolonial areas. Like the "patriotic war" conducted by the Kremlin against the German invaders, the overturns in Eastern Europe demonstrated that at times a bureaucratic caste, in defending or advancing its own interests, is impelled to undertake actions that run against its overall counterrevolutionary policies and have objectively revolutionary consequences.

The masses of China moved into the political arena by the tens of millions. Under the exceptional conditions provided by the invasion of Japanese imperialism and World War II, and under a spontaneous mass upsurge seldom if ever matched in history in its elemental force, the peasant armies that arose in a striking parallel to the ancient revolutionary pattern in China were able to defeat the reactionary forces headed by Chiang Kai-shek and bring the Maoist leadership to power. For a while, the new regime—a workers and farmers government of a type first foreseen by the Bolsheviks in 1922—sought to maintain capitalist relations under the formula of a "bloc of four classes." However, when it was compelled to mobilize in self-defense against the American imperialist intervention in Korea and the drive of General MacArthur's armies toward the border of China, the Maoist regime broke up China's capitalist economic structure, replacing it with a planned economy patterned after the Stalinist model in the Soviet Union.

This was an immense blow to the world capitalist system. It served to inspire hundreds of millions of the oppressed in all continents, and this effect was deepened as the standard of living of the masses in China rose swiftly in contrast to the abysmal level in India, a comparable country where the capitalist system and landlordism remained intact.

However, the peculiar pattern of the Chinese events was taken as a model by many revolutionists, who sought to transfer it to countries where conditions bore little resemblance to those in China. Guerrilla warfare in particular, instead of being taken as a tactic that had to be viewed in subordination to the key task of constructing a revolutionary party, was elevated to a strategy. It was thought that this strategy, with variations necessitated by the local terrain, could be applied universally.

It is, of course, true that in countries having a large peasant population the appearance of guerrilla contingents is often a sign of a rising revolutionary fer-

ment. Lenin noted the spontaneous development of guerrilla warfare in Czarist Russia at the time of the 1905 revolution and sought to take advantage of it—rather unsuccessfully as Trotsky observed in summing up the experience.

Guerrilla war, expanding into a so-called people's war, likewise played a role in the Vietnamese revolution. It also appeared in a positive way as an outgrowth of the mass peasant struggle in Peru under the leadership of Hugo Blanco. It is going on in the struggles against the Portuguese in Black Africa. It may appear again in the course of revolutionary developments in some countries, particularly where guerrillas have long been endemic.

In Cuba, the Castro team scored a brilliant success by relying on guerrilla warfare to open the struggle against Batista. The victory of the first socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere greatly reinforced the appeal of guerrilla warfare as a strategy, especially in Latin America.

The victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959 marked the high point in the influence of the Chinese pattern. On a deeper level, the particular course of the Cuban revolution resulted from the default of Stalinism and its disorientation of the workers movement, which imposed a prolonged delay in the revolution. Had it not been for the role of the Cuban Communist party in fostering class collaborationism under Batista, and had a genuine mass Leninist party existed, the Cuban revolution could have been achieved in the mid-thirties.

The victory in 1959 also marked the beginning of something new. The Cuban leaders were not of the Stalinist school—many of them were consciously anti-Stalinist. Although they were of petty-bourgeois origin, the Castro-Guevara team outflanked Stalinism from the left, opening a new phase in resolving the world crisis of proletarian leadership despite the fact that they themselves faltered in this task and eventually gave it up.

In the beginning, the Cubans undertook exemplary measures. Defying pressure from the imperialist giant only ninety miles away, they mobilized the masses and established a workers and farmers government, began a deepgoing agrarian reform, and dismantled the key sectors of the capitalist structure. Proceeding further, they set up a monopoly of foreign trade and initiated economic planning. With the establishment of a workers state, they undertook a whole series of progressive measures that included eliminating mass unemployment, racial discrimination, illiteracy, and other perennial social scourges. They launched an ambitious program of building low-rent housing. They gave an immediate lift to the standard of living of the masses, and, still more significantly, opened up completely new long-range perspectives for the



Castro addressing mass rally in Havana.



masses, including a comprehensive educational system.

Small wonder that the Cuban revolution gave enormous impetus to movements with similar emancipatory goals throughout the colonial world.

In the imperialist countries, including the United States, the Cuban revolution caught the imagination of hundreds of thousands of young persons, particularly the student youth, and was instrumental in bringing many of them toward revolutionary Marxism.

In Latin America an entire generation of revolutionary-minded militants devoted themselves to preparing for guerrilla war and engaging in it under the conviction that it had proved to be a surefire shortcut to victory or the only alternative to parliamentarism. The acceptance of guerrilla warfare in Latin America was not attributable to its greater applicability in this region in contrast to countries in Africa, the Middle East, or Southeast Asia, but to the direct inspiration and impact of the Cuban revolution. At the same time the consistent advocates of guerrilla warfare as a strategy could hardly confine its use to Latin America and had logically to consider and to urge its use in other areas in opposition to the methods of Leninism.

Of all the many ventures in guerrilla warfare throughout Latin America following the Cuban revolution, not a single

one has led to success. The roster of those who tried it includes top-rated experts: Uceda de la Puente in Peru, Carlos Mari-ghela in Brazil, Yon Sosa in Guatemala, and Che Guevara himself in Bolivia, not to mention dozens of less publicized figures who devoted intensive study and practice to the strategy.

A major element in their failures was the improvement in counterstrategy developed by imperialism, and the ability of the Pentagon to deploy substantial forces under its guidance in the arena of struggle.

Another element was misjudgment of the political situation. In China a mighty revolution poured human resources on an immense scale into the peasant armies and their guerrilla adjuncts. In Latin America the theoreticians and practitioners of guerrilla warfare put things upside down. It was their conviction that the mere appearance of determined guerrillas could prove sufficient to set a human tide rolling like the one that finally toppled capitalism in China, or if not a movement on that scale then at least one comparable to that of the Cuban revolution. Consequently miniscule groups, completely isolated from the masses, engaged in operations that were put down with relative ease by the bourgeois armed forces and their imperialist backers, a conspicuous example being the guerrilla front opened by Guevara in Bolivia.

## 2. The Turn in the Pattern of Revolution and the New Upsurge of Workers Struggles

Unperceived by the guerrilla groups, a deepgoing change in mood was taking place among the masses by the mid-sixties in many parts of the world, including the areas where the guerrillas sought to set up fronts. Whereas in China, because of the exceptional circumstances mentioned above, the peasantry had taken the lead through its armies (the Maoists even put down working-class actions upon entering the cities), in Latin America the peasant struggle temporarily subsided while the urban masses began to move forward.

This shift was evidenced in a highly dramatic form in the spontaneous mass uprising in Santo Domingo in 1965. In a few days, the urban masses seized control of the city, won over part of the army, distributed arms on a broad scale, and opened a mass armed struggle that had good chances of success. It took massive intervention by U. S. troops, coupled with the absence of a seasoned revolutionary leadership, to contain and then crush the insurrection.

The Santo Domingo uprising signaled what was happening on a broad scale in the colonial and semicolonial countries having a large peasant population—the city was reasserting its political hege-

mony over the countryside, the proletariat was again coming into position to press its claim to leadership. The long detour away from the main road of the world revolution in the aftermath of World War II was coming to an end.

In Bolivia, one of the reasons for Guevara's lack of success in setting up a guerrilla front was his expectation that the peasants would respond to his initiative. But the pattern of revolution Guevara had in mind did not correspond to the reality. The peasants did not respond, nor did they respond to the actions of the Peredo brothers and others who sought to continue what Guevara had begun. On the other hand, in the great Bolivian social and political crises of the following years, the workers in La Paz, along with the miners, traditionally the backbone of the proletarian revolution in Bolivia, played a major role in battling the reaction and seeking to move forward.

In Chile, which moved into the political forefront in Latin America with the victory of the Allende government in 1970, the city clearly outweighed the countryside, the workers of Santiago in particular mobilizing again and again, a fact that could have assured victory

had a revolutionary party existed.

Even in China a certain increase in the weight of the urban centers was observable during the "cultural revolution." This was particularly clear in the case of Shanghai at the end of 1966 and beginning of 1967 when the workers, raising a series of demands aimed at improving their standard of living, moved into action against the local bureaucracy.

The shift in focus toward the urban centers was paralleled by a rise in militancy of the workers in the imperialist sector. In their interplay, the two developments tended to reinforce each other on an international scale.

This was apparent in the giant student demonstrations in Mexico City in July-October 1968, which frightened the Mexican bourgeoisie into savage reprisals. It was to be seen in the great wave of demonstrations in Argentina in May 1969 that were touched off by the students in Corrientes and Rosario and that developed into successive urban explosions initiated by militant layers of the working class in Cordoba, Mendoza, etc. And it was visible in the strike struggles and student demonstrations that broke out in 1972 and 1973 in South Africa.

In France the rise in militancy took explosive form in 1968 when a student rebellion in Paris detonated a nationwide general strike involving ten to fifteen million workers. The absence of a mass revolutionary party prevented the general strike from following its logical course to the establishment of a workers government; and the Stalinists and Social Democrats were once again able to save the situation for the French bourgeoisie. May-June 1968 thus entered history as a rehearsal instead of the actual opening of the socialist revolution in France.

Aside from the dramatic demonstration of the rise of working-class militancy and the importance of the youth radicalization, the May-June 1968 events revealed that the control of the class-collaborationist labor bureaucracies over the workers in Western Europe had become eroded. This was a consequence of the wear and tear suffered by the Stalinist and Social Democratic bureaucratic machines coupled with the increasing tendency of the workers to move into action under pressure from the deepening contradictions of capitalism and its incapacity to grant them long-lasting concessions.

The new rise of the class struggle in Western Europe was soon confirmed by the "creeping May" that plunged Italy into a prerevolutionary situation in the fall of 1969.

As the upsurge of workers combativity in France and Italy continued, marked by numerous strike actions, the Spanish proletariat in 1970 also began to move. Mass mobilizations, nationally coordinated by the clandestine Comisiones Ob-



reras, protested the Burgos trial of the Basque nationalists and the victimization of other political prisoners. The years 1971-73 saw a series of militant strikes—Madrid construction workers, SEAT, El Ferrol, Bessos, Pamplona—actions that tended to grow over into even broader mobilizations against the Francoist dictatorship, challenging the Spanish rulers on a level not seen since the crushing defeat of the Spanish proletariat in the 1930s.

In Britain the mobilizations against the Industrial Relations Act, the occupation of the Upper Clydeside shipyards, and the militant strikes by the miners and dockers were all steps in a sharpening of social tensions and deepening confrontation between labor and the British ruling class that reached a new level at the end of 1973.

The rise was also reflected in the new stage of the Irish struggle. Mass mobilizations occurred in Derry in October 1968 and January 1969.

In North America, the deepening struggle in Quebec expressed itself through giant nationalist demonstrations in 1968-71; and through the continual rise of labor militancy over the past decade. The April-May 1972 upsurge in Quebec, initiated by a general strike of public-service employees, was the most important working-class battle in North America in many years.

Inside the United States, besides the rise of the antiwar movement, the struggle for Black liberation erupted in the proletarian ghettos of the big cities in elemental social explosions, the first one of spectacular proportions occurring in the Watts section of Los Angeles in 1965.

In Latin America, as the focus of the class struggle shifted more and more obviously to the cities, the guerrilla strategists likewise shifted, abandoning their efforts to establish military bases in the countryside. In place of this orientation, they initiated "urban guerrilla warfare." The most prominent exponents of this new line were the Tupamaros in Uruguay and the left-wing Peronists and the PRT-ERP in Argentina.

Like the practitioners of rural guerrilla warfare, the urban guerrilla groups have displayed a fatal inability to grasp the role of a Bolshevik-type party implanted in the masses. Consequently they see no need to build one. Some of them openly reject it, although it is doubtful whether they know what they are rejecting, being unable to distinguish between Stalinism and Leninism. They substitute their own action for that of the toiling masses and therefore stand apart from the struggle of the masses, which remains terra incognita to them. They reduce armed struggle to the caricature of small groups engaging in "expropriations," kidnappings, and other terroristic actions that may win them

applause but not leadership of the masses.

The rising temperature and increasing extent of the mass struggle in the cities has tended to further isolate the guerrilla groups. As this process continues to develop, more serious contenders for political leadership will come to the fore. In the long run these will prove to be the ones willing and able to learn from the example given by Lenin and Trotsky, particularly how to use the transitional method to build a revolutionary party of the masses.

The Fourth International does not reject guerrilla warfare under all circumstances. It views the utilization of guerrilla warfare as a tactical question to be weighed in the light of concrete situations that may arise in the course of struggle. What the Fourth International does oppose under all circumstances is the view that a small group can bypass the arduous task of constructing a Leninist-type party by substituting for the masses in armed struggle.

While rejecting the concept of guerrilla warfare as a panacea or a shortcut to power, the Fourth International recognizes the courage and dedication of guerrillas who stake their lives in such operations. Against the blows directed against them by reactionaries of all stripes, the Fourth International expresses its solidarity with the guerrilla fighters. Nonetheless it criticizes their course of action as politically mistaken and urges them to give deeper study and consideration to the Leninist-Trotskyist way of engaging in the revolutionary struggle for workers

### 3. Interplay of Victories and Defeats in the Three Sectors of the World Revolution

The interplay of developments in the three sectors of the world revolution in the past decade has been extraordinarily clear.

On the walls of the Sorbonne in imperialist France during the stirring events of May-June 1968, the most prominent portraits were those of Che Guevara, Mao Tsetung, Ho Chi Minh, and Leon Trotsky. While the selection of these particular portraits reflected the views of contending political currents among the radicalizing students in Paris, they also indicated a common motivation, "Let's make the revolution!"

The example of the French students and that of the French working class in the great general strike touched off by the rebellion in the universities served in turn to inspire the students and workers in other lands, an outstanding instance being the student demonstrations in Mexico City in 1968.

A current example of this interplay came in the closing months of 1973. Through giant rallies and marches involving crowds of more than 100,000

power.

Above all, the Fourth International calls attention to the turn in the pattern of the world revolution. Today the urban masses, with their own forms of struggle and class organization, are moving to the center of the stage.

As the proletariat again asserts its leading role in the international class struggle in a direct way, the revolutionary process will advance qualitatively. In the cities, the poverty-stricken layers of the populace, including oppressed minorities, will rally to the side of the proletariat; and the entire movement will become a powerful pole of attraction to the masses in the countryside, a phenomenon long ago anticipated by Trotsky in his theory of permanent revolution.

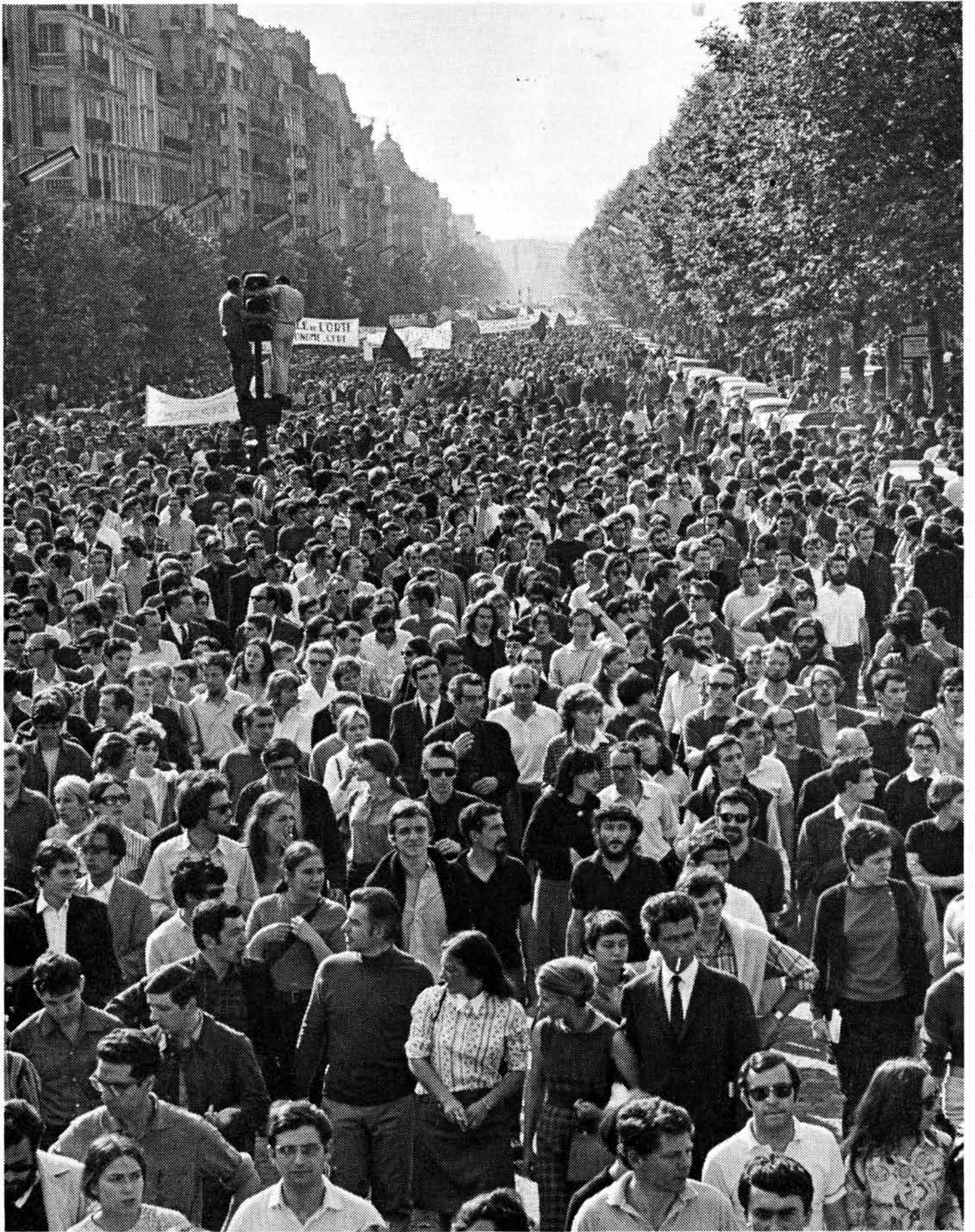
In colonial and semicolonial countries where the agrarian question remains acute, the inevitable new upsurges of the peasantry will add fresh dynamism to the revolutionary process. As in the Russian revolution, the proletariat and the peasantry in the coming period will tend to act in *combination* under the leadership of the proletariat (unlike the case of China, for example, in the 1940s).

Thus the turn in the pattern of the world revolution clearly signals the opening of a period in which it will become possible for revolutionary-Marxist nuclei to gain mass bases at an accelerated rate, in that way moving into position to supply the element of political consciousness required to resolve the historical crisis in proletarian leadership.

persons, the Bangkok students, backed by the workers, brought down a hated military regime in Thailand October 14. Within four weeks, on the opposite side of the globe in Athens, student demonstrations backed by workers scored a partial victory by bringing down Papadopoulos, the leading figure of the military dictatorship in Greece. Among the slogans shouted by the Athenian students, a favorite one was "Thailand!"

As for the Soviet bloc, the Prague Spring in 1968 was in part inspired by the example of the Vietnamese in resisting the U. S. imperialist invasion and by the example of the student antiwar protests and demonstrations in Western Europe and the United States.

In the imperialist centers, the Algerian and Cuban revolutions played a big role in helping to radicalize the youth, particularly in France, the United States, and Canada. The Chinese revolution played a similar role in many countries. The Russian revolution of 1917 had an effect in both the colonial world and the imperialist centers that has not yet been



June 1, 1968, student demonstration in Paris.

December 23, 1974



paralleled and that still remains fresh in the minds of older revolutionists.

Within the Soviet Union today, victories of the colonial peoples, setbacks to imperialism, and the radicalization in the West serve alike to feed the fires of rebellion against the bureaucracy. On the other hand, the reports filtering out of the Soviet Union of courageous defiance of the bureaucrats and their political police by intransigent fighters for proletarian democracy help encourage revolutionists in both colonial and imperialist countries to fight more energetically against capitalist oppression.

The current rise of workers struggles in Western Europe is bound to encourage similar trends elsewhere. One of the zones where this influence can have an early effect because of its proximity is Eastern Europe. The countries there, intended by Stalin to serve as buffers against military invasions from the capitalist West, have already shown how readily they can become converted into transmission belts of revolutionary ferment directed against the bureaucratic ruling caste in the Soviet Union. An impressive example of this was the rebellion of the Polish workers at the end of 1970 and beginning of 1971 that brought down Gomulka, inspiring political dissidents in the Soviet Union and frightening the Kremlin.

While counterrevolutionary capitalist ideology may follow this path of entry to a certain degree, experience has shown that the buffer zone has much greater affinity for revolutionary ideology and for revolutionary examples emanating from the oppressed layers in the capitalist countries. It is this, and not the influence of bourgeois "life-styles" or of "hippie culture," that worries the Kremlin's watchdogs. Their own life-style is bourgeois to the core, as they show before television cameras whenever they hold a summit conference with imperialist statesmen like Nixon and Kissinger. The top Kremlin bureaucrats are themselves the most important generators of bourgeois influence in the Soviet Union. That is one more reason why they must be removed by the Soviet workers.

Also to be taken into account are defeats to the world revolution. Some revolutionary Marxists do not like to analyze defeats. They prefer to concentrate on victories—which are preferable from the viewpoint of recruiting. But defeats are of decided importance in learning how to avoid repeating errors and in determining what tasks to undertake. Defeats are likewise important because of the repercussions that must be taken into account. They directly set back the revolutionary cause in the sector in which they occur, and they act as depressants in other sectors.

The series of defeats suffered in Latin America because of reliance on the guerrilla strategy had a decided effect on

world events. One of the reasons for the confidence of the Pentagon in plunging into Indochina was its conviction that it had mastered an effective "counterinsurgency" technique. As defeat after defeat occurred in Latin America, enthusiasm over the Cuban revolution waned elsewhere, quite visibly in the United States and also in the Soviet bloc countries.

The effect of two bitter defeats suffered in Brazil in 1964 and Indonesia in 1965 can be judged by considering how victories in those countries would have exhilarated the masses internationally and given mighty impulses to the world revolution.

The defeat in 1960 of the movement headed by Patrice Lumumba in the Congo not only threw back the African liberation movement as a whole, it was keenly felt in the Black liberation struggle in the United States. In the final analysis, the assassination of Malcolm X in New York in 1965 hurt the struggle in Africa.

The downfall of the Ben Bella regime in Algeria in 1965 likewise served as a source of discouragement to revolutionists throughout the Arab countries and elsewhere. Instead of another Cuban revolution lighting up the Maghreb and areas far beyond the Mediterranean, the Algerian revolution went into eclipse.

The signing of the Paris accords in 1973 represented a setback to the Vietnamese revolution. Although Washington did not realize its full goal of smashing the Vietnamese revolution and had to withdraw its troops, it remained in a relatively favorable position to preserve a capitalist South Vietnam. Instead of being able to point to a clear-cut success, revolutionists had to face up to the unfavorable aspects of the cease-fire that Hanoi was forced to accept. This task was made more difficult because the leading figures of the North Vietnamese government hailed the ambiguous compromise as an unalloyed victory.

The recent defeat in Chile was immediately interpreted by counterrevolutionary forces in neighboring countries as strengthening their hand. It cast a visible pall among vanguard elements in the imperialist sectors who were confronted with the need to organize elementary acts of solidarity with the victims of the junta instead of riding the wave of a great new victory with all the favorable consequences this would have had in their own countries.

In the Arab East the rise of the Palestinian resistance helped offset the effects of the 1967 defeat and fostered a revival of the Arab revolution as a whole. This development suffered severe setbacks in the September 1970 civil war in Jordan and later in Lebanon and other countries. As the considerably weakened Palestinian resistance organizations shifted to the right politically, individual terrorism

gained headway out of desperation.

These reversals facilitated attempts of the bourgeois Arab regimes to reach a settlement with the Israeli settler-colonial state at the expense of the Palestinian people. The mounting pressure from the Arab masses to end the continued Israeli occupation of Arab lands, coupled with the beginnings of a revival of the mass movement in Egypt, led in October 1973 to the renewal of war. While the political purpose of the war, from the point of view of the Egyptian and Syrian regimes, was to head off the mass movement and gain a better bargaining position for a settlement with Israel, and while the favorable showing of the Arab armies gave these regimes an enhanced prestige, the war also fostered a vastly increased feeling of confidence among the Arab masses, which will redound in the last analysis to the advantage of the Arab revolution.

The interplay of victories and defeats among the three sectors shows how important it is to watch for the possible effect of events in one sector upon happenings in the other two. Besides paying close attention to this aspect, revolutionists must do their utmost to see that accurate information about events is gathered and passed from one sector to another. The importance of the revolutionary press appears in a new light when viewed from this angle. Even more, everything said and done by revolutionists must be weighed not only for the possible consequences in a given country but also for their possible repercussions in other areas. Revolutionists bear an *international responsibility* for their course in the national arena.

For the Fourth International, which has sections and sympathizing groups all around the world, this has a special meaning.

As a class whose destiny it is to take human society beyond capitalism to the worldwide planned economic structure of socialism, the workers have interests that can properly be appreciated, defended, and represented only on an international level, that is, as a whole. The working class requires an international consciousness.

Without for a moment losing sight of the fact that the proletarian revolution moves along the spiral of separate countries in taking state power, the vanguard must insert the particularities of this struggle into their overall sweep and global interrelations. For this, a staff of cadres is needed—a world party of the socialist revolution.

This party, which the components of the Fourth International have sought to build for thirty-five years, follows and seeks to influence the interplay of trends in all three sectors. The analyses, proposals, and actions of the Fourth International

register the advancing level of political consciousness achieved by the interna-

tional proletarian vanguard. In this respect they constitute essential contributions

to resolving the crisis of proletarian leadership on a world scale.

### III. Radicalization and Mobilization of the Allies of the Proletariat

To break out of the decaying capitalist economic and social framework and move toward socialism, the proletariat requires the assistance of various allies. In the countryside, these include the lower layers of the peasantry; in the towns and cities, the students, artisans, members of the professions, small shopkeepers, etc. It is a problem of class leadership to break the grip of the bourgeoisie on these sectors and win them to the cause of socialism.

In the epoch of the death agony of capitalism, as is well known, the millions of persons standing between the two basic classes can be hard hit economically—sufficiently so to cause them to begin of their own volition to seek a radical way out. Unless the proletariat offers effective leadership in time, opening up a realistic short-term perspective of establishing socialism, these natural allies of the working class can become demoralized. Out of frustration and desperation, they then become prey to fascist demagogues, as was tragically demonstrated in Italy, Germany, and elsewhere following World War I.

Since experiencing the realities of fascism in Europe, the petty bourgeoisie as a whole has tended to resist the appeals of reactionary demagogues. In this respect, the present situation is more favorable than that of the twenties and thirties. Nonetheless, with the passage of time and succession of generations, the historic memory of the experience with fascism has grown dim. Moreover, fascism is quite capable of putting on new masks that make it more difficult to identify. Consequently it would be a grave error to count on the relatively more favorable attitude of the petty bourgeoisie as a whole remaining a permanent feature of world politics.

An ominous sign was the success of the counterrevolution in Chile in gaining a following among the truckers, some of the university students, and petty-bourgeois housewives in the cities as the generals prepared the coup d'état that toppled the Allende government. The Social Democrats and Stalinists in Chile closed their eyes to the significance of this growing reactionary trend among sectors of the petty bourgeoisie. They failed to grasp that their own heads were at stake. Their course led to a heavy defeat for the Chilean revolution, the Chilean workers paying with the loss of tens of thousands of lives, destruction of their democratic rights, and a steep decline in their already

low standard of living.

The development of malignant currents among the Chilean petty bourgeoisie was not at all inevitable. Excellent possibilities existed in that country to win them to the side of the proletariat or at least to neutralize them. In fact, one of the most striking features of the current world political situation, including the situation in Chile when Allende took office, has been the repeated indications of the readiness of class forces closely linked to the proletariat to move in a revolutionary direc-

tion.

The upsurge in national liberation struggles, the radicalization of the youth on a scale extending far beyond the proletariat, and the sudden emergence of the women's liberation movement have been especially noteworthy. These promising developments demand close attention. Correctly approached, they can contribute in the most positive way to solving the crisis of proletarian leadership and to forming a revolutionary alliance with broad masses of the petty bourgeoisie.

#### 1. Growing Importance of National Liberation Struggles

The rise of national liberation struggles in all three sectors of the world—the colonial sphere, the imperialist metropolises, and the workers states—is one of the most striking features of the current international political situation. Properly guided, the national liberation movements can be mobilized as a powerful allied force in the proletarian struggle for socialism.

In the imperialist epoch, the national bourgeoisie in the industrially backward countries betrays its own revolution. Bourgeois democratic tasks, including the achievement of genuine national independence, can be carried out only through the socialist revolution, headed by the proletariat with the support of the urban and rural toiling masses, chiefly the peasants.

The proletarian party must seek to win leadership in the national liberation movements, wresting it from the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties. While revolutionary Marxists give no support whatsoever to the alien class program of the bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalists, they champion the revolutionary democratic demands of the oppressed masses. The program of Trotskyism stresses the independent class demands of the proletariat and the revolutionary democratic demands of an oppressed people such as a thoroughgoing agrarian reform and national independence. Only this combination enables a revolutionary Marxist party to win leadership in the national liberation struggles and to draw the toiling masses behind the proletariat in a struggle to establish a workers state.

This correct policy on the national question was one of the keys to the victory of the Russian revolution. The main lessons were incorporated in the program of the newly formed Third International, and a promising beginning was made

toward the construction of Communist parties in the colonial world. This process was furthered by the worldwide upsurge of national liberation struggles inspired by the example of the Russian revolution.

The growth of Stalinism cut across this development. On the one hand, particularly in the workers movement in the industrially advanced capitalist countries, Stalinism resurrected the concept, prevalent in the pre-1914 Social Democracy, that the national question had no special importance for the proletarian revolution, that it was a peripheral question to be solved in passing by the socialist revolution. On the other hand, in the colonial and semicolonial areas, Stalinism reverted to the old Menshevik "two-stage" theory of revolution, counseling the working class and oppressed masses to look to the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists as the natural leaders of the "first stage" of the revolution.

Thus the rise of Stalinism helped block the development of a proletarian leadership of the nationalist movements in the colonial and semicolonial countries. Bourgeois and petty-bourgeois demagogues were able to gain ascendancy in these movements for a prolonged period, portraying themselves without challenge from the Stalinists as the champions of the socialist and nationalist aspirations of the masses.

This reinforced the long detour from the classical pattern of socialist revolution. Many national liberation struggles in the colonial world achieved sufficient strength after World War II to win formal independence from the imperialists; some broke out of the capitalist system as in the cases of China, Cuba, North Vietnam, and North Korea; while others were defeated.

Although formal political independence





February 1972 march in Northern Ireland protesting Bloody Sunday massacre.

has been achieved in most of the former colonies of imperialism, national oppression by imperialism continues there in less direct form. The task of winning genuine national liberation still remains to be accomplished.

A good example is the Arab East, where the pressure of imperialism is decisive in maintaining the fragmentation of the Arab people. Arab nationalist consciousness, as expressed in the widespread sentiment for Arab national unification, plays a progressive role in inspiring the Arab masses to struggle against the imperialists, the Zionists, and indigenous reactionary layers opposed to national unification. Of particular importance in advancing the class struggle throughout the Arab world is the Palestinian liberation struggle against the Israeli settler-colonial state.

Under this mass pressure, various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois tendencies have adopted a militant posture as champions of Arab nationalism, Nasserism and Baathism being the chief examples. But these antiproletarian leaderships do not carry out a consistent struggle for their proclaimed nationalist objectives; they continually retreat in face of imperialist pressure. Above all, they fear independent mobilization of the Arab masses, even if it is initially limited to nationalist objectives that they themselves claim to support. Only a revolutionary Marxist party, advancing a rounded class-struggle program, can provide the leadership necessary to carry the struggle through to a socialist revolution, thereby winning the revolutionary nationalist demands raised by the Arab masses.

The national question takes another important form in semicolonial countries where the ruling regimes perpetuate oppression against other nationalities within their own borders, fostering chauvinism by the dominant nationality against them. The Bangladesh national liberation struggle, which exploded in 1971, offers a good example of how struggles against national oppression of this kind can lead to posing the question of workers power.

As the pattern of revolution resumes the classical form of mass urban insurrections, new opportunities open up for constructing revolutionary Marxist parties in the colonial and semicolonial countries. These can be built only by nuclei grounded in the rich Leninist-Trotskyist appreciation of the national question.

In recent years the national question has come into prominence within the imperialist centers themselves. Here the interplay between the democratic struggle against national oppression and the proletarian struggle for the socialist revolution occurs with particular forcefulness because of the high proletarian composition of the oppressed nationalities.

The rise of the Black struggle in the United States in the aftermath of World

War II was the first major example of this new development. The colonial revolution inspired the Black masses to struggle for their freedom. The relative quiescence of the working class in the United States reinforced the tendency of the Blacks to rely on themselves and to organize independently.

But this development was not unique. It was followed by the mass Chicano struggles and a growing radicalization of other oppressed nationalities in North America.

In Canada nationalist sentiment within the Quebecois working class has been a powerful force helping to fuel the radicalization of labor and affecting all aspects of the class struggle.

In capitalist Europe, the most recent upsurge in the Irish national liberation struggle has been one of the central components of the post-1968 upsurge of the class struggle. Beginning as a mass movement for democratic rights, demanding an end to the repression required to maintain the division of the country and its subordination to British imperialism, the Irish struggle reached its high point in January-February 1972 when British repression of a large civil-rights demonstration in Derry in the North led to a massive workers mobilization in the formally independent part of the country.

After that, however, the movement went into decline for want of an adequate leadership. The petty-bourgeois nationalists of the Provisional IRA centered on terrorism, while the Official IRA, in turning toward a socialist perspective, slid over to economism, leaving the nationalist-minded masses to the petty-bourgeois nationalists. The far left in Ireland and Britain promoted this degenerative process by idealizing the militarism of the petty-bourgeois nationalists.

The revival of the Irish liberation struggle has given impetus to the development of national democratic movements among the other oppressed nationalities living in Britain and elsewhere in Europe, such as Brittany, for example, where the nationalist groups have traditionally been closely affected by developments in Ireland.

In general, from the Euskaldun (Basques) in Spain and France to the Koreans in Japan, there has been a growing upsurge of national liberation struggles in the advanced capitalist countries. Even where their numbers are extremely small either relatively or absolutely, as in the case of the Same people (Lapps) in Norway and Sweden, the Native Americans in North America, the Aborigines in Australia, and the Maoris in New Zealand, the struggles of such historically oppressed peoples can have an effect far beyond their size. Growing consciousness of the oppression of such peoples, and support for their struggles against that oppression, helps advance the radicaliza-

tion of the working class as a whole.

The attempts at greater economic coordination among the ruling capitalist classes in Western Europe exacerbate regional inequalities of development, which tend to reflect historical political inequalities. Consequently, the development of nationalist and even separatist movements is likely among the smaller oppressed peoples. Although in many cases these movements may initially reflect the illusions and parochial ambitions of petty local capitalist interests, revolutionary Marxists vigorously support the democratic struggles of such peoples, and challenge the type of economic integration conducted by capitalism.

In cases where minority peoples have some economic advantages but are politically oppressed, as are the Catalans, the generally declining prospects for bourgeois democracy may result in sharp struggles against the bourgeois order. Such struggles may considerably facilitate the task of socialist revolutionaries.

Another aspect of the national question in Western Europe is the struggle of the immigrant workers, who compose an increasingly important proportion of the work force in several countries. Suffering from the worst job conditions and the highest degree of exploitation, and faced by intensifying racist discrimination in daily life, these workers form the potentially most militant and explosive sector of the proletariat.

The rise of national liberation struggles in the imperialist countries has added explosiveness to the social tensions in the urban centers. The class struggle is not reducible to the issues of wages, jobs, and working conditions but takes many forms. It includes the struggle against all types of oppression characteristic of the capitalist era and against all those inherited from previous historical eras, which capitalism perpetuates, extends, and intensifies. The industrial proletariat is the decisive force in the class struggle, but it is not the only component, and it is not sufficient in most countries—it requires allies. Revolutionary Marxists must champion the struggles of all the oppressed, advancing the leadership of the proletariat.

The national question is also of signal importance in the bureaucratized workers states. The struggle against forms of national oppression perpetuated and fostered by the bureaucratic caste is becoming increasingly prominent in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. It is emerging as a major component in the political revolution. In the struggle against the menacing rise of bureaucratism in the Soviet Union, which he launched just before his death, Lenin singled out Stalin's reactionary record on the national question as one of the key issues. The Trotskyist Left Opposition continued the struggle begun by Lenin.



The correctness of this stand was shown in major antibureaucratic struggles that broke out following World War II such as the workers upsurge in East Germany in 1953, the Hungarian political revolution in 1956, the Polish upsurge of the same year, and the Czechoslovak explosion in 1968. Each of these upsurges had to confront not only the indigenous Stalinist bureaucracies but above all the Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow, which attempted to overturn the will of the masses in each of these other countries. Not only does national oppression manifest itself in the Kremlin's military intervention, but also in other ways, such as the subordination of the economic plans of the East European workers states to Soviet needs. Thus, the struggle against national oppression is a key feature of the unfolding political revolution in Eastern Europe.

In the Soviet Union itself national oppression bears down in an even more immediate way. There the bureaucracy has succeeded up to now in maintaining a tight grip on the oppressed nationalities. But the recent growth of antibureaucratic dissidence in the USSR shows that this situation may be changing. Resistance among the Ukrainians, the Baltic peoples, and deported nationalities such as the Crimean Tatars has been on the rise.

The extent of similar movements within China is not known because of the tightness of Peking's censorship.

It is essential for revolutionary Marxist

nuclei in the bureaucratized workers states to champion the struggles of oppressed nationalities for liberation from their oppression, including their right to self-determination.

Reactionary political currents have continually attempted to turn the justified anti-Stalinist hostility of the oppressed nationalities against the interests of the workers states and the world revolution. For example, the Zionists have been able to make some gains by basing themselves on Jewish opposition to Stalinist-fostered anti-Semitism. Such dangers make it all the more important for revolutionary Marxists to take the lead in the struggle against national oppression within the Soviet bloc, and to steer it toward a battle for socialist democracy.

As the economy and culture of the workers states advance, the burden of national oppression becomes all the more intolerable; and the interplay between the struggle against national oppression and the antibureaucratic political revolution becomes ever tighter, a development enhanced by the high proletarian composition of the oppressed nationalities in the European workers states.

Of particular importance by virtue of size and strategic position is the struggle of the Ukrainian masses against Great Russian domination. The Fourth International's call for an independent Soviet Ukraine remains in the forefront of the program for political revolution in the USSR.

## 2. International Radicalization of the Youth

University and high-school youth have in some countries long constituted hotbeds of political ferment, often serving as a sensitive barometer of impending shifts in other layers of the population. Revolutionary movements on all continents have always drawn some of their best cadres from the campus.

In recent decades the school population has greatly expanded as one of the consequences of the need of the capitalist system to provide pools of skilled workers and technicians for industry. Thus the campuses have grown in social weight out of sheer numbers and have been exercising more and more influence in the intellectual and cultural life of most countries. Economic, social, and political crises tend to find sharp and prompt expression among students and their responses easily pass beyond the campus, affecting layers of working-class youth in the factories.

This is, of course, not a one-way process. Working-class struggles can meet with responses of broad scope on the campus. In the final analysis, the political mood of students and teachers is determined by the status of the conflict between wage labor and capital. However, the re-

lationship between the two is not usually direct and immediate. Their development proceeds in an uneven way, each having a logic of its own.

The correctness of these generalizations was borne out to a remarkable degree during the eight years of massive military intervention by U. S. imperialism in Indochina. The antiwar movement took initial form in student protests and teach-ins on key campuses in the United States.

The rebellion on the American campuses, spilling over into the populace as a whole and beginning to affect the ranks of the armed forces, and finally the organized labor movement, was a central reason for the deep tactical division that appeared in the ruling class over the war in Vietnam. This rebellion—coupled with the stubborn resistance of the Vietnamese fighters—compelled Nixon and his business backers to finally withdraw U. S. ground troops from Vietnam.

With this victory, the student movement subsided in the United States. However, it would be a mistake to think that the curtain has now been drawn on American students serving as a source of ferment, and concluding that what they did is now

ancient history, never to be repeated. The students that participated in the great demonstrations are now being absorbed into jobs where their experience as active opponents of the war in Vietnam will inevitably find expression in the great working-class struggles that lie ahead.

The younger age levels replacing them on the campus are not much different from them and will respond in a similar way, if not on a higher and more effective level, as further events compel them to assess their perspectives in the light of the realities of capitalist society as a whole.

It should be observed, too, that the Trotskyist movement in the United States has gained from the youth radicalization. The Young Socialist Alliance is now the leading youth organization in the far left in the United States. The Socialist Workers Party likewise expanded in membership and influence as a consequence of the youth radicalization, gaining in particular a new generation of cadres initially recruited to the YSA.

Internationally the most brilliant example of what a student rebellion can lead to was shown in France in May-June 1968. The underlying causes and consequences of that rebellion continue to operate, as has been shown by the big mobilizations among the high-school and university students in France and Belgium against the conscription laws.

Out of the May-June 1968 student rebellion, sizable forces were won for the Trotskyist movement in France. Before it was banned in 1973, the Ligue Communiste had moved ahead as an increasingly influential force in the far left in Western Europe. In the Fourth International at the time, it ranked as the largest section in the world.

Elsewhere in Europe, the youth radicalization brought fresh forces to the Trotskyist movement in Belgium, Britain, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

In Argentina the youth radicalization, beginning with mobilizations over "student" issues on the campus, touched off mass mobilizations in the cities. The working-class upsurges in Cordoba, Rosario, Mendoza, and other cities finally compelled the bourgeoisie to retire the military junta and resurrect Peron so as to gain time against the mounting mass movement. In this situation, the Trotskyist movement won several thousand new adherents.

In 1973 the international student movement was again in the headlines. In South Korea demonstrating students gave the Park regime reason for renewed concern over its capacity to retain its grip. In Thailand huge demonstrations, spearheaded by students and backed by workers, shook the government, causing the ruling generals to flee the country. In Greece similar demonstrations, involving



November 1969 antiwar demonstration in San Francisco.



a large percentage of workers, caused the officer caste to replace Papadopoulos, hoping by that concession to stave off worse injury to the capitalist government and the system it serves.

The sudden appearance of these three new centers of massive student action served to underline the continuing importance of the youth radicalization on a world scale and its potential in the coming period.

The student protests of the 1960s and 1970s have often combined broad political issues of the class struggle on a national and international scale with issues relating to specific concerns of students. The same expansion of education that increased the social weight of student actions also accentuated the contradictions between the role of the educational system as an institution of capitalist rule and the needs and aspirations of the majority of students.

The mounting economic and social crisis of world capitalism further exacerbates these contradictions. The capitalists in all countries today are compelled to "rationalize" education: forcing students and their families to pay more of the cost of schooling; tying the content and organization of education even more directly than before to the needs of big business; moving to sharply limit the availability of education other than purely vocational; and instituting measures to restrict students' political freedom.

These developments lay the basis for increasing sharp conflicts between the students and the capitalist rulers—conflicts of direct concern to the masses of workers, who desire availability of education for their children. Recent instances of such conflicts include the struggles against the Claes-Hurez measures in Belgium; against the Debre law and Fontanet decrees in France; against tuition increases and cutbacks in aid to education in Canada, the United States, and other countries; and for increased student grants in Great Britain.

The radicalization of the youth, while opening up extraordinary opportunities for the revolutionary-Marxist movement, has also confronted it with difficult challenges. On the political level these stem in the main from the perennial impatience of the youth, which inclines many of them toward ultraleft postures or to simplistic pseudosolutions to the complex and difficult problem of mobilizing and organizing the working class and its allies in a struggle for power. The same cast of mind opens them to opportunistic turns that can prove just as deadly in diverting the movement from a revolutionary course.

Throughout the past decade and a half, this has required consistent battling against New Leftism, Maoism, anarchism, and various other currents of opportunist,

adventurist, or sectarian bent. Although the rank class-collaborationism of the Social Democrats and pro-Moscow Stalinists prevented them from making great headway among revolutionary-minded youth during the height of the imperialist aggression in Indochina, they can recover unless a consistent struggle is waged against them. This was demonstrated by the way in which the Stalinists were able to regain positions in the labor movement in various Latin American countries after suffering an eclipse in face of the revolutionary victory in Cuba. The Social Democratic formations in some countries can likewise recuperate by seeming to offer

### 3. New Rise of Women's Struggles

The international youth radicalization served as a powerful impetus to a new rise of struggles by women. Like the youth radicalization itself, women's liberation also drew inspiration from the colonial struggles and the movements of the oppressed nationalities in the advanced capitalist countries. The character and form of the women's liberation struggles today are rooted in the profound economic and social changes of the post-World War II years, and the deepening contradictions in the status of women and in the patriarchal family system.

In its first stages the women's liberation movement was taken by some to be a North American phenomenon. However, it soon appeared in other countries, and it is continuing to spread in an uneven way. From Australia, New Zealand, and Japan to Britain, France, and Italy, the vanguard of women are speaking a common language, pressing similar issues, and taking similar initiatives in action.

The new rise of women's struggles is a clear index of the depth of the crisis of the bourgeois social order.

Additional proof of this was the fact that in the wake of the women's liberation movement, homosexuals in the United States and other countries began fighting openly for an end to the stigmas attached to their views and practices and for an end to proscription of the right of all humans to freely determine their sexual preferences. In some countries their struggle has advanced significantly in the past few years in gaining public recognition and support of their democratic rights—a telling indication of the far-reaching impact of the deepening political radicalization.

From the beginning, revolutionary Marxists hailed the new upsurge of women's struggles and plunged into the thick of the movement. In doing so, they stood in the tradition of such figures as Marx, Engels, Bebel, Lenin, and Trotsky, who understood the revolutionary significance and importance of women's battles

a plausible alternative to socialist-minded young people repelled by Stalinism.

In opposition to these variegated tendencies, the Fourth International, with its program based on the principles of Leninism and Trotskyism, offers another though hard road, requiring the utmost in dedication and self-sacrifice. Only the best of the younger generation of students and workers are capable of following that road to the end, but that end is victory for the cause of worldwide socialism. And follow it they will in the coming period; today in small contingents, tomorrow by the hundreds of thousands and eventually millions.

for their liberation.

The Fourth International recognized that the rise of women's struggles was important for the development of the class struggle. This recognition stemmed from the historical materialist analysis of the oppression of women as an indispensable aspect of class society and from an understanding that the patriarchal family is one of the basic institutions of class rule. The struggle of women against their oppression tends to develop in an anticapitalist direction, and is a potentially powerful ally of the working class as a whole in the struggle for socialism. Struggles by women against their oppression provide an avenue to reach and mobilize the most exploited and oppressed layers of the working class. They help to break the stranglehold of reactionary bourgeois ideology, and are part of the battle to educate, politicize and mobilize the entire class around the needs and demands of the most exploited layers.

Many sectarians and ultralefts failed to recognize the importance of the new rise of women's struggles. They either ignored it, abstained from it, or denounced it as "bourgeois feminism." They saw only the fact that it was oftentimes women from petty-bourgeois and even bourgeois backgrounds who first voiced the demands of women. They failed to comprehend the dynamic of the struggle for women's liberation and to recognize that the issues raised were of greatest importance to the most exploited—to those from the working class and oppressed nationalities—and that this would eventually bring these layers to the fore. They failed to comprehend the interrelationship of women's oppression and class society.

Struggles around issues such as *legalized abortion*—an elementary democratic right—immediately touch on broader oppressive features of class society.

The struggle for women's liberation will, in its normal course of development, encompass and transcend the issues with



November 1971 demonstration in Washington, D.C., demanding legalization of right to abortion.



which it began. It will merge, as a distinct current, into the general struggle of the proletariat for the socialist revolution. The road of this development is quite clear. It will proceed through battling over such issues as the right to *full legal, political and social equality; legalized abortion and contraception; an end to bourgeois and feudal family law; equal educational opportunities; job equality and equal pay for equal work; and government-financed childcare facilities.*

The struggle for women's liberation is interlocked with the proletarian revolution in various ways. Within the organized labor movement it is an important component of the general battle to transform the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle by convincing the most conscious workers to take up and fight for the needs and demands of the most oppressed and exploited layers of the class. Directly involved in this is the role of the trade unions in safeguarding and advancing the standard of living of the workers as a whole. Revolutionists should take the lead in pressing the trade unions to fight for the demands raised by women

in industry and outside.

A similarly important interrelationship between the women's liberation movement and the proletarian revolution is offered by the struggle for national liberation. Women oppressed because of their nationality as well as their sex and status as workers may join the struggle for national liberation. But this struggle itself moves toward socialism in search of final solutions to the problems that have created it. Consequently women involved in national liberation movements are drawn in the direction of revolutionary socialism. They see socialism as a triple revolution—against wage slavery, against sexism, against national oppression.

Forms of struggle must be developed capable of mobilizing masses of women, awakening their creative capacities and initiatives, bringing them together, destroying their domestic isolation, increasing their confidence in their own abilities, their own intelligence, independence, and strength.

Through their own battles women will have to learn who are their class allies and who are their enemies. They will come to understand the interrelationship between

their oppression as a sex and class exploitation, and the need for proletarian methods of struggle which reject all forms of class collaboration.

Participating in these battles, revolutionary Marxists will be able to demonstrate in action that our perspectives, program and fighting capacities are capable of providing the kind of leadership necessary.

The default of the Stalinists and Social Democrats, and the sectarian foolishness of the ultralefts, make the new rise of women's struggles of special importance to the Fourth International as an arena where new cadres can be won and where our limited forces can gain valuable experience that can be applied in other areas of the class struggle.

As Trotsky said in 1938: "The decay of capitalism . . . deals its heaviest blows to the woman as a wage-earner and as a housewife. The sections of the Fourth International should seek bases of support among the most exploited layers of the working class, consequently among the women workers. Here they will find inexhaustible stores of devotion, selflessness and readiness to sacrifice."

## IV. Mobilization of Counterrevolution and the Struggle Against It

### 1. Blockade of Cuba and the 'Caribbean Confrontation'

U. S. imperialism had every reason to stand in fear of the Cuban revolution and its repercussions. As a consequence, the containment and crushing of the Cuban revolution became of primary concern to the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Pentagon. Under Eisenhower, the White House placed an economic blockade on the island, mounted a diplomatic offensive, and prepared an invasion that was brought to a head by Kennedy in the Bay of Pigs military assault.

The Cubans, supported by an energetic solidarity movement inside the United States itself, succeeded in defeating the armed imperialist intervention for the time being.

It was clear, however, that the Cuban people on their small island could not withstand a better prepared invasion by the most powerful military establishment the world has yet seen. To bolster their defenses they sought nuclear-tipped rocket installations from the Soviet Union, which, as Castro stated, was their right as a sovereign power.

This resulted in the famous Caribbean confrontation between Kennedy and Khrushchev in which the American president threatened to plunge the world into a nuclear holocaust if Khrushchev did not withdraw the rockets. Khrushchev backed

down in face of Kennedy's threat.

Out of the confrontation came the "Caribbean detente" between Moscow and Washington, the terms of which remain secret to this day. It is evident, however, that they included an agreement whereby the White House promised not to mount another invasion of Cuba, while the Kremlin promised to limit the types of weapons it would release to Havana. The detente included mutual tolerance of Washington's continuance of the economic blockade and Moscow's compensating for this by sending material aid in substantial amounts.

