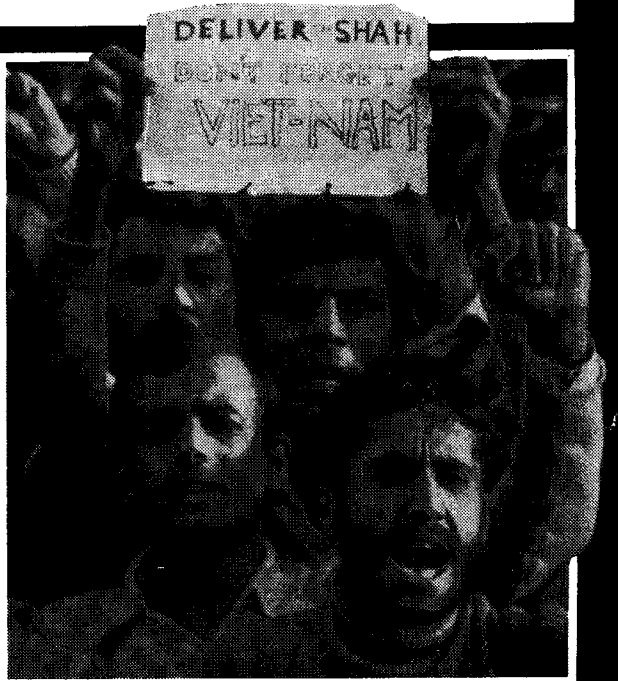
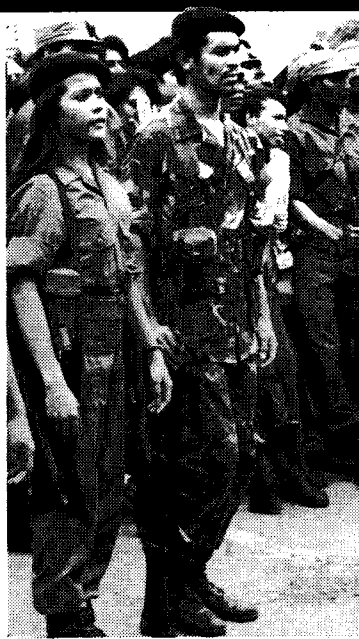


Special supplement to  
**Intercontinental Press**  
combined with **IMPREGOR**

\$4.95

# 1979 WORLD CONGRESS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL



Major Resolutions  
and Reports

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## Major Resolutions and Reports

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**Intercontinental Press**  
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Published January 1980

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**Editor:** Mary-Alice Waters.  
**Contributing Editors:** Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, George Novack.  
**Managing Editor:** Michael Baumann.  
**Business Manager:** Harvey McArthur

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# Fourth International Decides on Turn to Industry

By Mary-Alice Waters

With this special supplement of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* we are making available to our readers the major documents and reports from the world congress of the Fourth International which took place in November 1979. It was the fifth world congress since reunification in 1963 when a damaging ten-year split in the international was healed. It was the eleventh congress since the founding of the Fourth International in 1938, if those that were held by part of the world movement during the period of the split are counted.

The deliberations and decisions of the congress were marked by the international context in which the gathering took place—the deepening crisis of the world imperialist system. The evidence of this crisis, which is much broader than the economic problems of capitalism alone, can be seen even in a listing of the highlights of world politics since the last congress of the Fourth International was held in February 1974.

- The first generalized international recession since the 1930s shook the political and economic stability of the capitalist world in 1974-75.

- American imperialism proved incapable of maintaining its client regime in power in Saigon and by mid-1978 the economic foundations of a workers state had been established in all of Vietnam. This was the first new advance of the socialist revolution since the Cuban workers state was born in 1960.

- In Portugal and Spain, the dictatorial regimes born out of the victories of the fascist movements of the thirties crumbled under the weight of the tumultuous rise of mass workers struggles following the overthrow of Caetano and the death of Franco.

- Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and other countries of the Portuguese

empire threw out the imperialist colonizers. With the aid of Cuban troops the new Angolan regime turned back the South African army, giving fresh impetus to the liberation struggles in the remaining bastions of white imperialist rule in Africa—Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa itself.

- A revolutionary upsurge in Ethiopia brought down the feudal monarchy of Haile Selassie and opened a period of intensified class struggle throughout the strategically important Horn of Africa.

- The overthrow of the brutal Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea deprived imperialism of its most important beachhead in the drive to roll back the Indochinese revolution. It created conditions favorable to the advance of the workers and peasants of Kampuchea and Laos. The imperialist-inspired invasion of Vietnam by the Chinese bureaucracy, intended to punish the Vietnamese for their aid to the revolution in Kampuchea, ended in a fiasco for Peking.

- The colossal revolutionary upsurge of the Iranian masses, in front of which imperialism stood virtually helpless, destroyed one of the anchors of imperialism in the Mideast and opened the door to the process of permanent revolution that is shaking Iran.

- In Nicaragua the workers and peasants under the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front defied the imperialist colossus and overthrew the oldest dictatorship in Latin America. They have opened the struggle for the second workers state in the Western Hemisphere.

- The Cuban workers state took the leadership of the Nonaligned movement and Fidel Castro emerged as the chief spokesperson for the anti-imperialist struggle of the colonial and semicolonial masses.

- Before the tumultuous year of 1979 closed, tens of thousands of Soviet troops came to the aid of the Afghanistan revolution thwarting imperialism's determination to compensate for the "loss" of Iran by a new base of operations on the borders of the USSR.

- In the most powerful of the economically advanced capitalist countries the intensification of the rulers' economic problems reinforced their attempts to shift the burden onto the backs of the working class. The bosses struck some heavy blows, as the class-collaborationist misleaders of the labor movement failed to mobilize the power of the workers in response. But at the same time, the objective changes evoked new levels of combativity and heightened political consciousness in decisive sectors of the industrial working class, such as the coal miners in the United States, auto workers in Italy, steelworkers in West Germany, France and Britain. The hold of the class-collaborationist bureaucratic misleaderships was weakened.

- The crisis of Stalinism in the bureaucratized workers states has entered a new stage. In China, the masses took advantage of deep rifts within the bureaucracy, which widened following the death of Mao. By the millions, they began to voice their demands.

In Eastern Europe, too, there is growing involvement of sectors of the working class in antibureaucratic struggles. The capitalist rulers know better than anyone what a mortal danger this poses for their world order.

In short, it has been a bad five years for imperialism and those who depend on it to remain in power.

That is not to say there have been no reverses or defeats for the exploited and oppressed. The consolidation of the military dictatorship in Argentina; the U.S.



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## Delegates Honor Fallen Comrades

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

- James P. Cannon, founding leader of the Socialist Workers Party and of the Fourth International.
- Joseph Hansen, long-time leader of the Fourth International and editor of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.
- Georg Jungclas, a founding leader of the German section and of the Fourth International.
- Arturo Gomez, member of the International Executive Committee from the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores of Argentina.
- César Robles, a leader of the Argentine PST and delegate to the 1974 world congress, assassinated by the dictatorship.
- Former Trotskyist Mario Roberto Santucho, murdered by Argentine military forces.
- PST militants Adolfo Fenon Carrera, Armando Navarro, Cristina Isarregui, Cabello, Juan Carlos Scafide, Oscar Dalmacio Mesa, Mario Sida, Antonio Moses, Rubén Bouzas, Juan Carlos Nieves, Inosencio Fernandez, Adriana Zaldúa, Ana María Lorenzo, Lidia Agostini, Hugo Frigerio, Roberto Loscertales, Oscar Lucatti, Patricia Claverie, and Carlos Enrique Povedano, all murdered by the dictatorship.
- Rafael Lasala of the Grupo Obrero Revolucionario, murdered by the dictatorship.
- Mario Rodriguez, Adriana Drangosh, and Tomas Carricaburu of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria, killed by the dictatorship.
- The many Argentine comrades who have "disappeared" and probably been assassinated by the dictatorship.
- Alfonso Peralta, assassinated leader of the Mexican Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores and Heriberto Calvo

Pineda, peasant militant of the PRT.

- Fernando Lozano Menéndez, member of the Frente Izquierda Revolucionaria of Peru, murdered by police, as well as Jesus Lojano of Peru.
- Rafael Awad García, leader of the Colombian PSR.
- Humberto Valenzuela, founding leader of the Chilean Trotskyist movement.
- Kavons Hematianpour, Trotskyist militant killed in the February 1979 Teheran insurrection.
- Shuji Sugawara, organization Secretary of the Japan Revolutionary Communist Youth, and Yukio Niiyama, burned to death in a demonstration in defense of the Sanrizuka peasants.
- Chitta Mitra and Rauchhodlal Dalal of India.
- Wu Jingru, long-time member of the Revolutionary Communist Party of China.
- Ted Tripp of Australia.
- Yannis Vrichonopoulos of Greece.
- Herman Rodriguez of Euskadi, assassinated by the Francoist police, and Roger Cabri, Carnia, and Tomas Castanos of Spain.
- Ezio Ferrero of Italy.
- Jabra Nicola, one of the founders of the Trotskyist movement in Palestine/Israel.
- Yigal Schwartz of the Israeli Revolutionary Communist League.
- Evelyn Reed, long-time leader of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party.
- Tony Adams, Robert Chester, Duncan Ferguson, Virginia Kiezel, Herman Kirsch, Robert Langston, Ruth Querio, John Shaffer, Dan Styron, and Larry Trainor of the U.S. SWP.

Also saluted were the imprisoned comrades of our movement in Latin America, in Japan, in Iran, and Petr Uhl in Czechoslovakia, as well as the newly liberated Chinese Trotskyists.

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sponsored Camp David agreement between Sadat and the Zionist regime; the toll taken by the civil war and Israeli terror-bombing in Lebanon; the attempt to impose a "settlement" in Zimbabwe, however shaky it may be; and the terrible price now being paid by the people of Kampuchea and the rest of Indochina for their years of resistance to imperialist domination all stand as grim reminders of imperialism's power.

But as Ernest Mandel summed it up in his report on the world political situation at the congress, which we are publishing here, "The central idea in our analysis of the world situation is that there has been a change in the overall class relationship of forces after 1975 to the detriment of imperialism. This change is the result of the defeat the imperialists suffered in Indo-

china and the outbreak of the first generalized recession of the international capitalist economy since World War II."

Imperialism is more and more on the defensive, while the forces of world revolution are on the rise in a new and explosive way.

That was the framework in which the discussions and decisions of the congress of the Fourth International took place. The 200 some delegates and observers from 48 countries were concerned first and foremost with how to meet the challenges and take advantage of the openings in the period before us.

What must be done today to advance the construction of mass revolutionary parties that are working class in composition as well as program and perspective, in order to be able to make our revolutionary pro-

gram a living reality? How can we prepare the cadres assembled in the sections of the Fourth International in recent years to be able to lead the young and combative layers of the working class in the kinds of battles that are on the agenda today?

### Turn to Industry

The response to these questions is outlined in the world political resolution printed here, which the congress adopted by a large majority.

Emphasizing that our goal is the construction of "parties of experienced worker-Bolsheviks who act as political leaders of their class and its allies," the resolution states:

"In many countries the majority of comrades are union members, but strong industrial union fractions remain to be built. New opportunities have now opened up for gains in the industrial proletariat. Success in utilizing these opportunities requires special efforts, including mobilization of cadres recruited in the previous period. In many countries these cadres have not yet become rooted in the industrial working class. They should be led to make a turn in this direction without further delay."

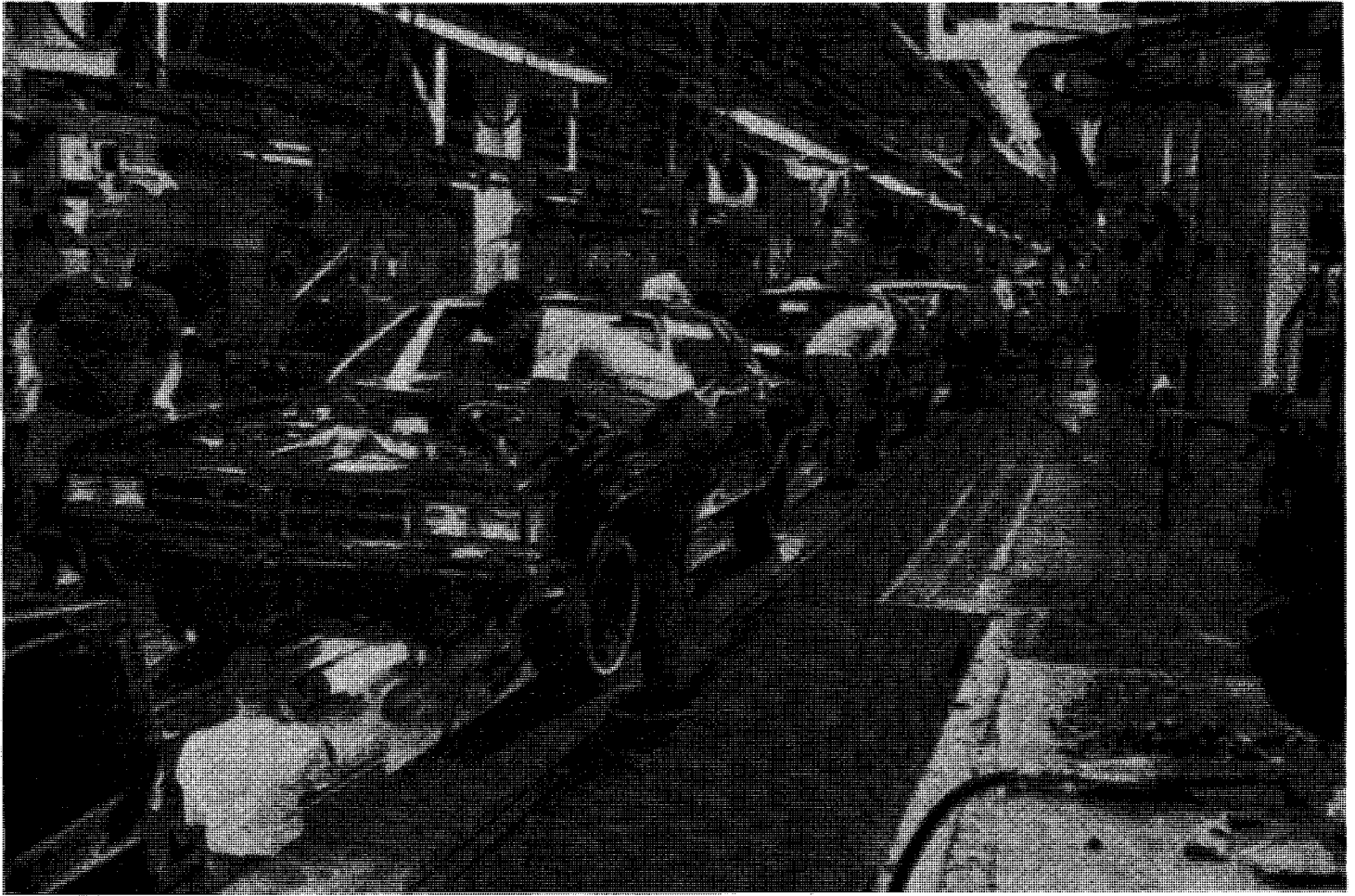
As Mandel stressed in his report, "the growing weight of the proletariat in the real process of world revolution is by no means the simple result of the fact that the revolution is once again knocking at the door of the imperialist mother countries, where the working class has its heavy battalions. This is a universal phenomenon, which we see both in the imperialist and semicolonial countries, as well as in the bureaucratized workers states.

Because of the central importance of this task for every single section of the Fourth International, the congress discussed and adopted a separate report on the turn to get a large majority of the members of the Fourth International into industrial jobs and unions. It was presented by Jack Barnes.

Behind the necessity for the radical reorientation of the forces of the international lie basic structural as well as conjunctural changes in the world situation.

Given the evergrowing weight of the proletariat in all three sectors of the world revolution, the political resolution underlines the fact that urban explosions and proletarian forms of organization will continue to be the focus of revolutionary upsurges in the coming years.

Moreover, as Barnes stated in his report, "the ultimate target of the rulers' austerity drive is the industrial workers, for the very same reason that the industrial workers have been at the center of our strategy since the founding of Marxism—their economic strength; their social weight; the example they set for the whole class; the power of their unions to affect the wages, conditions, and thus the entire social framework of the class struggle; their resulting potential political power vis-à-vis



(Top) U.S. auto assembly line. (Bottom) Cuban troops helped Angola fight off South African invasion.



the enemy class; the obstacle they pose to rightist solutions by the bourgeoisie. The industrial workers are both the source of most of the rulers' surplus value and the ultimate enemy that the rulers must defeat if the entire economic and social crisis of their system is to be turned around."

The conclusion that must be drawn by revolutionists, the congress affirmed, is that we must be parties composed of industrial workers if we are to be able to orient ourselves correctly today.

However, as Barnes emphasized, "Our movement's current social composition is totally abnormal. This is a historical fact, not a criticism. In fact, far from being a criticism, it was our movement's ability to recruit from the new generation of radicalizing youth—from the early sixties on—that today poses the possibility of making this turn. And this possibility now coincides with a pressing political necessity."

Even relatively small revolutionary parties can grow tumultuously during mass upheavals, being forged out of the fighters that come forward in the class battles, great and small. This is what happened to the Bolsheviks in 1917.

But, the report emphasized, "this can only be true for parties of industrial workers who have already been tested in action and have experience and respect in the workers movement. It cannot happen from outside the heart of the working class. Those who are on the outside when such developments occur will simply be bypassed; the opportunity will be lost.

"This is the goal of the turn. To place our cadres where they must be to build workers parties that are capable of growing out of the big class battles that we know are on the agenda throughout the world. Otherwise, our program, which the world proletariat needs to chart a course to victory, will remain a lifeless document rather than a guide to mass revolutionary action.

"We make no guarantees that the turn will bring us correct tactics, timing, or political savvy in meeting opportunities such as this. No promise whatsoever. These matters will be up to the comrades on the spot in each section and each new situation. We simply guarantee that these decisions cannot be made correctly without the turn, without parties composed in their overwhelming majority of industrial workers."

For this reason, "One central, practical consequence flowing from the political resolution submitted to this congress by the United Secretariat Majority overshadows all others—that is, that the sections of the Fourth International must make a radical turn to immediately organize to get a large majority of our members and leaders into industry and into industrial unions."

#### Political Campaigns Decided

While the turn was the overriding task that tied together the political decisions of

the congress, the other campaigns which the Fourth International set as its priorities were equally in harmony with the analysis of the world situation.

The central political campaign decided on was solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution—a drive to get out the truth about the advances of the workers and peasants in Nicaragua, to organize material aid for Nicaragua, and to defend the revolution against all attempts by imperialism to roll it back.

Other tasks included:

- defense of the Iranian revolution, and continued pressure to win release of the imprisoned Iranian Trotskyists;

- the campaign against imperialism's drive to roll back the Indochinese revolution, especially the merciless effort to starve the people of Kampuchea into submission, while arming and feeding the remnants of the Pol Pot forces and other counterrevolutionary outfits;

- stepped up coordination of the international campaign against reactionary abortion and contraception laws;

- increased participation in the struggles against nuclear power on an international scale;

- defense of Peter Uhl and his Charter 77 codefendants in Czechoslovakia, as well as other victims of repression in the bureaucratized workers states.

#### Four Major Resolutions

Four major political resolutions were drafted by a majority of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and presented for discussion. The United Secretariat is the body responsible for the month to month leadership of the international. It is elected by the International Executive Committee which is chosen by the world congress.

All four resolutions were discussed extensively throughout the sections of the international for several months. More than 890 pages of contributions to the written discussion were printed in English and French and circulated to the members. Much of the discussion material was translated into Spanish, German, Portuguese, Swedish, Japanese and Chinese as well.

National conventions were held in every country to vote on the resolutions and elect delegates to the world congress. Delegates were elected on the basis of their support for the four resolutions taken as a whole, or on the basis of support for counter documents.

Some parties, like the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, are barred from membership in the Fourth International by reactionary legislation in their own countries and thus are unable to cast decisive votes in any deliberations of the Fourth International. But they sent observers to participate in the discussion and cast a fraternal vote expressing their opinions on the political questions.

A good number of new groups that have

not yet been organized as sections of the Fourth International also sent observers, and they cast a consultative vote.

In addition to the "World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International," the other resolutions that formed part of the majority line were "The Crisis in Capitalist Europe and the Present Tasks of the Fourth International," "Resolution on Latin America," and "Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation."

All four were adopted by large majorities at the world congress. Most of the discussion came around amendments proposed by delegates to each of the major documents.

#### A Historic Resolution on Women

The resolution on women's liberation was of particular significance. Its preparation and adoption by the congress marked the first time in nearly sixty years that the international Marxist movement has discussed and passed a major resolution on the fight for women's liberation, its role in the class struggle, and its importance as part of the socialist revolution. In 1921 the Third Congress of the Communist International, starting from the writings of Marx and Engels and the experiences of the women's liberation struggles at the turn of the century, adopted a document that dealt with many of the same themes, but in a more abbreviated manner.

The current resolution which will guide the work of the sections of the Fourth International, not only stands on that previous document but is also the product of more than a decade of participation in and leadership of the new rise of the women's liberation movement around the world. The resolution came out of many hours of discussion and collaboration by women and men from dozens of countries. It is not an exaggeration to say that there is nothing comparable to it in the arsenal of Marxist literature.

#### Correcting an Error

The resolution on the orientation of the Fourth International in Latin America is also of particular significance. It marks the end of a long faction fight that deeply divided the Fourth International from 1969 until the end of 1977.

At the world congress of the Fourth International in 1969 a resolution was adopted that projected rural guerrilla warfare for a prolonged period on a continental scale as the strategy for revolutionary Marxists in Latin America. Trotskyists in a number of countries attempted to implement this line, and variations on it including forms of urban guerrilla warfare. Very grave defeats were suffered. Most important was the evolution of the Partido Revolucionario do los Trabajadores of Argentina [PRT (Combatiente)—Revolutionary Workers Party] which organized and led the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo

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## Topics and Reporters

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

1. *World political situation.* Ernest Mandel reported for the United Secretariat on the political analysis contained in the resolution "The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International." Extended time was given to Arpo of the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency and to C. Howard to present counterline documents.

2. *The turn to industry and related tasks of the Fourth International.* Jack Barnes reported for the United Secretariat on the tasks section of the political resolution. John Strawson was given extended time to present a counterline for the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency.

3. *Women's liberation.* Mary-Alice Waters reported for the United Secretariat on the resolution "Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation."

4. *Europe.* Charles Duret reported for the United Secretariat on the resolution "The Crisis in Capitalist Europe and the Present Tasks of the Fourth International." A counterreport was given by Arpo for the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency.

5. *Latin America.* Alfonso reported for the United Secretariat on the "Resolution on Latin America." Heredia was given extended time to present a counterresolution.

6. *Nicaragua.* Charles Duret reported for a majority of the United Secretariat on "Revolution on the March." Jack

Barnes reported for a minority of the United Secretariat on, "Theses on the Nicaraguan Revolution." Alan Jones reported on counterline amendments to the United Secretariat majority draft. Arpo reported for the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency on a counterresolution.

7. *Indochina.* Roman reported for a majority of the United Secretariat on the resolution "The Indochinese Crisis." Gus Horowitz reported for a minority of the United Secretariat on the resolution "New Advances in the Indochinese Revolution and Imperialism's Response." Sakai reported on the "Resolution on Indochina" submitted by the Japanese delegation and delegates Hoffman, Lucienda, Jaber, and Spathas. John Strawson reported on a counterresolution from the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency.

8. *Socialist democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat.* Ernest Mandel reported for a majority of the United Secretariat on a resolution with the above title. Barry Sheppard reported for a minority of the United Secretariat on a counterresolution "Socialism and Democracy." Livio Maitan reported on a third document which was withdrawn prior to the voting.

9. *Organization.* Frej reported for the United Secretariat on the organizational situation of the Fourth International.

10. *Split from the Fourth International.* Alan Jones reported for the United Secretariat. John Strawson made a counterreport for the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency.

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Between 1974 and the end of 1976, however, the majority of those who had previously supported the guerrilla line became convinced that it was wrong. Following the publication of an initial critical balance sheet drawn up by the IMT, both international factions dissolved in 1977 and a new majority emerged in the leadership of the international as the 1979 world congress was prepared. It was expressed in the four major political documents.

The resolution on Latin America published here states unequivocally:

"As a result of this erroneous line, many of the cadres and parties of the Fourth International were politically disarmed in face of the widespread, but false idea that a small group of courageous and capable revolutionaries could set in motion a process leading to a socialist revolution. The process of rooting our parties in the working class and oppressed masses was hindered. The line that was followed not only cut across the possibility of winning cadres from the guerrillaist tendencies to a revolutionary Marxist program, but also led to adventurist actions and losses from

our own ranks. The consequences for our small movement were most severe in Argentina and Bolivia.

"Accordingly, the Fourth International rescinds the erroneous line on Latin America adopted at the 1969 and 1974 World Congresses. The line of this resolution on Latin America now supersedes the previous line."

Most importantly, the new resolution on Latin America charts a course of building revolutionary Marxist parties in Latin America by orienting our forces toward the mass struggles and organizations of the working class and peasantry. The debate on the resolution was one of the richest discussions at the congress.

### Perspectives in Europe

The resolution on Europe, like the one on Latin America, takes the world political resolution as its framework and gives a more detailed analysis of the situation in capitalist Europe and the tasks of the Fourth International in those countries.

Like the other resolutions, it orients the sections toward the mass workers movement, especially the trade unions and toward making the turn into industry. It analyzes the upsurge of workers struggles in France, Spain, Portugal and Italy over the last years, and points out that the setbacks or stalemates have not been due to any lack of combativity on the part of the workers. It is the betrayals of the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaders which have blocked the masses.

The large majority vote for the European resolution also indicated a series of differences over the tasks of our movement in Europe, which had emerged during the IMT-LTF factional struggle, had been resolved.

### Sectarians Split

The resolution of the long internal struggle in the international and the dissolution of the two major factions represented a major victory. It demonstrated the capacity of the cadres of the international to recognize and correct errors once the test of experience was in. It was proof of the maturity and seriousness of leadership cadres on both sides of the deepgoing division, their ability to responsibly debate out the political differences while maintaining the unity of the international. The internal democracy of the Fourth International throughout this entire period can be matched by no other political current on the left.

Not all those who had gone through the decade of factional struggle over the guerrilla warfare line, however, were happy with the dissolution of the internal formations and the reestablishment of the norms of nonfactional collaboration in the leadership bodies of the international.

As the congress approached, sharp new differences emerged over the assessment of the unfolding revolution in Nicaragua, the

(ERP). The PRT (Combatiente), which was recognized as the section of the Fourth International at the 1969 world congress, moved further and further away from Trotskyism and finally left the international in 1973. It suffered heavy blows under the repression of the military dictatorship in Argentina and eventually most of its leaders were killed.

From the 1969 world congress on, a sizeable minority of the Fourth International opposed the guerrilla warfare line and organized to win a majority to reverse it.

Leading up to the 1974 world congress two international groupings were organized on the basis of this political division. The International Majority Tendency (IMT) defended and generalized the line of the 1969 world congress. The Leninist Trotskyist Faction (LTF) called for it to be rescinded and for a return to the Leninist strategy of party building.

At the 1974 world congress the delegates were almost evenly divided on the balance sheet of experiences with the guerrilla line in Argentina and Bolivia.

character of the Sandinista leadership, and the course to be followed in Nicaragua by the Fourth International. Even though these questions were scheduled to be discussed and voted on at the world congress, two groupings which together represented some 25 percent of the international decided not to participate in that discussion. They turned their backs on trying to win a majority of the international to their positions.

The Bolshevik Faction, led by Nahuel Moreno, and based primarily in a number of Latin American countries, and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency, with its principal forces in France, walked out of the international on the very eve of the world congress.

Their turn away from defending and understanding the revolution in Nicaragua was the political issue that precipitated the split. But its roots were in a profound rejection, by the Bolshevik Faction in particular, of the need to build a Leninist international. This had been demonstrated in a long series of destructive factional activities organized outside the framework of the elected bodies of the international. (For the statement on the split adopted by the world congress see *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, December 24, 1979, p. 1275.)

#### Several Important Debates

In addition to the four major political resolutions already mentioned, there were three other important questions on the world congress agenda over which there were significant differences that gave rise to majority and minority resolutions which are published as part of this documentary record.

The first, and the only one on which a position was adopted, was Nicaragua. While there was overwhelming majority agreement on the central task of defending the Nicaraguan revolution, differing assessments were presented on the stage of the Nicaraguan revolution, the character of the Sandinista leadership, the nature of the Nicaraguan government, and the orientation of the Fourth International supporters in Nicaragua.

In addition to a resolution presented by a majority of United Secretariat members, there were three other resolutions put to a vote. One was drafted by a large minority of the United Secretariat. Another by United Secretariat member Alan Jones.

A fourth resolution was presented by three delegates who stood on the political positions of the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency. They had condemned the decision by the LTT to split from the Fourth International. The three LTT delegates were also given time to present counterresolutions and reports on several other points on the agenda.

The document presented by a majority of the United Secretariat was adopted.

Three resolutions were presented on Indochina. They contained differing assessments of the contending forces involved in Indochina today, especially the role of imperialism and the character of the conflicts between the bureaucratized workers states. In addition to majority and minority United Secretariat resolutions, a document was submitted by the Japanese delegation and a number of other delegates.

As in the case of Nicaragua, despite the political and theoretical differences over a number of important issues, there was overwhelming agreement on the need to support the Vietnamese and current Kampuchean governments against the brutal imperialist offensive in Indochina today.

An indicative vote was taken on the three resolutions and it was agreed to continue the discussion in an appropriate form to be decided by the United Secretariat.

The third point on which there were majority and minority resolutions presented by the United Secretariat was the question of socialist democracy. The debate revolved around the place of the fight for democratic rights and workers democracy in mobilizing the working class for the socialist revolution and consolidating the democratic rule of workers councils or soviets.

On this question, too, only an indicative vote was taken and it was decided to continue the discussion in an appropriate form.

#### Building Revolutionary Youth Groups

The congress also heard a report on the tasks of the international in building revolutionary youth organizations. During the congress delegates and observers representing Trotskyist youth organizations in a number of countries met and discussed their progress. This represented an important step toward greater collaboration and coordination of the youth work of sections of the international.

Finally, an organization report was presented on behalf of the outgoing United Secretariat. It detailed some of the progress, problems, and challenges before sections of the international as they strive to deepen collaboration and simultaneously build both national sections and a revolutionary international.

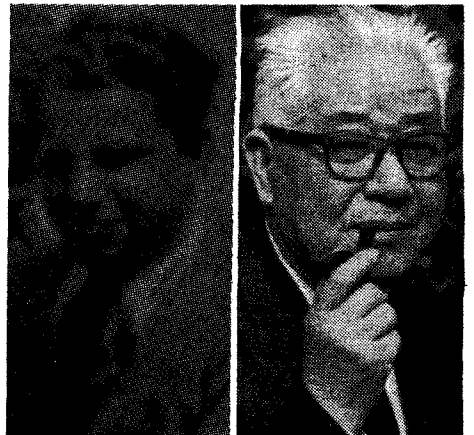
#### A Special Tribute

At the end of the congress a new International Executive Committee was elected. It is the body responsible for the leadership of the international between now and the next world congress.

One of the highlights of the final session was the special tribute the delegates paid to Pierre Frank and Peng Shu-tse, two founding leaders of the Fourth International.

Because of their age and health these two

veteran leaders of the Fourth International are no longer able to be active in the day-to-day leadership. But delegates felt it was important to maximize the possibility of drawing on their rich experience to help educate and train the new generation of revolutionary Marxists around the world.



Pierre Frank in 1930s; Peng Shu-tse in 1960s. World Congress honored these two veteran leaders of the Fourth International.

For this reason, a special category of advisory membership on the International Executive Committee was established for those two founding leaders. In a special presentation by Jack Barnes delegates took note of the extensive contributions these two long-time leaders of the international had made to the struggles of the working class in France and China, as well as internationally.

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The 1979 world congress marked the opening of a new chapter in the history of the Fourth International.

The international has grown significantly in the decade since the massive youth radicalization of the 1960s began to win a new generation of cadres to the revolutionary Marxist movement. Many new sections of the Fourth International have been born, and older ones strengthened numerically and politically. But everywhere the international remains a small vanguard current. Nowhere does it lead a mass class-struggle wing of the labor movement.

The challenge before us is to take the gains of the last decade and reorient the cadres who have been recruited and tested in struggle toward the new openings in the industrial working class.

The decisive way in which the congress determined to do this, as the central priority for every section of the Fourth International, without exception, gives good grounds for revolutionary optimism in the period to come.



# World Political Resolution and Reports



Iranian soldiers and antishah demonstrators during February 1979 insurrection.

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

The most important developments in the world political situation since the 1974 World Congress of the Fourth International can be summarized as follows:

1. A further shift in the international relationship of class forces to the detriment of imperialism as a result of the weakening of world capitalism owing to the defeat of American imperialism in Indochina, the first generalized recession of the international capitalist economy since 1937-38, and the revolutionary overturns of the shah's regime in Iran and Somozaism in Nicaragua, with all their consequences for the Middle East and Latin America.

2. The colonial and semicolonial sector remains highly explosive. New social revolutions will continue to break out there before socialist victories in imperialist countries—as indeed occurred in Ethiopia, Iran, and Nicaragua. But simultaneously, the weight and impact of the class struggle in the imperialist countries upon the world revolution continues to increase—a process which began in 1968. This means a growing tendency of the world's mightiest class contestants to engage in open confrontations, the revolutionary upheaval in Portugal in 1974-75 constituting the most striking recent example.

3. A trend toward proletarian predominance not only in the class struggle in the imperialist countries and in the semicolonies, but also in the growing political struggles in the degenerated or deformed workers states.

4. A growing crisis of the class-collaborationist bureaucratic apparatuses that control the mass parties and unions of the working class in the imperialist centers and many semicolonial countries. A vanguard of radicalized workers is emerging

that on certain key issues opposes the capitulationist line of the bureaucrats. However, this politically heterogeneous layer of the working class has not yet been able to organize a class-struggle left wing in the trade-union movement or present an overall socialist alternative within the mass parties, neither of which can be accomplished without the growth of the influence of the revolutionary Marxist movement.

5. A continuing tendency of the revolutionary process in all three sectors of the world revolution to assume predominantly proletarian forms of struggle characterized by intensification of the class struggle, mass demonstrations and strikes, organization of the working class and its allies in councils and committees, urban insurrections, a battle between contending political tendencies for a majority in the workers organizations, and a struggle for workers power by these class organs under the leadership of a Bolshevik party.

6. A crisis of world Stalinism connected with the crisis of capitalism and imperialism.

In the degenerated or deformed workers states, political opposition continues, with the dissidents becoming bolder in seeking openings to resist repressive measures. In Poland the working class is the central driving force of the anti-Stalinist opposition. In other countries, including China, the working class is progressively adding its weight to the opposition begun among intellectuals and oppressed nationalities.

At the same time the exacerbation of the Sino-Soviet conflict at the state level, the current trend of Peking's policy, increasingly lining up with reactionary capitalist and imperialist forces against both Moscow and Cuba, and the moves of the

Kremlin to further and further appease Western European imperialisms, has given that crisis an exceptionally grave character.

7. Increasing interaction between the three sectors of the world revolution. The national liberation struggles in the Portuguese colonies precipitated the downfall of the Salazar-Caetano regime in imperialist Portugal. The opening of the revolution in Lisbon in turn helped the victory of the struggles for independence in the Portuguese colonies. The repercussions affected

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*This resolution was submitted by the United Secretariat. The vote on this document was taken in two parts: On the political analysis contained in the resolution, the vote of the delegates and fraternal observers was 92 for, 7 against, 11.5 abstentions, 2.5 not voting; On the current tasks of the Fourth International: 95 for, 9 against, 6.5 abstentions, 2.5 not voting.*

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the class struggle in Southwest Europe, in Southern Africa, and in Ethiopia. The widening liberation struggle then made Africa itself the center of the colonial revolution for the time being. Another example is the development of a more direct linkage between the rising political opposition in the "people's democracies" like Poland and Czechoslovakia, the phenomenon of "Eurocommunism" in Western Europe, and the radicalization of the workers in the imperialist countries. Still another example is the spreading of the women's liberation movement from the industrially advanced capitalist countries to the colonial and semicolonial world.

8. The world political situation as a whole thus indicates an increase in opportunities for the growth of the Fourth International centering on winning cadres in the decisive layers of the industrial working class and the labor movement. While

new revolutionary forces continue to emerge, the crisis of proletarian leadership still prevents many unfolding revolutions from culminating in the conquest of power by the proletariat and establishment of new workers states.

## I. The Crisis of Capitalism and the Prospects for a Socialist Revolution

1. The end of the prolonged postwar boom in the beginning of the 1970s qualitatively aggravated the crisis of capitalism. Objectively, it meant reduction of the resources needed to restore capitalist stability in those countries where it was deeply shaken either by a grave economic crisis or by a strong upsurge of the working class. Interimperialist contradictions and competition have sharply increased. Nixon's "New Economic Policy" of 1971 opened a drive to reverse the declining position of the United States in interimperialist competition. In the 1974-75 international recession, when European bourgeoisies, especially Italy, Britain, Spain, and Portugal, required aid on the scale of the Marshall Plan, Washington haggled over the needed loans and attempted to force West Germany and the petrodollar sheikhdoms to provide the credit instead. The ability of the bourgeoisie to soften the class struggle by granting substantial concessions to the masses is significantly lessened under these circumstances.

From the subjective angle—that is, the political understanding of the proletariat—the end of the postwar boom has made it easier to expose the myth that "full employment" and a "continual rise in the standard of living" can be achieved under contemporary capitalism. This incapacity is all the more marked, inasmuch as the end of the boom signaled the beginning of an offensive against the working class and labor movement, an offensive that constitutes one of the key means of restoring the rate of profit. The reappearance of massive unemployment, and a general attack on real wages, including social-security benefits, have further undermined the myths advanced by the apologists of the capitalist system. The same is beginning to happen to the credibility of those who argue that capitalism can be reformed and made to operate to the benefit of the masses.

2. Although not so severe as the crises of 1929-32 and 1937-38, the international recession of 1974-75 was the gravest since then. As all capitalist economic crises, it resulted from a tendency of the average rate of profit to fall and the productive forces to outgrow the purchasing power of consumers as limited by capitalist relations of production and distribution. "Excess capacity," it is clear, has hit many key branches of the international capitalist economy. The 1974-75 recession and the subsequent period of restricted recovery included particular aspects like continuous inflation, and a succession of credit crises

that risk precipitating an international panic.

While the duration of the recession was limited by massive deficit spending, especially in the United States, Japan, France, Britain, and Italy, and to a lesser extent in West Germany, this fact only underscores the dilemma confronting the bourgeoisie. Recessions cannot be mitigated without fueling inflation. Permanent inflation, however, becomes less and less a motor and more and more a brake on expansion. The blows dealt to the international monetary system, plus the permanent crisis of the dollar, combine in turn with increasing protectionism to limit expansion of world trade, even provoking new contractions of the volume of international commerce. The contradictions of the system erupt all the more violently after having been partially contained by decades of neo-Keynesian inflationary techniques.

Evidence has thus accumulated showing conclusively that with the end of the 1960s the capitalist world economy entered a period of slower rates of growth, shorter and weaker upturns, and deeper recessions than in the previous two decades. The nature of the upturn after the 1974-75 recession was uneven, hesitant, inflationary, and lacked momentum. At the end of 1979 a new recession appeared on the horizon.

This does not signify a perpetual economic crisis without periodic new upturns in production and employment. And it does not mean that international capital is incapable of efforts to restore the rate of profit and resume capital accumulation. Such attempts not only involve a worldwide offensive against labor. They also involve intensification of competition and intensification of the concentration and centralization of capital in which less profitable firms and sometimes entire branches of national industry are eliminated in favor of more profitable ones. These drives mean attempts at restructuring both international capitalist production and the capitalist world market, including massive transfers of capital between various sectors of the international imperialist economy, and between the imperialist sectors and a few of the stronger semicolonial ruling classes. The growing internationalization of capital and the emergence of the so-called multinational or transnational corporations as the typical organizational form of the biggest trusts facilitate these moves to restructure the international capitalist

economy.

What must be stressed above all is that neither the scope of these moves nor the results obtained from the worldwide anti-labor offensive will make possible a qualitative increase in the average rate of profit, thereby facilitating capital accumulation and productive investment. The forces of stagnation remain deep and predominant. They can only be partially neutralized by measures undertaken by the bourgeoisie. To radically reverse the trend, major defeats of the masses would be required. These would open the way to a great increase in armaments expenditures, placing on the agenda world wars aimed at recovering some of the areas lost to capital through victorious socialist revolutions. However, such catastrophic defeats of the anticapitalist forces on a world scale remain extremely unlikely. In any case, attempts to impose them would touch off such intensified class struggles as to place on the agenda fresh opportunities for victorious socialist revolutions.

3. One of the most significant aspects of the world situation is the continual weakening of American imperialism's domination of international capitalism. Compared to the postwar situation of 1945-1970, this decline has assumed striking proportions, of which the erosion of the dollar by inflation is but one manifestation.

American imperialism has lost its position of absolute technological superiority to at least one competitor in most branches of industry. And in some, where this superiority still survives (nuclear industry, aviation, production of satellites, and manufacture of computers, the challenge of competitors is mounting. First place in the export of manufactured goods has now been taken by West German imperialism, and the Japanese are close to taking second place. In the average industrial productivity of labor, American imperialism is being overtaken by its main competitors. It is now being challenged even in capital exports and international banking. The European and Japanese multinational corporations are coming close in number to the American ones. They compete ferociously, not only in other continents but in the United States as well.

To be sure, the overall political and military superiority of the American imperialists over their competitors-partners remains of key importance in that struggle. Washington's dominance is based on the massive size of the American economy, a relatively greater access to global raw materials, especially oil, and the tens of thousands of nuclear weapons kept in firing position by the Pentagon. In 1977-78, for example, West Germany's combat aircraft fleet stood at 642. The U.S. "SAC" nuclear bomber fleet was 644 planes, and the U.S. military forces had 5,796 additional combat planes on top of these "strategic" bombers. This superiority is being used again and again by American impe-



rialism to gain economic, financial—and political—advantages. Of greater significance than the numerical superiority of the American air force is the general weakness of European capitalisms in face of the Soviet Union and its greater social instability flowing from the higher degree of politicization of the labor movement. This would become glaringly apparent in any real showdown.

While the European Common Market has withstood the test of the first recession involving all its member countries, it has not made any progress toward further economic, monetary, and political integration. It is stagnating. This is ascribable, among other reasons, to the dominant role played by all those factions in the capitalist class that rely, and will continue to rely, on the institutions of their own state in any explosive crisis. However, the survival of the Common Market testifies to the growing interdependence of all the member countries' capitalist economies. Dissolution of the Common Market would be a disaster for most of them. It is significant that the most important recent "successes" of the Common Market have been in the field of protectionism, such as the organization of steel and petrochemical cartels and the limitation of textile imports from semicolonial countries. Of similar significance is the fact that there is no realizable plan in sight of replacing the ailing dollar with a common European currency, the creation of the European Monetary System notwithstanding. Although the specific weight of West German imperialism has undoubtedly increased inside capitalist Europe, the political obstacles to West German domination in Europe remain formidable. No European "superpower" is about to appear.

The idea that American imperialism is able by itself, or in collusion with the Soviet bureaucracy, to stop revolutions in the imperialist or semicolonial countries does not represent a serious assessment of what is going on in the world. The historical trend is toward reducing—not increasing—imperialism's preponderance. The evidence of recent years shows the capacity of the masses to meet the challenge of imperialism successfully. What the small population of Cuba or the peoples of Indochina have been able to accomplish can surely be emulated by the powerful proletariat of the imperialist countries themselves.

The end of the postwar boom undoubtedly increased the sharpness of interimperialist competition, but this does not mean that the imperialist alliance is going to break up, placing interimperialist wars once again on the agenda. All these conflicts and strains occur within the imperialist alliance, an alliance set up to counter the successes of the world revolutionary process and the strength of the workers states, which represent mortal dangers to the survival of imperialism and capital-

ism. The various imperialist powers try to alter the relationship of forces within their alliance; they haggle, resort to blackmail, seize every advantage, ruthlessly seek to weaken their competitors. The near collapse of world credit in 1974 illustrates how far anarchic competition between these powers can push them toward the financial brink, before stepping back and invoking common action in an effort to salvage the world capitalist banking system. But they do not seek to break up the common front against the advance of the socialist revolution. They act in collusion to stem it.

4. The biggest danger to world capitalism resides in the fact that the end of the postwar boom and the opening of a prolonged slowdown in its international economy coincide with increased organizational strength and a rising level of militancy of the proletariat in nearly all the imperialist countries. At the same time, the depth of the social and political crisis excludes the possibility of the capitalist class buying off the working class through massive social concessions and reforms of a "New Deal" type.

Although the ruling classes in the imperialist countries have scored some gains (the results of the November 1975 events in Portugal being the most striking example), not a single decisive or even large-scale defeat has been inflicted on the working class. Despite the lag in political consciousness of the working class in countries like the United States and West Germany, despite mass unemployment and the reinforcement it gives to the international antilabor offensive, and despite the support given by the treacherous labor bureaucrats to the austerity policies promoted by the bourgeoisie, the proletariat has retained its inherent fighting capacities everywhere. The coal miners' strike in the United States as well as the strikes of the West German dockers, printers, and metalworkers early in 1978 demonstrate that even in the more stable imperialist countries when the capitalists step up their offensive, the working class proves capable of responding with powerful defensive measures. There is growing evidence that the workers in other countries such as Britain, Canada, Italy, France, Spain, and Denmark are fighting back against the "austerity" offensive. The gradual extension of the struggle for a thirty-five-hour week in several imperialist countries bears witness to the same trend.