Castro and Guevara, to their credit, understood the necessity of extending the Cuban revolution if it was to survive in the long run. In this respect they took an internationalist stand, fostering and supporting revolutionary struggles elsewhere in the world, above all in Latin America. The organization of OLAS in 1967 and Guevara's project of a guerrilla front in Bolivia stemmed directly from this internationalist view.

Limitations in the education and outlook of the Cuban leaders blocked success in their efforts to extend the Cuban revolution. They were not Leninists. They did not set out to organize a solid political base by fostering the organization of mass revolutionary parties standing on

the program of revolutionary Marxism. Immediately following the revolutionary victory in Havana, the situation was extraordinarily favorable for this inasmuch as millions of Latin Americans were lifted to their feet by what had been accomplished in toppling Batista and moving forward to the establishment of a planned economy in the Caribbean.

The Cuban leaders not only missed their timing in this but committed a series of ultraleft errors. Still worse, they decried "theory" as compared to "practice," and reduced practice to guerrillaism on a continental scale. The guerrilla strategy proved to be sterile, and since the defeat of Guevara's effort in Bolivia, the Cubans have virtually abandoned it.

The guerrillaism of the Cubans was quite logically coupled with deprecation of the validity and importance of revolutionary political principles. One of the gravest manifestations of this shortcoming came in their relations with the Kremlin. In return for material aid—without which, of course, the Cuban revolution could not have survived for long—the Cuban leaders granted undue political concessions to the Soviet ruling caste, helping to a certain degree to provide the Russian bureaucrats with a left cover.

A prime example was the apologies offered by Castro for the Soviet military invasion that crushed the budding political revolution in Czechoslovakia in 1968 that might have replaced the Stalinist regime

there with proletarian democracy.

In a parallel way, Castro has offered political support to bourgeois regimes in Latin America that have maintained diplomatic relations with Cuba. Conspicuous examples were Goulart in Brazil, Velasco Alvarado in Peru, and Allende in Chile. It is, of course, correct for the Cuban government to try to establish and to keep up diplomatic relations with all other governments, no matter what economic, social, and political system they represent. What is impermissible from the revolutionary-Marxist point of view is to express political solidarity with them, since this signifies placing confidence in the bourgeoisie and their policies, an act that disorients and diverts the workers movement in those countries from the revolutionary road. The catastrophe in Chile stands out as a grim example of what can result under such regimes, however loudly they proclaim that their aim is the achievement of socialism.

The mistakes made by the Cuban leaders helped open the way for the Stalinists to stage a comeback in Latin America. Even in Venezuela, where they had come under fierce denunciations from Castro in 1967 because of their treachery, they were able to reestablish themselves at the expense of the Guevarists.

Before the establishment of the military dictatorships in Uruguay and Chile, the Stalinists gained a free hand to engage in popular frontism behind Seregni and Allende to the detriment of the class struggle and particularly the defense of the Cuban revolution.

Castro's political softness toward the Kremlin has also had its domestic reflection. From 1961 to 1968, great concern was felt over the bureaucratic tendency forming around Anibal Escalante, a Stalinist leader of the old class-collaborationist Cuban Communist party, and stern measures were taken to push this tendency back. Castro now appears to be following a policy of "peaceful coexistence" with Cuban bureaucratism. One notable consequence has been strictures on free thought and artistic expression (the Heberto Padilla affair for instance). This has damaged the prestige of the Cuban government, bringing severe criticism from long-standing supporters of the Cuban revolution.

The failure of the Castro team to advance toward the establishment in Cuba of proletarian forms of democracy such as the soviets of the early years of the Russian revolution, in which various organized political tendencies and factions that supported the revolution were able to openly criticize defects and mobilize rank-and-file support in behalf of remedial measures, constitutes one of the gravest weaknesses in the Cuban governmental system. It nourishes subterranean currents, particularly those of a rightist bu-

reaucratic character. These degenerative developments can break into the open with stunning abruptness, perhaps catching even a Fidel Castro by surprise. To forestall such an eventuality and to ensure full mobilization of the masses in defense of the revolution, institutions of workers democracy should be formed in Cuba along the lines of those that functioned in the Soviet Union in the early days under Lenin.

The establishment in December 1973 of rankings in the armed forces equivalent to those in the capitalist countries and the bureaucratized workers states constituted another step on the road away from proletarian democracy. It marked the open appearance of a privileged officer caste, revealing how far bureaucratization has proceeded in the armed forces.

Consequently, it must be acknowledged that the Cuban revolution has not realized

its initial potentialities in helping to resolve the crisis of proletarian leadership internationally. In serious respects the Cuban leaders have fallen back, while dangerous bureaucratic tendencies continue to gather headway.

Under the following slogans, the Fourth International remains, as it has been from the beginning, the most intransigent defender of the Cuban revolution:

*For unconditional defense of the Cuban revolution against imperialist attack.*

*For an end to Washington's blockade of Cuba. Let the United States give up its naval base in Guantanamo.*

*For diplomatic recognition of the Cuban government by all other governments.*

*For free trade with Cuba and the granting of credits and material aid.*

*For extension of the Cuban victory throughout Latin America.*

## 2. The U. S. Imperialist Intervention in Vietnam

The eight years from February 1965, when Johnson ordered the first major military assault on North Vietnam, to January 1973, when a cease-fire was signed in Paris, marked a great turning point in postwar history.

At the outset of 1965 imperialist America appeared to have reached a pinnacle in dominance, a consequence of its victory in World War II. Its nuclear stockpile was sufficient to obliterate all the higher forms of life on the planet many times over. In the imperialist sector, it outweighed by far any combination of its capitalist rivals. It was prosperous enough to give plausibility to the propaganda about an "affluent society" and Johnson's demagoguery about the feasibility of eliminating poverty in the United States. To blot out the rebellious tendencies in the colonial world and to further constrict "communism" seemed a relatively easy matter, involving only small "brush-fire" conflicts like the Bay of Pigs operation in Cuba. This was how things appeared when Johnson decided to intervene in the civil war in Vietnam in a vigorous way.

What was revealed by the conflict? The American colossus proved to have feet of clay. The colonial revolution was stronger than the White House strategists had calculated. The industrially backward, agrarian Democratic Republic of Vietnam survived the most murderous and destructive assault in history on such a small country. The imperialist goliath was weakened sufficiently to encourage other small countries to offer stiffer resistance. In the United States, the vaunted prosperity was seriously undermined, and the almighty dollar declined dramatically. Wall Street's imperialist rivals gained better bargaining positions.

In Vietnam itself Washington had to accept an outcome much below what had been confidently anticipated in the beginning. Nixon could count himself fortunate that he had rescue teams in Moscow and Peking able to save him from ending up with a first-rate disaster in Vietnam.

The full costs of this "brush-fire" war are not yet reliably known. Saigon has admitted that its own casualties included at least 320,000 troops, and has claimed a higher figure for North Vietnam. The civilian casualties were much greater. Refugees number in the millions.

The cost to Vietnam is directly visible in the landscape, much of which now resembles that of the moon because of the cratering. The Pentagon's carpet-bombing and use of herbicides to destroy crops and forests on a vast scale has led to irreversible destruction of the soil in some areas and will have deleterious effects in others for generations to come.

In conjunction with the close of the long postwar boom cycle, the war placed fresh strains on the U. S. economy, exacerbating inflationary trends. The cost to the U. S. Treasury has been estimated conservatively at \$600 billion.

Domestic social tensions were greatly heightened as evidenced by the deepening radicalization. On the campuses, students staged militant demonstration, often taking the offensive in advancing their own interests as students against the school administration and their governmental backers. Opposition was especially sharp to conscription into the armed forces and to military recruiting efforts on the campus. The movement for Black liberation built up to new heights, scorning all appeals to give up the struggle temporarily in behalf of the war. The workers refused to believe in the war propaganda, and re-



jected making any economic sacrifices to help the intervention in Vietnam. In face of the appeals to their patriotism, they continued to defend their standard of living through union bargaining and strike struggles. The armed forces were seriously affected by the widespread mood of resistance to authority.

The political consequences were marked by the forced retirement of Johnson from public life and the development of a climate in which the impeachment of "the president" became a popular demand.

The decision to intervene in Vietnam in a massive way accorded with the overall plans for world conquest held by U. S. imperialism since the end of World War II. The White House took the plunge into a war on the Asian mainland because it thought the rift between Peking and Moscow could be made to pay off militarily through a bold stroke.

The geopoliticians of the U. S. military establishment likewise thought that by bringing the mailed fist down with sufficient brutality and ruthlessness they could strike terror throughout the colonial world, converting Vietnam into a fearful object lesson to other peoples dreaming of winning their freedom. The Pentagon's slogan could have been formulated as "No more Cubas!"

The calculations of the Pentagon proved to be partially correct. Moscow and Peking showed themselves incapable of closing ranks sufficiently to put up a united front against the common imperialist foe whose thrusts were in the final analysis aimed at them. They refrained from sponsoring mass protest demonstrations on an international scale. Although it was well within their means, they were unwilling to provide sufficient weaponry and supplies to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front to assure a military victory over the imperialist invader. They even stood aside in face of Nixon's bombing of Hanoi and his decision to mine all the harbors of North Vietnam so as to block delivery of Soviet and Chinese supplies of food and materiel.

Moreover, the North Vietnamese leaders remained true to their training in the school of Stalinism. While they offered a stubborn battle on the military level, they did not match it with a Leninist political course. Instead of advancing a program for socialism in South Vietnam, which would have aroused the masses there as nothing else could, they called for a bourgeois coalition government. They did not even raise independent demands for the working class. This stance was reflected in their attitude toward U. S. imperialism. They did not engage in socialist propaganda in the exemplary Bolshevik way to hasten disintegration of the invading armies and turn discontented U. S. troops into emissaries of so-

cialism in America itself. They relied strictly on slogans related to the right of national self-determination. It was completely correct to stand on this right and to defend it to the death; but a revolutionary-socialist program would have added a qualitatively superior political force to the defense of the Vietnamese revolution. Hanoi's course was patterned on Stalin's attitude during the "patriotic war" against German imperialism but without emulating Stalin in his excesses.

All this entered into the calculations of the White House. What was overlooked or discounted was the possibility of effective popular resistance under these unfavorable circumstances. The miscalculation was a grave one—it involved two key areas, Vietnam and the United States.

In Vietnam the masses rallied in a way comparable to that of the Russian people in defending their revolution in 1918-20 against the Allied imperialist intervention and in 1941-45 against the German imperialist invasion. Through their prolonged heroic resistance, they converted Vietnam from the easily seized Asian beachhead the Pentagon dreamed of into a quagmire into which the American military machine sank deeper and deeper.

On the other side of the Pacific in the United States the opposition to the war was immediate and widespread, taking overt form on the campuses from the beginning. This popular resistance was something new in imperialist America.

In World War I, the country was at first swept with patriotic hysteria. In World War II, the attitude was much more subdued, the general feeling being that there was no escaping going into battle against Hitler, Mussolini, and the Mikado. In the Korean conflict, opposition appeared within months, and it grew to such an extent as to doom the Democratic bid for the White House in 1952. But it did not express itself in large-scale mass demonstrations.

In the intervention in Vietnam, however, the opposition was able to stage huge rallies and marches in cities from coast to coast and to repeatedly converge on Washington and other key centers in a way that began to accustom the country to voicing protests in an organized way in the streets, thus encouraging extraparlimentary political action in the main citadel of world capitalism.

A feature of the highest significance was the initiative taken by the organizers of these demonstrations to reach out internationally and to appeal for protests in a coordinated way. Thus, throughout this entire period the world saw something absolutely new—groups in cities on all continents staging simultaneous demonstrations, often involving huge assemblages. For instance, in coordination with protests in the United States, cities like London, Paris, Melbourne, and Tokyo witnessed turnouts of as high as 100,000

persons.

The world saw something else that was new. The biggest demonstrations occurred inside the United States itself while the country was involved in a war planned, precipitated, and supported by the two capitalist parties that hold an absolute monopoly on the entire American governmental system from top to bottom, including Congress.

Some of the antiwar demonstrations in cities like New York, San Francisco, and Washington were of a size never before seen, reaching up to one million persons on a single day.

Confidence in the governmental institutions of American capitalist society suffered a good deal of erosion. In the form of a growing "credibility gap," dissatisfaction with both the Republicans and Democrats has continued to spread in popular consciousness.

Special attention should be paid to the advanced nature of the main slogans that surged to the fore in the American antiwar movement. The central one was "*For self-determination of the Vietnamese people.*" This took the form—and within the imperialist country mounting the aggression!—of the demand "*Withdraw U. S. troops now!*" These slogans, echoed by millions of Americans, powerfully aided the struggling Vietnamese in their battle for freedom, as the Vietnamese leaders themselves acknowledged.

The Fourth International can justly be proud of the fact that the Trotskyist movement played a key role within the imperialist aggressor country itself in bringing these slogans to the fore and in assuring that the antiwar movement took the form of a gigantic mobilization that caught public attention in many other countries, thereby helping antiwar militants internationally to engage in meaningful actions aimed at facilitating the victory of the NLF.

As the Vietnam war unfolded, the antiwar movement also began to have a noticeable effect on the morale of the U. S. troops. The broadening domestic disaffection over Johnson and Nixon's prolongation of the war bolstered oppositionist moods among the GIs, where they took forms that increasingly alarmed the Pentagon. The American forces in Southeast Asia threatened to come apart as they had at the end of World War II. This phenomenon was all the more remarkable in view of the failure of the North Vietnamese to bombard the GIs with leaflets, pamphlets, and radio messages explaining socialism and seeking to win them over to it. The program of socialism was brought to the GIs through the efforts of the Trotskyists, who distributed literature to them in the United States, Japan, Western Europe, etc., in areas where they were stationed or in transit.

As it mounted, the American antiwar movement also succeeded in involving more and more workers. Towards the

end, sectors of organized labor that became disturbed over the continued support to the war offered by the top AFL-CIO officialdom began to take action, a development that chilled ruling circles, sharpening the divisions among them over what tactic to follow.

When Nixon announced on April 30, 1970, that he had ordered an invasion of Cambodia, the American students gave his surprise move a surprise reply—the biggest spontaneous explosion of campus protest seen in history. It was during this wave that the National Guard fired on protesting students at Kent University, and the police slayed Black students at Jackson, Mississippi, murderous acts that intensified the spontaneous reaction. Millions of students went on strike. In many areas students took over their campuses, turning them into "antiwar universities," that is, organizing centers to expand the protests throughout the country.

To meet this deepening protest movement, Nixon resorted among other things to police-state methods, sending provocateurs into the antiwar movement, the Black liberation movement, and radical groupings, engaging in tapping of telephones, intimidation, harassment, police

### 3. Violent Repression and Class Collaborationism

With their various forms of fascism between the first and second world wars, Mussolini, Pilsudski, Hitler, and Franco signaled the new barbarism implicit in the evolution of capitalism. The trend has not been reversed since Hitler's gas ovens. The murder of as many as one million suspected "Communists" by the genocidal Suharto regime in Indonesia in 1965 proved that. The reigns of terror that have existed for a decade in Brazil and still longer in Iran, Paraguay, and South Africa speak in the same sense. In 1973 Chile's "nonpolitical" generals added their bit to the evidence by cold-bloodedly deciding on "a new Jakarta." The readiness of the capitalist class to resort to naked violence and ferocious terror if its rule is seriously challenged has clearly become more and more marked in the period of the death agony of the capitalist system.

The regimes that engage in mass murder to liquidate the labor movement and smother the revolutionary aspirations of the workers and their allies do not appear suddenly out of the nether world. They are preceded by phases in the class struggle that provide opportunities for revolutionary victories. In these phases, militant currents can grow swiftly, opening the way for the rise of a Leninist-type party of mass proportions.

In view of this potentiality, the capitalist rulers are prepared in advance to resort to the most extreme violence. However, they are never certain of the outcome of such measures, and prefer other means to keep the masses in check—and also

attacks, shootings of demonstrators, and frame-up trials. As happened during the McCarthyite period, in which Nixon shaped his political career, these antidemocratic methods were eventually turned against the liberal wing of the Democratic party, becoming epitomized in the burglaries that made "Watergate" a household word around the globe.

The enduring consequences inside the United States of the Vietnam war constitute a new element in world politics. From now on, direct involvement of U. S. troops on a sizable scale anywhere outside of the country is certain to meet with militant opposition domestically, with the likelihood of that opposition broadening rapidly into a colossal force.

Even if the U. S. ruling class were to refrain from engaging in new military adventures for the foreseeable future—which is unlikely—the change in political climate points toward a deepening radicalization of the working class and its allies in the period ahead, no matter how the rate of this process may be affected by conjunctural dips. The economic costs of the war, which are being passed on to the workers, help assure continuation of this trend.

to help provide more favorable conditions for the counterrevolution. Thus they utilize political stratagems of the most deceptive nature to divert the masses from taking the road of revolution.

In the imperialist countries, the capitalist rulers bend to the pressure. In meeting the May-June 1968 situation in France, de Gaulle granted economic concessions. In the United States during the industrial strife of the thirties, Roosevelt granted liberal-democratic concessions, recognizing in particular labor's right to organize.

In the colonial and semicolonial world, where the resources available to the bourgeoisie are much more limited, any far-reaching concessions or extended periods of bourgeois democracy are, of course, excluded. Nevertheless, the bourgeoisie—or at least its shrewdest layers—seek to bend with the pressure there, too. Examples of this abound, a striking instance being the concessions granted in Argentina under the first regime of General Juan D. Peron.

The flexibility of some leaders of the national bourgeoisie is noteworthy. They are capable not only of granting concessions to the masses but of combining these with actions against the imperialists. Chiang Kai-shek fought for a number of years against the Japanese imperialist invasion of China. Mossadegh nationalized the British-owned oil industry in Iran. Sukarno opposed Dutch and American imperialism. Nasser took over the Suez Canal and held it in face of a military invasion mounted by British and French

imperialism abetted by Israel.

In Latin America many examples can be cited of anti-imperialist actions taken by the "statesmen" of the national bourgeoisie. General Lazaro Cardenas, the president of Mexico, expropriated the oil holdings of the Americans and British. General Peron resisted both British and American imperialism in Argentina. General Juan Velasco Alvarado is currently practicing "military reformism" in Peru at the expense of some of the companies on the New York stock exchange. Salvador Allende nationalized various American imperialist holdings.

Political representatives of the national bourgeoisie are capable of taking on a most deceptive revolutionary coloration, posing as strongly pro-Moscow or pro-Peking or both, and making themselves out to be protagonists of "socialist" economic planning. Chiang Kai-shek—with Stalin's aid—wrapped himself in the Soviet flag before the 1925-27 Chinese revolution. Sukarno sought and obtained the endorsement of Mao Tsetung. Nasser leaned heavily on Moscow in shaping his image of "socialist" innovation in Egypt. Nkrumah in Ghana and Ne Win in Burma followed similar courses. In his final years, Cardenas posed as an admirer of Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution.

The anti-imperialist measures taken by the national bourgeoisie are always incomplete and transitory. Cases of involvement of the workers, as in Mexico under Cardenas or in Argentina under Peron, are ephemeral. The commitment of the national bourgeoisie to capitalism makes it impossible for them to gain real national independence from imperialism. They have no choice in the final analysis but to bow to the imperious pressures of the world market.

The anti-imperialist actions undertaken by national bourgeois regimes warrant the support of revolutionary Marxists. This support should take the form wherever possible of mass demonstrations, the bigger the better. This is the proletarian form of action par excellence. Such mobilizations of the workers and their allies should be organized in support of specific anti-imperialist measures—and *not* in support of the bourgeois figures who feel compelled to take them.

In no case can revolutionary Marxists give *political support* to regimes of the national bourgeoisie, no matter how progressive they may appear to be. Innumerable experiences prove that the opposition of the national bourgeoisie to imperialism is highly unstable. The national bourgeoisies will not conduct a consistent struggle against imperialism. Trotsky long ago explained the reasons. First of all, if the working class and peasantry are mobilized, they tend, in following their own class interests, to break through the framework of capitalism. This tendency has become an increasingly paramount feature



of the political scene. Secondly, the main class interests of the national bourgeoisie are the same as those of the imperialists, and they serve as their agents. Often their major objective in seizing foreign holdings is to improve their bargaining position as agencies of imperialism.

In fact, by sowing illusions among the masses, these same regimes disarm the workers and their allies, facilitating the succeeding phase of terror directed against them. In this way, too, the "progressive" sector of the national bourgeoisie plays a counterrevolutionary role despite the actions it may take against imperialism.

In both the colonial and imperialist countries, the petty-bourgeois bureaucracies of the trade unions and the Social Democratic and Stalinist parties play an especially treacherous role in paving the way for the coups of the military caste or fascist formations. They accomplish this through the politics of *class collaborationism*.

In the United States the trade-union bureaucracy carries on class collaborationism without disguise or apologies. Openly espousing the possibility of winning lasting reforms under capitalism, it participates in upholding the capitalist two-party system as a loyal faction in either the Republican or Democratic parties, principally the latter.

In Great Britain the trade-union bureaucracy operates through the Labour party, which has formally been committed to socialist objectives in the past, but which has practiced the rankest class collaborationism, actually conducting the affairs of state for the bourgeoisie in times of stress. So long as they themselves are too weak to offer an effective opposition in the electoral arena, revolutionary Marxists call for casting a vote for Labour party candidates. Such a vote is not cast for the *platform* of the reformist leadership of the Labour party.

The creation of the Labour party was a tremendous positive achievement of the working class. However, the Labour party has long played a negative role, harnessing the working class to reformism and class collaborationism. Against capitalist reaction, revolutionary Marxists stand on the side of the Labour party and seek to increase its weight as a massive political force. But the primary purpose of calling for a vote for reformist candidates of the Labour party is to help speed the process of exposing them as watchdogs of the bourgeoisie. Another objective is to bolster the tendency of the working-class ranks of the Labour party to move in a militant, class-struggle direction in opposition to the party's bureaucratic leadership.

While calling for a Labour vote under these conditions, revolutionary Marxists attack the reformist leaders and advance an alternative program of transitional proposals designed to give impetus to the

struggle for a workers government.

Revolutionary Marxists follow the same line with respect to other Social Democratic parties around the world that have a mass working-class base, ranging from Canada, Australia, and Japan to Belgium, France, and Germany.

Revolutionary Marxists take a comparable stand toward the Communist parties in the capitalist world that have a mass working-class base.

A *united front* of two or more mass reformist labor parties is a possibility in some countries. A development of this kind would represent a step forward warranting critical support from revolutionists on the basis of the line of class opposition drawn between the labor and bourgeois parties. In cases of this kind, the Trotskyist movement would press for implementation of the united front in the extraparliamentary arena with the objective of establishing a workers and peasants government.

Unlike a united front that draws a line of opposition to the bourgeoisie, "*people's frontism*," which has constituted the axis of Stalinist politics in the capitalist world since 1935, represents a variety of class collaborationism. Like the reformist labor parties, a people's front appeals to the illusions of the working class in the bourgeois electoral system and bourgeois coalition governments. It seeks to reinforce these illusions in order to divert the workers from taking the road to revolution. It consciously opposes extraparliamentary action, and when this kind of action cannot be avoided, it seeks to limit it and divert it into "safe" channels. Moreover, in a people's front, the Stalinists utilize the prestige of the Soviet Union, or other workers states, in this dirty game.

The distinguishing feature of a people's front is the open inclusion of bourgeois parties in the electoral front as a sector either in charge of determining policies or in whose interests policies are deliberately shaped. If, for the moment, substantial bourgeois parties are not prepared to participate in a people's front, the Stalinists readily accept surrogates, no matter how shadowy they may be. To call for a vote for a people's front therefore signifies supporting an *electoral platform to advance class collaborationism*. A question of principle is involved. To vote for such a platform is not a tactical question like giving critical support to a labor party (even one participating in a people's front) in order to bring it into office so as to expose in the most convincing way possible the treacherous nature of its leadership before its mass base.

The Union of the Left (Union de la Gauche) in France is a current example of a people's front. While it is not identical to the "classical" people's front of the mid-thirties in France, it bears a strong family resemblance.

In the thirties, the people's front set up by the Stalinists in many countries claimed to have the objective of "stopping fascism." Under the changed circumstances of the seventies, the Stalinists put "socialism" to the fore. The seeming shift was designed to meet conjunctural needs and does not signify an alteration in the basic content of the people's front, which remains class collaborationism.

The People's Unity (Unidad Popular) that backed Salvador Allende in Chile offered an instructive example of the continuity in the Stalinist line. Like the Union of the Left in France, this people's front proclaimed "socialism" as its ultimate goal. In its final days, however, the propaganda stress shifted to "stopping fascism" in the style of the various people's fronts of the mid-thirties.

These two current cases, along with the Broad Front (Frente Amplio) in Uruguay, show that people's frontism is still thriving despite its counterrevolutionary consequences in the thirties in France, Spain, Cuba, and many other countries, both imperialist and colonial, and in the sixties in countries like Brazil, Ceylon, and Indonesia.

It should be noted that in advancing and practicing people's frontism, Moscow and Peking offer little to choose between. Both Mao and Brezhnev are apt disciples of Stalin, the arch exponent of this variety of Menshevism and class collaborationism.

Mao bore direct responsibility for the policies of the Indonesian Communist party under Aidit that led to the victory of Suharto, a catastrophe comparable to the outcome of Stalin's policies in Germany in 1933. During the subsequent mass slaughter there were reports of guerrilla activities in various parts of Indonesia. The reports were either exaggerated by Peking, were faked by Suharto to cover continuing executions of batches of "Communists," or were desperate rearguard actions that ended in demoralization and prostration. This is clear eight years later.

In Chile from 1970 to 1973, the Moscow-oriented Communist party headed by Corvalan followed a people's front policy that went so far as to hail the inclusion of bourgeois generals in the coalition government. The "army-party," as it has been called by some, utilized its cabinet posts to undermine the "socialist" president and to prepare in detail the military coup that finished the new experiment in people's frontism. The blow constituted a major setback for the entire Latin American revolution.

Two lessons stand out with glaring clarity in the Chilean debacle—the need for a revolutionary party and the need to puncture the delusion that a "peaceful road to socialism" can be found through class col-

laborationism and the election of a coalition government.

In all its modern variations, class collaborationism calls for the same opposition from revolutionary Marxists as previous varieties going back to the Kerenskyism of 1917 in Russia, which Trotsky called the "people's front" of that time, and still further back to the Millerandism that was energetically battled by the left wing of the Social Democracy in the years before 1914.

The political essence of reformism and people's frontism, whatever the variants, consists—let it be repeated—of *class collaborationism*. That is what revolutionary Marxists focus on in combating it.

The class-struggle alternative offered by revolutionary Marxists has various

forms, ranging from opposition in the electoral arena to extraparliamentary action that eventually reaches the level of armed struggle for power. Its essence, however, consists of *independent working-class political action*, which reaches its highest forms under the leadership provided by a Leninist-type party.

Independent political action constitutes the means whereby the working class will eventually overcome the counterrevolutionary politics practiced by the capitalist rulers, whether ultrareactionary, liberal, or deceptively anti-imperialist. Independent political action also constitutes the means whereby the working class will overcome the class-collaborationist politics practiced by the trade-union, Social Democratic, and Stalinist bureaucracies.

#### 4. 'Peaceful Coexistence' and the Detente

In Vietnam, the Pentagon experienced the difficulty of smashing a revolution solely by military means even if used on a scale verging on the employment of nuclear weapons. The test was all the more impressive because the Pentagon had the supplementary advantages offered by the Sino-Soviet rift and the policy followed by both Moscow and Peking of limiting material aid to Hanoi and the National Liberation Front.

The deleterious consequences to the world standing of the United States resulting from the Pentagon's inability to achieve the main goal it had set in Vietnam, namely, to blot out the liberation struggle, led U. S. imperialism to make a turn in policy toward the Soviet and Chinese ruling castes. Nixon and Kissinger engaged in the "summitry" that brought Moscow and Peking into a common front with Washington against the advance of the world revolution. The common front, depicted as "peaceful coexistence" by Moscow and Peking, called for unity in action, a good deal of it in secret, while leaving leeway for mutual criticism in public.

This was the real meaning of Moscow and Peking's participation, under Nixon's sponsorship, in the behind-the-scenes negotiations that led to the "cease-fire" signed in January 1973.

The White House wanted the cooperation of Moscow and Peking in the imperialist effort to contain the Vietnamese revolution. The immediate objective was to help the Pentagon withdraw U. S. ground troops "with honor," and to use Soviet and Chinese influence for the time being as a substitute for U. S. troops and bombers.

For this cooperation, Nixon was willing to pay a price. Moscow received some concessions in the form of a lowering of trade barriers and removal of the ban

on shipment of most "strategic goods." Peking received similar concessions plus membership in the United Nations, the opening of diplomatic relations, and ending of the game of picturing Chiang Kai-shek's regime as the legitimate government of China.

America's imperialist rulers had additional concerns in mind. Inside the imperialist bloc itself, the mood of the masses, as evidenced by the growth and actions of the antiwar movement in North America and the rise in workers struggles in Western Europe and elsewhere, endangered further militaristic advances abroad, calling in fact for a relaxation of tensions if not the granting of concessions to bring the situation under better control.

Furthermore, the growth of interimperialist rivalries required attention. The capitalist countries that had been saved from the threat of revolution at the end of World War II by such measures as the Marshall Plan and the occupation of Japan had now become annoying competitors. The cost of the aggression in Indochina was weakening the American economy, particularly in the form of intensified inflation. The decline of the dollar was an ominous sign of what was happening to the relative standing of the United States. Even the governments of small countries like Peru, highly dependent on Wall Street, were daring to nationalize holdings of American corporations.

A detente with Moscow and Peking, permitting a withdrawal from Vietnam under the best possible circumstances, including retention of the Saigon beachhead, would facilitate opening 'a counteroffensive at home against the labor movement, which was pressing more and more heavily for wage increases to make up for the losses caused by inflation. A detente would likewise facilitate putting America's imperial-

ist rivals back in their places. It would, for instance, help cut into trade with the Soviet bloc which had virtually been monopolized by the West European countries and Japan.

Washington's detente with Moscow and Peking could hardly be opposed by Tokyo, Bonn, London, or Paris, although it signified gains for American capitalism at their expense. These powers stand today in the position of Great Britain in the twenties when the former mistress of the seas backed down from a confrontation that could have led to war with the United States. Britain's rulers prudently decided at that time that they had no realistic choice but to accept a role subordinate to that of the new colossus in the affairs of international capitalism. Today, Japan and the West European powers have no choice but to bow even more humbly before the Nixons, Kissingers, and Connallys. This was shown rather dramatically by the meekness in tone in their complaints at being excluded from the secret negotiations over the Middle East war in October 1973 and by the way they dropped to their knees when the American oil barons suddenly tightened the valves on their oil supplies. The fact is that even a combination of all the West European powers, plus Japan, could not stand up effectively as capitalist states against American imperialism with its fleets of submarines, intercontinental rockets, space satellites, and stockpiles of nuclear weapons, nerve gases, and bacteria.

In addition, the strategists of American imperialism saw a priceless opportunity to intervene in the Sino-Soviet rift. By adroit diplomacy, Washington could gain the advantageous position of acting as "moderator" between Peking and Moscow—for the sake of "world peace," of course—judiciously playing one against the other in the process, while undermining both of them.

Thus in a complete reversal of Truman's postwar stance of dangling the atom bomb over the Kremlin, the White House has now assumed the posture of being the best friend of the bureaucrats in Moscow—and Peking. More amazing still, the turn was carried out by Nixon, one of the McCarthyite specialists in witch-hunting the State Department to root out the hidden "Commies" who caused the U. S. to "lose China."

Startling as the reversal may appear to be, it hardly represents something new. Truman practiced "peaceful coexistence" with Tito. Before that Roosevelt gave a masterful performance with Stalin.

These zigzags in Washington's foreign policy do not represent an oscillation between a completely counterrevolutionary line and a "soft on communism" line. Such an interpretation is a pretext used by the Stalinists to justify their policy of participating in the wheeling and dealing of capitalist politics where they try to bolster



the liberals and put pressure on them to resist the hard line of the anti-Communist "hawks."

Moscow and Peking see the detente as the consummation of the class-collaborationist policy each has pursued for decades as the bureaucratic alternative to the revolutionary internationalism practiced by Lenin and Trotsky before the degeneration of the first workers state. Stalin's policy in this respect is well known. Mao's course before the detente was more veiled because of the persistent rejection of his overtures by U. S. imperialism. The limited aid given by Mao to guerrilla groupings in various parts of the world, his efforts to set up "pro-Chinese" groupings, and his revolutionary-sounding verbal denunciations of American imperialism constituted pressure for an understanding that was outlined in public as long ago as the Bandung Conference in 1955.

Moscow and Peking's chief motivation in pursuing the policy of "peaceful co-existence," that is, collaboration with imperialism, is fear of revolutionary upheavals elsewhere in the world. While neither center of bureaucratic power is averse to widening its influence and control, both of them stand in dread of disturbing the status quo because of the inevitable revolutionary domestic repercussions. That is why these conservatized rulers have quite consciously sought to collaborate with imperialism in maintaining the status quo. Tito is no different and no better.

The growth of political dissidence in the Soviet Union, as shown by mounting dissatisfaction among the intellectuals and broadening resistance among the oppressed nationalities, not to mention the "troubles" in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Poland in 1970, heightened Moscow's eagerness for a deal with Nixon. In the case of China, the same predisposition to welcome any move by Nixon was increased by the pressures that came to the fore in the tumult of the "cultural revolution."

For both Peking and Moscow, the conflict in Vietnam represented a standing threat to internal stability in China and the Soviet Union, principally because of the example set by the Vietnamese masses in resisting the aggression and because of the widespread sympathy for them among the Chinese and Russian masses. In addition, there was the cost of sending material aid to the Vietnamese. While this was held to the minimum, it nonetheless represented an item in the budget that the bureaucratic caste begrudged expending.

To this should be added the bait of economic concessions held out by Nixon. The Soviet economy is under great strain because of bureaucratic mismanagement and the cost of trading in a world market dominated by capitalist cartels. It is now known that at the time of the secret ne-

gotiations for the detente, food was in short supply in the Soviet Union, not to mention many other shortages productive of unrest among the masses. Under the detente, Brezhnev-Kosygin were able to make huge grain purchases in the United States at a favorable price. It likewise became possible to secure other greatly needed items available in the United States. These purchases enabled the bureaucracy to ease immediate social pressures and to gain precious time, the better to handle domestic political opposition and to silence critical voices.

Beyond these immediate considerations, the detente opened the possibility of more far-reaching concessions to imperialism that, while temporarily strengthening the domestic position of the ruling bureaucratic castes, could undermine the planned economies of the Soviet Union and China. Concessions of this kind would include incursions of private capital, the security of which—along with the profits—would be guaranteed by the ruling bureaucrats. In the case of the Soviet Union, the projects being talked about run into the hundreds of millions and even billions of dollars. That, of course, is only to begin with.

Whether concessions on this order will be granted by the Kremlin and by the Maoist regime remains to be seen. In the final analysis such concessions would constitute a giant threat to the economic base of the bureaucracy itself, that is, the planned economy on which it feeds in a parasitic way.

The domestic limitations to the detente are determined by the level of consciousness of the masses in the Soviet Union, who have given no signs of being prepared to give up the fundamental conquests of the October 1917 revolution, by the pressure this puts on the lower ranks of the bureaucracy, and by the ultimate instinct of self-preservation that may still exist in the top levels of the ruling caste.

That these limitations continue to play a role is shown by the insistence of the Kremlin that "peaceful coexistence" includes "peaceful competition" with capitalism internationally. This means that within the framework of collaboration in blocking and defeating revolutionary trends, Moscow and Peking intend to advance their own national-bureaucratic interests, however modestly and discreetly.

In an area like the Middle East, for example, Moscow has followed a consistent policy of maintaining a rather strong "presence" against the United States, supplying the Arab states with arms, some of them of much higher quality than were sent to Vietnam, for defense against the Israeli forces, which are supplied by Washington. Moscow's policy helps bolster the Arab capitalist states at the ex-

pense of revolutionary movements in the region, a line in complete conformity with the schema of "peaceful coexistence."

Moscow's pursuit of "peaceful competition" is not without its dialectical consequences. At the height of the October 1973 Middle East crisis, Nixon rattled the H-bomb, reminding the Kremlin and the world once again of the main logic governing the policies of U. S. imperialism.

The terms of the "cease-fire" in Vietnam sponsored by Peking and Moscow constituted one of the greatest of the many betrayals in the history of Stalinism. The two bureaucracies stabbed a workers state in the back while it was under ferocious assault by U. S. imperialism. They utilized their control of material supplies and their diplomatic and ideological influence over Hanoi and the National Liberation Front to compel acceptance of conditions highly detrimental to the military defense of the beleaguered workers state and to the advance of the Vietnamese revolution.

The fact that the Vietnamese leaders put the best face possible on the onerous conditions they felt they had to accept and that they even misrepresented a cease-fire imposed under these conditions as a great historic victory does not change the truth. Moscow and Peking, in forcing these conditions on the Vietnamese, committed a betrayal of major magnitude.

In previous decades, so great a betrayal would have been followed by demoralization and a period of stagnation in the world revolution. The general social turbulence on all continents today hardly permits the detente to serve as a long-lasting depressant in the period now opening.

Five convincing examples of this were the popular demonstrations that shook Thailand, Greece, and South Korea at the end of 1973, the militant strike of the coal miners in Britain that precipitated a national political crisis, and the twenty-four-hour general strike of three million industrial workers in Bombay and the state of Maharashtra in January 1974. The October war that broke out in the Arab East only nine months after the Vietnam cease-fire was signed served as another example of the difficulty of maintaining "peaceful coexistence."

In Vietnam itself, it can be added, civil strife continues to smolder, threatening to break out at any time on a much broader scale.

If the detente does gain time for imperialism, the colonial bourgeoisie, and the Stalinist bureaucracies, it can only end in social explosions of still greater force, and perhaps in totally unexpected areas. That time can be put to use in fostering the growth of Trotskyism so that the coming uprisings occur with leaderships on hand to guide them to a successful conclusion.

# V. Maturing of Subjective Conditions for Revolution

## 1. The Stage Reached by the Fourth International

From the preceding analysis of trends going back some years, it is evident that the objective conditions for the socialist revolution are ripe; they have even "begun to get somewhat rotten," as Trotsky put it thirty-five years ago. What has held the revolution from sweeping forward to a worldwide victory decades ago has been the unripeness of subjective conditions, which is expressed as a crisis in proletarian leadership. The degree of maturing of subjective conditions finds concrete measurement in the size and rate of expansion of the ranks of the Fourth International.

The class struggle has, of course, registered big ups and downs over the decades since 1938. Among the major victories can be listed the survival of the Soviet Union in World War II, the subsequent overturns of capitalism in Eastern Europe, the victory of the Chinese revolution and the resulting overturns of capitalism in North Korea and North Vietnam, and finally the victory of the Cuban revolution.

These developments greatly weakened world capitalism. However, capitalism still remains entrenched in the key industrial areas of North America, Western Europe, Japan, and important sectors of the colonial and semicolonial world; and world capitalism has become much more dangerous. The successes marked by the victory of the Soviet Union in World War II and the establishment of additional workers states did not bring forward a leadership capable of toppling capitalism in its main bastions. The distortion of the revolutionary pattern ascribable to the default of Stalinism blocked resolution of the crisis of proletarian leadership. In this sense, the situation outlined by Trotsky in 1938 has not been superseded.

To accurately analyze the prevailing objective situation is extremely important. Without a correct characterization of the conjunctural status of the class struggle, the Fourth International would quickly lose its way. We must know whether we face a downturn or an upturn. We must know what social sectors are in movement and whether they are developing in a favorable or unfavorable direction.

Just as important, however, is a correct characterization of the stage the Fourth International itself has reached. To determine that stage, an accurate analysis of the situation within the world Trotskyist movement is required.

In 1938, in projecting the strategic task facing the Fourth International, Leon Trotsky characterized the "next period"

as "prerevolutionary," that is, a period of "agitation, propaganda and organization." In this period the sharpening contradictions of capitalism as a world system press the proletariat again and again toward revolutionary political action; the petty-bourgeois layers are repeatedly thrown into turmoil; the ruling classes are racked by periodic crises. Taking the world as a whole, these main features of a prerevolutionary situation will be seen again and again. Organization of a mass revolutionary party can turn these prerequisites into a "revolutionary" situation. Within this general framework, Trotsky outlined in an abstract and normative way the tasks that revolutionists should work out concretely in individual countries, which is where specific prerevolutionary situations with their particular characteristics occur.

Trotsky was not depreciating the period by calling it "prerevolutionary" instead of "revolutionary"; he was simply recognizing the reality, the better to change it. The fact was that in no country at that time had any Trotskyist party yet won a majority of the working class to its banners. Achievement of that task still lay ahead. Along with it, such tasks as arriving at dual power and actually engaging in and leading a showdown struggle for a government of the workers and their allies also remained in the future. To facilitate fulfilling these tasks, Trotsky proposed a Transitional Program, together with a method of keeping it up to date, which was adopted at the founding congress of the Fourth International.

The subjective conditions required for transcending the prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organization have not changed *qualitatively* since 1938. No party adhering to the Fourth International has as yet won a majority of the working class or of its militant vanguard. *The Fourth International still stands at the stage in which the primary task is the accumulation of cadres.*

As a consequence, actions undertaken by sections or groups of the Fourth International are directed at facilitating the accumulation of cadres. The *aim* of these actions is propagandistic.

Propagandistic actions have a single overall purpose—to help ripen the subjective conditions. On the most elementary level such actions include the educational work of discussions on the job, producing and circulating printed or duplicated material, conducting classes, forums, public meetings, engaging in electoral activities, etc. As the revolutionary Marxist forces grow and become rooted in the masses,

the field of propagandistic actions broadens. In the process of winning leadership in a union or other mass organization, for instance, revolutionists participate in mobilizations of workers in strikes, demonstrations, defensive actions, etc., where they gain opportunities to demonstrate in practice the correctness of the program of revolutionary socialism and their capacities as proletarian leaders. The key objective at this stage, however, still remains that of accumulating cadres.

The quantitative development of the subjective side of the revolutionary process, as registered in the growth of the Trotskyist forces, makes it possible to exert an increasing influence in the class struggle. This may be registered in encouraging ways such as leadership in strike struggles or mass demonstrations. Nonetheless, on pain of losing that influence through a bad misstep, its limitations must be borne continually in mind. The Trotskyist influence in the class struggle today remains bound to developments in the objective situation completely beyond the control of our movement. To transcend this stage, to reach the position of being able to bring the objective situation under conscious control, that is, through negating bourgeois rule and establishing proletarian rule, requires *massive* forces—numbers so great as to make a qualitative difference. Once this qualitative point is reached, actions having an aim *qualitatively different* from those of the propaganda stage become both possible and necessary. The struggle for power, previously excluded, is placed on the agenda of the day.

It is vital to understand that characterizing the present stage as one of "agitation, propaganda and organization," that is, of revolutionary propaganda and assembling cadres, in no way implies that our activities are limited to commenting on events. Quite the reverse. As members of the proletariat, we participate in class-struggle actions to the utmost of our ability. To adopt any other course would signify falling into abstentionism, the mark of a sect, or substitutionism, the mark of an adventurist group.

To characterize the tasks faced by the Fourth International at its present stage as those of "agitation, propaganda and organization" does not arise from any lack of desire or will to move forward to the stage in which a mass revolutionary party has been built, a majority of the working class has been won, and the question of taking power is an immediate task. Nor does it arise from any lack of interest in the objective course of the class struggle, its ups and downs, and sudden or novel turns. The broad upsurges are of vital importance because they determine the appearance of prerevolutionary situa-



tions—sometimes in social explosions of the most unexpected nature as in Santo Domingo—which open the way for the swift expansion of the vanguard party and its being thrust forward into leadership of the working class, if it handles itself correctly as the Bolsheviks did.

The characterization of the present stage as one of "agitation, propaganda and organization" derives from an accurate appreciation of the actual number of cadres, the extent of their working-class roots, their ideological level, including hardness and immunity to alien class influences, their experience in practical organizational work, and their political capacities. A balance sheet of these items shows that the Fourth International is still weak, even in those countries where the Trotskyists have established a long record of stability and adherence to program and have made encouraging strides forward in the accumulation of cadres.

The maturity of objective conditions for the socialist revolution is matched qualitatively by the program of the Fourth International (which is brought up to date in correspondence with changes in objective conditions). It is the quantitative side that requires concentrated attention in the immediate period ahead. What is required is multiplication of the forces adhering to the program of the Fourth International. At a certain point quantity will make a qualitative difference—in a country that has attained the prerevolutionary level, the subjective conditions will match the objective. The maturation of the party in size, training, and influence supplies the final component needed to make the situation revolutionary.

Clarity on this is absolutely essential. Confusion on such a decisive question as the relative size, influence, and power of the sections of the Fourth International means blocking the road to assembling the forces required for a socialist victory.

For instance, instead of concentrating on the task at hand—quantitative expansion—confusionists may decide to tinker with the program. Various groupings have tried that in the past only to leave the Trotskyist movement and disintegrate or, perhaps worse, simply vegetate.

Another line of experimentation is to seek to gain cadres by way of clever tricks. This nearly always boils down to sliding away from program to put on a more pleasing appearance in face of opposing currents.

Another variant is to count on something unexpected turning up in the objective development of the class struggle that will lighten, if not altogether do away with, the hard, day-in-day-out work of building a party—an ad hoc substitute for the party that will save everything at the last moment, thus permitting one in the meantime to live on hopes to a certain degree.

Still another variant is to look ahead

to future possibilities, and, speculating on these, to apply tactics today that might be appropriate if and when these possibilities are realized. An extreme example is the initiation of "armed struggle" in situations where it can only be a caricature of the predictable course that a mass revolutionary party would adopt when the conquest of power is on the immediate agenda.

It cannot be stressed too emphatically that the primary task for the immediate period ahead is the *accumulation of cadres*. This can be accomplished through recruitment of individuals, through temporary blocs with other groups, or fusions. The possibility of fusions with other groups can grow in importance as the working-class upsurge continues, greatly speeding the accumulation of cadres and even lending tempestuous acceleration to the process of party building. These variants depend on concrete situations, including the political capacities of the leadership and the level of development of the rank and file of the sections of the Fourth International.

The axis of activities for the immediate period ahead must be decided on in the light of this reality. The framework of tasks is set by the frank and clear-sighted recognition that the central problems facing the Fourth International are those associated with the growth of small revolutionary propaganda organizations and not those faced by seasoned revolutionary parties of the masses about to take power.

Modest, realistic goals should be set. Success in achieving these can lead in a relatively short time in some countries to more ambitious targets. Winning cadres in this stage hinges on consistent *propaganda* advancing basic revolutionary-socialist themes in opposition to all other political currents, on appropriate and timely *agitation* around immediate, democratic, and transitional demands, and on efficient *organization*, particularly the development of professionals dedicated to advancing the revolutionary cause and committed to devoting all their time and energy to it.

Traps and pitfalls are not lacking. Inexperienced revolutionists can inadvertently cloud the political independence they really stand for by getting caught up in people's fronts that proclaim socialist aims. The well-meaning desire to find means of winning a hearing from the workers can lead to cutting corners on principles.

A snare of opposite nature in the last few years has been "minority violence." Under the misnomer "armed struggle," it has taken various forms such as guerrilla war, hijacking of planes, kidnappings, assassinations, and other "spectacular" actions carried out by small isolated groups. To engage in a premature armed confrontation with the capitalist state undoubtedly requires courage. However, it amounts to

taking cadres required for political struggle and converting them into mere units on a military level where they are subject to quick liquidation by the vastly superior military forces of the capitalist state.

To call on small units to carry out a task requiring powers that can be supplied only by the masses is suicidal. To hope that the actions of such units will set off a social explosion constitutes ultra-left adventurism. The price of the error of substituting the "strategy of armed struggle" for the Leninist strategy of party building is loss of valuable cadres and serious, if not fatal, setbacks in the primary task facing a small group of revolutionists of becoming rooted in the masses.

In addition, a heavy price must be paid for the opportunist deviations from program that such mistakes encourage and foster. Instead of arming the masses militarily as hoped, the cadres themselves become disarmed politically. The case of the PRT-ERP in Argentina, which followed the guerrilla road until that road led it out of the Fourth International in 1973, is a signal warning.

The last world congress, it must now be acknowledged, took an incorrect position in relation to guerrilla warfare by adopting an orientation calling on the sections of the Fourth International in Latin America to prepare for and to engage in it as a strategic line.

The main task facing a small group of revolutionists, let it be repeated, is to recruit and train cadres. This holds true for all such groups whether they are in the imperialist sector, the colonial and semicolonial countries, or the bureaucratized workers states. The objective is to expand the group and its influence so that it gains the possibility of initiating mass actions. To accomplish this, the revolutionary cadres must be rooted in the trade unions or similar broad organizations of the working class. They bring revolutionary-Marxist ideas *into* the class struggle, doing this as *participants* and not as *outsiders*. In the day-to-day struggle they seek to prove the capacity of Trotskyists to correctly and courageously express the needs and interests of the masses, thereby gaining recognition as tested and dependable leaders completely devoted to the cause of the working class.

If cadres can be won directly in the key industries or in the most powerful organizations of the working class, this of course coincides directly with the main line of march, which is to mobilize the proletariat for the conquest of power. However, if recruiting possibilities are, for the moment, difficult in these sectors, but better in others, no principle of Bolshevism bars a temporary shift of attention. In such circumstances, the focus of work should be moved to peripheral industries or to peripheral unions. The key is to *link*

up with those social sectors that are in movement and that offer the best opportunities for recruitment. A small group should not hesitate at following promising leads among oppressed nationalities, among radicalizing youth, male or female, on jobs, unemployed, or on the campus. An opponent political organization where a current happens to be developing in a revolutionary direction may offer promise of fresh forces. Dissident intellectuals (particularly in the bureaucratized workers states) may be a source of valuable cadres. The field of temporary concentration is a tactical matter—the aim is to *recruit, educate, assimilate*.

Publication of a journal should be undertaken as soon as possible. Assuming that the political line is correct and that articles are carefully written so that the particular audience where activity is being concentrated is drawn toward the journal, the main requisite is *regularity* of publication. Even if the journal is only mimeographed or handwritten (*samizdat* in the degenerated or deformed workers states; underground circulars in countries governed by military or fascist dictatorships), its regularity can be decisive in establishing its influence. Failure to produce a regular journal means stagnation. The

Fourth International can cite dismal instances of this, in some cases involving sections in crucial situations—and not in the distant past (Bolivia, Chile).

Small revolutionary groups are often beset by problems that they find difficult to cope with because of inexperience. These include training cadres, developing a competent leadership, and functioning in accordance with Leninist norms. Solutions to such problems, which are always very concrete, can be facilitated by consultation with more seasoned sections of the Fourth International, a task that falls under the responsibility of the international center.

While everyone in the world Trotskyist movement is interested in how tactical questions are handled by the sections and sympathizing groups, a world congress cannot properly determine these, still less can it properly attempt to determine tactics for the Fourth International as a whole. To try to do otherwise inevitably leads to disorienting errors, a result anticipated by theory and confirmed by historical experience. The main purpose of a world congress is to draw balance sheets, project a political orientation, and determine the main axis of activities for the immediate period ahead.

## 2. Tasks of the Fourth International for the Period Immediately Ahead

With these provisos, certain broad areas of work can be indicated as meriting special attention by all sections and sympathizing groups of the Fourth International:

1. *Advancing class-struggle, left-wing formations in the trade unions in opposition to the conservative bureaucracies.* This is in line with the general proletarian orientation followed by the Fourth International since its foundation. In some countries, where the rise in working-class militancy has been most marked, new opportunities have opened up. The PST in Argentina and the Trotskyists in Spain have demonstrated how such situations can be turned to account in penetrating the industrial proletariat and furthering the growth of the Fourth International.

2. *Educational and organizational work among radicalizing students, apprentices, and youth in the factories.* Such work is greatly facilitated by an independent youth organization adhering to the program of Trotskyism but without the stress on complete dedication and firm discipline demanded of members of a revolutionary-Marxist party. For conjunctural reasons, such as the weakness of the adult organization, some sections of the Fourth International have dissolved formerly affiliated youth organizations. Invariably this has raised new problems in developing young cadres and has hampered making maximum recruitment gains from the youth radicalization. Our

movement as a whole should resume the goal it set for itself in its founding period—the creation of an independent international youth organization.

3. *Fraternal collaboration with national liberation organizations.* Productive work has been done in this field since the postwar rise of national liberation struggles, an outstanding example being the solidarity campaigns organized during the Algerian revolution. The new opportunities that have appeared in recent years in the imperialist countries for activities of this kind, like the collaboration with Malcolm X and with the Irish republicans, should be seized in an energetic way. The same holds true for the new opportunities that have appeared in connection with the struggle against national oppression in the bureaucratized workers states.

4. *Participation in peasant struggles.* In many countries such as Bolivia, Peru, India, Sri Lanka, etc., where the agrarian question remains unresolved, fresh upsurges of the peasantry are certain to occur, signs of this already being evident in some areas. Revolutionary Marxists should actively participate in these struggles from the beginning, attempting to give them revolutionary forms or organization and to link them up with the struggles of the proletariat in the cities. The value of work of this kind was demonstrated by the Peruvian section of the Fourth International in the early six-

ties. Hugo Blanco's leadership in the agrarian struggle in the Cuzco region still remains a model that can be profitably studied by Trotskyists wherever the peasantry constitutes a substantial sector of the population.

5. *Active support of the women's liberation movement.* The close attention paid by activists in the women's liberation movement to experiences in other countries plus their general willingness to consider revolutionary views with an open mind have opened unusual opportunities for the participation of Trotskyists in this field and for international coordination of their activities. We should not wait for the women's liberation movement to develop by itself in countries where it is just beginning but should actively support it in the initial, formative stages when the considerable experience of the Trotskyist movement in organizing effective protests is most welcome, and when our opponents tend to be absent.

Besides work in these general areas, certain *internationally coordinated campaigns* can be projected, subject to modification in the light of events:

1. *In defense of the revolutionary struggles of oppressed peoples.* A good example in the past period was the international campaign in defense of the Vietnamese revolution. Another was the campaign in defense of the Palestinian revolution.

Comparable campaigns in the coming period should be waged in behalf of the Irish freedom struggle, the efforts of the Portuguese colonies to achieve national independence, and similar anti-imperialist struggles elsewhere.

The struggles of national minorities in the bureaucratized workers states should be handled in the same way.

Such work enhances the possibility for recruiting and developing Trotskyist cadres from among the many students and workers of these oppressed nations who are temporarily resident in Europe and North America where established Trotskyist organizations already exist. The nuclei of new sections can be built in part through this work, as experience has shown.

2. *In defense of political prisoners in all lands.* Specific campaigns like the one for political prisoners in Argentina in the past period can be waged for other areas, the ones most prominent at the moment being Chile, Brazil, the Soviet Union, Ireland, Spain, Iran, South Vietnam, Uruguay, and China.

3. *In defense of sections and leaders of the Fourth International hit by repressive measures.* The outstanding model for such campaigns was the one conducted to save the life of Hugo Blanco. The case of Luis Vitale is on the current agenda. In totalitarian Spain, the Trotskyist movement has been hit by dozens of arrests. The fight against the decree dis-



solving the Ligue Communiste remains urgent. Another important case is the ban on Ernest Mandel entering various countries. In the United States this struggle gained wide support in university circles, making it possible to carry it up to the Supreme Court, where it came close to winning. In Germany the case drew even wider support, making it a national sensation. Support has also been won in other countries. The campaign on this should be continued internationally because of its importance in fighting against similar bans against other leaders of the world Trotskyist movement, including Tariq Ali, Joseph Hansen, Alain Krivine, Livio Maitan, and Gisela Mandel.

4. *In defense of key strike struggles.* This is especially important when it involves such issues as workers control or workers management, as exemplified in the past year in the Lip struggle in France, or when it involves a major conflict like that of the coal miners in Britain.

5. *In defense of the struggles of im-*

*migrant workers.* In Europe this is a major issue, but it also extends to immigrant workers in other areas, for instance the Mexican workers in the United States.

6. *In opposition to new flagrant betrayals of revolutionary struggles by Moscow and Peking.* (Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Vietnam, etc.)

Besides campaigns around such issues, the world Trotskyist movement should collaborate as a whole on various projects, among them:

1. *Publishing the works of Leon Trotsky and other revolutionary figures.* Work is being done on this by the Trotskyist movement in Argentina, France, Japan, and the United States, and by independent publishing houses in various other countries. Publication of Trotsky's works in many languages is increasing. Of particular note is the fact that *The Revolution Betrayed* and the complete *Bulletin of the Opposition* have

been reproduced in the original Russian.

2. *Expansion of the circulation of the international press of the Fourth International.* This includes *Cuarta Internacional* in Spanish, *Quatrieme Internationale* in French, *Imprekorr* in German, and *Intercontinental Press* in English. *Intercontinental Press* has proved especially valuable because of its size, weekly schedule, and its thoroughness in reproducing the documents of the Fourth International and documentary materials from other sources. Publication of organs like *Intercontinental Press* in other languages should be a priority goal.

3. *Strengthening the international center.* An improvement in the flow of information, analyses, political declarations, and closer collaboration with the leadership of sections, sympathizing groups, and fraternal organizations is needed. Specifically, this requires a larger staff and more funds. A joint comradesly effort should make possible this benefit to the movement as a whole. □

# **Balance Sheet and Orientation for the Bolivian Revolution**



# Balance Sheet and Orientation for the Bolivian Revolution

## I.

1. The MNR regime, established following the victorious insurrection in April 1952, collapsed in November 1964 with the fall of Paz Estenssoro. But this regime, which was supported at first by the majority of the working class and peasantry, and which from its inception reflected the radicalization of the petty-bourgeois sectors, had already undergone a profound erosion. In fact, it had proved incapable of resolving the problems that were at the bottom of the revolutionary crisis of 1952. The economy of the country did not progress; the workers were robbed of their political and economic gains; the peasantry, while having received part of the land, still lived in extreme poverty and were subjected to the control of a narrow and conservative bureaucracy; the urban petty bourgeoisie could not escape from its poverty or make use of the democratic rights that it had fought for in its struggle against the oligarchic regimes; in spite of the nationalization of the mines, the country remained in the grip of imperialism and its international financial institutions. In the absence of a revolutionary leadership capable of developing them in preparation for a concerted struggle for power, the elements of dual power instituted by the working class and peasantry (formation of militias, workers control, union control over the radio, etc.) were gradually eliminated.

After a period of disillusionment and partial demobilization, the masses gradually resumed their struggles; and the last years of the regime were marked by growing conflicts between the government and the working class, which coincided with active mobilizations by sectors of the urban petty bourgeoisie and students. In the army itself—as the incidents of October 1964 (the Sora Sora battle) indicated—signs of demoralization had appeared as soldiers refused to take part in the repression. The military coup d'etat carried out by Barrientos was a preventive one aimed at blocking the new upsurge of the mass movement.

Seen at first by the masses as a victory, the political shift of November 4, 1964, stopped this mass movement from going ahead according to its own dynamic to establish a relationship of forces more favorable to the working class. The new regime started out by making demagogic denunciations of the veiled dictatorship of Paz and was quick to identify itself with revolutionary nationalist traditions. Barrientos was playing for time, and for a few months he was obliged to accept a situa-

tion where the masses, who in some areas were once again armed, enjoyed certain democratic rights, notably the freedom to rebuild their unions and political organizations. But this was only a very brief interlude.

The military government began to work rather rapidly and energetically to attain three essential objectives: the reestablishment of "law and order" in the mining regions, the establishment of an alliance with the peasant bureaucracy enabling the government to control or neutralize the peasantry, an economic "rationalization" based on a drastic reduction of workers' wages. These objectives were largely achieved by the only means possible: the establishment of a ruthless military dictatorship. The army occupied the mining regions; the unions were banned for all practical purposes. All democratic rights were suppressed, and the leaders of the workers movement were arrested, exiled, or forced to go underground.

The stability of the new regime was precarious above all because of the narrowness of its social base and the nonexistence of any economic margin for maneuver. Yet it lasted for about five years. This was not the result of real achievements or of a total crushing of the mass movement, but, in the last analysis, of a relative equilibrium of forces in the given domestic and international context. Barrientos did at any rate carry off one important operation successfully: The army began more and more to play the role of the political party of the ruling class and to involve itself deeply in running the country at all levels. This operation compensated for the absence or extreme weakness of the more or less traditional parties.

The defeat of Che's guerrillas brought an additional respite for Barrientos. But he did not have the means to take advantage of it; on the contrary, serious frictions developed in the army and the government itself, and new mass mobilizations began to take form. During the government of Siles Salinas, who succeeded Barrientos, the deterioration of the regime further accelerated. The army found itself obliged to make a sudden turn: the new president, General Ovando, charted a reformist course.

2. General Ovando's coup of September 26, 1969, was not unlike the one that occurred in November 4, 1964. It was dictated by the need to deal with a rapidly deteriorating situation marked by an increasingly abrupt upturn in the mass movement. However, precisely because of

the failure of the right-wing dictatorship, the army-party had to shift its course. It wanted to be seen as a political force that had pondered the lessons of the recent past, one capable even of understanding the motivations for the guerrilla actions and envisaging a revolutionary nationalist, anti-imperialist solution for the problems racking the broad masses. The nationalization of Gulf Oil was the gesture that most symbolized an orientation of trying to achieve more favorable relations with imperialism and stimulate the development of native capital. By a propaganda campaign relying primarily on anti-imperialist demagogy, the perspective of an economic boom, prosocialist rhetoric, statements about the need for reorganizing the state on a "national" basis and for an industrial revolution in the countryside, the reformist wing sought to win the support or favor of the masses of workers, peasants, and urban petty bourgeoisie. The relative success that the Velasco government obtained in its first year in Peru, and the "new" perspectives being

This resolution was submitted by the International Majority Tendency. The vote was for 137, against 125, abstentions 7, not voting 1.

outlined even by imperialist circles, which were expressed most explicitly by the Rockefeller Report, seemed to offer an international opening for Ovando's reformism.

In the framework of the given relationship of forces, this operation inevitably involved paying the price of restoring the rights of unions and political organizations of the working class and accepting as a fact of life the new mass upsurge that was taking form. The fact that Ovando was not in position to keep his promises, and that the turn he projected had only extremely modest practical results, then provoked the outbreak of serious conflicts and later on heightened the combativity of the masses, who had now gained considerable freedom of action.

The maneuvers of bourgeois sectors unwilling to assume the costs of the new course, and the machinations of the imperialist circles, who refused to grant any concessions, provoked a new crisis twelve months after Ovando came to power. This crisis proved to be all the more serious in that the army had become politically divided, and in its inability to arrive at a basic compromise, responded to the situation by conflicting moves. The right wing of the military probably underestimated the

reaction of the left as well as the level of mass mobilization. However, as soon as it was clear that the masses were ready to intervene actively against any fascist or profascist attempt, the military, recognizing the danger, was largely able to reach common agreement on the basis of supporting a reformist course. But, as a result of the crisis and the warning signal it represented in the eyes of the masses, Torres, who succeeded Ovando, had to sound more radical.

This involved in practice some additional measures aimed at the imperialist positions and, above all, more clear-cut economic and political concessions to the working class. In this context, while the crisis of the regime had continued to worsen (reactionary plans, conspiracies, maneuvers, and foreign pressure), the upsurge of the masses assumed a breadth and strength that had not been seen since April 1952, extending from the proletariat to broad sectors of the urban petty bourgeoisie and even some sectors of the peasantry. The convocation of the Popular Assembly in May 1971 symbolically marked the high point of this upsurge.

The downfall of the Torres government, ignominiously overturned in the space of a few hours, is in the last analysis, a further confirmation that any "democratic, anti-imperialist, anti-oligarchic" stage is objectively impossible in Bolivia, and any consolidation for any time at all of a bourgeois democratic regime is equally impossible. As soon as a powerful mass movement develops, its dynamic tends irresistibly to call in question the capitalist system itself so that a decisive confrontation rapidly becomes inevitable. The tragedy of the Bolivian proletariat was that the majority of the organizations claiming to represent the working class did not understand that such an outcome was inevitable or, even when they sensed the danger, were incapable of assuming all the political and organizational consequences that followed.

3. Banzer assumed power as the result of a realignment of the army behind a reactionary orientation and of the support he received from American imperialism and Brazilian sub-imperialism. His coup was inspired in particular by national bourgeois sectors that had profited from a partial economic boom in certain regions during the sixties. These sectors, which have ties to the Brazilian as well as the Argentine bourgeoisie, went so far as to threaten a secession of part of the country, and this blackmail contributed much to the army's decision to shelve Torres, now considered incapable of controlling the situation, and to reestablish a right-wing

dictatorship. The agreement with the Falange aimed, in addition, at making it possible to collaborate with the conservative sectors of the middle classes; and the compromise with the MNR corresponded to the necessity of winning support from popular sectors or neutralizing them. It was in this perspective precisely that Banzer avoided a direct confrontation in the mining regions.

The heterogeneous composition of the governing bloc was one of the reasons for the instability of the new military regime, shaken on several occasions by internal crises. The conflicts of interests among the bourgeoisies of other countries, especially Argentina and Brazil, also played a role. In such a context it was impossible for Banzer to completely crush the workers movement. (He even had to allow partial functioning of the unions in the proletarian areas.) The result was that important demonstrations and strikes took place, especially in October-November 1972, clearly indicating the will of sectors of the proletariat and the urban petty bourgeoisie, who had been hit by harsh economic measures, to resist and counterattack.

Still it would be erroneous to underestimate the essential fact: By setting back and dealing hard blows to a tempestuous mass movement, Banzer's coup

4. While representing a small minority of the population, the proletariat played a crucial role in the major struggles of recent decades owing to its position in the key sector of the economy and its geographic concentration. It is in this concentration that the strength of the working class resides—the citadel of the mining regions has created grave problems for all the governments, and they have often been forced to grant significant concessions, and on several occasions, even to tolerate situations of dual power. But at the same time this geographic position and the relative isolation have at times prevented an effective mobilization at crucial turning points. Moreover, it has made it easier to repress the workers through out-and-out massacres.

The Bolivian miners attained a high level of trade-union consciousness fairly early, and they have periodically been impelled by the very conditions they live in to organize powerful political mobilizations. Their combativity and their capacity to rebound, even after the most severe blows, are without equal in the South American continent. But that has not been sufficient to bring them to a

d'état enabled the ruling classes to overcome the gravest crisis of the last twenty years.

The national bourgeoisie and imperialism are perfectly conscious of the country's structural instability and of the danger of more mass upsurges. They recognize the necessity—from their point of view—of coming up with relatively long-term plans for exploitation and political reorganization and for crushing the working class for an entire period. On the one hand, they must seek to stimulate an economic growth, which, although deformed and incomplete, would reinforce the social position of the bourgeoisie, involve sections of the middle layers, and assure some outlets for at least a part of the growing mass of unemployed and semiemployed workers. On the other hand, they have to provide themselves with a more "scientific" repressive apparatus, capable of following the example set by the gerrilla regime in Brazil.

Although Banzer has not taken any decisive step in this direction, there are some indications—economic projects, decisions to form regional blocs, military aid, etc.—that the native ruling classes and imperialism are striving to act along these lines. It would be wrong to imagine that their initiatives are doomed to rapid and complete failure in every situation.

## II.

general political self-consciousness or an understanding of the need for an independent working-class political organization, distinct from the unions.

As in most of the other Latin American countries, the Bolivian proletariat has not lived through the experience of the traditional Social Democratic or Stalinist mass organizations. In the specific context of Bolivia this involved two consequences: the formation of political groups moving directly toward revolutionary Marxism and the mobilization of a great majority of the proletariat for a long period under the banner of revolutionary nationalist movements that had a petty-bourgeois leadership and worked in the interest of the so-called national bourgeoisie. This phenomenon explains why these movements in Bolivia were so radical at their height, and this radicalism in turn explains why the MNR was able for a very long period to maintain hegemony or at least very significant influence over the working class.

The insurrection of April 1952 enabled the working class to wrest important victories (including workers control and militias) and for years to main-



tain a high level of combativity and very high consciousness of its own strength. But subordination to the leadership of a party that in the last analysis represented the interests of other classes prevented the proletariat from formulating a tactic and strategy corresponding to the needs of its struggle in a situation of revolutionary crisis that objectively placed on the agenda the question of proletarian power. In a general sense, April 1952 was the February of Bolivia. The acceptance of the leadership of the MNR blocked the working class from taking the road to October. This was the historic price paid for the absence of a politically independent working-class organization, of a revolutionary party with broad mass influence.

5. The MNR would not have maintained its hegemony for so long and the proletariat would not have found itself politically disarmed under the Barrientos dictatorship and under the reformist military regime if centrism had not stood in the way of constructing the revolutionary party.

Above all through Lechin and his faction, centrism served to prevent growing working-class opposition to the MNR government from breaking out of the framework of the regime and the party. Thus it prevented this opposition from becoming the concrete point of departure for general political maturation and the construction of an independent working-class party. This orientation did not change radically with the formation of the PRIN, which still retained a centrist stamp on its ideology as well as its political strategy, and especially its practical endeavors. It is true that since the birth of the new party, Lechin has sought to present himself as the spokesman of the revolutionary aspirations of the working class, but in reality he never went beyond struggles for immediate demands, limiting himself in the broader political realm to demagogic proclamations about the need for socialism and revolution, which he completely failed to back up with an adequate strategy. Lechin's greatest skill—paid for at an extremely high price by the masses who put their trust in him—was always to evade making hard decisions at crucial turning points. He utilized the COB apparatus much more than the PRIN as his instrument for influencing the masses.

Taking an ambiguous position during the first stage of the Barrientos government, Lechin flirted with Che's guerrilla front but carefully refrained from committing the forces and influence still at his disposal. Finally, during the period of military reformism, in spite of all his demagogic pretenses and a cer-

tain tendency to edge to the left of the pro-Soviet CP and the opportunist Lora, the Lechin current effectively adapted to the Torres regime. This government, in fact, offered virtually ideal conditions for Lechin's traditional performances—appearing as the number one defender of the mining proletariat; utilizing the bureaucratic machine of the COB, which was quickly reestablished; making declarations about revolution and socialism that were as bombastic as they were empty of practical content. Owing to its composition, its origin, and functions, the Popular Assembly was bound to become the natural culminating point of all these new gestures: the louder the speeches, the less prepared the proletariat became for the approaching outcome. The result was that once again the masses found themselves unarmed in the face of a ruthless attack by the forces of repression.

The complete rejection of centrism in all its forms is an essential condition for the working class to be able to launch its counterattack and to be in position to effectively wage its revolutionary struggle for power.

6. In 1952 the peasantry was one of the motor forces of the revolutionary movement, one of the pillars of the new regime. Through the agrarian reform, their traditional enemies were destroyed and they received the land, freeing themselves from centuries of submission. To defend their gains and assert their force, the peasants organized their own militias, which, together with the workers militias, introduced real elements of dual power for an entire period.

But after winning their land—if only a part of it—and after becoming small landowners—if very poverty-stricken ones—the peasants began to demobilize and become conservative. They remained organized and even partially armed. But their organization gave birth to a peasant bureaucracy that linked itself to the government, becoming the instrument of conservatism and repression; and the militias themselves—where they survived—increasingly became the armed wing of this bureaucratic apparatus. An additional factor was a growing demoralization that came from seeing that, given the lack of financial and technical aid, the ownership of the land did not mean any change in the productivity of the soil or standard of living. Thus the peasant movement began increasingly to ebb, to split up, to

express itself only through sporadic and limited actions, to lose all revolutionary dynamism. It was thrown onto the defensive and in this mood remained passively attached to the regime that had given it the land.

This demobilization of the peasantry has now lasted for fifteen years; among other things, it constituted one of the more serious limitations of the 1970-71 upsurge and was consequently one of the elements contributing to Banzer's reactionary coup.

7. The radicalization of petty-bourgeois sectors in the 1940s and 1950s was expressed in partially contradictory phenomena. The MNR was to a large extent an expression of this radicalization, which, however, was also manifested in petty-bourgeois elements joining the Stalinist or pro-Stalinist formations that had opposed revolutionary nationalism during the second world war and immediately after, incorrectly characterizing it as a fascist current. Paradoxically it was only later, as the MNR became more and more conservative, that the CP began to support it—in tribute to its Menshevik conceptions of the revolution in Latin America—thus helping to prolong the hegemony of a bourgeois leadership over the masses.

The Barrientos period, especially from 1966-67, marked an important stage in the ripening of considerable sectors of the urban petty bourgeoisie. It was above all at this time that the students began to radicalize, thus becoming part of a worldwide phenomenon. Che's undertaking was an additional stimulant to this new wave of radicalization, which the defeat of the guerrilla front in no way slowed down. Unfortunately, this radicalization and the legitimate rejection of worn-out schemata of the peaceful road and revolution by stages went hand in hand with a wide adherence to spontaneism of the Debrayist type and to focoist conceptions. The lesson of 1967 did not lead to any serious rethinking. On the contrary, the Teoponte guerrilla action of 1970 bore the bitterest fruits of focoist adventurism. This experience was like a symbol of the sterility of a basically petty-bourgeois concept that claimed to conceive a revolutionary initiative by abstracting from the real dynamic of the class struggle and of all participation by the working class and the impoverished peasantry.

### III.

8. Revolutionary Marxists will not be able to define their strategy and orientation without drawing up a balance

sheet of two crucial events of the period following the downfall of the MNR regime—the guerrilla experience of 1967

and the defeat of August 1971.

Guevara and his comrades took the initiative in opening guerrilla war in a political context that fully justified the launching of armed struggle. On the one hand, by eliminating the last vestiges of bourgeois democracy, the Barrientos dictatorship had closed all possibility for the workers movement to take legal action; on the other hand, the masses, far from being crushed and demoralized, showed signs of growing combativity. Since September 1965, the vanguard forces had decided on a perspective of armed struggle in the form of guerrilla war.

All this was confirmed by the response the guerrilla action immediately had among the masses, giving rise to considerable mobilizations. It was also confirmed by the lasting political repercussions Che's action had even after his rapid defeat.

Having said this and without in any way minimizing the turn marked by the guerrilla action in the political struggle of Bolivia, a series of critical considerations are called for.

First of all, the choice of terrain was questionable. This choice, in fact, did not offer the advantage of carrying out preparations before the launching of operations and at the same time prevented any contact with the local population. Secondly, if Guevara was correct in placing the Bolivian guerrilla action in a continental perspective, his analyses of the conjunctural situation in other countries — especially Peru — were either excessively general or ill founded.

But the fundamental deficiency concerned the links with the social and political forces necessary to assure the indispensable political and logistical support. Che's diary provides clear indications of this.

Certainly Guevara was not unaware of this central problem, and he understood that he could not solve it without appealing to the militants and the cadres of the existing workers movement. But his mistake was to depend on the pro-Soviet CP, or on a sector of this party, and to a lesser extent, on a rotten centrist like the bureaucrat Lechin. *The fact that the choice was largely dictated by the Cuban political orientation at the time of the Tricontinental Conference* (the break with the Chinese, Fidel's Stalinist-like attack on Trotskyism) explains this decision, but obviously does not justify it.

The second error resided in *an objectively sectarian conception of the political relationships among the forces favoring armed struggle. It was correct in principle to strongly advocate a united military front.* It was also correct for the group that took the initia-

tive to uphold Che in the leadership role he normally played. But from this it did not follow that all those who wanted to join in the guerrilla action had to automatically accept the political leadership of the ELN and even less to dissolve organizationally. The attitude of the ELN leadership in this matter, besides providing an alibi for Monje and Company, was a very grave obstacle to reinforcing the core of fighters and even more so to substantially expanding the guerrilla action.

*It was because of these errors that the guerrillas did not succeed in establishing effective links with the masses, in taking root, in building up at least a minimum of solid infrastructure, that they could not increase their strength as rapidly as necessary by bringing in other forces that were available from the earliest months. Thus, when the repression struck its first hard blows, the results were catastrophic and Che's group was condemned to the most tragic isolation. Hence, it was inevitable that they would be liquidated in a short time.*

9. Concerning the events of August 1971, the question arises as to *why a mass movement that had been experiencing a spectacular rise right up to the time of the events* was crushed with extreme rapidity without its putting up significant resistance.

*In a very general sense, the deciding factor once again was the absence of a revolutionary party rooted in the masses on a national scale.* It has to be pointed out that, in spite of past experiences, the opportunist parties and currents had succeeded in maintaining their hegemony over the majority of the working class and the radicalized petty bourgeoisie.

But at the same time we must remember that *the peasantry did not mobilize on a national scale* either during the upsurge or at the moment of the coup. Peasant struggles took place in 1970 and 1971, especially around La Paz and Santa Cruz. But although they pointed to a possible trend that did not pass unnoticed by the frightened bourgeoisie who were already preparing their coup, these incidents failed to go beyond the level of local explosions. Such a situation made it possible for the army to concentrate its efforts on the cities, even on a limited number of cities, thus increasing its chances for rapid success.

Secondly, in spite of all the demagogic statements and the formal adoption of seemingly very radical documents, the majority of the workers movement and the petty bourgeoisie did not have a clear understanding of the nature of Torres's movement. Likewise they did

not understand the ineluctable dynamic of the situation. The lack of rigorous analysis and the failure to expose completely the nature of military reformism and its nebulous ideology prevented the masses from gaining a clear perspective, from grasping in a concrete way that a major confrontation was inevitable in the near future. Even worse, the illusion was broadcast that in face of a "fascist" attack, Torres himself would counterattack with the help of at least the army, and in the end, he would be forced to give arms to the people clamoring for them.

The error in analysis also involved the evaluation of the gains made by the working class upsurge and especially the significance of this Popular Assembly that attracted worldwide attention. The Assembly, which Torres was forced to accept, was without question a reflection of the strength of the mass movement. It was an indication of a situation of embryonic dual power and represented an effective instrument for revolutionary propaganda and agitation, as well as a forum for discussion among the various currents on the crucial problems. But it had no decision-making power, no real force to impose its possible deliberations, and even more importantly, did not directly express the sovereign will of the masses. It was not based in the slightest on democratic organs elected in the factories, in the villages, in the working-class suburbs, or in the army. In this decisive terrain no comparison is possible with the Russian soviets of 1917. In addition, the composition was decided by arbitrary criteria, and sectarian pettiness often took precedence over general political considerations. Finally, the essential questions — including the approaching political tests and the means to counter the imminent coup — were ignored or evaded. In fact, the Assembly appeared much more like a sterile and impotent parliament than an instrument for mobilizing the masses. At the time of the coup d'état, it proved totally incapable of providing any orientation whatever, or of leading the armed resistance of the masses.

In the context of a revolutionary upsurge, of a crisis of the ruling-class apparatus, on the eve of a major confrontation, which in the last analysis poses the question of power, the problems of armed struggle become the decisive political problems. The great majority of the leaders of the labor movement forgot this fundamental truth. They were caught up in the illusion that it was possible to continuously postpone the final battle, to force Torres and the "anti-fascist" sectors of the army to pull



the chestnuts out of the fire for them. To the extent that they took up the problem of armed struggle—in any case without any attempt at systematization—they were unable to go beyond the insurrectionalist and spontaneist conception refuted by numerous tragic experiences in Bolivia and elsewhere.

The revolutionary front had also been weakened in other respects by adventurist and militarist errors committed by certain of its adherents, especially the

#### IV.

10. The Bolivian Trotskyist movement came onto the political stage around 1940. In its fourth national conference early in 1946, it set up a nationwide structure that enabled it to focus its activity on winning a foothold among the masses of mine workers who, at that time, were consolidating their trade-union organizations. Although the movement achieved sufficient strength to elect deputies and senators to the parliament, it was unable, because of a series of errors, internal conflicts, and the effects of the 1949-50 repression, to compete effectively with the MNR for the leadership of the working class and the poor middle layers. In the period immediately following April 1952, the POR was able to expand. It won a real influence both among the peasantry—where it gave impetus to the development of peasant trade-unions and to land occupations—and among the miners. Fighting to create the COB, it won a majority in the assemblies of this organization; and it used this majority to mobilize the masses to force the nationalization of the mines under workers control and with the right of veto. Its ideological influence was reflected in the drawing up of the first statement of principles of the COB, which provided a pole of regroupment for the masses in opposition to the bourgeois government. The POR's political activity brought about a situation in which two lines and two programs confronted each other in practice: the line of the bourgeoisie with its aspirations of independent development, and the line of the revolutionary working class. Because of the threat it represented, the POR was harshly attacked by the MNR regime. It was violently repressed, and finally suffered a split because of the capitulation of the Lora-Moller tendency, which left the ranks of Trotskyism to enter the MNR in October 1954. This split in the POR weakened it and prevented it from taking full advantage of the subsequent crises of the Paz Estenssoro regime and the masses' growing disaffection from

ELN. The ELN had not assimilated the lessons of 1967, had not overcome its sectarian and bureaucratic tendencies. It did not grasp the meaning of the September 1969 turn in time—that is why it embarked upon the disastrous adventure of Teoponte, wasting courageous cadres and playing into the hands of the opportunists and centrists. Even after Teoponte, the ELN persisted in its confused orientation, to the detriment of the mass work that could have and should have been developed.

the MNR.

However, the capacity for analysis of the leading nucleus who maintained the party's continuity, and the positive impact of the Cuban revolution in Bolivia, enabled the POR to win important regional positions, to recruit new cadres, and to intervene effectively in the events of October-November 1964. Once Barrientos had successfully installed his brutal dictatorship, the POR understood that it was necessary to formulate a new orientation of armed struggle, and, beginning in 1965, it began to prepare for it.

Later, when Che's guerrilla project began in 1967, the POR understood the revolutionary importance of this initiative, expressed its support for the project, and stated its resolve to intervene directly. It was in a good position to enter into the struggle immediately, offering forces that were modest in size but nonetheless considerable in relation to the size of Che's detachments. However, these possibilities were not realized, basically because of the political and military sabotage of the leaders of the ELN's urban network. These were generally sectarian, anti-Trotskyist elements who were still linked to the Moscow-oriented CP, and who erected all kinds of barriers to participation by the POR.

11. After Che's death, the POR, with the agreement of the leadership of the International, adopted an orientation of resuming the armed struggle based on a conception that involved overcoming the errors committed and drawing the lessons of the defeat. Specifically, in the work of reorganizing the guerrilla forces in which the POR engaged, the need was recognized for linking the armed struggle to the mass movement and the class struggle in this period. This orientation was discussed and enriched at the Ninth World Congress.

The POR considered that a prerevolutionary situation existed in Bolivia as well as on a continental scale. It emphasized that the army was now playing the role of a bourgeois party in

power; that no perspectives existed for relatively extensive democratic stages, such as to allow a growth and maturation of the workers movement and the revolutionary party in conditions of legality or pseudolegality; that any mass upsurge and any working-class political and economic conquest of the least importance would inevitably provoke a major confrontation in the immediate future between the mass movement and the repressive forces. The POR reminded Bolivian revolutionists that not only the indigenous enemy, but also American imperialism and its allies in other countries in the continent, stood in their path.

The POR developed its conception of the armed struggle on the basis of this analysis, rejecting the concept that the armed confrontation would occur at the last moment, during the insurrection of the masses. It was therefore necessary to prepare for a long and difficult struggle that would probably assume a continental scale. The initial form of this struggle would be guerrilla warfare in three aspects—rural, urban, and based on the miners. Such a guerrilla struggle could grow without becoming isolated from the masses and without being confined to one particular sector. Precisely because the revolutionary workers and peasants movement in Bolivia had a very long tradition of struggle, precisely because many cadres had reflected on the past experiences and understood the blind alley of the traditional concepts, precisely because there were no margins for democratic concessions, the organizers of the armed struggle could count from the beginning on the direct participation of workers, peasants, and politicized students, and establish solid links with the mass movement.

In retrospect, this orientation, which warned against the illusion that there could be a democratic stage of any significant duration, and which put the armed struggle in the forefront as one of the essential tasks of the POR, was proved correct.

But the conception of armed struggle held by the POR and the International still remained very vague on the process of development from guerrilla nuclei established by the party to the formation of a mass revolutionary army. From this standpoint, the influence of the comrades of the PRT(C) weighed on the conceptions of the POR without being counterbalanced by the influence of the International. In fact, because of its traditions and its essentially working-class and peasant implantation (about 90 percent of its members)—which was quite different from the PRT(C)'s—the POR followed two paths at the same time: while advancing propagandistically and sometimes abstractly

the necessity of the Revolutionary Army, it correctly developed specific proposals for arming the proletariat and the peasantry based on the organizations the masses recognized as their own (through workers militias and peasant regiments).

Finally, in view of the very great weakness of the POR's infrastructure, there should have been a much clearer set of priorities as regards the party's immediate military tasks. From as early as September 1965, the POR had conceived of "guerrilla activity as a prolongation of mass struggle." Since 1968 the POR had specified that guerrilla activity could not be purely rural, but would have to be a combination of guerrilla activity in rural areas—selected according to political and not exclusively technical criteria—with guerrilla activity in mining regions and in the largest urban centers.

Applying this line, the POR in January 1968 reached an agreement with the ELN and the international forces that supported it that called for working together while maintaining the organizational and political independence of the two organizations. Only the development of the armed struggle over time, and the joint achievement of the tasks of the revolution, would pose the need for changes in this agreement. That is, the POR and the ELN would not fuse, but would maintain their respective organizational identities.

It was not easy to apply these agreements in the concrete. In practice, it turned out that within the ELN there was some resistance and a Stalinist-like prejudice that delayed common work from the beginning. When this common work did begin, the relations between the POR and the ELN improved and the shared responsibility for tasks and common risks assured good working relations between the two organizations. But the repression of July 1969, followed by the assassination of Inti Peredo in September, paralyzed and disorganized these plans.

The death of Inti Peredo broke off the evolution of his team toward a correct conception of guerrilla warfare as a factor in the class struggle and linked to the masses. This produced a very serious crisis, with internal divisions and conflicts, in the ELN leadership. The agreements with the POR became null and void, as each organization took its own road. This produced not only the rebirth of antiparty prejudices in the ELN, but also a return to the focism that Inti had been striving to outgrow. The new leaders of the ELN did not take advantage of the situation created by Ovando and embarked instead on the tragic experience of Teoponte.

The POR, in contrast, quickly understood the change that had occurred. It came out of the underground and became a semilegal organization. It convened a spec-

ial conference in November 1969 where it analyzed the nature of the Ovando government and the meager possibilities for reformism, and predicted the inevitability of new confrontations in the immediate future. In practice, it reinforced its mass work while continuing to rebuild sections of the organization that had either been destroyed by the repression or disorganized by the cessation of common work with the ELN. It held an international cadre school in Santiago, brought out publications, and intervened in the struggle to win back the right of the workers to elect trade-union leaderships that would represent them. It was present at the miners congress in Siglo Veinte, where it drew up a transitional program that projected answers to immediate economic needs in combination with other tasks of a political character. The party championed the struggle for the rehiring of 3,500 miners who had been laid off under the Barrientos regime, a group that included almost all of our miners' leaders. It fought for restoring wages to the 1965 level, for the return of union local offices and workers radio stations, and for freeing the prisoners, including several leaders of the party. When Ovando issued a decree nationalizing Gulf Oil, the POR used this as a starting point for demanding nationalization of all imperialist holdings. Wherever steps were taken along these lines, Ovando intervened with his army to return this property to his imperialist bosses. The POR extended its actions to the university, intervening in Cochabamba, Oruro, and La Paz through the Che Guevara student movement and winning an audience among the students for the first time in a long while, an achievement that enabled the party to intervene later on in the elections for the student centers. Among the workers and peasants, it developed the idea of arming the masses and creating armed detachments. Where it had influence it took the initiative itself in organizing such units, starting with its own members, as in the flour-mill workers union.

After a year in government, Ovando underwent a crisis. His supposed democratic opening had unleashed forces that he was unable to control. In despair, he came into conflict with the church, expelling priests and evangelical ministers accused of intervening in political life. In the end, he compromised himself by attacking the universities of La Paz, Cochabamba, and Sucre. Faced with the deterioration of the situation, the military commanders and the imperialists decided, with the agreement of Ovando himself, to prepare for a change in regime.

General Miranda's impatience provoked the crisis of the first week of October 1970. The air force resisted Miranda, creating a pole around which the discontented officers—including General Torres, who had

just been relieved of the high command of the armed forces—could gather. This sector appealed to the COB for support, offering it 50 percent of the ministries in the next cabinet. Invoking the specter of the masses who in 1952 had defeated the army, the anti-Miranda opposition led by Torres shifted the situation to its own advantage at a historic Assembly of Generals and Officers held in the main barracks of Miraflores at La Paz.

The COB, whose principal leader was Lechin, organized the Political Command to conduct discussions with the new government on the organization of the cabinet. The Political Command included the MNR and all the left-wing parties with the exception only of the POR(C) and the ELN. Once the military crisis had been resolved in his favor, General Torres withdrew his offer of 50 percent of the ministers to the COB, substituting a promise to implement a program of measures approved by the COB. This threw the Political Command into crisis, with the result that the MNR left this body and it was to all intents and purposes shelved.

As previously with Ovando, so also with Torres the bourgeoisie and imperialism tried to win time to rebuild their front and to overcome the disagreements among the officers over command posts and careers. But the mass upsurge that had precipitated Ovando's downfall continued to grow, leading to the emergence of the Popular Assembly.

Under Torres, the POR passed from the semilegality that it had under Ovando to legality.

In the ten months of the Torres government, the POR revamped its organization, with the aid of the Chilean comrades, and held cadre schools in Cochabamba and Oruro. It held a plenum of its Central Committee and decided to convene a national congress. The release of the imprisoned comrades strengthened its activity in the unions. In La Paz, we won the leadership of the flour-mill workers locals and a section of their national leadership. We won several posts in the miners union elections. At the COB congress in La Paz we dominated the political discussion and succeeded in obtaining support for a resolution presented by the POR delegation. And we won posts in the leadership. Winning some positions in the countryside, we were present at the congress of the independent peasants, and at least a third of the national peasant leadership were POR members.

The POR's position on the Popular Assembly was clear and consistent. In contrast to the reformists of all kinds who considered the Popular Assembly as a people's power from the outset, or who conceived of it as a body dependent on the government, the POR correctly held that:



—it would be wrong to call for all power to the Popular Assembly on the basis of arbitrary analyses;

—it would not be correct to set up an alternative power structure that the masses would not have understood.

However, making use of the "legitimacy" this assembly enjoyed in the eyes of the masses, the POR worked to transform it into a real soviet-type power. Our objective was to provide it with the following elements, which were either lacking or present only in an embryonic form.

1. A structure starting from the ranks and rising through intermediary organs to the national Popular Assembly.

2. The widest democracy at all levels, with election of delegates by rank-and-file bodies; delegates to be recallable at any moment, and obliged to account for their actions before these bodies.

3. Complete independence from the bourgeois government. The financing of the costs of the Assembly and the expenses of delegates to be handled directly by the workers organizations, in a completely independent way and without relying on the executive power, as had been done in May 1971 when General Torres had refused to support the Assembly economically and it was only possible to hold a token Assembly.

4. An armed force of its own that could serve as a real instrument for defending the Popular Assembly and have the capacity to enforce its decisions.

5. Inclusion of the peasants to a greater extent in order to correctly reflect an alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry. Election of delegates independently, through regional congresses.

It was with these conceptions that the POR worked. It was conscious of the limits of the Popular Assembly, but even in this framework it never came to consider the assembly as simply a platform for denunciations.

Moreover, the POR did not rest content with talking about these conceptions. It also took concrete initiatives in action at the departmental level in collaboration with the mass organizations.

Concretely, in Santa Cruz, basing itself on the Popular Assembly, the POR, in an alliance with the Sandoval Moron group, organized and led the armed occupation of the big landholdings belonging to Cooper and Company. It distributed these landholdings in order to establish housing projects. Similarly, in La Paz it worked to vitalize the COD (Departmental Workers Federation) and transform it into an active and dynamic branch of the Popular Assembly, a real embryo of workers power. Together with the peasant unions where it had some influence—as in the provinces of Camacho, Loaysa, and Nor Yungas in the department of La Paz—it organized the occupation of agricultural

lands and the expulsion of the former landowners.

It was through these actions, linked to the masses, that the POR was able to win posts in the Popular Assembly. The participation of groups of its members in the confrontations of August 19 in Santa Cruz and August 21 at La Paz, and the sacrifice of Tomas Chambi and other comrades showed, moreover, that the POR had posed the military problem concretely, without being lulled to sleep by the illusions promoted by the opportunist and centrist leaders of the Popular Assembly and their unions.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can say that while the POR correctly analyzed the process and took a consistent position in the class struggle, it was not free of limitations, errors, and indecision, which it must overcome if it is to benefit politically from the results of its efforts and its sacrifices.

While it is true that the experience of working with the ELN had positive results in enhancing the POR's image among the masses and enabling it to improve its situation (especially among university students, secondary students, and in some factories), that activity resulted in its losing the agility and audacity that had distinguished it in previous periods. The important thing is to understand that in united-front work and alliances of this nature, it is the initiative and impetus with which the revolutionists act to win the less enlightened sectors that determines how well such arrangements turn out politically and objectively.

In such activity, there must be a continual struggle for hegemony. If the POR had had a greater dynamism and clarity with respect to the armed struggle, it would have ensured a more rapid evolution among the more receptive cadres of the ELN, such as Inti, who had adopted an attitude of openness to working together.

This lack of aggressiveness on the part of the POR was also present during the Torres regime. The actions undertaken did not correspond to the objective needs and did not measure up even to the capacities of the party's own forces. The party's understanding of its tasks was not always on a par with the audacity required to dispel inertia through militant actions.

12. Under the Banzer dictatorship, Bolivia has been unable to escape its chronic political and economic instability. The masses' stubborn resistance to the repression of the military has prevented the latter from imposing on the country the social stability required by private investors. The oft-proclaimed "Brazilian-style economic miracle" the native exploiters dream of is nowhere to be seen. Instead, the economic crisis has continued to grow without letup. Inflation is again beginning to reach high levels, cutting into the masses' buying power. Bolivia's

dependence on Yankee imperialism and Brazilian sub-imperialism prevents it from benefiting in any real way from the higher prices for raw materials, especially tin and petroleum. The permanence of this crisis has spurred the resistance of the masses, and repeatedly goads them into tenacious struggles. To absorb and arrest the growth of popular discontent, Banzer would have to satisfy the people's needs to some degree, to resolve the unemployment problem, or at least maintain if not raise the standard of living. But on the contrary, the masses' situation is constantly deteriorating. The recent monetary devaluations and the increase in the prices of basic foodstuffs will produce violent explosions among large sectors of the masses, as has already happened. Unemployment is becoming serious, and there is no development capable of absorbing the steady growth of the labor force in the countryside and the cities. The demand for manpower to pick cotton has absorbed only an insignificant part of the mass of unemployed, and the creation of 10,000 jobs in the public sector during the two years of the dictatorship has served only to lessen unemployment among the ranks of the parties that support the government.

The national income declines and the budgetary deficit increases year by year. Banzer's dictatorship has no immediate possibility of altering this situation. As this crisis sharpens, it impels the masses into struggle.

Despite the scope of the repression, the workers movement has been reawakened by the stimulus of the economic crisis and the blows constantly dealt to its standard of living. The trade unions have reemerged; the union federations in the mines, factories, construction sites and the banks, etc., have begun to function and have raised the question of reestablishing their central organization, the COB. Once set in motion, the mass movement has rapidly tended to combine its economic demands with other demands of a political character. The November 19, 1973, miners congress at Potosi ratified the union's socialist theses and came out against Banzer's policy of denationalizing oil and gas; it also called for a general amnesty, the freeing of the prisoners, the return of those who had been exiled, a 100 percent increase in wages, as well as the establishment of a minimum family wage and the sliding scale. Similar proposals are coming forward from the workers in manufacturing, in construction, among the teachers and the bank and shop employees.

As it has done in the past, this development of the workers movement, this relative strengthening of the unions, is producing a relative weakening of the regime, bringing to the fore new contradictions and conflicts in the governing front. Faced

with the resolutions of the miners congress and the radicalization of the factories in La Paz, imperialism and the Bolivian bourgeoisie sense the approach of serious tensions, and they are hurrying to reorganize their front. The army, the real and absolute boss of the regime, has postponed indefinitely the elections promised by Banzer for June of this year and restored order in the FPN by sacrificing the Paz Estenssoro wing of the MNR. This wing has left the government, and its leaders have been expelled from Bolivia. Within the cabinet, the army and private enterprise lean directly on each other. The FSB (Falange) has won some political positions. The most hard-line elements have come to the fore. At the same time, Banzer has settled the negotiations on oil and gas to Brazil's advantage, seeking resources to strengthen his hand for a new confrontation with the masses.

The situation in Bolivia is ripening toward a new crisis in which the atomization and weakness of the revolutionary left continue to weigh as a negative factor, even if the workers organizations are exhibiting a certain revival. Moreover, there is the contradiction that the reformist and Stalinist leaders, who have not measured up to the demands posed by the new development of the workers movement in the specific conditions of the repression in Bolivia, remain in important leadership posts. For example, at their congress at Potosi in November [1973], the miners reelected their old, heterogeneous leadership. Faced with the advance of the process, the reformists and Stalinists continue to act as brakes on the movement and now they hope to divert the workers movement into a national-democratic struggle. That is the meaning of the four-party pact between the two CPs, the PRIN, and the MNR of Siles Zuazo, and the movement led by General Torres, which publicly identifies with Argentine Peronism.

In this context of class struggle, the revolutionary Marxists have the duty to help build a leadership equal to the demands of the process. But a leadership of this nature can arise only from an intensive political activity that combines discussions to clarify the nature of the Bolivian revolution, as well as the strategy and tactics needed, with real, concrete action within the mass movement.

The Bolivian revolutionary process brought about the unity of the masses within the COB and the Popular Assembly. Consequently, the Bolivian left was also impelled to unity during the struggles of August 21, 1971. Once the defeat had occurred, this unity was projected in exile, giving birth to the FRA.

The POR's participation in the FRA was a result of the unity achieved in the battles of the 19th and 21st of August by the whole left, the workers organiza-

tions affiliated to the COB, and sections of the officers corps of the army and the federal police who had joined in the struggle against the military coup d'etat. At this level, the party committed the error of signing the first leaflet that announced the formation of the FRA and that was ambiguous about the socialist character of the Bolivian revolution—a question that had been defined and clarified through the approval of the founding charter of the FRA and its military plan, which defined the front as a political-military organism fighting for socialism and composed of the fundamental parties and workers organizations of the country. It is this error, embodied in the signing of such a document, and not the participation in the front—which was correct—that motivated the International's criticism. The POR accepted that criticism in its self-criticism of April 1, 1972.

The participants in the FRA, including the two Communist parties, the PRIN, the Socialist party, and the MIR committed themselves to a struggle to lead the proletariat to power without intermediary governmental forms.

But the FRA split at its upper levels and remained paralyzed. These parties made an about-face. Returning to their old theories, they repeat today that the objective conditions do not exist for the struggle for socialism and subscribe to the line of broad fronts to bring to power nationalist governments involving coalition with the bourgeoisie. This was the aim of the two CPs, the pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese, with the PRIN and the MNR led by Siles Zuazo in joining together to form the "Front of the Four." Their perspective has now changed. They think they see rifts within the bourgeoisie, and they believe in the existence of a progressive sector. They are waiting for the Banzer dictatorship to provide a certain democratic opening. They base this illusion on the facts that the workers movement is functioning semilegally and the dictatorship has proposed general elections and a broad amnesty. Reality is putting the lie to the hopes of the reformists. The army and private investors have placed their support in the government. The elections have been postponed indefinitely and no general amnesty is foreseen. The dictatorship is preparing to take on the masses.

The revolutionary Marxists must combat these deviations by raising again and again the question of the nature of the Bolivian revolution—not only propagandistically, but concretely, through a policy of unity in action along opposing lines, based on the experience of the masses and their political achievements.

The fundamental premise of any revolutionary perspective is that no revolution by stages can resolve the economic, political, and social problems at the heart of

the country's chronic crisis and of the age-old suffering of the masses. In this regard, the experience of the MNR regime was definitive. As a result of the steps taken during the insurrection of 1952, the objective basis for a "democratic and anti-oligarchical" revolution has disappeared, and any revolutionary process has to pursue objectively anticapitalist and socialist goals from the very outset. More than any other neocolonial country, the Bolivian revolution will follow a dynamic of permanent revolution or it will not go forward. This is the fundamental lesson to be drawn from the events of 1971, which have revealed without the slightest ambiguity the extreme precariousness and fragility of any "democratic-reformist" endeavor that fails to break out of the framework of the system as such.

From this it follows that revolutionists must reject any policy advocating direct or indirect collaboration with the so-called national bourgeoisie or some sectors of it. The battle in this field is, in the last analysis, a fight for the political autonomy of the proletariat, which, in spite of its militancy and heroism, has long remained under the grip of bourgeois or petty bourgeois movements or caudillos and has continued to suffer the ideological influence of petty-bourgeois revolutionary nationalism even in the recent period under the military reformism of General Torres.

This traditional conception of revolutionary Marxism is complemented by a clear idea of the role of the peasantry—the principal ally of the driving force of the revolution, the working class. Currents that ignore or minimize the importance of the peasant masses for the Bolivian revolutionary process, and which hold that the striking force of the working class is sufficient to defeat the capitalist state apparatus, must be opposed. Experience has shown that as long as the peasantry is not mobilized, the working class inevitably runs the risk in any revolutionary upsurge of finding itself isolated and in a situation in which the repressive forces can be concentrated against it in a head-on confrontation, as happened during the many massacres of workers and on August 21, 1971, with the well-known results.

For this reason, one of the primary tasks of the POR in this period is to deepen and update its analyses of the social and economic situation in the countryside and the tendencies that are ripening there; to work out a policy likely to win a response among the peasants, and to lay the basis for integrating them fully into struggles in alliance with the proletariat. The POR must make more precise distinctions among the social categories that are shaping up in the countryside as a result of the agrarian reform: the agricultural proletariat of the plantations and sugar refineries that is



developing mainly in the eastern part of the country; the poor peasants holding only a small amount of land and who don't work for wages; and the middle peasants. Similarly, the POR must analyze the phenomenon of colonization, that is, the movement of sectors of the population of the countryside and even unemployed workers from the Altiplano [high plateau] and the valleys of the virgin lands of the tropical zones. Each of these categories has its own characteristics and demands, which must be taken into account if they are to be mobilized in alliance with the proletariat. The POR must intensify its work in the countryside, drawing up platforms of demands based on the needs of each of these categories, in order to tap their full revolutionary potential.

The importance of peasant work flows not only from general theoretical considerations, but from its concrete role in the phase of confrontation that we are experiencing. Bolivia is a country with a large peasant population. A large part of the army is also composed of peasants. The awakening and revolutionary mobilization of the peasantry will constitute an additional factor in the disintegration of the armed forces of the bourgeoisie.

On the basis of the understanding of the need for armed struggle that was introduced by the Ninth [World] Congress and of its own experience from 1967 to 1971, the POR must formulate clearly its concept of armed struggle suited to the present political conditions in Bolivia.