In the final analysis, of course, a spontaneous eruption by the workers against the combined offensive of the employers and the bourgeois state cannot by itself gain lasting success. In Italy, rank-and-file reactions of unusual militancy and duration have now occurred for nearly ten years without being able to prevent the renewed and more dangerous attack now being mounted by the capitalist forces. In fact, if no credible perspective is opened for

a socialist solution to the crisis, prolonged instability can itself create demoralization among the workers. The degree of success of working-class resistance to the bourgeois offensive and the capacity of the workers to go over to a clearly anticapitalist counteroffensive that could place the overturn of capitalism on the agenda hinges on the following broad lines of development:

a. The appearance of a growing layer of radicalized workers, which can, in some countries, be partially expressed in broad opposition currents.

b. Their organization into a class-struggle left wing opposed to the class-collaborationist policies of the bureaucratic leaderships of the trade unions and the Social Democratic and Stalinist parties.

c. The mobilization of this proletarian left wing, basing itself, in part, on leadership authority conquered in unfolding mass struggles, in a struggle to replace the class-collaborationist misleaders.

d. The drawing of growing numbers of militants at each stage, as they gain in political understanding, into building a revolutionary party.

The combination of these indispensable elements has not yet appeared in any imperialist country. It is this subjective factor and not the greater objective strength or resilience of capitalism that explains why the bourgeoisie succeeded in extricating itself for the time being from the extremely dangerous situation it confronted in Southwest Europe in 1974-77 (Portuguese revolution, upsurge of working-class struggles in Spain and Italy, new rise of radicalization in France).

The capitalists have not succeeded in stabilizing the situation as they did in the period following World War II. Far from it. Sharpened class struggles will continue in the immediate future, especially in Southwest Europe but also in Britain and other imperialist countries. While a showdown may be delayed for a time, with successive ups and downs of the class struggle, the general situation remains explosive. The character of the period ahead thus favors the emergence of a militant layer of workers capable of combating the class-collaborationist orientation of the Social Democratic, CP, and trade-union bureaucracies, and of moving in a revolutionary direction. This means big opportunities for building stronger revolutionary Marxist organizations.

5. The political crisis of the bourgeoisie and their government apparatus constitutes another source of instability. Several historical trends are interwoven in this crisis of leadership.

The weakening of the absolute hegemony of American imperialism over the capitalist world which was won in World War II, coupled with the effects of the defeat in Vietnam, has created a partial paralysis that no other imperialist power,

or any combination of imperialist powers, has been able to overcome. This has led to procrastination and incapacity to impose decisions in various fields of world politics and economics, as was shown in a striking way during the 1974-75 recession and the monetary crisis accompanying and following it.

The giant trusts ("multinational" corporations) continue to press for superprofits no matter what the effect may be on the stated policies of their own governments. American multinationals use their massive liquid reserves to speculate against the dollar. West German multinationals defy their government's declared policy of reducing unemployment, and increasingly export capital. British multinationals do the same thing on an even larger scale. The French nuclear and aviation industries are entering into joint ventures with other European firms, Gaullist rhetoric notwithstanding.

The massive increase of state expenditures and revenues—required since the 1930s to stimulate capital accumulation, guarantee monopoly profits, expand the military machine, and reduce social tensions—increasingly demands the loading of a larger part of the tax burden onto the backs of the workers. In conjunction with the antilabor offensive, they are making inroads on social security and cutting down on public services and other conquests of the workers. They must do this because deficit spending on a huge scale feeds spiraling inflation and threatens a collapse of world credit. But this course runs headlong into the expectations of the masses that years of governmental concessions on public welfare and other social measures have created.

These unpopular acts occur in face of widening skepticism over the nature of bourgeois politics (corruption, interlocking of "legitimate" and "illegitimate" business, scandals like Watergate in the United States, Lockheed in Japan and Italy, and so on). The credibility of the bourgeois political parties is further eroded when economic circumstances oblige them to carry out "austerity" measures.

Again, this crisis in bourgeois political leadership, which reflects in the last analysis the deep structural crisis of capitalism, should not lead to complacency among revolutionary Marxists. It does not mean that the bourgeois politicians are incapable of grappling with the challenges arising with increasing frequency. It does not mean that they are no longer capable of launching onslaughts on democratic rights and on the labor movement as a whole. In fact, the general trend is toward strengthening the repressive state apparatus and taking away fundamental democratic rights; that is, to move toward imposing a "strong state."

Yet nowhere in the imperialist countries has the bourgeoisie either assembled the political forces or weakened the working

class to the degree needed to impose a military or fascistlike dictatorship.

While the crisis of the bourgeois political order in a series of European imperialist states—especially Southwest Europe, partially also in Britain, Belgium, Denmark—emanates from the threat of a direct anti-capitalist confrontation with the working class, its origin is more complex in the United States and Japan.

In the United States, this crisis is a result of overlapping waves of mass radicalization in the 1960s and the 1970s in which the ruling class has been incapable of finding solutions that would satisfy the masses. American capitalism still has tremendous reserves and remains richer than any other sector of the world capitalist system. It is still able to co-opt leaders of mass movements not guided by a clear Marxist understanding. Many Black, Chicano, women, and student leaders have been bought off in this way. The capitalists, through their two-party setup, will attempt to do the same with the growing layer of radical unionists, who must fight to build a revitalized and democratized labor movement and for an independent labor party as the key political component of a class-struggle alternative to the current bureaucracy.

But despite its wealth, American imperialism lacks the resources needed to simultaneously overcome the crisis of accumulation of capital, defend its positions on the world market, play the role of world cop for the capitalist system, and grant concessions on such a scale as to derail emerging mass movements in their entirety. The way in which the Vietnam War was pursued and then ended; the way in which the rulers are moving to take back concessions granted earlier to the Black and women's movements; the way in which a general onslaught has been launched against living standards, working conditions, and union rights; the way in which mass unemployment, especially youth unemployment, is being institutionalized; the way the Carter administration has been unable to overcome the deep distrust which the Watergate scandal and the Vietnam War generated toward the presidency and other capitalist institutions; and the growing class polarization, including the growth of rightist demagoguery, are clear indications of these narrower limits of adaptability with which the U.S. capitalist class is confronted. Most important of all is the growing reflection within the industrial unions themselves of the broader social and political questions posed by the resistance of the oppressed and the social protest moods in the United States.

The growing crisis of the Canadian federal state, as well as the inability of the Parti Québécois, now in power in Québec, to satisfy the basic national and social demands of the Québécois toiling masses, and the growing resistance moods in the

Canadian labor movement fundamentally express the same trends.

The remarkable reappearance of Japanese imperialism as one of the world's leading industrial and financial powers, after its crushing defeat in World War II, has been highlighted for more than two decades by a certain number of basic trends: a close military and political alliance with American imperialism; extremely limited military outlays; job security for one-third of the Japanese working class under conditions of rapid expansion of output and productivity of labor; great internal political stability (rule by the same political party, the Liberal Democrats [LDP]); slow expansion of capital exports into East Asia and Southeast Asia, avoiding stirring up local anti-Japanese sentiments going back to World War II, and clearly overshadowed by the sensational successes of Japanese commodity exports not only to Asia but also to Australia, the United States, and certain parts of Latin America.

These seemingly permanent characteristics of reborn Japanese imperialism have now run into increasing difficulties as the result of all the changes in the world situation that have occurred since 1973. The Japanese-American relationship is shaken by the sharpened competition between these two imperialist powers. The rate of expansion of commodity exports cannot be maintained in the long run, without a vigorous expansion of capital exports, which have already reached an unprecedented level. Job security cannot be guaranteed any longer to the workers even of the large trusts. Military outlays will have to grow significantly. All these changes signify a deep crisis for the LDP-dominated political system, which could already have been overturned during the Lockheed scandal were it not for the dismal default by the reformist labor bureaucracy. The inability of the labor bureaucracy to present a radical alternative as a credible way out of the crisis of Japanese capitalism is the main factor enabling the Japanese bourgeoisie to combine its anti-working-class offensive and its aggressive drive toward new fields of capital export in the whole Pacific area with a gradual adaptation of its political system of government without running the risk of short-term political and social explosions threatening to overthrow it. But even more than in the United States, the limits of adaptability have become narrower. The instability of Japanese capitalism will be strikingly confirmed by a succession of crises in the coming years.

6. What we are faced with is a general crisis of bourgeois social relations and institutions that predates the reversal in the international economic climate. The turning point in capitalist Europe was the May-June 1968 events in France and subsequent developments in Italy and elsewhere. It was foreshadowed by the radical-

ization of the 1960s and early 1970s in countries like Italy, the United States, Japan, Australia, and West Germany. The forces feeding this radicalization, and undermining the stability of bourgeois institutions, include the women's liberation movement, the movement of youth and students, and the antinuclear movement. Of special importance are the Irish struggle against British imperialism, and the liberation movements of oppressed nationalities like the Québécois in Canada, the Basques and Catalans in Spain, and the Blacks and Chicanos in the United States.

This general crisis of bourgeois social relations and institutions has been nourished by the very successes which capitalism was still able to achieve in the previous postwar period (economic expansion; increasing proletarianization of the middle classes; technological progress; relative rise in the standard of living and the level of culture of the working class). The objective need to introduce planning in the further development of the tremendous productive forces built up under capitalism clashes more and more with the limitations imposed by capitalist social and productive relations. Even more glaring is the clash between the rising needs and expectations of the masses and the incapacity of capitalism to fulfill them (peace, freedom from want, self-determination, emancipation of women, meaningful education, protection of the environment, elimination of nuclear contamination, and so on). Environmental destruction has now become a permanent and cumulative problem regardless of the ups and downs of the business cycle.

The radicalization and increasing proletarianization of the allies of the working class is a significant indicator of the depth of the economic and political crisis faced by the bourgeoisie. Enormous forces extending beyond the proletariat are involved. These include the oppressed nationalities, women, youth, working farmers and poor peasants, and rank-and-file soldiers. Layers of these allies overlap with and in some cases make up weighty components of the working class. Their battles affect the labor movement, helping to radicalize the ranks by raising new issues that call for united action. The allies of the working class are affected by the attitudes of the trade unions and mass workers parties, above all by the powerful aid that can come from this source. It is the doubly oppressed components of the proletariat that have been hit the hardest by the austerity offensive. In every country the rulers have sought to deepen the divisions in the working class.

Out of fear of uncontrollable explosions, the class-collaborationist bureaucrats are opposed to fostering and tightening links in action with labor's natural allies. To the degree they are forced to express support to one or another demand of these movements the aim is to draw them into class-collaborationist channels and subordinate

them to reformist projects. Revolutionary Marxists, on the other hand, champion progressive demands raised by these allies and urge the labor movement to throw its power behind their struggles. The aim is to advance the socialist revolution, which combines the fight for the main goals of all these forces. These are freedom from exploitation and freedom from oppression.

The mounting challenge to bourgeois values and institutions (the family, the educational system, the army, the government and state, the hierarchical structure of capitalist institutions and especially the factory) reflects the objective crisis of the bourgeois order.

As part of its antilabor offensive, the bourgeoisie has organized a counteroffensive on the level of ideas (anti-Marxism, "new philosophers," "zero growth" and "right-to-life" theorists). This offensive has been powerfully assisted by the Social Democratic and Communist Party bureaucracies, which have repeatedly capitulated ideologically, politically, and in the will to fight in face of the capitalist offensive. It has been helped especially by the bankruptcy of Stalinism in ideology and in morale, and by the repulsive image of the existing "socialism" of the bureaucratic castes in the USSR, China, and Eastern Europe.

If the crisis turns out to be prolonged because of a failure of the labor movement to replace the class-collaborationist bureaucrats and to campaign for a credible radical reorganization of society, social frustration will rise. Radicalized elements—including unemployed youth—that could be mobilized as allies of the working class can become demoralized and turn to desperate lines of action such as terrorism. Ultimately such social frustration will favor the growth of right-wing forces. The criminal responsibility of reformism, Stalinism, and business unionism in paving the way for this danger cannot be overstressed.

For the time being, however, the trend is toward increasing radicalization of the masses; and this opens encouraging possibilities. For instance, the rise of the struggles of the oppressed nationalities is helping to politically awaken, activate, and radicalize other oppressed layers as well as a major part of the proletariat. The rise of the women's liberation movement has given impetus to struggles against other aspects of sexual oppression, especially the oppression of homosexuals that exists in every country. As proponents of progressive demands raised by gays and lesbians, revolutionists participate in campaigns against all forms of discrimination against them. The radicalization of the youth, which includes an important part of the working-class youth, has had a similar effect. Growing unemployment among white-collar workers has begun to radicalize this increasingly unionized sector of the working class. Working farmers and poor peasants constitute additional sour-

ces of strength. One of the goals of revolutionary Marxists is to combine these distinctive forces into a powerful anticapitalist movement.

Along with these forces should be added defenders of the interests of consumers, battlers on the ecological front, opponents of nuclear weapons and those who are protesting nuclear installations because they cannot be made safe. Antinuclear demonstrations numbering in the tens of thousands began in 1977, particularly in Western Europe and Australia. In the United States also the movement has spread rapidly, giving rise to militant demonstrations. In France and West Germany the antinuclear movement took on such proportions as to become a new political force. The direction of the antinuclear movement goes against capitalism and its governments. The protesters in general are aware of government responsibilities in this matter. The movement also implicitly raises the question of capitalist organization of the economy, since it spotlights dangers inherent in the profit motive at this stage of the development of technology.

There are three aspects to the antinuclear movement. (1) It opposes the construction of nuclear plants. Since the problems of low level radiation, accident prevention, reprocessing, mining, and waste disposal remain unsolved, the protest is bound to rise as the extent of the danger becomes known in greater detail to the public. (2) It opposes the construction, testing, stockpiling, and use of nuclear weapons. This creates the potential for mass action in the tradition of the antiwar movement, which the Fourth International has every reason to encourage. (3) It puts a spotlight on the limitations of bourgeois democracy by proving that big decisions are made outside of the control and knowledge of the people concerned.

7. The working-class vanguard has a clearer understanding of what a socialist revolution in the industrially advanced countries will be like not only as a result of practice both in the movements of workers and their allies and in prerevolutionary mass struggles but also as a result of programmatic clarification and advances in Marxist analysis. While the main lessons were demonstrated in France in May 1968, Portugal 1974-75, Italy 1969 and 1974, and Spain 1975-76, valuable experience was also acquired from the various mass movements in Britain, Japan, West Germany, Canada, the United States, and other imperialist countries.

The industrial proletariat is the most powerful social force in capitalist society. Once the scope of its mass mobilizations and the radical forms of its organization increase qualitatively—and that is a decisive characteristic of the emergence of a revolutionary crisis, together with the growing paralysis and initial disintegration of the bourgeois power organs—the attraction it exerts on all its potential

allies becomes immense. Proletarian forms of organization, growing out of experiences in prerevolutionary times—union committees, elected strike committees, broad factory committees, etc.—begin to take the form of elected councils that extend beyond the plants, centralize workers organization, pit it increasingly against the badly-shaken bourgeois state apparatus, and tend to encompass larger and larger sections of the allies of the working class.

A multi-faceted struggle erupts between the class-collaborationists and the class-struggle forces represented in these councils, for the leadership of the mass struggles, unions, and the other mass organizations. A process of selection unfolds, that makes possible the swift growth of a revolutionary Marxist mass party—provided it has grown sufficiently before these events to appear as a credible alternative leadership to the masses, it has firmly rooted itself in the industrial working class, and it had started to gain increasing influence and adherents in the proletarian vanguard. The growth of such a mass party is the decisive element in winning a majority of the workers to the revolutionary perspective of expropriating the bourgeoisie, removing and replacing the bourgeois state machine, and conquering power by the councils and guaranteeing victory.

There is no contradiction between the self-organization of the working class and building a mass revolutionary Marxist party. The tasks are complementary. Without the mobilization of the masses, victory is impossible. A party cannot substitute itself for an insurgent population in which the workers are taking revolutionary initiatives. On the other hand, the mass struggle—whatever the heroism of its participants—cannot succeed without the correct policies advanced by a revolutionary Marxist party. It is through the interaction of these complementary forces that an irresistible combination is forged.

Issues that tend to come to the fore as the working class engages in head-on resistance to the capitalist antilabor drive are trade-union democracy, union independence from the government, and workers control of production (opposition to firings, prevention of discriminatory layoffs, control of hiring, safety rules, pace and organization of work, length of workday and workweek, and so on). Workers control becomes a school for planned economy, pointing toward workers management.

The working class is profoundly democratic in its aspirations. This is shown, most clearly, by its sympathetic response to struggles in defense of democratic rights and by its concern for democracy inside the unions and mass parties. The working class is all the more attached to democratic rights as a result of its experience with the twin horrors of fascism and Stalinism.

Thus, in their struggle to conquer and consolidate political power, the workers will develop institutions to bring the differ-

ent proletarian layers together in the most cohesive and effective way. As historic experience demonstrates, the workers seek to construct, in addition to independent trade unions, committees and councils that help guarantee on the political level the right to freely debate policies and actions in all mass workers organizations and the right of various workers parties to function. For the revolutionary Marxists this creates the possibility of winning a majority for their proposed course of action and building a mass party, one of the requisites for bringing a revolutionary situation to a successful conclusion. A majority of the working class will hesitate at overthrowing bourgeois state institutions without first being convinced that workers power signifies an extension and not a restriction of the political rights of the oppressed.

This view was set forth in the resolutions of the first four congresses of the Communist International and in the Transitional Program adopted by the founding congress of the Fourth International.

A socialist revolution will signify a radical upheaval of all social relations, involving more than a deepgoing overturn in property relations, relations of production, and state institutions.

During the transition period from capitalism to socialism, the workweek will be shortened while wages will be increased and unemployment eradicated. Social services will be greatly expanded, particularly in the field of medicine (research, construction of hospital facilities, training of personnel), so that a widening range of social services becomes available to everyone as

a basic human right. The effects of centuries of discrimination against women and oppressed nationalities will be countered at every level. The scourge of worldwide hunger will be overcome. In conjunction with these advances, education will be transformed, shaped to the needs of all age levels, and tied in with technological needs on the one hand and the growing leisure time at the disposal of the workers on the other. The shortening of the workweek and development of social services and education on a massive scale will be more and more recognized as basic requisites for workers management of the economy, the conversion of equal rights into actual social practices, and the gradual withering away of the state.

From the outset a powerful international dynamic will be set in motion. A socialist revolution in an imperialist country will give great impetus to the liberation struggles of the superexploited colonial peoples and oppressed nationalities on the one hand, and the struggles of the oppressed masses of the degenerated or deformed workers states on the other. The example it sets will offer fresh inspiration to revolutionists in other imperialist countries. And it will transcend national borders with its new insistence on integrating resources and instituting planning. It will foster wider and wider international federations. All of these repercussions point to the only way in which the basic problems of our time can be effectively and ultimately resolved: through a world federation of socialist republics, through the Socialist United States of the World.

## II. The Crisis of the International Imperialist System and the Prospects of the Colonial Revolution

8. The defeat suffered by American imperialism in Indochina resulted in a decline in Washington's ability to serve as world watchdog of imperialism. This opened a new stage in the crisis of the world imperialist system.

The heroic Indochinese masses, while unable by themselves to inflict a decisive military defeat on the imperialist army, proved able to stand up for a protracted period against the most frightful modern weapons, especially aerial bombing on a massive scale. The stubborn resistance of the Indochinese destroyed the perspective of an easy victory entertained by the White House; it also eroded the morale of the American troops. Powerful mass antiwar sentiment in the United States itself made the political risk of continuing the war of aggression unacceptable. The American antiwar movement thus became the strongest ally of the Indochinese revolution. These changes led to the withdrawal of American imperialism from Indochina.

To these factors must be added the effects of the crisis of Stalinism. The Sino-Soviet conflict, in which Moscow and

Peking jockeyed for position, and the restlessness of the rank and file in many Communist parties, who were affected by the prestige of the Indochinese, made it impossible for these bureaucratic castes to block the revolutionary victory of the Vietnamese masses. With the elimination of capitalism and the fusion of the two halves of Vietnam, a single deformed workers state has been established there.

The deterioration in the relationship of forces at the expense of imperialism is especially striking in Africa where the Soviet Union has been able to extend its diplomatic influence. The antiwar sentiment in the United States made it impossible for Washington to intervene openly on the military level against the revolutionary developments in Angola and in the Horn of Africa. The Cubans, recognizing Washington's temporary paralysis, sent material aid with Moscow's acceptance, including thousands of troops to Angola, Ethiopia, and other countries in Africa. Ford and subsequently Carter threatened reprisals, which they are prepared to carry out. However, Havana accepted the risk,



Poverty and affluence side by side in Brazil: a characteristic of postwar urbanization in semicolonial world.

supporting the MPLA against the reactionary South African troops, and those of the FNLA and UNITA who aligned themselves with the South Africans, winning the gratitude of most anti-imperialist fighters in Africa. The contrast between the standing of revolutionary Cuba and counterrevolutionary United States among the insurgent peoples of Africa could hardly be more dramatic.

As a sequel to the imperialist defeat in Indochina, the Ethiopian monarchy was overthrown, and political independence was won in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau; this in turn strengthened the mass liberation struggles in Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa.

The defeat makes it more difficult for Washington to engage in a new adventure on the mainland of Asia or Africa (where the sympathies of Afro-Americans constitute an additional formidable obstacle). Not a single other imperialist power—neither Japan, West Germany, Britain, France, nor any combination of them—is strong enough militarily and politically to escalate aggressions in Asia or Africa to the level reached by imperialism in Indochina, Algeria, or even Malaya.

This does not mean that the imperialists are incapable of engaging in military actions such as those that were initially used in the war in Indochina. Quite the contrary, as is shown by the steps taken by France in Chad, Zaïre, Western Sahara, Djibouti, and the Comoro Islands; Bel-

gium, France, Britain, and the United States in Zaïre; Britain in Southern Arabia; South Africa in Angola; Israel in Lebanon; and the involvement of imperialist troops under the United Nations flag in Lebanon.

The weakening of imperialist capacity to smash the colonial revolution by military means does not, however, reflect a decline in military striking power. The weakness is on the political level. One of the ways Washington is attempting to overcome this political weakness is by reorganizing the international imperialist alliance and assigning others greater "responsibility" for supplying surrogate forces. Eventually this would involve Japan in East Asia, and West Germany in North and Central Africa. They are grooming South Africa to play an increased role in Southern Africa and Israel in its border zone in the Middle East. Meanwhile, evidence has mounted that Israel has become a junior nuclear power, and that South Africa has the same goal.

While the Japanese and West German imperialists are considering joining the nuclear club, the domestic and international political obstacles they face remain formidable. Strong countertendencies must be noted; for example, Washington's fear that West Germany and France (with Britain and Japan as possible junior partners) might challenge the American lead in the production of advanced nuclear weapons and delivery systems, one of the

strategic domains in which American imperialism still holds a near monopoly in relation to its allies-competitors.

9. Because of the repercussions of the American defeat in Indochina, the Soviet bureaucracy has gained a greater margin for maneuver. It is utilizing this margin to strengthen its bargaining position within the framework of an overall policy of "peaceful coexistence" or "détente" with imperialism. Its moves include granting military aid to certain organizations of national liberation movements which the Kremlin believes will advance its diplomatic interests.

Washington seeks to stop the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies from giving any material aid to national liberation struggles. It wants them to join in overall "settlements," the aim of which is to strangle the revolutionary mass movement. This policy has scored some successes in the Middle East with regard to the Palestinian revolution. It seems to be succeeding in areas where the Chinese bureaucracy previously aided local guerrilla forces. Imperialist pressure for similar turns in Africa has already made significant progress in enlisting the Chinese bureaucracy, which, for example, supports the Zairian regime. They have gotten the acquiescence of the Kremlin for an enforced settlement in Zimbabwe. Washington will continue to tighten the squeeze on the Kremlin in the near future in association with the general haggling over arma-



ments.

One should not be taken in by the periodic negotiations on "disarmament." Both imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy require a certain degree of control over escalation of the arms race, since it imposes bigger and bigger strains on the economy, above all on the economy of the Soviet Union, which still is substantially below the productive power of American capitalism. However, the basic trend is not toward disarmament but toward the development of ever more fiendish weapons. Imperialist expansionism is the root cause of this race that threatens to end in nuclear war. The worse the overall economic, social, and political situation of capitalism becomes, the more sharply this trend will emerge, as Carter's brandishing of the "neutron bomb" shows.

It is the duty of revolutionary Marxists to warn the masses that any hope that an uneasy but lasting peace can be established through a balance of fear or balance of deterrents only furthers the risk of nuclear annihilation. This risk will hang over the world as long as capitalism survives. It can be eliminated only through a victory of the socialist revolution in the United States and in the other capitalist countries possessing nuclear weapons.

The fact that there can be no lasting peace as long as capitalism survives should not lead to the conclusion that the "détente" policies pursued by the imperialists and the Soviet bureaucracy are just maneuvers to fool the masses of the world. Not only do both of these counterrevolutionary social forces have a common interest in maintaining the worldwide status quo despite their different social nature and historical interests, but the very weight of the armaments race and the real threat of triggering a nuclear world war make it imperative for these forces to attempt periodically to *organize* the arms race, which they are neither willing nor capable of stopping.

Thus in the 1969-73 period a series of limited agreements between Washington and Moscow were reached, of which the SALT I agreement was the high point. But quantitative limitations on the arms race inevitably increased the premium upon qualitative advances. Hence the push toward cruise missiles, neutron bombs, "classical" weapons of destructive capabilities comparable to those of the first A-bomb, and the search for radical new advances in arms technology. Hence also the crisis over SALT II and the spate of anti-Soviet propaganda and imperialist blackmail motivated in part by the economic crisis and the rise of the African revolution.

However, the very nature of a nuclear war indicates that a final phase antedating a third world war has not been reached. The situation is not desperate enough to cause American imperialism to choose that way out. In particular, the key political and social preconditions for a catastrophe of that scope do not exist. No

crushing defeat of the Western, above all the American, proletariat has been administered. The toiling masses of these countries are not demoralized or unable to act. Their combativity is such that they will not join their ruling class in a mad scheme of collective nuclear suicide. Those who talk about the inevitability or imminence of World War III criminally underestimate what is at stake for all of humanity, and irresponsibly consider that the key battles of the world proletariat have already been lost without a fight.

10. The regimes of the stronger semicolonial countries are continuing to play their role as regional supplements to the imperialist police, for which they are lavishly equipped with modern weapons as in the cases of the Brazilian army in Latin America, the Pakistan and Saudi Arabian armies in the Middle East, and the South Korean army in East Asia. Brazil and Pakistan have indicated their desire to become "nuclear powers."

The emergence of most such regimes is based on advances in industrialization. A series of semicolonial countries have now reached an intermediary position between the highly industrialized and the most backward countries. This applies to Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina, and to a lesser degree to South Korea, Egypt, and Iran. By the size of the working class, weight of industrial output, amount of exports, rate of capital accumulation, and the appearance of native banking groups capable of participating in finance-capital operations, the ruling classes of these countries today have at their disposal a much broader material basis than in the past. In addition, the huge rise in oil revenues allows some countries like Algeria, Iraq, and Venezuela to invest in an attempt to initiate industrialization, while others, the main example being Saudi Arabia, keep the bulk of their assets deposited in the major imperialist banks.

One should not conclude from this trend that these countries have become independent imperialist, "subimperialist," or semi-imperialist powers. Quite the contrary. Their social structure remains that of semicolonies, not that of imperialist powers. And as a result of semi-industrialization, their technological dependence on imperialism is greater than ever, their "national" bourgeoisie is engaging more and more in "joint ventures" with imperialist multinational corporations, and their indebtedness to imperialist banks and monetary institutions is constantly increasing.

Likewise, the social and political instability of these countries and the narrow political base of rule cause the regimes to lean heavily upon military and political support by imperialism. This instability is increased and not reduced by their successes at semi-industrialization. These successes generally follow a pattern of economic development (sometimes referred to as the "Brazilian pattern") in which the

standard of living of the industrial working class and the rural and urban poor is initially lowered in a draconian way—the function of the dictatorships ruling these countries is to make such a lowering possible. The narrowing of the internal market for industrial goods resulting from this pattern makes long-term cumulative capitalist growth unattainable in these countries, and demonstrates that they cannot pass beyond the state of semi-industrialization as long as capitalism endures. In recent years, the overall gap in per capita income between the imperialist and semicolonial countries has increased, and this increase is all the more striking if one takes into consideration the huge social inequalities which exist in semicolonial countries.

In the 1973-74 global upsurge of inflation and in the international recession that followed, the semicolonial economies suffered far more severe setbacks than the economies of the imperialist powers. In the industrially advanced countries inflation hit 10 percent to 15 percent levels; in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, inflation reached 25 percent and higher. With few exceptions the downturns were sharper. In a series of Asian and Black African lands, there was mass starvation. Foreign indebtedness mounted, and the stability of many neocolonial regimes—from Zaïre to Peru—was shaken.

The emergence of more powerful ruling classes in some of these countries does not change any of the fundamental strategic tasks of permanent revolution facing the masses. But it does create new facets of political struggle involving tactical questions. In general one can state that the reappearance of bourgeois nationalists like Cárdenas and Perón, who sought support against imperialism through mobilizing the masses, is quite unlikely. The last thing they want is to spark a process leading to another Gordobazo. Part of the explanation for this is the increased fear of the bourgeoisie in face of the proletariat's rising social weight in the class struggle. However, the political tasks facing the proletariat in these countries are more difficult than in the past because the imperialists and indigenous ruling classes have learned to move forcefully against the first manifestations of a revolutionary upsurge.

Under these circumstances, socialist revolutions are precluded in these countries without the leadership of mass revolutionary Marxist parties. The building of such parties is a precondition for the successful overthrow of both imperialist domination and the rule of the indigenous ruling classes. The absence of such revolutionary Marxist leadership explains why counterrevolutionary coups like the ones in Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina could win and why the Indian bourgeoisie has been able to maintain its class rule virtually unchallenged since 1947 despite recurrent deep economic, social, and political crises.

After crushing defeats, the mass movement can rise again more rapidly in the *semicolony* than in the imperialist countries because of the more explosive nature of many social and economic contradictions found there and the relative weakness of the ruling classes. But as long as the proletariat does not gain political independence and hegemony over the revolutionary masses as a whole (the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie, and the poor), the danger remains acute of a repetition of the upsurge, test of strength, defeat, dictatorship cycle; which has been strikingly exemplified in Bolivia and Argentina, where this cycle has been repeated three times in the last twenty-five years.

11. In the main areas of the semicolonial world some general features of the struggle between revolution and counterrevolution should be noted.

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Latin America constitutes that part of the semicolonial area displaying the greatest semi-industrialization, growth of the proletariat as a class (i.e., percentage of wage earners in the active population), urbanization, and change in composition of the ruling "bloc of classes" (with a mounting predominance of indigenous monopoly capitalists linked both to foreign "multinationals" and to the state bureaucracy that is administering an important sector of the economy). The traditional forms of working-class mass organizations (essentially mass trade unions) such as those in Argentina, Mexico, and Bolivia have remained under the predominant political influence of bourgeois nationalist demagogues or reformist misleadership. But the political control of these leaderships over the working class is coming under challenge as a result of the growing weight of the proletariat, its periodic explosive combativity, and the very nature of the austerity policies that the Latin American bourgeoisie has to apply under present circumstances in order to step up capital accumulation, and that leave little room for even temporary economic concessions to the masses. Hence the inability of the Latin American bourgeoisie at this stage to find a basis for their rule in the consent of the masses.

The deepening class contradictions between the Latin American proletariat and the indigenous bourgeoisie offer favorable conditions for the conquest of political class independence. This is now the main point on the agenda after the big defeats of the Latin American revolution.

The contradiction between the mounting strength of the proletariat and its lag in political class consciousness and independence, owing to the influence of Stalinism, the Social Democracy, and petty-bourgeois nationalism, plus the failure of the leadership of the Cuban revolution to project a revolutionary Marxist strategy, opens the possibility for reactionary dictatorships to win and to temporarily consolidate their

rule. At the same time, the necessity to resort to coups indicates the shaky character of these dictatorships and the possibility of their early disintegration and collapse in face of an upsurge by the masses. The capacity of the mass movement to rise again and to challenge both the dictatorship and the employers undermines the usefulness of the dictatorship in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, increasing the probability of "liberalization" maneuvers and even reconquest by the masses of basic democratic rights.

The series of defeats of the Latin American revolution, opened by the establishment of the Brazilian military dictatorship in 1964 and reaching its most murderous pitch with the Pinochet coup in Chile in 1973, seems to have come to an end with the military coup in Argentina in 1976. While the coup there signified a severe defeat for the Latin American proletariat, and through murder, arrests, and massive layoffs largely broke up the layer of vanguard workers that had come to the fore in the factories and the unions from the Cordobazo up to the general strike of 1976, it did not succeed in crushing in a fascist-like way the organized Argentine workers movement as did the coups in Brazil and especially Chile. The Argentine working class has been able to engage in organized defensive struggles, as exemplified by the strikes of 1977 and 1978. This in turn has been combined with a rebirth of the mass movement, especially in Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru, where the masses are rising again in broader and broader struggles that are wresting important concessions from the military dictatorships, thus undermining them.

The explosive opening of the Nicaraguan revolution, and the related mass upsurge in El Salvador, is the most striking confirmation of this new rise.

Attempts to return to constitutional and civilian rule cannot be excluded under these circumstances; it is even possible to visualize this or that "liberal" military dictatorship taking a permissive attitude toward working-class organizations. But in view of the explosive social and economic contradictions, long periods of relatively stable bourgeois democracy are not on the agenda in Latin America.

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In Black Africa, with the defeat of Portuguese colonialism, the transfer of governmental power to the Black ruling classes has been completed throughout the continent, with the notable exception of South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe.

Angola constituted one of the main battlefields. Washington sought to intervene through use of the CIA and through backing a military invasion mounted by the racist regime in South Africa. These efforts were beaten back by the MPLA government in Angola with the assistance of Cuban troops. The aid of the Cubans was decisive in defeating Washington's

imperialist scheme and in driving the South African invaders out of the country.

This gave a huge impulse to the struggle in southern Africa. The position of the white settler regime in Zimbabwe has become unviable, and imperialism has been forced to intensify its attempts to find a neocolonialist solution that will protect its interests and that can be presented as embodying Black majority rule.

In Namibia, too, imperialism is obliged to undertake a similar neocolonialist venture. But the struggle of the Namibian people, in the context of the stubbornness of the white settlers and the Vorster regime in defense of their privileges, is today making such a solution very difficult.

The unfolding struggles in industrialized South Africa—the main capitalist bastion in Africa where an indigenous white bourgeoisie and its racist state are pitted against a powerful Black working class and its allies—will be especially important for the course of the African revolution as a whole. The 1976 mass urban uprising in Soweto, directly challenging the system of apartheid and the bantustans, was an augury of the future.

The Haile Selassie regime was toppled by mass struggles and mass mobilizations of the previously superexploited serfs and oppressed nationalities of the feudal Ethiopian empire. These have continued on a scale not previously seen in Africa. A case in point is the development of the Eritrean struggle for independence. The fact that the Dergue regime is not willing to break with either international capitalism or private property does not lessen the importance of the mass mobilizations that have made Ethiopia a unique example of national and class struggle.

The gains made by the Ethiopian revolution up to now are substantial. They include: (a) A total eradication of all vestiges of slavery and feudalism. (b) A far-reaching agrarian reform. (c) A series of nationalizations, including banking and credit, public utilities, natural resources, and some industry. (d) The separation of church and state. (e) The spread of primary education as part of an initial drive against illiteracy.

While opposing all attempts by imperialism and its stooges to stop, reverse, or channel the revolutionary process in Ethiopia, it is the duty of revolutionary Marxists, here as elsewhere in the semicolonies, to struggle for independent organization of the workers and poor peasants, independence for the trade unions, committees, and militias; self-determination for the oppressed nationalities; and defense of their specific rights against all their opponents, including the Dergue.

Under the present circumstances of growing imperialist aggression against the African revolution and stepped-up ideological war against Cuba and the Soviet Union, it is imperative that anti-imperialist and revolutionary Marxist forces everywhere in the world combine their

defense of the African revolution with strong support for the right of independence for the Eritrean people. The Cuban government should continue to reject participating in any invasion of Eritrean territory.

In 1975 the Dergue launched a war of suppression of the Eritrean movement for national independence. The direct military participation by the Soviet bureaucracy in this war is to be condemned. The Fourth International supports without reservation the right of Eritrea to national independence. Withdraw the Ethiopian troops!

Cuban recognition of the right of the Eritreans to decide their own fate would strengthen the defense of the Cuban workers state against imperialism. To follow an opposite course would lead to negative results, injuring not only the Cuban revolution but also the important revolutionary gains made in Ethiopia itself. World imperialism, with increased capacity to maneuver in the region, would be the ultimate gainer.

In all the independent Black African countries the government and state are bourgeois. The transfers of power have resulted in a shift from direct to indirect imperialist rule, with imperialism still maintaining superexploitation through its key positions of economic power. However, marked unevenness both in the development of classes and in the accumulation of private capital makes it necessary to distinguish those countries marked by the rule of an emerging bourgeois class, allied or not to precapitalist ruling strata (Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Kenya, Gabon, and Zaïre are examples), from those where it would be more precise to speak of the rule of the nationalist petty bourgeois (Tanzania, Ethiopia since the downfall of Selassie, Guinea-Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique). However, the links which these petty bourgeois maintain with imperialist monopolies, their dependence upon the capitalist world market, and their attachment to private property (especially on the land) make them a culture medium for the development of a propertied indigenous bourgeois class.

Thus the Marxist analysis of classes, the government, and the state in the independent countries of Black Africa destroys any justification for believing that there exists an "African socialist" road different from that of building a revolutionary party based upon the proletariat.

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In the Arab world, the Palestinian resistance movement has ended in a political blind alley following defeats suffered under the combined blows of Zionist terrorism, imperialist intervention and pressure, repression by reactionary Arab forces like the Hashemite monarchy and the Maronite reactionary militias in Lebanon, and the tolerant passivity of the other Arab governments as well as of the Soviet bureaucracy.

The difficulties were compounded by Sadat's capitulation to Begin, which gave a green light to the Israeli government to launch its long-planned blitzkrieg against Lebanon.

The crisis of the Palestinian resistance movement was deepened by Sadat's capitulation to Zionism, the growing willingness of Syria to likewise arrive at a modus vivendi with the Zionist state, and—under the pressure from the Arab ruling classes, American imperialism, and the Soviet bureaucracy—the growing inclination of Fateh to adapt to these pressures, its verbal protests notwithstanding. All these forces see in the mass resistance of the Palestinian Arabs against the Zionist state the main if not the only obstacle toward "stabilization" of the status quo in the Middle East, i.e., consolidation of Israel, and recognition of the domination of American imperialism. They are ready to maneuver with any political apparatus, including that of the PLO, in order to achieve the goal of putting an end to that resistance. While Begin and the Zionist establishment exercise a degree of tactical autonomy, which enables them to not only embarrass the White House at times, but in the short run to block consummation of certain steps, they do not have the power to alter imperialism's grand design for the Middle East in the long run. Thus a whole cycle of Arab petty-bourgeois nationalism, which reached its height with the radicalization of the masses in the late 1950s and the early 1960s under the label of "Nasserism," is coming to an end. This explains, among other things, the revival of reactionary currents like the Moslem Brotherhood.

The coalition of hostile international forces which the heroic Palestinian resistance has had to face is so formidable that defense of their rights is difficult to carry out by the relatively small forces of the Palestinian Arab masses themselves scattered in Lebanon, Jordan, and the Zionist state.

These objective difficulties have been compounded by a political line that places reliance on material support from the Arab regimes, guerrilla war, and token aid from Moscow.

But the growing isolation of Israel on the international political arena; the discredit provoking a shift in public opinion even inside the United States by its increasingly reactionary actions (colonization, bombing of the civilian population in Lebanon, brutal repression in the occupied territories); the more and more recognized fact of the existence of a Palestinian nation; the growing popularity of the Palestinian cause in the Black American community and among many people of semicolonial countries in addition to the Arab countries, in the first place in Iran; the increasingly high price that the occupation and military policies are imposing on the Israeli economy: all this is provoking unprecedented dissent, a growing

peace movement, and beginning class differentiation among the Israeli population. The crisis faced today by the Zionist state is much more than a crisis of leadership. It is a deepening social and political crisis.

American imperialism is seeking to find a way to bring the Zionist leaders to adopt a more flexible attitude concerning the occupied territories and the national rights of the Palestinians. Nevertheless, they will not adopt a stand that would weaken the Zionist state, which they need even more after the fall of the Pahlevi dynasty.

The best course open to the Palestinian resistance is to try to help mobilize support among the millions of workers and poor peasants from Morocco to Iraq. Such support on a sufficient scale, combined with the struggles of other Arab workers and peasants, can change the relationship of forces in favor of the Palestinian resistance. But such a broadening of revolutionary ferment is irreconcilable with a policy of political subordination to the ruling classes and governments of the Arab states. A strategy that accords with the process of permanent revolution is required.

The strengthening of a powerful and increasingly restive and active proletariat in Egypt—as shown by the massive anti-governmental demonstrations in January 1977—and the appearance of proletarian class struggles in the three Maghreb countries (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco) are further indications of the new opportunities facing revolutionary Marxists in the Arab countries. The upsurge of workers struggles in Egypt is related to the crisis of petty-bourgeois Arab nationalism. Besides a reaction to the massive American build-up of Israel's military forces after 1973, it is both an expression of the fact that Sadat's economic "liberalization" policy did not reduce but rather increased the tremendous misery of the Egyptian masses and an expression of the refusal of these masses to accept a life of misery in return for anti-Zionist and anti-imperialist rhetoric. Sadat's desperate maneuver to reach an understanding with the Zionist state is an attempt at finding an economic solution to this crisis by reducing the burden of military outlays and increasing the involvement of imperialist and Zionist capital in the development of Egyptian capitalism. But it has failed to suppress discontent and mass militancy.

The armed struggle of the Sahara people for independence has accelerated the destabilization of the Moroccan and Mauritanian regimes. The military and diplomatic gains made by the Polisario Front increase the isolation of the Moroccan regime in the semi-colonial world. In response, Washington has poured new massive military aid to the Hassan regime, in an attempt to crush the rebels by an all-out invasion. At the same time, the alaouite power faces a new upsurge of worker and trade union struggles that are weakening



the myth of "national unity." The combination of these two factors has placed Hassan II in a weaker position which will affect the inter-bourgeois relationships in the Maghreb.

The failure of the economic policies of Boumediene in Algeria and the sharpening of the social crisis resulted in a major wave of strikes in the spring and summer of 1977. This massive entry of workers into struggle, especially in the state sector, modified the conditions faced by the ruling class. This alteration of the relationship of forces combined with the death of the Bonaparte Boumediene accelerated the political uncertainty inside the ruling classes. The continuing deterioration of the workers' living conditions increases the tendency of the working class to act as an independent force.

In Tunisia, the Destourien power faced a wave of radicalization that pushed trade-union organization to the point that the UGTT was partially taken over by the workers and became the main opposition force to the regime. In face of this challenge, the government sought a confrontation to put a stop to this process. Hence the savage repression on January 26, 1978.

This emergence of working class independence in some of the most important countries of the region presents the possibility—for the first time since the defeat of 1967—of providing an alternative proletarian leadership for the Arab anti-imperialist struggle. The combination of the social struggles of the Arab proletariat with the struggle for national liberation and anti-imperialist unification of the Arab region is becoming more and more possible.

On the Indian subcontinent, the working class has suffered serious defeats as the result of the treacherous class-collaborationist and government coalition policies of the Communist Party of India and Communist Party of India (Marxist), and of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Communist Party in Sri Lanka. The application of this policy at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s shattered a widening class-struggle offensive, divided and demoralized the working class and peasantry, and enabled the bourgeoisie to gain the initiative and open a general reactionary anti-working-class offensive despite the severity of the economic and social crisis and its own inner divisions.

The pattern of right-wing offensives that emerged in the subcontinent has been extended to Pakistan and Bangladesh as well, where the ruling military dictatorships are severely repressing workers struggles, workers organizations, and the right to strike.

These offensives reflect the fundamental inability of the ruling classes to seriously challenge the backwardness and stagnation inherited from colonialism. In the best of cases they have applied only stopgap measures. The constant increase in the

number of landless peasants and rural laborers, the huge dimensions of unemployment and underemployment (especially among the youth), the absence of any tangible effects of industrialization on the standard of living of the masses (which has declined and continues to decline in most areas), and the continuation of national oppression in several regions make any durable stabilization of reactionary regimes unlikely. However, the reemergence of powerful mass movements, especially of the working class, depends increasingly on leadership changes in the organized labor movement and the reappearance of a militant mass working-class movement capable of offering a convincing socialist alternative to bourgeois politics.

In Southeast Asia and East Asia, the pernicious effects of the Stalinist policies of both Moscow and Peking are canceling the stimulating effect of the victory of the Indochinese revolution. Peking's policy of treating "Soviet social imperialism" as the main enemy—a reactionary bureaucratic answer to the Kremlin's no less reactionary massive military buildup on the Chinese frontier—has already led to reconciliation with the reactionary ASEAN bloc bourgeois governments. This has further isolated the Thai, Burmese, Malaysian, Filipino, and New Guinean forces engaged in guerrilla war. The military conflict between Cambodia and Vietnam, and the growing conflict between Vietnam and China following Peking's reactionary invasion, have also dealt a blow to the attractiveness of the Indochinese revolution among the working people in the area. These are the logical consequences of the Stalinist theory of building "socialism in one country," which the respective bureaucracies in each of these countries hold in common.