The armed struggle corresponded to the needs of the masses and the class struggle. That is why even Che's guerrilla force in 1967 was accepted by the broad masses, because they saw it as a practical and concrete form of liberating themselves from the vicious circle of military interventions and massacres, and of applying what was being said continually by the declarations of the workers congresses on the struggle for power and for socialism. That is why, even despite the defeat, the guerrillas brought about a qualitative leap in political struggles in Bolivia and stimulated mass mobilizations and struggles.

Two conceptions of the armed struggle that are counterposed but equally false must be rejected in toto: the conception of the *foco*, which leaves out the class struggle; and the conception of the spontaneous insurrection, which reduces the armed confrontation to the final stage of the process of the struggle for power, and which expects that the masses will at that moment solve the problem of arming themselves, without having any military organization of their own. The POR correctly viewed the armed struggle as an integral part of its political conception of power and avoided falling into mil-

itarist deviations. It always insisted that the objective of armed guerrilla actions must be to strengthen the party's roots in the mass movement in order to promote the political and armed action of the masses themselves. Armed actions—that is, military activity—are not counterposed to party-building, but are linked with political work among the masses as inseparable components of an overall strategy for breaking out of the trammels of populism, spontaneism, and reformism and taking power.

13. In light of the Bolivian experience, the process should follow an evolution that can be summed up as follows:

a. The present stage where the workers movement is reviving in conditions of harsh repression against the vanguard, where a certain possibility for semilegal functioning by the mass organizations goes hand in hand with underground conditions for vanguard political organizations.

Corresponding to this period are types of concrete political and military activity that must be dialectically combined:

1. Armed initiatives of the vanguard organizations, carried out by their armed detachments. The latter have as their objective stimulating the workers and peasants movement—fostering the idea among the masses that they must arm themselves and form their own militias—as well as accumulating human forces and material and technical means.

These armed-struggle initiatives can and should take place in mining and rural areas as well as in the big urban concentrations. However, in this specific phase, when the factory and mine proletariat is leading the workers movement and can be expected to be the center of conflicts and confrontations, the party must stage its armed actions in this sector and in accordance with this sector's needs.

2. Intervention in present struggles where mobilizations involve massive sectors and could lead to the rebirth of embryonic forms of dual power in the old tradition of the trade-union militias and the peasant regiments. Within this perspective, the arming of the masses will tend to generalize and be concretized in armed worker-peasant detachments. Intervention by the party will be essential to avoid a falling into the same trap as in the past when the old-style, fundamentally defensive militias did not serve to open the way for an advance toward the seizure of power. In view of this past experience, the military initiative of the detachments of the party and the vanguard groups must give impetus to a new, offensive type of militias with a capacity for mobility. Propaganda about arming the masses and the development of their own armed forces is not sufficient; the party and vanguard organizations must put themselves at the

center of this work, stimulating the masses while strengthening their mobilization.

At the same time, the revolutionists must develop political work within the bourgeois army, trying to win the soldiers and noncommissioned officers over to the camp of the proletariat. Revolutionary propaganda must be combined with agitation on the immediate demands of the soldiers and noncommissioned officers (democratic rights, living conditions, etc.).

Obviously, there can be no illusions about the results of this work; the political and military disintegration of the bourgeois army will only be achieved if it has to confront the armed forces of the proletariat.

b. A generalized confrontation resulting from a military offensive of the bourgeois army and the masses' resistance to it, or imperialist military intervention after a partial victory of the masses or the conquest of power, provides the occasion for unifying the revolutionary armed units at a higher level, where they will assume the character of a standing force not tied to the places of production that were previously the theater of activity for the militias.

The combination of detachments of the party and the workers and peasants militias constitutes the point of departure for the mass Revolutionary Army. The Revolutionary Army acquires its fullest expression in the context of a generalized civil war. Dual power in the political and social arenas is complemented by geographic and military dual power.

The concept of the Revolutionary Army is thus closely linked with the concept of the revolutionary crisis, civil war, and mass mobilizations. It is not an army that suddenly appears at the wave of a magic wand at any moment, or which develops by itself.

14. The POR supports unity of action among the parties and currents struggling against the military dictatorships and imperialism. But parties and currents of the bourgeoisie, which have no other perspective than to replace the dictatorship while maintaining the dominance of the bourgeoisie, have no place in this front.

After August 21, the united front, formed in practice in the military action undertaken that day by the parties of the Bolivian left, was projected organizationally in the FRA. The FRA indicated the possibility of continuing the struggle. But the FRA became paralyzed and divided when it set about discussing the real and concrete organization of the confrontation with the dictatorship. Today, it has been replaced by other, partial fronts with a nationalist, bourgeois-democratic content, in which the POR cannot participate.

In any event, the problem of unity and the united front continues to be posed. The masses feel the necessity for it. The POR must take hold of this sentiment

and work to bring together the worker and peasant masses in a united front, provided that this front is capable of carrying out effective actions and is not confined to sterile denunciations. For united action against government interference in the workers movement and the limitations the dictatorship imposes on that movement. For united action to ensure that the COB can operate and to free the prisoners. For a united front for concrete objectives.

Unity can also develop around military activity. In the event that some organizations carry out armed actions, the POR could succeed in developing united actions on the operational level, on condition that there were cooperation among the forces engaged in working out the plans and providing the technical leadership of actions. And at the same time, along with this, it would maintain the party's strict political and organizational independence.

15. In the new rise of the workers movement in which the POR is participating, it puts forward a platform that combines, by means of a transitional program, minimum and immediate tasks of the masses with the maximum objectives. The fundamental points of such a program are:

1. A general wage increase to counter the devaluation of the currency that is impoverishing wage-earners. For a sliding scale of wages to defend the standard of living of the masses.

Rehire workers laid off because of their politics or support for social struggles; jobs for the unemployed. Continuous mobilization of the unemployed organizations in alliance with the trade unions. For a struggle against the continual rise in prices. Let the currency devaluations be paid for by private firms and the state, and not out of the miserable savings of the people.

2. Against imperialist pillage, for defense of state ownership of natural resources. For defense of oil, gas, and iron resources. Defend the COMIBOL and the nationalized mines that the fascist regime threatens to surrender to the voracious imperialists. For the return of workers control with right of veto, through establishment of workers control committees. Nationalize imperialist firms under workers control. Against the penetration of Brazilian sub-imperialism in the Departments of Santa Cruz and Beni. For

relentless, militant opposition to the breakup of the country being promoted by the agrarian-industrial bourgeoisie of Santa Cruz. Kick Yankee imperialism and Brazilian sub-imperialism out of Bolivia.

3. Defense of the Bolivian workers' trade-union movement. For the right of the COB, the national union federations, and the local unions to function freely and independently. Kick the police, the army, and the fascist armed gangs out of the working-class centers.

For defense of democratic rights and freedoms. Freedom for all the political and trade-union prisoners. Close the concentration camps and private prisons.\*

Free the universities from the fascist grip. For reconquest of university autonomy, abolition of Bolivia's university statute, for full self-management of the universities by boards that represent both the students and the teaching staffs.

4. Defend the peasantry and its rights to the land that it works. Defend its right to primary, secondary, and technical education. Kick the regiments occupying the regional centers and oppressing the farm workers out of the countryside. For state aid to settlers including technical assistance. Guaranteed prices for their crops, credit and discounts in buying their tools and machinery. Increase the size of the poor peasants' plots by dividing up the remaining latifundia and the reserve lands of the former landlords. Encourage voluntary cooperatives with state aid.

5. For the defeat of Banzer. For that, we must organize the arming of the masses. Struggle for a revival of the workers militias and the peasant regiments. Centralize military leadership, training, and armament, in a workers military general staff.

However, it is not enough to defeat the dictatorship only to replace it with a bourgeois government that has a liberal face. What is needed is to promote development of a new power that will carry on the experience of the Popular Assembly but rise above limitations and

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\*The term "private prisons" is used to describe the houses that the FSB and the MNR have on their own transformed into torture chambers and places for confining and executing revolutionists. They have done this independently of the police and army, which have no control over these establishments.

the weaknesses of that body in 1971. This new power should be enriched by a democratic way of operating. It should be closely linked to the rank-and-file workers and include a broad peasant representation. It should be independent of the bourgeois regime and rely on the armed force of the proletariat. The COB and the parties of the left should convene a Popular Assembly.

For a workers and peasants government, as the political expression of the rule of the oppressed masses led by the proletariat—the only way to liquidate capitalist and imperialist exploitation.

16. To initiate and apply this program, a party is needed. But to fulfill this role, the POR must strengthen itself and rise to the level of the tasks just outlined. The lack of development of the POR has become an obstacle for the advancement of the revolution.

The POR has, throughout its history, been able to maintain its roots in the workers and peasant movement. But it has also revealed its weaknesses; and if it does not overcome them, it will be unable to become the effective instrument that the masses need in order to win. This poses the necessity for it to transform itself qualitatively and quantitatively, by inserting itself more deeply into the country's key sectors, by broadening its national leadership teams, and by extending its body of intermediary cadres.

Of vital importance is the strengthening of its leadership center, which has the responsibility of planning all its activities, making maximum use of the capacities of its cadres, setting priorities, and concentrating its forces on the key axes of its activity as dictated by each period.

This party center will be all the more capable and effective to the degree that it is closely linked with the International center.

The POR will have to improve its infrastructure, which revealed its weakness in the events of August 1971. It will have to improve its means of communication and propaganda and regularize its press and its publications. The party must recruit its members through an aggressive struggle against reformism in all its forms, a struggle that must be waged politically and through militant initiatives, always standing before the masses as the real and reliable alternative. □



# **Argentina: Political Crisis and Revolutionary Perspectives**

# I. Historical Crisis of the System

1. Argentina has been convulsed by an economic, social, and political crisis that throughout numerous conjunctural ups and downs goes back two decades and, in certain respects, dates as far back as the 1930s.

In the framework of a capitalist system where, because of the imperialist grip, there was only distorted and unreliable growth, Peronism represented the most suitable political formula for the industrial bourgeoisie. In fact, General Peron's regime did help to an important degree to bolster the position of native capital vis-a-vis both the traditional conservative classes and foreign capital. By using a highly developed Bonapartist technique, Peron succeeded in establishing a relative equilibrium between the bourgeoisie and the exploited classes, a balance that, while guaranteeing in the last analysis the optimum functioning of the system in the given situation, assured real gains for the working class and other popular strata. By basing himself on mass support, Peron was able to bring about the social and political restructuring that made it possible to take advantage of the exceptional opportunities offered by the international situation at the time. But to win this support, he had to make some concessions to the mobilized working class, which won the greatest victories in its history (universal unionization, the development of the Comisiones Internas [Plant Committees], on-the-job rights, social-welfare laws, a marked rise in the standard of living, and so forth).

It is precisely because of this situation that Peronism still appears to be a viable short-term solution to some layers of the bourgeoisie and a hope for radical social and political change to very broad sectors of the popular masses.

The success of the Peronist formula was to a large extent due to the situation that existed during the second world war; the urgent economic needs of the European capitalist countries in the immediate post-war period of reconstruction; and to a lesser extent, the economic boom resulting from the Korean war. As soon as this situation changed and as soon as the world market was no longer starved for certain agricultural products and capitalist competition was once again unleashed, Argentina's socioeconomic balance was upset and a serious crisis loomed. From the beginning of the 1950s, Peron had to set his course toward "rationalization" and a quest for sources of imperialist capital. It was this sort of policy that provoked serious tensions between his regime and sectors of the working class.

2. Peron's downfall, resulting from nu-

merous and contradictory factors, opened a period of prolonged instability. The objective bases on which the Bonapartist regime rested, which guaranteed popular support for the policy of the industrial capitalists, no longer existed, and the ruling classes were not able to come up with any formula that would offer the slightest stability. The industrial bourgeoisie was deeply shaken by the crisis and was unable to project any solutions; moreover, it had to face a pitched battle with the working class, which although it was on the defensive, was still able in the five years that followed Peron's overthrow to put up a very vigorous struggle. The army began to emerge as the guarantor assuring the maintenance and functioning of the system. But it itself came under the influence of different social and political pressures and failed to advance a common strategy. It hesitated to take direct charge of running the government, dividing into opposing tendencies.

Fronzizi's regime, when all was said and done, was an ephemeral attempt to reestablish the dominance of the industrial bourgeoisie, based on the radicalized petty bourgeoisie and layers of the proletariat that remained faithful to the slogans of Peronism. The Fronzizi regime failed because, on the one hand, it quickly came into open conflict with the masses, and on the other hand, it could not provide a solution for the economic impasse and it thus promoted a comeback by the most conservative sectors of the ruling classes.

The industrial bourgeoisie demonstrated its intrinsic social and political weakness and had to rely on certain sectors of the army until the installation of the Illia regime—as transitory as Fronzizi's—which more directly represented the interests of the rural bourgeoisie and layers of the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie. The only success scored by the ruling class was that, starting in 1959-1960, the working class, hard hit by unemployment and a declining standard of living, began progressively to lose its dynamism and fighting spirit and entered into a stage of relative stagnation and demoralization—able only to wage sporadic and essentially defensive battles.

The Onganía regime, which came to power in 1966, brought the army to the forefront in the context of a situation relatively more favorable for stabilizing the country. The main goal of the new Bonapartist regime was to rationalize and modernize the economy, a policy that suited primarily the interest of the most "modern" capitalist sectors more or less directly

tied to imperialism. Furthermore, the job of the new government was made considerably easier by the relative passivity of the broad masses, the neutrality or even the favorable inclination of the majority of the union bureaucracy, and the attitude of the Peronist movement—which was, to say the least, equivocal for an entire period. A clear indication of the dictatorship's policy and the source of the social and political conflicts at the time were the measures restricting sugar production in the northern mills, the attempts to reorganize the railroads and the ports, and more rigorous control over the universities.

Onganía's Bonapartism, which operated in a completely different context from that of the Peronist variety, could promote the interests only of a very narrow minority. If Onganía was able to partially reactivate the economy and appreciably reduce the level of inflation, it was only by increasing the impoverishment of the proletariat as well as broad sectors of the petty bourgeoisie.

3. May 1969 marked a radical turning

This resolution was submitted by the International Majority Tendency. The vote was for 137, against 125, abstentions 7, not voting 1.

point. In Rosario, Córdoba and Tucumán the masses mobilized in the most gigantic movements Argentina had ever experienced. The Córdoba was a major test of strength between workers and students and the military dictatorship. It was the outbreak of a new stage of impetuous upsurge that created a prerevolutionary situation by shattering the balances established in 1966. This rise took the form notably of repeated explosive mobilizations both in the traditional epicenters of the workers movement and in the less radicalized cities, of hard-fought battles in vanguard workers sectors as well as general strikes that involved greater numbers than ever before in Argentina and in Latin America (November 1970 and September 1971). In this context the class struggle began to give rise to armed struggle, and urban guerrilla warfare spread to all of the country's important centers.

The bourgeoisie thus found itself faced with the need to reexamine its whole orientation. The question for the working class was how to take advantage of the new prerevolutionary crisis and the new explosive imbalances of the system in the context of a comprehensive anti-imperialist and anticapitalist strategy.

4. The ruling class, embroiled in the contradictions of neo-Peronism, had to confront the powerful upsurge of the mass



movement and the audacious initiatives of the armed-struggle organizations without a political leadership that was the least bit firm or homogeneous in the midst of an economic situation that combined a conjunctural downturn with the reappearance of a high rate of inflation. Called on to improvise, it alternated between the most brutal repression and attempts to seduce the masses through populist and liberalizing demagoguery. But it did not succeed in blocking the periodic mobilizations of the masses, the radicalization of wide layers of the petty bourgeoisie, or the revival of the student move-

ment, nor did it succeed in smashing the armed-struggle organizations.

In this context, Lanusse adopted the policy of the GAN (Great National Agreement), which brought about the elections of March 1973. There were, in fact, very great risks involved in any solution involving an increase in repression, such as the adoption of a reactionary Brazilian-type solution. In a situation of successive and powerful mass mobilizations and the existence of armed organizations already endowed with a wealth of experiences, a gorilla coup could have had

a boomerang effect, precipitating a civil war of uncertain outcome.

By accepting a reestablishment of official political activity, the GAN was intended to institute an agreement between Peronism and other traditional political currents (primarily the Radicals), to introduce a constitutional framework based on compromise and close collaboration with the trade-union bureaucracy, and to guarantee controlling positions to the military. Through this operation, it was hoped that it would be possible to isolate and crush the vanguards, especially the armed vanguards.

## II. The Working Class: Driving Force of the Revolution

5. The working class, the fundamental driving force of the revolution, has accumulated a great wealth of experience over the last thirty years. It has been the protagonist of an extraordinarily wide gamut of economic struggles extending from normal trade-union conflicts to factory occupations and seizures of hostages; of political general strikes; of vast mobilizations and abrupt semi-insurrectionary explosions; of hard-fought defensive battles; and of embryonic armed-struggle initiatives going from the most elementary kinds of sabotage to the boldest forms of urban guerrilla warfare. It has built powerful trade unions, which despite their origins and the ideology they adopted have been seen by the broadest masses as suitable instruments of class struggle and which in certain periods have accomplished the task of defending the immediate interests and elementary rights of the workers. The Argentine working class represents a relatively homogeneous social force with a tremendous specific weight in the political life of the country. When it mobilizes together with the wage workers in transport and in service industries, it is capable on its own of paralyzing all activity, as has been shown on several occasions by the most significant general strikes.

The contradiction of the Argentine workers movement lies in the fact that the proletariat has reached a high level of organization and carried out its most decisive political mobilizations under the hegemony of the Peronists, whose leadership reflected the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie.

At the beginning of the 1960s, important changes started to occur. From a structural point of view, the working class in the big cities in the interior, which was integrated into the modern industrial sectors, was acquiring an ever increasing

specific weight. From the political standpoint, the mobilizations had their epicenter first in the Tucuman region. A very hard-fought battle was waged there, but since it was a defensive one in the strategic sense, it was condemned to run out of steam. Next the epicenter shifted to Cordoba, which unquestionably became the nerve center of social and political confrontation.

This development went hand in hand with the emergence of young strata of the working class that had not suffered the negative effects of stagnation and demoralization. A broad vanguard matured politically under the influence of the Cuban revolution and the armed struggles inspired in many countries by the Castroists. The crisis of the international Communist movement and the Sino-Soviet conflict also had repercussions in CP circles. Thus, in the 1969 mobilizations in Cordoba and Rosario an important role fell to very militant workers who were not organized in the traditional workers movement. So, too, an ever clearer differentiation showed up in the unions, which was marked by phenomena of varying importance but all pointing in the same direction—increased radicalization of the regional leaderships, formation of the CGTA [the Confederacion General del Trabajo de los Argentinos—a left trade-union formation led by Raimundo Ongaro], the development of antibureaucratic tendencies and of plant unions reflecting pressure from below. Moreover, the emergence of these plant unions also reflected the revolutionary aspirations of the politically advanced layers of the working class that decided to break with routinist practices and respond to the violence of the repressive apparatus by posing the problems of armed struggle in a short-term perspective and beginning to operate on this level. The example of the Tupa-

maros in Uruguay was an additional stimulus.

It would be incorrect to conclude that Peronism's political and ideological influence is only a throwback to the past. But the links between Peronism and broad working-class layers have become much less solid than in the past, and their adherence to Justicialism has become much more critical. There are important layers that have broken with Peronism, especially in the decisive epicenters like the huge plants in Cordoba, where the Peronist bureaucrats have even lost hegemony in the trade-union arena. All this boils down to the fact that Peronism no longer controls the workers vanguard.

The Argentine working class therefore has been and remains the backbone of the revolutionary mobilizations, and its role will be decisive in the coming battles. Its weakness still lies fundamentally in the fact that there is no nationwide organization that presents a political line that is independent of every bourgeois or petty-bourgeois leadership or tendency, that there is no revolutionary leadership capable of mapping out and implementing the strategic outlines of a struggle for overthrowing the government. But forces have matured that understand the need for struggling simultaneously against imperialism and capitalism, as well as the need for an overall strategy of armed struggle for seizing power.

6. The peasantry does not represent a major force, and its social and economic weight is tending to diminish even further. Moreover, the Argentine revolutionists have not developed a general analysis of agrarian structures in recent years, a failure that has not been without its consequences in formulating political positions. It is unquestionable in any case that the poor peasants, especially in certain regions in the north where they are

closely linked to the workers, must be regarded as allies of the proletariat. Mobilizing these strata both in political battles and in the armed struggle is an imperative need that revolutionists cannot underestimate on the pretext of the specific social composition of the country and the overwhelming weight of the wage workers integrated into the urban economy.

A considerable role will be played by the petty bourgeoisie. In the 1940s, this social stratum was to a large extent the base of the anti-Peronist movements and organizations that stood objectively on conservative, if not outright reactionary, ground. The petty bourgeoisie also have been affected by the economic downturn, against which it is often less able to defend itself than is the working class, as well as by the growing strength of the monopolistic sectors, the progressive elimination of all freedoms and democratic rights by the military dictatorship, the repercussions of the Cuban revolution, and the situation of other countries on the continent. The result has been a growing radicalization of the petty bourgeois-

sie, along with the radicalization of the so-called marginal layers which fit into a category between the poorest workers and the most impoverished petty-bourgeoisie. It is these phenomena that explain the role played by petty-bourgeois elements in the struggles of recent years and in the armed-struggle organizations, as well as the influence Peronism has gained in these social strata.

The student movement itself—which cannot as such be characterized as petty bourgeois—has reflected, and in large measure given expression to, this radicalization. The significance of such an alliance between the working class and the radicalized petty-bourgeoisie and students was shown especially by the participation of petty-bourgeois layers in the great mobilizations of 1970-72, as well as the links established between the workers and students at the time of the revolutionary explosions in 1969. It is evident, moreover, that the favorable attitude on the part of the petty bourgeoisie greatly facilitated the development of guerrilla warfare in the big urban concentrations.

mechanisms of the system, and, on this basis, an alliance or compromise with the bourgeoisie or important sectors of it.

8. In Argentina, the orientation of armed struggle, which the Ninth Congress could only outline in a very general way, fitted into a context where a prerevolutionary situation was developing, the class struggle was reaching the stage of armed confrontations, and embryonic forms of civil war were taking form. On the other hand, the bourgeoisie had not exhausted all its margin for maneuver. The imperialists and the bourgeoisies of other countries on the continent were ready to intervene politically and, in the last analysis, even militarily to prevent the birth of a second workers state in Latin America. No revolutionary party existed with a decisive influence over the masses that could in the short run take advantage of the social explosions that were occurring and building up in the direction of a struggle for power. It was in this context that the revolutionary Marxists said that unleashing armed struggle is a task belonging specifically to the vanguard. It must take the initiative, while putting the emphasis from the start on those forms of armed struggle that make it possible to establish or strengthen ties with major strata of the masses. At the same time, they outlined a perspective of armed struggle developing through ups and downs and multiple variants for a prolonged period.

It was imperative, particularly after the 1969 turn, to prepare for armed struggle in the short run, and the revolutionary Marxists emphasized this quite clearly, reaffirming the necessity of avoiding the isolation of the armed-struggle organizations from the masses, as well as avoiding all *foquista* or spontaneist, insurrectionalist deviations.

At the same time, it was necessary to intervene in the mass movement to exploit every legal or semilegal opportunity, and to use every instrument the masses have traditionally considered worthwhile, as well as those that naturally appear in the course of mobilizations at different stages of an acute social conflict and in prerevolutionary situations. More concretely, this involved activity in the trade unions, a persistent struggle against the decaying bureaucracy, and initiatives to stimulate the polarization and the maturation of vanguard layers of the working class around a platform that effectively corresponds to the needs of the struggles and their generalization within the framework of a political struggle against the dictatorship. It also involves systematic activity to support and encourage the formation of democratic rank-and-file bodies that are the product of the need, felt particularly strongly by the most dynamic layers of the working class, to keep from being cooped-up in routine

### III. Permanent Revolution, Armed Struggle, and the Mass Movement

7. In a situation marked by a structural crisis and revolutionary tensions such as exists in Argentina, the question of power, of overthrowing the capitalist system and establishing a workers state is objectively posed. But no positive solution of this problem is possible without a strategy for taking power that includes an orientation of armed struggle and without a revolutionary party intervening to apply this strategy.

The basic orientation of the struggle flows first of all from the nature of the Argentine revolution. Revolutionary Marxists more than ever reject every conception based on the assumption of a democratic stage preparing the way for a socialist one. They reaffirm the concept of a permanent revolution, that is, that the unfolding of the revolutionary process has an anticapitalist and socialist dynamic. All the experiences of the last thirty years—in Argentina as well as in other Latin American countries—show that a revolution that stops on a "democratic," "antioligarchic," and "anti-imperialist" plateau and does not attack the capitalist system as such inevitably reaches an impasse, is thrown back, and ends in defeat. In those countries where democratic tasks remain to be accomplished—and there are less of these in Argentina than in almost any other country on the continent—these tasks can only

be achieved in the framework of a dynamic of permanent revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat.

It follows from this that we must reject any perspective of an alliance with the so-called national bourgeoisie or with any of its so-called progressive sectors. The workers and revolutionary movement must not, of course, fail to exploit the tactical advantages offered by the enemy's contradictions. In the case of a reactionary dictatorship, for example, it cannot exclude the possibility that bourgeois organizations or movements may take part in the opposition struggle.

But this by no means implies that bourgeois layers or political formations can be considered allies from a revolutionary standpoint. Any hesitation or doubt in this matter would come down, in the last analysis, to questioning the concept of permanent revolution. Since the revolutionary dynamic tends to shatter not only the framework of the capitalist system as such, a confrontation with the bourgeoisie is inevitable and it is necessary to prepare for such an eventuality. The revolutionists' criticisms of the Chilean Unidad Popular and the Uruguayan Frente Amplio do not concern simply the method of the "democratic road." They are aimed also and above all at the nature of a political strategy that involves maintaining the essential political and economic



functioning of the bureaucratized structures, to express their aspirations in a more immediate and effective way, to

make their wishes felt more strongly, and to provide a broader united base for struggle.

## IV. Peronism's Return to Government

9. Despite the fraudulent nature of the March 1973 elections, the results expressed a massive rejection of the military dictatorship. For lack of a revolutionary alternative, the masses used the elections to express themselves and their support for Peronism, whose political formulas appeared the most credible. Thus the elections also showed the mass support that Peronism continues to have, strengthened by the support of sectors of the radicalized youth who set the tone for the Peronist election campaign.

The inauguration of Campora as president on May 25 was marked by dramatic events that revealed the depth of the political crisis. Under the pressure of the masses, who mobilized in large numbers, with the active participation of the armed organizations, the most representative leaders of the dictatorship left the stage, unable to camouflage the partial defeat that their return to the barracks represented. All the political prisoners were immediately released, without exception. Allende and Dorticos were hailed, while Rogers was obliged to remain on the sidelines.

The change in leadership carried out by the bourgeoisie through the installment of a new Peronist regime and a return to parliamentary democracy promised from the beginning to be full of dangers.

10. Once he had abandoned the demagogic phrases used during the preelectoral period, Peron's plan became clear. This was to unite the main sectors of the ruling classes in order to find a way out of the country's economic crisis and the crisis of the instruments of bourgeois political domination, after so many years of failures at alternating between "democratic" and dictatorial regimes.

On the economic plane, Peron is trying to renegotiate the dependent relationship with imperialism, by seeking a base in other, non-American, imperialist capital and increasing state intervention in the field of economic planning. He is trying to limit inflation and to encourage a new phase of economic expansion. This presupposes a far-reaching modernization and rationalization of the productive apparatus.

The economic situation is characterized by:

- a. the small growth in the gross national product in the framework of a general stabilization, achieved at the cost of a slowdown in the growth of production;
- b. a foreign debt of US\$7 billion;
- c. a big deficit in the state budget, which,

insofar as it restricts public expenditure, conflicts with a policy of economic stimulation;

d. a sizable currency reserve (US\$1,300 million) and an expected surplus in the balance of payments;

e. serious problems in traditional grain exports in the coming year;

f. good prospects for the export of manufactured goods to Cuba, Chile, and Rumania;

g. the need to modify the system of price controls by allowing some increases;

h. the need to hold the line on wages;

i. a million and a half unemployed;

j. the fact that proposed foreign capital investments have not yet materialized.

Although the bourgeoisie's economic plan provides for a progressive redistribution of income, this presupposes a preliminary revival of economic expansion, which has not yet occurred. Thus the results of the first eight months of the Peronist government have yielded only several hasty measures with respect to the economic situation of the masses. Once again the bourgeoisie has asked the working class to make sacrifices for the "national reconstruction" of Argentine capitalism.

The "Social Pact" signed by the businessmen of the CGE (General Confederation of Company Managers), the heads of the government's economic planning departments, and the bureaucrats of the CGT (General Confederation of Labor), set the tone for Peronism's social policy. The miserable wage increase of about 200 pesos scarcely compensated for the deterioration of buying power produced by the escalation of prices during the last months of the dictatorship. The Party Commissions were suspended for two more years (this had already been done by the dictatorship), and wages were frozen. Like the Rural Pact and the Three-Year Plan, the Social Pact shows that Peron's economic policy is not encroaching upon the fundamental interests of any of the most important sections of the ruling classes. As for his attitude toward imperialism: he has taken no radical measures such as nationalizations or refusal to repay the foreign debt, but on the contrary has promised new guarantees for foreign investments, accommodating to the demands of international financial bodies. This is because to rationalize the productive apparatus and expand exports, he must depend on the monopolistic firms (for example, the agreement with the automobile companies), not to speak

of the necessity to attract new imperialist capital. The same thing applies to the big bourgeoisie, which after all these years must again look to Peron as the sole way out of the crisis. The "agrarian" bourgeoisie has obtained the government's unreserved respect for private ownership of land, postponement of the vote on taxing potential land profits, and guarantees of price supports to counter accidental fluctuations in production—measures that compensate for state intervention in the marketing of export grain. Although their role as minor partners has been recognized, the petty bourgeoisie and small-business men have suffered most in the short run from the partial stabilization.

The precondition for a more enduring stabilization and a new period of expansion is an intensification in the rate of exploitation, which will hurt the working class and layers of the petty bourgeoisie. That is, the precondition for the success of the economic plans is an essentially political one: success in imposing these plans on the masses.

11. There are a series of contradictions involved in trying to carry out a political "institutionalization," that is, in overcoming and resolving the political chaos—a reflection of the crisis of the system—that has shaken Argentina for the last twenty years. The principal contradiction is that the Peronist movement's arrival in power accentuated all its internal tensions, giving rise to a period of overt crisis. The heterogeneous and antagonistic interests that coexist within Peronism have begun an open struggle to impose their positions on the government.

The months following May 25, 1973, were characterized by the confrontations within the Peronist movement. The struggle counterposed mainly the trade-union and political bureaucracy to the young and militant sectors of the movement. Their irreconcilable antagonism was marked by the blood of the Ezeiza massacre on June 20, 1973, the day of Peron's return, when the armed right-wing gangs set into motion one of the most dramatic events in Argentine history. That was the beginning of a conscious offensive by the Peronist right wing as it prepared to win full control over the direction of the process. The July 13, 1973, coup, with the resignation of Campora and the restoration of power to Peron, came about in the same way. Lastiri's interregnum as president absolved Peron from carrying out the "dirty work," the "ideological housecleaning" of the Peronist movement, the McCarthyism, the return to censorship and obscurantism in cultural life, and above all, the escalation of assassinations and the attacks by the armed gangs of the Peronist right wing.

This very explosion of the internal conflicts within Peronism quickly revealed the

unstable character of the new period of bourgeois democracy. But, going beyond the internal struggle within the Peronist movement, the escalation of the number of gangs of special police and the bureaucracy is aimed at dealing selective but effective blows at sections of the social vanguard that refuse to accept the imperatives of capitalist "national reconstruction." The assassinations of militants, the kidnappings, and the right-wing attacks of various kinds followed in rapid succession at a rate never before seen, even under the military dictatorship. A "democracy" whose highest governmental agencies are encouraging the white terror is a strange democracy indeed!

The selective repression, under the cover of the activity of the special gangs, was to be complemented by new repressive legislation on various levels—from the new Law on Professional Associations, which consolidates the power of the trade-union bureaucracy, giving it the responsibility to control and repress the labor movement; to the reform of the Criminal Code, which reintroduces new concepts of political "delinquency"; and including the "Prescindibilidad" law (the "Availability" law) for civil servants, which deprives them of job security and provides for the purging of "undesirable" elements and the "rationalizing" of the state apparatus.

When veiled repression proves insufficient against the mass movement, the new Peronist government does not shrink from using the traditional repressive forces—the police and riot police—as when it crushed the San Francisco uprising (with a resulting death), or when it repressed workers' strikes in various regions of the country. A "people's government" that sends its police forces against its own voters is a strange one indeed!

The approach taken toward the mass movement will provoke the first disagreements among the various bourgeois sectors who support Peron's plan. It will also produce tensions within the armed forces, which are maintained as a reserve military party of the ruling classes, keeping control of the whole process.

The sectors of the petty bourgeoisie who believed in the anti-imperialist inclinations of Peronism are now seeing in place of their aspirations, a reactionary offensive against the university system, the development of McCarthyism, and the spread of right-wing terrorism. Peron's big plans for an independent foreign policy and support for the liberation of Latin America are being translated into aid to the Chilean military junta and a scandalous attitude toward the refugees, into the reception accorded to the hangman Banzler, and into the visits of the puppet Bordaberry and of Stroessner. In addition to the failure of Peron's diplomatic projects, Argentina is encountering great difficulties in its attempts to compete with

Brazil in the Latin American market.

12. The majority of the working class voted for Peronism. During the dictatorship's last months, they demonstrated their hopes for the period after the elections. But these aspirations were linked with the desire that concrete demands long rebuffed would at last be satisfied.

After the *Mendozazo* in March 1972, there was a sharp decline in workers' struggles throughout the country. The bureaucracy held back the struggles; only Cordoba continued to experience militant actions. After May 25, there was a change. The workers interpreted the election results and Campora's coming to power as their own victory. The lessening of the repression and the return of democratic rights that had been suppressed for years were to increase the relative weakness of the trade-union bureaucracy, which had no impact in the election campaign and up to the time when the government changed, because of its inability to mobilize the workers and its rejection by the rank and file. These developments were to give a new impetus to struggles, their revival indicating a new rise of the working class.

The most important characteristic of this new period of growing struggles is the integration into the struggle of the workers of greater Buenos Aires—almost 70 percent of the working class. It is they who were in the forefront of the majority of struggles in the first months of the Peronist government. The importance of this development is obvious in view of the fact that workers' struggles since 1969 had been limited to cities in the interior of the country, where the proletarian concentration is smaller than in Buenos Aires. Most of the struggles mobilize the industrial proletariat in confrontations with the bosses in the private sector, and not against the state. In general, the struggles are short and isolated, lacking unifying slogans that can extend them to the national scale. Most of the generalized struggles have been spearheaded by the workers in the state apparatus, who have been confronting a common boss—the state.

But in the context of the rise of struggles since May 25, there has been an increase in factory occupations, showing that important layers of the working class have assimilated the most militant methods of struggle that were developed during the dictatorship. In general, the struggles have developed around immediate demands such as defense of jobs, the rehiring of workers fired for political or trade-union activity, payment of salary arrears, and so on. But a characteristic feature of many of these struggles is that they become politicized in confronting the bureaucracy. A large number of the most militant confrontations, moreover, have been directed exclusively against the bureaucracy. The confrontations between the

bureaucracy and the ranks have almost always been violent, with armed confrontations resulting in dead and wounded. Finally, there is a reappearance of those explosive struggles with broad popular support that began to occur during the military dictatorship but that the repression and the hostility of the bureaucracy had increasingly isolated and hampered. The most significant was the popular mobilization in San Francisco, in Cordoba province, but similar events have already occurred in other places, as well as in entire regions of the province of Tucuman (Villa Carmela, Villa Quinteros, etc.).

Although the majority of mobilizations had a defensive character at the beginning, the context of the Social Pact and the attitude of the union bureaucracy enhanced their significance. These struggles show on the one hand the resistance of the working class to accepting new sacrifices, despite repeated appeals from Peron himself; on the other hand, they demonstrate the extreme situation the Argentine bourgeoisie has been placed in as a result of having continually stalled on meeting even the most elementary needs of the workers. But because of the lack of a nationally recognized class-struggle leadership and generalized slogans, the workers are still unable to understand that in reality it is the state they are confronting as their enemy; they have only come to understand the need to confront these measures on the local level. Nevertheless, even these limited struggles have an explosive dynamic that is intolerable for the state and the trade-union bureaucracy. They have sufficed to prevent the necessary political stabilization of the country, which is an indispensable precondition for the success of the government's plans. That is why the full fury of the armed gangs of the special police and the bureaucracy has been unleashed against the best-known worker-activists and the most militant sectors. They are attempting to behead the working class of its new broad vanguard that has come to the fore in recent years.

13. It must be concluded that the installation of a "constitutional" regime will be but a brief interlude that the ruling class will be quick to put in question. The opening of a whole stage of bourgeois democracy—where the parties and unions would enjoy effective rights and autonomy and could gradually become stronger—remains a completely unlikely variant.

Such a stage of bourgeois democracy would presuppose a defeat of the working class, concretized either through the physical destruction of its vanguard, or through the political acceptance of the plans of the bourgeoisie. It is unlikely that the latter possibility will be realized, and the bourgeoisie itself is aware that it cannot "alleviate" the situation by means



of ideological maneuvers, even with Peron's help.

In this context, the main danger for the working class and the revolutionary movement is that the dynamism and combativity of the masses will be expressed only in sectoral, uncoordinated struggles

that are likely to exhaust themselves or to result in very limited gains, or that these struggles will give rise to spontaneous explosions that can be isolated and repressed and that in any event have no real impact.

The confrontation between the workers

movement and the ruling classes that is developing under the new Peronist regime will determine the evolution of the relationship of forces in the southern part of the continent. In fact, after the defeat in Chile, the epicenter of the class struggle in Latin America has been shifted to Argentina.

## V. Crisis of Revolutionary Leadership, the New Broad Vanguard, and the Building of the Revolutionary Party

14. The new political conjuncture that opened with Peronism's return to power has once again revealed the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the Argentine workers movement. While the Argentine bourgeoisie is increasing its efforts to find a stable form of political rule that can provide it with guarantees of sustained capital accumulation, the majority of Argentine workers continue to have illusions in Peronism.

The absence of a revolutionary leadership in the Argentine working class, which has allowed bourgeois nationalism to develop in the ranks of the workers movement, is the historic responsibility of Stalinism. Before the second world war, the Argentine CP had succeeded in winning the most significant part of the workers vanguard, embodying in the eyes of the class the traditions, prestige, and influence of the Russian revolution. During the war, the CP followed the twists and turns of Stalinist policy, breaking totally with the dynamic of workers struggles and openly practicing class collaborationism reflecting the USSR's alliance with the "democratic" imperialist countries. This opportunist and treacherous policy on the part of the main workers party explains why the Bonapartist operation of Peron was so successful during his first government. He succeeded in winning the main workers leaders and the big majority of the workers vanguard that had emerged in the mass mobilizations of the day to the new bourgeois nationalist party created under his influence.

The first Peronist government was able to grant important concessions to the extremely militant workers movement, thanks to the margin of maneuver the Argentine bourgeoisie had gained from the loosening of its links with imperialism and the conditions favoring the country's traditional trade patterns as a result of the world war and the changes it had brought about in the international conjuncture. At the same time, General Peron's movement initiated a profound transformation in the structure of the organized workers movement, creating the conditions for the rise of a new union bureaucracy directly linked to the bourgeois state apparatus. This bureaucracy became the main vehicle

for class-collaborationist politics among the workers.

Contrary to what happened to the leaders of the MNR in Bolivia, Peron fell before the masses had broken from his movement. His successors sought to deprive the working class of the conquests of the Justicialist era and to suppress those organizations that the workers regarded more than ever as their front line of defense. A long period of eighteen years of proscription and persecution of its most militant members opened up for Peronism. For years these factors delayed the development of an *open crisis* within the workers movement.

15. The Cuban revolution had a determining role in the appearance of new vanguard sectors and organizations throughout Latin America. At the continental level, it was both the main motive force and the product of the crisis of Stalinism. It was to rupture the hegemony of bourgeois nationalism on the mass movement. It polarized the field of class struggle through the presence of the first Latin American workers state.

The Cuban revolution thereby led to an increasing radicalization of struggles, which was reflected in Argentina in Peronism, Stalinism, and Social Democracy, as well as to some degree in some sectors of the Trotskyist movement. This is how some initial elements of the present Argentine vanguard appeared, developing mainly from the ranks of Peronism and Stalinism.

But a new broad vanguard was to appear in Argentina, not only under the impact of the Cuban revolution, but above all out of the mass struggles that spread and developed around the confrontation with the military dictatorship, between 1966 and 1973.

16. That is why it is correct to consider the explosion of the Cordobazo as a key date for understanding the present situation of the vanguard in Argentina. Because it was in the Cordobazo that the appearance of a new social vanguard or broad vanguard was to be expressed for the first time on a massive scale.

What we call the broad vanguard is the totality of radicalized sectors of the mass movement who play an active role in the

struggles and who, to a more or less large degree, tend to escape the control of the traditional nationalist or reformist leadership as they go into action. This mass vanguard encompasses more than the number of militants who are organized in clearly structured groups or parties.

What the Cordobazo and the later struggles show is that this broad vanguard in Argentina is not limited to radicalized sectors of the student movement or the petty bourgeoisie; it is also composed of elements located in important sectors of the working class. In the latter case, this workers radicalization reflects the social weight of the Argentine proletariat and its active role in the mass struggles throughout the last thirty years. Among the harbingers of this radicalization were the workers' participation in the Peronist resistance, the general strike and factory occupations of 1964, the experiments incorporated in the programs of La Falda and Huerta Grande, as well as in the struggles of the longshoremen and sugarcane workers during the first years of the Onganía dictatorship and the splitoff of the CGT de los Argentinos [a distinct labor federation headed by the "left" bureaucrat Ongaro].

This new broad vanguard developed through these successive mass struggles against the military dictatorship, accumulating experiences and beginning to challenge the bureaucratic leaderships.

Now it is not only peripheral edges of the traditional organizations who are swelling the ranks of the vanguard but, above all, sectors that are radicalizing and appearing even in the midst of mass struggles, including student as well as worker struggles.

17. The real political importance and meaning of the armed struggle in Argentina depends on the degree to which it fuses with the traditions of the use of revolutionary violence in the working class—as in the Peronist resistance—and with the growth of the mass movement in the context of a prerevolutionary situation.

The guerrilla organizations were to have political repercussions among the masses and reciprocally, to find the development of the mass movement determining their own orientation. The growing worker and student movements con-

fronted the repressive apparatus of the military dictatorship on several occasions, objectively posing the necessity to organize revolutionary violence. Only then could it be understood to what degree sectors of the masses and especially this broad vanguard that had emerged from the struggles themselves had identified with the guerrilla struggle as an extension of their own struggle against the dictatorship.

That is how an identification with armed struggle and, more concretely, support of the guerrilla organizations became one of the main points of reference for the majority of the new broad vanguard.

18. But armed struggle is not a sufficient pole of clarification to assure the homogeneity and cohesion of this new broad vanguard. As soon as the electoral maneuver prepared by General Lanusse became clear, the political contradictions that would break up the initial framework of unity of action in the struggle against the dictatorship were to appear clearly.

This is where the absence of a revolutionary Marxist pole in the Argentine vanguard became obvious. This role was not filled by the PRT, an organization that had some real possibilities of winning a hegemonic position within this new broad vanguard. The centrist orientation of its leadership made it incapable not only of benefiting from the prestige it had won through the actions of the ERP, but also of acting as a force that could provide political clarification in the struggle against Peronism and reformism.

Thus the natural heterogeneity and political confusion of this new vanguard, the historical product of Stalinism's domination of the international workers movement and of the weakness of revolutionary Marxism down through the years, was to continue and to crystallize into different political currents.

Today it is impossible to analyze the characteristics of this broad vanguard without analyzing the principal political currents that it includes.

The partial setback of the military dictatorship and the return to a regime of bourgeois democracy, with a certain lessening of the repression and the reestablishment of democratic rights, even though precarious, will enable broader sectors of this social vanguard to express themselves in new mobilizations and mass struggles, and thus to gauge the limits of this situation.

Even if the situation of the vanguard in Argentina continues to be characterized by a profound atomization, the new conjuncture, which is more demanding of political responses than was the previous period of the military dictatorship, has begun to produce a certain polarization. Thus organizations and currents that are more important and defined are appear-

ing, accompanied by a process of fusions, splits, crises, and clarification.

Numerous groups and organizations continue to exist, however, around these sectors, the most important poles of the broad vanguard. We must take these groups and organizations into account when we attempt a more precise definition of united-front tactics and political intervention in the different mass fronts.

19. The vast majority of this new broad vanguard was to identify with *revolutionary Peronism*, and with *radicalized Peronism*.

Insofar as the radicalized sectors of the Peronist youth groups had identified with the Peronist armed organizations, these sectors were able to channel and win the support of a major part of this new broad vanguard of student and worker origin.

The development of various workers currents opposed to the bureaucracy and identified with radicalized or revolutionary Peronism reflected the difficulty some sections of the working class were having in breaking with bourgeois-nationalist ideology after thirty years of the workers' consciousness being formed in the Peronist mold, and in the absence of a "classist" (class-struggle) mass alternative. This had already been experienced previously, for example, in the formation of the CGT de los Argentinos.

The radicalization of sectors of the petty-bourgeoisie and the student movement was followed by its "Peronization."

This phenomenon reflected, in a distorted way, the weight of the labor movement in the social struggles. It was an opportunist attempt to link up with the working class, through adapting to its present level of consciousness.

The new conjuncture, characterized by the presence of bourgeois and bureaucratic Peronism in government, under the leadership of General Peron himself, tends to increasingly sharpen the political contradictions in the radical wing of the Peronist movement. There is a gap that grows wider and wider between the aspirations of the militant sectors and the harsh reality of the bourgeois project of rebuilding a national capitalism under the sponsorship of Peron. There is an insurmountable contradiction between the needs of liberation and the "socialist fatherland" that arose in the struggle against the dictatorship and, on the other hand, Peron's maintenance of a negotiated dependence on imperialism.

The demands that were rejected for so many years, and that are today advanced by the workers ranks, collide with the requirements of the "Social Pact" signed between the bosses and the union bureaucracy with Peron's full support.

The whole struggle against the military dictatorship is being betrayed by virtue of the fact that the assassins and torturers guilty of bloodbaths against the people go unpunished, and are even vindicated by

the new wave of repression being undertaken by the special gangs of the police and the Peronist right wing.

In these conditions, two distinct attitudes have already appeared clearly within the "radical wing" of the Peronist movement.

One is held by the leadership of the Peronist youth, the Peronist worker youth, the Peronist university youth, and the FAR and Montonero organizations.

They are vainly trying to preserve the precarious political breathing space won within the Peronist movement, at the cost of continual twists and turns, in order to absolve Peron himself from responsibility for the government's policy.

They continue to hold to the logic of Peron's plan for "national reconstruction," putting forward a stages concept of revolution in which an alliance with the national bourgeoisie would have its place.

This leads them into increasingly opportunist attitudes, such as collaborating with the army in the case of "Operation Dorrego"; negotiating worker and student struggles; adopting a conciliatory attitude toward the most reactionary sectors of the Peronist movement, whose role of open betrayal of the labor movement they themselves had denounced; subordinating themselves to the "tactical" interests of these sectors; and supporting the bureaucracy's "Law of Professional Associations."

This attitude will lead to a growing separation of the leading circles of the radical wing of the Peronist movement from their base among the militants, especially those militants of working-class origin.

The outlines of the other attitude, still a minority one, are to be found among the more consistent sectors of the revolutionary wing of Peronism — the Peronist Armed Forces (FAP), the Rank-and-File Peronists, the October 17 Revolutionary Movement, and the Peronist Revolutionary Front.

These sectors have shown they are more in tune with the militant and revolutionary aspirations of their ranks, and are beginning to pose the necessity of an independent alternative for the working class, in a process that can lead to a split with bourgeois and bureaucratic Peronism and with Peron himself.

Thus new conjunctural conditions are appearing that favor a break by wider sectors of the social vanguard with the ideology of bourgeois nationalism, to the extent that a revolutionary Marxist pole exists capable of winning it and offering it new perspectives.

Thus a new and decisive stage is appearing in the open crisis of Peronism as a bourgeois-nationalist current in the process of losing control of fundamental sectors of the workers movement and the mass movement in general.

20. *Stalinist reformism* has won new forces, especially among the student movement and among sectors of the new van-



guard.

This rise of the CP is a phenomenon that is not limited to Argentina, but which has occurred also in other countries of Latin America. It shows the CP's capacity to recover from its own serious crises and its own links with the international Stalinist movement. In the last analysis, this rise reflects the weight of the USSR in the international relationship of forces and the fact that the crisis of Stalinism does not automatically mean the disappearance of this reformist current.

In a more precise and conjunctural way, this rise indicates a certain recovery of reformism vis-a-vis the crisis of the Castroist current which, at the Latin American level, developed under the impact of the Cuban revolution as both a product and a motive force of the crisis of Stalinism. This recovery of Stalinism is also based on the dependence of the Cuban workers state on the USSR: the present policy of the Cuban leadership is not weakening Stalinism as was the case in preceding years. The experience with the Popular Unity in Chile has also contributed to the resurgence of reformist illusions.

This conjunctural growth of the CP poses once again the problem of the validity of the political and ideological struggle against Stalinism in the Argentina of today.

The CP's policy has been revealed as absolutely tail-endist in relation to Peronism, in the framework of a traditional orientation of revolution by stages and class collaboration with sectors of the bourgeoisie. In this sense, its present growth will deepen its contradictions and its crisis, to the extent that the failure of its present bourgeois project and the precariousness of bourgeois parliamentary democracy become obvious, as they did in Chile.

21. The Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) represents the most important centrist force in the revolutionary left. Precisely because it opts for the armed struggle as a central core of its political theses—and armed struggle constitutes one of the main political reference points of the new broad vanguard—it tends to polarize around itself military sectors lacking important perspectives of their own in the present conjuncture.

In spite of the growing rightward evolution of its leadership (see the section "A First Self-Critical Balance Sheet of Argentine Trotskyism" in this resolution), the PRT has won great prestige as a result of the ERP's struggle against the military dictatorship. Despite many inadequacies from the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism, it has shown that it is capable of important political initiatives in the new conjuncture, such as the workers assembly of Cordoba, various military actions, its participation in the mass mobilizations for Trelew and Chile, and the creation of the

Front Against Imperialism and for Socialism.

In the short run, the major source of the PRT's contradictions is its inability to define and develop an overall correct tactic that can respond to the needs of the conjuncture. Thus the gap between propaganda initiatives, which remain relatively abstract, and a policy in the mass movement that is insufficient or tail-endist in relationship to the reformists, continues to widen.

But it must be emphasized that as long as there is no clear revolutionary Marxist alternative that is also a political force capable of attracting significant sectors of the broad vanguard by its presence in the struggles, the PRT will continue to appear as the most advanced and most credible existing option in the revolutionary left.

22. The other important organized sectors that are influential in the new broad vanguard, whose main characteristic is their centrism on the question of armed struggle, have radicalized in opposition not only to the radical wing of Peronism and Stalinist reformism, but also to the PRT and other armed organizations. This means that they have developed their consistency and their main points of reference in reaction against the principal deficiencies of these currents, giving rise to a broad overall political and ideological definition, as well as to a perspective of doing "serious" work in the mass movement.

Reacting against Peronist populism, reformism, and ideological eclecticism, organizations like the PCR and the VC seek a consistent line in Maoism, while the PO, the PST, and others seek it in Trotskyism.

Although in their strategic perspectives they can hold various positions, ranging from "people's war" to insurrectionalist positions, and from the revolution by stages to the permanent revolution, their activity with respect to armed struggle is the same. They have not understood the necessity of armed struggle initiated by detachments of the vanguard in the period of the dictatorship. They do not understand the necessity of responding with mass self-defense to the current attacks of the special gangs of the police and the trade-union bureaucracy. This policy disarms and disorients their own militants and sectors of the broad vanguard influenced by them in the worker and student movements. This is expressed by a complete absence of responses to the key questions of the present period or, in the best of cases, by an improvised tail-endism with respect to more consistent revolutionary sectors.

23. The crisis of revolutionary leadership that the Argentine workers movement has been experiencing does not signify only that the majority of workers have illusions about bourgeois nationalism. It also means that none of the existing political forces today appears as the embryo of a revolutionary party capable of lead-

ing the working class to the seizure of power and the building of socialism, thus putting an end to the capitalist system of dependence and exploitation. Even the most advanced forces have profound deformations that prevent them from becoming a real revolutionary leadership of the masses.

To employ such a characterization is to emphasize the central task facing revolutionary Marxists at the present stage: building a revolutionary party capable of overcoming the crisis of leadership of the proletariat and leading it to the definitive victory over imperialism and the bourgeoisie. The entire activity of revolutionary Marxists must be focused on building the party.

Revolutionary Marxists insist on the full actuality of the Leninist theory of organization. This means posing the problem of building a party in accord with the principles of democratic centralism, composed of members tested through their experience in the class struggle, and providing for the fusion of revolutionary Marxism with the workers vanguard.

24. A hard political struggle is required to build a revolutionary party in Argentina. It means contending against bourgeois nationalism for the support of the masses. It also means debating sectors that have already escaped the control of the traditional bureaucratic leaderships, that is, the new broad vanguard, in contest with the radical wing of the Peronist movement, with reformism, and with the various centrist currents. The party will be built in conditions where there already exist relatively crystallized poles at the level of the vanguard—or at least poles having a significant political attraction.

These conditions require that the task of *political clarification and education of the broad vanguard* be made a fundamental aspect of party building, given the fact that this vanguard constitutes the essential basis on which the revolutionary Marxists must accumulate their forces. The political education of this new broad vanguard in the present circumstances of Argentina can only occur on the basis of *the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism*. Only revolutionary Marxism offers a solid critical basis and a coherent political alternative to bourgeois nationalism, Stalinist reformism, and centrism. In Argentina today, there is no more room for new centrist options, if the crisis of revolutionary leadership is going to be effectively overcome. Only a revolutionary Marxist party will be able to lead the Argentine proletariat to workers power and socialism.

25. The explosive dynamic of class struggles in a country like Argentina determines how the political accumulation of forces involved in building a revolutionary Marxist party will take place. Even an organization that is of modest size, but which is struggling to become the vanguard, quickly confronts imposing responsibilities.

Moreover, the existence of more than one vanguard pole already commanding significant political strength and capacity for initiatives requires that revolutionary Marxists who claim to be contending for leadership of sectors of the broad vanguard build a real and concrete alternative, and not present themselves simply as a "theoretical" alternative.

These two factors put a question mark on the possibility of building the revolutionary Marxist party through an accumulation of forces by "stages," including a first stage of propaganda and pure and simple education.

Political education and accumulation of forces within the broad vanguard is a function not only of the ability to conduct a necessary political struggle around revolutionary Marxist positions, but also of the ability to transform them into initiatives in action that concretize the revolutionary Marxist orientation in the eyes of sectors of the masses and the broad vanguard by demonstrating its quality and its superiority and the capacity of the organization to carry out such initiatives successfully. Initiatives in action must be part of an overall tactic that is suited to the conjuncture. Only if we are able in practice to carry

off such a tactic and obtain results from it, even the most modest results, within sectors of the masses, can we go forward in building the revolutionary party. In that sense, the revolutionary Marxists must be able to assume tasks and responsibilities that correspond to the vanguard of the class struggle in Argentina in the present period. They must build their organization as a *combat organization* composed of members completely committed to the revolutionary cause and determined to take on all the tasks of the period. There is no room for dilettantes or propagandist organizations in Argentina today.

## VI. The Tasks of Revolutionary Marxists in the Present Period

26. In the stage that opened with the installation of the new Peronist government, the central task of revolutionary Marxists is to win a mass base, even if only in several epicenters of the class struggle. This objective can only be achieved if the revolutionary Marxists succeed in creating an alternative pole to Peronism, reformism, and centrism, a pole that can win to the revolutionary organization or its influence some cadres of this new broad vanguard that played a leading role in the struggles beginning with the Cordobazo in May 1969. Any success revolutionary Marxists achieve in this area will help strengthen the mass movement as a whole, thereby deepening the crisis of the system, stimulating the political maturing of broad layers of workers and employees, and helping to emancipate them from the influence the bourgeoisie continues to exert through the medium of Peronist ideology.

The main efforts of revolutionary Marxists in winning a mass base should be oriented toward inserting themselves in the workers movement. That involves a centralized and planned intervention of the developing revolutionary Marxist party aimed at winning to its ranks the best cadres of the new workers vanguard. This intervention will be focused on those sectors of the working class where it is possible to accumulate forces, combining an intervention in the most concentrated and advanced of the key sectors with an intervention in less advanced sectors that have nevertheless experienced an important radicalization and important struggles.

The first concern of revolutionary Marxists in the workers movement will be to encourage struggles and to support them. The natural point of departure of these struggles is the legitimate desire to recover conquests of the workers that have been trampled underfoot by the bourgeoisie and the dictatorships for the last twenty years, as the first step toward winning new conquests. It is essential that the recovery of previous conquests and the winning of new ones be the product of the struggle, be-

cause whether the labor movement increases its subordination to the bourgeoisie or increases its confidence in its own forces and methods of class struggle will depend on this. In addition, the struggle against high living costs and for regaining the previous standard of living involves a refusal to subject the labor movement to the requirements of the bourgeoisie's economic policy, and breaking with the Social Pact, which was signed by the bosses and the Peronist trade-union bureaucracy, against the people's interests. From this standpoint, such struggles have a major political significance beyond their intrinsic objectives and lead to confrontation with the Peronist government and its plans.

Revolutionary Marxists must emphasize transitional demands that stimulate an anticapitalist dynamic in the struggles. In the context of prerevolutionary crisis, such demands go beyond the level of propaganda and become the subject matter of political agitation campaigns.

The problems of modern industry and the experiences of the struggle of recent years indicate that these transitional slogans will tend to be centered on the theme of workers control. This concept can be developed around several themes: rehiring of workers who are laid off, *with the right to veto layoffs, to open the books, and to abolish business and banking secrets*; struggle for wage increases and against the high cost of living, *with the sliding scale of wages controlled by the workers, permanent parity commissions under the control of workers assemblies, neighborhood price-control commissions, workers control of production as a means to control costs and prices*. A struggle for working conditions and job security, *with production norms and the pace of work determined by the workers themselves, workers control over conditions of job safety and hygiene, the elimination of security guards and their integration into useful employment, etc., etc.* An anti-imperialist struggle with *nationalizations and*

*state ownership under workers control*. All opportunities, all incidents, and all conflicts should be used to put forward these slogans and others that express the concept of workers control in concrete terms.

The struggle for transitional demands must be accompanied by the struggle for the independence of the workers movement in relation to the bourgeoisie and its state. Thus, at the same time, revolutionary Marxists advocate the creation of democratic rank-and-file bodies as the primary instruments of revolutionary mobilization, capable of growing over into an embryo of alternative workers power. We must take advantage of all struggles to fight for the independent organization of the proletariat, beginning with its most elementary forms such as democratically elected strike committees, struggle committees, and so on.

Revolutionary Marxists will have to take advantage of high points in their struggles to wrest the unions from the hands of the bureaucracy and make them instruments of defense of the workers' interests. The integration of the bureaucratic leaderships into the state apparatus and their transformation into civil servants sharing responsibility for the management and functioning of the capitalist system indicate the importance and the implications of the struggle against the bureaucracy. A major proportion of the present workers struggles will inevitably develop an antibureaucratic dimension and thereby go beyond their initial economic framework to become transformed into political struggles that are decisive for the labor movement. If it is true that the bureaucracy is nothing other than the representative of the bourgeoisie in the workers movement, and that behind it lies the fundamental class enemy, the present mode of domination of the bourgeoisie over the masses gives the bureaucracy a decisive role. Hence the explosive character of the antibureaucratic struggle, its dynamic of violent confrontations with the armed gangs of the bureaucrats,



and its collisions with the bourgeois state itself when the union bureaucracy cannot contain the mass movement.

Revolutionary Marxists will organize the struggle against the union bureaucracy at the rank-and-file level, encouraging, supporting, and participating in the formation of regroupments, slates, fronts, and mobilization committees against the bureaucracy, while avoiding any identification with oppositionist tendencies that are also bureaucratic. To help break the bureaucracy's restraining hold, revolutionary Marxists will do what they can to organize the generalization, solidarity, and centralization of struggles, breaking through their isolation and thereby holding out new perspectives and new possibilities.

The very dynamic of the class struggle and the character of the class confrontation taking place in Argentina today pose revolutionary Marxists with the necessity of assuming as a central task the responsibility to advocate and organize mass self-defense. Every struggle of a certain scope must pose armed self-defense against the attacks of the gangs of the bureaucracy and capital, against police and special military repression. Armed self-defense should be accompanied by demands pointing to a renewal of the traditions of militant forms of struggle that challenge bourgeois legality: ranging from factory occupations, seizures of management personnel, and strike pickets, up to the formation of combat detachments and workers commandos that undertake offensive actions. For revolutionary Marxists, self-defense is preparatory to the arming of the masses in the perspective of the armed struggle for the seizure of power. The decisive character of self-defense and its relevance today mean that revolutionary Marxists cannot limit themselves to propaganda for it, nor wait like spontaneists for "the masses" or "the mobilization" to defend itself in the natural course of things. On the contrary, they must take concrete and definite initiatives in this direction, in order to gradually draw more and more sectors of the masses into the tasks of armed self-defense.

27. In the present stage, major efforts will have to be devoted to a centralized and planned intervention in the student movement. For revolutionary Marxists, the student movement, besides being an invaluable source for rapidly accumulating cadres, permits the organization to engage in political initiatives with a significant mass impact within a relatively short space of time.

Revolutionary Marxists will propel forward the struggle against the plans of the bourgeoisie, which are aimed at transforming the students into factors in the rationalization of the dependent capitalist system. Through mobilizing and organizing the student movement, they will try to maintain the role it has had in recent

years as a politicizing factor and auxiliary of the workers movement in the struggle. They will struggle to convert the university that serves the capitalist system and a negotiated dependence with imperialism into an instrument serving the workers and people's struggles. They will struggle against the plans of both imperialism and the national bourgeoisie. Within the framework of their critique of the content of education and their challenge to imperialist domination, they will struggle to introduce Marxism into the university as a fundamental political and ideological weapon against bourgeois ideology. Participation in legal, representative student bodies, when guaranteed free speech, will be used to encourage mobilizations and struggles, based on the forms of democratic organization of the ranks of the student movement that have been developed during the recent years of struggle against the military dictatorship. In addition to fighting against all forms of obscurantism, revolutionary Marxists will denounce the plans and agents of imperialism and the bourgeoisie. They will mobilize and organize the armed self-defense of the students against the armed gangs of reaction.

28. The value and relevance of the armed struggle are indicated by the very characteristics of the period, by the explosive character of the class struggle, and by the responsibilities for the vanguard that flow from it.

The first duty facing revolutionary Marxists at this level is to assure the armed self-defense of the mass movement and of its own activity as a vanguard. Those who would be incapable of assuming such a role cannot claim to play an effective vanguard role.

The revolutionary organization must combine the various necessary levels of armed struggle with its own political intervention, which involves developing revolutionary fighters, as well as agitators, propagandists, and organizers. From this standpoint, in Argentina today we should not sacrifice the clandestine character of the organization—especially of its leadership, apparatus, and infrastructure—in order to take advantage of possibilities for legal or semilegal work.

Besides self-defense of the mass movement and its own activities as a vanguard, the revolutionary organization will undertake a series of armed initiatives in action, the necessity of which will flow from the characteristics of the period and the conditions in which the party is being built. The fundamental purpose of these actions is to carry out armed agitation and propaganda to publicize the positions of the revolutionary Marxists. These actions may be centered in milieus where we are developing our political intervention, or they can be of greater scope with a more general character. In all cases, such initiatives

must not be meant to replace the activity and struggles of the masses, but precisely to stimulate them. Their fundamental character will therefore be to carry out *political denunciations* and to contribute to the maturing of the broad vanguard, thereby helping build the party. The political themes of such actions must be evaluated tactically in each case in terms of the conjuncture and the situation of the revolutionary Marxists.

29. The needs of the political and ideological struggle against Peronism, reformism, and centrism, as well as of the active intervention of revolutionary Marxists in the class struggle, require intensive propaganda work. Even the most minimal possibilities of using legal and semilegal openings must be exploited along this path. Besides the special efforts that are necessary to guarantee the quality, the regularity, and the broadest circulation of the central organ, revolutionary Marxists will increase the means of propagandizing their positions. This propaganda will be focused on several fundamental axes:

a. A consistent struggle to demystify Peronism and the nature of the regime that resulted from the 1973 elections, which at the same time involves a definition of the prerevolutionary character of the period, the nature of the revolutionary process in Argentina, and the aim of the struggle for workers power. Peronism will have to be demystified not only through general explanations of the first Peron governments, between 1945 and 1955, but also and basically by citing the concrete experience that the masses are going through right now. It must be emphasized that any eventual adaptation to the level of consciousness of the masses would only appear to resolve the problem of establishing links with the masses without actually doing so. Inevitably, this would lead to a tail-endist attitude, devoid of a revolutionary orientation and method.

b. A demystification of all parliamentary illusions. The precariousness of the "democratic" interlude and the inevitability of armed confrontations must be continually emphasized. We must show concretely the continuity of the class character of the state and its role as a repressive instrument of domination serving imperialism and the bourgeoisie. We must denounce the fact that repressive elements who carried out torture and assassinations under the military dictatorship go free and are even used in new ways for the same ends. We must point to the fact that the armed forces remain as the reserve military party of the ruling classes, ready to actively intervene again as a decisive guarantee of the continuity of the system.

c. A propaganda campaign with the slogan of a revolutionary workers and people's government. The social content of this formula is a government from which the

representatives of the ruling classes would be excluded, and which would be composed of representatives of the proletariat, the poor peasant layers, and the radicalized petty bourgeoisie, the only allies the working class can count on. The formula of a revolutionary workers and people's government will be explicitly counterposed to any formula that deliberately blurs the precise class content and implies an alliance between bourgeoisie and the exploited classes. Propaganda for this formula must be accompanied by propaganda on the structures of workers power, from neighborhood councils and factory committees to a People's Assembly whose legitimate expression must be the workers and people's government. At the same time, we must explain that such bodies can only arise from the mobilization itself, from the revolutionary struggle of the working class and its allies, and that it requires the arming of the masses. In this sense, a real workers and people's government can only arise from and be based on a people whose ranks are armed and organized.

d. Propaganda on the forms and content of the socialism we are fighting for. The power of the democratically organized and centralized workers councils must be counterposed to the farce of "national socialism" of bourgeois and bureaucratic Peronism; to the ambiguities of the "socialist fatherland" of the radical wing of the Peronist movement; and to the bureaucratic model of socialism presented by the international Stalinist movement, a caricature that has done so much to discredit socialism and prejudice the workers movement against it.

e. A consistent struggle around the full program of revolutionary Marxism. More precisely, a struggle for proletarian internationalism and solidarity with struggles in the other countries dominated by imperialism, in the advanced capitalist countries, and in the bureaucratized workers states. This involves an active defense of the relevance of the building of a mass revolutionary international and of the role played by the Fourth International at this level.

30. The present relationship of forces between revolutionary Marxists on the one hand, and the Peronists, reformists, and centrists on the other, means that we cannot continually apply the united-front tactic without falling into tail-endist positions. In these circumstances, we must adopt a more flexible tactic of *unity-outflanking at different levels*. We must dynamically promote a correct dialectic that combines unity in action on precise points of an action program with independent initiatives. To subordinate a revolutionary approach to the interests of achieving unity in all situations leads to tail-endism in relation to the dominant political currents. An exclusively independent activity leads to sectarianism, isolation, and ineffectiveness in the political and even ideological struggle.

Unity in action on precise points and independent initiatives outflanking the dominant political currents must be combined so as to support the mobilization, organization, and political clarification of sectors of the masses in which we are intervening. We refer to unity of action-outflanking at different levels because it is a question of benefiting from similar trends and contradictions among the different political forces that make up the spectrum of the broad vanguard.

The dispersion of the revolutionary Marxist forces, their limited influence in the mass movement, and the significance of the present political situation mean it is extremely important for these sectors to gradually come together and unify if they are to succeed in forming a pole capable of influencing the broad vanguard. Such a

## VII. A First Self-Critical Balance Sheet

32. There is a great tradition of Trotskyist organizations in Argentina. Several of them already have a long history, more or less linked with the Fourth International. However, neither Posadasism (which broke with the Fourth International in 1962) nor the tendency that resulted in today's PST [Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores—Socialist Workers party, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International], have succeeded in forging a continuity of revolutionary Marxist politics.

The Fourth International has experienced an important defeat with the split of the Revolutionary Workers party [PRT—Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores], together with the majority of its members, from the International. This occurs at a time when the Argentine political situation is heading toward a class confrontation whose outcome, after the coups in Bolivia, Uruguay, and Chile, will be reflected in the relationship of forces throughout Latin America. This political context, and the circumstances and forms of the PRT's split, indicate the importance of the defeat.

This development must be analyzed self-critically by the Fourth International as a whole, and by its leadership in particular. Within the framework of this resolution it is appropriate to make a first self-critical balance sheet.

33. The PRT was recognized unanimously by the Ninth World Congress as the Argentine section of the Fourth International because the congress considered that this organization represented the continuity of the section, its national congress having been called by a majority of the Central Committee of the united section, while the minority of the Central Committee, which constituted the group La Verdad, had refused to recognize the authority of that

process must occur *on solid political foundations* that include a definition of the tasks of the period as outlined in this resolution.

31. Building the revolutionary Marxist party and intervening in the class struggle with the ability to carry out initiatives requires a special effort to assure the political education of the cadres and members of the broad vanguard who are won to the organization. In addition to an effort to raise their theoretical level and their political capacities, this also involves their achieving a more profound understanding through debating and assimilating the experience of the struggles of recent years, one of the richest experiences in the history of the country and of the whole of Latin America. In this framework, we must begin defining a strategy for power as a task of major importance.

congress. At that time, the leadership of the PRT already held a series of positions, many of them inherited from the leadership of the united section, that were in contradiction with the essential concepts and analyses of the Fourth International—an erroneous appreciation of Maoism, especially of the theoretical implications of Mao's concept of people's war; an apologetic appreciation of Castroism; a centrist and eclectic conception of building the International; an opportunist conception of the struggle against the bureaucracy of the degenerated workers states, typified by the support they gave to the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Kremlin armies, etc. Although these positions were partly known, neither the Ninth World Congress nor the leadership of the Fourth International spelled out a political critique of the PRT.

The PRT could therefore have already been characterized as a centrist party, but with a centrism different from the Castroist current in general. This centrism has many roots: the impact of the Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions; the international influence of Maoism, reinvigorated by the cultural revolution and the Sino-Soviet conflict; the influence of Peronism in Argentina, which encouraged the development of the revolutionary populism that figured in the ideology of the PRT.

But its links with the Trotskyist movement meant that the PRT had maintained a definition of the party and an understanding of the need for one, in contrast to the lack of precision of the conceptions held by the MIR and the Tupamaros, not to speak of the Castroist current in general. From this viewpoint, the PRT objectively posed the necessity of the Leninist party at the level of the new vanguard, which in Latin America had begun the armed struggle after the Cuban revolution—a new



vanguard that is characterized in general by its lack of understanding of the necessity of the party. Even in the confused formulas of the Fifth Congress, in 1970, where it included the Chinese, the Vietnamese, the Cubans, and the Albanians in "its" proposed international, the PRT kept a vision of the International and its necessity that went beyond the horizon of OLAS. Finally, the PRT assimilated (although in a confused and insufficient way) the conception of the permanent revolution, which leads it today to retain a class-struggle approach to Peronism. Moreover, the PRT has shown that it is capable of actually initiating armed struggle, despite the political errors we will analyze, which have been paid for at the cost of losses and splits. This aspect of its political intervention corresponds to a profound necessity of the period; otherwise, it would be impossible to understand the origin of the influence and prestige that the PRT presently enjoys despite its errors. Thus the PRT has been able to win a body of representative militants among the best elements of the new vanguard that has arisen during the recent years of struggle in Argentina.

For all these reasons, the recognition of the PRT as a section of the Fourth International was justified. In the framework of the transformation of the Fourth International from a propaganda organization to a combat organization capable of actively intervening in the class struggle and able to take initiatives in action, including armed struggle in Latin America, the integration and political education within the Fourth International of representative sectors of the new vanguard, such as the PRT, that state their programmatic agreement with the Fourth International are correct.

But immediately after the Ninth World Congress there should have been a frank discussion with the Argentine comrades on all the theoretical and political differences, instead of limiting ourselves to publicizing the courageous actions of the ERP without at the same time posing the political problems that existed. A correct characterization of the PRT as a centrist party implied the need to understand that a veritable political battle had to be waged to clarify positions and definitions, even if this led to a break with an important sector of its leadership and its members. The conditions for this struggle for political clarification were incomparably more favorable at the time of the Ninth World Congress than during the recent past, because at that time the centrist positions and the definition of the PRT's orientation were less crystallized. At that time, too, there were more elements likely to join a tendency supporting the Fourth International, given the framework of a battle for political clarification.

The attitude of the Fourth International toward the PRT must be characterized as opportunist. The lack of necessary debate

with the Argentine comrades is still more serious when one takes into account the fact that in addition to the positions of the PRT Fourth Congress, which were already partly known at the time of the Ninth World Congress, there were other facts that should have alerted us further to the dangers in the PRT's orientation. Before and after the Ninth World Congress, the PRT had experienced serious crises involving important splits and reflecting the difficulties it had encountered, first when it defined its strategy and then in the practical application of that strategy. The most important warning signal was the preliminary debates and resolutions of the PRT's Fifth Congress, held in July 1970, which were accompanied by the split of important sectors, including the majority of members of the Central Committee elected in 1968. No balance sheet of this congress was made on the International level, although it is true that the International center suffered from a serious delay in the receipt of information about it. The sectors that had split off were overlooked, in an administrative way, and the majority was recognized as the legitimate successor, without the least analysis of the political significance of what had happened.

Nevertheless, the criticism that certain members of the Communist Tendency were making at the time had a number of valuable points—for example, the characterization of the period, the role of armed struggle in the building of the party—that anticipated to some degree some of the characterizations that we are able to make today. Despite the eclectic nature of the Communist Tendency (which resulted in the dispersal and inconsistency of the majority of its members, with a few exceptions), it would have been important to have an analysis of the positions that were debated at that time. Nor did trips and contacts between the leaders of the Fourth International and the PRT have any effect on the way the debate was conducted. When the first elements for a discussion were produced, it was already too late for this to have any significant repercussions in the PRT.

The relations between the PRT and the Fourth International highlighted the fact that there was no leadership acting as the collective center. Nevertheless, the objectives of the Ninth World Congress required a profound transformation in the International center and its methods of operation. Only a real *day-to-day* leadership, with new resources in personnel and finances would have enabled it to respond effectively to the new needs arising from the evolution of both the objective situation and our orientation. In this situation, the work of the center with respect to Argentina was rarely discussed collectively, and what discussion did take place was sporadic and much less than what was required.

But it was a political weakness as much as an organizational weakness on the part of the International leadership, as was shown in the administrative attitude taken toward the building of the Argentine section. We were prevented from defining what was involved in the objectives adopted by the Ninth World Congress by the lack of understanding of the role the leadership had to play in the transformation of the International; by the maintenance of primitive and routine methods of work; and by the absence of a clear political characterization of the PRT, which led some to hope that it could be progressively and spontaneously assimilated to revolutionary Marxism. In addition, there was the underestimation of the major inadequacies of the Ninth World Congress in the definition of the orientation for Latin America and the dangers involved in the application of the armed-struggle orientation, which was a new experience for the International as a whole.

For all these reasons, the Fourth International must self-critically take responsibility for the circumstances in which the split in the Argentine section took place.

From the viewpoint of the centrist leadership of the PRT, its break from the Fourth International is at once a consequence and a necessary step in a growing evolution to the right. The pressures from the Cuban leadership played an important role in influencing this leadership in its break with the Fourth International.

34. Shortly after the Fifth Congress, in July 1970, the PRT began to carry out its actions through the intermediary of the ERP. Having succeeded in educating its militants in a fighting spirit, it was in a position to launch a systematic and effective struggle of considerable scope. In the space of a few months, the ERP emerged as the most dynamic of the armed-struggle organizations, winning broad support from proletarian and popular layers and becoming a real factor in the political struggle of the country.

The major initiatives of the PRT-ERP occurred in the context of urban guerrilla struggle against the military dictatorship, the broad lines of which were developed in forms that corresponded in actual fact to the tasks of the vanguard in that period:

- a. actions aimed at accumulating financial resources;
- b. actions aimed at acquiring arms, medicine, medical equipment, etc.;
- c. actions linked to mass mobilizations;
- d. actions to punish hangmen of the dictatorship, known and hated for their crimes.

Some actions especially tended to integrate the armed struggle into the concrete dynamic of the mass struggle. Some significant episodes, especially during the 1971 mobilizations at Cordoba, were, moreover, a refutation of the opportunists' arguments that armed actions of the kind the ERP engaged in are not understood

or approved by the working class and provoke the isolation of the vanguards. On the contrary, in an upsurge and a pre-revolutionary crisis the existence and intervention of armed detachments of the vanguard reinforce the masses' mobilizations, increasing their combativity.

The PRT-ERP also carried out expropriations of food and clothing, distributing them in the poor neighborhoods and slums. These actions were aimed at winning the sympathy of the poorest layers of the population and creating a social base of support for the guerrillas. The priority given to orienting toward the most backward sectors of the mass movement to the detriment of advanced sectors of the workers movement is itself debatable. The attempt to base its urban support on a social layer likewise corresponds to an incorrect characterization of the period.

Militarist deviations in the armed activity of the ERP were manifested through empiricism or improvisation. Several far-reaching actions were compromised because of their voluntarism or an overly ambitious choice of projects. The situation of the organization was not always taken account of in deciding on some actions, which led to the loss of comrades. The system of organization adopted from 1971 on, with the formation of "squads," increased the distortion between the efforts devoted to military action and those aimed at insertion in the mass movement, producing deviations in party building.

The balance sheet of the period of armed struggle from 1969 to 1973 indicates that the organizations that successfully engaged in this struggle won a response from the masses, which, among other things, enabled them to play an important role in the mobilizations of May 1973 and during the first months of the Peronist government. Even more important, if the mass mobilizations beginning with the first Cordobazo were the decisive element in the defeat of the military dictatorship, the guerrilla struggle helped to deepen the crisis of the regime. At the same time, it acted as a factor increasing the political maturity of the broad worker and student vanguard.

35. Despite the favorable objective conditions and the prestige gained by the audacious actions of the ERP, the PRT did not succeed in establishing solid links with important sectors of the masses. In other words, the PRT was not able to plumb the potential offered by the period in the framework of the given relationship of forces, in order to build a revolutionary Marxist party with mass influence. That is the consequence of the erroneous strategic orientations and overall conceptions of the leadership team represented by comrade Santucho.

Already, before the split of 1968, the party had drawn the apparently unanimous conclusion that the problem of

armed struggle should be put on the agenda. The analysis of the situation at the time—a relative stagnation of the workers movement, sharp social conflicts in the Tucuman area, the existence of a guerrilla nucleus in Bolivia, in the context of a situation defined as prerevolutionary in Argentina—had suggested the perspective of armed action in the form of guerrilla struggle based for a period in the North. The Fourth Congress, which occurred before the Ninth World Congress, saw the development of a harsh polemic on the necessity of concretizing the orientation for armed struggle (the minority represented by Moreno had meanwhile left the organization), while affirming a concept that tried to avoid the twin pitfalls of focoist adventurism and insurrectionalist spontaneism. Based on social and political—and not just technical—considerations (having in fact a relatively static view of the tendencies that were maturing in the country and a lack of understanding of the social formation of the country and the fundamental role of the urban working class), it placed its priority on rural guerrilla warfare. It was the adherence to this perspective, even after the Cordobazo, that was at the origin of the new crisis that shook the party in the first part of 1970. The Fifth Congress marked a decisive stage through the establishment of the ERP.

These corrections, carried out empirically, proved insufficient and did not prevent a number of serious errors and deformations.

First of all, the development of the revolutionary struggle was conceived in accordance with an analogy with the experiences of the Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions. This implied an ignorance or minimization of essential differences: the social composition of these countries, the existence before the outbreak of revolutionary war of a party with broad mass influence, the paralysis of the ruling classes resulting from international as well as domestic causes, and so on. Moreover, a schematic analysis continually blurred the necessary distinction between a pre-revolutionary situation and the first stage of armed confrontation on the one hand, and revolutionary war, in the real sense of the term, on the other.

Hence the illusions about the possibility for a rapid and sustained growth of the ERP as the armed organization of the masses. By avoiding the necessity of defining a tactic for building the party, a conception arose of the PRT as the self-proclaimed vanguard.

The basic conception was that the ERP would be built as a result of the initiatives that it took itself through the action of its members, and consequently military strategy was outlined without a strict relationship with the organization's political evolution. This led to a dynamic

of the ERP substituting for the party. It was not understood that the integration of sectors of the masses into the armed struggle takes place essentially through their own experience with the sharpening of the class struggle. Nor was there an understanding of the essential role of insurrections and semi-insurrections in the accumulation of experiences by the masses, or of the practical application of the vanguard character of the revolutionary organization as a step toward generalizing the armed struggle.

Another consequence was that the party came to understand the turn in the situation only with considerable delay; above all, it was unable to determine the new priorities in its orientation with the necessary speed and agility. In fact, in the second part of 1971 and in 1972, it went through a militarist deviation, failing to understand the need for forms of armed struggle increasingly linked with the mass movement, such as self-defense teams, which were, however, objectively possible (this was expressed, among other things, through its complete deficiency with respect to the tactical problems posed by the elections last March).

In its political conceptions, the PRT took erroneous or at least equivocal positions on some important problems. It used frankly opportunist formulations when, in a resolution of its executive committee, it characterized the ENA (including the PCA), some petty-bourgeois formations, and even some bourgeois sectors, as strategic allies.

It thus revealed its insufficient assimilation of the theory of permanent revolution and its centrist approach to Stalinism, seeking agreements with the latter on conciliationist bases.

The PRT verged on a rightist orientation when it expressed its preference last July (1973) toward an electoral bloc between the labor leader Tosco and the "progressive" bourgeois Alfonsín. It revealed its theoretical faults when it expressed agreement with the electoral policy of the Tupamaros, who supported the bloc of the CP and SP with the bourgeois parties under the leadership of General Seregini.

It mobilized support for the Front Against Imperialism and for Socialism on the basis of a minimalist program and at the cost of conciliation with bourgeois Peronism, without defining clearly the nature of the Peron government, while at the same time failing to offer its own members channels for democratic discussion among the rank and file.

In its documents and publications, as in its practice, the PRT has likewise demonstrated that it has not assimilated the methodology of transitional demands. That is why it combines (as it did in the past) positions that are correct in principle but that are expressed in a basically propagandist form (for example, demands



directed at the Peronist regime), with a minimalist platform for the working class and the other layers of the population. This is a particularly serious error in a pre-revolutionary situation and one, moreover, that prevents an adequate understanding of the real meaning of the potential elements of dual power. All this has alternated with sectarian attitudes (for example, the pretense of imposing the PRT's own conception of revolutionary war on trade-union platforms) and with a bureaucratic practice in its activities in the mass movement.

Finally, if for a certain period underground conditions could explain some restrictions in the full application of the norms of internal democracy, it is nonetheless true that the PRT leadership used clandestinity as a pretext to limit the circulation of political ideas, above all when it was a matter of critical positions. It adopted increasingly bureaucratic methods effectively guaranteeing itself exorbitant powers and introducing norms that are foreign to a Leninist organization. To make things more difficult for oppositionists, it developed an almost caricaturized form of the theory of the class struggle within the party. Even though it had itself announced the opening of the pre-congress discussion period, as soon as important sectors of the party began to ask ques-

tions about the line, the methods, or relations with the International, it quickly ended the debate by administrative measures that brought about splits. It postponed the congress indefinitely, far longer than the statutes allowed. What is even more significant, the Santucho leadership prevented members from learning about critical documents sent by members of the International's leadership, and once the polemic began to touch on issues more directly related to the situation in Argentina, it bureaucratically decided to break with the International, confronting not only the next congress but also the Central Committee with an accomplished fact.

Thus the sum total of the errors and deviations flowing from its centrist orientation prevented the PRT from winning a hegemonic position in the new broad vanguard that had arisen in the struggles of recent years. Despite its importance and prestige, it was not able to build a real alternative to Peronism, reformism, and various centrist factions.

36. Point 36 of this resolution is published internally in an Internal Bulletin of the Fourth International.

37. Argentina is the country in Latin America that during the last twenty years has experienced the broadest mobilizations of the working class; where van-

guards have matured as a result of many experiences, both national and international; and where there are many militants who consider themselves to be revolutionary Marxists. The creation of a revolutionary party with a mass base is inscribed on the order of the day, and the Fourth International will have to consider as one of its priorities the building of a section which, breaking with the deformations and weaknesses of the Trotskyist movement in the past, will rigorously defend all the conceptions of revolutionary Marxism and draw the political and organizational conclusions that correspond to the urgent needs of the period.

This means that the International must provide sufficient material and political means to aid the construction of its Argentine section. The political means involve mainly the strengthening of the international leadership, the opening of a debate on the strategy for power in the countries of Latin America, and a profound balance sheet on the PRT experience. If its lessons are drawn and assimilated, that experience can become one of the fundamental conquests for the Fourth International in Latin America, because politically it is the richest experience of armed struggle on the continent since the Cuban revolution. □

# **Armed Struggle in Latin America**



# Armed Struggle in Latin America

1. For a number of reasons that were spelled out in the resolution on Latin America at the Ninth World Congress and that are peculiar to that continent at this stage, any turbulent rise of the mass movement must soon confront a resolute attempt by the army to crush it and to establish a military dictatorship. The experience since 1969 has completely confirmed the correctness of this analysis, in Uruguay and Chile as well as in Bolivia.

Given the experience of the Cuban revolution, the numerical and social strengthening of the proletariat, and the decline in the control of the traditional leaderships over the most combative layers, the bourgeoisie and the various petty-bourgeois formations succeed less and less frequently in diverting the explosive mass movements. They no longer dispose of sufficient economic resources to be able to eliminate the most basic causes of the masses' explosive discontent, or to be able noticeably and permanently to improve their material conditions. But the bourgeoisie still has at its command sufficient political and military resources to be able to confront the rise of the masses through the resolute intervention of its principal instrument, the "army-party." That is the objective and specific reason for the increase in the number of bloody confrontations between the Latin American proletariat and armed reaction.

This does not mean that the bourgeoisie is unable to concede any economic or political (democratic) reforms to the masses, nor that a bloody dictatorship is the only form of government it can presently opt for on this continent. When the mass movement is still at a relatively low point, the bourgeoisie can permit itself the luxury of certain reforms without fearing a rapid and explosive escalation of demands (military "reformism" in Peru for five years, the present situation in Venezuela). When the mass movement begins to raise its head under a dictatorship, the ruling classes may prefer a regime enjoying a certain popular base to a regime of "gorillas" in order to be able to divert the upsurge for a certain period, to avoid its generalization, and to slow its transformation into a revolutionary situation (change from the Barrientos dictatorship to Ovando's, then to the Torres regime in Bolivia; the change from Onganía to Lanusse and to the return of Perón in Argentina). But the key element in all these maneuvers always remains the degree of control they hold over the mass movement. When the latter begins to escape all control, the explosiveness of

social contradictions and the rapid polarization of social and political forces in Latin America leave the bourgeoisie no other choice but to attempt to crush the proletariat by brute force. In the conditions of such an upsurge in the mass movement, there is no possibility for a "constitutional," bourgeois-democratic regime of any significant duration.

This is the essential lesson of the unfolding of the class struggle in Latin America since the Ninth World Congress, confirming the fundamental projection of the resolution of that congress on Latin America. Any strategy and any tactic of the revolutionary Marxists that does not start from this essential reality, that avoids giving a clear reply to this question, or that tries eclectically to advocate some contradictory variants, will prevent the vanguard from playing its essential role in such a phase: to prepare the masses, their organizations, and the vanguard itself for the inevitable confrontation, once a certain threshold of mobilization has been crossed.

2. The strategy adopted by the Ninth World Congress expresses a clear awareness of this correlation of social and political forces in all countries of the continent where a powerful rise of the mass movement is taking place. It signifies that the primary duty of revolutionary Marxists is:

a. To continually warn the masses against any illusion that they can escape armed confrontation by extending their democratic or economic struggles. It is precisely the stepping up of the mobilization that makes armed confrontation inevitable in the short run, in the present social, economic, and political conditions in Latin America.

b. To untiringly popularize the necessity for the general arming of the workers and poor peasants in self-defense bodies that can develop into workers, peasants, and people's militias. "Arming the proletariat and its allies with the desire to arm themselves" becomes the number one propaganda task when reaction's coup d'état proves probable if not inevitable in the near future.

Nor is any strategy for the conquest of power possible if the working masses are not likewise convinced of the necessity for armed struggle and have not already passed through the necessary experiences and skirmishes in this respect. When the prerevolutionary situation approaches a revolutionary situation, when the sharpening of class contradictions draws near to its culminating point, the incapacity of the proletariat and its vanguard to adopt a concrete orientation for seizing power, based on the arming of

the masses, means the inevitability of a bloody and momentarily triumphant initiative by the Latin American counter-revolution. For considerations of defense as well as offense, the refusal to place the question of arming the masses at the center of political attention thus means, under these circumstances, taking a course toward certain defeat.

c. To reject any spontaneist illusion that expects the workers to be armed through a sudden, unforeseen, and spontaneous outburst from the rank and file and postpones the political and practical preparations for arming the masses until other supposedly primary "political" tasks have

This resolution was submitted by the International Majority Tendency. The vote was for 142, against 125, abstentions 1, not voting 2.

been accomplished (that is, until the eve of a mythical general "insurrection," which will never occur under these conditions).

d. Not to rest content with general and abstract propaganda in this area, but to undertake initial pilot projects, to enter into preliminary actions that are carefully calculated for the effect they can have in raising the level of consciousness of the masses, increasing their combativity, and their will and capacity for arming themselves.

In a situation of an impetuous rise of the mass movement, the revolutionary Marxist organization must take this road as soon as it has crossed the minimum threshold of cadre accumulation enabling it to approach creating armed detachments of the party without this undermining the party's overall work of rooting itself in the working class; carrying on trade-union activity, propaganda, and agitation; and continuing to consolidate and strengthen the organization as such.

In this sense, forming armed detachments of the party is part of an overall revolutionary strategy. In close coordination with the party's mass work and complementing this, formation of armed detachments must serve the precise function of preparing the way for, facilitating, encouraging, and pushing the pace of arming by ever broader sectors of the workers and peasant vanguard. That is, its role is to promote the formation of workers, peasant, and people's militias and then to help organize them and to offer the centralized leadership that is essential in the event of confrontation with the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state (in this phase, moreover, the party should play a vanguard political

and military role).

In a situation where the social contradictions are less acute, the revolutionary Marxist organization must likewise prepare itself and prepare the masses for the armed confrontation that is to come, without, however, regarding the formation of armed detachments as its central task. On the other hand, regardless of the numerical strength of the organization, there is still a need for a clandestine apparatus that can give members a practical education in military questions.

In a situation of severe repression (as in Brazil), even the political activity of a revolutionary organization requires armed protection in the Bolshevik tradition (i.e., to assure that leaflets can be distributed and that members can speak in factories).

In no case can military work be conceived of as being autonomous in a political way with respect to the party's mass work.

3. When a sharpening of the class struggle has led to a temporary victory by a military dictatorship and experience has shown the masses that struggling against such a dictatorship by trade-unionist, semilegal, and routinist methods is completely inadequate, then conditions exist for initiating armed struggle in various forms against the dictatorship.

Such initial actions of military harassment can only be effective, however, if:

a. The masses understand the need for them based on their experience; that these actions flow in a way from this experience; and that they therefore receive growing support—at first of a political, and later of a material nature—from the masses.

b. The period of clashes between small groups of partisans and the counterrevolutionary army does not drag on too long. This means that guerrilla warfare has succeeded as a tactic if it combines with a mass movement produced in part by the spur of these actions and by the mass work of the party. (In that case, by their political prestige and their military capacities, armed detachments can serve as the catalyst for creating broader armed formations arising out of the mass organizations.)

There is a need for a revolutionary Marxist organization that can correctly assess the evolution of the objective situation and the consciousness of the masses, that can subordinate a specific form of struggle to the interests of the proletariat as a whole and of the revolution, that can amplify the impact of guerrilla actions in the factories, the universities, etc., and that can bring about a convergence of the struggles against the bourgeois state. Without such an organization, guerrilla warfare loses its effectiveness, and

there is a very real risk of its being transformed from a particular and episodic form of armed struggle into a fetish to which all forms of struggle by the proletariat and its vanguard are subordinated, if not sacrificed.

The Fourth International firmly rejects the Debrayist conception of the guerrilla "foco" and related illusions long promoted by the Cuban leadership. According to this way of looking at things, the activity of small nuclei with the determination to undertake military initiatives can be a *sufficient* motive force of revolutionary struggle and replace both the activity of the Leninist party as well as the mobilization and organization of broad masses, which in the last analysis are regarded as auxiliary elements.

4. The initiative of small armed groups prolonging the resistance of the masses to dictatorship must not be confused with a generalized civil war (or a war of national liberation) of the Vietnamese type, a war resulting from a revolutionary upsurge under the leadership of a party that has already won hegemony in the mass movement.

When a revolutionary crisis in a Latin American country does not culminate in a rapid defeat of the proletariat and its allies, a period of civil war may occur, with broad participation by the masses in armed revolutionary formations (something that should not be confused with an initiative by small armed groups). In the course of such a civil war, the proletariat and its allies run a serious risk of finding themselves confronted by a military interventionist force with superior resources, sent in either by U.S. imperialism or one of its Latin American "stand-ins" (notably the Brazilian army). The civil war could then assume directly features of a war of national liberation. A tendency to spill over national borders in the short or medium term and to become transformed into a continent-wide struggle could arise from the sort of foreign intervention mentioned above, from the repercussions the revolutionary process would have on neighboring countries that have mass movements with a relatively high level of consciousness, or from geographical and military factors. This possibility underscores the necessity of viewing the class struggle in Latin America—both politically and organizationally—from an internationalist and continental perspective.

But this hypothesis assumes something that is still far from being attained in any Latin American country: the existence of a revolutionary leadership already enjoying broad mass support and thereby capable of engaging in large-scale and organized armed resistance against the "national" and international forces of coun-

terrevolution.

In general, despite the ripeness of the overall objective conditions, the revolutionary parties' weakness in numbers, influence, and military preparation makes a short-term revolutionary victory in Latin America highly improbable. Nevertheless, if an impetuous upsurge in the mass movement should push toward a decisive test of strength, revolutionary Marxists are obligated to prepare themselves politically and militarily for this test, and to prepare the masses for it as well. Furthermore, protracted armed struggle appears to be the most probable variant whether or not this upsurge emerges victorious or goes down to defeat, foreign intervention being virtually inevitable in the case of victory.

5. In the context of its overall programmatic approach to the problems of strategy and tactics raised by the rise of the revolutionary process in a succession of Latin American countries, the Fourth International supports a strategy in which armed struggle plays a role in the fight for the Transitional Program as a whole, inasmuch as the necessary mobilization of the masses for the program's national-democratic and workers demands will itself increasingly lead to violent confrontations with the counterrevolutionary army, that is, to raising the question of arming the masses and preparing for this organizationally and politically.

This *strategy* is part of the general strategy of permanent revolution in these countries. None of the fundamental problems of Latin American society and its underdevelopment can be resolved without the conquest of power by the proletariat allied with the poor peasantry. Without systematically preparing the proletariat and masses to take up arms, any attempt to struggle for power against the "army-party" of the Latin American bourgeoisie is irresponsible and will turn into a deadly trap.

This strategy for Latin America fits into the Fourth International's primary task of solving the crisis of revolutionary leadership by building new mass revolutionary parties. Unless the International offers a concrete answer to the problems posed by the revolutionary upsurge, such parties cannot be built.

The explosive character of the Latin American class struggle, and the resulting dynamic of confrontation between the mass movement and the forces of reaction, has its effects on the work of building the revolutionary party. It would be illusory to think the accumulation of militants in the framework of a propagandist organization *alone* will eventually make it possible to undertake *in a natural way* the necessary political and organizational transformations. From this fact flows the importance of strictly adhering from the





Douglas Bravo and Luben Petkoff, leaders of the Venezuelan guerrilla group FALN.

very beginning to Bolshevik norms regarding the structure of the organization and the training of party members. It is only in this way that the party will be able to intervene politically in the class struggle, overcoming all the obstacles the bourgeoisie may put in its way.

The theory that the preparation and launching of armed struggle must be subordinated to the development of propaganda within the bourgeois army, and that this will then create the political preconditions for armed struggle, has been disproved by the events in Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Chile. These experiences confirm that this theory involves a misunderstanding of the uneven pace of the maturing of revolutionary consciousness among the vanguard workers and peasants on one hand, and within the army on the other, as well as a lack of understanding of the prevailing political, organizational, and psychological difficulties that mark the outbreak of widespread mutinies within the bourgeois armed forces. If the masses do not have substantial self-defense forces capable of

welcoming and protecting the rebel soldiers at that moment, the first significant incidents of indiscipline within the army will be put down with particular savagery and may even be the signal for a coup by the extreme right. The bourgeoisie understands that it cannot, under any circumstances, tolerate the disintegration of the last effective political instrument it possesses. The necessary propaganda in the army must be matched by the strengthening of the armed detachments of the party and growing successes in the formation of armed detachments of the proletariat and poor peasantry. Political campaigns denouncing the bourgeois army should also be used to lay the groundwork for this dialectic.

On the other hand, the case of the majority of the Argentine PRT has also demonstrated the danger of militarist deviations when the turn toward the formation of armed detachments of the party has been carried out successfully. These deviations consist of neglecting tasks that are indispensable under these circumstances—the tasks of political agitation

and propaganda, systematic efforts to raise the class consciousness of the workers, struggle against the influence of reformist, class-collaborationist, or confused petty-bourgeois nationalist ideologies, as well as the tasks of patient, systematic work in the plants in order to constantly extend the party's roots in the class.

In the specific conditions where it is necessary to form armed detachments of the party, the conception of the Fourth International is never to give an absolute priority to any one aspect of revolutionary activity, but to integrate it into an overall strategy of preparing the masses to set up organs of dual power and carry out the revolutionary seizure of power.

6. After the Cuban experience—an experience in which rural guerrilla warfare played a decisive role in the development of the revolutionary struggle—and even in the period following the Ninth World Congress, Latin America has witnessed other instances of armed struggle. These developments show the urgency of clarifying the decisive question of the role of

armed struggle in our strategy for seizing power.

The Tenth World Congress resolutions on Bolivia and Argentina provide a brief balance sheet for these two countries.

Armed struggle in Brazil, which took the form almost exclusively of urban guerrilla warfare conducted by very small nuclei, ended in the defeat and breakup of nearly all the organizations that engaged in it. The objective conditions turned out to be much more difficult than the revolutionists expected. In reality, the struggle was launched in a period in which the dictatorship was consolidating its grip significantly by smashing every potential mass mobilization in the egg and winning a relatively strong social base, especially among layers of the petty bourgeoisie. From the subjective point of view, the armed organizations paid a steep price for their adherence to Debrayist concepts and for their militarist deviations.

In Uruguay, the mass mobilizations against the regime had, by 1968, already won near-unanimous support in a situation in which the regular armed forces were still quite weak and unprepared to stand up against a generalized confrontation. Because of the grip the traditional parties, above all the Uruguayan Communist party, had on the masses, the proletariat did not have a revolutionary strategy for seizing power, and the movement began to ebb, opening the way for a repressive counterattack by the regime. Five years later a similar situation occurred. The reactionary coup by Bordaberry and the military provoked a powerful response, including a general strike, occupations of factories, and almost total paralysis of the country. But even a mobilization as powerful as this one was not enough to overcome the offensive of a government that was prepared for a military test of strength and had decided to make full use of its military apparatus. The only way out would have been to arm the proletariat in preparation for an armed struggle for power, counterposing a proletarian military force to the repressive forces of the ruling classes, the latter aided by imperialism and its allies. The absence of such a strategy and the concrete actions it would have inspired led to a situation in which one of the largest and most courageous mass mobilizations in the history of Latin America ended in a sorry defeat and the installation of reactionary dictatorship. The events of July 1973 also marked a defeat for the Tupamaros, owing to their failure to elaborate an overall revolutionary perspective and their inability, despite the popularity won by their courageous actions, to present themselves as an alternative leadership.

The defeat suffered by the Chilean proletariat tragically illustrates how far short the spontaneous and defensive resistance

of the working class falls of being able to block a coup of this sort. This harsh lesson confirms once again the role that must be played by the arming of the proletariat, as well as of the revolutionary organization and its members. A revolutionary victory is possible only if the party and the masses are prepared to face a coup and if on the eve, or at the first sign, of such an event, there is a capacity for taking decisive action.

A balance sheet heavy with failures must not lead to a total rejection of the forms of armed struggle that have been tried or, in particular, to the conclusion that the guerrilla-warfare experiences represent a total bankruptcy. Nonetheless, the problem of what to do in the face of a series of military coups, the crushing of the most promising mass movements in one country after another, as well as the problem of what to do in the face of the total failure of "focoism," is one of the most burning questions that has been raised by the unfolding class struggle in Latin America.

7. Despite the fact that it was based on a correct analysis of the social contradictions and of the inevitability of confrontations on the Latin American continent, and that it initiated a correct turn, the Ninth World Congress resolution did contain errors of analysis and perspectives, especially in underestimating the possibility that the reactionary forces could crush the mass movement for a long period (Brazil), or hold it at a manageable level for a fairly long time (Peru).

Above all, however, it made dangerous extrapolations: "Thus not only in a historical sense but in a more direct and immediate one, Latin America has entered a period of revolutionary explosions and conflicts, of armed struggle on different levels against the native ruling classes and imperialism, and of prolonged civil war on a continental scale." ["Resolution on Latin America," in IIDB Reprint, *Discussion on Latin America* (1968-1972), p. 46.]

Formulations like this do not permit making the essential distinction between a situation of embryonic civil war in which guerrilla actions take place and a situation of revolutionary war in the strict sense of the term. This is a distinction that the Argentine PRT [Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers party] never made. It was fully convinced that war had been declared and it made this the framework for its activity, notably for building the ERP [Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo—Revolutionary People's Army]. To this must be added the importance the resolution accorded to the notion of a "strategy of armed struggle." The formula can perhaps be explained by the need to emphasize the differences that exist be-

tween Europe and Latin America from the point of view of party building. But the notion of a "strategy of armed struggle" is ambiguous, and in any event does nothing to provide a Latin American section with the necessary instruments for working out specific perspectives.