In Thailand mobilizations of students, workers, and peasants of exceptional scope occurred from 1973 to 1976. This explains the violence of the coup d'état in October 1976. The current development of the anti-imperialist struggle is not only an echo of the American defeat in Vietnam; it also reflects such changes in Thailand as a growing agrarian crisis, exodus from the countryside, increase in the number of wage earners, unemployment and massive underemployment, and aggravation of the unevenness of regional development.

The rottenness and violently repressive nature of many of the governments (especially the Thai, Indonesian, and South Korean dictatorships) have made them highly unpopular. Hence the negative consequences of Stalinist policies will slow down but not reverse the trend toward rising mass resistance against the ruling classes.

12. Despite its efforts, imperialism has not succeeded in establishing economic, social, and political stability in the semicolonial countries. There will not be, and cannot be, any "new world economic

order" so long as international capitalism exists. The capitalist system cannot provide a basis for any order other than the one based upon exploitation, which involves superexploitation of the weakest.

The rise in strength of a handful of indigenous ruling classes because of semi-industrialization and an increase in revenues from oil resources (in the cases of Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia both phenomena coincide) means a limited redistribution of the total mass of surplus value extracted from wage earners on an international scale to the advantage of these ruling classes and at the expense of weaker neocolonial bourgeoisies and the imperialists. This is the price which imperialism has to pay in the long run for the switch from direct to indirect rule in the colonial world under the pressure of the insurgent masses.

But imperialism is seeking to shift these losses upon the masses of the imperialist countries and of the weaker semicolonies themselves, thereby adding to the motor force impelling the workers and their allies to move in the direction of socialist revolution in both sectors of the international capitalist economy. Thus the international crisis of capitalism aggravates the instability of the regimes in the so-called Third World. Nonetheless, the semicolonial world is at present undergoing the deepest crisis of anti-imperialist leadership since World War II because of the role played by the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies and the limits of the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships.

Peking's kow-towing to the White House was a blow to the entire struggle for national liberation. In Latin America, the defeats resulting from the guerrilla strategy during the 1960s, and the evolution of Cuba's policy with regard to some regimes and the Communist parties on the continent, have eroded the influence of Guevarism. In the Arab world, the bankruptcy of the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships has isolated the struggles in southern Arabia and placed the Palestinian resistance in a political blind alley.

The ensuing vacuum has enabled Moscow to take the initiative temporarily and recover from its loss of influence in various liberation movements. The guerrilla actions undertaken by some of the Communist parties in Southeast Asia and by the anti-imperialist movements in a number of Asian and African countries cannot mask the depth of this overall crisis of political leadership in the colonial and semicolonial world, a crisis marking the close of the chapter in the history of national liberation struggles that opened as one of the consequences of World War II.

Despite the general bankruptcy of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships in the semicolonial world, such a leadership succeeded in leading the masses to topple the shah. To be sure, this leadership opposed the assertion by the toilers of their class interests as the revolution un-

folded. On the other hand, the opening of the revolution in Nicaragua where, for the first time since the Cuban victory, an unfolding permanent revolution is led by a current independent of Stalinism, indicates that great opportunities face revolutionary Marxists in the semicolonial world.

The general trend of revolutionary development in the semicolonial countries can be determined by the formula of the permanent revolution. Our political tasks are basically determined by that pattern. We endeavor to build mass Leninist-type parties in order to accomplish these tasks. In most of these countries, many mass struggles and the revolution itself can start around issues belonging historically to the tasks of bourgeois-democratic revolutions: agrarian reform, democratic rights, Constituent Assembly, separation of church and state, national liberation, and unification of the country.

### III. Perspectives and Problems of the Iranian Revolution

13. The overthrow of the hated totalitarian regime of the shah of Iran in one of the most sustained mass mobilizations in history has deep significance for the toiling masses the world over.

The shah's regime appeared to be impregnable. Washington had built up his army into one of the largest and most highly armed in the world. The CIA helped construct SAVAK into a massive secret police network. Right to the bitter end, every imperialist power supported the Peacock Throne against the Iranian masses. Moscow and Peking, each seeking "peaceful coexistence" with Washington, added their support, with Moscow changing sides only when it became apparent that the shah was finished. Finally, the shah had control of billions of dollars in oil money and was promising rapid economic and social progress.

The Iranian masses overcame all these obstacles by relying on the immense power of the millions when they mobilize in united action. The toiling people throughout the world can identify with the proletarian methods of struggle utilized—mass demonstrations, formation of broad struggle committees, general strike, appeals to the soldiers who joined the struggle, mass insurrection. It was this power of the masses that disintegrated the apparently invulnerable power of the shah. If it can be done in Iran, it can be done anywhere.

In the course of the year-long mobilization that built up toward the February 9-12, 1979 insurrection, the working class came forward as the backbone of the broad mass struggle, reflecting the worldwide tendency toward proletarian predominance in mass political struggles including in the semicolonial countries.

The overthrow of the shah's regime opened a process of permanent revolution

Because of the degree of industrialization and proletarianization reached in several of these countries, however, revolutionary mass struggles do not always start around such issues. They can be touched off by issues typically advanced by the proletariat in the class struggle. Revolutionary Marxists understand the logic of permanent revolution in the semicolonial countries, which includes the struggle for immediate gains. While never abandoning the struggle for anti-imperialist and democratic goals which figure among the key revolutionary tasks in these countries, they stubbornly fight for the organizational and political independence and unity of the proletariat of all nationalities as a necessary precondition for the conquest of power by the proletariat allied to the poor peasantry. Without a workers state, the anti-imperialist and democratic tasks of the revolution cannot be fully realized.

in Iran—the Third Iranian Revolution. This revolution has demonstrated the key role of democratic and anti-imperialist demands in semicolonial countries. However, whatever contradictions exist between imperialism and the native Iranian capitalist class, it is nevertheless dependent upon imperialism. There can be no "stage" of capitalist development in Iran independent from imperialism. Neither can the Iranian bourgeoisie carry through the democratic tasks of granting land to the peasants and the wherewithal to exploit it, freedom for the oppressed nationalities, or equality for women.

The national democratic and anti-imperialist mass movement, in which class demands of the toilers began emerging, toppled the monarchy. It was led by the bourgeois leadership of the Shi'ite hierarchy headed by Khomeini. The prestige that leadership gained in this struggle is the key card the ruling class in Iran is playing in its attempt to restore a stable state apparatus and a new bourgeois political leadership in order to crush the revolutionary process and relaunch a process of "rationalized" capitalist development in Iran. That is the course the ruling class has embarked upon, with the support of imperialism. The state remains a bourgeois state.

The dynamic of the Iranian revolution continues to be one of upsurge. The magnitude of the mass mobilizations and the victory of the mass insurrection have created tremendous expectations among the workers, the semiproletarian layers in the cities, the poor peasants, the oppressed nationalities, and women. Neither the Khomeini regime or any other type of bourgeois rule can fulfill these expectations or crush the mass movement through repression at this stage. They first have to

achieve social stability and rebuild the army and other institutions of the capitalist state.

To win their demands and embark upon economic development free of the distortions imposed by imperialist domination, the working class and all the toilers will have to go forward to the establishment of a workers state, breaking the power of imperialism and its Iranian junior partner, expropriating the bourgeoisie, and opening the door to begin the construction of socialism.

In the long run there are only two possible outcomes: either the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with the peasantry, which alone can guarantee the victory of the revolution, or the victory of the counter-revolution.

The main obstacle on the road to the victory of the revolution is the weakness of the subjective factors, the leadership and class consciousness of the proletariat and toiling masses. There is no revolutionary mass party in Iran. The Iranian working class has not yet conquered political class independence. The political prestige and authority of the Shi'ite clergy, won during the anti-shah struggle, is today the main stumbling block to the conquest of that class independence. To reinforce its hold on the masses, the clergy utilizes the reactionary ideology of religion. However, in the process of their struggles the masses will break this hold of the clergy.

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14. While doing everything it could to prop up the shah, Washington was not able to send troops against the Iranian people. No other imperialist power was in a position to substitute. The Iranian revolution has dealt a new blow to imperialism, further shifting the relationship of class forces on a world scale. Imperialism counted on the shah's regime and army as a bulwark against the Arab revolution, as a protector of its interests in the oil-rich region, and as a bastion of capitalist stability in the "Northern Tier" including Turkey, Afghanistan, and Pakistan on the southern flank of the Soviet Union.

The breaking of the shah's yoke has resulted in renewed struggles by Iran's oppressed nationalities. Comprising 60 percent of the population, they include Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Baluchis, Turkmenis, and Arabs, among others. Many of these groups spill over the Iranian borders, and their renewed struggles will directly affect Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. This is true for the Soviet Union, too, where the struggles of the oppressed nationalities will be part of the political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The Palestinian people have been given a powerful boost. From a staunch supporter of Israel and its major oil supplier, Iran has become an antagonist of that imperialist beachhead, cutting off oil supplies to it.

Oil supplies were officially cut off to South Africa. U.S. bases, used to spy on the Soviet Union, were shut down.

Imperialism has responded by attempting to shore up friendly regimes in the area, increasing its military presence, and seeking points of support in Iran to reverse the revolution's anti-imperialist dynamic. But as Begin has pointed out, Iran has shown that no semicolonial country—including Egypt and Saudi Arabia—can play the role of stable outpost for imperialism in the area that Israel can, and Washington must rely on Israel more than ever. Carter put the squeeze harder on Sadat to come to an agreement with Israel. At the same time, the imperialist powers, while utilizing reactionary policies of the Khomeini regime for propaganda purposes to smear the revolution itself and justify their support of the shah, are backing the efforts of the capitalist government to stem the tide of the revolution, so that they can reconsolidate their economic links and control in Iran.

In the long run, capitalist stability will require closer ties with imperialism. Given the mighty anti-imperialist awakening of the masses in the course of the revolution, however, open moves in this direction can meet with opposition from the masses.

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15. Underlying the crisis of the Iranian monarchy was the failure of the shah's so-called White Revolution launched in 1962-63. The "agrarian reform," the industrialization projects that were given a boost in the 1970s by the rise in the price of oil, and the influx of petrodollars did not resolve any of the basic problems of underdevelopment caused by the long years of imperialist exploitation.

The partial industrialization did not end the dependence upon imperialism but changed its form. It was tailored to fit the needs of international imperialist monopolies, not to achieve balanced growth of the economy. Capital goods had to be imported from the imperialist countries; investment tended in the majority of branches toward assembly of products as part of a chain of production controlled by the monopolies. A powerful consortium of the big oil companies controlled the marketing of Iranian oil, the "one crop" mainstay of the economy.

The "agrarian reform" destroyed the traditional agriculture of the country, not for the benefit of the peasantry, but for Iranian and imperialist capital. Large agribusiness enterprises were established, producing for export and the needs of the imperialist-dominated world market. This resulted in a terrible destruction of productive forces caused by the elimination of the traditional modes of cultivation and irrigation. Previously a net exporter of food, Iran must now import 60 percent of the food required for internal consumption.

The agrarian reform drove millions from the land. The massive exodus from the rural areas to the cities was not accompan-

ied by the creation of sufficient industrial jobs. This led to a monstrous growth of shantytowns in the urban centers, inhabited by sections of the workers, semiproletarians, and unemployed.

The international recession and its aftermath sharpened the crisis of the Iranian economy. Inflation soared to over 30 percent per year. The prices for capital goods imported from the imperialist powers rose faster than oil prices, which were also affected by the decline of the dollar. Iran began to build up debts to the imperialists.

The monarchy's much-touted "liberation" of women was also a sham. While granting women certain legal concessions, lifting some of the barbaric laws codifying their oppression, that oppression remained basically untouched.

The oppressed nationalities were ruthlessly suppressed by the shah, denied all language and cultural rights, and held to a second-class status compared to the Farsi-speaking Persians. Given the fact that much of the peasantry are from the oppressed nationalities, the national oppression is intertwined with the exploitation of the peasantry, of the Arab workers in Khuzestan and of the second-class status of many of the workers and semiproletarians forced into the cities from the countryside.

The regime denied all rights to the working class to organize to better its lot. "Unions" run by SAVAK ensured the presence of the secret police in every workplace. The partial industrialization was carried out through a brutal exploitation of the working class.

The shah's support for developing certain industries harmed sectors of the artisans. In the context of the world recession and its aftermath, the regime imposed on the merchants of the "bazaar" higher taxes, higher interest rates, and customs policies that favored the imperialists the top fifty families. It attacked the working class through freezing wages and the imposition of a workers' passport. This led to an increase of the social isolation of the monarchy, reflected in the failure of the shah's attempt to build a pro-monarchy political party on the basis of the White Revolution.

The facts refute all theories that the oil income was transforming Iran into a "sub-imperialism." On the contrary, the oil income sharpened the contradiction of an economy that remains under imperialist domination.

16. In 1976, differences appeared among those in power over what policies to adopt in face of the economic crisis. The monolithic facade of the monarchy began to crack.

In 1977, sectors of the intelligentsia and of the liberal bourgeois opposition of the old National Front, encouraged by struggles abroad demanding human rights in Iran, began to mobilize publicly to demand respect for the Constitution of 1906 which was still formally in effect. There was an

upsurge in the student movement. The regime decided to meet the opposition currents with repression.

In the context of the isolation of the monarchy, the stepped-up repression had the effect of extending the movement. A dynamic began to unfold that characterized the whole movement: crackdowns were answered with deepening mobilization, revealing the depth of hatred for the repression, oppression and exploitation embodied in the shah's regime, as well as growing willingness to fight to the end against it.

On January 8, 1978, mass street demonstrations in the religious city of Qum protested government newspaper attacks on the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini. Many were killed when police attacked.

In a pattern that came to mark the protest movement, a new wave of demonstrations began forty days later, following the traditional Muslim mourning period. At that time there was an uprising in the Azerbaijani city of Tabriz which revealed elements of the future development of the revolution. Workers, shopkeepers, and the semiproletarian masses in the city joined in. The discipline of the Tabriz garrison broke, and the army was unable to crush the masses. The city came under the control of the population for a day before the shah was able to regain control by bringing in troops from the other garrisons.

The cycle of demonstrations, which grew in scope and spread to all the major cities, tended to be organized out of the mosques, the only centers of social life not totally controlled by the regime and its police, as a result of the inactivity and betrayals of the old opposition parties (Tudeh, National Front) and the big influx into the cities of a rural population on which the hold of religion was stronger. This brought to the fore the role of the Shi'ite hierarchy. The shah's regime contributed to the opposition of the hierarchy through its forcing of Khomeini into exile in 1963, its incessant attacks upon it to try to reduce its influence, and attempts to gain control over it.

With a large organizational network at its disposal, the hierarchy was able to profit from the weakness of the old bourgeois political opposition, the National Front, as well as the organizational weakness of the workers movement. The betrayals by the Tudeh party in the Second Revolution, the policies of support for the shah by the Kremlin and Beijing, the repression of political and religious minorities in the bureaucratized workers states, have led many combative and devoted youth, workers and intellectuals to turn toward utopian or reformist concepts of "socialism in Islamic colors" as put forward by the theologian Shariati or by the Mujahedeen guerrilla organization.

The massive influx to the cities from the more backward countryside, where the hold of religion was traditionally stronger, gave a broader popular base to the hierarchy in the urban areas.

But undoubtedly the key factor in the way the masses looked upon the hierarchy was the role played by Khomeini. His authority among the masses is based on the fact that he refused all compromises with the shah and the monarchy, even when other bourgeois opposition figures were ready to do so.

In September 1978, the working class began to enter the struggle with its own weapons and forms of organization. By December, a revolutionary general strike spearheaded by the oil workers drew behind it the merchants and other social layers, and became the backbone of the broad mass struggle. Mobilizations intensified, and culminated in the February 1979 insurrection that swept away the monarchy.

Given the weakening and paralysis of the state apparatus and the upsurge of the mass movement, decisive advances toward the organization of the toilers into councils or soviets were possible in the immediate aftermath of the insurrection. What was lacking was a mass revolutionary working-class Marxist party capable of giving a lead.

17. Following the overthrow of the monarchy, the Khomeini-appointed bourgeois government of Mehdi Bazargan found itself in office, trying to restore capitalist law and order, and rebuild the army and the other institutions of the capitalist state. Real power, however, resided in the Islamic Revolutionary Council dominated by the clergy. Khomeini's plan to build an alternative bourgeois regime to that of the shah was put into practice.

The character of the year-long mobilization against the shah determines the context in which the class struggle is now unfolding. The masses overthrew the monarchy by relying on their power alone. They now expect that their economic, social, and political aspirations will be met.

But given the crisis of the world capitalist system and the continuing social instability in Iran, the crisis of the Iranian economy is likely to intensify, even though the policy of the new regime is to try to take measures to correct the extreme economic distortions introduced by the political and economic policies of the monarchy. The regime is thus in no position to make substantial concessions to the masses, although it has to make some. On the contrary, it must drive harder against the workers and other toilers to try to establish the conditions for large-scale capitalist investment again. This will bring it into increasing conflict with the masses, who, far from being defeated, are imbued with a spirit of self-confidence flowing from their successful battle against the shah. The main test of strength is therefore still before us.

The major confrontation so far between the new regime and the masses has been in Kurdistan. In the course of the revolutionary insurrection the Kurds armed

themselves and established Kurdish committees throughout Iranian Kurdistan. When the central government attempted to reassert its authority in March 1979, this led to major clashes. In the summer, Khomeini launched a major military offensive against the Kurds using air power against the masses, which resulted in a military setback for the Kurdish struggle, but not its crushing or defeat. It remains a major challenge to the regime. Recently, the Kurds have made important advances, forcing Khomeini to declare he is ready to recognize a status of partial autonomy for Kurdistan.

There have been struggles of other oppressed nationalities, including the Baluchis, Turkmenis and the Arabs in Khuzestan and along the Gulf Coast. At any time the Azerbaijanis and other oppressed nationalities could explode. The capitalist government, on the other hand, must try to rebuild a stable central capitalist state. This means that the national question will remain explosive, and will be one of the key struggles in the period ahead.

The Khomeini-Bazargan regime also attacked democratic rights. The first problem it attempted to grapple with was the fact that large sections of the urban population were armed. It has had partial success in collecting these arms, and in organizing armed youth who participated in the insurrection into the "pasdars," a force under the control of the clergy-dominated Imam's Committees.

While the army was badly shaken and in some places shattered during the insurrection, certain elite units were kept intact and used, for example, against the Kurds. But the regime's attempts to rebuild the army have not yet succeeded. Army ground troops are still unreliable and the regime is compelled to rely on the "pasdars," who, for example, have borne the brunt of the fighting in Kurdistan.

Steps by the religious hierarchy to enforce the reactionary Islamic code against women in March 1979 sparked the most massive demonstrations supporting the rights of women ever to occur in an Islamic country. The participation by women in the mobilizations against the shah had given them experience in political actions and created the conditions for this counteroffensive. The government was forced to temporarily retreat as a result of these mobilizations, but has launched a campaign against women through mass propaganda. In the further course of the revolution we can expect new eruptions of struggles by women.

Censorship was imposed on radio and television almost immediately, and there have been various attacks on freedom of the press. The first serious attack on democratic rights in general coincided with the summer offensive against the Kurds, when all the leftist press was banned, as well as some of the bourgeois papers. This censorship was not total, however, and opposition views began to

find their way again into the remaining newspapers. Recently, the regime has been forced to retreat, allowing some of the banned journals to reappear.

Selective repression against the left began soon after the insurrection, through attacks on sellers of newspapers by gangs incited by the clergy or Imam's Committees, harassing arrests by these Committees, etc. More serious arrests then occurred, the case of our comrades in Ahwaz being the best known both nationally and internationally. Along with the shutting down of the left press this summer, gangs were incited to attack the headquarters of left groups, and they even killed members of the Tudeh party and Fedayeen. These sorts of assaults have died down; however, left groups are not able to function openly at this time.

Further repressive moves against the left can be expected. Such blows against the vanguard, however, will not be sufficient to decisively set back the toiling masses and can be fought on this basis.

The Imam's Committees, appointed from above, have succeeded in absorbing or replacing the neighborhood committees that sprang up in the period just before and during the insurrection. They are under the direction of the Islamic Revolutionary Council.

In the course of the general strike leading up to the insurrection, strike committees were formed. In the period just following the insurrection, workers met in assemblies and attempted to elect new committees. The regime succeeded in blocking the formation of unions, and in most cases coopting the committees. However, struggles in the factories continued, in an uncoordinated and sporadic way. This has led to a new upsurge in the formation of factory committees in recent months. The character of these committees varies widely, depending on the degree of mobilization of the workers.

The showdown with the working class, the decisive contest for the revolution, is still in the future.

So far, the bourgeoisie has not been able to decisively reverse the upsurge of the masses or achieve a stable bourgeois regime. Key to Khomeini's plans for doing this has been his demands for "national unity" around the "Islamic Republic." The referendum on the Islamic Republic and the election of the "Assembly of Experts" to approve the new constitution were steps designed to go in this direction. However, it is clear that these moves have not resulted in stabilizing the social situation as the regime had hoped.

Central to the ability of the weak bourgeoisie to advance its interests is the authority of Khomeini with the masses. Without this cover, the government could not hope to carry out its reactionary aims. But Khomeini's authority does not exist in Kurdistan, and has been weakened among other oppressed nationalities. Although it still exists among the most downtrodden

plebeian masses in Tehran, there too it has eroded. The confrontation with American imperialism, which started in November 1979 over the demand for the return of the shah, and the dismissal of the Bazargan government, has once again enhanced Khomeini's standing among the masses. Khomeini's authority will be further tested against the realities of the class struggle, and can be used up if it is pitted directly against the goals of the masses.

In this situation, sharp divisions have opened in the ruling class over how to deal with the Kurdish revolt, the growth of the factory committees, the usefulness of repression and censorship, how much formal authority to give the clergy, and other questions. This was reflected in the conflicts between the official Bazargan government and the Islamic Revolutionary Council which led to the dismissal of Bazargan and his cabinet, but it is now apparent in deep divisions among the top clergy and in the Islamic Revolutionary Council itself.

Support for the government among the toiling masses depends upon the illusions about its will and capacity to satisfy basic demands. At the present time repression will not be able to stabilize its base. In the course of the class struggle in the next period, the illusions of the masses are going to erode. There can be new government crises and sharp changes in the composition and policy of the government and the Islamic Revolutionary Council itself.

18. The dynamic of the class struggle brings to the fore the combination of immediate, democratic and transitional demands, along the lines of the permanent revolution. Among the main tasks confronting the revolution are the following:

- For unconditional defense of the conquests of the revolution against domestic reaction and imperialism.

- For the convocation of a free and sovereign Constituent Assembly.

- For full democratic rights for all political parties. Against all restrictions on freedom of speech, press, and assembly. Separation of church and state, and freedom of religion and belief in general.

- To counter the effects of unemployment and inflation, the hours of work should be reduced with no loss in pay to spread the available work, and wages should rise automatically with the cost of living. A vast program of public works is urgently needed to help fight unemployment and provide badly needed housing, schools, hospitals, and social services.

- For the workers to open the books of the companies to the public, so that the truth about the economy, secret deals with imperialism, and corruption can be known. Immediate appropriation of all the properties of the royal family, and of the capitalists who fled or who refuse to reopen their factories. Stop the flight of capital abroad. Expropriate the key sectors of the econ-

omy, and place all expropriated properties under workers control.

- The peasants need land, cheap credit, adequate machinery and fertilizers and guaranteed markets.

- Closely connected with the fight for the social needs of the peasants is the question of the liberation of the oppressed nationalities, who were in the forefront of the fight against the shah. Full restoration of the language and cultural rights of these oppressed peoples, and for their right to self-determination.

- For the liberation of women.

- Dissolution of all the special repressive bodies of the old regime. Open the files on their crimes against the Iranian people.

- The organizations of the masses have the right to defend themselves against thugs and ex-SAVAK agents masquerading as revolutionists.

- Full political rights for soldiers.

- The workers need democratic unions to fight for their interests.

- For the development and coordination of the *shoras* (committees) in the factories, on the farms, and in the neighborhoods. In order to fight for the interests of the workers and semiproletarian urban masses, the soldiers, peasants and all the toilers, these committees have to be independent from the state and religious hierarchy, and be run democratically. Purge the SAVAK agents who have tried to penetrate the committees. The objective is the formation of broadly based councils or soviets of delegates from the worker, soldier, peasant and neighborhood committees.

- While revolutionary Marxists will fight side by side with the present regime

against any counterrevolutionary attempt by imperialism, its direct stooges, or an imperialist supported military coup to overthrow the present regime, no capitalist government can meet the needs of the toiling masses. For a workers and peasants republic, a government that would cement the bonds between the workers and poor peasants, guarantee the rights of the oppressed nationalities, mobilize the masses to expropriate the major branches of banking and industry, break the power of the imperialists and their native junior partners, institute a planned economy, and establish a workers state based on the democratic councils of the toilers.

The workers and their allies can win if a mass working-class Marxist party can be built in time, in the heat of the struggle itself. This is the job which our comrades of the HKS have set themselves. An important task of the Fourth International is to aid our Iranian comrades in advancing toward this goal.

The campaign in the international labor movement to save the lives and free the arrested comrades of the Iranian HKS was initiated by the Fourth International and its sections and sympathizing groups, with important aid from the OCRFI. This campaign has been one of the most successful of such actions we have ever engaged in. It has succeeded in preventing the execution of the comrades who were condemned to death. It serves as an example of the importance and potential of such defense campaigns and will remain a central task of the Fourth International until our comrades are freed.

#### IV. The Crisis of the Bureaucratic Castes and the Prospects of Political Revolution

19. The recent evolution of the Soviet Union, East European countries, and China strikingly confirms the Trotskyist analysis of their social relations, state structures, and dialectical development of the basic contradiction between their planned economies on the one hand and the parasitism of the bureaucratic caste on the other.

a. The noncapitalist nature of the economy of these countries is underlined by the fact that alone among the industrialized countries of the world, the USSR, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland were not drawn into the international recession of 1974-75. They did not undergo an overall reduction of industrial output; they experienced no massive unemployment. At the same time, these societies proved unable to insulate themselves from the effects of large-scale fluctuations of prices and trade on the international capitalist market. The recession helped expose once again the reactionary Stalinist myth that "socialism" has been established there, and that these economies could develop without fundamental internal con-

traditions, in isolation from the world economy and the international class struggle.

The productive forces in the Comecon countries are hampered more and more by the national framework in which they developed. Rapid and balanced development in Eastern Europe, the USSR, and China requires an international division of labor. Hence the growing pressures to dismantle the old Stalinist autarchic framework. But the expansion of economic links with capitalist economies brings the world market into conflict with economic planning. Insofar as the governments of Eastern Europe continue to seek stepped-up production of consumer goods through increased imports of advanced Western machinery, their direct dependence on Western capital and their vulnerability to the effects of capitalist crises increase. For this reason, these bureaucracies are forced to maneuver ever more desperately between the demands of the working class at home and the pressures of the imperialist bourgeoisies. The blowup in Poland in 1976 was a good example of this. In



anticipation of increased exports, the bureaucrats borrowed heavily from Western banks. With the failure to realize these plans owing to the recession in the capitalist world, the bureaucrats cut back food subsidies; and the workers responded in their own way, staging militant mass demonstrations and strikes.

Within Comecon itself, the development of cooperation through a system of genuine international planning is blocked by the nationalist framework within which the Stalinist bureaucracies operate. This means that any decisive step forward toward international planning could be established only by *one* of the bureaucracies (clearly the strongest one, the Soviet bureaucracy) destroying the relative economic autonomy of the others. Yet the relationship of forces between the bureaucracies and the masses in East Europe precludes any attempt at direct and complete subordination of their economies to Moscow without risking a political explosion. Thus no thoroughgoing international division of labor is possible within the framework of Stalinist rule in Eastern Europe and the USSR.

These societies remain in transition between capitalism and socialism. Capitalism can still be restored, while the rule of the parasitic caste with its mismanagement and distortion of all social relations blocks a decisive advance toward socialism.

b. The hope of some currents that the bureaucracy might reform itself and enact radical reforms or carry out a "revolution from above" has proved illusory. The pressing objective need to end bureaucratic rule explains in part the growing differentiation and rifts in the ranks of the bureaucracy. But the ruling caste cannot voluntarily give up the monopoly of power that assures its special material and social privileges. Any reforms granted by the bureaucrats are designed in the final analysis to maintain their power and privileges.

This is strikingly confirmed in the economic field. In a planned economy—which lacks the economic mechanisms for propelling increases in the productivity of labor such as those provided by capitalist competition—it becomes increasingly difficult to assure a steady growth of productivity without asserting the sovereignty of the direct producers over the planning process and in the management of the producing units. Yet democratically centralized planning presupposes the elimination of the power of the bureaucratic caste. The Stalinist mechanisms of assuring the extraction of the surplus product by reducing mass consumption and by police terror become less and less successful with the transition to technologically advanced forms of industrial development, and the resultant development of a working class of heightened skill, cultural needs, and social weight. All attempts by the bureaucracy to reform the system of bureaucrat-

cally centralized planning have failed to achieve a qualitative leap in productivity. Only the conquest of workers democracy will make that possible.

c. On the other hand, the parasitism of the bureaucracy, which is more and more flagrant; its complete incapacity to reconcile the needs of social planning with the reactionary defense of its privileges; its inability to develop any specific ideology of its own; the continual appearance of differences in its ranks, show that what we are faced with is neither a new ruling class nor a new class society, but a perversion of the process of building a classless society. At times of extreme political crisis, and even in periods of increased tensions, the bureaucracy tends to split, one wing savagely defending a position marked by the most reactionary ideologies; the other wing bending to the pressure of the masses, who want to establish proletarian democracy. So far as the ruling caste was concerned, this was clearly the basic pattern of the East German uprising in 1953, of the Hungarian revolution in 1956, and of the "Prague spring" of 1968. It is the pattern already discernible in the revival of political life in Poland.

d. Only a political revolution, which eliminates any form of rule by a bureaucratic caste, can reopen the road toward building an international classless society. The coming political revolutions in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and China will not change those elements in the economic system inherited from the October revolution—collective property in the means of production, central planning, and the public monopoly of foreign trade—which are necessary prerequisites for the building of socialism. The political revolution, will, however, not be restricted to the superstructure. The introduction of proletarian democracy will radically transform planning, economic management, and the organization of the production process. It will, among other benefits, restore the friendly, mutually advantageous alliance with the peasantry. It will mark a decisive assertion of workers management of the economy and the beginning of a radical transformation of family life.

e. The intermeshing of the crisis of capitalism and the crisis of the bureaucratic castes points up once again the counterrevolutionary nature of Stalinism on a world scale. "Peaceful coexistence" and "détente" do not remove the threat of a nuclear world war. They are intended to help maintain the present division of the world into "zones of influence" and prevent any decisive advance of world revolution. That objective contradicts the avowed goal of preventing war; for the danger of nuclear war can be overcome only by toppling capitalism in its key centers. The Stalinist bureaucracies cling to class-collaborationist policies, which in the final analysis weaken the defense of the economic base that is the source of their special privileges. This seemingly irra-

tional behavior can be explained only by fear of a new upsurge of socialist revolution. If this should occur in the West, it would inspire a similar upsurge in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Not even Peking wants that.

Revolutionary Marxists likewise reject the parallel reactionary propaganda of Maoist origin, according to which two "superpowers" dominate world politics and economics, thus blocking any progress toward socialist revolution in the industrially advanced capitalist countries. This view, like the concept of "peaceful coexistence," writes off the possibility of a socialist revolution for decades to come. The reactionary nature of this position, and the no less reactionary political conclusions drawn from it, such as justification of alliances with all kinds of bourgeois imperialist forces and reactionary semicolonial regimes, must be sharply opposed.

Revolutionary Marxists uphold the need to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack. Any attempt to restore capitalism in the countries where it has been abolished would constitute a giant step backward for humanity. But the conflict with imperialism must be clearly distinguished from the conflict between the oppressed masses in the workers states and the ruling bureaucracies, regardless of any confusion among the political dissidents resulting from the decades of Stalinist dictatorship. Against imperialism, the side of the workers states must be defended. Against the bureaucracy the cause of the masses must be espoused.

The necessary defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism does not and cannot imply any form of "ideological united front" with the bureaucracy against its political opponents. In its ideology, the bureaucracy does not offer a "variant of Marxism." As a parasitic social layer, its ideology covers up its oppressive nature. It has to be overthrown.

f. While the labor bureaucracies of the capitalist world are incapable of offering a future beyond capitalist exploitation and the limitations of bourgeois democracy, and the Stalinist bureaucracies of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe remain tied to the perspective of "peaceful coexistence," i.e., the international status quo—the permanent division of the working masses of Europe between East and West—the Fourth International struggles for the historical perspective of a real unification of the continent in a United Socialist States of Europe. In this giant step forward, both imperialism and Stalinism will be replaced by the free association of the laboring masses in an international federation of socialist democracies open to the peoples of all other continents who free themselves from the rule of capital.

20. The fact that a Stalinist bureaucracy has ruled the Soviet Union for at least fifty years, and that similar bureaucracies have ruled Eastern Europe and China for de-

cadres, raises theoretical and political questions to which revolutionary Marxists must give clear answers. While it is correct to present the Stalinist government as a regime of crisis in the USSR, one has to add that it has exhibited greater resistance to mass dissatisfaction, despite repeated crises, than was originally thought possible by revolutionary Marxists. The reasons for this combination must be explained.

The power of the Soviet bureaucracy props up bureaucratic rule in all of Eastern Europe. Through direct military intervention, the Kremlin saved the rule of the bureaucracy in East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956), and Czechoslovakia (1968) when those dictatorships were crumbling under the blows of impetuous mass movements—the beginning of political revolutions. Moscow indirectly saved the bureaucracy in Poland through outside pressure and fear of open intervention in 1956 and again in the early 1970s.

In the Soviet Union, the rise of opposition on an overt mass scale has been slow to reappear since the crushing of the Left Opposition. Fifty years of Stalinist terror have politically and organizationally atomized the Soviet working class. The physical liquidation of cadres broke the continuity of experience with the generations of prerevolutionary and revolutionary Russia.

The defeat of attempted political revolutions in Eastern Europe, coupled with the absence of a successful socialist revolution and the establishment of proletarian democracy in any imperialist country, further hampers the recovery of the Soviet working class. It was precisely for that reason—to prevent an attractive “alternative model” from radically modifying the political situation in the USSR—that the Kremlin took the risk of crushing the “Prague spring.” The price that had to be paid for that crime was considered to be a lesser evil than the repercussions in the USSR and the other East European countries of a triumph of the political revolution in Czechoslovakia, an industrially advanced country with a powerful and politically advanced proletariat.

The uneven development of political consciousness, opposition, mass action, and mass organization, which placed the East European workers at a higher level than those of the USSR, still left the bureaucracy in the USSR powerful enough to block a definitive victory of the political revolution in Eastern Europe. The absence of such a victory in turn has slowed down the militancy of the Soviet proletariat. This was predominant in the survival of bureaucratic rule in the face of deeper and deeper crises.

However, since the beginning of the 1970s, signs have been accumulating that this pattern is beginning to yield opposite results. The latest phase in the crisis of world Stalinism, marked by the appearance of so-called Eurocommunism, brings in fresh stimulation from abroad con-

tribute to deepening the political challenge to bureaucratic rule. The emergence of movements in Poland and Czechoslovakia in defense of constitutional rights helps in the same way, as does the rising resistance of the oppressed nationalities. The first forms of independent working-class protest have indeed appeared in the USSR, be it on a very modest scale. The continued production of underground samizdat material despite intensive police efforts to stamp it out is another telling indicator. All these developments, combined with approaching revolutionary openings in the imperialist countries, create more favorable conditions for a new political awakening of the Soviet working class.

These more favorable conditions for challenging the rule of the bureaucracy reflect structural changes in Soviet and East European society. The creation of developed industrial economies, with increasingly large layers of highly skilled workers, has made police terror more costly to the bureaucracy. Economic and social reprisals are used more often than open police repression of the broad masses. But the Stalinist police apparatus moves swiftly to crush any attempt to mount an organized political challenge to the established order.

The Stalinist bureaucracy was able to appeal with some success to the younger generation on the basis of the social and economic transformations in the USSR during the industrialization period and in Eastern Europe after World War II. But today one of the most explosive and intractable problems confronting the Stalinist bureaucracy is a deepgoing ideological and cultural revolt amongst youth. The reduction of opportunities to rise in the Soviet hierarchy takes away another obstacle to the revitalization of the working class—the hope of finding an individual solution to the “social question.”

In and of itself the relative stability of the bureaucratic rule during the last two decades has created an increasing number of political problems. Inasmuch as the leading personnel of the bureaucracy is no longer periodically shaken up by violent purges, it tends to become older, making the problem of succession more and more difficult to solve, especially in the total absence of democracy. This fact, combined with increasingly difficult choices in the allocation of resources—military vs. civilian outlays, expansion of consumption vs. expansion of investment, expansion of the raw material basis vs. expansion of technological renewal—and the active opposition of the caste to the toilers exercising any voice in these decisions, makes the very succession to Brezhnev a complicated and potentially explosive problem for the bureaucracy. The atomization of the toiling masses reinforces the growing isolation of the top layers from society, living in an artificial world cut off from the world of the average citizen.

21. One of the most striking develop-

ments in Poland and Czechoslovakia under bureaucratic rule has been the gradual appearance of a political opposition which the bureaucracy handles with a degree of circumspection. This also holds in part for Hungary, Yugoslavia, and even the USSR and East Germany. In Poland, the opposition movement has become very broad, and oppositionists have gained a fairly continuous experience in public and relatively large-scale forms of political activity.

There are varied reasons for this phenomenon. First of all, the depth of the contradictions, the obvious impasse into which the bureaucracy has steered the economy, the universal bitterness over its repressive measures, the deeply felt need for thoroughgoing democratization of political, economic, and social life have created favorable conditions for a more audacious public expression of political criticism and of more general grievances.

A new generation has grown up with confidence in its capacity to protest gross violations of civil rights and to utilize avenues of public protest. Striking examples of such actions include the demonstration by tens of thousands in Poland in opposition to proposed changes in the Polish constitution at the end of 1975, the widespread demands for a parliamentary inquiry into police brutality after the workers strikes in June 1976 in Poland, the extensive protests against the expulsion of Wolf Biermann from East Germany and the trial of Rudolph Bahro, the widespread refusal of people in Czechoslovakia to participate in the officially obligatory campaign of denouncing Charter 77 as well as the protests against the trial of Peter Uhl and his co-defendants, which spilled over into Poland and Hungary, the use of the right to strike by 35,000 miners in Romania in August 1977 over pay and working conditions, and the public demonstration in Georgia against the ban on Georgian as the official language of the republic in April 1978. Such an attitude toward civil rights becomes extremely dangerous for the bureaucracy in periods of social instability. The bureaucracy is faced with the dilemma of reverting to massive repression—which itself could produce an even more violent popular response—or tolerating certain opposition currents.

A similar striking development is the more and more prominent role the resistance to national oppression and resentment against national inequalities is playing in the general struggle to break out of the straitjacket of bureaucratic rule. In the Soviet Union, in which barely 50 percent of the population considers itself Russian, the activities of the Ukrainians, the Baltic nationalities, the nationalities of the Caucasus, the Tatars, and the Soviet Jews, for instance, are particularly troublesome to the Stalinist bureaucrats, since they continually raise issues associated with the right to national self-determination. In Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, demon-

strations in April 1978 over the question of national language rights won some concessions from the government.

Moscow's attempt to remove language guarantees shows the intent of the bureaucracy to eliminate all vestiges of the Leninist nationality policy. It also shows that memory of this policy exists on such a broad scale that it cannot be eliminated without great struggles, and that battles in this field can erupt quickly and win concessions.

Similarly in the East European countries, the issue of national liberation has become acute under the oppressive economic and military domination of the Kremlin, a striking example being the struggle of the Czechoslovak people for withdrawal of the Warsaw Pact troops. In Eastern Europe, Stalinist dictatorship and the practice of building "socialism in one country" have not only blocked solution of the national problem but made it more explosive.

Proletarian revolutionists recognize that struggles over the national question are a central part of the overall struggle against bureaucratic misrule and for workers democracy. The question is not merely how the political revolution will advance the fight against national oppression, but even more decisively, how national struggles can help advance the political revolution.

The Fourth International defends the slogan of the independent and really sovereign Soviet Socialist Republics of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Ukraine, while at the same time advocating the confederation of all these workers states on a strict basis of equality, in one or several democratic federations of workers states.

A dispute has also arisen over the denial of national rights to the Hungarian minority in Romania. And the Romanian regime itself has renewed claims that the Moldavians incorporated into the USSR are part of the Romanian people. Bulgaria and Yugoslavia sharply disagree over the question of Macedonia.

Another notable development is the decline in both the scope and the effectiveness of repression in the countries under bureaucratic rule. This is the product of many factors: a growing reluctance of large sectors of the bureaucracy to reinstall a Yezhov-type period in which they themselves could become individual targets; growing resistance in all other layers of the population to any form of terrorist measures such as Stalin utilized on a massive scale; growing effectiveness of international protests against repression, especially protests from the international labor movement itself; growing capacity of the victims of the repression to organize resistance, which is a major factor making repression less effective.

To be sure, repression remains heavy and is accompanied by hideous practices such as internment of political dissidents in psychiatric institutions where they are subjected to refined torture. Repressive measures will undoubtedly be intensified in the first stage of explosive mass movements. But its effectiveness in atomizing society and the working class, and blocking political dissidence through the use of sheer terror, has been considerably undermined.

In addition, a series of structural changes has encouraged the reappearance of oppositional tendencies. Economic growth and scientific-technological pro-

gress require a more liberal climate, at least in the field of the natural sciences and debates over investment and management alternatives. For reasons of economic self-defense, the bureaucracy has been forced to end the sealing-off of Soviet society from foreign countries. This holds even more for Eastern Europe. The flow of ideas between the bourgeois countries and the states ruled by a bureaucratic caste has steadily increased. Contacts are multiplying between Soviet, East European, and Western citizens, primarily through scientific collaboration, exchange of students, and tourism.

Also, industrial collaboration has involved a few contacts between Soviet workers and workers from the West. Thus the possibility of increasing collaborative thought and action between sectors of the Soviet, East European, and West European workers is gradually becoming stronger.

22. The predominant feature of the emerging opposition movements in Eastern Europe and the USSR is their commitment to struggling for democratic rights and civil liberties. They have been marked by a diverse political composition and the inclusion of nonsocialist and non-working-class ideologies. Despite the fact that for decades they have been pursuing a policy of siding with the bureaucracy in blocking any growth of popular mass movements in Eastern Europe, the Western bourgeoisie, in their "human rights" agitation, have painted up some of these antisocialists, the better to use them as symbols in the capitalist war against socialist ideas.

While a restoration of capitalism is still possible in these countries, the motive forces for such a restoration are not to be



Worker in Iranian oilfield.



found among antisocialist ideologues inside the civil rights movement, but primarily in the ingrained aggressiveness of international capitalism and the imperialist powers—who owe their prolonged survival to the counterrevolutionary strategy of Stalinism and reformism among other things—and in the restorationist forces inside the bureaucracy itself, and in sections of the newly rich among the petty bourgeoisie. Whether restorationist forces prevail depends upon the evolution of the social relationship of forces, both on a world scale and inside Eastern Europe and the USSR. And a favorable evolution of that social relationship of forces depends on the capacity of the proletariat to assert its rights, overcome its atomization, organize massively, and transcend the discrediting of communism, socialism, and Marxism brought on by Stalinism. For revolutionary Marxists, the fight for civil and democratic rights is of fundamental importance in the struggle to overthrow the bureaucratic castes in Eastern Europe and the USSR.

In suppressing democratic rights, the Stalinist dictatorships regressed below the advances in this field promulgated by the great bourgeois-democratic revolutions. Besides upholding the democratic rights fought for in the revolutionary battles of the past, other reasons exist for insisting on the centrality of the struggle for these gains. Against a bureaucratic dictatorship in a society without private property, the conquest of self-determination by the masses in the political field necessitates the elimination of the control of the bureaucracy over production and social wealth. It is obvious that the atomized working class, more than any other social force, stands to gain from a conquest of democratic rights in the degenerated or deformed workers states. Anything that fosters a rise in working-class self-organization, self-confidence, and ability to develop independent political action, helps tip the scales in favor of political revolution and proletarian democracy—not restoration of capitalism. If one needed confirmation of this thesis, the balance sheet of the "Prague spring" provides ample evidence.

But precisely because the struggle for civil and democratic rights presents such a challenge to the bureaucracy, those engaged in the battle need to consider a series of overall programmatic and strategic questions. Just as the bureaucracy tries to link its tactics against civil-rights protest actions to the overall defense of its caste interests, so the tactics of revolutionary Marxists engaged in this movement must be conditioned by the requirements of the worldwide struggle for workers power and socialist democracy.

Revolutionary Marxists reject the notion that the masses in Eastern Europe and the USSR can turn to the imperialist governments of the West for help in winning democratic freedoms. Civil-rights cam-

paigns centered on appeals to imperialist governments arouse false hopes as alternatives to mobilizing the masses. Revolutionary Marxists likewise reject all terrorist methods in the struggle for civil rights, since these go against the requirements of patiently working toward broader and broader mass mobilizations.