In fact, the only explicit guideline for applying this "strategy of armed struggle" that emerges from the Ninth World Congress resolution is the axis of rural guerrilla warfare, an axis that is given a "geographical-military meaning," a statement that comes down to viewing the development of guerrilla warfare as relatively independent of the social substratum that could be provided in certain countries by the agrarian question. The political perspective for this sort of rootless guerrilla warfare can only be understood if one takes seriously the "conjunctural" importance of "prolonged civil war on a continental scale"; or, in other words, if the intensity of class confrontations objectively presents the masses with a military task that is immediately assumed, i.e., if the civil war is already more than embryonic.

8. The Ninth World Congress orientation is based in part on the Trotskyist movement's unity tactic toward the Castroist current—a current that emerged under the impact of the Cuban revolution and reached its political high point in 1967 with the holding of the OLAS [Organización Latinoamericana de Solidaridad—Organization of Latin American Solidarity] conference. The Ninth World Congress resolution posed the following task: "Integration into the historic revolutionary current represented by the Cuban revolution and the OLAS, which involves, regardless of the forms, integration into the continental revolutionary front which the OLAS constitutes." ["Resolution on Latin America," p. 50.] In the spring of 1969, however, OLAS as an organization hardly existed except on paper. What did exist were bilateral relations between the Cuban state and the Latin American revolutionary movements. The distinction is important. For while the path being followed by the Cuban leadership was not as well defined then as it is today, a turn had already begun with the positions it took on Czechoslovakia, France, and Mexico. It can be predicted that Cuban aid to revolutionary movements will carry more and more political conditions. This means that any relations in the spirit of unity with the Castroist current, which remain a central question, presuppose a political struggle, which is the only way to firm up the sections of the Fourth International against the inevitable pressures.

The insufficiencies and errors in analyzing the conditions and forms of armed struggle can in large part be explained by the weakness of our movement at the



time of the Ninth World Congress, by the weakness of its roots in the socioeconomic reality.

Recognition of the weakness of our sections, though essential, is missing from the Ninth World Congress resolution.

The resolution did not assess the consequences of its analysis insofar as the forms of development of our sections are concerned. This led to an underestimation of the qualitative leap that had to be made, and must still be made, if groups that are still mainly propaganda organizations are to take up the tasks of the period.

The Ninth World Congress resolution affirms the relevance of armed struggle in Latin America and thus represents one of the gains made by our movement. It fills an important gap in drawing for our sections the general implications of the new situation that emerged on the continent following the victory of the Cu-

ban revolution. The fact remains, however, that it left open several essential questions, and contains certain errors mentioned above—errors that require self-criticism.

These omissions and errors not only prevented the Ninth World Congress resolution from fully defining our strategy for the seizure of power (by failing to clarify the concepts of "prolonged revolutionary war" and the role of insurrections, the revolutionary army and organs of dual power, prerevolutionary situations and the revolutionary crisis, urban and rural guerrilla warfare, etc.). They also opened the door to sometimes sterile polemics by enabling a current in the International—a current that still refuses to draw the necessary lessons from all the costly defeats of the mass movements that have found themselves disarmed or taken by surprise by the initiatives of the military in Latin America—to concentrate

its fire on false targets and obscure the essential content of the debate, a development that has had unwholesome consequences not only for the internal life of the International but most of all for the arming of the Latin American sections, both politically and organizationally. In light of the series of experiences in Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Chile, it is high time to bring the discussion back to its real terms and alternatives. Such is the aim of the present statement.

This resolution does not propose to settle all the problems involved in the armed struggle for power. It is up to our sections and groups in Latin America, based on the orientation of the Tenth World Congress, to draw the lessons of their own experience in order to define their tasks more specifically. In doing so they will help to deepen and give impetus to the collective thinking of our entire International on this question. □

# **Report on Armed Struggle in Latin America**



# Report on Armed Struggle in Latin America

The aim of this report is not to repeat what is contained in the resolution we will be voting on but to indicate the place the discussion now occupies in the Fourth International. The context can be out-

lined both in terms of the political questions that arise from a critical reassessment of our previous analyses and in terms of our current need to present our program on this point in a better way.

were not met. The aim is not to call into question the overall political basis on which the Ninth World Congress worked out its orientation for Latin America. But this critical review of the past is important for a full understanding of the present resolution.

## Ninth World Congress Resolution on Latin America

The resolution adopted at the Ninth World Congress stressed that armed struggle was a reality in Latin America. That contention was based on both an assessment of the depth of the social struggles and an analysis of the relationship of socioeconomic forces established between the classes (the relative social weight of the proletariat, the weakness of the national bourgeoisie, etc.). Two main consequences flowed from this reality.

● Any significant upsurge in the class struggle that is not quickly brought to a halt by the bourgeoisie and drained of its momentum poses the political question of violent confrontation. From then on the activity of the masses is dominated by the fact that repression looms over the horizon.

● The revolutionary vanguard is thus very quickly confronted with the need to define its own political and organizational tasks in this context—though its forms may vary—for a long period of time.

This thesis has been confirmed by history over the course of the last five years in Latin America, including in countries where the most significant "democratic openings" occurred (Bolivia, Uruguay, Chile, etc.). The evolution of the present situation in Argentina indicates that it too will not escape this process. The reality of armed struggle remains a question determining the options open to revolutionary Marxists. This is what is emphasized in points 1 and 2 of the resolution presented to this congress.

The Ninth World Congress also urged the sections to intervene in the revolutionary current that emerged after the victory of the Cuban revolution in order to reshape it politically through common action and win over a section of it to our program and movement.

The PRT (Combatiente) [Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers party] posed a special problem. Although it was a section of the Fourth International, it had yet to be fully won over to Trotskyism (see the Argentine resolution on this). Does the overall failure to integrate the PRT(C) into our movement and the split that ratified this failure call for a general condemnation of the entire proposal to establish contact with the new revolutionary generation in Latin America? No—

but it does enable us to define more accurately *the way it should be applied*.

An example, even though it is from Europe, will help shed some light on the question—the fusion of the Basque organization ETA-VI [Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna—Basque Nation and Freedom] with the LCR [Liga Comunista Revolucionaria—Revolutionary Communist League], a Spanish sympathizing organization of the Fourth International. ETA was initially a nationalist formation that was much further from Trotskyism than the Castroist current or the Argentine PRT(C). The evolution of the ETA militants began with an understanding of the limits their original orientation imposed on their development. The Trotskyist current emerged through contact with the Spanish LCR and the French Ligue Communiste [Communist League], and, through these organizations, with the Fourth International. Its emergence culminated a process of political clarification that was already under way in the ETA and resulted in a leap forward in the formation of a Trotskyist organization in the Spanish state. *The example of the LCR/ETA-VI provides a useful illustration of the validity of our general plan for building the Fourth International.* Furthermore, this example is far from unique (note the recent affiliation of the GRS [Groupe Revolution Socialiste—Socialist Revolution Group], the new Antilles section of the Fourth International). *At the same time, however, it enables us to illustrate the two conditions necessary for carrying out this plan:* the capacity of the Trotskyist organization and militants to *organize a programmatic debate* with the centrist currents that have begun to evolve, and their capacity to carry out joint actions with these currents. *The failure to measure up to these two conditions in Argentina* is what prevented us from definitively winning over a *significant* current of the PRT(C) to our movement. The existence, in spite of our weakness, of groups that have emerged from the PRT(C) and have resolved to continue building an Argentine organization of the Fourth International testifies to what it would have been theoretically possible to accomplish.

*The task today is to draw up a critical balance sheet of our previous orientation in order to point up why these conditions*

The weaknesses, ambiguities, and errors of the Ninth World Congress resolution on Latin America stem mainly from three sets of problems:

a. *Organizational weaknesses that were not overcome.* The Ninth World Congress set our movement, more firmly than in the past, on a course toward political action corresponding to the new international situation. In Latin America, this was charac-

This report was made by Roman in behalf of the International Majority Tendency. No vote was taken on his report separate from the resolution submitted by the IMT on the same subject.

terized by an unprecedented effort to respond to the concrete problems posed for both the vanguard and the masses by the sharp and violent character of the confrontation with the bourgeoisie.

But this effort to "transform" our movement politically implied a deepgoing modification of the way it functioned as an organization—both on the level of the sections and the international center. *We did not succeed in changing our methods of functioning as quickly as the new political tasks we had assigned ourselves demanded.* Consequently, our Latin American sections and the United Secretariat were unable either to initiate the political debate in time or work closely enough with the PRT(C). For this reason, the United Secretariat and each section of the International must now put special emphasis on this organizational transformation.

b. *The Ninth World Congress orientation for Latin America was marked by a number of weaknesses and errors of political analysis.*

The main ones concerned the analysis of the Castroist current, the evolution of the Cuban state, and the emergence of a new equilibrium in continental class struggles marked by a greater significance of the urban sectors. These errors resulted in an undeniable overestimation of our perspectives (closely linked to the hope that the Castroist current and Cuba would play a much more significant role than it actually did), and in an extreme centralization of these perspectives around rural guerrilla warfare.

*These weaknesses and errors of analysis were serious because they concerned*

some of the central problems under debate with the Latin American vanguard, including the PRT(C).

This is why the Tenth World Congress is opening a discussion on the evolution of the Cuban state.

c. *A general programmatic weakness of the International in a very important domain, that of choosing the forms of armed struggle and integrating them into our revolutionary strategy.*

Marxist thought in this and other areas has to a great extent been rendered sterile by Stalinism, which has broken the continuity linking us with Bolshevik traditions. In addition, the weakness of our forces prevented us from taking up the development of this question with the same success we have had in other domains. It was no accident that we returned to this fundamental question in the context of the Ninth World Congress and the need to determine an orientation for Latin Ameri-

ca. This flowed from a political turn toward intervention in a continent where the class struggle concretely posed the questions of armed struggle to the vanguard and the masses.

This relative lack of a living theoretical tradition of armed struggle and the narrowness of our political experience (though there was some in Europe—the resistance—and in Latin America) made the Ninth World Congress resolution on Latin America very abstract and dangerously hasty. That was the source of "elliptical formulations" that tended to "telescope" the different stages of struggle—formulations that we have criticized in the discussion.

*The aim of the present resolution is to return to these questions, beginning with an effort to systematize and develop our orientation with regard to the place and the forms of armed struggle in our strategy for Latin America.*

### What Is Under Discussion in the Present Debate?

We attach great significance to this question. For us, the point is not merely to take stock of our previous orientation, for the problem remains a burning question. The Latin American far left contains two broad currents representing two symmetrical deviations on the role of armed struggle in the revolutionary strategy for seizing power—a "militarist" current and a so-called "massist" or spontaneist one. We have to present and explain our own positions and distinguish our revolutionary Marxist current from the other currents, including our position on armed struggle.

To understand the function of the present resolution we should go back once again to the context of the current discussion. The majority tendency has no intention of promoting either a "focoist" strategy or a terrorist orientation, as the minority would have one believe. On the contrary, as the resolution presented to this congress illustrates, our entire orientation reflects and clarifies the need to subordinate the party's decisions on the question of armed struggle to its transitional strategy for seizing power. Moreover, this is not a debate about one preferred form of armed struggle (i.e., rural guerrilla warfare). On the contrary, our orientation brings out the variety of forms armed struggle can take—and the different ways of arming the proletariat—depending upon the various possible political situations; in contrast with the Ninth World Congress resolution it calls attention to the role of the revolutionary crisis in the arming of the masses.

This is not a debate over the "techniques" of armed struggle. It is an eminently political debate over the vanguard's particular responsibilities in solving the prob-

lem of arming the proletariat and the popular masses in order to seize power.

In this report I am not going to take up questions that have already been dealt with at some length in the discussion (the Bolivian experience, etc.). In order to illustrate general applicability of the debate I will take only one example—Chile and the circumstances surrounding the resistance to the military coup. It is clear to everyone that this was a case in which there was no question of a "focoist" orientation (i.e., the organization of rural guerrilla nuclei), "terrorism" (i.e., assassinations of UP [Unidad Popular—Popular Unity] governmental figures), or of a generally "militarist" perspective.

As far as all Trotskyist militants are concerned, there was a clear necessity to organize an urban and regional insurrectional uprising in the face of the danger or first sign of the coup. Despite this very general area of agreement, important differences remain regarding the analysis of what the role of the vanguard was in this situation. Behind the specific debates one can readily see what is really at issue in the discussion—a discussion that this World Congress must bring to a conclusion.

What then were the tasks of revolutionary militants in anticipation of the coup?

The first priority was obviously to defend and broaden the proletariat's political and organizational autonomy, and on this basis strengthen its alliance with the working peasantry (from which flows support to the slogans of nationalization under workers control, expropriation of the large landholders, spread and national centralization of the embryonic organs of dual power then in the process of emerging, etc.). The point, therefore, was to hasten the working class's political

break with the reformist leadership and to put forward an alternative political leadership on a national scale.

But was that enough? We do not think so. A comparison will help demonstrate this, a comparison with Spain in July 1936.

The revolution did not win in July 1936 in Spain. But the situation was quite different from that of Chile in September 1973: for one thing the fascist coup had been defeated in the greater part of the Spanish territory. If that had been the case in Chile (for instance, in the regions of Valparaiso and Santiago), the national and continental situation would have been profoundly different from the one that emerged from the general success of the coup. That does not mean, however, that the struggle would have been over. The example of Spain brings that point home. But the struggle would have taken place on an infinitely more favorable basis than it does today, and not only for the Chilean workers.

The question of why Chile suffered such a heavy defeat is therefore of great importance. What lessons are to be drawn regarding the role of revolutionary militants? Those who feel it is enough to reply that since the revolutionary party had not been built, revolution was not on the agenda, are sidestepping the question. For it cannot be said that the Spanish far left (CNT, POUM) [Confederacion Nacional de Trabajadores—National Confederation of Workers; Partido Obrero de Unificacion Marxista—United Marxist Workers party] was qualitatively more developed than the far left in Chile. And it certainly cannot be said that general conditions were less favorable in Chile: The objective weight of the Chilean working class was relatively strong, and the workers had benefited from three years of the Popular Unity government, during which a very large number of workers committees had been established (the cordones, etc.). The peasant movement too had accumulated a number of experiences in struggle. A process of political differentiation was taking place among the masses. And in the beginning, at least, the ruling classes were equally divided.

Likewise, if one compares, in the Spain of July 1936, the areas where the coup succeeded and those where it failed, it can be seen that the intervention of general factors does not provide a sufficient explanation: The workers stronghold fell almost without a fight.

What proved to be decisive was the intervention of the vanguard. Everywhere in both Spain and Chile, the masses reacted spontaneously to news of the putsch. But they also reacted everywhere in an essentially defensive fashion, occupying "their" factory, "their" neighborhood. In both cases the masses had been disarmed by a reformist government. In Spain,



wherever the coup was defeated, this occurred on account of the intervention by revolutionary militants who, with whatever arms they had in their possession, knew how to put forward objectives to the mobilized masses (the armories, encirclement of the barracks, etc.). *It was the intervention of the vanguard that enabled the masses to break away from passive reaction and go over to the counteroffensive.* And this occurred even in regions where the reformist leadership remained at the head of the workers movement. The MIR [Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria—Movement of the Revolutionary Left] (the main organization of the Chilean far left) was unable to carry out what the militants of the CNT and POUM accomplished in many areas of Spain. This is probably the product of a difference in the history and class struggles of the two countries. An insurrectional tradition—and thus cadres who had already been tested, and masses who had already accumulated experiences of struggle—already existed in Spain.

The lesson to be drawn from the comparison of Chile in 1973 with Spain in 1936 is clear. The bourgeoisie does not wait until the masses have finished breaking with the reformist leadership before it reacts. *Once it reacts, everything takes place in a few days at best; more likely in a few hours. The revolutionary vanguard must know how to sweep over the reformist leadership in order to present objectives to the masses. And it must know how to present objectives that are not only political but are also related to the military tasks of the insurrection.*

For the Latin America of today the lesson is even clearer that the bourgeoisie and its army have learned a great deal and have made careful preparations. The Chilean coup is a model of the type. The degree of preparation required of the masses and the vanguard is therefore greatly increased.

What then are the tasks of revolutionary Marxists in a situation similar to that of Chile before September 1973, *specifically in reference to the question of arming the proletariat* (and taking into account the whole range of other political tasks)?

At least four can be cited:

1. Carrying out *beforehand* a systematic campaign of political education around the themes of arming the proletariat (from self-defense to militias), against legalist illusions, and against the bourgeois army. Here, just as around other transitional themes, the Marxist vanguard must play an *active* role in formulating slogans, publicizing them, and generalizing *concrete experiences* (for in the end, it is through this analysis that the masses become educated). *This is what makes the question of arming the masses one of the key questions in the revolutionary party's political activity once a tumultu-*

*ous mass upsurge is under way.*

2. *On the basis of this work*, consistent propaganda and organizational activity must be carried out inside the bourgeois army. The example of Chile reconfirms that this work can only be carried out on the basis of a relationship of forces grounded in the effective capability of the masses to confront the bourgeois army. Work in the army should begin as soon as possible. It can succeed only on the basis of well-established work outside the army that is not limited to peacefully organizing the masses; militias and workers committees must already be in existence if the rank and file of the army is to come over to the proletarian camp. Opposition to the coup existed in the army, and it even seems to have been rather broad. It was physically crushed without resistance.

3. The revolutionary party must be capable of carrying out *its own intervention* and it must have its armed detachments. It should not only be able to assure the protection of itself and its militants, but should also be capable of facilitating the masses' *concrete experiences*, maximizing their effect, and deepening them, as well as carrying out significant political actions at the chosen time to speed up the process. In addition, it must be capable of enrolling the masses when decisive confrontations begin.

4. In a general way, the question of timing becomes a key factor. In no case is it possible to count on the bourgeoisie being paralyzed for a length of time sufficient to enable the masses to undergo "naturally" the full experience of the bankruptcy of reformism, if only because the bourgeoisie has the benefit of international support. From this flows the decisive role of revolutionary militants in the whole period of preparation for the insurrection. At the decisive moment, this question becomes even more important. There is no longer time to hesitate. All the circumstances and conditions involved in sweeping over the reformist leaderships and in carrying out the political and military tasks of the uprising must have already been anticipated and thought out. "Insurrection is an art," Trotsky used to be fond of saying. That is something we should not forget.

Stressing these tasks of the revolutionary vanguard is not, we repeat, aimed at sidestepping the debate on the other forms of struggle. It is aimed at throwing some light on the fundamental point under debate. *Because the orientation thus defined is different from both militarist orientations and tail-endist, spontaneist orientations.*

It differs from militarist orientations—of which the PRT(C) of Santucho is the most sophisticated example—by concretely illustrating the central role of organs of dual power in arming the masses, the

importance of the moment of revolutionary crisis and the link between carrying out the tasks of arming the proletariat and the revolutionary Marxist program as a whole.

It is profoundly different from the perspectives proposed by the international minority (and in particular by the Argentine PST), which are very close to those of the spontaneist current on the question of the insurrection.

For the minority, the arming of the proletariat is the "natural" product of revolutionists' general political activity and requires no prolonged and specific intervention on the part of the party. "Minority violence" is *in principle* contradictory to "mass violence" and thus should be denounced. The only violence permitted is violence coming from the mass movement, carried out in its name, and by its organizations. The term "minority violence," which they say must be denounced in principle, is also attached to actions that scarcely merit the term "violence" (such as breaking the windows of a U. S. embassy in the name of a revolutionary political organization in the course of a movement against the imperialist war in Indochina. . .). The revolutionary militant must march with the masses, *at the same pace as the masses*—masses who, "when the time comes," will know how to find ways to arm themselves.

The minority refers to the lessons of the guerrilla defeats in Latin America. We will draw them. But they themselves forget to draw the lessons from *guerrilla warfare that helped bring about victories* (from China to Cuba, including Vietnam); nor do they draw the lessons of the defeats of the "insurrections" in Bolivia, Chile, etc., over the last few years. They show signs of the most insipid tail-endism toward the mass movement—and in point of fact toward its reformist leaders—and of total spontaneism in regard to arming the proletariat. We believe in the spontaneity of the masses—otherwise we would have no hope for the socialist revolution. But we do not believe in being unprepared for insurrection and revolution.

As for the third tendency, it seems to adopt the minority's tail-endist way of approaching this question. They differ only in offering an amendment calling for the existence of an "armed (but *inactive*) wing" of the party until the day when "the masses themselves" arm themselves. The importance of the inactive "armed wing" is reduced to furnishing, when the time comes, well-trained (how?) "revolutionary officers" for the proletariat. For the third tendency, the politics of the PST are simply "not very clear" because the PST is silent about the existence of this "armed wing." The silence will have lasted until the end of the debate, and it is not by accident: It is the product of legalistic politics.

## The Tenth World Congress Resolution

The resolution presented to the Tenth World Congress does not try to present an overall continental strategy based on a precise evaluation of the evolution of the class struggles in Latin America. Its aim is more modest; its purpose is different from that of the Ninth World Congress resolution.

Its aim is to begin, on the basis of a critical balance sheet of our past orientation, the work of conceptualizing and formulating the party's tasks in relation to armed struggle. In other words, its purpose is to eliminate the "elliptical" character of the formulations of the previous world congress, to show in a more systematic way the form that armed actions of the party take in relation to the evolution of the political situation, the class struggle, and the party itself. This resolution continues the work of programmatic development begun in this area at

the Ninth World Congress. That is what has led us to define more fully the content of the concepts involved and to give a more balanced assessment of the role of rural guerrilla warfare as it was defined five years ago, and to do so in terms of an analysis of the shift in social struggles under way in Latin America.

It is at the very least somewhat strange to assert that the resolution presented to this congress tends to generalize guerrilla warfare to encompass all forms of struggle in Latin America, and tends to extend this orientation to the whole rest of the world. First, because this resolution specifically emphasizes *the limits to actions of the strictly guerrillaist* (rural or urban) *sort. Second, because it is in point of fact a continental resolution, not a world one.*

### A Continental Resolution

In my remarks I made comparisons with some European examples (ETA-VI and July 1936 in Spain) because it is possible to draw useful lessons from them. *But the resolution on armed struggle in Latin America is perhaps based more on the differences between continents than on their similarities.*

The first difference is stated in point 1 of the resolution. Everywhere in the world the revolution will undoubtedly be violent, and every revolutionary party must therefore set itself specific military tasks. *But at the moment the violent confrontation between the masses and the bourgeoisie begins, the forms this confrontation takes will differ greatly between the colonial and semicolonial countries on the one hand and the imperialist countries on the other, for the social structure in these countries is vastly different. The social weight of the proletariat is much weaker in the colonial and semicolonial countries, as is the socio-economic base of the bourgeoisie. It is this particular relationship between the classes that explains the rapidity with which any serious upsurge in class struggles provokes a confrontation. The difference between the colonial revolution as a sector of the permanent revolution and the "classical" proletarian revolution is shown here as well. In what Latin American country would the bourgeoisie be able to assimilate and derail a struggle as broad as the one in May 1968 in France, through essentially political means and wage concessions? That is, however, what the French bourgeoisie did; the army (though on alert) remained in the barracks and the police intervened only at the beginning and end of the*

movement. Three militants were killed, but that time the army was not directly used (although the *threat* of an intervention was employed).

So, are we talking about a resolution that is valid for the whole of the colonial and semicolonial world? No! Latin America has a social structure and a tradition of class struggle that differ in too many ways from those of the other continents dominated by imperialism to permit the use of an identical approach. A document on armed struggle in Southeast Asia or Black Africa would not be exactly like the one for Latin America.

An example will clarify this point: the comparison with Vietnam enabled us to criticize the conception held by the PRT(C) and the ERP [Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo—Revolutionary People's Army] by *highlighting the differences.* Prolonged revolutionary war on the Sino-Vietnamese model requires the creation and development of liberated zones based on a *resistance economy and an embryonic state apparatus* that can only exist in a country with an economy that is still essentially rural. The socioeconomic base of a liberated zone (not to mention problems of a more specifically military character) does not exist in a shantytown. *Developments in urbanized Argentina cannot be the same as those in rural Vietnam.* In other words, for Argentine revolutionists the emergence of liberated zones can only be conceived within a perspective of continental, or at least subcontinental, struggle. *However, this perspective implies the existence of a continental or subcontinental civil war encompassing significant rural regions.* In other words, this

orientation was not applicable in the last few years.

The Vietnamese national liberation army was not based solely on the formation of liberated zones. Its development was also coordinated with the outbreak of revolutionary crises, and partial or general insurrections (August 1945, for example). There is a dual lesson here. Generally speaking, the transition from minority armed action to the arming of the masses occurs in a context of overall socioeconomic crisis, of revolutionary crisis. What is involved is a qualitative leap; *i.e., it is not a case of linear development from an armed wing of the party to a mass revolutionary army.* And the political line of the revolutionary party must lead to locating these favorable factors. For that matter, the concrete means for forming a revolutionary proletarian army of mass proportions will vary according to the country, the specific situations, and the concrete forms of the class struggle (centralization of workers militias, development of a "national liberation army" of the Vietnamese type, etc.). Here again the party's role in anticipating developments will be decisive.

The comparison could be pursued further to show the importance of *differences* in defining an orientation. There is, however, a *general theme* underlying the differences between the majority and minority, a theme that has nothing to do with "continental" considerations and that expresses itself in our different conceptions of armed struggle. What is this theme? *It involves the relationship that must be established between the revolutionary vanguard and the masses in order to assure the full development of the transitional dynamic of struggles; it also involves the nature of the program and the whole question of transition.* The differences can be expressed as follows: Is it enough to march at the same pace as the masses, merely taking up their slogans and forms of struggle, or should the Marxist vanguard be capable of preparing the masses—through propaganda, agitation, and action—for the tasks they are going to be confronted with in the immediate future? We agree with Lenin that there are times when the party must know how to march a "half step" ahead of the masses, or else risk being unable to play its role. That holds true for armed struggle as well as everything else.

### A Bolshevik Tradition

For the minority, the resolution on armed struggle in Latin America, in the context of the Ninth World Congress, represents an "innovation" in the history of the Trotskyist movement, an innovation whose methodology is contrary to the Marxist tradition. We have already replied to this astonishing argument in the



precongress debate, taking up (among other examples) the method applied by Lenin at the time of the development of guerrilla actions in Russia in 1906, and the method Trotsky applied to the antifascist struggle and to actions taken by the party itself. Since it is necessary to go back over this, let us take a look at a pamphlet written by Trotsky—*Strategy and Tactics in the Imperialist Epoch*, chapter 10, "The Strategy of Civil War." In 1924, a working group centered around the Military Science Society encountered opposition from the anti-Trotskyist faction of the Comintern. In Trotsky's view:

"A more lightminded and criminal step can hardly be imagined. In an epoch of abrupt turns, the rules of the civil war in the sense presented above must be part of the iron inventory of the entire revolutionary cadre, let alone the leaders of the party. These 'statutes' would have to be studied constantly and augmented from the fresh experiences in one's own country. Only such a study can provide a certain guarantee against steps of panic and capitulation at moments when supreme courage and decisiveness are re-

quired, as well as against adventurist leaps in periods which require prudence and patience.

"Had such regulations been incorporated in a number of books, the serious study of which is as much the duty of every communist as the knowledge of the basic ideas of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, we might well have avoided such defeats as were suffered during recent years, and which were by no means inevitable. . . ." (*The Third International After Lenin*, pp. 146-47.)

It can be seen that our concerns are not new.

We do not believe that the solution to all our problems can be found in the texts that are the heritage of the Marxist movement. But we do believe in the application of the method that guided the Bolsheviks' actions during the Russian revolution and the elaboration of the Transitional Program of 1938. All we are doing today is renewing—in a modest fashion—an old tradition of the communist movement, a tradition many of whose threads have been broken by Stalinism.

The resolution presented to this Tenth World Congress puts forward a concept

of armed struggle that is sharply distinguished from the militarist or spontaneist deviations of armed struggle, deviations that have been and continue to be widespread in the Latin American far left.

The resolution enables us to draw a critical balance sheet of our own orientation. Its aim is to clarify and better differentiate the concepts we make use of (armed protection of the party's propaganda work, actions of the party itself, guerrilla warfare in the strict sense of the term, and so forth). It illuminates the correlation that exists between the evolution of developments in the class struggle and the tasks incumbent upon the party.

But this resolution remains very abstract. It is no substitute for the capability of each of our groups or sections in Latin America to define its own tasks in terms of the national situation. It does not claim to define a full, complete, *overall* strategic orientation for the entire Latin American continent. But to move ahead in both elaboration and action, we must now bring to a close the debate between tendencies that emerged in the International following the Argentine and Bolivian experiences. □

**Counterreport  
on Armed Struggle  
in Latin America**



# Counterreport on Armed Struggle in Latin America

To properly judge the resolution that has been placed before the congress, and in particular the arguments made by Comrade Roman, the reporter for the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency, who went beyond Latin America—citing events elsewhere in the world—to bolster his arguments on the "programmatic clarification" offered by the resolution, it is necessary to consider the document in relation to the position on this question held by the Fourth International since it was founded in 1938.

The fundamental position of the Fourth International on armed struggle proceeds from the view that the socialist revolution, unlike all previous revolutions, is a conscious action carried out by the masses—by the masses in their millions and tens of millions—under the leadership of the proletariat. This sounds simple; and it is simple—but it is also very profound. It constitutes the basic frame of revolutionary Marxist politics, distinguishing us from all other tendencies in the radical movement. We proceed from this view in trying to solve the key problem that faces us as revolutionary Marxists today: how to bring the program of socialism to the masses so that they adopt it as their own program and set out themselves to realize it in life.

This is very clearly shown by the way Trotsky, in his final programmatic statement on the question of armed struggle, handles the subject in the Transitional Program.

He begins with mass actions; in this instance with a wave of sit-down strikes and occupations of factories. That is the proper way to begin from the Marxist point of view. Then he proceeds to the probable response by the bourgeoisie—the use of violence. This in turn impels the workers to act in self-defense.

Measures of self-defense, worked out by the masses and put into effect by the masses, sharpen the class struggle, as Trotsky outlines the likely course of events. The bourgeoisie, as has been seen in many a bitter strike struggle, resorts to the use of armed thugs, to private armies, in addition to the ordinary use of the police and army. As the struggle sharpens, the bourgeoisie inclines more and more toward a fascist take-over. Or, if you wish to look at it in the context of many areas today, including Latin America, the bourgeoisie inclines toward a military coup and the establishment of a repressive military regime.

And so to defend themselves in the most powerful way open to them, the masses mobilize in their millions. Their self-defensive measures—as Trotsky continues the logical sequence—become broader, sharper, and increasingly effective through

the organization of armed workers detachments. This involves, as Trotsky stresses, tens of millions of toilers. In dealing with armed struggle, Trotsky always speaks in terms of the masses—of the vast majority of the population. The battle begins in the plants, Trotsky says; in the plants where the workers are. It ends with the masses flooding the streets as the contending class forces confront each other in mounting clashes.

The nuclei in this area of the class struggle consist of strike pickets. That's the point of departure. For the workers, self-defense begins with pickets. These develop at a later stage, as Trotsky visualized the sequence, into a workers militia.

Trotsky emphasizes, moreover, that as the struggle proceeds, the advances always occur on the basis of the experience of the masses themselves. He is simply stating the most elementary proposition of Marxist politics. Our politics is the politics of the mass movement, of mass struggles.

Here is Trotsky's summary on the question of armed struggle:

"Engels defined the state as bodies of 'armed men.' *The arming of the proletariat* is an imperative concomitant element to its struggle for liberation. When the proletariat wills it, it will find the road and the means to arming. In this field, also, the leadership falls naturally to the sections of the Fourth International."

What is the essence of this position, of this revolutionary Marxist political position? It is the mobilization and organization of tens of millions of people. The concept is one of immense boldness—a perspective of organizing the masses by the millions. Considering the small forces that we start with, what perspective could be bolder than that?

By what strategy is this aim to be achieved? It is through the construction of a mass revolutionary party, an instrument interlocked with the masses and thereby in position to provide them with leadership at each stage of the struggle.

Consider more closely Trotsky's sentence on how the proletariat is to be armed. This is Trotsky speaking: "When the proletariat wills it, it will find the road and the means to arming."

Does this mean that Trotsky was a spontaneist? Few today would call Trotsky a spontaneist. In 1938 that position was called having confidence in the initiative of the masses. Initiatives in action, if you please.

Trotsky was not an *advocate* of violence. He said more than once that it would be preferable to avoid violence. He pointed out, however, that the decision on this question rested with the bourgeoisie, and that history teaches us that

the bourgeoisie will resort to minority violence if they believe their rule to be seriously endangered. The majority then has no choice but to defend itself against the violence of the small minority hanging on to power against the will of the people.

Trotsky insisted on the importance of the distinction between majority and minority. In the case of the civil war in the United States and again in Spain, it was the reactionary minority that resorted to violence in hope of frustrating the will of the majority. The majority had no choice but to respond in kind.

Trotsky's rejection of a course that

This counterreport was made by Joseph Hansen in behalf of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. The vote was for 118, against 143, abstentions 6, not voting 3.

would have involved our movement in the use of "minority violence" cannot be ascribed to pacifism, tail-endism, or right opportunism on his part. In the last years of his life, as is well known, he was greatly concerned about the mounting threat from native fascism in the United States itself. Against that threat, Trotsky counseled his followers in the United States to use their influence to help the trade unions and other mass organizations initiate the organization of workers defense guards.

What Trotsky said on this question in the last years of his life is especially important. He was voicing his considered judgment based on the entire experience of the revolutionary movement, including what he had learned in the Russian revolution and in the struggle against the rise of fascism in Europe. In the Transitional Program he condensed the valid positions of the first four congresses of the Communist International. Besides that, Trotsky left us rich observations on this question in his *History of the Russian Revolution*.

What is the conclusion of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction on this point? Briefly, that there is no need for a new resolution on armed struggle. We already have a rounded programmatic position on armed struggle. What we leave open is its tactical application. That has to be determined by the concrete circumstances at a given moment in the class struggle. If any resolution is required it ought to be one reaffirming the Trotskyist position against the challenge offered by the new rise of individual terrorism in many countries.

The resolution of the IEC Majority Tendency does the opposite. It revises the Trotskyist position. It reaffirms the guer-



Petrograd, 1917: Bolshevik sailors arrive from Kronstadt.

*December 23, 1974*



rilla orientation adopted at the 1969 congress. At the same time it seeks to make that orientation more palatable. It could be said to mark the completion of the turn adopted by the majority at the last world congress. The resolution reduces guerrilla warfare to but one form of "armed struggle." Or, looked at from another angle, it generalizes guerrilla war. Instead of a particular form we have been presented with the general form.

What is referred to in the resolution, it must be emphasized, is not armed struggle as initiated and carried out by the majority of the population but violent actions initiated and carried out by small groups. Such actions are supposed to serve as examples to the masses. And this is obviously how the term "armed struggle" will be understood by every guerrilla fighter, every practitioner of "minority violence" in the world.

Some of the flaws in the resolution, as it stands, should be noted. In the very first sentence a contradiction appears: "For a number of reasons that were spelled out in the resolution on Latin America at the Ninth World Congress and that are peculiar to that continent at this stage, any turbulent rise of the mass movement must soon confront a resolute attempt by the army to crush it and to establish a military dictatorship."

According to that, "armed struggle" is confined to the continent of Latin America. Yet the stated conditions hold generally for all continents. They hold even for industrially advanced countries. It can be safely predicted that any turbulent rise of the mass movement anywhere in the world today faces the danger of "a resolute attempt by the army to crush it and to establish a military dictatorship."

That was the experience in Indonesia, which is hardly a part of Latin America. Wasn't a turbulent rise of the mass movement there met with the establishment of a ferocious military dictatorship?

If it is true that the bourgeoisie will grant concessions in face of small mobilizations, as the resolution states elsewhere, but will seek to smash big mobilizations, doesn't that hold for Western Europe and for the United States? Consequently, even though we consider his conclusions to be wrong, it was correct of Comrade Roman to consider the question on a world scale and not merely in reference to Latin America.

In fact it would appear that the references in the resolution to Latin America represent nothing but bits of the shell in which the new orientation on "armed struggle," or guerrilla war, was presented at the last world congress.

There are other flaws. The resolution singles out "armed struggle," as an entity existing in its own right, a phenomenon to be considered by itself. Abstracting the question in this way shows that the

authors of the resolution have isolated it from the struggle of the masses.

Further proof, if proof is needed, is the emphasis on the action of miniscule groups. In reality that is all the resolution deals with—the action of miniscule groups isolated from the masses.

Along with this goes unrealistic schematization, an abstract set of rules as to when and where "armed struggle" is to be used, in what forms the miniscule groups should apply it; that is, whether as guerrilla war, as armed detachments of the party, as initial pilot projects, etc.

The fatal flaw in this approach is that the concrete reality is always richer than the best-laid schema. Concrete reality always proves to be richer than it can be imagined in advance. Thus the tactical prescriptions advanced in this resolution can prove to be deadly traps.

Our movement has had some bad experiences in this respect. Wasn't that one of the reasons why the sections of the Fourth International in both Bolivia and Argentina followed courses out of consonance with the reality, thereby suffering serious setbacks?

This is not all. The resolution offers a caricature of the position outlined in the Transitional Program. Then it *combines* this caricature with the Transitional Program.

What this means in practice is shown by what the Bolivian comrades told us happened in Bolivia. They succeeded in getting important union bodies there to vote for the Transitional Program. Then they discovered that this was not enough because later on they still had to confront the problem of "armed struggle." So they "attached" armed struggle to the Transitional Program.

The most important aspect of the Transitional Program, however, is the method it offers—a method to be used by the revolutionary party in advancing the class struggle. This method applies to all aspects of the class struggle, including the periods in which the masses resort to arms in self-defense against the attacks of the bourgeoisie. The point is that revolutionists should master this method so that they can utilize it in concrete situations no matter how unexpected these situations may be in their actual form. To have unions *vote* for the Transitional Program can be meaningless, if not worse.

The Bolivian comrades believed, of course, that they had carried out their duty and had scored a success in getting powerful unions to vote for it. After this success they turned to other tasks. And what happened? They were left defenseless before the pressure of Castroism.

The resolution submitted by the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency follows essentially the same course. The majority comrades emphasize that they are all for the Transitional

Program; but they propose to combine something with it that goes directly against Trotsky's basic concept of armed struggle as arising from within the mass movement itself.

On the theoretical level such an attempt represents an absolute collapse of serious thought.

The orientation on rural guerrilla war adopted at the last world congress reflected the pressure of Castroism on our movement. In some circles of what the majority calls the "new mass vanguard," it is thought that the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban revolutions were touched off by small groups through pedagogical armed actions.

If you believe that this model is valid for the coming revolutions, then the majority resolution follows logically. But it is the logic of Castroism—a quite obsolete logic, it ought to be added. The fact is that this model is far removed from the real course of those revolutions.

On top of that, the revolutionary upsurge developing internationally today is more and more approximating the model of the Russian revolution.

Castroism has been ebbing for some time. How then are we to explain the pressure within the Fourth International for continuing the guerrilla orientation, the pressure for deepening it, for generalizing it, for experimenting with new variants of it? The explanation remains the same as the one offered by the minority at the 1969 congress. The fact is that the memory of the impact of the Russian revolution, of its pattern, of the methods used by its leaders, and what a mighty role can be played by a Bolshevik-type party has grown dim. It remains a living concept only among the older generations, along with young comrades who are really willing to study it in depth and to transport themselves in mind to that titanic event.

Many youths have come into the Fourth International under the influence of the Cuban, Chinese, and the Vietnamese revolutions. They have not yet outgrown that influence. At best the Russian revolution is to them one among other revolutions, one model among others; and they have not yet grasped its central political lesson.

And sadly enough, some of the older leaders of the Fourth International, rather than seeking to overcome the ultraleft bias of these new recruits, bent to the pressure. As in the way they handled the non-Trotskyist PRT in Argentina, these leaders drifted. Still worse, they pampered the ultraleft prejudices of these recruits. These are the main sources of the pressures within the Fourth International that have led to the continuation, deepening, and generalization of the "armed struggle," or guerrilla, line as codified in this resolution which is now before us. □

**Theses on Building  
of Revolutionary Parties  
in Capitalist Europe**



# Theses on Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe

## I. The Change in the Objective and Subjective Conditions for Building Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe Since 1967

Since 1967, the conditions in which revolutionary Marxists go about carrying out their central strategic task—the building of Leninist parties capable of leading the proletariat toward the victorious socialist revolution—have greatly changed

in capitalist Europe. These changes, which are in part the product of upheavals in other parts of the world, in the final analysis reflect the deepening of the basic crisis of bourgeois society in Europe. This crisis manifests itself at all levels of society.

announced by Nixon's speech on August 15, 1971. Far from reducing inter-imperialist competition or the general crisis of the system, these defensive measures on the part of American imperialism can only serve to exacerbate them.

While stimulating the formation of the Common Market of capitalist Europe, competition between the capitalist powers has impeded its transformation into a real supranational state, which would correspond to the needs of the growing process of interpenetration of capital. Recently there have been many setbacks in the field of monetary and political unification of capitalist Europe. A generalized

### 1. The Deepening Crisis of Capitalism

The crisis of the international capitalist system underwent a new deepening with the end of the long period of accelerated economic expansion carrying forward the "Korean war boom" that came at the end of the postwar revolutionary crisis in Western Europe. The West German recession in 1966-67 was quickly followed by a recession in Italy and Japan (1970-71), a new, minor recession in West Germany (1971-72), and a general slowing of economic growth in all the imperialist countries. For the first time since the second world war, attempts to reduce these crises of overproduction through stepped-up inflation ran into obstacles; inflation went hand in hand with economic stagnation in a number of imperialist countries. The stepped-up inflation of the dollar finally precipitated the collapse of the international monetary system created at Bretton Woods and opened a profound worldwide monetary crisis that threatens to undermine international credit and, as a result, the expansion of world trade.

The reversal of the general economic climate is the result not only of conjunctural factors but also of profound structural factors. The main stimuli of the rapid expansion of the postwar years are fading away one after the other. The decline of the old industrial branches—such as the coal industry, textiles, copper, shipbuilding, and no doubt also steel—is irreversible. At the same time, the pace-setting industries that "carried" the postwar growth have one by one been hit by an excess capacity and as a result have been forced to cut back their investment. This is already the case in the electrical appliance industry, the automobile industry, and petrochemicals; it will also soon be the case in the electrical machine industry and in electronics itself. The declining rate of profit is showing up more and more clearly, choking off rapid growth. This effect is reinforced by the steady shrinking of the market in propor-

tion to the enormous expansion of productive capacity.

The still limited buying power of the bureaucratized workers states, including China, on the world market does not enable them to provide an important supplementary outlet capable of absorbing the excess capacity of imperialist industry as a whole. In certain branches (steel pipes, equipment for automobile and petrochemical factories), however, it has been possible to stave off sharp crises in the imperialist countries by filling orders from the workers states—orders prompted, moreover, by specific temporary scarcities in the Eastern countries (cereals, for example).

The slowdown of growth in the international capitalist economy strongly accentuates interimperialist contradictions, including competition in East-West trade (this is one of the reasons for Nixon's overture both to Peking and to Moscow). This declining growth rate comes, in fact, in the wake of a period during which the relationship of forces among the imperialist countries underwent a major shift. American imperialism has progressively lost the absolute superiority it enjoyed within the imperialist camp during the immediate postwar period. Its share of the world market (the capital market as well as the commodity market, even if there is a lag of several years between the trends in the two) is continuing to shrink to the advantage of the West German and Japanese imperialists, and some other imperialist countries in the European Economic Community (EEC). The weakening of British imperialism has been especially pronounced during the last fifteen years.

This modification of the interimperialist relationship of forces has resulted in particular in a growing penetration of European and Japanese goods into the domestic U.S. market, which is what prompted the (essentially protectionist) countermove-

This resolution was submitted by the International Majority Tendency. The vote was for 144, against 125, abstentions 1.

recession will put the process of unification on a European scale to the decisive test. There will be either an acceleration of the integration process or a dismantling of the Common Market and the rebirth of protectionist practices. In the latter case, American imperialism, which even today holds an evident superiority in the political and military spheres, will regain an indisputable economic dominance.

### 2. The Crisis of Social Relations

The end of the long period of rapid expansion brought with it a sharpening of social contradictions in capitalist Europe that, since May 1968, has taken the form of a *general social crisis* in several European countries (France, Italy, Spain, Great Britain). Any spectacular new recurrence of this crisis could drag in all the rest of capitalist Europe. The socialist revolution is once again on the agenda in Europe, not just in a broad historical perspective (in that sense, it has been on the agenda since 1914), but even from a conjunctural point of view.

The most profound source of this social crisis lies in the fact that the basic contradiction of the system—the contradiction between the level of development attained by the productive forces and the maintenance of capitalist relations of pro-

duction—has been considerably aggravated by the postwar phase of growth of the productive forces. Even more than the phase of stagnation from 1914 to 1939, this growth has objectively undermined capitalist relations of production.

We are increasingly approaching the upper limits of the adaptability of these relations of production, not only as regards the functioning of the market economy, the profit drive of the private trusts, the financing of long-term productive investments, and the development of the material and intellectual infrastructure of production, but also as regards their ability to satisfy—if only in an elementary way—the new needs generated in the working population by the growth of the productive forces themselves. A good part of these new needs, keenly felt especially by the youth, clearly cannot be met within the context of bourgeois society. In this category must be placed requirements of high-quality social consumption, met according to the "satisfaction of needs" principle (health, education, culture, information, retirement, etc.), as well as the need for creative activity radically breaking from alienated labor.

This general crisis in social relations had begun to manifest itself even before the turn in the world economic situation; the turn itself has obviously made it worse. As growth slows, interimperialist competition is intensified, and the crisis of the international monetary system spreads, the European bourgeoisie is less able to grant new concessions to the working masses and finds itself even forced to call into question a series of gains (considered by the proletariat to be given) that were granted during the course of the preceding phase. The attempt to make the workers pay the price of inflation, and the general reappearance of unemployment (during the winters of 1970-71 and 1971-72, there were about five million unemployed in capitalist Europe), are two aspects of the same basic orientation of big capital, which is trying to restore the rate of profit by intensifying its exploitation of the working class.

The scope and importance of the upsurge in workers struggles since May 1968 reflects the fact that the working class is becoming increasingly conscious of these problems and is attempting to respond to them through direct struggles, and the fact that they are putting up enormous resistance to the attempt to substantially raise the rate of surplus value. As a result, these struggles are not directly determined by the economic conjuncture and therefore often last for extended periods of time. A central aspect of this upsurge of struggles is the fact that the tendencies outlined here apply to *capitalist Europe as a whole*.

Of course, these struggles do not occur in every country in the same forms, with the same intensity, and above all,

at the same time. This unevenness has contradictory results: It moderates the explosive character of a deepening crisis in one country when this crisis coincides with relative stability in the other countries. But at the same time, it prolongs the period of instability and the potential for a crisis on a European scale.

New countries enter into a phase of acute crisis in the class struggle while others are going through a period of partial downturn. These crises fuel each other and make it more difficult for the bourgeoisie to reestablish equilibrium in individual countries.

In the context of this rise of the workers struggles on a European scale, the immigrant workers too have appeared on the front lines of the anticapitalist struggle. The wave of industrialization following the second world war induced several million workers to emigrate to the main countries in capitalist Europe. This immigration was one of the factors that made it possible, despite the expansion of industrial production, to systematically rebuild an industrial reserve army, whose function is to hold back wage increases. However, the way these immigrants have been incorporated into the economy (grinding jobs, low wages, lack of social amenities, etc.) and into society (housing conditions, various kinds of discrimination, racism, etc.), as well as the upsurge of struggles both in their countries of origin (Spain, Italy) and in the countries where they have immigrated, will intensify those major struggles that have developed in a portentous way in recent years (occupations of immigrant hostels in France and Great Britain; strikes by semiskilled workers in the Renault plant in France, the Ford plant in Germany, the textile mills in Britain, and the metalworking and construction industries in Switzerland; antiracist mobilizations, etc.).

Faced with these explosions, the bourgeoisie has strengthened its legislative measures designed to control the flow of immigrant labor, to introduce criteria of eligibility for immigration in accordance with a more precise determination of levels of skill, and to establish strict police supervision aimed at repressing political activists and worker militants among the immigrants (Fontanet decree in France, Immigrant Act in Great Britain, various laws in Switzerland, etc.).

The leadership of the trade unions and of the traditional workers parties accept in fact the division engineered by the bourgeoisie between immigrant workers and native-born workers; they support, either openly or by their silence, the various measures of control over immigration. Under these conditions, the immigrant workers tend to fill the vacuum left by the bureaucratized workers organizations by developing their own organs of defense in France, the MTA [Arab Workers Movement] and UGTSF [General Union of

Senegalese Workers in France]; in Switzerland, the CLI. Especially in countries in the first phases of a rise in class struggle, the immigrant workers' struggles often have a powerful impact and an exemplary character. Nevertheless, the separation between immigrant and native-born workers remains a serious handicap, particularly during periods of recession. As a result of this division, the combative layers of the immigrant workers may become isolated at times unless everything possible is done to unite them with the indigenous workers vanguard.

The upsurge of the class struggle in Europe in the last five years has taken on various forms, sometimes in combination, as follows:

a. Explosions on a national scale that bring about a revolutionary or prerevolutionary situation (May 1968 in France).

b. Massive and prolonged mobilizations of the working class and of various social strata—with strikes in decisive industrial sectors (metalworkers, chemical and petrochemical workers, etc.) and regional and national strikes—leading to an acute social and political crisis or even to a prerevolutionary situation (Italy, 1968-73).

c. Tests of strength that take place on, or move toward, a national scale (miners' strike in Great Britain in 1972, general strike in Denmark in 1973).

d. Militant mobilizations of decisive sectors of the working class or of pace-setting sectors in the social and political sense (Spain; France; Italy; German metalworkers in December 1971; and Belgium, on a much lower level).

e. Pilot experiences that are limited but potentially involve the characteristic elements of the period (Sweden, Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark, West Germany).

On the basis of the experiences of the post-1968 upsurge, the thrust of these struggles can be summarized as follows:

a. Wage demands, whose major importance lies in the rejection of incomes policies.

b. Struggle against the rising cost of living and demands directed against the effects of inflation on the workers.

c. Demands for defending jobs, struggles against factory shutdowns, layoffs, and industrial and regional restructuring.

d. Demands championing the principle of equality and aiming at reducing wage differentiations within the working class and between factory and office workers.

e. Demands for reduction of hours with no cut in pay, and longer paid vacations.

f. Defense of collective bargaining, the right to strike, and other trade-union rights and prerogatives.

In addition to these general objectives there has been the development of objectives that have a profound importance because they are directed, at least in embryonic form, against the capitalist rela-



tions of production themselves:

— Revolts against speedup and piecework, against the subdivision of job categories, against layoffs, etc., which in the dynamics of the upsurge can lead to partial experiences of workers control directly challenging the principle of profit as the goal of production.

— Attempts to considerably enlarge the scope and quality of public services (right to free, quality health care and education, right to housing, retirement at sixty at 75 percent pay, etc.); demands for the quantitative and qualitative expansion of child care and free services, allowing the socialization of domestic duties.

These mobilizations and the goals they set themselves are dealing hard blows to the bosses' strategy, which is to increase the rate of surplus value, above all through increasing the rate of exploitation, so as to counteract the decline in the average rate of profit.

This general crisis of class relations had already begun to manifest itself before the turning point in the world economic situation, but this turn has deepened it considerably. This social and political crisis, which began in 1968, continues, and on the whole will continue, to deepen. Increasingly this confrontation will tend to take place directly between the two fundamental classes. Now more than ever, the bourgeoisie is forced to mount an attack on the working class in order to control the trend of wages and cut employment.

But today it must pursue this objective in the framework of a relationship of forces that has changed in favor of the

working class on a world scale and specifically in the European capitalist countries. It faces a European proletariat that through the entire preceding period has not suffered any very serious or lasting defeats, and that entered this phase, as a consequence of a fifteen-year decline in the industrial reserve army, with its forces intact, with a higher level of unionization, and with an increased confidence in its own forces.

The crisis in capitalist relations of production has become a crisis of bourgeois relationships as a whole. At the beginning, it was expressed with increasing acuteness by the student youth (college student and high-school revolts); then it grew into a crisis of all social relations (education, mass media, church, etc.) and of the patriarchal institutions and values that make up the bourgeois order (crisis of the family, radicalization of women in response to their oppression). As it penetrated into the working class, through the intermediary in particular of young workers and apprentices, this crisis in bourgeois social relationships in turn aggravated the crisis in the capitalist relations of production.

*Under these conditions, a rapid and crushing defeat of the working class is practically excluded. We must therefore be prepared for years of intense social struggles, with ups and downs but with continuing possibilities for revolutionary upsurges, depending on the advances scored in raising class consciousness and strengthening the revolutionary Marxist organization.*

### 3. The Political Crisis of the Bourgeoisie

Confronted with a worsening of the economic situation and social contradictions, the bourgeois political system has been, and is continuing to be, shaken by a crisis no less deep—crises in the bourgeois leadership teams; crises of political alternatives; crises of the bourgeois political parties; crises of the entire governmental system of the bourgeois state. The most striking signs of this crisis have been the spectacular fall of de Gaulle, the semiparalysis of successive governments in Italy and Great Britain, and the persistent tension in West Germany—long the most stable and the most depoliticized country of postwar capitalist Europe. The increasingly pronounced crisis of the Franco regime fits into this same context.

The basic choice with which the bourgeoisies in capitalist Europe have been confronted is between a "co-opting" reformism (which tries to break down the combativity of the workers through concessions that strengthen the mechanisms of conciliation and class collaboration) and an intensification of repression (involv-

ing a frontal attack on working-class freedoms, especially on the right to strike and on free collective bargaining). Both variants, moreover, accentuate the decadence of classic bourgeois parliamentary democracy, continue shifting the bourgeois state's center of gravity toward an executive that increasingly stands outside of any control, thus highlighting the inherent tendency of monopoly capitalism toward setting up a strong state, and reflect the bourgeoisie's desire to hamstring the trade-union movement.

Nonetheless, neither this reinforcement of the executive nor the variant of frontally attacking some working-class rights should be confused with a new rise of fascism. The main characteristics that distinguish fascism from other forms of bourgeois government are on the one hand the total destruction of all workers organizations (including the reformist organizations), and on the other hand a mass mobilization of frenzied and pauperized petty bourgeois, greatly extending the striking power of the classical repressive apparatus. Today the objective con-

ditions for a new rise of fascism have not yet come about in capitalist Europe. The workers movement, especially in Germany, has paid too dearly for confusion in evaluating different forms of rule by capital to accept any loose talk about a "creeping fascization" of the regime. It would be wrong, however, to underestimate the increased strength of fascist-like organizations that can serve as the foot soldiers of the classic right wing.

The slowdown in economic growth, and especially the stepping up of interimperialist competition, have undermined the preconditions for implementing a "reformist" policy. What the bourgeoisie has in fact been able to offer in the form of "joint worker-boss management," "profit sharing," "payment in stocks," and other reforms has been too meager to make a serious dent in the proletariat's fighting spirit. The failure of bourgeois "reformism" is clearest in Italy: Reforms that are more urgent than ever, even from the standpoint of rationalizing the operation of the capitalist economy, could not be implemented during an entire decade under the aegis of the "center left." Nor will they be achieved in the present stage despite the renewed liberalizing gestures of a very large sector of the bourgeoisie and the heightened desire for collaboration on the part of the PCI [Italian Communist party] and the unions, as well as the PSI [Italian Socialist party]. In Great Britain, the pronounced decline of imperialist economic strength obliges the bourgeoisie to call into question even some of the main reforms granted during the two preceding decades, and even some of the conquests of a preceding epoch.

But at the same time, the relationship of forces between the classes remains such that an overall repressive assault has practically no chance of succeeding. The forces of the workers movement, which for the most part remain intact, would respond to such an overall assault on a scale that the bourgeoisie takes well into account and that it correctly fears. As a result of this fear, for the moment it rejects as too dangerous any attempt to set up an openly dictatorial regime on the Greek model.

In these circumstances, the most probable political perspective remains a prolonged period of instability, with successive bourgeois teams wearing themselves out in "center right" or "center left" governmental formulas, but without either of the two contending camps being able to firmly impose its will. The proletariat is still being hamstrung by its crisis of leadership, by the paralyzing role of the traditional leaderships. At the same time, the bourgeoisie remains too weak to impose a radical solution. In France and Italy, where the rise of workers struggles reached a peak in 1968 and 1969, the bourgeoisie has been able temporarily to resume the initiative, without, however,

being able to impose its fundamental solutions. The fighting potential of the proletariat in these countries remains intact.

To be sure, such an unstable equilibrium cannot go on indefinitely. In the absence of a victorious counteroffensive by the bourgeoisie, the very continuation of the social crisis contributes toward solving the crisis of leadership in the proletariat. On the other hand, the continuation of this crisis of leadership, resulting in successive waves of struggles that fail to change anything in the area of state power, ends up tiring out the working masses and lowering their capacity for mobilization, and thus could create favorable conditions for a bourgeois initiative to inflict a severe defeat on the proletariat.

Such a severe defeat could take different forms according to the country involved, ranging from the establishment of military dictatorships to a radical modification of the relationship of forces between classes such as to exclude, for an entire period, any new upsurge in the objectively anticapitalist struggles of the 1968-73 type while not formally abolishing the bourgeois democracy or forcing underground the mass organizations of the workers movement. The important point is to understand that the bourgeois "solution" to the current sociopolitical crisis would have to measure up to the crisis itself; it could not be limited to a gradual imperceptible modification of the political atmosphere, but would have to involve a radical change in the relationship of forces between classes. This does not necessarily imply the establishment of a dictatorial regime along with destruction of the organized workers movement, but it does imply, of course, a qualitative reinforcement of the bourgeoisie's apparatus and capacity of repression, and a radical drop in worker combativity.

The proletariat will not necessarily benefit from a prolonging of the present crisis and of the relative equilibrium of opposing forces. If a decisive revolutionary breakthrough does not occur, the bourgeoisie will finally impose *its* solution. But the fact that we are only at the beginning of the deepening social crisis, that neither the extent of unemployment nor the political level of the workers struggles yet confronts the bourgeoisie with an immediate question of life or death, allows us to envisage a period spread out over several years before the decisive battles are fought. However, in some countries the development of a serious political crisis in these conditions could precipitate tests of strength with important repercussions on a continental scale.

A specific manifestation of the crisis of European bourgeois leadership can be seen in their political attitude toward the European question. The extension and interpenetration of capitalist enterprises throughout the area (a tendency which the

entrance of Great Britain, Denmark, and Ireland into the EEC can only reinforce), and the need to compete with American and Japanese imperialism, would tend to favor a strengthening of European supranational structures of a pre-state nature — European currency, common industrial policy, common executive, autonomous European nuclear striking force, etc. But since each concrete step in this direction involves sacrifices for this or that "national" bourgeoisie, and since the room for maneuver on an international and national scale is dwindling as a result of intensifying interimperialist contradictions and social contradictions, the hesitations and political divisions within the European bourgeoisie grow as the hour of decision approaches.

The inability of the Spanish bourgeoisie to "liberalize" its political structures, however slightly—its feeling that it must perpetuate Francoism even without Franco—is a sign of the explosive character of social contradictions in the Iberian peninsula. And at the same time it is a reflection of the political crisis within the European bourgeoisie: It deprives the bourgeoisie any means of averting the development of a revolutionary situation in the southwest of the continent—a sit-

uation whose subjective repercussions, reinforced by the presence of large numbers of emigre Spanish workers in other countries, could cause it to spread rapidly throughout Europe as a whole.

The resumption of the centuries-old struggle of the Irish people for unity and independence coincides with a sharpened crisis of British imperialism and in turn accentuates this crisis. The tendency has been to move rapidly toward higher forms of struggle as well as mobilizing and organizing the vanguard of the masses, above all in Northern Ireland, where dual power existed *de facto* for several months, forcing the imperialists to resort to massive repression.

In Greece, the mass movements of 1973, marked by the emergence of new vanguards, shook the military dictatorship established in 1967. They revealed the ephemeral character of any supposed "liberalization" maneuver and the bourgeoisie's incapacity to extricate itself from its crisis. This crisis, far from lessening, has tended to deepen on the political and social levels as well as the economic level. It is significant that even if these movements were essentially supported by the students, they were characterized at the same time by the participation of increasing sectors of the workers vanguard.

#### 4. The Crisis of the Traditional Organizations of the Working Class

Alongside the political crisis of the bourgeoisie, the traditional workers movement has also gone through a deep crisis in the course of the past few years. In part, this has the same roots as the crisis of the instruments of capitalist domination: the aggravation of the social contradictions that undermine the credibility of the reformist orientations of the Socialist parties and the neoreformist orientations of the Communist parties; the new rise in workers struggles, which are beginning to get out of the control of the traditional leaderships of the workers movement; and the general crisis of bourgeois social relations (especially capitalist relations of production), which has freed powerful anticapitalist energies expressed above all in the rise of the new vanguards. At the same time the crisis of the traditional workers organizations interlocks with the crisis of Stalinism, which—after the ebbs and flows following the twentieth congress of the CPSU, the crushing of the Hungarian revolution, the eruption of the Sino-Soviet conflict, and the fall of Khrushchev—has undergone a new important leap with the Czechoslovak crisis, the revolt of the Polish workers, and the political crisis that the Chinese leadership is going through.

The new rise of workers struggles and the radicalization of a sizable vanguard of the working class are coming more

clearly into conflict with two phenomena, whose significance must be analyzed without underestimating their limitations—the increasing integration of the Social Democracy into the bourgeois state apparatus on the one hand, and a process of Social Democratization of the Communist parties on the other.

During the past decade, an important shift has taken place within the Social Democratic parties in the relative weight of the representatives of the bureaucracy of the workers organizations as such, in respect to the representatives of the bureaucracy of the bourgeois state. The latter have gained considerably in strength in relation to the former. We have even witnessed high Social Democratic state functionaries beginning to slide into leading positions in private capitalist trusts. These processes have unquestionably promoted the eruption of conflicts between Social Democratic leaders trying to express the "general interest" (that is, the interest of the bourgeoisie) and the unions, including the trade-union bureaucrats, who have traditionally been the most solid props of the Social Democracy.

The CPs have in general increased their drift to the right, adopting strategies and tactics that align them with the trade-union bureaucracy (or its "left" wing) in countries where the Social Democracy has



hegemony and orient them completely toward an electoralist and neoreformist strategy in the countries where they themselves have hegemony. Whatever the complex and contradictory pressures from the ranks for such a turn, when the leaderships of these CPs "dissociated" themselves from the Kremlin at the time of the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the armies of the Soviet bureaucracy, they did so under pressure from the Social Democrats, ushering in a new stage in this process of Social Democratization.

Still, the conclusion to be drawn from these two phenomena is not that the Social Democratic parties have become bourgeois parties or that the CPs have become Social Democratic parties. The Social Democracy remains dependent—in certain countries like West Germany and Belgium, more than ever dependent—upon its working-class electoral base. This is an electoral base that, unlike that of the Democratic party in the United States, expresses an elementary class reflex through its vote, that is, the determination to vote for a working-class party instead of voting for a bourgeois party. The class nature of these parties is also reflected in their links with the trade-union movement. The counterrevolutionary and procapitalist nature of the policy of the leaders of these countries (a policy that dates from neither today nor yesterday, but that has been a constant phenomenon for almost sixty years) changes nothing in this objective fact, any more than the objective neoreformism of the CPs allows them to definitively cut the cord that ties them to Moscow.

The crisis in the traditional organizations of the workers movement is not developing in a straight line. If it is sometimes marked by not unimportant splits (e.g., the *Manifesto* group in Italy), it can also be expressed through the reappearance of broader centrist tendencies within the traditional parties (the Jusos in West Germany). It can be accompanied both by a temporary sag in the electoral strength of these parties (Belgium and Great Britain, 1970, for the Social Democracy) and by a new electoral thrust—especially when these parties appear to newly politicized layers to be a "lesser evil" in comparison with the corrupt and bankrupt bourgeois parties. But the main characteristics of this crisis remain no less salient in all the countries where the resumption of workers struggles and the youth radicalization have assumed sufficient scope:

a. The traditional reformist policy is increasingly losing credibility despite the attempts to present reformist operations as the beginning of "the transition to socialism."

b. The common ground in the orientation of the Social Democrats and the CPs—namely the electoralist and parlia-

mentary road—is being increasingly challenged objectively by broad masses, who are rediscovering direct, extraparliamentary action as the main instrument for defending their interests, even if they continue to vote for the traditional parties.

c. The traditional leaderships are no longer successful in winning over very large sectors of the young workers to their policy and concepts, nor in exercising a dominant role in the student movement, which is largely dominated in most cases by far-left organizations and groups.

d. The fact that the traditional political organizations become compromised by accepting anti-working-class and antiunion measures (which they are inclined to make especially when they are in the government, but also when they are in the opposition; note the hardening of the French Communist party's apparatus against the militant strikes in France), together with the absence of mass revolutionary parties, creates a political vacuum to the left of the traditionally dominant working-class political formations (the CP in France, Italy, and Spain; the Social Democracy in other countries of capitalist Europe). A section of the trade-union movement has tended to fill this vacuum, at least temporarily, by offering an alternative channel for the most radicalized sector of the working class. This was especially true of the trade-union "left" in Great Britain in 1970-71, of the Italian unions in 1969-71, partially true of the left wing of the Belgian unions, of the CFDT in France, and of the Dutch unions. Thus, the identification between the unions and the traditional workers parties is beginning to blur. A certain room for independent maneuver on the part of the unions is reappearing. And we are seeing *the beginning of a recomposition of the organ-*

*ized workers movement as a whole.* This process can even go so far as to impel a wing of the unions to assume clearly political tasks, as for example in Great Britain with the struggle against the anti-strike legislation first of Wilson and then of Heath, or the "struggle for reforms" in Italy in 1970-71.

We must not lose sight of the conjunctural nature of this evolution. We must especially not deduce from it that we are witnessing a full, so to speak spontaneous, confluence of the economic struggles and the political struggles of the proletariat. The unions' room for independent maneuver remains limited by the bureaucratic nature of their leadership, including the left wing of this leadership, which has little inclination to undertake a general struggle against the capitalist regime. The nature of the period not only imparts an objectively political thrust to mass struggles but also carries with it an urgent need to raise the question of political power—a question that the unions are loath to raise. Still less now than in the past can unionism, including the syndicalist variety, substitute for building a revolutionary party.

On the other hand, it is clear that the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies cannot remain passive in the face of this beginning recomposition of the organized workers movement, which threatens to undermine their hegemony over the proletariat—the basis for all their maneuvers and all their privileges. Therefore, the possibility remains for abrupt adaptations to the radicalization of large sections of the proletariat in an attempt to regain control where it has been lost and to channel the mass movement toward goals that are compatible with the fundamentally reformist strategy of these parties.

## 5. The Appearance of a New Vanguard

The result of all the above changes is a shift in the objective and subjective situation for building revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe that is of decisive and immediate importance for revolutionists. *A new vanguard of mass proportions has appeared*, by and large eluding the control of the bureaucratic leaderships of the traditional workers organizations. This development marks the beginning of a change in the historical relationship of forces between the bureaucracies of the traditional organizations and the revolutionary vanguard that resulted from the defeats of the world revolution during the 1920s and 1930s and from the bureaucratic degeneration of the USSR and the Communist International. The development of a new vanguard has occurred on a scale quantitatively and qualitatively

different from everything that happened in the decades following the crisis of 1918-23. It usually arose on the basis of solidarity and identification with the colonial revolution (Cuba, Vietnam), under the influence of the heightened worldwide crisis of imperialism and Stalinism. That is why it developed on an especially broad scale among the radicalized youth (university students, high-school students, apprentices). But as the domestic social crisis of the capitalist countries of Europe has worsened—beginning especially with the May 1968 revolutionary crisis in France—the workers component has become predominant within the new vanguard, reorienting it toward workers struggles.

Even after the bureaucratic degeneration of the Communist parties, all those

who wanted to engage in a radical fight against capitalism continued to gravitate politically around the bureaucratic mass parties of the workers movement. The main characteristic of the new situation is the fact that a growing number of these anticapitalist militants are no longer oriented primarily by these parties, are ready to act outside the control of the leaders of these parties, and are capable of engaging in mass actions, without necessarily adhering to the full revolutionary Marxist program or the revolutionary Marxist organization.

The new rise of workers struggles and the scope assumed by the clearly anticapitalist demands these have raised, as well as the growing differentiation within the union movement that is impelling layers of the working class out of the control of the bureaucratic apparatuses (as for instance in the wildcat strikes and hard-fought local strikes that are taking place despite the excommunications of the bureaucratic leadership), are becoming the decisive factors in determining the orientation of the new vanguard. And, progressively, they are bringing about a change in its composition (although this process is still only on a very modest scale in countries like West Germany, the Scandinavian states, the Netherlands, etc.). What chiefly distinguishes this new vanguard from the one we have known throughout the preceding decades is its ability to intervene in the class struggle in its own right, to take political initiatives, and here and there to take the leadership of mass workers struggles.

Within the proletariat, the broad vanguard is not identical with the totality of the militant workers who stand in the front line of the struggles but have either not yet understood the need for challenging the capitalist system as a whole, or are not yet ready to act politically outside the control of the traditional bureaucratic leaderships of the workers movement. As the struggles spread and the working masses radicalize, a growing number of militant workers tend to act as an integral part of the new mass vanguard, which is far from being a stable and fixed phenomenon. It must be emphasized, furthermore, that the radicalization process of this worker component of the mass vanguard does not imply in any way a lessening of the specific weight of the union structures.

Finally, the mass vanguard is not limited to the far-left political groups, even though these groups largely recruit from it. The existence and growth of these groups testifies to the scope of this phenomenon of the mass vanguard. We should consider them in part as the transitional political expression of the mass vanguard's confused break with the politics of the traditional bureaucratic leaderships.

In order to define more clearly the na-

ture and limitations of this new mass vanguard, we must combat two illusions. The first illusion is that this new vanguard, as a whole, is *revolutionary*. The second is that the appearance of this vanguard means a fundamental change in the relationship of forces in the workers movement and the working class.

Because of its very origins, the new mass vanguard harbors within it numerous elements with a petty-bourgeois consciousness and ideology who, depending on the circumstances and the relationship of forces with the revolutionary Marxist organization, can at best play a secondary role in the unfolding of the struggles, or at worst profoundly distort and pervert the forms and the results of these struggles. This vanguard, after all, was born out of a movement of spontaneous revolt against capitalist society and against the adaptation of the bureaucratic leaderships of the workers movement to this society.

This spontaneous revolt can appear in extremely varied spheres. The milieu's own struggles play an important but not exclusive role: Even within the working class, the crisis in the bourgeois relationships in general constitutes a powerful factor of radicalization and differentiation of the vanguard. The diversity of the forms taken by these ruptures with the practice of the bureaucratic leaderships makes any overall political characterization of the mass vanguard one-sided. Spontaneously, as a consequence of its social composition as well as the very structures of the workers movement, it oscillates between ultra-leftism and centrism.

However, the road from spontaneous

revolt to effective struggle for socialist revolution can be a long one. Some of the participants in this vanguard, who remain prisoners of spontaneism, sectarianism, ultraleftist infantilism, apolitical workerism, or primitive syndicalism, will never travel this distance. Others will go it only on the condition that the revolutionary Marxist organization acquires a decisive political weight within the vanguard, remaining always equal to the tasks confronting it.

While this vanguard has attained a mass character and is for the first time in a long period becoming capable of effective action, it is no less true that it still remains very much a minority within the mass movement, and even more so within the organized workers movement. The essential task of the vanguard is not to constantly measure its strength against the masses still following the traditional leaderships but to change the relationship of forces in the mass movement through its ability to impel masses much broader than those consistently associated with it into action that overflows the channels of bureaucratic control. Unless it goes through the necessary apprenticeship in learning the tactics for exploiting this capacity, even a vanguard of 50,000 or 100,000 individuals can become isolated and disoriented in a mass movement of millions of workers. It can be bypassed by events, be buffeted about by partial and temporary setbacks, and vacillate impressionistically between an opportunistic adaptation to the leaders of the traditional workers movement and sectarian abstentionism and defeatism.

## 6. The Central Task

From these five changes in the objective and subjective conditions for building revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe, we have drawn, and continue to draw, the conclusion that *the central task for revolutionary Marxists in the stage that opened in 1967-68 is to win hegemony within the new mass vanguard—putting emphasis on strengthening ourselves within the workers component of this vanguard—in order to build qualitatively stronger revolutionary organizations than in the preceding stage*, to make the transition from revolutionary propaganda groups to revolutionary political organizations beginning to sink roots into the proletariat.

Political hegemony implies that the revolutionary Marxist organization, through its propaganda, its campaigns, and its initiatives, appears as a pole of reference for this broad vanguard, even if a large part of it is not yet directly organized by

our movement.

It is illusory, in fact, to think that propaganda groups can transform themselves in one leap into revolutionary parties already possessing decisive political influence over a section of the proletariat—at least in countries like those of capitalist Europe, where there is a long-established workers movement with a bureaucratic apparatus exerting tremendous weight among the working masses. The masses do not take their orientation in the first instance from programs, platforms, or ideas. Their orientation is determined by their immediate needs and the tools for waging effective struggles that are available to meet these needs.

Only when the revolutionary organizations have demonstrated not only the lucidity and correctness of their program but also their effectiveness in action (if only on a limited scale) will the defeats brought on by the opportunism of the traditional leaderships and the antibureaucratic re-



volts inspired in turn by these setbacks result in a massive influx into our organizations. The stage that leads from the essentially propagandistic group to the revolutionary party, in the scientific sense of the term, is therefore one in which a revolutionary organization begins to sink roots in the class, that is, to achieve through its intervention in the class struggle a relationship of forces enabling it to project itself as a credible alternate leadership for the workers movement, beginning with a vanguard sector of the working class.

Setting our main goal as winning political hegemony within the mass vanguard follows from the overall analysis of the present stage of the class struggle in capitalist Europe:

a. Unless the revolutionary left achieves such hegemony, there is a danger that the strength of the mass vanguard will be dissipated.

b. Unless this mass vanguard is crystallized into a serious and powerful revolutionary Marxist organization, its potential for influencing broader masses is in danger of being neutralized and lost.

c. Unless this potential of the vanguard to influence greater masses makes itself felt with increasing forcefulness, the upsurge in workers struggles will arrive at a dead end, which in the long run will facilitate a counteroffensive by the bourgeoisie.

It is no easy task for revolutionary Marxists to win hegemony within this new mass vanguard. Such an objective can be achieved neither by adapting opportunistically to the lowest common denominator of this politically disparate vanguard, nor by an attempt (in the final analysis, no less opportunistic) to make a "synthesis" out of the various currents running through it.

Achieving this objective requires:

1. *Continuing education of the vanguard* by means of a polemic with the various far-left groups on revolutionary strategy, the Transitional Program, the unity of the working class, class alliances, and the construction of the revolutionary party. Not one of these questions is as yet clearly understood by this broad vanguard as a whole.

2. *A capacity on the part of the revolutionary Marxist organizations to take political initiatives outflanking the course of the reformists.* These initiatives are aimed at mobilizing not only this broad vanguard but along with it a part of the worker activists and even a part of the masses. These initiatives allow the broad vanguard to be educated in the perspective of a generalized confrontation with the bourgeois state. And they serve to free the militant activists from the grip of reformism.

3. *A capacity on the part of the revolutionary Marxist organizations to offer this broad workers vanguard a framework for continuing mass work* that will enable it both to demonstrate real strength on a national scale vis-a-vis the reformists through central campaigns, such as support for workers struggles, anti-imperialist mobilizations (Indochina, Chile), antimilitarist mobilizations, etc., and to challenge the dominance of the reformists over the economic struggles in the plants through continuing trade-union work designed to build a class-struggle trade-union tendency and through an ability to mobilize some independent actions within the plants.

This takes account of the new forms of organization within the plants, whose character varies according to their specific objectives and also the extent of trade-union organization and the greater or lesser dominance of the reformists over the trade-union apparatus.

*In all cases, however, our aim is:*

1. To bring about the emergence, during periods of heightened struggle, of genuine structures of workers democracy (general assemblies with full power, elected strike committees, shop stewards).

2. To advance toward establishing permanent class-struggle tendencies in the trade unions but in no way whatever to build permanent struggle committees, or small, sectarian red trade unions, or centrist political trade-union groups.

3. To build party sympathizer groups in the plants with the goal of bringing the best militants into the revolutionary Marxist organization.

4. *To develop the capacity to master the dialectic of sectors of intervention*, which depends on the growth of the revolutionary Marxist far left and on the relationship of forces between it and the traditional parties, and also on the size of the broad workers vanguard, particularly in relation to the youth vanguard. That is to say, to master the dialectical connections and the allocation of forces

— between central political actions and diversified local political actions;

— between work in the youth sector and in the worker sector;

— between the periphery and the heart of the workers movement;

— between community work and plant work.

The problem is thus posed differently depending on the particular country and on the particular stage achieved in building the organization.

5. *This activity as a whole is aimed at transforming this vanguard into an adequate instrument for restructuring the organized workers movement.* It thus assumes a specific, unity tactic toward the

traditional workers parties. While in fact our organizations are as a rule still too small to be able to apply the united-front tactic as a central tactic, through the initiatives and campaigns we propose this broad vanguard can be mobilized and, with it, a section of the militant workers. Thanks to the relationship of forces thus established, the traditional workers parties can be forced to accept unity in action. Through such conjunctural unity in action, we aim to draw in the masses and wherever possible to outflank the reformist apparatus. In the course of this process of "initiatives—unity in action—outflanking," we aim to educate the broad vanguard as to the strategic necessity of working-class unity and of rejecting every sectarian deviation and to wrest militant workers from the reformist hegemony—if not to win them permanently to revolutionary Marxism, at least to lead them to a lasting political break with reformism.

This unity tactic toward the workers movement must be complemented by a specific tactic toward the organizations of the far left designed both to achieve the basis for mass initiatives by uniting the far-left organizations on certain questions and to combat in practice, in forms of action, slogans, etc., their sectarian deviations, particularly those of an ultra-left character.

Here again, this unity tactic toward the other far-left organizations varies according to the relationship of forces between the revolutionary Marxist organization and the other far-left organizations, between the far left and the workers parties, between the far left and the broad vanguard. It thus necessarily differs from country to country and depends on the stages of the construction of the revolutionary Marxist organization.

The upheavals of 1967-68 provided an exceptional opportunity for a breakthrough by a new revolutionary leadership of the European proletariat—the biggest opportunity since 1917-23. But it will not last indefinitely. Within a finite period of time we must assemble all the conditions necessary for a qualitative strengthening of the revolutionary Marxist organizations, or else this historic opportunity will be lost.

We reject any spontaneist illusion to the effect that the scope of the present crisis of capitalism and Stalinism—which is, in fact, unprecedented—could, through the pressure of the masses, force the leaders of the trade-union bureaucracy, the leaders of the SPs and the CPs, to lead a socialist revolution in Europe to a successful conclusion. If a new revolutionary leadership is not built in the time remaining to us, after successive waves of mass struggles (some of which will certainly surpass even May '68 in France), the European proletariat will experience new and terrible defeats of historic scope.

## II. Concrete Forms and Content of the Revolutionary Perspectives in Capitalist Europe

### 7. Revolutionary Upsurge and Dual Power

The experiences of more than a half century, as well as our economic, social, and political analysis of contemporary European capitalism, make it possible for us to define clearly the revolutionary perspectives of our work. The perspectives can be summed up essentially in two categories of problems: the problems relating to the revolutionary upsurge; and the perspective for the revolutionary struggle for power.

Aside from exceptional cases where bourgeois armies have collapsed as the result of defeat in an imperialist war (e.g., Germany 1918-19), or bourgeois states have completely collapsed owing to defeat and occupation in an imperialist war (Yugoslavia and Greece 1941-44), the upsurges of exceptional mass struggles by the European proletariat during the past half century have exhibited a great number of common features. These characteristics were present equally in the struggles in Germany 1920-23, Italy 1919-21, Great Britain 1925-26, Spain 1931-37, Belgium 1932-35, and France 1934-36 as well as the more recent examples of Italy 1945-48, Belgium 1960-61, Greece 1963-65, France 1968, Italy 1968-69, and Spain at the present moment. They can be listed as follows:

a. Through mass strikes and general strikes, mass struggles on an exceptional scale can completely paralyze not only the economy but even most of the activities of the bourgeois state apparatus. They thus objectively pose the question of state power even when the masses themselves are not conscious of it and are not in fact setting out to overthrow the bourgeois state. Such struggles are manifestations of the crisis of capitalism's decline and agony, of the workers' instinctive attempt to take the leadership of society and rebuild it along the lines of their socialist program.

b. The ripening of the historical conditions for socialist revolution is also revealed by the fact that during these explosions of mass struggle, numerous intermediary petty-bourgeois layers are instinctively drawn by the proletarian struggle, rally around the struggling proletariat, and participate in varying degrees in its struggle.

c. Although these explosions often occur suddenly and unexpectedly, they always take place as the culmination of a phase of radicalizing struggles, marked by the appearance of more militant forms of combat, by violent skirmishes between

part of the working class and its vanguard, on the one hand, and bourgeois society, on the other—that is, the expression of not only a structural but also a conjunctural crisis of bourgeois society.

d. The immediate detonator of these explosions can vary greatly: economic demands (1919-20, 1925-26); acute economic crisis (1923); abrupt change in the economic situation (1960-61); reaction to a violent move by the far right (Spain 1936, Greece 1963); hope for a fundamental political change (June 1936 in France); student revolt (May 1968); monetary crisis; colonial war; defense of rights the workers movement has won (right to strike, trade-union freedom), and so forth. It would be futile to attempt to set up a possible catalog in advance. But what should be emphasized is the fact that the detonator, whatever it is, can only play its role after a whole molecular process has taken place in which the proletariat has radicalized, grown in self-confidence, and lost some of its electoralist illusions, while the social and political "fever temperature" has risen. Unless such a trend has affected a considerable part of the proletariat, no limited explosion, no matter how major, will touch off struggles embracing millions of workers.

e. In the imperialist countries like those of Europe, even a weakened bourgeoisie, even one facing a sharp social and political crisis, normally has many resources it can fall back on to absorb objectively revolutionary explosions as long as the proletariat's level of class consciousness and the breadth (as well as the political ability) of its revolutionary vanguard are not sufficient to prevent it. Such resorts include electoral maneuvers (turning over the government to left coalitions or parties); immediate economic concessions; selective repression, that is, repression concentrated against the vanguard alone or the forces spearheading the mass struggle; or a combination of some or all of these methods. Save for exceptional times of imperialist war and occupation, or an exceptional economic crisis like the one that struck Germany in 1930-33, we have to rule out any notion that the imperialist bourgeoisie will prove incapable of maneuvering or making immediate concessions to the masses. This is an essential difference between the situation in the imper-

ialist countries and that in the colonial and semicolonial countries.

Furthermore, the vast political experience of the European bourgeoisie has taught it that as long as it retains state power and control over the main means of production and exchange, it can rapidly take back any concession granted during a time of acute revolutionary crisis. The main thing is to preserve these two basic instruments of domination intact, that is, to see that the mass movement recedes and breaks up. The rest will flow automatically from this.

f. For these same reasons, any tumultuous upsurge of the mass movement is always limited in time. If victory is not achieved, if at least a point of no return—a break with the bourgeois state and capitalist relations of production—is not reached (that is, if a situation of dual power does not arise), the mass movement is condemned to go into an ebb, which in such cases is synonymous with a return to the "normal" functioning of capitalism.

What distinguishes a situation of dual power is the fact that it constitutes a state of affairs that cannot be absorbed into the normal functioning of bourgeois institutions. As long as this dual power persists, a "return to normal" is impossible. Even in the event of some partial defeats of the mass movement, an overall test of strength between the classes remains inevitable within a more or less short period of time.

It flows from this that *the main task of revolutionists in case of an explosion of tumultuous mass struggles consists in preparing for and ensuring the appearance of organs of dual power that can prevent the rapid absorption of the upsurge by bourgeois state and economic relations, and, as a result, give the class struggle the form of a series of general confrontations, thereby creating the best conditions for a rapid growth of class consciousness and for a rapid strengthening of the revolutionary party.*

The organs of dual power do not necessarily have to grow out of strike committees and take the form of soviet-type councils from the very start—although that remains the most probable variant. They can grow out of spreading experience of workers control or—as during the Spanish civil war—an experience of large-scale arming of the workers. The essential thing is that such bodies be oriented toward forming a centralized structure that would begin to assume real state-type powers.



## 8. Dual Power and Revolutionary Victory

In the industrialized capitalist countries, the main conditions for transforming a revolutionary situation, where organs of dual power have sprung up, into a revolutionary victory are the following:

a. A continuing mobilization—with spontaneous forms and initiatives impossible to specify in advance—of the great majority of the proletariat and working masses around organs of dual power arising to meet the need for solidifying their ranks, for democratically centralized organization, and for protecting the masses and defending them politically, economically, and by force of arms against bourgeois repression.

b. The weakening and increasing paralysis of the organs of power belonging to the bourgeoisie, whose economic and financial means are more and more cut off by the successes of the struggle of the masses in the factories, the banks, the communications media, etc., and whose subordinate and middle-level personnel feel themselves more and more attracted by the revolutionary thrust of the proletariat, or at least neutralized in the decisive test of strength that is building up.

c. The receding and rapid disappearance of all the masses' illusions about halfway solutions, which, under the guise of maintaining dual power or putting together hybrid forms of power, prevent the destruction of the centers of bourgeois power and thus pave the way for the liquidation of the organs of workers power.

d. The existence of a revolutionary leadership capable of projecting and organizing the most daring initiatives on a wide scale, of closely watching the progress the proletariat makes on the way to political maturity, of assembling the technical preconditions for the insurrection as soon as the majority of the workers are firmly won to the idea of taking power, and of creating psychological and political conditions such as to reduce to a minimum the adversary's will and capacity for resistance.

Contrary to what occurs in the less developed capitalist countries, the economic striking force of the proletariat in the industrialized countries is so great, and the social base of the bourgeoisie's power so narrow, that in the event of a revolutionary upsurge involving the great majority of the workers, the repressive apparatus can be partially paralyzed at the outset. This has been confirmed in all the important revolutionary upsurges in capitalist Europe since 1919. It is only by taking advantage of lack of determination, hesitation, and an absence of clear goals on the part of the proletariat that bourgeois reaction can launch a counterattack once the first storm has passed.

The revolutionary Marxist organization's revolutionary education of its own cadres and activists, its revolutionary

propaganda in the vanguard, and its occasional exemplary agitation among broader masses must aim to prevent any such pause from arising—after the mass movement reaches its first peak and surprises and paralyzes the adversary—that would give the enemy camp time to regroup its forces and prepare its countermove. Formation of organs of dual power, which are compelled to arm for the purposes of self-defense, and the seizure by the masses and their representative bodies of as much decisive material "security" as possible (means of communication, infrastructure, banks, industrial plants) constitute the most effective means of limiting the cost of the revolutionary victory, in both material and in human terms.

The idea spread by technocrats of the right as well as the "left" (and sometimes even the far left) to the effect that the technical complexity of economic and social life makes a proletarian revolution in this epoch if not impossible, at least much more difficult, is theoretically false and has in practice been contradicted by the initial experience of most of the revolutionary upsurges in the West in our century. The more complex the economic mechanisms are, the more vulnerable they are to a widespread mass movement. The more the intricate machinery of the state apparatus has been technologically modernized, the more easily it can be paralyzed by mass action. The nerve centers of this machinery—power plants, banks and postal checking offices, telecommunication relay stations, radio and television transmitters, telephone and telegraph exchanges—can be taken over by the workers within minutes and used to advance the revolution. For capitalist reaction to regain them from the workers, or to substitute parallel centers, in order to use them to its own advantage, the bourgeoisie requires political unity and determination, a reserve of fresh forces to be sent in that is unaffected by the revolutionary process, and a readiness to risk a general confrontation with millions of persons—factors nearly always absent at the outset of a mass revolutionary explosion.

Experience has also shown that where intellectual labor is more thoroughly integrated into the productive process by the

third technological revolution currently in progress, the greater is the number of highly skilled scholars, engineers, and technicians who will pass over into the camp of the proletariat as soon as the revolution gets under way and make sure that the bourgeois side holds no "monopoly of knowledge" that can prevent the workers from running the productive apparatus and infrastructure in the interest of the popular masses.

Also completely contradicted by recent experience is the idea that the imperialist bourgeoisie and the reformist and Stalinist bureaucratic apparatuses have drawn the main lessons from the revolutionary explosions of the past, thereby making impossible—or at least more and more difficult—any repeat of these kinds of explosions. Underlying this idea is the view that such explosions are attributable to some "error" committed by the rulers and their servants on the eve of the blow-up—too much rigidity and harshness, according to some; too much cowardice and a tendency to retreat and grant concessions, according to others.

In reality, the explosion of generalized mass struggles has deep objective roots in the social and political crisis confronting the regime. "Errors" by the rulers can contribute toward touching off such explosions only in the sense of determining the precise moment and occasion, not in the sense of actually having caused them, whereas they could have been avoided indefinitely. On the contrary, the preparatory phase of such explosions has in general been characterized by the rulers' successive—or combined—use of *every* possible variant in policy—the repressive as well as the "reformist" variant. One of the factors precisely determining when the explosion will occur is the exhaustion of all these variants and the unconcealable impasse of bourgeois policy that results. The question therefore boils down to this: Is the objective scope of the crisis in capitalist social relations such that *in spite of* all the lessons the bourgeoisie and the reformist apparatuses within the workers movement have learned from the past, similar impasses *have to periodically* reappear? Our answer to this question is an unequivocal Yes. It is based on the main lesson of European history since 1914 and arises from the very nature of the epoch—the epoch of the crisis and decline of the capitalist system.

## 9. The Inadequacies of the Subjective Factor

The failure up to now either to direct the explosions of mass struggles in capitalist Europe into culminating in situations of dual power, or to bring about a revolutionary victory in cases where dual power was achieved (especially Spain 1936-37, and in part Germany

1923 and Italy 1919-20), is not the result, in the final analysis, either of the inherent strength of capitalism or of insufficient combativity on the part of the masses. It is essentially the consequence of *subjective deficiencies*—an insufficient level of class consciousness on the part of the

proletariat and its revolutionary leadership. In the perspective in which revolutionary Marxists in capitalist Europe are presently working, *their main task remains to overcome these deficiencies.*

The concrete character of these subjective deficiencies during the present stage can be described precisely. In spite of the fact that the working class is beginning, in action, to go beyond its bureaucratic apparatuses, it is still having a great deal of difficulty developing forms of struggle and bodies for leading struggles that truly unite its forces and function independently (elected strike committees, general strike assemblies, federation and centralization of strike committees, etc.). It is still only beginning to break loose from the grip of an electoralist and parliamentarist conception of governmental and state power (this is the result both of prevailing bourgeois ideology and of three-quarters of a century of opportunist practices and miseducation by most of the mass workers organizations). During its initial phase, the radicalization of the proletariat results in fragmented struggles and an even more pronounced separation between those minority layers that are ready to engage in "tough" action, and the majority who continue to follow the established apparatus. The working masses, and even part of the vanguard, have not yet made a clear distinction between the objectives of reformist struggles (which can be co-opted and assimilated within the framework of the capitalist system) and truly transitional and anticapitalist objectives (which lead to the creation of organs of dual power). For the great majority of workers, the question of arming the proletariat and of disarming the official and semiofficial repressive apparatus of the bourgeoisie remains an abstract and theoretical problem. They do not really see it as an indispensable necessity on the road to taking power. This gap in the workers' consciousness has been strongly reinforced by the reformist parties abandoning of all antimilitarist propaganda and all education on the need for arming the proletariat.

We reject the two parallel illusions that up to now have derailed or stifled so many revolutionary plans throughout the history of the imperialist countries: the spontaneist, opportunist, and tail-ending illusion, on the one hand; and the sectarian, propagandistic, and ultimatic illusion on the other.

The spontaneists have the illusion that by the very logic of their struggles the working masses will come to remove these subjective deficiencies that in the past have blocked the victory of every revolutionary upsurge in the industrialized capitalist countries. The broadening and the expansion of workers struggles create the *precondition* for a rapid rise in their class consciousness; but they do not automatic-

ally ensure it. There is no reason to suppose that the masses, educated for decades in the spirit of respect for bourgeois parliamentarism and the "electoral road to socialism," will be transformed, as if by magic, into adepts of the Leninist theory of the state simply because they have unleashed a general strike. It is even more improbable that just by occupying factories masses deprived for decades of all class-oriented political education will gain the capacity to put together a coherent program of transitional demands and to wage a successful fight for this program against the maneuvers of the bourgeoisie and the reformist apparatuses.

On the other hand, there is no reason to suppose that simply by increasing its numbers and expanding the circulation of its press a revolutionary vanguard organization can succeed through education and propaganda in raising the level of class consciousness among entire layers—let alone the majority—of the proletariat. Only individuals can absorb ideas through reading or study. The masses absorb ideas only through their experience in struggle. Any revolutionary propaganda divorced from the real experiences of proletarian struggle—on the pretext, say, that these experiences are too elementary, reformist, "purely" economic, and so on—is condemned in advance to remain without effect on the course of history.

By defining the obstacle, it is easier to see how to overcome it. What makes the progressive elimination of the subjective deficiencies of the proletariat *objectively possible* is the opening of a period of struggles taking on broader and broader dimensions, raising more and more social problems of various kinds, able little by little to politicize wider layers of the proletariat and the working masses—

struggles that are unfolding under the conditions of a progressive recomposition of the labor movement (that is, of a shift in the relationship of forces between the vanguard and the traditional leaderships, both within the mass movement and within the traditional organizations themselves). This progressive recomposition need not necessarily coincide, by the way, with a reorganization of the workers movement, although it will inevitably result in touching off at least a partial restructuring.

What makes a solution to the crisis of the subjective factor *subjectively attainable* is for the revolutionary Marxist organization to have a correct overall orientation (programmatically, strategically, and tactically), for it to increase its strength organizationally and politically (that is, to sink roots increasingly in the class), and for its propaganda and agitation to gain increasing credibility by making a general political impact and scoring some initial successes here and there.

There is therefore a dialectical interrelationship between the radicalization and the politicization of workers struggles, the growth of the mass vanguard, the strengthening of the influence of revolutionary Marxists in these struggles, their increasing participation in workers struggles, and the response to their general revolutionary propaganda and to the practical steps they take to multiply experiences of the workers assuming the leadership of their own struggles and to orient them toward transitional demands. It is this dynamic that will smash the barriers on the road to socialism one after the other. This dialectical interrelationship is one of active intervention and programmatic steadfastness, of initiatives in action and mass education; it is one in which revolutionary propaganda leads to action.

## 10. Conditions of Revolutionary Victory

In the light of all these lessons of history, it becomes evident that a prior phase of dual power is of decisive importance to the victory of the proletarian revolution, in order to overcome the double inadequacy of the subjective factor: the insufficient class consciousness of the proletariat and the weakness of its revolutionary leadership. For it is precisely by virtue of the experience of dual power that the majority of the masses in capitalist Europe, still under the domination of reformist traditions and leaderships, can liberate themselves from these bonds and begin to follow a revolutionary Marxist leadership.

This clearly presupposes that:

1. This leadership has to a large extent already passed the threshold of primitive accumulation of cadres, of implantation in the working class, of ability to intervene

in the class struggle and of credibility within the broad vanguard, even before the opening of the phase of dual power.

2. It has prepared its cadres to confront the problems of the struggle to win the majority of the workers and the problems of the conquest of power, and it has carried out systematic propaganda within the broader vanguard in favor of the revolutionary conquest of power and against all reformist, gradualist, electoralist, and putschist illusions.

3. It audaciously applies those parts of the Transitional Program especially suited to wresting control over the majority of the masses from the bureaucratic leaderships of the workers movement—particularly, agitation for the united front.

4. It audaciously broadens its sphere of predominant influence within those social



layers that are potentially allies of the proletariat—the working peasantry, salaried technical personnel, etc.—by means of agitation on appropriate transitional demands.

5. It thoroughly understands the decisive role of centralized revolutionary initiative in carrying through the armed insurrection, supported by the majority of the laboring masses.

It is highly unlikely that the stage of agitation and of action on these tasks will be reached before the emergence of organs of dual power, that is, before the emergence of a revolutionary situation in the

strict sense of the term. In countries where the organized workers movement has very deep traditions and roots in the proletariat, it is excluded that a majority of the proletariat can go over to the revolutionary organization except by passing through such a phase. The belief that, in the absence of an extremely acute revolutionary crisis manifested precisely in the birth of organs of dual power, a new experience with a reformist or "labor" government would suffice to suddenly propel the masses by the hundreds of thousands toward still small revolutionary groups, is a gradualist illusion that must be resolutely rejected.

## 11. Our Central Political Tasks

The main political tasks that the revolutionary Marxist organizations must accomplish during the present stage flow from the whole preceding analysis. The following are the tasks whose achievement will stimulate the dynamic of mass struggles and the growth of class consciousness outlined under point 9—tasks that center on intervention in the working class.

a. Systematically intervene in all agitation among workers, in all strikes and campaigns around limited demands, striving to link up these actions to the general approach outlined in the Transitional Program: to propagandize for a series of demands (essentially around the axis of the demand for workers control) that are increasingly central today and that objectively lead the workers to challenge the authority of the bosses and of the bourgeois state and to create organs of dual power—and to conduct propaganda and agitation around the tasks of workers self-defense.

b. Support the day-to-day struggles of the masses around all immediate demands, even the most modest ones, inasmuch as these struggles lead the workers to seek solutions through direct action and mass initiative, and push them in the direction of broadening and extending their struggles.

c. Popularize and spread so-called qualitative demands that arise out of mass struggles themselves and that either undermine the very foundations of capitalist market economy or serve as a powerful stimulus for solidarity and unity among all layers of the proletariat—i.e., equal wage raises for everybody; no speedup; free, high-quality public services, etc.

d. Press for, spur on, broaden, and—as soon as possible—extend incidences of the workers organizing struggles on their own initiative (democratically elected strike committees, general assemblies of strikers, shop stewards democratically elected and recallable at any time, councils of shop stewards, etc.); these are a great school preparing the workers for the soviet-type

bodies that will spring up. In some circumstances, where the proportion of union members is very high and there is real rank-and-file democracy, it is not excluded that such bodies can coincide with rank-and-file union structures.

e. Conduct a systematic propaganda campaign in the organized workers movement around transitional demands and help in the recomposition of this movement by getting these demands—especially the demands for workers control and workers self-defense—adopted by radicalizing sectors in the trade-union movement and in the traditional workers organizations.

f. Organize propaganda and agitation on the theme of working-class unity, and conduct a systematic struggle for all political and trade-union rights and for the same political and trade-union rights for all who work in the same country, incorporating this struggle into the framework of the working class's overall battle against layoffs, unemployment, etc.; organize solidarity with immigrant workers in struggles against the forms of exploitation and discrimination that specifically affect them; combat in a thoroughgoing way all forms of racism and xenophobia—weapons of divisiveness in the hands of the employers. While it is necessary to support movements of self-organization by immigrant workers and super-exploited communities (living in the ghettos where the bourgeoisie has thrown them) as an expression of a *first step in defense* against racist attacks and the many kinds of discrimination, it is essential to seek to unite them as rapidly as possible with the labor movement as a whole, in order to avoid incidents conducive to deepening the division within the working class.

g. Organize international propaganda around the themes of solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles on the "underdeveloped" continents, solidarity with struggles in other European countries, and solidar-

ity with the antibureaucratic struggles of workers, students, and intellectuals of the bureaucratized workers states.

h. Develop systematic activity opposing all discrimination against women (even in our own ranks and in the workers organizations). Participate in struggles against the oppression of women in such a way as to help expose class cleavages; to advance the development of a clear anti-capitalist consciousness on the part of these women, by taking as the starting point the same themes that awakened them politically; and to emphasize self-organization, direct action, and working-class unity, while seeking to make clear through these struggles the bankruptcy and inadequacies of the reformist and Stalinist leaderships.

i. Educate the workers vanguard and broader layers of workers systematically in a nonelectoralist and nonparliamentarian view of the question of power. Use propaganda for the slogan of a workers government—including, as its concrete form, government by the workers organizations, which may be appropriate during particular moments of the political conjuncture—to project primarily the idea of a *government resulting from mass struggles and action*. The use of this slogan in election campaigns must be strictly limited to specific circumstances depending on particular conjunctures. Otherwise it threatens to run counter to one of the essential goals—the systematic destruction of electoralist illusions and reformist ideology.

j. Take credible steps to initiate unity of action: steps toward immediate unity of the entire vanguard in action around goals for which this unity of action is objectively necessary and possible, despite the various political and ideological differences that run through the vanguard (e.g., the funeral for Pierre Overney in France); propaganda for a united front with the traditional organizations once a threshold in the relationship of forces within the workers movement has been crossed; propaganda for a united front of the traditional organizations when the objective necessity presents itself (struggle against the fascist threat or the threat of a Bonapartist dictatorship; defense of the right to strike and working-class freedoms, defense of major strikes that the bourgeoisie is trying to crush, etc.).

k. Through general propaganda, but also and especially by pointing to actions, incidents, and concrete events that have an obvious pedagogical value, systematically educate the workers vanguard and broader working-class layers on the need for armed self-defense against the violence of big capital, both in its extralegal variety (fascist gangs, private armed forces of the capitalists, secret police forces, strikebreakers) and its "legal" variety (police, riot squads, and armies). Undertake

a campaign of antimilitarist propaganda, even in the bourgeois army itself.

Advocate within the mass organizations the need for workers combat detachments and workers militias.

Instigate vigorous antimilitarist activity, including constant propaganda within the working class and the civilian youth against the bourgeois army, and diffusion of revolutionary propaganda and organization of communist work within the army itself, especially in countries where there is compulsory military service.

1. Systematically popularize our "socialist model"—our conception of socialist democracy, of a state based on workers councils (councils of the working people), of democratically centralized (planned) self-management, of consciously organizing the withering away of the market categories by both gradual means and abrupt leaps forward, and of the con-

scious struggle after the seizure of power for the radical transformation of human relations in all spheres of everyday life, particularly the struggle against the persistence of patriarchal values and institutions. This model can inspire political activity in several ways. It can mobilize people against capitalism, strengthen the vanguard vis-a-vis the reformist and Stalinist apparatuses, and help to preserve the future soviet state against bureaucratic deviations.