The struggle for democratic liberties cannot be pursued in isolation from the other demands of the toiling masses in Eastern Europe and the USSR of a political, social, or economic character. Only by combining the struggle for political rights with a rounded struggle in defense of the social interests of the masses can the struggle for socialist democracy be carried through to a victorious conclusion. Those who fail to see beyond bourgeois democracy will be unable to concretely mobilize the masses in a successful struggle for power against the Stalinist bureaucracies.

Revolutionary Marxists seek to establish the broadest possible unity of action around concrete demands. But they maintain their own political identity and independence, struggling for a political revolution, direct workers power, and world socialism. Therefore, they oppose converting ad hoc united fronts into organizations or currents defined by a confused and eclectic political program.

Above all, they combine this united-front activity with a relentless struggle against reactionary bourgeois or prebourgeois ideologies and political theories, which objectively help the Stalinist bureaucracy's attempts to smear the rising political opposition as proimperialist, and which represent additional stumbling blocks on the road toward socialist democracy. These tendencies are deeply anti-working-class and antisocialist. As the struggle broadens, drawing in more and more workers, a showdown with these reactionary forces will become increasingly unavoidable.

Revolutionary Marxists base their political perspectives neither upon waiting for spontaneous mass explosions, nor on the isolated conspiracies of small clandestine groups. They count upon the dialectical interplay of programmatic clarification, organization of the vanguard and the masses, and mobilization of the masses. Without participating in the living struggles of the masses, no development of an experienced and conscious political leadership is possible.

Without conscious programmatic clarification and the organization of a Marxist vanguard, the mass movements themselves will be diverted, contained, and defeated by the bureaucracy. At the present stage of development in Eastern Europe, the USSR, and China, this means combining public actions with clandestine propaganda and the formation of discussion circles on a programmatic basis leading to the construction of revolutionary Marxist organizations.

This combined struggle inside the workers states might appear difficult at

first sight. But each step gained in independent organization of the workers will make the task easier. Revolutionary Marxists act inside the united fronts for democratic rights not only as the boldest and most effective fighters for genuine socialist democracy. They also act as uncompromising representatives of the immediate and historical interests of their own class—the working class.

If a political revolution flares up in one of the countries of Eastern Europe before it does in the USSR, the overwhelming military preponderance of the Soviet army does not automatically guarantee victory to the bureaucratic counterrevolution. In the case of Czechoslovakia, the Soviet bureaucracy paid a huge political price for its invasion. It was itself hesitant and divided over launching the attack.

The experience indicates the vital need to strengthen the links of the vanguard of the mass movements across the frontiers of the various East European countries, of the USSR, and toward the workers movements in the West. This increases the possibility of a rapid and powerful internationalist response to any use of troops by the Kremlin against the insurgent masses in Eastern Europe. This could convert the invasion into a disaster for the Soviet bureaucracy: splits within the international bureaucratic alliance, broad mobilization of communist and socialist workers in the West in defense of the political revolution, widespread demoralization of the Soviet occupation forces, solidarity actions in the USSR, and a political crisis within the Soviet bureaucracy itself. Whatever the precise tempo and form of development of the political revolution in Eastern Europe, such an internationalist perspective is required for a definitive victory in the struggle for socialist democracy.

23. The general contents and basic trends of the political revolution in all those postcapitalist societies where it has been placed on the agenda can be judged from the main goals sought by the masses in the series of social explosions that began in the German Democratic Republic in 1953.

The program of the political revolution has thus been hammered out in living struggles. The main points include the elimination of the organs of mass repression, the conquest of political freedom for the toiling masses, the establishment of independence for the trade unions and of genuine proletarian democracy with its real control by the workers; diversity of parties or factions, abolition of censorship, and assurance of the right to real ideological freedom in all spheres of social, scientific, and artistic life. To consolidate these gains requires the exercise of workers power through freely elected councils of the masses, which will appear in the struggle against the institutions of the bureaucratic dictatorship, the establishment of workers control and workers management, the modification of the decision-

making powers of technicians so that they function as consultants and not as part of a ruling caste, the radical reduction of social inequality, and rebuilding the planning system so that the drain of parasitism is done away with in behalf of fulfilling the needs of the toiling population.

In sweeping away the reactionary bureaucratic structure and replacing it with proletarian democracy, the political revolution will exhibit its social character. It will end discrimination in all forms. The right of oppressed nationalities to exercise self-determination will be guaranteed—as it was under Lenin and Trotsky—up to and including separation if they so choose. The explosive nature of the national question will impose overhauling the relations of the republics in the Soviet Union. The way will be opened for women to come forward with their own special demands and the enactment of these demands into enforceable legislation. The same will hold for the youth, with transformation of the educational system and guaranteed provisions for jobs. As part of an internationalist foreign policy, the army will be democratized and placed at the disposal of the international proletariat as it was when it was built under Trotsky. The workers states will form a united front as a step toward integrating their economies in accordance with scientific planning.

Once this liberating process begins, it will sweep throughout the country, making possible a great new cultural leap and the advancement of science and the arts to an unheard-of level.

The impact on the working class in other countries will be greater than anything seen since the October 1917 revolution. Once again the Soviet Union, and with it the other workers states, will stand out as a shining beacon for the international proletariat and its allies.

To be sure, these general formulas do not answer all questions, nor do they cover all variants. The existence of chauvinistic Russian tendencies in the different strata of Soviet society, which oppose self-determination for the oppressed nationalities, but which are nevertheless not inclined to restore capitalism, can create an unpredictable unevenness of development between the social and political goals of mass explosions leading to ideological differentiations within their ranks.

The exact interplay—impossible to foresee at this stage—of socialist revolution in the West and political revolution in the USSR and Eastern Europe will determine the speed with which the Soviet and East European proletarian vanguard succeeds in constructing a revolutionary Marxist party capable of taking the lead in reviving the internationalist aspects of class consciousness and class politics. Any further improvement in the world relationship of forces to the detriment of imperialism would obviously give powerful assistance to that process. On the other hand, grave defeats of the proletariat in the

imperialist countries or semicolonies would place new obstacles in the way of the political revolution in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and China. In spite of all these uncertainties, one can today see the main features of the political revolution in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and China not only as a programmatic projection based on the experience and theory of the Trotskyist movement but as the realization of actual trends in social developments unfolding before our eyes.

24. The death of Chou En-lai on January 8, 1976, and Mao Tsetung on September 9, 1976, precipitated important political changes in the People's Republic of China. To understand the significance of these changes, one has to consider them against a concrete background. A virtually uninterrupted factional struggle over economics, defense, and related issues, had been going on at least since 1959, when Mao was put in a minority at the Lushan Central Committee meeting following the disasters of the "Great Leap Forward." Several of the contending factions successively tried to further their aims by appealing to the masses. On several occasions these mass mobilizations—intended by the various factions of the bureaucracy to remain strictly circumscribed to purposes that did not conflict with the rule of the bureaucratic caste as such—went beyond the intended limits and unleashed genuine mass demands, the dynamics of which pointed toward a political revolution.

First it was the Maoist faction, which in 1966 appealed to the masses against the majority of the Central Committee. With the Red Guards serving as a spearhead, Mao succeeded in mobilizing millions of people, many of whom, contrary to Mao's interests and goals, voiced their fundamental grievances against the privileges and abuses of power of the ruling bureaucratic stratum. But the result objectively was to merely help substitute one faction of the bureaucracy for another. Other layers of the bureaucracy were opposed to that course, fearing the unleashing of uncontrollable forces.

When radicalized youth started to demonstrate against bureaucratic privileges as a whole, and when workers began to take over plants, the bureaucracy closed ranks. With the help of Lin Piao commanding the army, these advanced sectors were ruthlessly suppressed. Some of the leaders of the "Shanghai group," later touted as part of the so-called left faction of the bureaucracy, won their prestige in the apparatus through the very repressive role they played at that time. The forcible shifting of a large number of Red Guards and other urban youth to the countryside closed that phase of the so-called Cultural Revolution. One of the results of this shake-up was the elimination of Lin Piao and the purge of a major part of his followers.

Later it was the anti-Mao faction that started to use mass mobilizations on a large scale to further its factional pur-

poses. Whether it engineered the big April 1, 1976, demonstration at Tien An Men Square in Peking—ostensibly in honor of Chou En-lai but in reality against the Mao faction—or whether that demonstration was spontaneous is hard to establish at this point. What is clear, however, is that the violent repression of that demonstration catalyzed not only a new outbreak of the faction fight but widespread mass discontent, which came to the fore with Mao's death and the culmination of the struggle over the succession. Against the faction organized around Mao's widow Chiang Ching, Teng Hsiao-ping and his group—again with the help of the army and the repressive forces—succeeded in reestablishing their position in the top command on the basis of huge mass demonstrations against the "Gang of Four." Hua Kuo-feng, who began by supporting the purge of the Teng Hsiao-ping faction after April 1, 1976, this time switched sides and supported the struggle against the Mao faction. Because of the dismal record of that faction following 1968 (purge of the Red Guards, purge of Lin Piao, freezing of workers' wages, curbing of elementary democratic rights), the Mao faction, especially its elements centered around the Gang of Four, did not receive any widespread mass support when it was purged.

In its bid for popularity and stabilization, the new regime has started a process of de-Maoization. Of special interest are the revelations about the state of the economy under Mao. Instead of the "excellent situation" in production formerly proclaimed by the Chinese press, the regime has admitted that the economy suffered setbacks and made little progress on a per capita basis since 1966. Some concessions have been made to the masses both in lifting wage levels and in restoring higher education. The circulation of some of the classical works of Chinese and Western literature has been permitted. Some political prisoners have been freed, while new ones have taken their place. Several Chinese Trotskyists—imprisoned since 1952—were released in 1979. The fate of the others remains unknown.

At the same time, material incentives, premiums, piecework, and factory profitability are being fostered. Violent repression, including execution of political opponents, continues. Like the victims of the Mao faction yesterday, the victims of the Teng Hsiao-ping and Hua Kuo-feng factions are being slandered, without any of their real views being made known to the masses.

No real "thaw" is to be seen. The bureaucratic caste as a whole continues to rule. "Self-reform" of the bureaucracy is excluded. While opposition voices—some of which even develop a theoretical critique of bureaucratic rule—continue to appear, no turn toward proletarian democracy, toward organs of power democratically elected by the workers and the toiling peasants, has occurred. Oppositional for-

mations are forbidden, protest by the workers or other sectors of the masses remains subject to repression. Hua continues to uphold the banner received by Mao from Stalin of building "socialism in one country."

The continuation of the Mao-Chou foreign policy is especially instructive. After having used a lot of anti-imperialist rhetoric in the early 1960s, reproaching the Soviet bureaucracy for its policies of class collaboration with American imperialism, as soon as Washington made its turn, Mao and Chou suddenly switched over to the policy of the "two superpowers threatening world peace," of which the "late-comer," to wit, the Soviet Union, was painted as the most aggressive and most dangerous. Teng Hsiao-ping later developed the "two superpower" theory into the "three worlds theory," which provides a cover for the Chinese bureaucracy wooing and collaborating with extreme reactionary bourgeois forces both in imperialist

## V. The Crisis of the Class-Collaborationist Labor Bureaucracies

25. The class-collaborationist labor bureaucracies in the imperialist countries firmly counted on unending economic expansion. This was the assumption, for instance, underlying the "Common Program" signed by the leaders of French Stalinism and Social Democracy on June 27, 1972. They were convinced that a "mixed economy" in France could guarantee full employment, eliminate severe business cycles, and provide for steady increases in real wages and social-security benefits. They were as completely unprepared, both ideologically and politically, for the outbreak of the world recession in 1974 as they had been for the radicalization of the 1960s and the May-June 1968 upsurge.

Under these conditions, the "natural" inclination of the labor bureaucrats in the unions, the Social Democracy, and the mass Communist parties in a series of countries was to press their class-collaborationist orientation. These bureaucracies approved or even directly applied the various bourgeois "austerity" programs, which aim to shift the burden of the crisis onto the working class and obtain an increase in the rate of profit by cutting real wages, social-security benefits, and other social services.

In particular, they have endorsed the bourgeoisie's policy of dividing the working class by not supporting struggles waged by women, workers of oppressed nationalities, or immigrant workers who are attempting to secure their elementary rights (equal pay, union benefits, decent working conditions, etc.). The bureaucrats view these workers as marginal, and in this way foster sexist and chauvinist attitudes against them. In addition, at least a wing of the labor bureaucracy, supporting

countries like the United States, West Germany, Britain, France, and Japan, and in semicolonial dictatorships (Zaire, Iran, Chile, Argentina, Egypt, and the ASEAN powers).

The continuation of the interbureaucratic faction fight since Mao's death, which reflects the inability of the bureaucracy to close ranks around the new bonaparte, is, together with the consequences of the mass mobilizations, a feature of recent political developments in China. It is unlikely under these circumstances that the Chinese bureaucratic caste will survive as long as the caste has in the USSR, particularly in view of the increasing pace of the class struggle in many other countries. Likewise it should be noted that for the past decade numbers of workers and youth have openly expressed their desire for proletarian democracy. The pressure in favor of a political revolution, which has increased substantially in the last period, it can be predicted, will continue despite temporary lulls or setbacks.

thinly disguised racist or other reactionary views, endorse "protectionist" measures of big business aimed at exporting unemployment to countries competing with "us."

However, the length and gravity of the overall crisis affecting the international capitalist system, plus the parallel crisis of Stalinism, make it difficult for the labor bureaucrats to unanimously accept responsibility for "managing the crisis" in favor of "their own" bourgeoisie. Such monolithism could be maintained only if the crisis were relatively short and the working class remained disoriented and quiescent. But the very duration of the crisis goads the workers into reacting against the additional burdens that the employers and their government—even if administered by the reformists—try to impose on them. The more intense these reactions, the more likely it is that they will be reflected in an organized way inside the unions and mass parties of the working class. Thus the twin crises of capitalism and Stalinism become translated into a crisis of the mass reformist organizations and their class-collaborationist leaderships.

There is of course a deeper reason for the revolt of the workers. In a period of very slow economic growth, if not outright depression, the employers are unable to grant concessions sufficient enough to temporarily appease the workers. The bourgeoisie must even try to take back past concessions won by the working class. The workers sense the bankruptcy of class-collaborationism and defend themselves from the capitalist offensive through spontaneous actions or pressuring the labor bureaucrats to act.

But it takes more than this to present a consistent and credible alternative to the

program and strategy of reformism. As long as no politically credible and organizationally powerful alternative pole of attraction appears, the present leaders of the mass organizations will by and large retain by default the political allegiance of the majority of organized workers, be it on a purely electoral basis with stronger and stronger reservations. Periodic differentiations in the ranks will continue to occur, increasing the possibility of growing numbers of workers outflanking the labor bureaucrats in action. Rooted among these workers, the revolutionary Marxists will be able to build up their own forces and in many countries help speed the formation of an organized class-struggle left wing that presses key class demands flowing from the needs of the present economic, social, and political situation. This growing alternative leadership will prove attractive to the class as a whole and its allies. Revolutionary Marxists, utilizing the method outlined in the Transitional Program, will seek to raise the political level of such class-struggle left wings as they arise and keep them headed in the direction of a socialist revolution.

26. In a series of major capitalist countries, the Social Democracy has descended to new levels of treachery as a labor agency of the bosses. For instance, in Britain, West Germany, Denmark, and Portugal, the governments headed by the Social Democracy have enforced anti-working-class "austerity" measures. They have come out openly not only in favor of capitalist profits but of increasing them at the expense of wages and social and public services. This policy is defended with the argument that in a depression, priority must be given to the struggle against unemployment and not to increasing wages. Then the ancient "lesser evil" is dragged out—if "we" don't apply "mild" austerity measures, then reaction will come to power and apply "harsher" austerity, coupled with massive unemployment and a savage attack on democratic rights.

It is not necessary to point out the hypocrisy in these arguments. In spite of their attacks on real wages, the governments headed by the Social Democracy have not reduced unemployment. Structural unemployment is here to stay. Far from protecting "democracy" against the "onslaughts of reaction," it is precisely these governments that have leveled sharp attacks against democratic rights, launched waves of repression, and strengthened the repressive state apparatus in several countries. If the resulting disorientation and partial demoralization of the working class caused by the Social Democratic leaders paves the way for the return to power of reactionary direct representatives of the bourgeoisie, they will be able to exploit to the fullest the preliminary "clearing of the field" accomplished by the reformists.

It might seem paradoxical that despite the exposure of the Social Democracy as a cynical agency of bourgeois politics inside

the labor movement, it has undergone considerable expansion during the last period in countries like Portugal, Spain, and (to a lesser extent) France. The explanation for this is threefold:

In the first place, when workers become so radicalized as to be able to topple a fascist or brutal military regime, they seek to organize themselves as an effective political force on a national level. Because of their experience with openly declared capitalist parties, the masses are not pulled in that direction. They move instead toward what they consider to be working-class parties, a conclusion drawn from memory, from accounts of underground activities, or actual contact in preliminary phases of fighting the dictatorship. But the masses are largely ignorant of the factional struggles over policies and lines of action that occurred under the dictatorship. Consequently a period opens of testing these parties in which the masses pass judgment on them primarily in accordance with the criterion of effectiveness. A moderate party that displays great energy in propagandizing itself, that does not hesitate to use radical-sounding demagoguery, including talk of workers control and similar concepts, and for opportunist reasons puts itself at the head of demonstrations, protest rallies, and even union struggles, can swell its ranks on a large scale before its pretenses are exposed.

In the second place, the fact that increasing numbers of the world proletariat have become thoroughly convinced of the abhorrent nature of Stalinism, while agreeing on the need to struggle for socialist goals, has given the Social Democracy "another chance." In the absence of mass revolutionary parties, important sectors of the working class find the Social Democracy if not more attractive, then at least less unattractive, than Stalinism. Wherever the Stalinists (as in Portugal in 1974) combine the traditionally repulsive aspects of their policies with flagrant class collaborationism, strikebreaking, open support to bourgeois governments, and divisiveness in the labor movement, this impels many class-conscious workers to opt for the Social Democracy.

In addition, under "normal" circumstances, the vast majority of the working class is not politically active. In periods of upsurge, on the other hand, masses of workers, running into the millions in heavily populated countries, come into political activity for the first time. Newly politicized workers tend to join the traditional proletarian organizations. Other layers of workers seek to move ahead to more revolutionary levels. Spain and Portugal provide striking examples of this process.

In the third place, the very growth of the Western proletariat and the increasing proletarianization of the "middle classes" broadens the differentiations within the working class, and incorporates into the organized labor movement new layers of relatively privileged professionals with

little or no knowledge of the past betrayals of reformism, little or no socialist education, and loaded with petty-bourgeois illusions.

All this creates an objective basis for the temporary growth of the Social Democracy.

World imperialism—especially the more flexible European sectors—has deliberately used the Schmidts, Wilsons, and Callaghans as their first line of defense against the threat of revolution in Southwest Europe. Together, they have calculatedly used and built up Mário Soares, for example, as the main Judas goat in restoring "law and order" in Portugal and a stable repressive apparatus to enforce it, a task which no reactionary bourgeois figure could have carried out in 1975-76 in view of the relationship of class forces.

But precisely because they are rooted in the working class and maintain numerous ties with the trade unions and other organizations of the proletariat, Social Democratic mass parties cannot insulate themselves from revolts and oppositional moods engendered by the crisis of capitalism. Thus political differentiation and growth of oppositional currents within Social Democratic mass parties is on the agenda. This process is interlinked with the development of similar differentiations in the unions and in the mass Communist parties, and with the growing opportunities to organize class-struggle left wings in the labor movement as a whole.

27. "Eurocommunism" is misnamed. It has nothing to do with genuine communism. Moreover, it is a phenomenon not limited to the mass Communist parties in Western Europe. It also involves the Japanese CP, the Australian CP, and formations such as the Venezuelan MAS, which originated in a split from the CP in 1971. The appearance of Eurocommunism marks a new stage in the crisis of Stalinism. It consists of a more systematic codification of the class-collaborationist, electoralist, and reformist practices engaged in by the CPs since the Seventh Congress of the Communist International and the initiation of "popular front" policies in 1935. It is featured by abandonment of even lip service to Lenin's concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of references to Leninism in the official party programs, coupled with more critical public statements concerning the worst features of the Stalinist dictatorships in the USSR and Eastern Europe. The manifold inner contradictions of Eurocommunism are just beginning to unfold.

There is nothing new in Eurocommunism so far as class collaboration, government collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and betrayal of the revolutionary movement is concerned. The Stalinists engaged in these practices on a broad scale in Spain and France before World War II and again in France, Italy, Greece, and elsewhere at the end of that slaughter. On these occasions the CP leaderships liter-

ally saved the bourgeois state and bourgeois property relations from being overthrown by the masses. What is new in so-called Eurocommunism is the emphasis these bureaucrats place on their "independence" from the Kremlin. Formerly they rode high on the popularity of the October revolution and the Soviet Union, particularly after its victory over German imperialism. Today they seek to rid themselves of the political cost of publicly associating so intimately with the Kremlin. In the past, sharp turns in the international situation, to which Moscow responded with total reversals in foreign policy, would cause these mass Communist parties to make abrupt shifts in line. Under current conditions, such overnight reversals run the risk of causing disastrous losses of trade-union influence and voters.

But the Eurocommunists are not moving toward class political independence and revolutionary Marxism. Their direction of movement is toward deeper integration into bourgeois society and more open support of the bourgeois state in competition with the Social Democrats whom they regard as both bitter factional rivals and allies in preventing socialist revolution. Out of bureaucratic self-interest, they are compelled to maintain their differentiation from the Social Democrats and to periodically sharpen it. This leads them to step up divisionist policies toward other forces in the labor movement as was vividly demonstrated in France in the breakup of the Union of the Left on the eve of the 1978 elections.

Nevertheless the Eurocommunist CPs have not cut their links with the Soviet Union, the "socialist camp," and the "world Communist movement." In fact they do their utmost not to let their more critical stance toward the Kremlin injure these links. They follow this course because the huge apparatus built up by most of these parties inside bourgeois society, which feeds essentially upon accumulated reserves of imperialist wealth and superprofits, is able to maintain and amplify its privileges only if it consolidates and extends its electoral and trade-union strength. For this it requires a specific political and ideological image involving its special relationship with the Russian revolution, the USSR, and the "socialist camp." If it loses its specific differentiation from the Social Democrats, it becomes vulnerable to displacement by them. In reality, the Eurocommunist bureaucrats are concerned about their ties with the bureaucracies in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, who likewise cling to identification with the Russian revolution if only ritualistically. For example, the objective of maintaining friendly ties with the Romanian Stalinists led the Italian, Spanish, and French CPs to turn a blind eye to the August 1977 miners' strike there. The Eurocommunists have the same sort of relationship with the Yugoslav bureaucrats.

The Eurocommunists are all the more sensitive to this problem because of the sharpened class struggle resulting from the general crisis of the capitalist system, and the concomitant search by the workers for class-struggle leadership and proletarian democracy. This is a central factor in the motivations of the leaders of Eurocommunism.

Another factor is the growing challenge from left currents in the working class and in the mass organizations controlled by the Communist parties. It helps explain the continued identification of the Eurocommunist parties with the "socialist camp" and the "heritage of the October revolution." They are unwilling to make it easier for revolutionary Marxists to be recognized by large sectors of the working class as the genuine representatives of communism.

No qualitative change has occurred in the nature of these Communist parties. Nevertheless, Eurocommunism represents a phase in their increasing integration into bourgeois economic institutions and the state machinery (in Trotsky's words, the Communist parties "feed from the same sources as the Social Democracy, that is, the superprofits of imperialism"). This trend, noted by Trotsky in 1938, could eventually lead to the transformation of these parties into analogs of Social Democratic parties.

This qualitative change has not occurred. The conditions for such a transformation include profound upheavals in the organized labor movement, successive splits and regroupments, significant alterations in the international situation, as well as important shifts in the relationship of forces among the different political currents in the working class.

It should be pointed out that the sallies by the more outspoken Eurocommunist leaders against the political regimes in the USSR and Eastern Europe have drawn sharp rebuffs from the Kremlin, which is aware that criticisms from such sources encourage articulate socialist opposition within these countries. Likewise, if the Eurocommunists still generally express solidarity with the "anti-imperialist struggle of the socialist camp," some exceptions have already been recorded. The Japanese CP supports its own imperialist government against the Soviet Union on the question of the return of the Kurile Islands to Japan. The Italian CP leadership is ready to approve Italy's membership in NATO and has come out openly against the Kremlin's line on Eritrea.

The fact that the appearance of Eurocommunism coincides with a general rise in working-class struggles, leftward differentiations inside the unions and more critical attitudes of large layers of workers toward bureaucratism—union bureaucrats and party bureaucrats alike—adds to the strains brought about by a change in line which, for important layers of Communist militants, means in any case a radical

break with traditional political norms, habits, and convictions. Both the factional struggle precipitated by Eurocommunism and the class struggle thus give impetus to political differentiations in the Communist parties of a scope not seen in most of these parties since the 1920s. If the rise of oppositional tendencies should coincide with mass revolts of workers against "austerity policies" applied or even approved by the CPs, the potential for splits arises. We of course reject any illusions that the CPs can be regenerated or can transform themselves into centrist parties as a result of Eurocommunism.

The Eurocommunists, like the Social Democrats, seek to gain government posts and build up party strongholds inside the bourgeois government and state apparatus while strengthening their position in the organized working-class movement. For the time being, however, the key sectors of the European bourgeoisie oppose this buildup. Their reluctance differs qualitatively from their attitude toward the similar designs of the Social Democratic parties. It will require a powerful prerevolutionary or even revolutionary upsurge of the mass movement, and immediate threats to the survival of capitalism, for the bourgeoisie to abandon their resistance and treat popular fronts with a strong Communist component as a last defense line before turning toward an extreme right-wing and fascist mobilization against the revolution.

28. Even more than the leaders of the Social Democratic and mass Communist parties, the trade-union bureaucracies have been subjected to direct pressure from the membership in response to the anti-labor offensive mounted by the employers. These bureaucrats have shared responsibility for imposing various governments' "austerity policies," "wage restraints," and repressive laws upon the working class wherever these have been applied by governments headed by reformist workers parties or with their participation. Indeed, without their complicity, mass resistance against these policies would have become irresistible from the outset. But even in those countries where such policies were applied by governments composed of bourgeois parties, union bureaucrats have been responsible—as in the United States, France, and Japan—for putting a brake upon mass resistance and for fragmenting

and isolating militant responses on the picket line. They have even openly opposed strike actions and mobilizations of the working class and its allies in favor of "political" solutions, such as manipulations through "historical compromise" or electoral politicking.

The unions, which had steadily grown in both absolute and relative strength during the previous period in nearly all the imperialist countries, include in their structure a much larger part of the working class than the reformist parties do. Consequently they are more subject than the reformist mass parties to working-class discontent, unrest, or revolt ascribable to the capitalist depression and "austerity policies." Resistance inside the unions to the "austerity" policy approved by the Italian Communist Party and trade-union leaderships was so strong that the union bureaucracy at first sought to undermine the opposition by imposing its line piecemeal before daring to challenge it openly. In Britain, a sector of the union bureaucracy also offered lip service to the workers' resistance against "wage restraints" while at the same time doing everything possible to avoid an explosion of mass struggles in defense of jobs and the level of real wages. Even in West Germany, the conservative union bureaucracy, while constantly giving aid and backing to the anti-working-class policies of the Schmidt cabinet, had to go along with the growing discontent of the workers and organize a series of official strikes in the spring of 1978, in order to avoid losing control over the mass discontent. Likewise, the class-collaborationist leadership of the American coal miners' union had to acknowledge the strong reaction of the rank and file against the employers' union-busting offensive, while doing its utmost to weaken the strike and to undermine the rank-and-file revolt.

More generally, one could say that in the absence of mass revolutionary parties, the capitulation of the reformist parties impels the ranks to turn to their unions to fill the political vacuum. Insofar as they express discontent with the procapitalist policies of the SP and CP apparatuses, and make some gestures of resistance, they voice the interests of the class not only on "pure" trade-union questions but on social and political questions as well, starting from economic issues.

## VI. The Immediate Tasks of the Fourth International and the Turn to Industry

30. Despite its division into nation-states, one of the main features of capitalism is its international structure. This led first to creation of the world market, then the progressive unfolding of an international division of labor and a development of the productive forces that clearly cut across national boundaries. From this flows the international character of the

working class and the international nature of the class struggle.

For the bourgeoisie, the internationalization of the productive forces stands in fundamental contradiction with the national and continental fragmentation of capital, which is rooted in private property and competition. For the working class, no such internal contradiction exists. The



historic interests of wage earners of all countries are identical—the abolition of capitalist property, wage labor, exploitation, and oppression in the building of a classless society can be achieved only on an international scale.

On the other hand, no matter how intensive the rivalries may be between national sectors of the capitalist class, all of them agree on fighting tooth and nail against the socialist challenge of the working class. The working class is led in turn to organize itself by extending and tightening its international ties, not only to press forward its historic interests, but even to defend its immediate needs and conditions of day-to-day life and work against the capitalist offensive. Hence the compelling necessity to build a world party of socialist revolution. Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky devoted themselves to advancing this task.

But the international bourgeoisie is today far ahead of the working class when it comes to international coordination. The multinational corporations pit the workers in one country against those in another. Even the various national bourgeoisies have been able, in spite of their contradictions, to unite in defense of the capitalist system.

The working class, its unions, and its political organizations have not managed to pursue a joint struggle against the common enemy to a corresponding degree. The reformist and Stalinist leaderships have instead backed their "own" bourgeoisies and often led the working class in protectionist and narrow chauvinist directions. Instead of coordinating the struggle against world capitalism, the reformist Internationals have backed their own national organizations in an attempt to lead the masses to support their "own" bourgeoisie.

In constructing the Fourth International, it is necessary to proceed simultaneously on both a national and international level. This is not a peculiarity of "Trotskyism" in opposition to Marxism or "orthodox Leninism." On the contrary, building an international *organization* is part and parcel of the revolutionary Marxist program. It follows from Marx's analysis of capitalism, from Lenin's theory of imperialism, and from the theory of permanent revolution.

During the struggle for power and even after its conquest, the proletariat is directly confronted with counterrevolutionary actions by the international bourgeoisie. An effective answer to these attacks requires solidarity actions by the workers and their allies on an international scale.

Any abandonment of the task of simultaneously building national and international organizations nourishes deviations from revolutionary Marxism. It nourishes the appearance of petty-bourgeois nationalist tendencies inside the revolutionary movement itself. It hampers the ability of the revolutionary Marxist movement to

theoretically analyze and chart a correct political course in face of the new problems that are encountered.

The program of the Fourth International summarizes the experience of the struggles of the proletariat and its allies on a world-wide scale for the past 150 years. Among the key documents on which the Fourth International stands are the resolutions of the first four congresses of the Communist International (1919, 1920, 1921, 1922) and *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International* ("Transitional Program," adopted in 1938).

To advance party building, the Fourth International abides by the norms of democratic centralism both nationally and internationally, with the right to form tendencies or factions guaranteed as was the tradition in the Bolshevik Party in Lenin's time.

On this point the statutes of the Fourth International include two general provisions on the mode of operation of democratic centralism: (1) Decisions taken by a majority of delegates at a democratically organized world congress, the highest body of the Fourth International, are binding on all sections. Decisions taken by the International Executive Committee, which is elected by the delegates to serve as the highest body until the next congress, can be appealed but remain in effect until the appeal is heard and decided on; (2) The members of national sections have the right to elect their own leaderships. Democratically organized congresses and plenary meetings of elected national committees constitute the highest bodies of national sections. They have the right to determine political line on all questions nationally, and to interpret and determine for all members of the section the national application of decisions made by the Fourth International.

31. During the last decade the Fourth International has made organizational gains—sections and sympathizing groups now exist in about fifty countries. However, no party adhering to the Fourth International has as yet won a majority of the working class or of its militant vanguard. Its current central goal remains to recruit and train proletarian cadres through deepening involvement in the class struggle. This centers on making a decisive turn to industry in order to continue our proletarian orientation.

Since its foundation, the Fourth International has followed a proletarian orientation without overlooking opportunities to recruit in allied layers of the population. The essence of this orientation consists of advancing the Marxist program and utilizing the method of the Transitional Program to intervene as much as possible in the politics of the country and developments in the working class and its organizations. It includes recognition of the fact that only a party that is proletarian in composition as well as program, and has earned growing respect by the workers for

its leadership role in the class struggle, can win a majority of the toiling masses to its banner and lead them in the struggle for power.

In many countries the majority of comrades are union members, but strong industrial union fractions remain to be built. New opportunities have now opened up for gains in the industrial proletariat. Success in utilizing these opportunities requires special efforts, including mobilization of cadres recruited in the previous period. In many countries these cadres have not yet become rooted in the industrial working class. They should be led to make a turn in this direction without further delay. Their participation in trade-union fraction work from the base of jobs in industry can perceptibly increase the rate of successes of the party's political campaigns—as Trotsky put it in discussing the Transitional Program—by showing the workers how to think socially and act politically. It will facilitate paying the necessary attention to building class-struggle left wings. It will improve the progress of similar work in the mass movement and among the allies of the proletariat. It will help develop links with the struggles of the superexploited—women, youth, and the oppressed nationalities or immigrant workers. It will also enhance sensitivity to the moods of the workers and give greater stability to the sections and their work.

On the internal level, it will facilitate training leaders and solving organizational problems in all aspects of our work. The struggle for proletarian parties includes consciously cultivating the functioning of leadership as collective teams; it means promoting inclusive leadership bodies that organize themselves in a democratic and objective way, including in their composition comrades of different viewpoints and experiences in the party; it means education on the theoretical and political importance of the organization question; it means conscious attention to the development of workers, women, and comrades from oppressed nationalities, as rounded party leaders; it means education against the dangers of permanent factionalism and cliquism, which can tear apart young and inexperienced organizations. The goal is parties of experienced worker-Bolsheviks who act as political leaders of their class and its allies.

### 32. *Building campaign parties*

In the intertwined and worsening crisis of imperialism, capitalism, and the bureaucratic castes, it is imperative to present to the working class general political solutions that point out the road toward workers power. Seizing, at any given moment, the campaign axis that can best advance this is a basic test for a revolutionary party. Some campaigns are international in scope and coordination, while others center on the timely grasping of opportunities presented by selected issues in each given country. To help advance the national political standing of the sections

of the Fourth International in the working class as a whole, serious campaigning is required on these issues.

The increased weight of the proletariat in all three sectors of the world revolution; the growing tendency to urban mass actions and proletarian forms of struggle and organization; and the increasing radicalization of young workers in response to the deepening crisis of imperialism and the austerity offensive of the bourgeoisie make carrying out a radical turn to industry the decisive underpinning for the success of the campaigns of the Fourth International and its sections.

In many ongoing struggles, well-chosen initiatives can lead to substantial gains for the party. Fruitful work can be accomplished in the electoral field. The point is to organize campaigns that bring to the fore the favorable response of the Trotskyists to new advances by this or that sector of the working class and its allies. One of the results is to demonstrate the ability of the Trotskyists to organize broad united actions in the most effective way, thereby enhancing their reputation among the vanguard of the working class. To do this requires a serious, well-circulated workers press, offering an accurate account of events along with a popular presentation of their meaning. Such a press plays a key role in opening and sustaining campaigns and bringing them to a successful conclusion.

Systematic campaign initiatives of this kind around key questions of the class struggle and political life of the country can decisively consolidate party-building gains and help project the party's program as a general solution to the problems affecting all sectors of the working class and its allies. Under the present conditions of unemployment, well-planned campaigns for a shorter workweek without reductions in pay, closely linked to growing favorable sentiment inside the unions on this question, are an important example.

Sending comrades into industry often relates to concrete political fraction work in Social Democratic or CP organizations, their youth movements, and mass organizations dominated by them. This varies from country to country. The upsurge of mass struggles and the growing crisis of Stalinism and Social Democracy is giving rise to centrist currents which, because of their origin in the organized workers movement and initial orientation toward the left, are different from the "Mao-centrist" organizations. Today, there are significant oppositions in some of the Communist parties (for example in Spain). The same holds for some Socialist parties (for instance, in France, the CERES—Centre d'Etudes, de Recherches et d'Education Socialistes; in West Germany, the Jusos—Young Socialists; and in Finland, the SF youth).

Revolutionary Marxists must pay careful attention to such tendencies, combining

a consistent criticism of their theoretical and political insufficiencies and presenting our program and criticisms in a systematic way in the debates going on in these parties, while following a policy of unity of action around key issues of the current class struggles.

33. *Encouraging the formation of independent youth groups adhering to the program of Trotskyism.* This must be seen as part and parcel of a successful approach to the turn. This can be greatly facilitated by stepping up work among apprentices and young workers in the plants, among students in high schools and technical schools, and among radicalizing college students. Serious consideration should now be given to the creation of an independent international youth organization.

34. The following are the central internationally coordinated campaigns prioritized by the World Congress.

a. *Nicaraguan solidarity campaign.* We have a revolutionary internationalist duty to help organize, both inside and outside the labor movement, a united-front solidarity campaign demanding massive aid to help the Nicaraguan people reconstruct their devastated country. This is the central international action campaign of the Fourth International.

We demand aid from both governments around the world and from the mass workers organizations, farmers groups, and other nongovernmental organizations and institutions. This is a burning need of the Nicaraguan revolution, as explained by the appeals for international aid by the new government and the FSLN.

Supporters of the Nicaraguan revolution must also prepare for the possibility of major armed conflicts as the class struggle deepens toward the overthrow of capitalist property relations. American imperialism will not simply sit back and allow the Nicaraguan workers and peasants to move forward to the second workers state in the Americas. World events and the relationship of class forces, both inside and outside Nicaragua, may preclude direct U.S. intervention, but we cannot act on such an assumption. Like the Nicaraguan masses, we must be prepared to respond quickly and vigorously to direct United States or U.S.-backed military moves.

In mounting such an effort, the forces mobilized to win reconstruction aid for Nicaragua would provide the basis for a worldwide campaign demanding: "U.S. Hands Off Nicaragua!"

This solidarity work must be a central political task of the Fourth International. We will participate in united-front solidarity committees and take this campaign into the unions, women's organizations, and organizations of the oppressed nationalities. This campaign and coverage of events in Nicaragua should be prominently and regularly featured in the press of the International, particularly given the deliberate blackout of the revolution by the

major capitalist media.

Getting out the truth in this way is particularly important since the heart of our solidarity effort is convincing workers in North America, Europe, and throughout the world that they have common class interests with the Nicaraguan toilers and an important stake in the success of the revolution there. By countering the attempts by the capitalists to pit workers in different countries against each other, we lay the necessary foundation for activities in solidarity with unfolding revolutions.

This effort in solidarity with Nicaragua is closely intertwined with defense of Cuba against the imperialist blockade and the military threats that will escalate as the conflicts in Nicaragua deepen. Washington's increased military pressure on the pretext of an alleged Soviet combat brigade in Cuba shows that the U.S. rulers are already retaliating against Cuba's solidarity and aid to Nicaragua and other anti-imperialist struggles in Central America and the Caribbean.

b. *Specific issues of the women's liberation movement such as the abortion rights campaign.* Significant opportunities exist for the participation of Trotskyists in this arena. There are growing possibilities for some internationally coordinated activities. Opinion is now virtually unanimous in the Fourth International on the character of our work to build the women's movement, our program for women's liberation, and the strategically important role that the struggle against women's oppression will play in the socialist revolution. (See resolution adopted, "Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation," elsewhere in this collection.)

c. *Campaigns of the antinuclear protest movement.* The recent swift expansion of the antinuclear movement is of great significance. Its international character facilitates coordination of protest actions in a number of countries. The Trotskyists everywhere have been playing a major role in the antinuclear movement, demonstrating the opportunities open to the Fourth International in this arena.

Paralleling and often interlocking with the antinuclear movement, the antipollution movement also offers opportunities for advancing the viewpoint of revolutionary socialism. The same holds true for the ecological movement, which is gaining in public receptivity. (See "The Turn to Industry and the Tasks of the Fourth International" Report.)

d. *Defending political prisoners.*

The Fourth International has continued to respond to threats to the lives and freedom of its leaders. The outstanding successes were (1) the battle to release Hugo Blanco and regain his freedom to enter Peru, and (2) the struggle to prevent the execution of and then gain release of the fourteen imprisoned Iranian militants of the HKS. The latter struggle remains a central responsibility of the entire Fourth

International.

The success of these campaigns resulted, to a large degree, from our ability to involve broad sectors of the world labor movement and opponents of repression. In this sense also they were a model.

We do not single out necessarily the defense of leaders of our movement for such campaigns. These should also be organized around outstanding revolutionists who are not members of the FI but who symbolize the battle for socialism in their respective countries. In that sense a worldwide defense campaign for Petr Uhl and his codefendants is a priority today.

Besides cases continually arising in the degenerated or deformed workers states, the field calling for special efforts in defense work continues to expand. The use of torture stands at an all-time high in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and Iraq. Irish political prisoners are handled in a parallel fashion. Palestinian political prisoners are similarly brutalized.

One of the most hypocritical poses in this respect is Carter's championship of "human rights" in face of the brutality of the American prison system and the practice of denying the right to political asylum in the United States to leftists. Organizations specializing in this field such as the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and Amnesty International should be given full assistance in their defense work.

35. The following central propaganda tasks flow from our analysis of the present state of world revolution and our proletarian orientation.

a. *Defense of the Indochina revolution and the fight to save the Kampuchean people.* Through our press and spokespeople, the Fourth International must explain the urgent need to defend the Indochinese revolutions against the growing pressure from imperialism—above all U.S. imperialism—in which the current Pnompenh regime and Vietnamese troops are today fighting imperialist-backed forces. In these conflicts, revolutionaries cannot and do not remain neutral. We place ourselves unequivocally on the side of the workers regimes threatened by imperialism, the reactionary military dictatorship in Thailand, and other proimperialist or imperialist-backed military forces such as the Khmer Serei, Khmer Serika, Sihanoukists, and the Pol Pot-Khieu Samphan Khmer Rouge.

We demand that the entire U.S. military network in Southeast Asia be dismantled, and we give full support to the anti-imperialist struggles in that region. We defend Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea against pressure from the Peking bureaucracy.

The concrete axes of this propaganda campaign are:

For urgent massive aid to the Indochinese countries, with no political strings attached. This is especially urgent in Kampuchea, where financial, medical, food,

and general material aid must be sent to Pnompenh to save the Kampuchean people from starvation and disease, as well as to help reconstruct their war-ravaged country. We seek to expose the imperialists' brutal use of the food weapon to undermine the Pnompenh government and their fraudulent "humanitarian" campaign around the Kampuchean and Vietnamese refugees.

The stepped-up imperialist intervention during 1979, highlights the importance of demanding an end to the economic blockade imposed on Vietnam by U.S. imperialism since 1975 and the embargo on food and economic aid begun in 1979 by Japan and the European imperialist powers.

Under no conditions should humanitarian aid to the Kampuchean refugees be used as a cover—as it has already been by the imperialists—to provide material assistance to rightist-backed forces using Thailand as a staging ground to attack the Indochinese countries across the Laotian and Kampuchean borders.

We demand diplomatic recognition of the Vietnamese, Laotian, and Kampuchean governments. Representatives of the Pol Pot-Khieu Samphan army must be thrown out of international bodies such as the United Nations.

b. *Internationalizing issues arising from working-class struggles.*

Defending union rights and strike struggles. Strikes involving masses of workers in certain industries or even companies offer special opportunities for national and international solidarity campaigns. The most recent case involved the 1978 nationwide strike of the American coal miners, which also drew an especially warm response from the British coal miners. As the Grunwick strike in Britain demonstrated, international solidarity can be of special concern to immigrant and women workers.

The recent attacks upon union rights in Sri Lanka have led to a broad united defense campaign in which the revolutionary Marxists have played a significant role.

Popularizing key demands such as the fight for the shorter work week, campaigns against anti-working-class initiatives by "multinationals," initiatives bringing together leaders from several countries working in the same branch of industry or for the same companies are additional examples.

c. *Defense of the revolutionary struggles of oppressed peoples that have been singled out by reactionary forces as special military targets.* A current example is defense of the Palestinian people against the U.S.-backed military onslaught of the Israeli government. Another is defense of the peoples of Southern Africa against the predatory attacks mounted by the racist regime of South Africa with the connivance and backing of the White House. Another is defense of the Cuban revolution

against the belligerent threats, bullying tactics, and systematic economic and diplomatic pressure mounted by U.S. imperialism and its satellite regimes. Still others include defense of Vietnam against the reprisals organized by American imperialism; and support for the Irish demand to withdraw the British army of occupation from Ulster. New fronts like defense of the Zimbabwe people against an imperialist-imposed neocolonial "settlement" will continue to engage the Fourth International.

Particular attention must be paid by our sections in the industrially advanced countries to pressing for or reviving anti-imperialist mass actions. Actually, solidarity mobilizations have been dangerously weakened in various countries since 1969, making it difficult to organize rapid replies to interventions mounted by the capitalist powers. This was demonstrated in France after the multiple military incursions in Africa decided on by the government. Our youth organizations especially ought to play a motor role in developing anti-imperialist movements.

d. *Backing oppressed nations and national minorities in their struggle for liberation.* The field is a wide one, extending from the Maoris in New Zealand, the Basques and Catalans in Spain, the Corsicans in France, and the Irish and the nonwhite immigrants in the United Kingdom; to the oppressed nations in Southern Africa, the Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans in the United States, and the Kurds in Iran, Turkey, Iraq, and Syria. Among the areas where the Fourth International has been foremost in calling attention to the importance of the struggle for self-determination are Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. More and more opportunities and responsibilities for revolutionary Marxists are appearing around the world as these struggles raise the political consciousness of the working class and, in increasing instances, help lay the groundwork for the fight to transform the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle.

e. *Backing struggles of immigrant workers and defending them against chauvinist and racist attacks.* As part of the reserve army of labor, immigrant workers are prime targets of "austerity" moves, being among the last to be hired and the first to be fired. Virtually ignored by the union bureaucracies, their wages are in the lowest brackets and their housing the very worst. Lacking citizenship, it is difficult for them to organize protest actions. They are vulnerable to summary deportation. Discrimination and these threats increase as unemployment rises.