*These central political tasks make up a coherent plan. The aim is to make sure, when the next explosion of mass struggle occurs—whether it takes the form of a mass political strike or a general strike involving an occupation of the factories; whatever the occasion and whatever sets it off—that there will be a sufficient number of revolutionary worker cadres in the factories, with enough influence and*

*prestige, and that the revolutionary Marxist organization will be established in enough places and the broadest layers of workers will have acquired enough experience in struggle so as to guarantee that organs of dual power will spring up in the main factories and regions of the country, that they will quickly federate into a single system of dual power (a system of the soviet type, even though its name and its origins might vary considerably), and that the logic of a revolutionary situation can thereby fully unfold on all levels. In other words, we are working in the conviction that every success today in sinking revolutionary Marxist roots in the class, in carrying out propaganda for transitional demands, and in recomposing the workers movement will result a few years from now in a cumulative and qualitative improvement in the conditions that are required for the spread of a system of organs of dual power.*

### III. The Central Problems in Building Sections of the Fourth International in Europe at the Present Stage

#### 12. Three Predominant Orientations in the Building of the Party

The form of party building that is appropriate to the central tasks of the present stage—that of winning hegemony within the mass vanguard and transforming our sections from propaganda groups into organizations on the way to becoming rooted in the proletariat—is specific to this stage. It is neither that of entryism, nor that of growth through the immediate recruitment of broad masses, which can become appropriate at a later stage.

These three different major orientations in party building—viewed in every case in a nonmechanical way, that is, in combination with various transitional forms, such as fractions inside mass organizations, groups for sympathizers and contacts, and so forth—correspond in a fundamental sense to *three objective perspectives on the predominant form of radicalization*. The entryist tactic for building a revolutionary party proceeded from the hypothesis that the process of radicalization—of forming a new mass vanguard—was taking place for the most part within the traditional mass organizations. Such a hypothesis was shown to be correct in capitalist Europe in the period that extended from the early 1950s until the beginning of the 1960s (e.g., Bevanite left, followed by the Cousins tendency, in the British Labour party; Communist Youth and Ingrao tendency in the Italian CP; opposition tendencies and the UEC within the French CP, and Social Democratic left within the SFIO,

giving rise to the PSA and the PSU; Renard tendency in the Belgian workers movement; trade-union left and Communist opposition giving rise in Denmark to the SF; and so forth).

An approach to building the revolutionary party based on expectations of immediately recruiting broad masses assumes that this party already represents in itself a pole of attraction for radicalized workers and intellectuals directly through its propaganda, its agitation, and its activity (including its united-front initiatives), with whole currents breaking away from the traditional organizations to join it. Such a situation, which is by and large the kind in which the Western European Communist parties found themselves at the beginning of the 1920s, around 1934-35, and again following the second world war, does not yet exist for any revolutionary organization on this continent today.

The tactic for building the revolutionary party that underlies our present orientation in capitalist Europe is based on the fact that the process of radicalization is already for the most part unfolding outside the traditional organizations but is not yet taking place around the established pole of a revolutionary Marxist party, and that it also is having important repercussions—which could even become decisive in a quantitative sense during a later stage—inside the traditional

organizations. But the initiatives and general activity of the revolutionary Marxist organizations are already, at the present stage, decisive for the overall success of the process of radicalization at work both outside and inside the traditional organizations.

This tactic is based on a dialectical analysis of the relationship—at first glance, an intricate and even contradictory one—between the vanguard's need for ideological clarification and a regrouping and strengthening of its forces on the one hand, and the rate of progress of that section of the masses who are still largely following the traditional organizations, on the other. We have already emphasized the fundamental fact that today the former process in the long run determines the outcome of the latter as well. There will not be an extensive and decisive split in the traditional organizations without the appearance of credible enough and strong enough poles outside these organizations around which such splits can crystallize.

An important factor must be added here that makes it possible to lessen, and within the not too distant future to resolve, the contradictory nature of the tasks required by the present stage—namely, the fact that in addition to the gradual change in the relationship of forces between the traditional bureaucratic apparatuses and the vanguard, a change is also taking place in the relationship between the traditional parties and the masses who continue to follow them. Today these rela-



tionships are far more complex than they were during the postwar period. The bitter experiences of the past have not been erased from the workers' memory. After the experience of four Labour governments since the war, those British workers who are still convinced that Wilson and Company want to introduce socialism by parliamentary means have dwindled to a very small number.

As for the Italian and the French workers, their doubts about achieving socialism by the parliamentary road extend not only to the SPs but, for growing numbers of workers, to the CPs.

For every capitalist country in Europe a more precise analysis is needed of the specific relationship between the proletar-

ian masses and the traditional workers parties. Such an analysis would, in any case, show that while the gap between the consciousness of the vanguard and the broader masses is still large, it is nonetheless smaller than that indicated by election results, which reflect traditional loyalties and lesser-evil reflexes. There is less of a difference between the ability of the vanguard, on the one hand, and of the broader masses on the other to outflank the reformists and the Khrushchevite neo-reformists in action than there is between the levels of consciousness of these two groups. The tactic for building revolutionary parties suited to the present stage of working-class radicalization must be based on an analysis of these concrete processes.

### 13. The Uneven Development of the Radicalization

Just as we must attach a prime importance to the dialectical relationship between the "radicalization of the vanguard and that of the broader masses," so too the dialectical relationship between the radicalization of different layers of the population ready for revolutionary action takes on a great importance for building our organizations. This dialectical relationship, reflected in the dialectic of sectors of intervention, comprises the following elements:

a. During the initial phase of the present social crisis, the most extensive political radicalization developed within the university and high-school student milieu. Independently of the ups and downs in the university and high-school student movement proper—that is, the movement around the social and material problems specific to this element—a broad and highly politicized vanguard has crystallized among the student youth, oriented toward general political problems, primarily problems of solidarity with the colonial revolution and anti-imperialist movements throughout the world.

After May 1968 and, more generally, after the revival of workers struggles throughout Europe, a fundamental turn has taken place in this milieu everywhere in the world. Today what primarily determines the orientation of university and high-school students is intervening in workers struggles and the perspectives of these struggles. Given the aggravation of the overall crisis in society and in university institutions, it remains both possible and necessary to politicize new generations of student youth through anti-imperialist, anticapitalist, and antibureaucratic propaganda and actions. Demands that have to do with the specific problems of university and high-school students continue to provide a ferment of agitation and organization that can radicalize the less po-

liticized layers. But the capacity of revolutionary Marxists to bring these strata to a general understanding of revolutionary program and to the revolutionary party depends on the overall activity of the revolutionary Marxist organization and its political initiatives, as well as the extent and effectiveness of its intervention in the working class.

In the present situation of recomposition of the workers movement, expansion of the vanguard, and growing politicization, it is becoming easier and easier to move from struggle against the higher-education policy of the government to advancing the revolutionary Marxist program in its entirety.

b. The most important phenomenon is the radicalization of the working class. However, it is developing unevenly. The growing militancy of the class has not been accompanied by a corresponding politicization. Indeed, it is necessary to put in a separate category those militant workers who are able, in times of struggle, to outflank the reformist apparatuses but who, for the most part, are not involved in the revolutionary, anticapitalist struggle in a continuous way. A large number of these militant workers remain under the influence of the reformist apparatuses. A small number, often composed of recently proletarianized young workers, express a powerful sentiment of revolt more than the development of an anticapitalist class consciousness. Only a minority, through struggle, cross over in a lasting way to the new, broad vanguard. The broad workers vanguard itself is, for reasons already mentioned, highly differentiated, breaking down as follows:

(1) Trade-union cadres, leaders of mass struggles recognized as such in the plant, who in action escape from the hold of the bureaucratic leaderships, but who have

been strongly marked by the decades of reformist hegemony and betrayal and who will not at the present stage readily get involved in building the revolutionary Marxist party.

(2) Natural leaders who have been thrown up by the past five years of rising workers struggles—younger militants who are beginning to force their way forward in the plants as an alternative leadership challenging the hegemony of the trade-union bureaucrats and fighting them for leadership of the class struggle.

(3) Finally, young workers and apprentices whose consciousness develops primarily in response to the total social crisis and who are attracted by the far-left groups, by radical forms of action, and by action around such issues as sexual repression, women's liberation, the military, and the educational system.

At the present stage in building our organizations it is primarily the last two categories of militant workers that we can count on organizing in and around the party. In order to accomplish this, we must be able through our political campaigns to do justice to the various anti-imperialist and anticapitalist issues that have the potential of mobilizing, primarily but not exclusively, the mass vanguard, and be able by our intervention in the plants to respond to those needs of the class struggle that are not met by the traditional leaderships (democratic organizational forms of struggle, defense against anti-trade-union repressive measures, solidarity with exemplary struggles, etc.).

c. A deep and massive social change has occurred on the periphery of the working class—the proletarianization of formerly independent middle strata (peasants, shopkeepers, and some intellectual workers and workers in the so-called liberal professions). This transition tends to end—although with some delay—in an ideological alteration of these strata, who in social upheavals become increasingly conscious of the identity of their interests with the historical interests of the proletariat. A similar but more precipitous alteration has occurred among the strata that long since have been condemned to sell their labor power but still outside the sphere of production in the strict sense, and that today, throughout capitalist Europe, are ever more rapidly being unionized and subjectively integrated into the workers movement: teachers, salaried employees, civil servants, etc. The ideological change experienced by these layers does not occur without a temporary strengthening of reformism, centrism, and ultraleftism. Without shifting its principal focuses of activity, the revolutionary Marxist organization must attentively follow the radicalization in these milieus, responding to their immediate concerns, linking their struggles to the general struggle of the

proletariat for transitional, anticapitalist demands, offering them the perspective of its socialist "model," which answers to

their fundamental concerns, and seeking to draw the most advanced elements into its own ranks.

vanguard forming and going into action, and radicalization in the traditional organizations (a classical example in this regard is what has been happening in Great Britain since the start of the struggle against the Tories' antistrike bill). We are convinced that the Social Democratic, Stalinist, and trade-union bureaucracies remain an essential roadblock on the path to the socialist revolution, a roadblock that must be shattered, as the workers' struggles broaden and radicalize, by the pressure of rising class consciousness and the strengthening of the revolutionary Marxist organizations. But we are equally convinced that no mass revolutionary party will see the light of day, that no generalized system of dual-power bodies can arise from these struggles, unless mass currents break off from the traditional organizations on the basis of their own experience. The precise tactic the revolutionary Marxists adopt toward the organized workers movement, which they try to bring broader sections of the new far-left vanguard to accept as the correct tactic, has the objective of stimulating, of facilitating, and of politically orienting this polarization and splitting-off process.

#### 14. Decline of the Centrist Organizations and the Restructuring of the Workers Movement

This restructuring of the European far left coincides with two phenomena that determine its limits and prefigure its dynamic: the rapid decline of the centrist formations that emerged at the beginning of the 1960s (disappearance of the PSIUP, the breakup of the PSU in France and the VS in Denmark, the decline of the PSP in the Netherlands and the SF in Norway) and a reviving influence of the traditional organizations in a not inconsiderable sector of the vanguard (the CP in Great Britain and Italy, and Social Democracy in West Germany and to some extent in Sweden).

The revolutionary Marxists struggling for political hegemony within the new vanguard cannot reject all of this organized far left as simply "ultraleftist." They continue to advocate unity in action by revolutionists for precise objectives and at precise moments (e.g., the funeral of Pierre Overney in France), when these objectives coincide with the real interest of the working class and its vanguard. The revolutionary Marxists are striving, as the political differentiation develops, to become the principal pole of regroupment for the far left on the basis of their political analyses (China, the USSR, permanent revolution, the bureaucratic structure of workers organizations, their attitude toward the unions, transitional demands, the organization of workers struggles, workers democracy, their "model" of socialism, etc.)—which have been confirmed by events—and on the basis of their growing foothold in the working class.

At the same time, the revolutionary Marxists are deliberately trying to bridge the gap that developed in the preceding period between the new far left and the organized workers movement. In this they have a dual objective: to reduce the risks of the far left finding itself isolated in the face of repression by the bourgeois state—which in these circumstances would be largely successful—and to bring the weight of the far left to bear in order to radicalize the organized workers movement that is in the process of recomposition. In this regard, specific united campaigns involving important sections of the organized workers movement and the new far left play a vital role. This aim is best served by campaigns such as those in defense of the Vietnamese revolution, in defense of the victims of repression, in defense of the unions' right to strike and freedom of collective bargaining, and more generally, in defense of democratic rights that have been undermined or openly attacked by the bourgeoisie.

The role of pivot that the revolutionary Marxists are seeking to play between the new far left and the organized workers movement by no means represents a centrist scheme to gain a position in electoral combinations or interbureaucratic agreements, as the PSU and PSIUP have done. To the contrary, it represents a profound understanding of the dialectical interrelationship that dominates the whole present phase: the interaction through manifold intermediary stages between a mass

In the period that began in May 1968—with differences from country to country—the masses have been tending periodically to unleash vast struggles that have overflowed the channels of the traditional organizations, and initiatives by these organizations are no longer indispensable for the spread of such battles. On the other hand, the masses are still not capable of projecting general political solutions, and thus of posing the question of *political power*, independently of these traditional organizations. Our orientation of "initiatives for unity in action plus outflanking the bureaucrats" takes into account these two sides of the reality, thereby avoiding the twin traps of opportunist tail-ending on the Lambertist model, and of sectarian isolation.

### IV. The Type of Organization Most Suited to the Present Capabilities of Revolutionists in Capitalist Europe

#### 15. The Renewal of the European Sections of the Fourth International

In the present stage, starting in 1967-68, the Fourth International began a turn toward independent activity aimed at winning political hegemony in the new vanguard, although some sections generally went about making the shift too slowly and too inflexibly. The turn was carried out under the best circumstances wherever there was a youth organization led by revolutionary Marxists existing inde-

pendently that could "skirt" the problem of a section identified in the eyes of the vanguard with an entryist orientation.

On the other hand, there was a real danger that youth organizations lacking a sufficient number of experienced Trotskyist cadres would let themselves be caught up in a sectarian (or spontaneist) inclination to underestimate and misjudge the organized workers movement and

transmit into the Fourth International itself the pressures coming from a petty-bourgeois social origin that were typical of a large part of the new far left in the initial phase. This danger subsists, moreover, in those countries where this evolution has occurred, or is in the process of occurring, several years behind those where the mass vanguard is the most extensive (France, Italy, Great Britain, Spain).

For these two reasons, the Fourth International opted for a rather rapid fu-



sion between the hybrid youth organizations, which in reality were substituting themselves for the revolutionary Marxist organizations that did not function within the new far left, and the old sections, which had kept a varying—but in most cases appreciable—number of experienced Trotskyist cadres rooted in the organized workers movement. This pragmatic solution has paid off in all cases where it has been applied. It has permitted a considerable increase in our numerical forces, as well as a broadening of our following in the mass vanguard, without the loss of positions or prestige in the organized workers movement—in fact quite to the contrary. It has enabled us to avoid grave political errors—minor ones of course have been inevitable—as a result of a sudden expansion of our forces and our tasks.

The position adopted thus opposes building or long maintaining hybrid revolutionary youth organizations, which, in certain contexts and in view of the relationship of forces, would continue to function as substitutes for adult revolutionary organizations and bear many of the failings typical of the radical student milieu. But this position is by no means opposed in principle to building genuine *youth* organizations that would confine themselves to the specific tasks of youth work on the basis of the sphere of activity, base, and influence already achieved by adult revolutionary organizations. The possibility

for taking a turn to form such a youth organization thus depends strictly on the relationship of forces, that is, the influence that the adult organization has already acquired in the vanguard, its base in the working class, and the number of cadres that can be put at the disposal of the youth organization. As long as it has not reached the critical threshold of forces and roots in the working class necessary for attempting such a project, the adult revolutionary organization will strive to organize sympathizer groupings specifically adapted to the youth, such as were mentioned above.

A special problem is raised by increasing opportunities for members or sympathizers of revolutionary Marxist organizations to win positions of leadership in mass youth organizations that are not specifically revolutionary (trade-union youth groups, high-school and university student organizations, etc.). In each concrete case, it will be necessary to assess these opportunities for investing forces by weighing the gains that could be made (especially in winning a base in the unions and the plants, achieving mass influence on specific issues, and taking part in re-composing the organized workers movement) against the gaps such a deployment threatens to create elsewhere (notably in reducing the number of cadres of leadership ability ready to assume the tasks of leading the organization of directing its open external activities).

## 16. Three Priorities in Employing Our Forces

Every small revolutionary organization faces a multiplying number of tasks that overstrain its strength and grow as it grows. The essential job of any leadership worthy of the name is to set an order of priorities based on general analyses and perspectives and resist temptations to depart from it in an impressionistic way, under the pressure of new opportunities turning up in this or that sector.

Of course, this order of priorities must be periodically reviewed and revised critically in the light of an assessment of the results achieved and possible changes in the objective situation (conditions in the organized workers movement also being an element of the objective situation *from the standpoint of the revolutionary Marxist organizations*). Adhering to these priorities must also be combined with the necessary tactical flexibility so as to take advantage of abrupt turns and major opportunities that suddenly open up. But such flexibility must play the same role as utilizing reserves in military strategy. It cannot substitute for the strategy itself. Otherwise, the basic orientation, the order of priorities, is lost, making way for impressionistic leaps from one "opening" to

another.

From all the preceding analysis, there flow three priorities for employing our forces, which, moreover, are closely linked together:

—primitive accumulation of forces, to make it possible to reach the takeoff point of effective political intervention on a national scale, without which winning hegemony within the mass vanguard is absolutely unachievable.

—making a central political breakthrough that would transform our numerically increased forces into a revolutionary political striking force, and at the same time keeping them from being worn away in disjointed actions or those confined to isolated sectors, which would threaten to result in their being caught up in workerist, tail-ending, spontaneist, and other deviations.

—winning a growing base in the workers and trade-union movement that would enable us to transform the numerically and politically strengthened revolutionary organizations into a permanent factor in raising the level of consciousness and organization of the most militant layers of the workers, into a driving force in preparing the way for future explosions of

mass struggles culminating in a system of dual power.

From these combined priorities—which are not the same as the ones in the preceding period and are not yet those of a struggle to win the control of the broad masses away from the traditional parties—flow the conclusions about the type of organization needed in the present stage, the deployment of our forces, and the way of operating and intervening, etc. These questions are eminently concrete and take on a special character for every section, depending on the point reached in the primitive accumulation of forces, in acquiring the capacity for making a central political breakthrough, in winning a base in the working class. Nonetheless, a certain number of general rules can already be discerned from the experiences of the last four years:

a. In the present stage, in view of the very nature of the mass vanguard and the new far left, no serious progress can be accomplished by means of febrile activism and superficial, primitive agitation. What is absolutely essential is to demonstrate the superiority of our analyses, to defend and illustrate our full program, to stand out as the main center of living Marxism in our time. Anything that is not won on this basis, especially in the student and intellectual milieu, will not be definitively won. From this logically flows the importance of the education of cadres and theoretical and political elaboration on a high level.

b. The vanguard does not recognize, has never recognized, and will never recognize self-proclaimed "new revolutionary leaderships." This status must be *won* by the overall activity of the organization. In this regard, it is vital not to let ourselves be deceived, and to distinguish carefully between the influence and prestige that can be won by revolutionary Marxist militants *in a specific milieu* in the mass movement on the basis of their individual talents and leadership abilities, and the influence of the revolutionary Marxist organization as such on sections of the working class on the basis of the organization's full program. This second kind of influence is by no means the result of the former, although, among other factors, the respect won by individuals is an essential element in winning general political influence. The most striking example of this distinction is presented by the Communist party of Great Britain. During the last twenty years, this party has seen thousands of its members win dominant positions in the lower echelons of the trade unions (enabling them to lead major struggles in the last three years), while its political influence on the British working class is without doubt at the lowest point since 1940.

Revolutionary Marxist organizations the size of the present sections of the

Fourth International cannot hope to win a general political following in the working class as a whole in one fell swoop. But they can, after reaching a certain threshold, win a political following among a layer of young vanguard workers by means of two tools that must be used as much as possible in the present stage: (1) Organizing national political campaigns on carefully chosen issues that correspond to the concerns of the vanguard, that find an echo in mass struggles by expressing the objective needs of these struggles, and that offer a chance for demonstrating a capacity for effective initiative, even if still modest, by our sections; (2) our sections' ability to centralize their forces on a regional and national level in order to break the wall of silence and indifference surrounding certain exemplary workers struggles, wildcat actions, and to start off effective solidarity movements.

c. The presence within the working class, in the plants and in the unions,

## 17. Centralized Leadership and Autonomy of Activity

The priorities that flow from the whole preceding analysis imply a certain type of revolutionary organization, not just as regards the hierarchy of tasks but as regards the structure of the organization itself.

More than ever the political and organizational strength, the stability and continuity, of the leadership are decisive in successfully carrying out the tasks of the present stage. Without this type of leadership, neither a choice of priorities, nor a correct analysis of the objective situation and its tendencies of evolution, nor a correct deployment of our forces can be achieved. Without the presence of such a central leadership, a sudden numerical growth, the influx of a large number of young militants, would rapidly lead to the development of regionalist and localist tendencies, which would result in grave political errors arising out of incorrect generalizations from particular situations or tendencies. This would also lead to grave political crises, since the need for high-level centralized political elaboration would be felt by all revolutionary militants in connection with the objective tasks of the present stage themselves.

Creating and strengthening such leaderships, for all our sections, therefore takes a top priority, preceding all others. What needs to be stressed is not a purely administrative centralization but political centralization of the Leninist type, which would make it possible to unify the experience of the entire organization, to test the correctness of its analysis in the light of practical experience

of thousands of elements that have an oppositionist attitude toward the traditional organizations and can be drawn into important struggles is confirmed by all the experience of recent years. But these workers are scattered, isolated from one another, often disillusioned by their experiences in new organizations into which they have let themselves be drawn unthinkingly, almost always under the pressure of the threat of repression from the bosses and the trade-union bureaucracy. It is illusory to think that we can absorb these people into our sections, in one stroke. Individual cases aside, they will only become a social base for revolutionary Marxist organizations to the extent that these organizations demonstrate their political and organizational seriousness. And such seriousness involves, in addition to the tasks mentioned above, *regular, persistent, long-term intervention in the plants and unions regardless of the immediate results and regardless of the ups and downs in the class struggle.*

nationally and internationally. This in turn would make it possible to concentrate forces at the right time in the most opportune sector, that is, where the effectiveness of a given number of activists would be multiplied. Even the individual effectiveness of these activists, moreover, would be greatly reduced by the absence of a centralized leadership and discipline.

Such a central political leadership needs a minimum national apparatus in order to play its role both within the organization and in the working masses. It must reach out through a chain of regional and local relays, through secondary leaderships already formed or in formation. It must have a central press with a minimum readership and material and financial base (a central print shop and regional apparatuses) that would make it possible to intervene rapidly into strikes and various mass movements and support in practice the national campaigns of the organization.

On the other hand, with the growth of the organization, the multiplication of its tasks, and the previously mentioned priorities of the leading bodies, we must aim for more and more independent activity on the part of the cells, the local and regional leaderships, working committees, and fractions in specific milieus and in specific struggles that do not have national ramifications. The absence of such autonomy threatens to create continual bottlenecks at the level of leading bodies and would tend to interfere with or even overshadow their main

role, which is *general political elaboration and setting priorities*. To the contrary, by encouraging such independent analysis and activity at the lower levels, the revolutionary Marxist organization will be transformed into a *permanent school for leaders*, which is, moreover, indispensable if it is to become the nucleus of a mass revolutionary party.

The national leadership cannot promote such a selecting out of secondary cadres by constantly substituting itself for regional and local leaderships, or by intervening constantly in work commissions and trade-union tendencies. In this regard, it must concentrate on the above-mentioned tasks of political centralization and conceive of its job with respect to the intermediary cadres as one of *training and selection*, which involves, of course, making critical balance sheets periodically. Expanding the central committees of the sections, getting these bodies to function as collective instruments of high-level political elaboration and education, calling periodic national conferences on special subjects, and organizing leadership schools will help solve the problem of training intermediate cadres. The problem of the press is similar. For a whole period the priority task may be to create or strengthen national weeklies—the organizations' principal national instrument of political intervention. But at the same time, meeting the organizational priorities mentioned above creates an imperious necessity at certain stages of growth for a network of regularly appearing plant papers, complemented by local organs in regions or localities where a stronger base exists. In the same way, there may be such a need for a theoretical journal in some sections, where the milieu the organization is working in and the nature of its ongoing propaganda organ make it essential to present supplementary political and theoretical analysis of a higher level to a broader public. Coherent structuring of this whole press system depends on the strength of the organization and should remain under the control of the leadership, subject to critical examination at regular intervals.

Similar considerations apply also to problems of finances and the material base of the organization. Solving the central financial problems of the organization (assuring adequate functioning of the national leadership, publication of the central political organ of the section, a minimum of full-timers and technical apparatus) takes top priority. But above a certain threshold the regional and local bodies must maintain their own financial resources and a minimum technical apparatus at this level—and in a later stage, regional and local full-timers—as an essential precondition for realiz-



ing the benefits of the influence that has been won and for continued progress by the organization. In this area also the national leadership must follow a flexible system of priorities, subject to periodic review, so as to prevent choices being made in a routine way, under the impact of pressures from the outside, or without taking account of the interests of the organization as a whole.

## 18. The Fight Against Repression

The perspective unfolding is one of rather rapid progressive growth of the revolutionary Marxist organizations, in a climate favoring radicalization of the proletariat and the gradual infusion of the revolutionary program into an increasingly broad vanguard. The bourgeoisie is also aware of this perspective, just as it realizes the grave risks involved for the survival of its system and its state. It would, of course, be illusory to think that the bourgeoisie is going to sit by passively and watch the developing and strengthening of the revolutionary Marxist organizations.

The two principal dangers threatening the revolutionary Marxist organizations in this regard are the following:

a. A *selective state repression* aimed essentially at the far left, possibly going as far as outlawing it (the way would be paved by a campaign of stigmatizing the far left as "criminals," like the campaigns unleashed in France at the time of the vote on the "antiwrecker law," in Italy around the Valpreda and Feltrinelli affairs, and in West Germany under the cover of the Baader-Meinhof affair). This danger arises at the exact juncture in which the bourgeoisie considers the relationship of forces still unfavorable for unleashing a massive repression against the entire labor movement but seeks to prepare for this by a repression against the far left alone. The foundations for the counterattack must be laid now by creating a climate of general solidarity against repression, of defending all the democratic rights of the workers movement, and of de facto recognition that the far-left organizations are part of the organized workers movement. Our fundamental line for blocking this first danger is to prevent the far left from becoming isolated from the mass workers organizations.

b. The danger of *extralegal repression* at the hands of hired gangsters acting as supplementary police, of private security forces of employers, and of armed semifascists. This weapon, already used extensively by the Brazilian, Uruguayan, Argentine, and Mexican bourgeoisies, has been imported to Europe via Francoist Spain and the Greece of the colonels, and its use is spreading today

in France and Italy. The danger of this method of terror being introduced into most European capitalist countries cannot be underestimated.

The most effective response to this danger is to revive the reflexes of self-defense and to lay the basis for workers militias arising out of worker and student strike pickets. But it has already proved indispensable in Spain and France for the revolutionary organizations themselves to take initiatives in self-defense. This may be the case tomorrow in other European countries. Such initiatives must be conceived and executed in such a way that they will be understood and endorsed by a broader vanguard, link up with the workers organizations' tradition of self-defense against the fascists, and serve as exemplary strongpoints to encourage more massive forms of self-defense on the part of the working class.

The existence of these dangers, as well as the very logic of an objective situation that can shift rapidly toward pre-revolutionary or even revolutionary conditions, obliges the sections of the Fourth

## 19. Build the International Simultaneously With the National Organizations

Building revolutionary Marxist organizations in capitalist Europe is inseparably linked to building the Fourth International as an international organization. The two tasks interpenetrate, both from the standpoint of the objective needs of the class struggle and of the specific job of strengthening the Trotskyist current within the mass vanguard.

The internationalization of workers struggles is an inevitable trend produced by the growing internationalization of capital. The existence of the Common Market, the international interpenetration of capital, the weight of multinational corporations owning factories in many European countries, the trends to more advanced economic and monetary integration in capitalist Europe—all these factors bring international collective bargaining and contracts, international wage actions, and Europe-wide strikes more and more onto the agenda.

The revolutionary Marxists who years ago foresaw and predicted this evolution must not limit themselves to supporting or encouraging trade-union initiatives that go in this direction. They must give the indispensable push to move this internationalization of the class struggle beyond the stage of being confined to a purely economic level and to specific sections and sectors of workers. The propaganda of the revolutionary Marxists for a socialist united states of Europe and for solidarity not only with economic strikes abroad but with the political struggles of

International to give special attention to the problems of security and to systematically prepare an apparatus that can enable the organization to continue functioning with the maximum efficiency possible when the imperialist repression seeks to drive it underground. The more effective these responses and preparations are, the more the bourgeoisie will hesitate to go further down the road of repression or of using semifascist gangs.

The spirit in which our sections will have to educate the entire mass vanguard, moreover, is this: to show the bourgeoisie in practice that the price it will have to pay for any attempt to establish an open dictatorship will be a civil war in which both camps will use arms. History has shown that from any point of view such an eventuality is preferable to an institutionalized civil war in the form of a bloodthirsty dictatorship where the bourgeois camp murders and tortures at will, while the proletariat and the worker militants, disarmed and disoriented, stand by helplessly and watch the massacre of their own.

the Spanish, Portuguese, Greek, and Irish proletariats with the anti-imperialist fighters of Asia, Latin America, and Africa, and with the antibureaucratic fighters of the bureaucratized workers states must lead to organizational results. It must lead on the one hand to broad international solidarity fronts, and on the other to training the first revolutionary Marxist cadres, forming the first Trotskyist nuclei, and reinforcing the sections of the Fourth International in a number of countries. Likewise the revolutionary Marxists must take concrete initiatives in those sectors where multinational firms have a decisive weight.

A powerful revival of the workers' reflexes of international solidarity, moreover, is playing a major role in the development of the class struggle in Europe in the present period in the following ways:

a. Neutralizing the negative effects of the internationalization of capital on the efficacy of national strikes, effects that will become more and more important in the years to come.

b. Accelerating the integration of the immigrant workers into the phalanx of the workers movement and blocking attempts by the bourgeoisie to utilize racism and xenophobia aimed at these workers as a weapon for dividing the proletariat, attempts which also are going to increase.

c. Preparing the European proletariat to oppose en masse any attempt at international counterrevolutionary intervention against a socialist revolution winning vic-

tory first in a single country of capitalist Europe; such preparation must be undertaken in advance and in a systematic way as the proletariat returns to its internationalist traditions.

In the broad framework of their general tasks of solidarity toward the struggles of all oppressed peoples, the European sections of the Fourth International bear a special responsibility to:

a. Defend the Vietnamese revolution by maintaining a high degree of mobilization of the vanguard in support of victory to this revolution so as to neutralize to some extent the pressures of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies on the Vietnamese leadership to seek a compromise with Washington.

b. Defend the Irish struggle against the attempts of British imperialism to isolate it politically from the British and European proletariat and crush it militarily.

These internationalist political tasks, moreover, impose specific organizational tasks on the revolutionary Marxists of capitalist Europe; closer coordination in the day-to-day work of the European sections of the Fourth International (on special problems, such as the immigrant workers and anti-imperialist and antibureaucratic solidarity; through special cam-

paigns on the occasion of strikes with international ramifications, and so forth). Such coordination calls for creating ad hoc bodies under the control of the international leadership.

Closer coordination of the day-to-day work of the European sections of the Fourth International will have the goal notably of transforming the still very uneven development of these sections into combined development. Every success in a given sector, every specific breakthrough by one of its sections, can become a reference point, a training ground, and a point of departure for similar successes by other sections. This effort must go hand in hand with a systematic effort to give an international amplification to the most advanced forms of working-class struggle and organization achieved by the advanced strata of the proletariat in one or another European country.

Of all the currents of the new mass vanguard, of all the currents of the organized workers movement, the Trotskyist current alone proclaims the necessity of building an international organization simultaneously with the construction of national revolutionary organizations; it alone rejects as a reactionary utopia in our time the concept of building strong national

revolutionary parties first in order to arrive later—by a sudden transformation whose secret has never been revealed—at a politically homogeneous international.

The eminently international character of the economy, of politics, of society, and of the class struggle in our time is no "Trotskyist fixation" but a concrete and tangible reality constantly impressed on the vanguard and the conscious workers by the facts. Internationalism—not platonically and literary, but practical and organizational—is one of the distinguishing marks of the Trotskyists in the mass vanguard; it is thus an argument that already pleads in favor of our movement and will do so more and more powerfully as a result of the lesson of events. Every increase in the strength of the Fourth International, every success in transforming any of our sections from a propaganda group into a revolutionary organization capable of taking the initiative politically and beginning to win a base in the working class, will have favorable repercussions on the construction and growth of all the other sections. In this sense also, building the sections and building the International interpenetrate and form a single organic process, not simply the sum total of national successes or failures. □



**Statutes**

**of the**

**Fourth International**

## Section I

### Name—Objectives—Program

1. The Fourth International (World Party of the Socialist Revolution) is composed of militants who accept and apply its principles and program. Organized in separate national sections, they are united in a single worldwide organization governed by the rules and practices of democratic centralism.

2. The aim of the Fourth International is to help educate and organize the proletariat and its allies in order to abolish capitalism, with its oppression, poverty, insecurity, and bloodshed. It seeks to establish a World Socialist Republic of Workers and Peasants Councils, governed by proletarian democracy. Working-class rule of this kind will make possible the construction of socialism, the first stage toward the coming classless society of enduring peace, material abundance, social equality, the brotherhood of man, and boundless progress under a worldwide scientifically planned economy.

3. The Fourth International seeks to incorporate in its program the progressive social experiences of humanity, maintaining the continuity of the ideological heritage of the revolutionary Marxist movement. It offers to the vanguard of the international working class the indispensable lessons to be drawn from the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, the

subsequent struggle against Stalinist degeneration, and the new revolutionary developments following World War II. The Fourth International stands on the programmatic documents of the first four congresses of the Third International; the International Left Opposition; the Movement for the Fourth International; the Transitional Program adopted at its Founding Congress in 1938, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*; and the key documents of the world Trotskyist movement since then.

4. The national sections constitute the basic organizational units of the Fourth International. The aim of every national section is to become a mass revolutionary Marxist party capable of guiding the class struggle within the country to a successful conclusion in a socialist victory. To achieve this, the main task of a national section is to build a leadership that measures up to the historic need and to conquer mass influence. This is the means through which the Fourth International aspires to achieve its great emancipating goal, since an international organization does not replace or substitute for a national leadership in heading a revolution. Thus the healthy development of its national sections is of primary concern to the International as a whole.

## Section II

### The World Congress

5. The highest authority of the Fourth International is the World Congress. Climaxing a democratic process of discussion and election of delegates among the national sections, the World Congress determines the political line of the International as a whole on all programmatic issues. In questions involving the national sections, the World Congress serves as the final body of appeal and decision.

6. A World Congress must be held at least every three years upon call by the International Executive Committee. The call must be issued at least six months in advance of holding the congress, the intervening time constituting the preparatory discussion period. A special World Congress can be convoked at any time by the International Executive Committee or by one third of the national sections.

7. Representation of national sections at the World Congress is determined in accordance with the numerical strength of

the sections. The International Executive Committee works out a formula on this each time it convokes a congress, bearing in mind the practical difficulties such as the size of the gathering, as well as the need to assure democratic representation to both the smaller sections and those facing special problems such as repression. The International Executive Committee has the power to recommend that delegates of minority tendencies in national sections, who would not otherwise be represented at a World Congress, be seated with voice. It can also invite groupings that are not affiliated to the Fourth International to send observers to a World Congress. In both cases, however, it is up to the delegates at a World Congress to decide whether to approve such recommendations or invitations. The International Executive Committee is responsible for the practical work of providing a suitable meeting place for the World

Congress as well as housing delegates, enlisting translators, secretaries, etc.

8. National delegations, immediately after a World Congress, are required to report back to their national executive committee, or to a congress of their national section, in order to assure the fullest possible consideration of adopted documents, their early publication, and the rapid and effective undertaking of tasks decided on at the World Congress. In case of differences between a section and the World Congress, it is the duty of the section to loyally carry out the decisions made by the majority at the World Congress, no matter how serious the differences were or what the position of its delegation was. It retains the right to appeal decisions it disagrees with to the next regular or special World Congress.

## Section III

### International Executive Committee

9. The International Executive Committee, elected by the World Congress, constitutes the highest body of the Fourth International between world congresses. It is charged with the responsibility of

The outgoing United Secretariat of the Fourth International presented a motion to adopt the current statutes without change. The motion was adopted unanimously.

applying the decisions of the World Congress and is held accountable to the next World Congress for its stewardship. It exercises disciplinary powers over its own members.

10. The International Executive Committee is composed of thirty-one members and seven alternates, elected by name to serve until the next World Congress. A national section can propose replacement of a member representing it; however, this must be ratified by a majority of the International Executive Committee. At plenary meetings, alternates replace absent members in the order of their election, exercising voice and vote. Any alternate can attend sessions of the International Executive Committee with voice but not vote.

11. Sessions of the International Executive Committee must be held at least every six months upon call by the United Secretariat. The International Executive Committee can be convoked at any time by majority decision of the United Secretariat or upon the request of one-third of its own members.

12. It is the duty of the International Executive Committee to keep up with world events, applying the political line



decided on at the World Congress, and publishing such documents as it deems necessary. It follows the political and organizational life of the national sections and helps them to correctly apply the decisions of the World Congress by providing timely information and suggestions.

Decisions of the International Executive Committee as to the interpretation of a political line decided on at a World Congress, or its practical implementation, are binding on all the sections. They can appeal decisions they disagree with to the World Congress, but in the meantime they must abide by them.

13. Only a World Congress has the power to recognize, expel, or drop a section from the rolls. In a country where no official section exists, the International Executive Committee has the right to open negotiations with a group that has evolved to the point of adopting the program of the Fourth International and can establish a fraternal working relationship with it prior to recognition as a section. In a country where a national section has been marked by inactivity, failure to maintain its obligations to the International, gross incompetence in responding to political opportunities or in meeting dangers, or flagrant indiscipline with regard to the political or organizational decisions of a World Congress or the program of the Fourth International, the International Executive Committee must compile a record together with recommendations, for consideration and action by the next World Congress.

14. The International Executive Committee cooperates with the national sections in helping to raise the theoretical, political, and organizational level of their internal life. However, intervention of this kind, carried on by such activities as tours and visits by members of the International leadership, is qualified by the resources of the Fourth International in personnel and finances. This qualification operates with equal force in instances where differences have developed between a national section and the International Executive Committee. Nevertheless, the International has the right to send a representative to present its views. Such representatives are responsible to the United Secretariat and the International Executive Committee. The national leadership

should do its utmost to cooperate closely, giving representatives of the International Executive Committee voice (but only consultative vote) in all leading bodies, enabling them to discuss freely with the membership, and permitting them to present motions if they wish.

15. Where supposed violations of democratic centralism in national sections are brought to the attention of the International Executive Committee, whether these violations involve a leadership accused of depriving a minority of its democratic rights or a minority accused of irresponsibly violating the discipline of the section, the International Executive Committee may bring its moral influence to bear to help rectify the situation, if evidence exists that errors or abuses have actually occurred. Rather than exercise disciplinary measures of its own in instances of differences with a national leadership, the International Executive Committee should seek to rely on persuasion and recommendations. In no case has it the power to alter the majority rule of a regularly elected leadership of a national section.

16. The International Executive Committee is empowered to organize such commissions, subsecretariats, technical bureaus, or other supplementary bodies as it requires. These are entirely subordinate to the International Executive Committee and can be dissolved whenever it considers it advisable. The danger of fostering a dual center and breaking down the practice of democratic centralism should be borne in mind in considering the advisability of forming commissions or subsecretariats in parts of the world other than the International center.

17. The International Executive Committee is empowered to establish commissions entrusted with coordinating the activities of several or more sections in certain fields (for example, a youth commission, trade-union commission, women's commission) or for a complex task such as fostering the growth of the movement in countries where a section has not yet been established. The tasks of the commissions will be determined in each case by the International Executive Committee in collaboration with the sections involved, but in general will be limited to gathering information, compiling documents, undertaking research, coordinating work, and maintaining links.

its powers except that it cannot organize subsecretariats or commissions. Its decisions are binding on the sections. Appeal can be made to the International Executive Committee, but pending consideration of the appeal decisions must be carried out.

20. Members of the International Executive Committee who are not members of the United Secretariat can attend its sessions with voice.

21. The International Executive Committee can replace members of the United Secretariat by majority vote.

22. The United Secretariat must hold meetings at least once a month.

23. Copies of all resolutions and essential extracts from the minutes of the United Secretariat are to be sent as rapidly as possible to all members of the International Executive Committee and leaderships of sections.

24. The United Secretariat is empowered to organize the necessary administrative and technical apparatus to carry on its work efficiently. In this the sections must help to the best of their ability, particularly by providing personnel.

## Section V

### Publications

25. The United Secretariat is assigned the responsibility of editing and publishing an official organ in the name of the International Executive Committee. The official organ will publish the main programmatic documents and resolutions of the world congresses, the International Executive Committee, and the United Secretariat. National sections are duty bound to translate this material where necessary and see that it is published and circulated in their own countries.

26. The United Secretariat is assigned the responsibility of also regularly publishing an Internal Bulletin. In discussion periods preceding world congresses, the Internal Bulletin must appear with the greatest possible frequency in order to make all the contributions and main discussion articles available to the membership in time to assure that each tendency or different political position is presented at least once.

## Section VI

### Finances—Dues

27. The United Secretariat designates one of its members as treasurer. It is the treasurer's duty to keep the United Secretariat informed on the status of finances, making a detailed financial report on a quarterly basis. The treasurer may lay out money for routine expenses but must ob-

## Section IV

### The United Secretariat

18. The daily political, organizational, and administrative work, as well as regular communication with the sections, is assured by the United Secretariat. The United Secretariat is elected by the International Executive Committee, which has the power

to determine the size of the United Secretariat, its composition, and place of residence.

19. In the intervals between sessions of the International Executive Committee, the United Secretariat acts in its name and with

tain advance approval from the United Secretariat for anything that is not routine. At an appropriate date, the International Executive Committee will designate a special accounting commission to audit the accounts kept by the treasurer before he presents his report to the World Congress.

28. The activities of the leading bodies of the Fourth International are financed through dues paid by the national sections in proportion to the number of their members. The dues also help subsidize the publications, which are only partially sustained through sales and subscriptions. In principle, international dues should be

set at one-sixth of the regular national dues. This should be supplemented by voluntary contributions. Dues and voluntary contributions constitute the sole source of income for the International; the national sections should therefore make these obligations of primary importance. A section that falls three months in arrears in its international dues is to be notified that its good standing is becoming endangered. Sections that have not paid their dues for six months or more are—except for reasons clearly beyond their control—in bad standing. A section in bad standing automatically loses its right to be seated at a World Congress.

## Section VII

### Structure—Membership—National Sections

29. The internal structure of the Fourth International, on the local, national, and world scale, is determined by the principles and practices of democratic centralism. Representing the maximum possible democracy in internal discussion in elaborating a political line and the firmest discipline in applying that line after it has been decided on, it includes the following rules:

a. All leading bodies must be elected by the rank and file, or by delegates elected by the rank and file, at regular meetings, conferences, or congresses provided for by statute. The leading bodies must report back regularly to the elective bodies to whom they are responsible.

b. Members of the national executive committees of national sections have voice but only consultative vote as fraternal delegates at national congresses unless they are regularly elected delegates. In order to maintain rank-and-file control, national executive committee members should make it a norm not to run as regular delegates to national congresses unless this is precluded in some cases by the financial weakness of the section.

c. Voting on documents or political positions proceeds by open show of hands or roll call. Voting on the composition or order of leading bodies is by secret ballot.

d. The mandating of delegates is prohibited; in other words, no matter what the position of an elective body is, its delegates must be free to vote according to their own conscience and convictions as shaped by the discussion at a congress or convention.

e. No one on a leading body has the right to threaten to resign or to utilize any other form of organizational ultimatum in seeking to sway a decision. A leader can propose his resignation but it is up to the elective body to accept or to refuse it.

f. Decisions of higher bodies are strictly

binding on lower ones. The decisions must be carried out loyally and immediately. In the event of an appeal, no delay is thereby justified in carrying out directives.

g. Decisions are reached by majority vote. Minorities are duty bound to carry out majority decisions. Minorities, however, have the incontestable right to constitute themselves into tendencies or factions on the basis of a stated platform and to enjoy democratic rights such as:

To present their views to the membership of their national section during the preparatory discussion period before national congresses.

To present their views to the membership of the International through the Internal Bulletin during the pre-Congress discussion period.

To be represented in the leading bodies with due consideration to their political and numerical importance. This does not mean that every minority, no matter how small, is entitled to representation on a leading body. Nor does it mean proportional representation for minorities. The Fourth International abides by majority rule and this includes the right of the majority to assure itself a working majority when sharp differences are involved. But it is also the duty of the majority to safeguard the rights of the minority and this means that a minority is not to be penalized for holding a minority position.

h. Members facing disciplinary action are entitled to know in advance the accusations brought against them, to present their defense, and, except where it is geographically impossible, to confront their accusers.

i. All members are entitled to complete, honest, and impartial information on the problems and activities of the International, especially on questions under debate among the leaders of the International and the national sections.

j. Full and free international discussions must be held in the periods preceding world congresses, or congresses of national sections, and each time that historic events of exceptional importance require special discussions. A national section can make an exception to this only when it is working under conditions of severe repression (i.e., fascism, military dictatorship, or a sweeping witch-hunt).

k. No one on full time shall receive remuneration above the equivalent of the wages of a skilled worker.

30. In each country there can be only one section of the Fourth International. The process of building a stable section, however, is fraught with difficulties. Experience has shown that small vying groups and tendencies will sometimes resist fusion in practice. On the other hand, a clear basis may not exist for choosing one group over another. In such situations further tests may be required to establish that a grouping is capable of meeting the international obligations of a section and gives promise of developing into a viable revolutionary Marxist leadership on a national scale. To meet temporary requirements during such a transitional testing period, a World Congress may decide to recognize a formation as a "sympathizing group." Where more than one "sympathizing group" is given such recognition within a country, one of the tests of capacity to assume the rights and duties of a section will be the attitude displayed in practice in handling the problem of fusion of forces. "Sympathizing groups" are to be considered as candidates for the status of national section. Upon recommendation of the International Executive Committee, they may be granted voice but not vote at a World Congress. Where a section exists, the International will in no case recognize any other formation as a "sympathizing group," except with the approval of that section.

31. National sections exercise jurisdiction within their own countries. They apply the general political positions of the Fourth International, which they have helped to shape through the process of democratic centralism. They determine their own statutes in accordance with the rules and practices of democratic centralism and arrive at their own national political positions through the same procedure. However, the program and statutes of national sections must be in general conformity with the program and statutes of the Fourth International. National sections exercise disciplinary powers over their own members up to and including the penalty of expulsion; all disciplinary measures, however, are subject to appeal to the higher bodies of the International.

32. To help achieve the best possible international coordination, national sections must conduct relations of special importance with each other through the United Secretariat. In case of urgent neces-



sity, such relations can be carried out directly on condition that the United Secretariat is rapidly informed of the details. National sections are encouraged to extend fraternal aid to each other and to strengthen fraternal bonds through visits and other forms of cooperation. In all this, bearing in mind the risk of setting up centrifugal tendencies, they should consciously strive in their fraternal work to strengthen the International center and its authority.

33. Everyone who accepts in words and deeds the program, the statutes, and the decisions of the International, and is an active and disciplined member in good standing in a national section, is a member of the International. The minimum criterion for the establishment of "good standing" is the payment of dues. This holds for the unemployed as well as those holding jobs in countries where abysmal wage levels exist. In these cases dues may amount to only a nominal sum but must nevertheless be paid to maintain good standing. Sections must rigorously distinguish between members—a category determined on the combined basis of dues payment and disciplined activities—and sympathizers who cannot meet these minimum requirements for one reason or another. New members must normally go through a probationary period. No one can be a member of two sections simultaneously.

34. The number of delegates which a national section is entitled to have at a World Congress is determined by the International Executive Committee on the basis of payment of dues to the International. Thus if a national section lists 1,000 members on its books, but sends International dues to the center for only 400, its membership is to be listed as 400 and the other 600 are to be listed as sympathizers.

35. Members who belong to trade unions or other mass organizations, and in particular those holding official posts, must conduct themselves at all times under the strict political control of the designated bodies of the national section.

## Section VIII

### International Control Commission

40. The World Congress elects an International Control Commission of three members, each belonging to a different section, who have a reputation in the International for objectivity and political maturity. They cannot be replaced as members of the International Control Commission until the World Congress following their election unless a vacancy occurs. In this exceptional case, the International Executive Committee elects a replacement of similar qualifications. The International Control Commission elects one of its mem-

36. Members of national sections elected to bourgeois parliamentary bodies must conduct themselves at all times under the strict political control of the leading bodies of their national section.

37. Members of the International who take long trips outside their country, or who wish to change their permanent residence to another country, must first secure approval from the national leadership, which in turn must inform the United Secretariat. The United Secretariat will then help facilitate a fraternal reception by the national sections for comrades traveling abroad. Except by special decision of the United Secretariat, a member of a section living more than six months in another country where a section exists must transfer to that section. The section involved must, before accepting the transfer, ask for a report through the United Secretariat in order to verify that the comrade left his former country with the full knowledge and permission of the section. No section can refuse to accept the transfer of a member of the International when his former section has indicated that he left in good standing.

38. To keep the International center informed about their activities, the national sections must regularly send copies of the minutes of the sessions of their leading bodies plus such additional information as is needed to provide a clear picture. They must also send a sufficient number of copies of documents, internal bulletins, newspapers, magazines, and other publications. They must inform the United Secretariat in time of the holding of congresses, conferences, and meetings of national or central committees. Each section should designate a leading comrade to keep up correspondence with the International and to see to it that regular items are sent for the press of the International.

39. Without ever abandoning the advantages of legal existence before it is absolutely necessary, national sections that are threatened with repression must make preparations for reorganization well in advance of going underground.

bers to serve as secretary and to convoke the body when occasion arises.

41. The International Control Commission investigates cases involving violations of discipline or proletarian morality in the International. It undertakes inquiries either at the request of the International Executive Committee or on its own initiative. When it opens an investigation, it has the right to request documents and testimony from all comrades without exception. It has the right to determine what form the investigation shall take, whether

by inquiry on the spot, through correspondence, or through the designation of comrades to take evidence on its behalf.

42. The International Control Commission reports its findings to the International Executive Committee and recommends what action should be taken. It is accountable to the World Congress following the one which elected it.

## Section IX

### Disciplinary Measures

43. The public expression of major differences with the program of the Fourth International or the political line adopted by the majority at a World Congress, the violation of the statutes of the International or its national sections, actions incompatible with proletarian morality, or which place the organization or its members in danger, are subject to disciplinary measures by the leading national or international bodies. The accused must be presented with the charges in writing in advance and have the right to present their defense, and, except where geographically impossible, to confront their accusers in the body having jurisdiction in the case.

44. Disciplinary measures apply at once. Those under charges nevertheless have the right to appeal to the body immediately above the one that applies the disciplinary measures, on up through the structure from the local organization to the World Congress. When the United Secretariat is notified that an appeal is to be made from the decisions of a national section, it will acknowledge receipt of the appeal and also specify the procedure to be followed in carrying the appeal to the higher bodies of the International. The International Executive Committee is empowered to determine whether it will hear personal argument or confine itself to documented material in considering an appeal. It can recommend the procedure to be followed by a World Congress, but the final decision on this is up to the World Congress itself. In cases involving proletarian morality the International Control Commission can intervene at any time if it considers the matter of sufficient importance.

## Section X

45. A two-thirds majority of the delegates at a World Congress is required to amend the statutes. □