For these and other reasons, the defense of immigrant workers in the face of stepped-up racist, anti-immigrant demagoguery is of prime importance to many sections of the Fourth International, which have long engaged in solidarity actions on this front. In Britain the defense of immigrant workers has led to sharp confronta-



tions with highly reactionary forces, including protofascist demagogues. On a smaller scale similar developments are occurring in France with Arab and African workers. Recently the struggle has become of greater importance in the United States, where the Mexican workers have stepped up their resistance to Washington's arbitrary and brutal immigration policies. One of the outcomes of united action in this field is the strengthening of fraternal ties between the sections that are able to engage in such joint campaigns.

36. *Participating in the struggles of poor peasants and working farmers.* The Fourth International has always stressed the importance of the peasant struggle and its linkage with the struggles of the urban masses. It has made some contributions of its own in this field; for example, the work of the Peruvian section in the mobilizations of the peasants seeking land in the early 1960s.

While the peasant struggle is most important in those countries where the peasantry still constitutes the majority, or a sizable minority, of the active population (Indian subcontinent, Peru, Mexico, Egypt, etc.), it should not be underestimated in other countries.

In Spain, the peasant movement has undergone a powerful upsurge both in struggles and in organization. Even in the United States, where only 3.8 percent of the population now live on the land, militant sectors of the farmers initiated demonstrations against the farm policy of the Carter administration. The demonstrators displayed strong solidarity with the coal miners, sending truckloads of food to the strikers.

In India, as a result of the growing class polarization in the villages, sharp confrontations are occurring between, on the one hand, landless agricultural laborers and poorest peasants, and, on the other, the rising village bourgeoisie and kulak class. These indicate that the urban proletariat has a tremendous potential ally in the countryside. It is an urgent task for the labor movement and its vanguard to forge on an anticapitalist basis a worker and peasant alliance that champions the burning issues raised by the rural poor.

37. *Defending sections and members of the Fourth International subjected to repressive measures.* At the present time, under the guise of "battling terrorism," a witch-hunt reminiscent of the McCarthyite

period has been launched in West Germany. Restrictive legislation has been enacted and utilized there against leftists of diverse currents. Among the worst hit in various countries have been Trotskyists, hundreds having been arrested and in some cases tortured or murdered by the police as in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Chile. Trotskyists in Spain and Japan have been arrested by the dozens. Similar repressive blows have been struck against the Trotskyists in Greece. In China, leading Trotskyists continue to be held in prison. The right of leaders of the Fourth International to travel freely is still severely restricted. Thus the problem of defending ourselves against such attacks has grown in acuteness in recent years.

Quick results in defending revolutionists can be achieved where they are known enough in the class struggle so that the masses themselves rally to their defense. Thus in Spain in November 1976, when the government arrested delegates to the congress of the Basque LCR, the solidarity response included job actions and strikes in big plants in the Basque region. These gained rapid release of the comrades.

As justification for hitting Trotskyists with special vindictiveness, a sustained effort has been made by reactionary forces to paint the Fourth International as a "terrorist" organization. Two of the most vicious agencies have been the CIA and the FBI. Their activities include driving "Trotskyists" out of jobs and circulating cooked-up derogatory material to block them from finding new jobs. The American Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance have taken the lead in countering this witch-hunt. Through a \$40 million suit against the government, they were able to uncover a great deal of evidence exposing the illegal activities of the American political police, and set in motion similar suits by others who suffered damages from violation of their rights by government spy agencies.

The campaign of the SWP has greatly aided the efforts of the world Trotskyist movement to counter the propaganda smearing it as a "terrorist" organization.

38. *Advancing regroupments and fusions.* The construction of a mass Leninist-type party cannot be confined solely to the individual recruitment of members. At a certain point the question of regroupments leading to fusions arises as different layers of the proletariat and its allies gain in political understanding, and the crisis of

the reformist and centrist organizations develops.

Our goal remains a mass world party of socialist revolution, of which the current Fourth International is only the programmatic nucleus.

The process must be repeatedly reviewed from the angle of the different tactical problems that arise in exploring two types of opportunities facing us at the moment: (1) Unifying with groupings that accept the program of Trotskyism in general but maintain differences as to its application on certain key points; (2) Establishing fraternal relations with groupings that do not claim to be Trotskyist but that are evolving along lines that may eventually make fusion possible on a principled basis.

Recently new opportunities to unite with groups claiming to adhere to the program of Trotskyism have arisen and more may soon find a place on the agenda. In clarifying our differences with such groups and probing the possibilities of united action and unification with them, a key factor will be what position they take on the most important issues of the class struggle in light of their declared allegiance to Trotskyism. Success in this will help attract class-struggle-minded workers breaking from the Social Democracy, Stalinism, and centrism but who are repelled by the fragmentation of the Trotskyist movement in some countries. The Fourth International welcomes moves that lead to principled fusions. It stresses the fact that the internal life of the Fourth International is a rich one with guarantees for the presentation of minority viewpoints and the right to form tendencies or factions in accordance with its organizational norms.

In the case of fusions, the decisive criterion is agreement on a principled program (including Leninist organizational norms) defining revolutionary strategy in the class struggle.

As for the leftward-moving tendencies not claiming to be Trotskyist, it has been possible in several countries to engage in common actions that have advanced the struggle of the masses and have proved of mutual benefit. In each case where common actions and joint political initiatives appear possible with other organizations, the leadership of sections should open up fraternal relations. Again, the key will be the position these organizations take on the decisive political issues in the class struggle.

# Report on the World Political Situation

By Ernest Mandel

I.

The central idea in our analysis of the world situation is that there has been a change in the overall class relationship of forces after 1975 to the detriment of imperialism. This change is the result of the defeat the imperialists suffered in Indochina and of the outbreak of the first generalized recession of the international capitalist economy since World War II.

The worsening of the world situation for the imperialists at this point does not come from a decline in their military power. Militarily, they are stronger than ever. It is the consequence primarily of the impact of the Indochina war on the internal political situation in the United States, of the relative decline of American dominance over the capitalist world as a whole, and of the grave crisis of leadership for the imperialists that flows from these developments. Even the long phase of depression that the capitalist economy is going through has contributed only indirectly to the worsening of the imperialists' situation. This immediate deterioration has led to a situation without parallel in decades, if not since the beginning of the imperialist epoch. For the last four years, the capitalist system has lacked any world policeman or policemen capable of sending in large forces to block the advances of the revolution.

The dictatorship of the shah, keystone of the whole imperialist system in the Middle East, and the Somoza dictatorship, keystone of the counterrevolution in Central America, have both fallen without the imperialists being able to intervene militarily on a large scale to rescue their most valuable allies. The fall of these dictatorships involves, in turn, a new deterioration in the strategic relationship of forces for imperialism in these two areas of the world.

But it is one thing to register this weak-

ening of the capitalist system and to note the gravity of the crisis that is shaking this system and the opportunities this development offers for new advances of the world revolution. It is something else again to estimate correctly the resources the imperialists still have at their disposal to try to recoup the situation.

In saying that the immediate cause of the relative paralysis suffered by the imperialists over these last four years is political and not military or financial, we are recognizing that imperialism still has enormous power and reserves that provide the capacity for counterattack. Therefore this paralysis will be only temporary. It would be a serious mistake to think that there is going to be a second Iran in the Middle East or Far East, or that a second workers state is going to emerge in Latin America without a strong response by the imperialists, including a large-scale military effort.

The political obstacles to such intervention are serious. But they are not insurmountable in the short term. To think otherwise would mean forgetting that, except in a revolutionary situation—which does not exist today in any of the main imperialist countries—the prevailing ideology remains that of the ruling class. When this class really wants to, when it is ready to pay the price, when it has reached a consensus in its own ranks, it can to some extent turn around the opposition to foreign adventures among a majority of the population.

In fact, the imperialists have already begun to prepare such a counterattack. The American army is in the process of building up a special intervention force of 110,000 to 150,000 men, designed particularly for action in the Middle East. This is in addition to the Marine corps, which is being strengthened, the airborne division, and the powerful naval fleets that the U.S. imperialists have stationed in the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific.

The assassination of the dictator Park was followed immediately with a show of force by the Seventh Fleet off Korea. The Pentagon reacted to the fall of Somoza by setting up a base and a special strike force to cover the Caribbean and all of Central America. The American, British, and French imperialists are also preparing to cover their major bastions in Africa—Egypt, Morocco, Zaïre, Kenya, and above all, Nigeria and South Africa.

Behind the smokescreen of the SALT II accords, Washington has once again stepped up the nuclear arms race. And it has launched a scare campaign about some military advance that the Soviet Union is supposedly going to make in the mid-1980s. This new phase of nuclear

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*The vote of delegates and fraternal observers on this report for the United Secretariat was: 88 for, 9 against, 12.5 abstentions, 3.5 not voting.*

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arming includes Western Europe in the framework of NATO. The new MX and Cruise missiles, the intermediate-range Pershing missiles, as well as the neutron bomb, are only the first elements of this new phase. Moreover, major forces in Western Europe are waiting for the least sign of hesitation on the part of U.S. imperialism or for any new defeats for Washington, to jump head over heels into a new, qualitatively higher stage of independently rearming imperialist Europe. The enormous potential of capitalist industry in Europe, which is technologically the most advanced in the world, would enable them to make up for any lag in a relatively

short time, including in the field of missiles and nuclear arms.

Of course, the Soviet armed forces have made parallel advances, which are dangerous for the imperialists particularly in the naval and air-naval field. But the fundamental conservatism of the Soviet bureaucracy, its fear of world revolution, and its attachment to the status quo—which it is prepared to upset only when the risks are minimal, as in the Horn of Africa—make it very unlikely that Moscow will make any real use of its increased power to counter the counterrevolutionary interventions of the imperialists. Soviet forces serve much more as chess pieces in a political game than for real actions in “localized” conflicts.

The real historical dimensions of the deterioration in the relationship of forces for the imperialists can be defined not in terms of prolonged paralysis or military weakening, but in terms of the political and social price that they will have to pay for every new large-scale counterrevolutionary intervention anywhere in the world. This price will be enormous, out of all proportion to the price they paid for their counterrevolutionary intervention in Indochina.

Any massive military intervention against the revolution in Central America will touch off real anti-imperialist explosions throughout the continent of Latin America. A massive military intervention in the Middle East would risk igniting a good part of the Arab world. The antiwar reactions in the United States itself would be much stronger than they were during the war in Indochina. The Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican national minorities would be particularly affected in the event of an intervention in Africa or in Latin America.

Such reactions would be still more powerful in the event of a massive military intervention against a real proletarian revolution in one or more countries in Western Europe. This sort of intervention is in fact scarcely conceivable for that very reason. The dissensions within the imperialist alliance, and the spread of anti-imperialist and anticapitalist sentiment, as well as the development of anti-imperialist and anticapitalist mass actions in Europe and Japan, would probably be still more powerful than the extension of the antiwar movement in the United States.

The situation would change fundamentally only if the proletariat and the anti-imperialist mass movement suffered crushing defeats in a series of key countries comparable to those they suffered in the 1930s and at the end of the 1940s. If that happened, moreover, the way would be opened up for World War III. The gravity of the crisis of the capitalist system requires “solutions” commensurate with this crisis. But the relationship of forces between the classes in the key countries

makes such defeats extremely unlikely in the short- and medium-term. The most probable variant therefore is a continuation of “localized” imperialist counterattacks, for which the imperialists will have to pay a constantly higher political and social price. The political crisis of capitalism will be a prolonged one.

## II.

Examining the economic conjuncture leads to a similar conclusion. The depression will be long. It will probably last through the 1980s, after having lasted through most of the 1970s.

Of course, the perspective is not for a linear development of the depression nor even long-term stagnation, or absolute decline in the production of goods. Phases of recovery will follow phases of outright recession, with notable differences in the breadth and duration of these phases in the various imperialist countries, in the various semi-industrialized semicolonial countries, and in the various sectors of the more backward semicolonial world.

However, inflation, structural unemployment, and chronic crises of entire industries will continue to afflict the international capitalist economy as a whole. It will not regain the optimistic expansionist mood of the 1950s and 1960s. The threat of a collapse of the international monetary system and of the entire inflationary credit system that underlies it would loom clearer and clearer. At the same time, the poverty of the so-called Third World countries—in which, according to a recent report of the FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations], a billion human beings suffer severe malnutrition—and the extremely mediocre economic performance of the bureaucratized workers states will limit the “alternative markets” for international capital much more than during and after the generalized recession of 1974-75. China's reentry into the world market is proving a much more modest affair than the initial expectations of the imperialist circles. More than ever, the only “alternative market” that is constantly expanding at a rapid rate will be the arms market, which itself has been one of the main sources of the permanent inflation for forty years.

The essential cause for the duration of the depression lies in the fact that it cannot rapidly play the role that cyclical crises of overproduction must objectively play in the world of capitalist production—that is, create the conditions for a substantial rise in the average rate of profit based on a major increase in the rate of surplus value, and a no less important devaluation of capital. The main obstacle that stands in the way is the intact power of the labor movement, and the increased power of the proletariat. It is the combination of a grave economic depression with the increased power of the proletariat and with

the weakening of the world imperialist system—contrary to what happened after 1929, at least in most of the imperialist countries—that is creating an unprecedentedly grave overall social crisis for the capitalists.

To be sure, the international bourgeoisie responded to the generalized recession of 1974-75 by unleashing an austerity offensive in virtually all the capitalist countries. To be sure, in the semicolonial countries—where the extent of unemployment, galloping inflation, and dictatorial regimes cut down the ability of the working class to counterattack—real wages suffered cruel cuts as a result of these offensives. This was the case notably in India, Mexico, Argentina, the Philippines, Chile, and Peru, to cite only a few of the more significant examples. To be sure, a section of international capitalist industry is reorienting toward the semi-industrialized semicolonial countries in order to take advantage of the social conditions prevailing there that are more favorable to a rapid accumulation of capital. The bourgeoisies of other semicolonial countries are desperately trying to attract such investments, notably by creating “free zones” where the working conditions and wages are worse. To this end, brutal attacks have been launched against the workers in countries as far apart as Sri Lanka and El Salvador.

However, the bulk of industrial capital, which produces the greater part of surplus value in the world, continues to be invested in the imperialist countries. In these countries the gains achieved by the bourgeois austerity offensive have been extremely modest, if not already wiped out by the workers counterattacks. The resistance the workers have put up has proved much more tenacious than was expected by the bosses, the governments that defend their interests, and the SP and CP bureaucracies that capitulate to these capitalists. This resistance has been mainly on the trade-union level. But its political reverberations will soon be felt.

Likewise, the fear of a violent reaction by the workers to a new qualitative jump in unemployment has, up to now, prevented the imperialist bourgeoisie from sacrificing a number of big companies on the brink of bankruptcy, while bankruptcies of small and middle-sized companies are steadily mounting. State subsidies of all sorts are keeping these bankrupt monopolies afloat.

This is why the economic depression will also be prolonged. It can lead to a favorable outcome for big capital—this cannot be excluded in principle; Lenin warned us “there are no hopeless situations for capitalism”—only if there is a grave defeat of the working class in a series of key capitalist countries.

Under such conditions, there is not much point in getting involved in long discussions about the exact chronology, geographical spread, and duration of every one of

## Fourth International: U.S. Hands Off Iran!

[The following statement was adopted by the World Congress of the Fourth International.]

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The U.S. government is using its economic power and threatening to use its vast military arsenal to impose imperialist interests in Iran.

In an arrogant response to the demands of the Iranian working masses for the return of the shah and the wealth he plundered, the U.S. rulers have escalated their aggressive moves.

A fleet of U.S., British, Australian, and New Zealand warships has been activated in the Arabian Sea. American troops have been placed on the alert in the United States. Carter has ordered a boycott of Iranian oil and has frozen more than \$6 billion in assets held by the Iranian government in the United States.

A chauvinist war hysteria is being whipped up by the imperialist governments and capitalist media around the world to justify these moves. This campaign portrays the Iranian masses as bloodthirsty, reactionary religious fanatics. It blames the Iranian people, especially the heroic oil workers, for the energy crisis contrived by the imperialist oil monopolies.

Right-wing hoodigan attacks on Iranian citizens in the United States are being used to create the impression that American workers want to go to war

against their Iranian brothers and sisters.

But neither the American working class nor the workers and oppressed masses around the world want an imperialist military intervention in Iran. They know the Iranian people struck a blow for freedom around the world when they threw out the butcher shah and his imperialist advisers.

Carter calls the Iranian people "terrorists." But the real terrorists in Iran have been the imperialist powers who armed the shah to the hilt, and the CIA and Israeli agents and the SAVAK agents they trained, who were responsible for tens of thousands of deaths and untold numbers of torture victims.

Today the Iranian masses are fighting to extend the revolution that ousted the despotic regime of the shah, to win full social and economic equality, and to end imperialist interference. They deserve the fullest solidarity from the world working class.

The World Congress of the Fourth International calls on all workers organizations around the world to mobilize the broadest possible campaign of action against Washington's military threats in Iran.

Return the murderer shah to be tried for his crimes!

Give back the wealth stolen from the toiling masses of Iran!

U.S. hands off Iran! Withdraw the imperialist fleet from the Arabian Sea!

Portuguese revolution in 1974-75, the prerevolutionary crisis in Spain in the first half of 1976, and the explosive new upsurge of workers struggles and of the political crisis in Italy in the same period have confirmed this prognosis. In some other countries in capitalist Europe, especially Britain, increasing political polarization, sharpening class conflicts, the power of the workers movement, and the bourgeoisie's more and more pressing economic need to confront the workers are opening up a period of social and political instability much more pronounced than in the past, even though this does not yet amount to prerevolutionary crises.

At various times—November 1975 in Portugal, the second half of 1976 in Spain, September 1977 to March 1978 in France and Italy—the initiative has passed from the hands of the proletariat to those of the bourgeoisie. The reasons for this turnabout will be discussed under the special point on the congress agenda dealing with class struggles in capitalist Europe. What should be stressed here is that these were conjunctural shifts and not a change in the period. In none of the countries mentioned above, nor in several others that could be mentioned, has bourgeois society regained the relative stability that characterized it roughly between 1953 and 1968. Nowhere has the increased power and combativity of the proletariat been seriously eroded. Nowhere have the relationships of forces been changed by major defeats for the working class. Nowhere are the capitalists safe from sudden turns in the situation that could create new revolutionary crises.

However, the growing weight of the proletariat in the real process of world revolution is by no means the simple result of the fact that the revolution is once again knocking at the door of the imperialist mother countries, where the working class has its heavy battalions. This is a universal phenomenon, which we see both in the imperialist and semicolonial countries, as well as in the bureaucratized workers states.

This increased weight of the proletariat in the unfolding of the revolutionary process has both an objective and a subjective cause. The objective cause is the growth in the numerical and economic strength of the proletariat, that is, wage labor, with respect to the total economically active population. This phenomenon can be observed in all three sectors of the world revolution. The subjective cause is the real, although uneven, loosening of the control over the working class that has been exercised for several decades by the SPs, CPs, union bureaucracies, and nationalist-populist apparatuses, notably as a result of the demoralizing effects on the level of class consciousness of a long period of defeats of the revolution.

The following figures are indicative:

the recessions that are going to follow one another throughout this long depression. Predictions about this would inevitably include unknown factors that therefore would be highly speculative. Has a recession already begun in the United States in 1979? We think it has, but that has not been completely proven. Will it spread to the rest of the imperialist countries (and most of the semicolonial countries) in 1980? We think so, but in the case of Germany and Japan, this is still subject to doubt.

Rather than concentrate our analytical work on such short-term predictions, we should clarify the nature of the period. Here, doubt is no longer possible. Since the end of the 1960s, the long postwar boom has faded. A long depression began, destined to continue through the 1970s and 1980s. It is dealing a mortal blow to reformist and neoreformist illusions. The capitalist system is clearly capable of neither assuring full employment nor a steady growth in the real incomes of workers in the imperialist countries. (In

the underdeveloped countries these illusions had hardly any credibility even during the "boom.") It is the task of revolutionary Marxists to lead the working class to draw the necessary political conclusion from this. The capitalist system must be overthrown. The working class must take power. There is no other way to eliminate the double curse of unemployment and inflation.

### III.

Already, at the two preceding world congresses, we pointed up another new feature of the world situation—the end of the long period of relative stabilization of capitalism in Western Europe. Since 1968, proletarian revolution—that is, prerevolutionary and revolutionary crises—has once again been on the agenda not only in a historical sense, but in a much more immediate one, at least in the four countries of southwestern Europe. May 1968 in France, the Italian "creeping May" in 1969, the

**Industrial Wage Workers  
as Percentage of  
Total Economically Active**

	1960	1977
<b>Imperialist Countries</b>		
Italy	40%	47%
Spain	31%	42%
France	39%	41%
Japan	30%	37%
Portugal	29%	36%
<b>Semi-industrialized Semicolonial Countries</b>		
Hong Kong	52%	57%
South Korea	9%	33%
Singapore	23%	32%
Taiwan	11%	27%
Egypt	12%	26%
Mexico	20%	25%
Brazil	15%	20%
<b>Bureaucratized Workers States</b>		
Rumania	20%	31%
North Korea	23%	32%
Yugoslavia	23%	34%
Bulgaria	25%	38%
USSR	29%	46%
Czechoslovakia	46%	49%
East Germany	48%	51%
Hungary	35%	58%

If you add the wage workers in the service sector to those in industry for the imperialist countries as a whole, the proletariat makes up more than 75 percent of the economically active population, reaching peaks of over 90 percent in the United States, Britain, and Sweden. In the semi-industrialized, semicolonial countries, this percentage reaches or exceeds 50 percent in most of the countries mentioned above, as well as in Argentina, where the industrial proletariat, properly speaking, has shrunk. The change that has taken place is much more striking still if you take 1950 or 1953 as the point of departure rather than 1960.

In the case of those semicolonial countries that remain essentially agricultural, accelerated capitalist penetration of the countryside has, in some important instances, brought about the rapid growth of a rural proletariat consisting of landless agricultural workers who often have only seasonal employment. Such workers today comprise 40 percent of the so-called peasant population in India. If you add to these the wage workers in industry and the services, you find that the proletarianized masses make up 45 percent of the economically active population in India, which is out of all proportion to the percentage in Russia in 1917, in China in 1949, or say nothing of Vietnam in 1945 and 1953.

This objective fact is sufficient to explain why the long detour of the world revolution after World War II is coming to an end. Specifically proletarian forms of struggle—mass political strikes, general strikes, urban insurrections—and specifi-

cally proletarian forms of organization—committees of all sorts leading up to councils of delegates, that is, embryonic soviets or soviets at various stages of maturity—are beginning to predominate in all three sectors of the world revolution. The Iranian and Nicaraguan revolutions have confirmed the correctness of this analysis. The spectacular rise of workers struggles in Brazil is undoubtedly the most important expression of this tendency historically.

If this World Congress puts a special stress on continuing and extending the course of proletarianizing the international, which we have been involved in for several years, it is not only for reasons of principle that are always valid—namely, that the social composition of our movement should correspond to its fundamental objective, which is to build a new revolutionary leadership of the *proletariat*. A rapid growth, like the one we experienced after 1968 in the youth movement, therefore inevitably calls for adjustments.

It is above all because of the proletariat's overwhelming weight in the real process of the world revolution; because of the rise in workers struggles, albeit primarily defensive ones, against the crisis and the austerity offensive of the capitalists, which are giving rise and will give rise to a new generation of militants and radicalized working-class leaders in the plants and trade unions; and because it is vital for our international to influence them and win them to our program. We can only do this successfully if we are solidly rooted in the big plants themselves, regardless of the time required for this effort, which is in any case a long-term one.

The building of mass revolutionary parties and a mass revolutionary international will essentially be the result of a fusion of our nucleus—reinforced by revolutionary regroupment operations—with this new proletarian vanguard, as it will be the product of fusion with currents moving toward our program and toward a break with the traditional bureaucratic apparatuses within the mass parties of the workers movement and within the anti-imperialist movement.

#### IV.

The current problems of the class struggle in capitalist Europe and Latin America will be dealt with under special points on the agenda of this Congress. Therefore, we would like to raise two important questions that will not be dealt with separately by the Congress—the current stage reached by the Iranian revolution, and a few general problems posed by the crisis of the bureaucratic dictatorship and the rise of political revolution in the bureaucratized workers states.

The Iranian revolution offers one of the most startling examples of the law of

uneven and combined development.

On the one hand, we witnessed one of the most impressive revolutionary mass mobilizations of the twentieth century. Literally millions of persons came into the streets of Tehran in steady streams. This mobilization finally smashed the political and moral capacity for resistance of an army which the shah had equipped with more than \$35 billion worth of ultramodern weapons, and pampered with a high standard of living. The victory was won despite repression that cost the lives of tens of thousands of demonstrators in the single culminating phase of the revolutionary upsurge.

On the other hand, we saw a clergy, the Shi'ite clergy, take over the political and ideological leadership of the movement. A battle that began in opposition to the shah's autocracy, for democratic freedoms, led to the adoption of a constitution that also restricts democratic freedoms, albeit to a much more limited extent than under the shah, and that also sets up a kind of autocracy—that of Ayatollah Khomeini.

Khomeini's personality is, in a certain way, the symbolic synthesis of this contradiction. We said before, on other occasions, that the Khomeini phenomenon, which is unique in the history of bourgeois revolutions—not to mention that of the initial phases of the process of permanent revolution—combines the traits of a Danton with those of a Savonarola. But it should be understood that Khomeini can play the role of Savonarola only because he has played that of Danton, that is, because he has shown a remarkable firmness, intransigence, and audacity in the struggle against the shah, against the Pahlavi dynasty, and against the monarchy. There lies the real source of his prestige and legitimacy in the eyes of the masses, which he is now seeking to reinforce and renew through anti-imperialist agitation, which also has powerful support among the masses.

Fundamentally, it is not the hold of religion over the masses that explains the Shi'ite clergy's prestige. It is the political prestige won by that clergy in the struggle against the shah's tyranny that explains its ability to establish—for the time being—the confused and deceptive ideology of the "Islamic Republic," and to strengthen the hold of religion.

Of course, the special social composition of the population of Iran's big urban centers, where semiproletarianized layers of recent rural origin still predominate over the working class strictly speaking, partly explains the relative ease with which Khomeini has been able to maneuver up to the present. But, we repeat, the fundamental cause of his ascendancy is political, not religious. It derives both from the absence of any other mass political force that was deeply engaged in the struggle against the shah, and from the role of organizer and coordinator of the



antidictatorial struggle played by the Shi'ite clergy. In the eyes of the majority of the masses, who are still only at the first stage of their politicization, the Shi'ite clergy appears as the authentic and legitimate leadership of the revolution. There is an obvious parallel with the nationalist and populist leaderships of revolutions (or of initial stages of revolutionary upsurges) in many semicolonial countries, such as Mexico, Argentina (Perón), Bolivia (MNR), and Egypt (Nasser), to take only the most typical examples.

For us, the bourgeois character of the state and government, and the thoroughly reactionary character of Islamic clericalism, leave not the slightest doubt. But what is clear to us is not clear to 80 percent of the Iranian masses. Moreover, we never confuse the mass movement with its temporary leadership. It would thus be absurd and sectarian to think that the Iranian revolution has already been beaten, or that it is already in the midst of a downturn, solely because of the reactionary ideology of the current leaders of the revolutionary process. For us, the fundamental criterion is the dynamic of the mass movement. Some currents of our movement (not to speak of the CPs and the Social Democracy) made this error with catastrophic political consequences between 1944 and 1950 in Argentina, judging the situation and the nature of the trade-union movement led by the Peronists by the ideology or origins of Perón, and not according to the trajectory and social nature of the mass movement.

Khomeinism obviously encompasses a three-fold contradiction.

It came to power on the crest of a powerful mobilization of socially disinherited masses. They rose up against the shah's tyranny, not only to win democratic freedoms or the right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination, but also, and especially, to end their poverty, which implies a number of precise socioeconomic goals—a job for the millions of unemployed; decent housing for the millions of homeless now living in slums; decent wages, and indeed, workers control for the millions of workers; an end to galloping inflation, mainly through a growth in the domestic production of food; a genuine agrarian reform and a tolerable life for millions of small farmers; an end to the centuries-old oppression of women subjected to unbearable burdens.

Khomeini cannot satisfy these deeply felt aspirations, any more than any other bourgeois or petty-bourgeois politician, for that matter. The political authority he enjoys among the masses is, for the time being, the only dam protecting the Iranian bourgeoisie against a new phase of revolutionary mobilizations, this time taking on a direct anticapitalist character, the nature of a real social revolution. That is why the bourgeoisie tolerates Khomeini and is utilizing the influence of the Shi'ite clergy and

the confused notion of the "Islamic Republic"—nay, "Islamic socialism"—to delay as much as possible the winning of political and organizational autonomy by the proletariat.

But there are limits to the masses' patience. Given the Khomeini regime's inability to satisfy their material and national aspirations, ruptures will take place, differences will deepen among the clergy itself; it is only a matter of time before it is bypassed. Therefore, it is necessary to crack down, as they have begun to crack down on the Kurds and the far left, especially after August 1979. But the masses are militant, mobilized, full of self-confidence. Many factory committees are beginning or are continuing to defy the authority of the bosses and the government. The memory of the shah's repression is close at hand. To attack such a movement head-on would be suicidal. Therefore, what is involved is a probing, limited, selective crackdown, which is frequently obliged to back off.

Moreover, a frontal onslaught would require an effective instrument, which in Iran could only be the army. However, the army is divided, dismembered, unsure of itself, especially after the traumatic shock it suffered during the last weeks of the shah's tyranny. Time is needed in order to reforge it as an adequate instrument of the counterrevolution. Khomeini will not be able to play that role to the end. At most, he can initiate it.

Finally, for the Iranian bourgeoisie, elimination of the shah's regime was especially aimed at rationalizing the Iranian economy, eliminating or at least reducing nepotism, waste, megalomania, the destruction of agriculture, everything that hampers an organic growth of the capital accumulation theoretically made possible by the substantial oil revenues. Khomeini cannot rationalize anything from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie—except control of the mass movement. Hence the continual division within that same bourgeoisie, within the bazaar, within the state apparatus, within the army top command itself, as to what road to follow.

For revolutionary Marxists, the essential things are to correctly judge the dynamic of the mass movement, not to let ourselves become isolated from it, to push it forward, both in terms of anti-imperialist and democratic demands and in terms of anticapitalist ones; to become the best spokespersons for the masses' deeply held aspirations, recognized by them as such; and at the same time to wage an intransigent battle for the political and organizational class independence of the proletariat.

## V.

The chapter of the political resolution concerning the bureaucratized workers states represents an important step for-

ward compared with similar chapters of political resolutions presented to previous World Congresses. This step forward reflects both a better knowledge of the reality of these countries on the part of our movement—as a result of broader activity—and the growth of political activity and differentiation within these countries. We have nothing to add to what the draft political resolution states in this regard, since these problems of concrete analysis and political tactics do not seem to have been a matter of controversy during the pre-World Congress discussion.

However, it is necessary to forcefully oppose the idea that periodically resurfaces, that the trend toward the economic reforms carried out in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and China, and the closer economic collaboration between the capitalist monopolies and the bureaucratic castes in power in those countries, could lead to a cold restoration of capitalism.

More than forty-five years ago, Trotsky correctly characterized the theoretical error underlying such hypotheses. It consists of "running the reformist film backwards," assuming that one could go gradually from a workers state to a bourgeois state, just as the reformists assume that one can go gradually from a bourgeois state to a workers state.

What the Transitional Program calls the "Butenko faction" of the bureaucracy undoubtedly exists. Nor can we doubt that the bureaucracy undermines the foundations of the workers state through the sum total of its economic and political practices. But it is one thing to undermine them; it is another thing to overturn them. To overturn the workers state, a slow evolution is not sufficient. An active, violent, brutal counterrevolution is necessary—all the more violent and brutal in that it would involve not only smashing the state apparatus and neutralizing the opposition of a not insignificant section of the bureaucracy that identifies with it, but especially overcoming the resistance of a proletariat that is much stronger than in the past.

To believe that the "Carter offensive" could more easily achieve the goal that Weygand, Hitler, Roosevelt or Truman were unable to achieve under conditions infinitely more favorable for imperialism is to be completely mistaken about the development of the relationship of forces, both worldwide and within the bureaucratized workers states themselves. What is historically on the agenda in these states—despite an inevitable alternation of conjunctural ups and downs—is not the restoration of capitalism, but the upsurge and victory of the antibureaucratic political revolution.

The principal basis for the survival of the bureaucratic dictatorship in the USSR today no longer consists of the backwardness and poverty of the country, or the pressures of capitalist encirclement, although these factors continue to play a

secondary role. It consists of the depoliticization and lack of a clear political alternative capable of mobilizing the Soviet proletariat, which has become the second largest in the world, numbering eighty million. This depoliticization will disappear little by little at first, while disappearing more rapidly in the "people's democracies," and as the proletarian revolution rises in the imperialist countries.

A careful comparison between the crisis of Maoism and that of Stalinism shows—as the political resolution points out—that the People's Republic of China has never known the degree of depoliticization and passivity on the part of the proletariat that characterized the USSR for so long.

In fact, it would be no exaggeration to say that, in the short run, the chances for a broad politicization of the working class and gains for our ideas are greater today in China than in the USSR. Given the level of development reached by the two countries, this is no doubt a passing phenomenon. But full conclusions should be drawn from it, not only as far as our initiatives are concerned, but also from the standpoint of analyzing China's place in world politics.

We unanimously condemn, in the most energetic way, the counterrevolutionary course of the Peking bureaucracy's foreign policy, whose most shameful expression in the last period was its support to the shah and Pinochet, and to military attacks on Vietnam. But we should avoid two mistakes—that of identifying the People's Republic of China with the ruling bureaucracy in Peking; and that of thinking that Peking has been transformed into a satellite or lasting ally of Washington. Similar errors, made by some in judging the USSR at the time of the Stalin-Hitler pact, led to deviations that are now classic.

There are irreconcilable contradictions between the interests of the Chinese bureaucracy, whose dictatorship is based on the suppression of private property, and the interests of the imperialist states. The Peking bureaucracy maneuvers in a cynical, unprincipled way on the world stage—as the Kremlin has done and is still doing—unscrupulously sacrificing the interests of the workers, poor peasants, and oppressed peoples in many countries. But it is maneuvering to defend its power and privileges, not those of the imperialist bourgeoisie. In the context of these maneuvers, nothing is either lasting or definitive. Sharp and unexpected turns are inevitable.

One of the consequences of this cynicism on the part of the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies, which is more pronounced than ever, is to provide grist for the mill of the international bourgeoisie's ideological offensive, the natural counterpart to its anti-working-class austerity offensive. The crusade is led under the banner of the "crisis of Marxism." The impotence of the CPs, both pro-Moscow and "Eurocommunist," not to speak of the Maoists, in the face of this offensive is painful to watch. It is the task of the Fourth International to resolutely take the lead in defending Marxism and science against this full-fledged revival of obscurantism. It is our conviction that an effective defense of Marxism cannot be limited to preserving its gains, but must combine defense of these gains with an audacious theoretical battle to enrich Marxism through explanations of new phenomena, explanations compatible with its internal logic. The only "existing Marxism" is living, creative, critical Marxism which does not balk at any new challenge.

As a matter of necessity, this World

Congress takes place under the ensign of practical internationalism embodied in an organization. Never has history offered us as many proofs of the disasters that the theory and practice of "national Communism" lead to as in the last twelve months. Never has the fundamental realism of our program and our historic project—to lead the *world* revolution to victory—been better demonstrated.

In the epoch of imperialism, in the epoch of the ever-increasing internationalization of the productive forces and of the class struggle, there is no way to be internationalist in words while limiting oneself in practice to building national organizations. One cannot be internationalist in practice unless one accepts in actual fact the *simultaneous* building of national proletarian parties and a proletarian international.

The special role of the Fourth International in the worldwide workers and revolutionary movement can be summed up in this two-fold battle—a stubborn, uncompromising, daily battle—for the self-organization of the proletariat, and for practical—and practiced—internationalism. But, likewise, nothing is more in keeping with the profound nature and historic mission of the proletariat itself than its instinctive tendency toward self-organization, and the fact that it is the only social class that can fully and unconditionally accept internationalism. It is by these traits of its nature, more than by any others, that the working class reveals its capacity to save humanity from falling into barbarism and self-destruction. To these threats—more real than ever—there is only one alternative, which only the working class can accomplish—the victory of the worldwide socialist revolution, the Worldwide Republic of Workers Councils.

# The Turn to Industry and the Tasks of the Fourth International

By Jack Barnes

One central, practical consequence flowing from the political resolution submitted to this congress by the United Secretariat Majority overshadows all others—that is, that the sections of the Fourth International must make a radical *turn* to immediately organize to get a large majority of our members and leaders into industry and into industrial unions.

This task links the four line resolutions we are going to vote on. It flows from the analysis of the world situation developed in the political resolution that we discussed. So I'm not going to review in detail the structural, demographic, and economic changes behind this decision.

The resolution points to the growing weight of the proletariat in all three sectors of the world revolution. It points to the urban explosions and proletarian forms of organization that have been, and will continue to be, the focus of revolutionary upsurges in the years ahead.

Combined with these structural factors behind the turn are: on the one hand, the long-run stagnation that the world capitalist system faces and the antilabor offensive it engenders; and, on the other, the undefeated working class that the bourgeoisie faces going into this crisis. To this *capitalist crisis* must be added the growing *crisis of world imperialism*.

All this makes the world situation more, not less, explosive. It means that uncontrolled forces—spurred either by the actions of the oppressors or those of the oppressed—can be set into motion. We've seen this in Iran and Nicaragua. And this explosive potential is not limited to the semicolonial world.

Superimposed on these factors is another very important conjunctural factor, the world recession of 1974-75. This downturn, the first generalized recession on a world

scale since the 1930s, came on top of the events that had transpired since 1968. What this definitively set in motion throughout the world is an intensifying austerity drive by the ruling class against the working class, against all the oppressed, and against the political rights the masses need to organize and fight back. This is not just a tactical or short-run policy of the rulers. It is a fundamental policy that economic realities *force* them to carry out.

The ultimate target of the rulers' austerity drive is the industrial workers, for the very same reason that the industrial workers have been at the center of our strategy since the founding of Marxism—their economic strength; their social weight; the example they set for the whole class; the power of their unions to affect the wages, conditions, and thus the entire social framework of the class struggle; their resulting potential political power vis à vis the enemy class; the obstacle they pose to rightist solutions by the bourgeoisie. The industrial workers are both the source of most of the rulers' surplus value and the ultimate enemy that the rulers must defeat if the entire economic and social crisis of their system is to be turned around.

The ruling class cannot afford, and will not allow, these industrial workers to organize *solidarity* with fellow workers, with the oppressed, and with their allies throughout the world. It cannot afford, and will not allow, the industrial workers to develop *trade-union democracy* so that the power of the working class can be organized and used.

In other words, the rulers will not allow without a mighty battle the *evolution of a class-struggle left wing in the labor movement*.

This ruling-class offensive brings down

increasing pressure on the entire working class, on national minorities, on women, on every exploited and oppressed person fighting for their rights. It intensifies pressures on small vanguards seeking to chart a course forward toward the victory of the working class. Everyone who is seeking the revolutionary road, a class-struggle perspective, everyone who is seeking progressive alliances, feels this pressure. It is a fundamental aspect of the

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*The vote of delegates and fraternal observers on this report for the United Secretariat was: 77 for, 17 against, 16.5 abstentions, 2.5 not voting.*

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austerity drive, of the offensive of the rulers—and one that will be magnified as the offensive deepens.

As we discussed yesterday, the only possible reversal of the capitalist crisis, in the judgment of the political resolution, is through a large and decisive enough defeat of the industrial working class to rationalize and restructure capital, to attack with force every upsurge of the colonial peoples, and thus open a new period of expansion.

What conclusions must we draw from this?

That a political radicalization of the working class—uneven and at different tempos from country to country—is on the agenda.

That the rulers' offensive will force big changes in the industrial unions.

And that the key for revolutionists is to be there, in and part of the decisive sector of the working class, prior to these show-downs.

It is *there* that we will meet the forces to build the Fourth International, to build workers parties. It is *there* that we will meet the young workers, the growing numbers of women workers, the workers of oppressed nationalities, and the immigrant workers. It is inside the industrial working class that revolutionary parties will get a response to our program and recruits to our movement.

In light of all these factors it's also important to step back and look at the turn from a broader historical point of view. Our movement's current social composition is totally abnormal. This is a historical fact, not a criticism. In fact, far from being a criticism, it was our movement's ability to recruit from the new generation of radicalizing youth—from the early sixties on—that today poses the possibility of making this turn. And this *possibility* now coincides with a pressing political *necessity*.

Only parties not only proletarian in program, but in composition and experience, can lead the workers and their allies in the struggles that are on the agenda.

Only parties of industrial workers will be able to withstand the pressures, including the ideological pressures, of the ruling class. And these pressures will increase.

Only such parties will have their hand on the pulse of the working class, and thereby not misread their own attitudes, ignorance, and moods as those of the workers. In other words, only parties of industrial workers can move forward and outward.

Only parties of workers that have been tested in action by the workers themselves, long before the decisive showdowns, can decisively grow and chart a way forward. Only that kind of party can attract and link up with the militant class-struggle currents that will break loose as the crisis of the reformist leaderships and centrist organizations deepens.

### Marxism's Proletarian Heritage

We are not blazing a new trail in this regard. In the history of the Marxist movement, the most proletarian parties have been the best parties—the most revolutionary, the least economist, the most political. Go back to the Bolsheviks. Go back to Rosa Luxemburg. Go back to the goals the Fourth International set for itself, with the advice and leadership of Trotsky, at the end of the 1930s.

In fact, it is the proletarian tradition and orientation of the Fourth International that enabled us to arrive where we are today as a unified revolutionary organization on a world scale—an organization that has cadres to make this turn. And it's the turn—universally organized and car-

ried out—that is the only way to preserve and enrich our proletarian orientation.

At the same time, it is crucial to recognize and state clearly that the turn is *not* a continuation of what we've been doing. It is the way we can continue our proletarian orientation, but to carry out this turn on a world scale we must make a break with what we've previously been doing. That's why we call it a *turn*.

This turn will dictate no tactics. Our tactics and campaigns in each country are dictated by the class struggle, by the conflict of class forces. But the turn affects every single one of our tactics, all of our political work, all of our institutions, and every single mode of party functioning. The turn is not a *sufficient* condition to take advantage of the opportunities before us and to meet the crises facing our class. But it is a *necessary precondition* for the next steps forward. Failing that, we can make no progress.

This is what the world political resolution lays out as the central task for the entire Fourth International: to organize and *lead* the overwhelming majority of our cadres into industry and the industrial unions "without further delay."

"The goal," according to the resolution, "is parties of experienced worker-Bolsheviks who act as political leaders of their class and its allies."

It goes without saying that we will not carry out the turn in exactly the same way in every country or part of the world, whether we have ten members or a thousand. But for the political and organizational reasons we've discussed, the turn is a *universal* one for our international movement, in all three sectors of the world revolution. That needs to be understood, so that we can carry out this task as a disciplined world party.

There comes a time when a political problem, a sociological fact, and a leadership decision coincide. This is one of those times. To put our movement in a position to move forward politically, we must simultaneously take our cadres and our program into the decisive sections of our class. Otherwise, we'll become *part* of the growing crisis of leadership in the world labor movement, rather than part of its solution.

### Experiences and Lessons

The resolution was drafted a little more than a year-and-a-half ago. Since that time, our movement has had a great deal more experience with the turn. We've already had the chance to test our conclusions and develop a richer knowledge of the facts than we possibly could have had when we first adopted this resolution. This report and discussion will help us take cognizance of these experiences and changes and, if adopted, report them in printed form to our entire movement.

Of course, there is unevenness from one country to the next in the current stage of implementing the turn. There are differing stages in the development of the political

situation in various countries. Some important experiences have been unique to a single section or a single industry. We can put those aside for today's discussion.

But there is also an entire set of experiences that are common everywhere that we have seriously begun the turn—from Iran to Canada, from Sweden to New Zealand. These common lessons are decisive everywhere that we have significant forces in the Fourth International. They are lessons for the *practical leadership* of the next step forward in carrying out this common task.

What are these lessons of the last few years?

*First.* There is no possible way to make the turn unless the leaders of the party lead. This means that the leadership must analyze and effectively intervene in the unfolding of the class struggle, so that both the political basis of the turn and its practical application are always presented clearly to our cadres.

Comrades cannot be ordered or shamed to make the turn. They have to be politically convinced, inspired, and organized by the leadership. The membership is *waiting* to be led on this turn. That's our universal experience.

But this can only be accomplished if the leadership itself goes into industry. Our goal is not just to get a majority of the membership into industry, but a majority of our elected leadership bodies as well, on a local and national level. Only such a leadership can carry through the turn.

*Second.* The turn has to be approached collectively, not individually. The party must lead comrades into industry. They're not doing it on their own. They're not sent in someplace and then left to fend for themselves. Everytime we've done that, we've reaped the whirlwind. We've lost comrades to demoralization, to opponents, to the Stalinists. The turn is a conscious *party* task, not a routine task of a small group of comrades individually.

Connected with this, we've found everywhere that what is decisive in making the turn and practicing politics in industry is not what comrades accomplish as individuals, but what they accomplish as *fractions* and as part of the party. Comrades with different strengths and weaknesses work together as a disciplined unit of the party, learning from their joint successes and errors.

*Third.* Experience has taught us that there is no gradual way of accomplishing the turn. Of course, the turn takes place over a period of time. Comrades go into industry in successive waves, not all at once.

But the turn cannot be presented or implemented as a gradual, routine, or partial campaign. It must be organized and led as a decisive act by the entire organization. Whenever it has been tried any other way, the turn stalls to a halt and recoils, rather than going forward in waves. If we don't recognize this and act

on that basis, we will fail; we will not carry out the turn.

When we gather the statistics from each national leadership for the next meeting of the International Executive Committee, we will get a feel for how much progress we're making—country by country—in leading a big majority of comrades into industry.

*Fourth.* In every single country where we've made progress with the turn, we've learned—sometimes from false starts—that there can be no such things as exempted jobs, or categories of jobs, or exempted layers in the party. Such exemptions always end up as excuses not to carry out the turn, not to participate in the turn. Trade unionists who are now working jobs *outside* of industry have a particularly important role to play in personally leading party cadres into industry and bringing their experiences to bear in building our fractions. They can provide essential political and practical leadership.

I think we've now bypassed a false debate—the debate over the public versus private sectors. What's important is not whether comrades are paid by the government or a private employer. What's important is whether or not we are in factories, mines, mills, transport centers, communication centers—whether in the private or public sector. *Our goal is to get into industry, to become part of the industrial working class.*

We don't begin by looking for where most women currently are working or where the bureaucracy is weak, although these factors can play a role in targeting particular industrial sectors. We look for where our class is concentrated and where class battles will, by necessity, open up in the coming period. That's where decisive class-struggle leadership will be needed and where we must go. That's the line of the resolution.

We are looking for the natural leaders of the working class—those who are looked to for leadership by other workers. Some of them have already been elected to union posts, but our eyes are not on official leaders at any level. We'll win the best of them by going after the *young rebels* in the working class. They will be decisive for us and for our class in the coming period. That's who we're after.

*Fifth.* This recognition of the centrality of young workers drives home the importance of launching, rebuilding, or helping to strengthen revolutionary youth organizations. Having a youth organization—and one that is fully geared into the industrial turn—becomes *more* important, not less important, as we concentrate our cadres in industry and the industrial unions.

The world Marxist movement has traditionally recognized the need for proletarian youth organizations as a central party-building instrument. As growing numbers of young industrial workers are repelled by capitalism and attracted to radical ideas and alternatives, this need

becomes more pressing. There will be a separate report on the youth work of the international later in the Congress, so I won't attempt to develop this point. But we're learning that we must consciously recognize this as an indispensable part of the turn in order to tap the opportunities before us and make the maximum gains for our parties among radicalizing workers.

#### What Not to Expect

Our initial experiences with the turn have also taught us what we should *not* tell comrades to expect.

We can't promise rapid recruitment. That depends on a whole series of other factors—the unfolding of the class struggle, the stage of class politicization, and the capacities of the party.

While we make no promises that the turn will solve other problems facing the party, we can guarantee that the turn puts us in the best position to solve those problems and take advantage of opportunities. And without the turn, we can guarantee disaster.

Finally, we can't promise that the turn will be painless or easy. It's not, because it's unlike any other thing we normally do and have become accustomed to. It's not a change in political line or a correction of a political error. It's not a shift in tactics. It's not the launching of a new campaign.

The turn means a change in the life of thousands and thousands of comrades. That's different. And that takes leadership.

Everywhere that we've begun to carry out the turn in a systematic and thorough way, there have been some losses of individual comrades. There are comrades for whom the turn sharply poses the question of what they are doing with their lives, what their personal commitments and priorities are. Then, the party also inevitably makes some errors and false starts. And some other comrades drop away.

But the more important lesson that we've learned is that the turn *saves* comrades. It prevents demoralization and turns around the malaise that sets in when our parties don't have the necessary political and organizational moorings in the heart of our class. It provides a perspective, and a realistic base from which to move our work forward. Unsuspected capacities in comrades have come to the fore when they get into industry as part of a strong fraction.

That's one of the most crucial aspects of the turn, and another reason why it must be carried out quickly and led decisively.

#### Some Organizational Conclusions

From our initial experiences, we have also drawn some conclusions on important organizational questions connected with the turn. And all the organizational forms of our parties have to be subordinated to carrying out the turn.

*One.* Comrades who go into industry

have to function as fractions, as a unit, as a collective team—whatever the particular term may be in different sections. They have to have formal structured ways to make decisions democratically, to be tied together politically, to work out problems, and to integrate and develop new comrades that go into industry or are recruited there.

If this does not happen, we can isolate, demoralize, and finally lose comrades. They begin to feel personally responsible for making party gains and personally to blame for any failures or setbacks. We carry out work in every other arena collectively, and that's how we must carry out the turn. It is crucial to organize and lead comrades through fractions. And the party leadership must pay close attention to their work.

*Two.* As we get more and more comrades into industry, it is crucial to pay close attention to maintaining the basic units of the party—branches, or whatever a section may call them—as *rounded political bodies*. They must be of sufficient size and organized politically so that the comrades in them obtain something there that they cannot get through the industrial fractions or in other way. That is, these basic party units must provide the rounded political experience, leadership, Marxist education, and political discussion that comrades can only get from the party as a whole.

Failure to do this can even exacerbate the problem of how to combine what is often called trade-union or factory work with more general socialist political activity.

Of course, this doesn't solve any of our tactical problems of how to link factory work, trade-union work, with other party tasks and campaigns. Those will be solved concretely in each section and specific situation.

But the lesson that comrades in industry must also be active members of rounded political units of the party—in which they have regular and systematic political decision-making power and responsibilities—is a key one for avoiding unnecessary pitfalls.

*Three.* The turn both necessitates and helps accomplish further professionalization of the party. The turn makes more immediate and real our concept that every comrade, every worker-Bolshevik, is a professional revolutionist. The need to have a professional apparatus, the willingness of comrades to be full time, the need for professionalism at every level of the organization—all this becomes more necessary as we become parties of industrial workers.

At the same time, it is important to avoid any concept that there are two categories of party members—those in industry and those not in industry. All party members have equal rights and equal responsibilities. The turn in no way establishes a category of second-class membership for comrades who for what-



ever reason are not currently working an industrial job.

*Four.* The turn also brings into sharper focus the question of leadership norms and general party norms, which must be reviewed to make sure they are in step with our advance along the historical line of march of our class.

Trotsky wrote a series of letters about these matters to the American Trotskyists in the years leading up to the fight with the petty-bourgeois opposition in the late 1930s, when the party was carrying out an industrial turn. Most of these letters dealt with the leadership question. He listed some key characteristics of proletarian leaders and proletarian attitudes: Seriousness toward your organization and its leadership. Subordinating personal considerations in putting the party first. Having a professional attitude toward it. Being deadily opposed to cynicism, gossip, bureaucratism, super-sensitivity to criticism, and other such things common in petty-bourgeois circles. And above all, looking at things not as *me* and *mine*, but as *us* and *ours*.

These were not just moral lectures. Trotsky considered changes along these lines—and the open recognition of the need for such changes—to be a precondition to building proletarian parties and a revolutionary international.

In one 1937 letter\*, Trotsky wrote: "I have remarked hundreds of times that the worker who remains unnoticed in the 'normal' conditions of party life reveals remarkable qualities in a change of the situation when general formulas and fluent pens are not sufficient, where acquaintance with the life of workers and practical capacities are necessary."

In a letter several days later, Trotsky spoke of the need to educate the party in a spirit that "rejects unhealthy criticism, opposition for the sake of opposition." The key to this, he said, is "to change the social composition of the organization—make it a workers organization. . . . [Workers] are more patient, more realistic. When you have a meeting of 100 people and between them 60-70-80 are workers, then the 20 intellectuals, petty bourgeois, become ten times more cautious on the question of criticism. It's a more serious, more firm audience."

The petty bourgeois intellectuals' tendency to criticize for the sake of criticism, says Trotsky, is a way to "muffle their inner skepticism."

"The young workers," he says, "will call the gentlemen-skeptics, grievance mongers, and pessimists to order."

Full-timers in a revolutionary organization, Trotsky stressed, "should have in the

first place a good ear, and only in the second place a good tongue." And as the party begins to recruit industrial workers, Trotsky warned, it must "avoid a great danger: namely that the intellectuals and white-collar workers might suppress the worker minority, condemn it to silence, transform the party into a very intelligent discussion club but absolutely not habitable for workers."

Awareness of these questions of attitudes is not only a necessity if we are to carry out the turn to the end; but by driving through the turn, we will have the greatest chance to alter the orientation, combat alien attitudes, and improve the atmosphere and functioning of our parties. We will begin acting as parties of industrial workers.

#### Educate, Agitate, Organize

*Five.* The education of the party. As comrades begin the turn, they learn and relearn our program, learn and relearn Marxism. They are constantly challenged to explain and popularize our ideas to their co-workers. So we are obligated to expand and pay more careful attention to political education.

This is one safeguard against the susceptibility among comrades to move away from being political when this turn is being carried out. All history tells us this is a danger.

*Six.* Improving our newspapers and turning them more and more into workers' papers. It is through our party press that we can speak to the largest number and broadest layers of workers. Its how we explain why the need for the labor movement to begin thinking socially and acting politically is a life-or-death question.

Our own members are the single most important audience for the party press, along with those in our class and among the oppressed who look to us for political analysis and leadership. What we put in our newspapers, and how we explain things, helps us train our cadres as worker-Bolsheviks rather than radical trade unionists. It helps steel the party against economist tendencies to reduce the struggles of the allies of our class—women, the oppressed nationalities, and so on—to union struggles or to struggles between employees and employers. It helps combat any false ideas that international or other broad political questions cannot be presented to workers at any given period.

*Seven.* The turn makes more important, not less important, the building of *campaign parties*—parties that carry out centralized, political campaigns dictated by the national and international class struggle. We need parties that speak politically to the workers through our actions and our political campaigns, not primarily through how we relate to issues or struggles on the job. As the turn is made, these party campaigns are vital safeguards against rightist and economist pressures that have

historically affected revolutionists in the working class. If there is one thing that the turn does not change, it is our absolute opposition to any spontaneist concepts of how to build the party and attract workers to it.

*Eight.* We have begun to learn valuable lessons about the relationship of the turn to our participation in building the struggles of women, oppressed nationalities, and around issues such as nuclear power or international solidarity. We've learned not to confuse our trade-union or factory fractions with our fractions set up to lead work in various other particular *struggles*.

Of course, there is an interlink. There is a crossover of membership. But we can't reduce one organizational form to the other to carry out our work. To do so simply reflects internally the wrong tendency to reduce the struggles of women, of oppressed nationalities, and of other mass struggles to battles in the factories or the unions. Our turn is a turn outward, not inward.

Struggles that develop inside and outside the labor movement need to be combined and thereby mutually strengthened. Our turn, and the political factors underlying it, greatly expand the possibilities and openings for industrial workers and their unions to be brought into other struggles. We participate in these struggles not only as activists and leaders in them, but more and more as conscious revolutionary leaders of the labor movement.

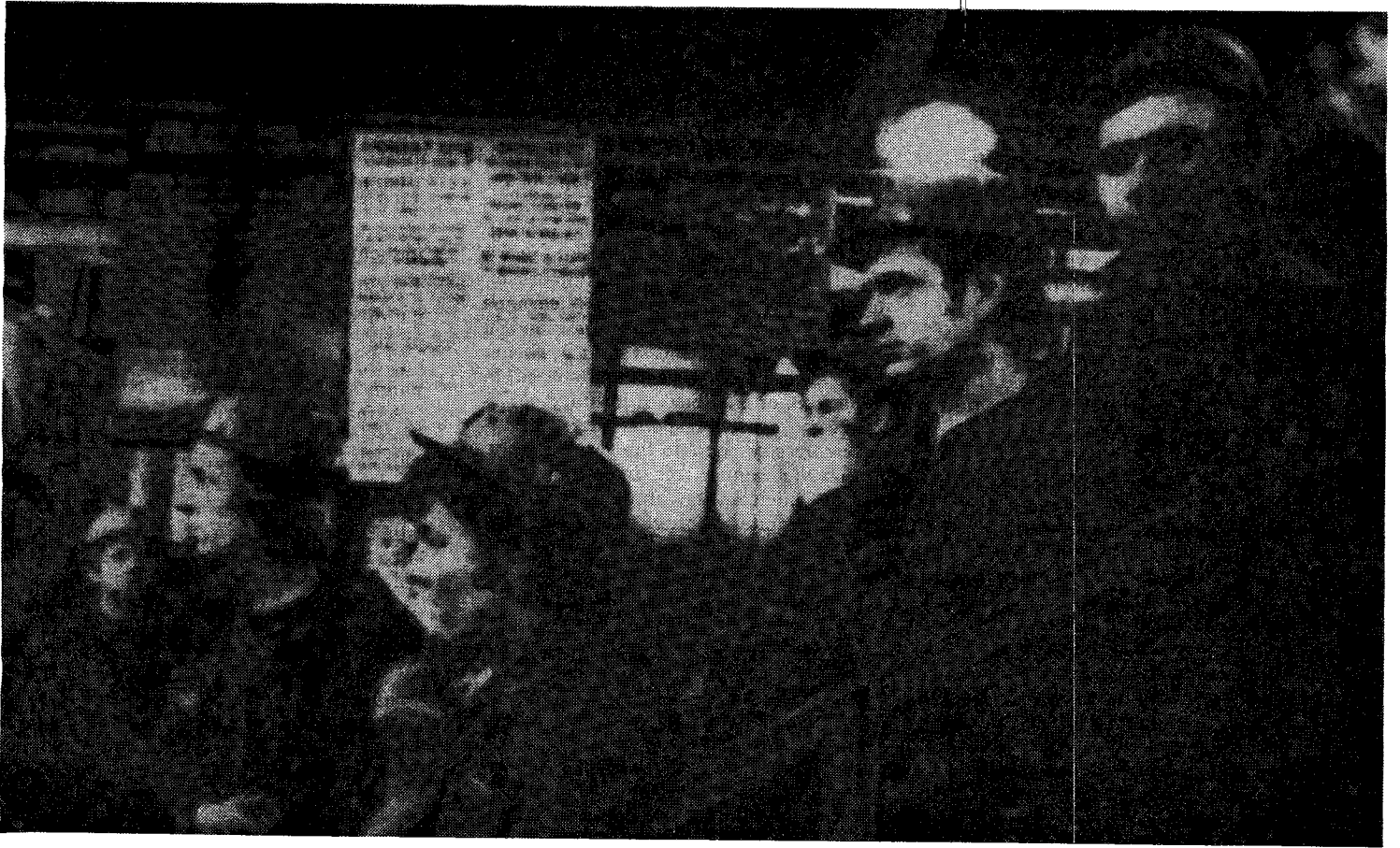
Our goal is to hasten the convergence of the working class, its struggles, and its organizations with the battles of all the oppressed. We can say in all truthfulness to the oppressed, "Your struggles must not be subordinated to any other struggle." It's only a revolutionary leadership of the working class that can say this and *act* on that basis. This is crucial to the ability of the working class to forge needed and lasting alliances with all sections of the oppressed in a common battle against the exploiters.

*Nine.* We have discovered that where the turn has been driven through, women comrades and comrades of the oppressed nationalities have developed more confidence in the party and more confidence in themselves as leaders of their class, their particular struggles, and above all, as leaders of the party.

The turn brings out the best in comrades.

Our turn toward the industrial working class and unions also points in the direction of helping to solve the crisis of leadership in the movements of women and the oppressed nationalities. Today, these struggles confront a crisis of class perspectives. They need to develop a proletarian composition, orientation, and leadership to move their struggles forward. As partisans and participants in these struggles, we will help accelerate the resolution of the leader-

\*These letters are available in "Background to *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*," published by the National Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party. Available for \$1.75 from Pathfinder Press, 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.



(Top) Miners in Pawlowice, part of Poland's growing working class. (Bottom) Soviet troops in Prague, 1968.



ship crisis from our base in industry, involving our co-workers in these movements and fighting to bring the power of the labor movement behind them.

#### Iran and Nicaragua

This brings us to the central campaigns and political tasks before the Fourth International, based on discussions we've had in the United Secretariat.

In outlining these tasks, we should first point to the tremendous effort our world movement has mounted to save the lives of our imprisoned Iranian comrades. This is among the proudest chapters of the International over the entire last period. It is the most effective emergency campaign we've ever carried out. Not only did we save the lives of the comrades, but these efforts had a direct and extremely progressive impact on the Iranian revolution. Protest messages appeared regularly in the Iranian press, forcing the government to make a public response. The Iranian comrades have reported on the reaction of their co-workers in industry to the case and to the broad international support in the world labor movement.

As the events of the past few days have demonstrated, the political focus of this effort now will be shifting. With the new deepening of the Iranian revolution, our best defense of the comrades will be the active solidarity that our world movement can help mobilize with the demand of the Iranian people for the extradition of the shah, and the publicity we can give to the role of our Iranian comrades as anti-imperialist fighters with a revolutionary internationalist program to lead the struggle to victory. The more the revolutionary upsurge there mounts, the better will be the situation for our imprisoned comrades.

In this showdown between the Iranian masses and U.S. imperialism, our world movement has a vital role to play in educating about and building opposition to the threat of U.S. military aggression. We can help the Iranian people get out their message to the world working class about the crimes of the shah and about their struggle for a just social system free of capitalist exploitation and imperialist domination.

We have a similar responsibility and opportunity concerning events in another part of the world—that's the campaign in solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution. We are demanding massive aid to help the Nicaraguan people reconstruct their devastated country—aid on a government level, from the mass workers organizations, and from other institutions. Our aim is to help organize, both inside and outside the labor movement, a united-front solidarity campaign to carry out this campaign. This is a burning, immediate need of the Nicaraguan revolution, as shown by the international appeals of the new Sandinista government.

We are convinced that supporters of the Nicaraguan revolution must prepare for

major conflicts there in the not-too-distant future. American imperialism will not simply sit back and allow the Nicaraguan workers and peasants to move forward to the second workers state in the Americas. As the struggles that pose that question are deepened, we will have to be prepared for the possibility of intervention—in one form or another—on a massive enough scale to try to preserve capitalist property and restore bourgeois political power. World events and the relationship of class forces, both inside and outside Nicaragua, may preclude direct U.S. intervention. But we cannot assume that. Like the Nicaraguan masses, we must be prepared for direct U.S. or U.S.-backed military moves. That's our special responsibility.

We correctly point to the current tactics of the Nicaraguan and imperialist bourgeoisie, which revolve around small aid to domestic capitalists there to help them buy time. The aim is to try to chip away at the gains, the institutions, and the confidence of the proletariat in Nicaragua.

But we must be under no illusions that the revolutionary process in Nicaragua is subject to the control either of the bourgeois forces on the right, or the FSLN and revolutionary forces on the left. Sections of the Nicaraguan exploiters will continually provoke conflicts and crises, just as initiatives by the workers and peasants can unexpectedly drive the process forward. Regardless of the current tactics of the bourgeoisie, conflicts will continue to erupt, as the capitalists continually probe the capacities of the revolution to withstand their resistance and move forward.

As political leaders, we will be called upon to *lead*—not only our own forces, but all those who want to defend Nicaragua.

This will be the central worldwide campaign of the Fourth International. We want to participate in united-front solidarity committees. We want to take this issue into the unions, women's organizations, and organizations of the oppressed nationalities.

This campaign must also be prominently featured in our press week in and week out. This means not only coverage of solidarity events in our countries. People will be inspired to become partisans of this campaign as they become more and more aware of the inspiring things that are happening in Nicaragua, and our press has an indispensable role to play in helping to counter the capitalists' media blackout of the revolution. This is one of the most powerful ways we can build solidarity with Nicaragua and spur activists to participate in the solidarity campaign.

We also must intertwine this effort with defense of Cuba against the imperialist blockade and against the military threats that will escalate as the conflicts in Nicaragua deepen. The Carter administration is already intensifying its military pressure against Cuba in retaliation for its solidarity with Nicaragua, and other anti-imperialist struggles in the Caribbean and

Central America. Washington is warning Cuba that it will not tolerate any interference with imperialist plans in Nicaragua. That is the meaning of the moves allegedly in response to Soviet troops in Cuba—the mock assault on Guantánamo, strengthening U.S. naval presence in the Caribbean, attempts to form an inter-American military force for the region, and so on.

#### Indochina

Another important international campaign centers on Indochina. This will be primarily a propaganda campaign carried out through our press, not an action campaign such as that around Nicaragua.

A major counterrevolutionary drive by imperialism is under way in Indochina today. Using starvation as a political weapon, and cloaked behind a pretense of providing humanitarian aid, the imperialists are engaged in major arming and encouragement of an alliance between the reactionary military regime in Thailand and opposition forces to the current Kampuchean government that range from Pol Pot's army to the Khmer Serei.

Pierre Rousset has drawn up a short memorandum outlining the main themes of this campaign. I am going to read this outline, and we propose to adopt it as part of this report on the tasks of our world movement:

"The framework:

- defense of the Indochinese revolutions in the face of growing imperialist pressure, in which the Phnompenh regime and Vietnamese troops are today fighting imperialist-backed forces;
- defense of the Indochinese workers regimes in face of pressure from the Chinese bureaucracy;
- the struggle to dismantle the entire U.S. imperialist military network in Southeast and East Asia and full support to the revolutionary struggles in the region.

"Concrete axes of the campaign:

"• For urgent massive aid to the Indochinese countries, with no political strings attached. This is especially urgent for Kampuchea, where financial, medical, food and general material help must be sent to Phnompenh to save the Kampuchean people from starvation and disease, as well as helping to rebuild their country and revive the socioeconomic activities that have collapsed. An end to the economic blockade imposed on Vietnam by U.S. imperialism and an end to the embargo of food and economic aid begun this year by Japan and the European imperialist powers.

"• End the brutal imperialist use of the food weapon! The imperialists' fraudulent international "humanitarian" campaigns around the Kampuchean and Vietnamese refugees must be exposed.

"• The Kampuchean refugees in Thailand and around the Thai border must be saved from starvation. But this humanitarian aid *must in no case* be used as a cover to give material aid to the combined combat forces of the Khmer Rouge on the one hand, and of the Khmer Serei, Khmer Serika, and Sihanoukists on the other hand, as is presently the case. We oppose any such aid.

"Thailand, the Thai regime, and the Thai army must not be used as a staging ground to attack the Indochinese countries, through either

the Laotian or Kampuchean borders.

"In any conflict that is fundamentally between prouperialist military forces and workers governments and states, revolutionaries cannot and do not remain neutral. They place themselves unequivocally on the side of the threatened workers regimes.

"• Diplomatic recognition of the Vietnamese, Laotian, and Kampuchean governments. Representatives of the Pol Pot-Khieu Samphan army must be thrown out of international bodies such as the United Nations."

These are the outlines we propose for our campaign around Indochina.

### Stop Nuclear Power

The fourth task we want to point to is the antinuclear campaign. This will not be organized internationally in the same way as the Nicaraguan campaign, since it depends much more on the particular stage of the movement from country to country. Nonetheless, we want to coordinate on a world scale our participation in this internationally important struggle. This is currently the single largest mass protest movement growing in the world, and it is even spreading from the advanced imperialist countries to the semicolonial countries.

Our goal is clear: to shut down all nuclear reactors now! We want to involve the labor movement in this struggle. We believe that this is a question of survival for the working class, and we take on the rightist demagogy of many class-collaborationist labor leaders who try to convince workers that nuclear power means jobs and progress, when it actually means radiation and the constant peril of mass destruction.

We want to participate and provide leadership to antinuclear campaigns, committees, and coalitions in our various countries. We want to use our growing base in industry to help strengthen the movement by involving industrial workers in this fight. We believe that the labor movement has a big stake in throwing its power behind the struggle to shut down the reactors.

This movement also provides a growing base of opposition to the rapidly expanding arsenal of the imperialist powers. In some countries, there have been large protests around this issue, as well. How to draw the connection between these two issues differs on the tactical level from country to country and situation to situation.

The antinuclear movement provides an important political opportunity for the entire Fourth International. As we've already begun to see, it will be one of the greatest sources of cadres for our movement and our youth groups in the coming period.

Of course, there are many other important campaigns. For example, around abortion rights and other women's liberation activities; this will be taken up in a full agenda point here at the Congress.

There are also the struggles of immigrant workers, the oppressed nationalities, peasants and small farmers, and so on.

In the time allotted, however, we wanted to draw special attention to just one other emergency effort that our movement on a world scale has already been involved in and must continue to champion. That is the powerful campaign organized in defense of Petr Uhl and other victims of the Czechoslovakian bureaucracy.

This is not simply a solidarity or emergency defense campaign, which would be sufficient justification. There is something more involved, however. This kind of effective solidarity with dissidents in the bureaucratized workers states is today the single most important step the international as a whole can take toward winning cadres to the Trotskyist movement in Eastern Europe—and we can add China as well.

### Some Questions and Answers

I want to end on some questions that have been raised about the turn.

Is it mechanical? Is it a gimmick? Is it a factory obsession?

Well, I guess you could say we have a certain obsession about getting large fractions of comrades into great concentrations of industrial workers. We might quibble over the word. But we plead guilty.

Is it mechanical? Yes, in a certain sense. The mechanics of actually driving through the turn are a precondition for politically carrying it through.

Is it a gimmick? No. It's not a gimmick. Unless our entire political analysis is wrong.

The leadership of the Fourth International, the International Executive Committee, must lead the turn.

It must lead through political analysis, in order to situate the turn in the unfolding world class struggle.

It must lead by more of its members going into industry.

It must lead through coordination of the turn on a world scale, facilitating the exchange of experiences and information among the national leaderships and comrades in industry in different countries.

This means that the IEC, like all other leadership bodies of our movement, will have to begin organizing its work differently. The agendas of its meetings will have to change. The questions it must consider and deliberate on will broaden.

For example, the next IEC meeting must concretely look at the statistics on the progress of the turn and assess their political and organizational implications.

The only way the success of the turn can be measured is to look honestly and cold-bloodedly at the figures—the number and percentage of comrades in industry in each section, the number of functioning industrial fractions, the number of leadership cadres who are carrying out the turn. Only by reviewing these figures can we assess

the progress in carrying out the central decision of this Congress. This is what we must do at the next IEC meeting.

The more successful we have been in drawing the lessons and implementing the resolution, the quicker the turn *per se* will be behind us. The turn is a radical *tactical* move necessitated by the historical development of our movement and the current stage of world politics. It is an abnormal response to an abnormal situation—a situation in which the big majority of our members in every section have *not* been industrial workers. Once this historically necessary tactic has been carried out—once the abnormal situation of our current social composition and arena of work has been changed—the turn will be behind us. In the United States we talk about the "withering away of the turn." If it is carried out to the end, the tactic ceases.

Several comrades have told me, "Don't forget to point out that our movement faces a crisis, that we have a great number of problems." There's an important factor to remember in connection with this. The problems we face don't reflect decisive setbacks for the working class such as those in the 1930s—the rise of fascism and world war—or a political retreat such as that in the 1950s.

*The crises and problems we face are ultimately rooted in our need to prepare for challenges and opportunities posed by an ascending class struggle and a situation in which the balance of forces on a world scale is shifting to our class.* These struggles have not been decided. The biggest ones are still to come. And they are going to bring forward new forces from our class and its allies.

### Building a Mass World Party

Given these revolutionary prospects, the turn is also decisive in putting the Fourth International in the position to accomplish what will be the most important challenge in building a mass world party of socialist revolution.

Everywhere we exist in the world today, we have only small propaganda groups. To accomplish the tasks we've set for ourselves, we must be able to turn to layers of revolutionists that come from other directions and other traditions—*revolutionists of action*, such as the layer that came out of the Cuban revolution or the Nicaraguan revolution today, left currents that arise from the crisis in the union movement and the reformist parties. Our capacity to link up with them, to attract them to our program and convince them of its necessity, to merge our forces and theirs into a common political and organizational framework—this is the only way we can build a mass world party. It can't be done simply through recruitment to our sections.

But this historic task can only be accomplished by organizations rooted in industry and composed of industrial workers.

We often point out that even relatively small revolutionary parties can grow tumultuously during mass upheavals, being forged out of the fighters that come forward out of these class battles. This is true. It is what happened to the Bolsheviks in 1917.

But this can *only* be true for parties of industrial workers who have already been tested in action and have experience and respect in the workers movement. It cannot happen from outside the heart of the working class. Those who are on the outside when such developments occur will simply be bypassed; the opportunity will be lost.

This is the goal of the turn. To place our cadres where they must be to build workers parties that are capable of growing out of the big class battles that we know are on the agenda throughout the world. Otherwise, our program, which the world proletariat needs to chart a course to victory, will remain a lifeless document rather than a guide to mass revolutionary action.

We make no guarantees that the turn will bring us correct tactics, timing, or political savvy in meeting opportunities such as this. No promise whatsoever. These matters will be up to the comrades on the spot in each section and each new situation. We simply guarantee that these decisions *cannot* be made correctly without the turn, without parties composed in their overwhelming majority of industrial workers.

Finally, we should dispense with one myth. I was struck by it when reading a document that contains an exchange between leaders of the British Socialist Workers Party and comrades from the International Marxist Group. The British SWP warns that several years ago their American organization tried to place the big majority of its comrades into industry, and the experience ended in disaster. Here's what they had to say:

Now, while we completely agree with the *objective*, the solid implantation of revolutionaries in the industrial working class, we believe that the *method* proposed to achieve it can only lead to disaster. 'Proletarianisation' or 'industrialisation'—ie transplanting ex-students into industry is only a substitute, and a dangerous one at that, for the real task of building workers' parties.

'Industrialisation' has certain superficial attractions. It yields quick results—it leads to significant increases in the number of manual workers among the members. These results are however achieved at a high price. The petty-bourgeois comrades sent into industry are forced to adapt to their new environment. Their first

priority is to make themselves acceptable to their work-mates. The natural consequence is that they play down, or completely conceal their politics and concentrate upon making themselves effective trade unionists. A gulf opens up between their life as revolutionaries and their life as worker militants. Within the workplace their priority is not to win over other workers to revolutionary politics, to sell the party's paper, to present a programme of struggle against the bosses, but to establish themselves as good militants pure and simple. Within the organisation they often become a conservative force, tending, for example, to take what they believe to be a 'super-proletarian' (ie reactionary) line on questions of, for instance sexual oppression, and to adopt generally economic positions.

At the same time 'industrialisation' tends to create two tiers of membership within the organisation. There are the 'worker-Bolshevik cadres' who have made the transition from petty bourgeois to 'proletarian' and who therefore tend to regard themselves as an elite, and the rest, who exist, not to build the party and rank-and-file organisations in their own workplaces, but to 'service' the 'proletarians'. Work in the white-collar unions and among students, far from negligible spheres of activity, tends to suffer severely under this sort of regime.

We are not inventing this scenario. It has happened in odd instances within our own organisation. It happened to the International Socialists in the United States, where 'industrialisation' created a paper which hardly mentioned politics, a bloated full-time apparatus, a conservative layer of 'proletarianised' students and, at the bottom, demoralised white-collar workers and students. The end result is that the organisation has dissolved itself into various rank-and-file union caucuses and a monthly propaganda magazine.

The conclusion the British SWP draws from this experience is: *Don't go into industry. The turn is wrong.*

We say just the opposite. We say the reason the IS experience led to failure—and it was abysmal—was because of the program and leadership of the organization that carried it out. The reason it failed is that this organization counterposed going into industry and "union work," on the one hand, to the development of a politically rounded workers paper, Marxist education, and systematic political campaigns, on the other. When they made the turn, the leadership consciously *depoliticized all party institutions.*

If such false counterpositions are made, then the turn will fail. You do lose comrades. And you can't recruit and hold politicizing young workers. When the party is falsely told to *choose* between an effort to get comrades into industry and carrying out organized political campaigns, then, of course, colonization will fail.

But we have a totally different approach. We don't think that comrades who have been recruited from and trained in important protest movements and struggles of the oppressed will become less political, less feminist, less opposed to nuclear power when they become industrial workers and union militants. We believe—and our experience already confirms—that comrades become more confident and more effective in all these struggles.

Ultimately, underlying opposition to the turn—whether consciously or not—is the idea that somehow workers are inherently less revolutionary, less political, and more prejudiced than other sectors of the population. That's absolutely false.

We are convinced that workers are *not* less political than other sectors of the population. To the contrary, we're convinced that as the struggles of all the oppressed deepen, industrial workers will more and more take the lead.

But to carry out the turn, we have to face facts. We have to look cold-bloodedly, honestly, and thoroughly at our current size, composition, and problems. There are no tricks or formally correct definitions that can help us become parties that are proletarian in composition as well as program. We have to start from our *real* composition, so we can judge the real tasks and opportunities before us.

### Meeting the Opportunities

There is no reason for pessimism. We should look at the crisis we face and the problems we confront as reflections of a period that is opening in which we can *resolve* them. The turn will give us the political perspectives we need to grow and move forward.

On a world scale, we are the only organized revolutionary alternative for the labor movement. Every other international current has failed.

We are convinced that in making the turn to the industrial working class, we must simultaneously build a world party and our national sections. We cannot build revolutionary workers parties anywhere in the world without the simultaneous struggle to build the world party.

And that world party cannot and will not be built unless its components are *workers parties*, rooted in industry, in countries throughout the world.

In driving through the turn, we open the door to the entire next stage in constructing the international party of socialist revolution that is needed by the working class to topple world capitalism.



# Resolution on Latin America



Light and power workers contingent in demonstration of Sandinista trade-union federation. Banner reads: "At last we can provide light after forty-five years of darkness. We are organized! Homeland and revolution."

# Resolution on Latin America

## Preface

The following resolution was written in November, 1978. A few particularly relevant examples from subsequent events have been included. The most important development since the document was written is the Nicaraguan revolution. The Nicaraguan experience has not been incorporated into the body of this resolution; instead it has been dealt with in a separate resolution. The resolution adopted by majority vote at the world congress is entitled

“Revolution on the March.” The minority resolution is entitled “Theses on the Nicaraguan Revolution.”

An extensive balance sheet of the Cuban revolution has not been included in this resolution because a special discussion on Cuba is scheduled to take place in the leadership bodies of the Fourth International. The basic framework of that discussion is indicated in points 23 and 24 of this resolution.

## Introduction

Although there is a great unevenness between the various countries of Latin America, and within each country, the continent as a whole is the most economically developed of all the semicolonial regions of the world. In recent years economic development has accelerated significantly, particularly in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, which together account for a big majority of the population of the continent. This is shown, in particular, by the rising proportion of the national product stemming from industrial production, the growth of the proletariat, and the increasing importance in the ruling-class bloc of indigenous industrial and banking sectors.

Despite the growing industrialization, the indigenous bourgeoisies have not been capable of carrying out the still necessary democratic and anti-imperialist tasks of the Latin American revolution. It is beyond their reach to carry out a deepgoing agrarian reform, win genuine economic independence and complete national liberation from imperialism—prerequisites for assuring a better way of life for the masses. Imperialist domination remains, with the capitalists and landlords as dependent partners, condemning the masses to a life of exploitation, repression, and poverty.

As a result, all the basic contradictions produced by the law of uneven and combined development manifest themselves in a concentrated way in Latin America. On the one hand, there has been explosive growth of the cities, the development of modern industry, and the mechanization of sectors of agricultural production. But the cities are populated by masses of poor, unemployed or partially employed; considerable small-scale manufacturing exists alongside modern industry, and industrial production still benefits only a small minority; agricultural production still does not meet human needs, while the toilers on the land, unable to compete, can barely survive. The perspectives facing the Latin American masses under capitalism remain bleak.

But the very advances made in capitalist industrial development are creating even more mature conditions for overturning capitalist property relations. On the one hand, the Latin American ruling classes, including the increasingly important industrial and banking sectors, are still dependent on the imperialists and are much less able than in the past to promote bourgeois-populist challenges to imperialism and to use mass mobilizations for their bourgeois-nationalist interests.

On the other hand, recent economic development has resulted in notable growth of the Latin American working class, numerically as well as in specific social weight. A series of new sectors have grown up in the big industries with high capital concentration (such as the automotive industry). Taken as a whole this signifies the appearance of a youthful and powerful Latin American proletariat. This proletariat exists and is growing in combination with the older sector of the working class and with its long tradition of struggle and of trade-union organization. The energy of the younger sector will be the basis for renewing the methods and forms of workers organization in relation to the old trade union leaders subordinated to reformist and bourgeois-nationalist tendencies, and to the state. The combination of older and newer layers of the proletariat, especially notable in countries such as Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Peru,

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*This resolution was submitted by the United Secretariat. The vote of delegates and fraternal observers was: 94 for, 11 against, 3.5 abstentions, 4.5 not voting.*

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and others, has already produced instances of massive growth at all levels of workers organization, as in Brazil.

The proletariat is moving to the leadership of the class struggle as a whole, and is increasingly inclined to employ the most advanced and powerful forms of struggle. So-called austerity plans not only affect the industrial proletariat, but the entire wage-earning sector (especially the urban workers), which has grown enormously. The working masses are confronted with

imperialism, with the bourgeoisie, and with the state that is more and more seen as the bearer and guarantor of this policy. Thus are created conditions for a new alliance, one that goes in an anti-imperialist and anticapitalist direction, an alliance through which the proletariat can organize the wage-earning and oppressed sectors of the population around a socialist program.

The victory of the Cuban revolution and the creation of the first workers state in the Western Hemisphere proved that entirely new possibilities are open to the masses of Latin America. The Cuban revolution demonstrated that far-reaching and permanent anti-landlord, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist measures can be achieved by the toiling masses when they are mobilized, provided these are combined with the struggle for socialist goals led by the proletariat. The Cuban revolution showed that deepgoing agrarian reform can be carried out and a genuine break from imperialist domination can be made. It proved that poverty can be ended, murderous Batista-type regimes swept away, and a social system founded on exploitation overthrown.

The socialist perspective, which has continually been brought to the forefront by struggles in countries from the least to the most highly developed, and which was verified for all of Latin America by the Cuban revolution, is objectively most timely for semi-industrialized Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico.

The Cuban revolution touched off a struggle of historic proportions in Latin America. The imperialists and national bourgeoisies were thoroughly frightened by the Cuban experience, and they have followed a consistent policy of trying at any cost to block the victory of another socialist revolution in the region.

Under the impact of the Cuban revolution, there was a rise in the class struggle throughout Latin America which led to prerevolutionary crises in several countries. But the strategy of guerrilla warfare promoted by Castro and Guevara failed to extend the socialist revolution. The guerrilla strategy was unable to break the hold of the bourgeois-nationalist, Stalinist, and Social Democratic misleaders over the mass movement; the promising opportunities were lost.

Since 1964, with the military coup in Brazil, a series of grave defeats were inflicted on the proletariat and oppressed peoples of Latin America. These setbacks were especially marked in the countries of the southern cone: Bolivia, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina.

The Argentine military coup in 1976 was a heavy blow to the proletariat. It was followed by massacres, layoffs, and mass arrests, destroying a large part of the militant proletarian layers that had played the most important role in the semi-insurrectional uprising in Córdoba in

1969—the “Cordobazo”—and that remained in the forefront through the 1975 general strike and other struggles that took place prior to the military coup of 1976.

But the 1976 coup failed to shatter the morale of the Argentine workers or the organized labor movement on the scale suffered by the workers under the coups in Brazil, Uruguay, and Chile. The Argentine working class has succeeded in mounting organized resistance struggles, as was shown in the strikes of 1977 and 1978.

The failure to crush the Argentine working class proved to be a turning point.

The recovery of the mass movement in Latin America followed an upward course after 1976. In Brazil, a powerful strike movement in 1978-79 marked the awakening of the largest and most important working class on the continent. In Peru, the military dictatorship was profoundly shaken by a series of mass mobilizations and strikes followed, on the electoral level, by major gains by the working class in the Constituent Assembly elections of 1978. The 1977 *paro cívico* in Colombia and the 1977 and 1978 strikes in Bolivia exemplified the same trend. New challenges to imperialist domination developed in the Caribbean, particularly Grenada, drawing this area closer to political developments in Latin America as a whole. The new phase of rising class struggle reached its highest point so far in the victorious struggle that toppled the Somoza tyranny in Nicaragua in 1979; this had an immediate impact in reinforcing the struggle in El Salvador and elsewhere in Central America.

Nicaragua has shown the timeliness of prospects for revolution on the continent. The process which developed there as a radical guerrilla struggle against imperialism and Somoza culminated in a victorious urban insurrection in which the role of the proletariat and plebeian masses allied with it played a decisive role in the overthrow of Somoza.

This acute continental political crisis has coincided with the grave economic situation of world capitalism that began with the generalized recession of 1974-75. The deepgoing capitalist economic crisis throughout the world and within Latin America has been combined with consecutive interbourgeois crises, numerical and organizational growth of the proletariat, and radicalization of the petty bourgeoisie. These factors determine that the overthrow and liquidation of the existing dictatorships in Latin America, and of the so-called austerity policy continuing throughout the Latin American states, will only be conceivable by means of a tumultuous and violent process of mass mobilizations and struggles, of confrontations with imperialism and with the state, of organization of the working class and of combinations of different forms of struggle: generalized strikes, democratic mobiliza-

tions, armed struggle, popular insurrections, and so forth.

This process will undergo sharp twists and turns in which democratic periods can be combined with the continuation or rebirth of dictatorial forms, forms challenged anew by the resistance and mobilizations of the masses. There is no stabilization of the dictatorships, but stabilization of the democratic bourgeois regimes is also excluded. The conquest of democratic rights, one of the principal objectives of the struggle of the workers movement, will be obtained and maintained only insofar as the day-to-day struggle and mobilization of the masses, and the growth of their forms of organization in all sectors of society, are preserved and strengthened. The fundamental nucleus of these forms is the workers organization in the place of production, in the factories and mines.

The essential next step forward for the working class is the conquest of class political independence, and the creation of a consistently class-struggle leadership of the labor movement that can challenge the treacherous leaderships that the workers and the oppressed have followed in the past: the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists, the Stalinists, and the Social Democrats. If this can be accomplished, the working class can be organized and mobilized to lead all the oppressed in struggle against the imperialists and indigenous ruling classes.

The proletariat is the historical guide of all the oppressed sectors. It is the bearer of the socialist program of the Latin American revolution. The road to its organization, to the extension of its program, to its alliance with other exploited and oppressed sectors, to the overthrow of capitalism and to the construction of its own workers state passes, however, through various forms and methods of struggle and of organization that have been passed down to revolutionary Marxists from the example of Leninism.

Prospects for the construction of mass revolutionary parties of the Leninist type will be enhanced as new revolutionary forces emerge out of the radical democratic and anti-imperialist struggles and the rising mobilizations of the working class, particularly the industrial proletariat. Revolutionary Marxists firmly rooted among workers in the mines, factories, and agriculture will be in the best possible position to grow and win these new revolutionary fighters.

It is obvious that bright perspectives are opening for the spread of revolutionary Marxism in Latin America. To take advantage of them, however, the key problems must be solved—the construction of mass parties of the Leninist type. This requires examination of the limitations of the strategy of guerrilla war promoted by Castro and Guevara, and a Marxist criticism of

the role of the Stalinist, centrist, Social Democratic, and bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist currents.

Above all, a revolutionary Marxist pro-

gram must be developed specifying the main tasks facing the proletariat and its allies in advancing the struggle for socialism in the coming period.

## I. Recent Economic and Social Changes in Latin America

1. With the Latin American capitalist economies drawn further into the acute contradictions of world capitalism as a whole, the worldwide capitalist recession of 1974-75 hit Latin America hard, especially because of the increase in the price of oil and the contraction of the market in the imperialist countries. The rate of economic growth diminished; inflation and unemployment rose; trade terms deteriorated; foreign debt and interest payments to imperialist banks reached unprecedented levels; imperialist penetration gained momentum.

A few of the Latin American ruling classes benefited from the hike in oil prices. The governments of Venezuela, Ecuador, Trinidad-Tobago, Bolivia, and Mexico in 1977-78, were able as exporters of crude oil to reduce somewhat their traditional deficits in foreign trade. However, the possession of oil resources has not narrowed the gap between the economic and social backwardness of these countries and the development of the imperialist countries.

The countries of Latin America emerged from the recession of 1974-75 with enormous foreign debts. For the first time since the crisis of the thirties, the possibility has appeared of some countries, such as Peru, resorting to a moratorium in payments to the imperialists' banks. Besides this, trade deficits in 1975-76 were greater than ever, with the exception of oil, despite the declining rate of growth and along with it of imports.

These debts are so enormous that some Latin American countries must utilize the larger part of their income from exports to keep current on their payments. Under these conditions, the Latin American governments are subjected to austerity policies imposed by imperialist banks through the instrument of the International Monetary Fund.

2. The close of the period of post-World War II capitalist expansion is affecting the region slowly but surely. Despite occasional periods of economic growth in some countries, the fundamental economic superexploitation of semicolonial Latin American society continues. This is marked above all by structural underemployment and unemployment of the work force. In Mexico, for example, more than 50 percent of the economically active population is affected. In some industries production has fallen far short of capacity, a problem that up to now has been relatively unimportant in Latin America. The expansion of the nonproductive, parasitic sectors

of the economy is accentuated. This is particularly true of the percentage of national income devoted to military spending which is directly linked to the fundamental objective of the ruling classes: to hold the toiling masses under conditions most favorable for exploiting labor.

Permanent inflation also reaches far more severe levels in Latin America than in the imperialist countries. In 1977 the annual rate of inflation reached 100 percent in Chile and 176 percent in Argentina (the highest in the world). The average rate of inflation in Latin America in the 12-month period from June 1977 to June 1978 was 44%. This contrasts with an average of 6.5% during the same period in the industrially-advanced capitalist countries.

The Latin American capitalist economies continue to be dependent on imperialism. But whereas the sectors of imperialist capital that dominated the Latin American economies in the past were those linked to agriculture, mining, and oil-oriented toward the export trade—new sectors have now come forward. The industrial monopolists of the imperialist countries who export machinery and equipment, and are thus interested in seeing the Latin American countries gain a certain degree of industrialization, have invested more heavily. The index of industrial production in Brazil rose from a base of 100 in 1970 to 164 in 1975, largely as a consequence of this. The main area of investment is in consumer durables and modern packaged goods. In 1977, for example, imperialist monopolies and trusts controlled 100% of Brazil's auto production and 94% of its pharmaceutical products. In Mexico in 1976, 74% of foreign investment was in industry, accounting for 40% of all industrial production, and for 80% of industrial production in sectors such as electrical, chemical, and machinery production.

Inter-imperialist competition has played a decisive role in this change in placement of imperialist investments. The U.S. imperialists remain preponderant in Latin America, but they have lost much ground to the various West European and Japanese imperialists, which have often initiated the penetration of this new sector of production.

But this partial industrialization does not cancel out the difference in productivity between the imperialist centers and the dependent semicolonial countries of Latin America. This gap in productivity not only remains, but continues to widen as a result

of the imperialists' monopoly of high-technology production. Nor has the basic semicolonial position of the partially industrialized Latin American countries changed in relation to the world market. Brazil, for example, exports manufactured goods (the overwhelming bulk go to other Latin American countries), but still relies on agriculture for 60% of its export earnings.

In the world market, terms of trade are as unequal as those in the previous periods of imperialism, if not more so. These terms of trade provide a source of super profits for the imperialists, among other reasons because of the payment for high-technology goods.

3. The process of "substituting for imports" (that is, domestic production of products that had traditionally been imported) that began with World War II fostered some industrialization mainly in the 1950s and 1960s. The limited character of this industrial development must be stressed. Much production remains in the small-scale manufacture and artisan sectors. In comparison with the imperialist countries, industrial production accounts for a relatively small part of the economic output of most Latin American countries. Furthermore, industrial development tends to be concentrated in a few countries, and within those countries, in small areas. One-half of Brazil's industry, for example, is concentrated in São Paulo and parts of Rio de Janeiro. In absolute terms, however, there has been a significant increase, and the impact of this partial industrialization on overall economic, social, and political developments is out of proportion to its absolute weight, and is growing.

The process of capitalist accumulation, which was fed and accompanied by this rapid industrialization, benefited sectors of imperialism in association with the national bourgeoisie. In this way the industrial bourgeoisie and banking sectors tied to it are tending to stand out as the most dynamic sectors of the dominant national ruling class bloc. Thus, in Mexico there is the "Monterrey group," the Banamex group, and the Bancomer group; in Brazil, the Bradesco group, the Itaú group, the National Bank group, and the Simonsen group.

Despite this trend, the social structure of these countries remains that of semicolonies; they have not become independent imperialist, "subimperialist," or semi-imperialist powers. The partial industrialization, in fact, has meant that the technological dependence of these countries on imperialism is greater than ever, their "national" bourgeoisies undertake more "joint ventures" with imperialist corporations, and their debts to imperialist banks and monetary institutions are increasing constantly.

These economic transformations that resulted from the expansionist course of imperialism in the period of feverish



growth following World War II have produced a growing differentiation among the various semicolonial countries of Latin America. By the size of the working class, weight of industrial output, amount of exports, rate of capital accumulation and development of the banks, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico can be classified as semi-industrialized countries. Midway between these three and the most economically backward countries of Latin America are Venezuela, Chile, Peru, Colombia, and Uruguay, with the industrialization process growing fastest in Venezuela as a result of the great inflow of oil revenues.

In general, the industrial working class still remains a much smaller part of the active population in Latin America than in the imperialist countries. But its absolute size and its specific weight have grown considerably as a result of the above economic processes. Concentrated in big enterprises and economically very important areas, the industrial working class plays a political and social role far out of proportion to its numbers. Thus the weight of the industrial working class in Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico is becoming more and more decisive in the political dynamics of the continent as a whole.

4. Capital—both indigenous and imperialist—has likewise penetrated some sectors of agriculture in a massive way. In addition to northeast and northwest Mexico and the areas surrounding São Paulo and the south of Brazil, there has been a growing development of “agribusiness” in Central America, Colombia, Venezuela, and Peru.

The peasant subsistence economy is destroyed in this process, but agricultural production as a whole has not been transformed in a balanced way onto a modern capitalist basis. In fact, the problem of food production has been aggravated in many cases.

The bourgeois state is increasingly being converted into the political agent of imperialist finance capital in the countryside, inasmuch as its agricultural activities are integrated into the process of the worldwide accumulation of capital. The raw materials produced by the agribusiness complexes in Latin America are integrated directly into the world market, without regard to the production of food and materials required nationally.

In Mexico, in the four northern states of Sonora, Sinaloa, Baja California, and Tamaulipas, where agribusiness for export purposes predominates, mechanized means are used for 90-99% of food production, and the overwhelming bulk of the land is chemically fertilized. Not so in the less developed south. Agribusiness has resulted in spectacular growth for new export crops such as soybeans and sorghum, while at the same time Mexico has had to import basic foodstuffs for consumption.

With the destruction of the old peasant

communities and the development of “agribusiness,” a modern rural proletariat has appeared, exploited under conditions different from those of the small farmers working the land. Nonetheless, the Latin American countryside continues to present a variegated panorama combining different relations of production. The bulk of the rural population has not been proletarianized, far from it. Subsistence farming remains by far the most important. Broad rural sectors remain in the form of small farmers working their own land or holding land so small that in addition to working their land they are forced to look for work elsewhere in order to survive.

5. The process of urbanization has accelerated considerably, giving rise to some of the world's largest cities. Mexico City mushroomed from 2.8 million inhabitants in 1950 to 10.9 million in 1975; São Paulo from 2.4 to 9.9 million; Rio de Janeiro from 2.8 to 8.3 million. Lima, Bogotá and Caracas, each with a population of only 600,000 in 1950, grew to 3.9, 3.4, and 2.6 million respectively by 1975. According to official projections these cities will more than double in size in the next twenty-five years. Buenos Aires, with a “slower”

growth rate, still expanded from 4.5 to 9.3 million between 1950 and 1975.

The percentage of the economically active population in agriculture in Mexico fell from 57.8% to 39.4% between 1950 and 1975; in Brazil from 57.5% to 44.3%; and in already urbanized Argentina, from 25.2% to 14.8%. But industrial growth has been insufficient to give productive employment to the broad masses that emigrate from the countryside in search of better living conditions, above all wage-earning opportunities. Nor have housing facilities or municipal services kept pace with the extraordinary urban growth, and there is a situation of permanent crisis in these areas.

Much of the urban population consists of a huge sector of unemployed or partially employed, living in slums and shantytowns, eking out a bare living for survival. In addition to the traditional urban artisans, new forms of artisanry have arisen as a result of uneven industrial development, for example, “handymen” tinkering with automobiles or machinery. Tens and tens of thousands of people are condemned to peddling, beggary, homelessness, prostitution, or driven to desperate acts.

## II. Changes and Crisis in the Political Institutions of Bourgeois Rule

6. The economic and social changes in Latin America considered above have heightened the need to expand the administrative and military apparatus of the capitalist state in order to fulfill an ever-expanding role in society: (a) expansion of the nationalized sectors of the economy; (b) increased intervention in the economic field; (c) attacks on the standard of living of the working class to facilitate capital accumulation. The expansion of the nationalized sectors of the economy, especially in the field of heavy industry and raw material production has developed because private capital is unable to provide the enormous investments that are necessary. The expanded state sector indirectly subsidizes the private sector. This, in turn, has required changes in and expansion of the governmental structures and personnel. But the strengthened and militarized bourgeois state continues to operate in semicolonial status with respect to imperialist monopoly capital.

The old landowning oligarchy and its commercial allies (the traditional comprador bourgeoisie) that long dominated the governments of Latin America have lost ground to the new sectors of indigenous industrial and banking capital. In Mexico, where this process has been among the most advanced, the old landowning and comprador sectors of the bourgeoisie have been virtually eliminated from governmental power. While this process has not gone as far in other countries, the trend is clear: a growing concentration of executive

power in the hands of the industrial and related banking sectors of the bourgeoisie; the increased need to use this power to advance profitable industrialization.

With the exception of a few areas of the economy, such as petroleum and other exceptional cases, the partially industrialized capitalisms of Latin America are too weak to permit substantial economic concessions to the workers, while acute international competition and the restricted nature of the internal market force them to drive real wages down. To carry out this policy in face of a growing and increasingly powerful working class has required increased state intervention. Two basic means have been employed: (1) attempts to control the labor movement by integrating the trade-union bureaucracies into the bourgeois parties and the apparatus of the bourgeois state. The tight control over the Mexican trade-union movement by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional [PRI—Institutional Revolutionary Party] and the control by the Peronist movement over the Argentine trade-union movement are outstanding examples; (2) attempts to crush the labor movement in totalitarian fashion, as in Chile, Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay.

As a result of this greater involvement of the government in economic and social life, huge governmental bureaucracies have flourished in countries such as Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, and Venezuela.

The bureaucracies include the technical specialists and managers in the increas-



ingly important nationalized sector of the economy and the political and military functionaries in the government and army. Drawn from the new industrial bourgeoisie and sectors of the middle class aspiring to such positions, they use their posts to accumulate capital.

The ideology increasingly promoted now in the highest echelons of the state in Latin America is closely linked to the role of advancing industrialization in close dependency on imperialism. The traditional "anti-imperialist" nationalism promoted by the aspiring national bourgeoisie in the first phase of industrialization in Latin America is giving way to the new themes of modernism, efficiency, and technical expertise in alliance with imperialism.

7. The 1964 coup in Brazil set the tone for the series of bloody dictatorships that were to arise later in Chile, Uruguay and Argentina. These dictatorships, all drawing on the support of U.S. imperialism, have been marked by a greater degree of totalitarianism than was usual in the more traditional forms of military and police despotism. The widespread murders, the pervasive use of torture, the buildup of an extralegal repressive and terror apparatus, and the adoption of the most up-to-date police methods all reflect the underlying need of the bourgeoisie to resort to modern dictatorial techniques to prevent a large and powerful working class from organizing. Similar methods were also used in Bolivia to crush the revolutionary upsurge led by the powerful miners.

The Brazilian regime was able to promote economic growth and to establish a base of support among a small layer of society, primarily sectors of the urban petty bourgeoisie, while imposing harsh impoverishment on the workers (whose purchasing power fell by 30% after 1964) and on the broad masses of urban and rural poor. However, most of the economic "success" of the dictatorship occurred in the period prior to the worldwide economic depression of 1974-75; since then the flaws in the Brazilian economic "model" have become more evident, the foreign debt of Brazil is one of the highest in the world, and the regime has lost some of its previous aura of economic success. In face of this situation, the class struggle in Brazil has begun to revive, as attested to by the student struggles for democratic rights in 1977 and the massive strikes for wage increases by more than 200,000 industrial workers and, in addition, by teachers and health workers in 1978.

Even by utilizing draconian methods against the workers, the dictatorship in Chile was not able to stabilize the capitalist economy and promote growth in the first five years of its rule. The purchasing power of the masses fell by 45% during the first eighteen months of military rule. In face of this, the initial signs of a revival of workers struggles began to be seen in 1978.

In Argentina, where the working class suffered the most terrible blow in its history, the Videla dictatorship has nevertheless failed to achieve economic successes; it has failed to crush the workers movement to the same degree as its neighbors in Chile, Brazil and Uruguay. The Argentine workers proved able to launch important defensive struggles in 1977 and 1978.

The initial signs of labor and student struggles indicate that these harsh dictatorships will face increasing difficulty in the period ahead. On the one hand, a renewed escalation of repression might well fail to stop the growing opposition, while further undermining their social bases of support. On the other hand, if they relax the repression they run the risk of creating a situation that encourages a further upsurge of mass struggle.

8. More generally, throughout much of Latin America there appears a crisis of the political institutions through which bourgeois rule has been maintained. Several of the outstanding examples are the following:

a. In Nicaragua, the more than 40-year-old family dictatorship of Somoza was shaken to the roots in 1977-78 and overthrown by the FSLN victory of July, 1979. A separate resolution adopted by the world congress analyzes this momentous event in detail.

b. In Peru, the ten-year experience of military rule under Velasco and Morales Bermúdez ran aground. At the outset, the regime gained support from the masses owing to its populist demagogy and popular measures such as a limited land reform, some nationalizations, and some other economic concessions. But government austerity measures eroded its support, and in 1976-78 a series of general strikes and mass upsurges had brought Peru to a prerevolutionary situation in 1978. The June 1978 elections to the constituent assembly, and then the assembly itself—conceived by the ruling class as a maneuver to gain time—became added factors undermining the legitimacy of the military regime in the eyes of the masses.

c. In Argentina, the 30-year-long method of controlling the masses through the bourgeois nationalist Peronist movement came into crisis. The material conditions that had prevailed in the 1940s when the earlier Perón regime came into office, and that had enabled the Argentine bourgeoisie to grant economic concessions to the masses, no longer existed during the 1973-76 Peronist regime. Instead, it had to carry out austerity measures. Although it had been swept into office in an overwhelming electoral victory, the Peronist regime was unable to impose austerity on the militant Argentine workers. Unable to use the Peronists to put its austerity policy over, and with sectors of the workers movement beginning to escape Peronist control, the majority of the Argentine bourgeoisie turned to Videla, while the Peronist trade-

union bureaucrats proved incapable of defending the Peronist government against the coup. The result has been an enormous loss of prestige for the Peronists within the working class, and a substantial erosion of its ability to control the workers movement.

d. In Colombia, the two-decades-long system of bourgeois rule that began with the installation of the "National Front" agreement in 1958, and that provided for the institutionalized bipartite division of posts and alternation of governmental administrations between the Liberal and Conservative parties, has run into serious difficulty. The terms of the National Front pact were officially ended in 1974, and were continued in makeshift fashion afterwards. But no stable institutional framework, taking account of the changes in relations between the classes and within the ruling class itself, has been fully worked out. At the same time, the bourgeoisie has been moving to impose reactionary legislation and politically restructure the state apparatus in a reactionary way in order to try and insure its stable domination, for example, the 1978 decree of a "statute of security" by newly-elected President César Turbay Ayala. But in the same period, the masses, with the working class in the forefront, erupted in a huge "Paro Cívico" [general strike] in September, 1977, opening up the possibility of a big rise in the class struggle.

e. In Mexico, the bourgeoisie has found itself obliged to make changes in its fifty-year-old system of extreme presidentialism, in which the PRI completely dominated the country's political life, with all genuine opposition banned. This system has been eroding in face of growing opposition, first by sectors of the petty bourgeoisie, and then, in a stronger fashion, by sectors of the working class that are looking for a way to break the iron control that the PRI's trade-union bureaucrats (the "charros") have over the unions. The regime has announced a "political reform," granting legal status to several opposition parties. While the ruling classes will find it difficult to move towards a multiparty system, and is, in fact, continuing many of its repressive policies, the workers and their allies can take full advantage of the democratic opening to advance their own interests.

f. In the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico, the sham autonomy of the status of "Free Associated State" and the failure of the "Economic Miracle" are becoming increasingly apparent to the masses. In 1977, while the U.S. imperialists took out a record \$2.2 billion in profits, interest, and rent (over and above that reinvested in the island), real unemployment was around 50 percent, and more than half the population was dependent on welfare to survive. The "autonomous" Puerto Rican government can do nothing but beg futilely for handouts from Washington. The masses' dis-

satisfaction was reflected in the 1976 elections, in which the pro-"autonomy" Popular Democratic Party (PPD) was swept out of office. The New Progressive Party (PNP) won, not because of its pro-statehood line, but because of its promises to bring economic improvements, promises that it violated on taking office. This is leading to greater instability in Puerto Rico, a process begun in 1968, when the PPD was defeated after twenty-eight years in office. The PNP, unable to solve the economic problems, instead has unleashed a campaign to impose statehood. The PPD reacted by shifting its stance towards demanding greater autonomy (although remains purely demagogic on its part). Some key trade-union officials also began raising the possibility of a labor party. Although concrete steps to follow this up were not taken, this situation offers tremendous opportunities for revolutionary Marxists to promote policies that can advance the independence movement and

### III. Imperialist Policy in Latin America Today

9. Following World War II huge upsurges in the class struggle occurred in many countries of Latin America. Among the high points were Colombia in 1948, Guatemala in 1954, and, deepest of all, the Bolivian revolution of 1952. But these upsurges, in which the masses generally followed bourgeois-nationalist leaderships, were all defeated.

The Cuban revolution brought this period of defeats to an abrupt end. It stimulated a new rise in the Latin American class struggle. It showed that victory for the socialist revolution was possible, that U.S. imperialism, for all of its power, could be defeated.

In face of this the imperialists stepped up their direct and indirect intervention throughout the region to prevent any repetition of the Cuban experience. Imperialist policy since the Cuban revolution has been to crush in the egg all movements that threaten or could potentially threaten the stability or existence of capitalist rule. This has constituted the essence of White House policy, despite such window-dressing as Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress."

Only in exceptional cases has U.S. imperialism been able to rely on a relatively stable bourgeois-democratic regime to defend its interests. For the most part the period since the Cuban revolution has been marked by the large-scale "counterinsurgency" programs of the 1960s, the direct U.S. military invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965, and the instigation of brutal military coups in a series of countries.

The 1964 military coup against Goulart, carried out by the *Brazilian generals*, in close alliance with the U.S. State Depart-

ment, educate on the need for independent working-class political action.

The developments in these countries, under a wide variety of conditions in the class struggle, testify to the profound instability of bourgeois rule in Latin America. The mass movement can clearly wrest significant gains in the period ahead, but economic and social conditions do not allow for the prospect of long-term, stable bourgeois-democratic openings. The rise of the class struggle will lead to a sharpening of class polarizations that will culminate either in conquest of power by the proletariat or bloody defeat, as the bitter experience of the southern cone illustrated. But experience also shows that such dictatorial solutions are themselves unstable, and will once again give way to a new round of class battles and revolutionary upsurges. The cycle will only be ended by way of the victory of the working class in a socialist revolution.

ment, inaugurated a long-lasting, brutal dictatorship in the largest country in Latin America. With the notion that development and "national security" were inextricably combined, this set the tone for the military dictatorships and hard repression that were to be imposed in Bolivia (1971), Uruguay (1972), Chile (1973), and Argentina (1976). This brought the majority of the countries and the great majority of the people of Latin America under military rule.

U.S. imperialism's stance towards the Cuban workers state has remained aggressive: harassment and economic sabotage; direct invasion in 1961; naval blockade and threat of world war in 1962; a sustained economic boycott; continual CIA plots, sabotage and provocations; renewed military threats over Cuba's current role against imperialism in Africa.

10. The worldwide recession of 1974-75 and the historic defeat it suffered in Vietnam weakened U.S. imperialism. Washington's capacity to contain the class struggle is more restricted today than in the past, owing both to the financial and military limitations on its worldwide "obligations" and to the increasing political repercussions, particularly within the United States itself, that it would risk from direct intervention. Additional factors weighing on Washington's policy in Latin America are the continuing revival—despite defeats—of the class struggle, particularly in the form of mass action by the urban proletariat, and the erosion of the stability of some of the dictatorships it has relied on.

Without abandoning its aggressive line against the Cuban revolution and the Latin American revolutionary movement,

imperialism now has to be more careful about the forms that its intervention takes.

Washington is at the same time probing the possibilities for containing the class struggle through "liberalization" schemes. These are restricted, however, by two built-in limitations: (1) incapacity to grant any substantial economic concessions to the masses; in fact, greater austerity measures are being imposed; (2) growing difficulty to counter the upsurges of the increasingly strong working class.

The problems of imperialist foreign policy offer opportunities to the working masses. One example is the "human rights" rhetoric of the Carter administration. This demagogic publicity is not primarily oriented towards Latin America, but is designed to whip up sentiment against the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, it has put Washington in an awkward public position in relation to some of the brutal Latin American dictatorships, forcing it sometimes to take its distance publicly from them. The working class can take advantage of this in its struggle for democratic rights in these countries.

Since the 1960s various European imperialists and the Japanese imperialists have considerably increased their penetration of Latin America, mostly in the form of investments. They have also increased their sales of military equipment. New industries, such as automobile production, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and certain food products are among the areas in which they now have major investments. From this has flowed a growing political influence. Despite the economic competition, in the overall strategic politics of the region their interests are identical to those of U.S. imperialism. They try to convey a liberal image in contrast to the discredited U.S. imperialists. This enables them to play a role in trying to contain the class struggle through support to "liberalization" schemes by the ruling class.

Conflicts between the imperialists and various sectors of the national bourgeoisie remain inevitable. In some cases, the national bourgeoisie can take advantage of interimperialist rivalries—in the areas of arms sales or nuclear reactors, for example. However, the increasingly close ties of dependence on imperialism are also narrowing the bourgeois nationalists' room to challenge the imperialists, and are tending to turn their anti-imperialist posturing into sheer demagoguery. The case of Torrijos in Panama is instructive in this regard, especially if compared with some of the past bourgeois nationalists, like Arbenz in Guatemala and Cárdenas in Mexico, who carried out real, if limited, measures against the imperialists, such as nationalizations. Behind Torrijos' stance of opposition to the United States was concealed a fundamental conciliationism that preserved the essential aspects of imperialist domination of Panama and the Panama Canal.

#### IV. The Working Class Moves to the Forefront of the Class Struggle

11. In the years following the 1976 defeat in Argentina the struggles of the exploited masses in Latin America have been on the rise, under different conditions in each country. The huge mass upsurges of 1977-78 in Nicaragua and Peru, leading to prerevolutionary situations, have been the deepest. The strikes of the Argentine working class in 1977-78; of the Brazilian workers and students in 1977-78; and the series of strikes in Bolivia and Ecuador in 1977 are signs of revival after defeats. The 1977 general strike in Colombia and the big trade-union mobilizations in Mexico in 1975-76 have eroded the capitalist stability of these countries.

In the renewal and rise of the mass movement a continuing trend can be seen for the axis of class struggle in Latin America to be one in which the proletariat takes the initiative, playing a vanguard role with respect to the broad masses as a whole. To the extent that its class independence is asserted, the proletariat will be able to lead the revolutionary masses (the peasantry, the urban and rural poor and petty bourgeoisie) and will be better able to avoid the defeats and collapse of promising mass movements as has occurred so often in the past. Thus, the experience of the Russian Revolution of 1917 is becoming more and more timely for Latin American revolutionists.

12. The trade-union movement in Latin America was initially centered in construction, textiles, and the export-oriented industries such as railroads, maritime, and mining. From the end of World War II until the 1960s, the unions grew in industries that arose to produce for the expanding internal market, such as canned food products, new textiles, and the electrical and metals industries. Since the 1960s unions have developed in new industries such as automobile, petrochemicals, and modern electrical appliances.

The trade-union bureaucrats allied with the national bourgeoisie on the ground of sharing a common interest in developing an internal market. For decades this alliance helped to keep the workers movement politically subordinate to the bourgeoisie and ideologically dominated by bourgeois-nationalist conceptions. Outstanding examples are those of Peronism in Argentina and "charrismo" in Mexico.

The Communist parties, with their Stalinist concept of forging alliances with sectors of the bourgeoisie, played a decisive role in enabling the bourgeois nationalist trade-union bureaucracies to consolidate. During World War II and the postwar period, the CPs promoted a line of "anti-fascist fronts" and "national unity," in accord with Moscow's search for diplomatic alliances. In Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Cuba this led them to subordinate the

workers movement to authoritarian regimes that used populist demagoguery. In Argentina and Bolivia during the same period, the Stalinist version of "antifascism" caused the CPs to unite with oligarchical and proimperialist forces, and to characterize Peronism and the MNR [Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionaria—Revolutionary Nationalist Movement] respectively, as fascist. This left the field clear for Peronism and the MNR to portray themselves to the workers as the sole standard-bearers of the anti-imperialist struggle.

As a result, the Stalinists themselves were unable to make gains in the trade-union field in comparison with the potential. In most countries of Latin America outright bourgeois political forces control most of the trade unions.

13. The development of the consumer durables industries in the relatively industrialized countries has brought about the growth of new sectors of the proletariat concentrated in big industrial complexes. As was seen in the semi-insurrection in Córdoba, Argentina in 1969; in the huge strikes in Brazil in May and November 1978, initiated by the auto workers; and in the series of city-and-province-wide general strikes sparked by the struggles of steel and shipyard workers in Chimbote, Peru in 1978, the workers in these industrial centers of production will tend to come forward as vanguard sectors of the class.

The workers in the big centers of industry and mining are the ones most ready to assert their power self-confidently, acting both through the official union structures and ad hoc committees in the plants. Thus, these sectors of the working class can be mobilized to confront the ruling classes on a broad economic and political front, and to initiate effective challenges to the trade-union bureaucrats in order to fight the bosses.

The spread of technology and the resulting proletarianization of white-collar labor has also enlarged the organized sector of the working class. Organized in trade unions that are often new and less bureaucratized than some of the older unions, these workers have often carried out militant struggles, for example, the teachers, bank workers, and health workers in Colombia. Although their social weight and political importance is less than that of the industrial workers, they are also playing a role in this stage of the revival of working-class militancy. In Peru, for example, there were big strikes of health and hospital workers as well as copper miners and steelworkers in December 1977. In July 1978 the teachers and health workers were in the forefront, and in August and September public employees went into motion alongside the miners and metalworkers.

The wave of strikes by industrial workers in Brazil in May and June 1978 was followed in August and September by big struggles of teachers and bankworkers.

In Mexico in 1977-78, hard hit by an economic crisis and government austerity drive, the electrical, telephone, rail, and mine workers, and the teachers have spearheaded a generalized working-class response against the bourgeois offensive. This has put considerable pressure on the powerful, corrupt bureaucracy that controls the unions. As a result, the bureaucracy, while continuing to resort to repressive attacks against the ranks, has had to take a more verbally aggressive stance toward the employers. It has threatened to call large-scale mobilizations for the first time in forty years. The workers are being drawn to the trade unions, and are seeking to turn them into instruments of struggle against the bosses.

14. To transform the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle, a class-struggle leadership must be created to replace the class-collaborationist bureaucrats. This will not be an automatic or purely spontaneous process. To the degree that a mass class-struggle alternative does not arise, the old leaderships, despite their betrayals, will appear to the workers as their only recourse, and the bureaucracies will be able to reassert their weight, aided, to be sure, by the bourgeois governments. Even where the trade unions have been crushed, as in Brazil, Uruguay and Chile, elements of the old trade-union bureaucracies, themselves the victims of repression and thus able to retain a certain prestige in the eyes of the workers, are held in reserve by the capitalists for future use. Elsewhere, even while workers struggles are on the ascendancy, or are reviving after defeats, a recovery by the discredited bureaucracies can be observed alongside the emergence of militant moods in the working class: this is already partially the case for the Peronist trade-union leadership in Argentina and is the case for the Lechín leadership of the Bolivian miners. In Peru, while the APRA [Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana—American People's Revolutionary Alliance] has been singularly unsuccessful in reestablishing its once-hegemonic position in the trade unions, the Communist Party has been able to maintain control over the apparatus of the main union federation, the CGTP [Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú—General Confederation of Peruvian Workers].

On the other hand, a layer of militant activists and organizers has developed out of the experience of working-class struggles. This layer includes many shop stewards, activists in the internal commissions and factory committees, representatives of coordinating bodies, and activists in various trade-union currents, and, in some cases, officials of the trade unions on the plant level. They constitute



Miners in Bolivia.

the recognized leadership of the class in the centers of production. Their weight has proved decisive at key moments in the class struggle in shaping the views of their fellow workers and helping to develop organs of struggle. In many cases this layer has been able to maintain a continuity over the years in spite of the ups and downs of the mass organizations. Thus, the working class vanguard has been able to function, to a certain extent, as the "memory" of the class, transmitting experiences of past struggles to the next generation of militants.

Examples of this phenomenon include the leadership core of the current known as "working-class Peronism" in Argentina, which maintained semilegal forms of organization in the plants during the two decades in which Peronism was proscribed; the vanguard of the mine workers in Bolivia, which prevented the consolidation of various dictatorships there; the vanguard sectors of coal, copper, and steelworkers in Chile; the vanguard metalworkers, miners, and the militant (*clasista*) tendencies in the trade unions in Peru; the most combative sectors of the electrical, telephone, railroad, and mine workers in Mexico.

But these *clasista* tendencies lack political clarity and organizational stability. The process of organizing the fight against the ruling class and replacing the bureaucratic misleaders with a politically clear

and consistent class-struggle left-wing leadership, including militant layers like those above, requires the political involvement and leadership of the revolutionary Marxist party.

15. In the interplay between the revolutionary Marxist party, the militant vanguard of the proletariat, and the class as a whole, the party pays special attention to the vanguard. But the program and policies around which it seeks to organize this vanguard are not different from the program and policies it puts forward in the class struggle as a whole. The objective is simply to promote a program of action that will enable the proletarian vanguard, organized in a class-struggle left wing, to organize, mobilize, and lead the class and its allies against the ruling class offensive, and in this process replace the class-collaborationist bureaucrats.

To meet the offensive of the bosses requires mobilization around a broad program of action, corresponding to the most acute problems facing the workers and all the oppressed. Beginning from the defense of the unions, working conditions, and standard of living of the masses, this program will point towards workers control of production and a workers and *campesinos* government. The workers must learn to think socially and act politically: to understand the broad social and political questions facing all the oppressed

and exploited, to champion their needs as the workers' own, and to unite and lead the oppressed and exploited to act independently on the broad political arena as well as on the economic front. In defending the interests of the working class and all the oppressed, and fighting to mobilize them along these lines, a class-struggle left wing can emerge that can transform the unions and other mass organizations into instruments of revolutionary struggle.

This process will be uneven. Militant tendencies and struggles will initially arise around some, but not all points of a rounded program of action. Revolutionary Marxists will support such developments as a step forward, while at the same time seeking to win adherents to a more advanced and comprehensive program of action.

An example of the unevenness of this process is the development of the Democratic Tendency of the Mexican electrical workers, which has been in the forefront of many struggles. In 1975, a mass meeting of Mexican electrical workers, on the initiative of the Democratic Tendency, adopted the Declaration of Guadalajara, which put forward a broad trade-union platform of economic demands and demands for trade-union democracy, but did not clearly break on the political level with the bourgeois government of the PRI. While supporting the steps forward taken by the Democratic Tendency, a fight must still be waged for a

break with the PRI and for a program of action that meets the needs of all the oppressed.

The construction of a class-struggle left wing requires the leadership of the revolutionary Marxist party. This, in turn, requires that the party itself be rooted in the

key sectors of the working class, particularly the industrial workers, who will be the backbone of class-struggle leadership for the class as a whole. In the course of fighting for a class-struggle leadership in this way, the party will grow into a mass proletarian party.

## V. The Mobilization of the Allies of the Working Class

16. The development of capitalism in agriculture took place through the destruction or absorption of the primitive agricultural economies. But this development was incomplete. Thus, today, there exists a spectrum of social relations in the countryside, ranging from those under which peasants live on a marginal subsistence basis, including in some cases, in pre-Colombian forms, to modern agribusiness.

The contradictions that developed in Latin America have brought together the impoverished masses of peasants, the agricultural proletariat, semiproletariat, and the migrant workers on one side against the ruling-class bloc made up of larger landholders, the modern agrarian bourgeoisie, and the imperialist-owned companies associated with the agrarian bourgeoisie on the plantations. All of the latter fall into the framework of imperialist financial domination.

The peasant masses who cannot meet their needs by working their small plots (the *minifundistas*) or those who have been dispossessed continue to demand land as their main goal. The bourgeois land reforms of all types, whether won by mass movements as in Peru, or initiated by bourgeois regimes for the purposes of agricultural modernization, have proved totally incapable of meeting the demands of the majority of the Latin American peasants. As a result, land occupations continually arise.

The land reforms won by the Bolivian and Mexican revolutions have also failed to satisfy the needs of the masses. The land reform in Mexico was the deepest of all the agrarian reforms under capitalism in Latin America. The land won by the *campesinos* in struggle was declared public property by the bourgeois government; these lands (*ejidos*) were supposed to be protected from a return to latifundia status—as long as the land was worked it belonged to those who worked it, it could be rented or passed on to their heirs, but not sold. But the small farmers could not stand up to the big mechanized farms or, especially in northern Mexico, to the growing agribusiness linked to imperialism, which dominates through its control over agricultural machinery, chemical fertilizer, the food processing industries, and marketing. As a result, the *ejidatarios* have been forced, more and more, to “rent” their land to the big agribusinesses, and then to go to work as agricultural laborers. In the state of Sonora, 70% of the *ejidos* are rented, and

in Sinaloa more than 40%. In all of Mexico there were 2.5 million small peasants in 1970 working their land, but 3.3 million without land (a jump from 1.5 million landless in 1950).

Thus the small farmers and landless of Mexico face the task of carrying out a new agrarian reform based on the conquests of the past, but going much further. The socialist revolution in Cuba offers the only example of a successful agrarian reform in Latin America.

Millions of peasants in Latin America see their livelihoods threatened by the inexorable advance of large-scale capitalist agricultural enterprises and the processes of agricultural modernization, carried out to the benefit of imperialism.

Throughout Latin America an immense mass of impoverished peasants has been created, eking out a living on the fringes of the process of production. They stream into the cities, swelling the ranks of the unemployed and urban poor, or they remain on the countryside as a reserve army of migrant labor that can be drawn upon to meet the seasonal needs of capitalist agriculture.

In several countries the ruling class has initiated an agrarian counterreform, seeking to reverse the limited gains of earlier periods. The Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, for example, has not only restored nearly all the land that had been expropriated from the big landholders during the Allende period, but has also moved to take away land distributed under the earlier Christian Democratic governments. Revolutionary Marxists, at the same time that they explain the limited character of the current agrarian reforms, defend the gains that the masses have won.

Thus a thoroughgoing agrarian reform is more necessary than ever. This requires not only the nationalization of the huge ranches and plantations (the latifundias) and the distribution of the land to the landless, but also the establishment of the means necessary to aid the small farmers, such as establishment of easy credit, irrigation projects and other technological aids. Measures to break the control of the profiteering distributors, benefiting the working farmers, while keeping retail prices down, are especially important in helping forge an alliance between the farmers and the workers.

The contradictory process of capitalist expansion in the countryside is creating a growing sector of agricultural workers,

primarily in the agricultural and livestock sectors that are most tied to the development of agribusiness. Often the work is seasonal, and the agricultural workers are condemned to a marginal existence as unemployed or toilers on very small plots of land during the rest of the year.

These workers can be mobilized together with the peasants in land occupations and other forms of struggle around demands for land. They can also be mobilized around demands specifically appropriate to their status as agricultural workers (wage increases, hourly wages rather than payment by production, limitations on the working day, health and retirement benefits, etc.). Of particular importance is the right to form trade unions, which has been one of the key axes of attack by the ruling class.

The bourgeois regimes have employed various methods of trying to prevent the peasants from organizing to fight for the land. These range from outright repression as in Chile, where all independent peasant organization is prohibited, to manipulation of agrarian organizations such as the Mexican National Peasant Confederation and the National Association of Tenant Farmers in Colombia. In Peru the military government dissolved the National Agrarian Confederation when it threatened to escape its control. In some cases, such as the “military-peasant pact” in Bolivia and the Confederation of Peasant Settlements of Panama, the governments have fostered local peasant leaderships tied to them.

Under these conditions, the struggle for the independence of the peasant organizations from the bourgeoisie and landlords is a key step in the struggle for the liberation of the peasant masses in Latin America.

Outstanding examples of these kinds of struggles were those of the peasant unions in the valley of La Convención and Lares in Peru in 1962-63, the Agrarian Leagues in northeastern Brazil in 1961-62, and the 1975-76 struggles of the Mexican peasants who today are grouped in the Independent Revolutionary Peasant Coordinating Committee.

Guerrilla struggles rooted in mass peasant upsurges have been endemic to Latin America, as in Colombia in 1948 and afterwards. They are quite different from the *foco* experiments of the 1960s, in which small guerrilla bands tried to establish themselves on the countryside. But in the majority of cases, even the mass-based guerrilla struggles have been incapable of helping the masses of peasants and semi-proletarians to go forward towards national forms of organization, towards political independence from the bourgeois state, and towards linking up with the working class in the cities.

Only when the working class takes the lead of all the oppressed sectors of society can the alliance between workers and peasants be forged and a successful struggle against the common bourgeois enemy be waged.



This alliance based on democratic demands acquires an increasingly anticapitalist dynamic. The cycles of peasant battles tend to coincide with workers struggles. It is not possible, however, to seal this alliance spontaneously. The action of revolutionaries, with a program that expresses the fundamental convergence of the two classes in their struggle against the bourgeoisie and its state, is essential. The crowning result of the action and propaganda of revolutionaries is the workers and peasants government.

17. The fight against racism and national oppression *within* Latin America is a major issue in the class struggle, and in several countries is decisive for the socialist revolution.

The two main groupings of nationally oppressed peoples are the Indians and the Blacks (each grouping consists of many components).

(a) *Indians*. There are about 30 million Indians in Latin America, most of them concentrated in the areas that had been the centers of pre-Colombian civilization: Mexico and Guatemala; Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador. Elsewhere they have a numerical importance in specific regions. And everywhere their struggle has a great moral weight owing to the history of Latin America.

Most Indians still live in the countryside and form the most poverty-stricken strata of agricultural laborers, tenant farmers, poor peasants, and the landless. Growing numbers, however, have been forced into the urban slums and shantytowns. Income levels, literacy rates, the life expectancy and infant mortality rates—these and other key statistics all show the terrible oppression of the Indians. The theft of their lands, the suppression of their languages and various cultural heritages, their legal disbarment from civil rights in some cases (such as the right to vote) all reinforce and help maintain their superexploitation. It is essential for the workers movement to take up the struggle around the Indians' lands and around the other key issues they face.

In some countries where the Indian population is small, such as Chile and Argentina, their existence has been deliberately ignored by the bourgeois regimes, and virtually no provisions have been made to enable them, if they wish, to preserve their languages or cultural heritages. The Indians living in the forests (about one million in number) suffer the most. In Brazil and Paraguay they have been viewed as barriers to progress, and they have been subjected to the fiercest repression, including genocidal slaughter, intentional starvation, and induced epidemics. In Paraguay today some are still forced into conditions of virtual slavery.

The Mexican and Bolivian revolutions brought about significant reforms for the Indians. But the policy of "indigenismo" [nativism] developed by the bourgeois gov-

ernments is fundamentally paternalistic, composed of social work projects and the encouragement of some features of Indian culture as a means of trying to assimilate the Indians into capitalist society. In the absence of major socioeconomic improvements, this policy has failed, and in some cases has begun to give way to repressive measures, as for example, the massacre of Indians in the Mexican state of Hidalgo in 1977.

The oppression of the Indians will only be abolished through their own independent mobilization, as part of a broader revolutionary upheaval. The Mexican and Bolivian revolutions, as well as the Guatemalan upsurge in the early 1950s were all accompanied by the mobilization of the Indians, principally through the land reform measures and the beginning of the elimination of language discrimination and the other means through which the Indians have been traditionally oppressed. As a result, the Indians became increasingly involved in political life during these events. One of the best examples of how to mobilize the Indians was provided by the Peruvian peasant mobilization in 1962-63. Whereas the workers movement had previously paid lip service to this question, Hugo Blanco and the other leaders saw the need to develop a Quechua-speaking indigenous leadership that could instill the Indian peasant masses of the La Convención area with pride and self-confidence, and organize their struggle for land in an effective way.

(b) *Blacks*. Black people, brought to Latin America as slaves, continued to be subjected to an entire system of racist practices after the legal abolishment of slavery. As a consequence, Blacks are nationally oppressed in Latin America.<sup>1</sup>

The largest Black population is in Brazil. According to the 1950 figures, 11% of the people identified themselves as Black, and 26.6% as of mixed race. Together they form the majority of the population in some important regions of the country. So sensitive is this issue to the ruling classes in this country of 115 million people, that since 1950 all indications

of race have been eliminated from the census data released by the government.

Racist oppression is built into the social structure of Brazilian class society. Whites monopolize the best jobs, housing, and social services. In the countryside, Blacks are the poorest, most oppressed layer of peasants and workers. The 1950 census statistics on education dramatize this oppression in the starkest way. Those who identified themselves as Black were only 4.2% of the primary school graduates, 0.6% of secondary school graduates, and 0.2% of university graduates. Those who identified themselves as of mixed race were only 10.2% of primary school graduates, 4.2% of secondary school graduates, and 2.2% of university graduates.

No mass Black movement has yet developed in Brazil, and the regime is hostile to any attempts by Blacks to form their own organizations. Nevertheless, under the impact of the African revolution and the Black struggle in the United States, the first signs of a Black movement have reappeared. On July 7 1978, more than 1,000 Blacks rallied in São Paulo to protest racial discrimination. An organization called the United Movement Against Racial Discrimination has emerged, the first such organization since the Black Front was banned by the Vargas regime in 1937. Another form that the emerging nationalist consciousness in Brazil has taken is the adoption of some of the aspects of Black culture of the United States.

The national oppression of Blacks is also an important issue in Central America, the Caribbean islands, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela. Blacks are important in certain industries, such as those related to the Panama Canal. Even where Blacks are a small minority, they are often concentrated in certain regions where their social weight is thus greater, such as the Limón area of Costa Rica and the Pacific and Atlantic coastal areas of Colombia.

In addition to the oppression suffered in terms of jobs, housing, education and similar areas, three particular issues can be noted.

i. In Central America, the first language of many Blacks is English, which is suppressed in the schools and media.

ii. A legacy of British colonialism in Guyana and the Caribbean, particularly Trinidad, and of Dutch colonialism in Surinam, is social tension between the Black and East Indian populations, both of which are oppressed.

iii. In addition to the influence of the African revolution and the Black struggle in the United States (and also in Britain), the impact of the Cuban revolution is particularly important in the Caribbean area. The giant strides taken towards eliminating racial oppression against Blacks in Cuba stand in sharp contrast to the racism practiced in the capitalist countries of the area.

Racism is built into Latin American

1. Point 17(b) raises new and very important issues for the revolutionary Marxist movement that must be discussed thoroughly. The general line of this point, stressing the importance of the struggle against the racist oppression of Blacks in Latin America, and outlining the revolutionary Marxist approach in fighting this oppression, is part of the line of this resolution, and is being submitted to a vote. The specific characterization of this oppression as *national* oppression, and of Blacks as oppressed nationalities or national minorities, and thus with the right to a separate state or states, is included in this document to initiate a discussion, but a vote on this characterization is not being proposed.

class society on all levels. A color gradation exists, whereby those closer to the European racial norm have privileges compared to others. This generalized racism is based on the institutionalized racism against Blacks and Indians. Only in the process of ending the oppression of Blacks and Indians can this more generalized racism be eliminated.

The reformist leaders of the workers movement have betrayed the oppressed Black and Indian peoples of Latin America. Revolutionary Marxists are the only one who will champion the interests of the Blacks and Indians and fight against this oppression whenever and wherever it occurs. Given the social weight of the oppressed national minorities, placing stress on this issue and adopting a correct policy to fight and eliminate racist oppression is vital for the success of the socialist revolution.

Historical experience has shown that the rise of struggles against national oppression is accompanied by a growing pride and self-confidence on the part of the oppressed, and a growing insistence on the part of the oppressed of the need to determine their own affairs. Although it is premature to predict all the exact political forms that will be necessary to guarantee an end to racism and national oppression against Indians and Blacks, the socialist revolution will have to provide whatever means are necessary to do so; this includes the possibility of territorial autonomy or independent states. Only by championing the right of self-determination can revolutionary Marxists win the oppressed to the fight for socialism.

A different aspect of the national question in Latin America is that of the immigrant workers. The Guatemalans in southern Mexico, the Colombians in Venezuela, the Haitians in the Dominican Republic, the Paraguayans and Bolivians in Argentina, and others are all subjected to discrimination on the basis of nationality or race. The fight against this oppression is an important part of the fight to unite the working class.

The most important component of immigrant Latin American workers are the Mexicans in the United States, as well as Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Colombians, Haitians, and others. In Britain and Canada there are a large number of Blacks from the West Indies, and in France immigrant workers from the Antilles. The struggle against deportations or discrimination against these or other immigrant workers is a means of educating and establishing links with the workers movement in the imperialist countries and of dealing blows to the imperialist powers.

18. The huge new concentrations of urban poor are a social factor of immense importance. Netzahualcóyotl, for example, one of the slum and shantytown districts—"proletarian cities"—of Mexico City, has grown in the past twenty years from an

illegal squatters district to a population of around two million people. Half the population of metropolitan Lima lives in the slums and shantytowns—the "barriadas"—that surround the Peruvian capital.

In Puerto Rico, Washington's "showcase of democracy," tens of thousands of people live in shantytowns with houses of tin, cardboard, and plywood, and without plumbing, running water, or electricity. Similar examples can be found in all cities of Latin America.

Two of the key issues of specific concern to the urban poor are:

(a) **Jobs.** The great mass of urban poor, many of them just recently driven off the countryside for want of land or work, find themselves unemployed or minimally employed in the cities. With unemployment a growing structural problem (in Lima, for example, almost 50% of the city's work force was considered unemployed or underemployed in 1977), there is no prospect for a solution under capitalist rule.

(b) **Housing and Municipal Services.** The feverish growth of these huge urban concentrations has occurred in the absence of adequate, balanced industrial growth and urban planning. As a result, there is a critical shortage of housing and a woeful lack of adequate facilities such as water, electricity, transportation, sewage treatment, health services, education, etc.

These concentrations are social tinderboxes that can easily erupt in elemental explosions, as occurred in Lima in February 1975, when, after a year of rapidly rising prices, the masses took advantage of a conflict between the police and the army to engage in widespread looting and the burning of government newspaper offices. The lack of cheap public transportation helped spark one of the mass mobilizations in Managua, Nicaragua, toward the end of 1977. (Important working-class residential areas that were built up after the 1972 earthquake are located so far away from the industrial area that workers had to pay up to 15% of their income just for transportation.)

It is a key task of the labor movement to provide leadership and political direction for the discontent of the urban masses. The potential for labor initiatives in this area was illustrated by the Colombian general strike, organized by the trade-union movement in September 1977, and hundreds of regional and local general strikes in the same period, and by the successive general strikes in Peru in 1977-78.

19. As in other semicolonial countries, the oppression of women in the countries of Latin America has been particularly acute in comparison with the advanced capitalist countries. The relatively backward economic and social system has prevented women from obtaining the possibility for economic independence and thus has meant the preservation of many

more archaic social practices against women and the maintenance of the family, including the extended family, in stronger fashion. Two of the specific features of the oppression of women in Latin America are the weight of the Catholic Church and the omnipresence of *machismo* as ideology and social practice.

Objective changes, such as those already noted in the economic and social situation in Latin America, are laying the basis for the development of a women's movement. These changes include: the expansion of education for women and their involvement in production outside the home; the growing urbanization; the breakdown of traditional socioeconomic relations in the countryside; the weakening hold of traditional Catholic ideology; the influence of the new international women's liberation movement.

The deeprooted prejudices against the participation by women in political life has inhibited the early development of a women's liberation movement comparable to that which has appeared in the advanced capitalist countries. It is only a matter of time, however, for such a movement to develop. The severity of the oppression of women and the great social weight of this oppressed sector has created the potential for a mass women's movement of explosive potential.

Initial signs of the development of a women's movement in Latin America can already be noted:

(a) The appearance, in many countries, of women's groups that explicitly consider themselves to be feminist organizations. Though they are still small and mostly student or petty-bourgeois in composition and audience up to now, feminist organizations will certainly grow among women of the exploited classes.

(b) The growing participation by women in political life. In this process some specifically women's groups have appeared, such as the housewives committees in the Bolivian mining areas and the women's committees of the Democratic Tendency of the Electrical Workers in Mexico. These reflect a growing self-confidence of women. Although these are not explicitly organized as feminist groups, and although they are not even necessarily based around specifically women's issues, these developments are the first signs of what will become a mass women's liberation movement.

Specific struggles by women will develop around a variety of issues. Among the key issues that can be listed are: full civil and legal rights (such as the right to divorce, and juridical equality); the right to abortion and against forced sterilization; for child-care facilities; against discrimination in job opportunities and on the job, for equal pay for equal work.

20. In contrast to teachers, health workers, technicians, and white-collar employees of various kinds, who live by

selling their labor power and are a part of the working class, the urban petty bourgeoisie, strictly speaking, consists of layers such as artisans, shopkeepers, the small owners of business enterprises, upper level engineers and scientists, the administrators in government and big enterprises, and professionals. These strata are not consistent allies of the working class, but many can be won.

The importance of this question for the class struggle was illustrated in Chile during the Allende regime. As the class polarization intensified, and as the economic crisis deepened (exacerbated by the economic sabotage of the imperialists and Chilean bourgeoisie), these petty-bourgeois layers saw what appeared to be only temporizing and equivocation by the SP and CP, the large workers parties. They saw no clear solution to the crisis put forward by the organized workers movement. Little by little they were alienated from the working class and won over by the anticommunist hysteria of the right. The reactionary truck owners' and shopkeepers' strikes of October 1972 and July 1973, and the September 1973 anti-Allende march by 150,000 middle-class women were key signposts leading up to the Pinochet coup.

This experience need not be repeated elsewhere. Although some petty-bourgeois layers, especially the upper strata and those most closely linked by profession to maintaining bourgeois relations of production, cannot generally be won over to the workers, the middle classes can be divided. A clear working-class solution to the economic crisis can win over artisans, small shopkeepers, merchants, truck owners, etc. Professionals such as physicians, engineers, and scientists can be inspired with the perspective of putting their valuable skills at the service of the masses, as has happened in many cases with physicians in the countryside supporting peasant struggles. Political decisiveness by a capable working-class leadership can win large sectors of the urban middle classes and neutralize others.

21. The importance of winning the rank-and-file personnel of the armed forces to the side of the working class was also illustrated by the experience of Chile. As the class polarization intensified there, divisions developed between the officer corps, increasingly inclined towards a reactionary coup, and the ranks, attracted to their working-class and *campesino* brothers and sisters. But the SP and CP had futile hopes that the bulk of the officer corps would remain loyal to the Allende regime. They stood aside as rank-and-file sailors and soldiers, particularly the Valparaiso sailors, sought to organize against the coming right-wing coup and were subjected to repression from the officers. The ranks were abandoned by the government and the parties they sought to de-

fend. With this, the reactionary outcome was sealed.

Whereas the revolutionary workers movement seeks to win the ranks of the armed forces, it does not orient towards winning the police or the specialized repressive military units such as the National Guard in Nicaragua. These police forces are not composed of workers or peasants temporarily in uniform. Although individuals in the police may be influenced by the workers and peasants struggles, the overwhelming bulk of the police will not. They are corrupted and transformed through years of experience, becoming a social layer hostile to the working class and its allies, who must be prepared to defend themselves against these repressive police forces.

22. As a result of the growing need for skilled technical, service, and administrative workers, there has been a tremendous expansion of higher education in many countries of Latin America. Huge university complexes, such as the Autonomous National University of Mexico, with more than 200,000 students, illustrate the transformation that has occurred. In the old "liberal" university system, the student composition was mainly limited to the children of the bourgeois and upper petty-bourgeois elite. In the mass university of today many of the students originate from the lower levels of the petty bourgeoisie and more privileged sectors of the working class.

## VI. The Revolutionary Marxist Balance Sheet of Other Political Currents

23. The strategy of guerrilla warfare, which was in part due to a misunderstanding of the dynamics of the Cuban revolution, was promoted by a large number of revolutionary-minded militants in Latin America during the 1960s, has proved to be a failure.

The guerrilla warfare currents became important throughout Latin America after the Cuban revolution. An entire generation was inspired and radicalized by the Cuban revolution and the prospects for repeating the Cuban success elsewhere in Latin America. Many rejected the two-stage theory of revolution, which until then had been dominant in the left, owing to Stalinist influence. They saw in Cuba proof that a socialist revolution was possible, even in face of attempts by the imperialists to crush the revolution. They rejected the peaceful road of class collaboration promulgated by the Stalinists and other reformists.

But the strategy of guerrilla warfare, in both its rural and urban varieties, remained peripheral to the main needs and concerns of the masses. The essential feature of the guerrillaist line was reliance on the exemplary actions of small groups. The guerrillaist currents did not advance a program capable of leading the workers and drawing behind them the peasants

Economic development, however, has not kept pace with the growth of education, so the perspective facing students is often one of joblessness. Concentrated in huge numbers, having many social links to the less privileged layers of society, radicalized by general social issues as well as their own perspective of a bleak future with no work, the students of today can play a greater role than ever before as an ally of the working class and oppressed masses.

Student struggles continually arise over a variety of issues. In Brazil in 1977-78 mass nationwide student upsurges spearheaded the struggle in behalf of democratic rights and against the dictatorship. In Panama in 1977-78 students were in the forefront of struggle against the Panama Canal treaty. In the Dominican Republic in 1977 students protested austerity programs threatening the education budget for the University of Santo Domingo. In Mexico in 1977 huge contingents of students participated in the demonstrations of support for the striking university workers. High school students in Peru backed the militant 80-day nationwide teachers strike in 1978.

Students must link their struggles and concerns to the labor movement. Key areas to establish such links include the fight for jobs; the struggles by teachers and school employees; initiatives taken by the labor movement in general social struggles.

and oppressed masses in a consistent struggle against the ruling classes. They fell victim to the stepped-up repression. They were generally isolated from the masses at the very time that huge proletarian upsurges took place.

This occurred in Argentina, for example, where the PRT developed a strategy of prolonged guerrilla warfare in that highly urbanized and proletarian country; this strategy included the concept of establishing dual power through control over geographical areas; the revolution was conceived as a war of national liberation already underway in the form of guerrilla actions.

The Castroist leadership of the Cuban revolution sought to extend the revolution in Latin America. But, misreading the lessons of their own revolution, in which massive mobilizations of workers and peasants overthrew the capitalist state, the Castroists used their enormous prestige to promote the line that, in view of the explosive political conditions, armed actions by small groups would eventually spark the masses into action. The generation of revolutionists that was inspired and radicalized by the Cuban leadership, followed the Cuban lead and fell by the wayside or were crushed in courageous, but politically ineffective actions. The Cas-

tro leadership bears considerable responsibility for the strategy that led to these defeats.

Some elements in the guerrillaist currents, whose break with the Communist parties was limited to the question of armed struggle versus the peaceful road, accepted the Stalinist line on other basic questions of political strategy, such as the two-stage theory of revolution. This explains the ease with which many partisans of guerrilla warfare, such as Héctor Béjar in Peru and the ALN [Accção Libertadora Nacional—National Liberation Action] in Brazil, later turned to collaboration with bourgeois political forces.

The position of revolutionary Marxism, which has been fully confirmed by the experience of the last two decades, including the Cuban revolution, flows from the fact that the socialist revolution is not the work of an armed vanguard, separate from the masses, but of a class-conscious and organized proletariat, leading exploited masses numbering in the hundreds of thousands and millions. This is the only force that can stand up against the repressive forces of the bourgeois state.

Thus, guerrilla warfare is incorrect as a strategy; it is a tactic subordinated to the perspective of mass mobilization and the construction of a Leninist party.

History has shown that on the road to the socialist revolution the workers will have to defend themselves against a violent bourgeois counterrevolution, and that the organization of this self-defense cannot be considered in isolation from the organization and mobilization of the masses. Self-defense, as an activity of the mass movement, cannot be grafted onto the movement from outside. It must correspond to the level of mobilization, organization and consciousness of the masses. It has to be conceived of and led by the party in such a way that the masses themselves, organized democratically, decide on the necessary means for their own self-defense. Self-defense against the day-to-day threats that it faces is a key means by which the working class prepares to defend a government of workers power against the bourgeois counterrevolution. The reliance on the armed action of "specialized" groups of militants, organized outside the structures of the mass movement, and in neglect of the central political tasks, leads to isolation and defeat.

The lesson of Chile is enlightening in this respect. The Chilean workers were organized on a massive scale, and they had set up their own structures of organization and mobilization, the *cordones industriales*, that could have developed into organs of workers power. The workers, however, still looked to the SP and CP for political leadership, and these parties followed the class-collaborationist policy of subordinating the workers to the bourgeois Allende government, in which they participated. Instead of orienting toward a

workers and farmers government, based on structures like the *cordones*, they counseled trust in a government that relied on and at times included some of the generals who were later to carry out the coup. So, in face of the counterrevolution the masses were left leaderless, and fell victim to the military's offensive. With an orientation toward a workers and farmers government, the correct course of self-defense against the coup would have been clear: the armament of the workers through their own organizations like the *cordones*, and the development and growth of similar rank-and-file-based councils in the armed forces.

The MIR [Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria—Movement of the Revolutionary Left], the MAPU [Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitaria—Movement for United People's Action], and the sectors of the left wing of the SP with a similar approach did not promote a revolutionary strategy as an alternative to the Unidad Popular line of the SP and CP; in fact, they generally supported the Allende government while trying to outflank it from the left, and were absolutely incapable of providing the leadership that the masses needed in the crucial hours. They claimed to be preparing as a vanguard organization that could take up armed struggle after a coup d'état, and turned their backs on the burning task of preparing the masses to organize their own self defense against the threatening coup through the mass organizations such as the *cordones*. Although they prided themselves for "specializing" in preparations for armed action, their small-scale response was totally ineffective, and they, too, were crushed by the coup.

One of the tasks of revolutionary Marxists in Latin America is to explain the crucial lessons of Chile with regard to the correct course through which the workers can organize to defend themselves against the bourgeois counterrevolution. Only a clear understanding of this can prepare them for the concrete tasks that will arise as the class struggle sharpens, and prevent another crushing defeat like that in Chile.

All the bourgeois governments of Latin America—whether dictatorial or bourgeois democratic in form—have traditionally used harsh repressive methods against any mass movements that have gone beyond the established channels of reformism and populism. But as the victorious experience of Nicaragua has shown, the struggle against these bourgeois regimes, once rooted firmly in the masses, has a dynamic toward effective confrontation with the bourgeois state apparatus (the army, police, judiciary, etc.) through the combination of general strikes, the armament of the masses, and popular insurrection.

The victory in Nicaragua in July 1979 was not the work of a heroic minority or

an elite of specialists in armed struggle. It was the culmination of a process in which the toiling masses were increasingly organized and drawn into a variety of struggles against the Somoza dictatorship. These actions, led and inspired by the FSLN, included general strikes and armed uprisings in the cities, involving workers, urban poor, youth, and sectors of the petty bourgeoisie; land occupations by poor peasants and agricultural laborers; and increasingly effective guerrilla operations. In the course of the struggles, the masses organized committees of their own in the workplaces and neighborhoods, and in the countryside to carry out not only military self-defense, but also some administrative tasks in areas such as medical care, sanitation, and food distribution. The final victory came with the mass popular insurrections in the cities.

One of the tasks of revolutionary Marxists in Latin America is to explain the above lessons which show that mass insurrection was the key to victory.

24. The Fourth International promoted an incorrect political orientation in Latin America for several years. The clearest and most developed expression of this incorrect line is contained in the following report and resolutions on Latin America adopted by a majority vote at the 1969 and 1974 world congresses of the Fourth International (Ninth and Tenth World Congresses—Third and Fourth World Congresses Since Reunification):

a. At the world congress in 1969: the report and "Resolution on Latin America."

b. At the world congress in 1974: the report and resolution on "Balance Sheet and Orientation for the Bolivian Revolution"; the report and resolution on "Argentina: Political Crisis and Revolutionary Perspectives"; the report and resolution on "Armed Struggle in Latin America."\*

As a result of this erroneous line, many of the cadres and parties of the Fourth International were politically disarmed in face of the widespread, but false idea that a small group of courageous and capable revolutionaries could set in motion a process leading to a socialist revolution. The process of rooting our parties in the working class and oppressed masses was hindered. The line that was followed not only cut across the possibility of winning cadres from the guerrillaist tendencies to a revolutionary Marxist program, but also led to adventurist actions and losses from our own ranks. The consequences for our small movement were most severe in Argentina and Bolivia.

\* See "Documents of the World Congress of the Fourth International," *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 7, No. 26, July 14, 1969 and Vol. 12, No. 46, December 23, 1974 for reports and resolutions on Latin America listed above.

Accordingly, the Fourth International rescinds the erroneous line on Latin America adopted at the 1969 and 1974 World Congresses. The line of this resolution on Latin America now supersedes the previous line.

One of the most important tasks for the education of the revolutionary Marxist forces in Latin America is the critical evaluation of this whole experience. With the debate now over, the documents can be studied in an educational way, as part of the history of our movement.

25. In the initial period after the Cuban revolution, the Communist parties suffered setbacks owing to the wave of radicalization that generated and strengthened currents to the left of the CPs—a process encouraged by the Castro leadership. In a few cases, most significantly in Venezuela, the CPs were pushed to the sidelines or isolated. But in most countries the Stalinists were able to retain significant cadres and an apparatus in the trade unions and other mass organizations.

With this core of strength remaining, the CPs were partially able to recover from their initial reverses, owing to:

(a) The failure of the guerrillaist strategy, leaving no strong organizations behind and leading ultimately to the disillusionment of many of the guerrillaist cadres, and a turn on their part towards the CP brand of reformism, which appeared to them as the only coherent alternative.

(b) The weakness of the revolutionary Marxist parties, organizationally and politically. They were not strong enough to attract the bulk of those revolutionary-minded militants who were beginning to reevaluate the guerrillaist line. Nor were they strong enough to offer a credible alternative to the left of the CPs that could attract the masses who were radicalizing again under the impact of the new rise in class struggle in the urban proletarian centers.

(c) After the failure of the guerrillaist strategy, the Cuban leadership moved to heal the earlier breaches with the Latin American Communist parties. This move by the Cubans was exemplified at the 1975 Havana conference of Latin American Communist parties, where a common document, compatible with the Communist parties' traditional class-collaborationist positions towards Latin America, was adopted. The Communist parties were able to regain some of their previously diminished authority by drawing upon the prestige of association with the Cuban leadership.

(d) In some countries—Guatemala, El Salvador, Paraguay, Chile, and Uruguay, for example—where the CPs suffered severe repression from the bourgeois dictatorships, they were nevertheless able to make relative gains in the workers movement as a result of their role in the resist-

ance. Elsewhere, as in Peru and Mexico, the CPs benefited as the support of the bourgeois-nationalist currents within the working class eroded. The Argentine CP is also trying to make gains in this regard. In Panama and Mexico, Stalinists have been able to profit from the lifting of certain restrictions on democratic rights.

All of the Latin American Communist parties pursue the counterrevolutionary policy of shoring up bourgeois rule. Under various rubrics—"popular front," "anti-fascist front," "democratic unity," etc.—the common orientation is that of seeking alliances with one or another sector of the bourgeoisie. Some of the Stalinist betrayals have been quite brazen; for example, the Argentine CP supports the military dictatorship of Videla under the rationale that it represents the lesser evil in Argentina, and because it has expanded its commercial relations with the USSR.

Only the Mexican and Dominican CPs have taken a few timid steps in sympathy with "Eurocommunist" CPs. The other Latin American Stalinist parties continue to present the old-style uncritical stance towards the Soviet bureaucracy.

Despite a partial recovery from their earlier reverses, the Communist parties of Latin America, even where they are very strong, do not enjoy dominance in the workers movement. Currents to the left of the Stalinists, including the revolutionary Marxists, have the possibility of challenging the CPs for influence in the working class. This was most strikingly illustrated in the 1978 Peruvian elections, when the FOCEP slate [Frente Obrero, Campesino, Estudiantil, y Popular—Workers, Peasants, Students, and Poor People's Front] received twice the number of votes as the CP.

While the Peruvian CP is still much stronger than the Trotskyists in terms of size and its weight in the trade unions, it faces a growing challenge.

The CP policy against the Trotskyists has been carried out either by tactics of trying to ignore us or to respond to our political ideas by slander and violence, as in Costa Rica. As we grow, however, the Stalinist methods backfire, and the Trotskyists can deal political blows to the Communist parties whenever they resort to such tactics.

In several countries the growing strength of the Trotskyists has enabled us to draw the CPs into common activities; for example, in the Constituent Assembly in Peru and in the campaign for legalization of the workers parties in Mexico. Such united-front-type activities aid the class struggle, and can also help create an atmosphere in the workers movement favoring objective discussion of our respective political views.

26. Maoism had little organized influence in most countries of Latin America in the initial period of the Moscow-Peking

split. But it grew in the late 1960s and early 1970s as disillusionment set in among the proponents of the Castro/Guevara variety of guerrilla warfare. The Maoist line was adopted as an alternative by those who still saw armed struggle as the central question, and who remained hostile to the pro-Moscow CPs. The populist demagoguery of the Maoist groups, and their emphasis on "people's war" seemed to provide answers to the question of how to link up with the masses.

The main growth of the Maoists was in Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, and the Dominican Republic. But even during their high point, the various Maoist groups were never able to unite in a single organization. As Maoism declined in the late 1970s, with the crisis of the Chinese bureaucratic caste, this fragmentation became even more pronounced. Many of the Maoist groups splintered, losing numbers and influence. Thrown into ideological disarray by the foreign policy maneuvers and domestic turnabouts of the Chinese bureaucracy, some of these groups have been evolving away from orthodox Maoism towards centrism, while others have taken refuge in pro-Albanian positions. The Maoist-leaning groups are considerably weaker than the pro-Moscow Communist parties, but are stronger than the revolutionary Marxists in some countries, and are a serious, if weakened, challenge to us. In Bolivia, in contrast to the situation elsewhere, the Maoists managed to grow stronger in the recent period by bringing together most of the currents into one organization, the CP (M-L).

The Maoists promote a class-collaborationist, Stalinist policy, along the same fundamental political lines as the pro-Moscow Communist parties, but with a pronounced sectarian posture, for example, splitting the trade-union movement. This sectarianism makes it difficult to draw the Maoists into common activity with other tendencies in the workers movement. Nevertheless this objective can be pursued with a measure of success, as in the fight for ballot status for FOCEP in the Peruvian election campaign in 1978.

27. Under the impact of the Cuban revolution and the radicalization of the late 1960s and early 1970s, a spectrum of centrist groups of diverse origins emerged in Latin America, for example, the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria [MIR—Movement of the Revolutionary Left] of Venezuela, a split off from the Acción Democrática [AD—Democratic Action]; the Vanguardia Revolucionaria of Peru [Revolutionary Vanguard], which arose out of bourgeois populism and passed through Maoism; and the MIR of Chile, whose roots included a component in the Trotskyist movement.

With a political line oscillating between revolutionary and reformist positions, the centrist organizations are inherently unstable and generally short-lived politically.



They were never able to organize any long-lasting continental or regional structure. The most significant attempt to do so was the formation of the Junta Coordinadora Revolucionaria [Revolutionary Coordinating Council] in 1974, which included the MIR of Chile, the PRT-ERP of Argentina [Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores/Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo—Revolutionary Workers Party/Revolutionary People's Army], the Tupamaros of Uruguay, and the ELN [Ejército de Liberación Nacional—National Liberation Army] of Bolivia. This proved to be short-lived, as each of its components went into crisis. Most of the important centrist groups that arose in the 1960s and 1970s have either collapsed or degenerated in a reformist direction. The MIR of Chile, a victim of both severe repression and the proven failure of its political strategy, is in deep crisis aggravated by a pro-Moscow turn on the part of its leadership. The PRT-ERP has likewise made a pro-Moscow turn. Other centrist groups that remain important, such as the MIR of Venezuela, are suffering from reformist pressures of both a Social Democratic and Stalinist variety.

Although the centrist organizations are heterogeneous politically, with their actions marked by a range from ultraleftism to opportunism, some will move toward revolutionary positions under the impact of the class struggle. This will offer opportunities for common action. While ruling out adaptation or concessions to them, it

would be an error for revolutionary Marxists to adopt a sectarian stance towards leftward-moving centrist currents, or to conclude fatalistically that their degeneration towards reformism is certain. On the contrary, recent experience has confirmed the possibility of winning leftward-moving centrist formations to revolutionary Marxism, for example, the Bloque Socialista [Socialist Bloc] and the Comandos Camilistas [Camilista (Camilo Torres) Brigades] in Colombia.

28. Reformist parties of a Social Democratic type have existed at one time or another in most of the Latin American countries. But strong and long-lasting Social Democratic parties, originating out of and based in the working class, were built only in Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile. However, the Argentine Socialist Party foundered, losing ground to the Peronists in the 1940s. In Uruguay the impact of the postwar upsurge in Latin America and then the Cuban revolution caused breaks between the party and its base in the rightist trade-union bureaucracy. By the late 1960s organized Social Democracy had become marginal in those two countries. In Chile, however, the SP adopted a more leftist posture than the CP, allowed diverse currents to function inside it, and won over currents attracted to the Cuban revolution. It was able to develop a trade-union base in the CUT [Central Unica de Trabajadores—United Federa-

tion of Workers] equivalent to the CP's as well as a larger electoral following.

The Second International in recent years has made big efforts to extend its influence in Latin America, including the deepening of its relations with bourgeois parties. For example, an international gathering in Caracas in May 1976 was attended by European Social Democratic leaders and Latin American bourgeois figures long associated with the Social Democracy, such as Romulo Betancourt and Carlos Andres Pérez of the Venezuelan AD; Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, leader of the Peruvian APRA, and Ricardo Balbin of Argentina's Radical Party. This was followed by the world congress of the Second International in Geneva in November 1976, where for the first time the problem of establishing links with Asia, Africa, and Latin America was accorded high priority. The bourgeois PRD [Partido Revolucionario Dominicano—Dominican Revolutionary Party] of the Dominican Republic and the PLN [Partido Liberación Nacional—National Liberation Party] of Costa Rica were also formally brought into the Second International at that congress, and close links were established with the Puerto Rican Independence Party. Further developments along the same line were implemented at the international conference in Vancouver in late 1978.

The trend toward growing Social Democratic influence in Latin America has developed in the wake of the increasing



Striking auto workers in Argentina.

penetration of European imperialist capital. The Social Democrats are subordinate to imperialism and the national bourgeoisie, and promote an anti-working-class line that must be unmasked in order to advance the development of revolutionary Marxism.

The orientation of the Second International reflects a means by which the leaderships of the Social Democratic parties of Europe, in the service of their own imperialist ruling classes, can facilitate the increased economic and political intervention of the various European imperialists in Latin America. This orientation is twofold: (1) to try to establish Social Democratic parties based in the trade-union bureaucracies where possible; (2) to draw in populist-nationalist and liberal bourgeois parties and political figures, especially where they control trade unions. The Second International hopes to make gains from the problems facing the bourgeois-nationalist parties. But the prospects for the growth of Social Democratic parties in Latin America are somewhat limited by the bourgeoisie's opposition and incapacity to grant economic concessions to the workers.

29. The disintegration of the social structure in the countryside and the impact of the growing urbanization on social relations have had an effect on the lower levels of the Roman Catholic Church. A sector has sought to develop an ideological expression for the radicalization of broad layers of the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and part of the proletariat (for example, the radical priests and Catholic students who helped organize the Peasant Leagues in northeastern Brazil). Archbishop Dom Helder Câmara of Recife has attempted to channel this radicalization in the direction of Social Christian reformism. But Camilo Torres in Colombia broke with Social Christian positions and came out in favor of the socialist revolution.

Where dictatorships have smashed or paralyzed the organizations of the mass movement it has often been possible, as a result of the radicalization in sectors of the church, for workers organizations, including the most militant and politically advanced, to operate under the protection of church structures. This has been the case in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Central America.

This field should not be overlooked by revolutionary Marxists. Ways and means should be sought for drawing Catholic radicals into common actions in defense of the working class and the oppressed masses. In the course of such common actions it is possible to help the most advanced elements move beyond Social Christian positions to proletarian politics, scientific socialism, and the revolutionary Marxist movement.

30. In summary form, the position on

Cuba that the Fourth International adopted in previous documents is the following:

(a) The revolution culminated in the overthrow of capitalism in Cuba and the establishment of a workers state. This marked a historic advance for the Cuban masses, resulting in immediate economic and social gains on a broad scale, and setting an example for all of Latin America.

(b) The Castro leadership of the revolution came from radical petty-bourgeois layers, independent of Stalinism. In the process of carrying out the bourgeois-democratic tasks and leading the Cuban masses in a socialist revolution, it acted as a revolutionary leadership.

(c) The Cuban workers state was marked from the beginning by the absence of democratic workers councils as the basis for the government. Although bureaucratic deformations existed in Cuba from the outset, they were not deep or far-reaching enough to indicate the existence of a hardened bureaucratic caste or the need for a political revolution.

After nearly twenty years since the revolution a further evaluation of the achievements and problems facing the Cuban revolution is in order. Such a broad assessment will not be taken up in this document, but the two key sets of questions that must be considered in making an assessment are the following:

(a) To what degree do parasitic economic privileges exist for the leading strata and to what degree have such privileges become entrenched? To change the previous position it would have to be proved that a crystallized bureaucratic caste exists, whose interests are antagonistic to those of the toilers in Cuba and throughout the world. It would have to be shown how this qualitative change took place. If this were shown, it would then follow that this caste could only be removed by the process of political revolution.

(b) Should the Fourth International continue to act toward the Cuban leadership on the basis that, under the impact of revolutionary advances in the class struggle, especially in Latin America, and under the influence of a growing Fourth International, differentiations will take place and major components can evolve towards Leninist policies and norms of workers democracy?

31. In its international policy, the Castro leadership from the beginning was subject to pressures emanating from both Washington and Moscow, designed to discourage the Cubans from promoting revolutionary developments. Nevertheless, the Castro leadership defied these pressures and sought to spread the example of the Cuban revolution in Latin America and also in Africa. However, the Cuban leadership promoted the strategy of guerrilla

warfare, a fundamentally inadequate strategy, that led to failure.

The delay in the extension of the revolution and the failure of the guerrilla line increased the effects of the objective pressures from U.S. imperialism and Moscow.

In response to this pressure the Castro leadership adopted some positions contrary to proletarian internationalism; in particular it lent political support to the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 (although Castro did make strong criticisms of Moscow at the time). Earlier errors were continued and reinforced, in particular support to bourgeois regimes, such as that of Díaz Ordaz in Mexico, Velasco in Peru, and Torrijos in Panama, and failure to seek opportunities to encourage the class struggle in the advanced imperialist countries. In place of the earlier attempt to encourage the development of alternative currents to the left of the Latin American Communist parties, the Cuban leadership moved to establish collaborative relations and to conclude political agreements with the Latin American CPs, as was exemplified by the 1975 Havana conference of Latin American Communist parties.

The Castro leadership played an important role in Black Africa in the mid-1970s. Disregarding the possible improvement of diplomatic and economic relations with Washington, and risking new aggressive measures, including military ones, against Cuba itself, the Castro leadership defied U.S. imperialism and threw considerable resources into helping defeat the imperialist military intervention in Angola. The South African invaders were driven out of Angola and a huge impulse was given to the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. Imperialist threats against Cuba were raised once again in opposition to Cuba's role in the Horn of Africa.

The contrast between the standing of revolutionary Cuba and counterrevolutionary America among the insurgent peoples of Africa could hardly be more dramatic.

The increasing imperialist aggression against the African revolution, and the step-up of imperialist threats against Cuba makes it imperative that anti-imperialist and revolutionary Marxist forces combine their defense of the African revolution with strong support for the right of independence of the Eritrean people. The Cuban government should reject participating in any invasion of Eritrean territory or any attempt by the Dergue to reestablish Ethiopian rule in Eritrea. Cuban recognition of the right of the Eritreans to decide their own fate would strengthen the defense of the Cuban workers state against imperialism.

The step-up of imperialist threats against Cuba brings to the fore once again the need to defend the Cuban revolution as a key task of the workers movement in Latin America.

The Cuban revolution and the achieve-

ments of the Cuban workers state continue to be a source of inspiration and revolutionary action for the people of Latin

## VII. The Strategy and Tactics of Revolutionary Marxists in Latin America

32. The economic and political changes noted earlier show that after a period in which the role of peasant struggles or petty-bourgeois guerrilla warfare experiments stood out, the trend of revolutionary developments in Latin America is shifting to the following general lines: the working class is moving towards the forefront, towards leading the struggles of the peasant masses, the urban poor, the oppressed nationalities, women, and all oppressed and exploited layers of society. This conforms to the experience of the Russian Revolution, which showed that the working class if capably led, can lead all the oppressed to victory. Success hinges on the construction of mass revolutionary proletarian parties based on a Leninist program of struggle. The parties of the Fourth International are the nuclei aspiring to become such Leninist-type parties.

The main guidelines of the revolutionary Marxist strategy are contained in the resolutions of the first four congresses of the Communist International and *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International* (the "Transitional Program"). Beginning with the need to defend the democratic rights and social conquests of the working class and the other oppressed strata, and the need to fight for new gains, this program advances a clear line of class independence and a series of easily comprehensible, immediate, democratic and transitional demands that can lead ultimately to the mobilization of the masses for the socialist revolution.

There are three intertwined axes to this strategy in Latin America today: (1.) demands that express the most pressing needs of the working class, among which class independence is key; (2.) democratic demands, that correspond above all to the needs of the workers and most oppressed sectors of society, principally the peasants, the urban poor, oppressed national minorities, and women; (3.) demands that arise against the continued imperialist domination over the peoples of Latin America.

Consistent struggles for demands around these axes rapidly lead to confrontation with the bourgeois regimes and take on an anticapitalist dynamic. In Latin America today only the working class can head up the democratic and anti-imperialist struggles in a thoroughly anticapitalist direction.

Based on these guidelines, many of the specific tactics will vary from country to country. But in the elaboration of a revolutionary program today, major consideration must be given to one problem that has stood out in the experience of the class struggle in Latin America: while extraordi-

America. Revolutionary Marxists continually champion this experience in their action and propaganda.

nary mass mobilizations have developed repeatedly and while the willingness of the masses to struggle has been exceedingly high, the organizations of the working class and its allies have been greatly weakened as a result of political subordination to the capitalist class.

The key to overcoming this contradiction is twofold: (a) the creation of mass working-class parties independent of the bourgeoisie; (b) the transformation of the trade unions into consistent instruments of class struggle.

33. The ruling class austerity drives will impel the workers to seek ways to fight back, and experience has shown that workers seeking to fight will turn first to their existing mass organizations, particularly the trade unions. However, the trade unions, the most powerful of the existing organizations of the working class, are at present generally controlled by class-collaborationist bureaucratic leaderships that hold the unions back, preventing their potential power from being used to defend the full interests of the working class and its allies in face of attacks by the ruling class. A key problem, therefore, is the need to construct an alternative class-struggle leadership that can turn the trade unions into powerful instruments of struggle. As struggles arise, this will stimulate the development of other instruments of struggle, including strike committees, factory committees, committees of action, and the creation, in a revolutionary upsurge, of workers and peasants and soldiers councils that can challenge the state power of the bourgeoisie.

A class-struggle leadership can be constructed around a clear program of action designed to unite the working class in its own class interests and mobilize all the oppressed behind the workers, independently of the ruling class. In the process of building such a leadership, militant tendencies will emerge and partial struggles will develop that point in this direction. It is necessary to generalize and deepen such developments so that a politically rounded class-struggle left wing can emerge and fight to win majority leadership in the trade unions.

Some of the key points that will define the platform of such class-struggle leaderships will be the following:

(a) *For trade-union democracy.* The corruption of the trade union bureaucracy, its suppression of internal democracy in the unions, and its use of physical violence against the rank and file all flow from the ties of the bureaucracy to the ruling class and the bourgeois state. The prerequisite

for mobilizing the power of the trade-union movement against the bosses is to insure that the full decision-making power is in the hands of the rank and file. Trade-union democracy not only includes the right to vote, but also the right to full access to information affecting the workers, frequent membership meetings and national congresses, the right to recall officials, the right to form tendencies, and other such measures. Democratic internal functioning, from the election of the leadership to the setting of policy, is not an abstract moral principle, but a necessity to guarantee that the full power of the unions is used. Only a membership that thinks for itself, that fully understands and decides the next steps to take, will be capable of mobilizing the full power of the ranks and drawing in the allies beyond the union.

An example of the importance of this issue is that of the electrical workers in Mexico. At the end of 1971, when the smaller but relatively more democratic electrical workers union, the STERM [Sindicato de Trabajadores Electricistas de la República Mexicana—Electrical Workers Union of the Mexican Republic], came under strong attack from the bureaucratic *charros* of the larger electrical workers union, SNESCRM [Sindicato Nacional de Electricistas, Similares y Conexos de la República Mexicana—National Trade Union of Electrical Workers and Affiliated Trades of the Mexican Republic], the STERM workers were able to appeal for support to broader forces among workers, students, unemployed, and peasants, who saw the fight against the *charros* as their own. The *charros* had to retreat, and offer the compromise of unification, which was accepted. Then, in the new united electrical workers union, SUTERM [Sindicato Unico de Trabajadores Electricistas de la República Mexicana—United Electrical Workers Union of the Mexican Republic], the desire for more internal democracy proved infectious, leading to the creation of the Democratic Tendency, which was able to mount a serious challenge to the *charros*. In 1975-76 the electrical workers and their supporters mobilized in mass demonstrations of up to 150,000, and have been spearheading some of the most militant labor struggles in Mexico in recent years.

One organizational conquest of the workers movement in Argentina, where the trade unions have been very strong, but tightly controlled by the Peronist bureaucrats, are the *Cuerpos de Delegados* (delegate bodies) and the *Comisiones Internas* (internal committees). These factory committees, looked to as the organs of all the workers and subject to a great measure of rank-and-file control, were the backbone of the militant workers struggle during the period between 1969 and 1976.

In both cases the fight for trade-union democracy correctly centered around the question of how best to turn the unions into effective instruments to fight the bosses.

(b) *For full trade-union rights.* The elementary right to strike and to organize is often a key issue that has come under attack, not only from the individual employers, but from the bourgeois state as well—as shown by the frequent resort to police and military intervention to break strikes, or the prohibition of trade unions among some public employees. In the countries ruled by dictatorships the trade unions have virtually no rights.

To counteract government suppression or control, various bodies will develop such as workers commissions that have arisen as *ad hoc* committees in some of the plants in Brazil. These can help regenerate the trade unions or themselves become embryos of independent trade-union organizations, especially insofar as they take on a regular existence and internal life.

In Mexico, the struggle against government interference in and control of the unions takes the form, in some cases, of democratic union oppositions, through which the rank and file strive to regain control of the trade unions from the bureaucratic *charros*, tied to the bourgeoisie.

Another key issue is the fight against ruling-class attempts to impose binding arbitration on the trade unions (with the bourgeois state, of course, as final arbiter), to exact no-strike pledges from the trade unions, or commitments to accept government austerity measures, including wage freezes.

On another level, a struggle is necessary against outright imperialist interference in the trade-union movement, often carried out in complicity with bureaucratic leaders of the North American AFL-CIO.

(c) *For expanded and more powerful trade-union organizations.* Historically, except for Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Brazil, and in some specific industries elsewhere, such as mining in Bolivia, trade-union organization has been very weak in Latin America involving only a small percentage of the working class. The organization of workers into trade unions has grown somewhat in recent years. In Peru, the number of recognized unions jumped from 500 in 1955 to 5,000 in 1978, with most of the growth concentrated in Lima, where 25% of the work force is now in unions.

But this is still a weakness of the Latin American labor movement. The goal of reviving the trade unions in Brazil and Chile and of building a strong independent and militant trade-union movement in countries like Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and in Central America is a top priority. In Peru, Mexico, and Argentina, large sectors of the workers still must be drawn into the trade unions.

Related to the task of unionization is that of organizing the basic units of the trade unions according to the criterion of workplace, rather than just on a geographical or industry level, as often exists. Workplace units of the trade unions, in which the rank and file can meet together

and democratically decide their own affairs, are essential to assert the power of the ranks. The lack of this form of organization in many cases was a weakness of the CUT in Chile in 1971-73.

Similarly, a key need is for *industrial* trade unions, rather than the weaker plant-by-plant or craft-based unions, which, except for Argentina, have predominated in Latin America. This is a weakness of the Mexican CTM [Confederación de Trabajadores de México—Mexican Workers Federation], for example, and of the Puerto Rican trade unions. The only way to effectively organize the big new industrial plants is on an industrial union basis, particularly if the entire work force at the plant level can be drawn into the union.

(d) *For trade-union unity.* Colombia offers an example in which the division of the trade-union movement—in this case, into four major trade-union federations, as well as several important unaffiliated unions—is a major obstacle to organizing the power of the working class effectively. When the unions can unite in action, as occurred in September 1977, a powerful impetus can be given to the class struggle, and broader social layers can be drawn in. In Colombia the pressure of the ranks forced the leadership of the UTC [Unión de Trabajadores de Colombia—Union of Colombian Workers] and the CTC [Confederación de Trabajadores de Colombia—Confederation of Colombian Workers]—the big federations linked to the Conservative and Liberal parties—into agreeing with the mobilizations that the CSTC [Confederación Sindical de Trabajadores de Colombia—General Trade-Union Confederation of Workers of Colombia], the CGT [Confederación General de Trabajadores—General Confederation of Workers], and independent unions had been planning. The formation of the unified national trade-union committee and the agreement to fight for a uniform national contract set the stage for the massive nationwide general strike.

In Peru, rank-and-file pressure was essential to the success of the big general strikes of July 1977 and February and May 1978. These strikes came about as the result of unity in action among the Stalinist-dominated CGTP, the big independent unions, and the smaller CTRP-Lima [Central de Trabajadores de la Revolución Peruana—Central Workers Union of the Peruvian Revolution] and CNT [Central Nacional de Trabajadores—National Workers Federation] federations.

A common error of many militant anti-bureaucratic opposition currents in the trade unions has been to form separate trade unions. Although these may in some cases organize sectors of the working class, they are cut off from the bulk of organized workers. In other cases, independent trade unions have arisen in some sectors of the working class, owing to the failure of the big trade-union federations to

carry out organizing campaigns. The fight for trade-union unity includes the need to draw the independent trade unions into the larger, organized trade-union movement.

In general, it will require mobilization of the ranks to impose long-lasting trade-union unity in places where the movement is seriously divided. The fight for trade-union unity in Colombia and Peru is closely linked with the fight for independent working-class political action.

(e) *For the unity of the working class.* The working class in Latin America is divided by capitalist society in many ways: employed and unemployed; unionized and non-unionized; skilled and unskilled; men and women; workers of oppressor nationalities and those of oppressed national minorities; white collar and blue collar; urban and agricultural; old and young; citizens and immigrants.

The ruling classes seek to preserve the existing divisions, hoping that those in a more privileged position compared to the rest will turn their backs on their fellow workers. In this way labor solidarity and unity—and thus the power of the labor movement—would be weakened. A major problem in Latin America is to prevent the unions from becoming entrenched bastions of the skilled, relatively privileged workers, unconcerned with the much larger layer of poor and unskilled workers.

The austerity drives of the bourgeoisie hit hardest at the most oppressed and exploited sectors of the working class. At the same time, the capacity of the ruling class to deal blows to these sectors facilitates ruling class attacks on the most powerful sectors of the working class. Thus, the interests of all workers in the fight against austerity lie in the broadest class unity to fight back.

A key feature of a militant class-struggle leadership in the unions will be its stance on overcoming these divisions within the class. This can only be done on the basis of championing the needs of the most oppressed sectors. This not only means fighting against discrimination whenever it occurs, but also fighting for special programs to overcome the effects of past discrimination. In many cases it will mean a political fight within the working class to overcome the deeprooted prejudices of the more privileged sectors. But such fights must be carried out. An example is the fight of the Argentine women textile workers to obtain proportional representation in the factory committees.

Since the Latin American trade unions generally organize only a part of the class, often only a minority part, a key task is that of uniting the unionized and non-unionized workers. One of the main ways this can be accomplished is by the creation of factory committees in the plants; these can begin, for example, in *struggles* over working conditions, safety, and speedup, or in broader political struggles.

In the big Volkswagen plant in Puebla,

Mexico, the workers took the initiative to organize and coordinate departmental factory committees over such issues; this reinforced their capacity to struggle and greatly strengthened the union, which had previously been weak.

In times of upsurge, the example of factory committees, as organizations uniting *all* workers, can spread on a broader level, beyond the factory.

Even more advanced developments will appear, such as the industrial *cordones* in Chile and the popular assembly in Bolivia in the early 1970s. The fight to transform the trade unions does not, however, contradict the perspective of forming broader soviet-type organizations of the class, but is a necessary complement and preparation for that perspective.

(f) *For the trade unions to take the lead on all social and political questions.* If the trade unions are to be transformed into fighting instruments of class struggle, they must break out of any narrow framework that sees their role limited to the economic concerns of their own members. They must build solidarity and link their struggles with the struggles of the peasants and oppressed national minorities, women, and the unemployed and urban poor. They must take the lead in the fights for democratic rights and against imperialist domination. This, too, will increase the strength of the unions.

As the most powerful existing organizations of the working class, the unions, under a class-struggle leadership, have to play a central role in the struggle for full democratic rights and against imperialism. With their potential for establishing international links with trade unions in other countries, the unions can not only win solidarity throughout Latin America, but can play a role in dividing the workers of the imperialist countries from their own ruling classes, and winning their support for the struggles of the oppressed and exploited peoples of Latin America.

(g) *For independent class political action.* The major political weakness of the labor movement in Latin America is the absence of mass working-class parties—except for Chile, where the SP and CP did achieve mass influence, but promoted a class-collaborationist line. In some countries where the trade unions have been strongest, like Argentina and Mexico, the full power of the unions has never been used, owing to their subordination to bourgeois-nationalist parties: the Peronist organizations and the PRI. In Bolivia the strong miners union has been tied, via the Lechn bureaucracy, to the bourgeois-nationalist MNR.

The experience in Colombia in 1977-78 offers a good illustration of the scope of the problem. In September 1977, the trade unions were able to call a massive nationwide general strike that challenged the ruling class on a whole series of crucial economic and social questions. But this

show of independent strength was not translated onto the political arena. Three of the four main union federations remained directly tied to bourgeois political parties, and the fourth, led by the CP, promoted popular frontism as its strategy. In the elections of 1978, except for the relatively small campaigns for the socialist candidates that were run by UNIOS [Unidad Obrera y Socialista—Workers and Socialist Unity] and the PST [Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores—Socialist Workers Party], there was no major independent class alternative, and thus no opportunity for the masses to express their repudiation of the ruling class. The result was a blow to the masses that had waged such a militant struggle only a few months earlier.

The fight for independent working-class political action can be waged over an initial step, such as the fight in the Mexican unions against obligatory affiliation to the PRI. It can be waged in a more advanced way through a struggle for the trade unions to organize a mass workers party, as in Brazil or Argentina. It can be waged over a break with the ruling class on the governmental level during a pre-revolutionary situation, as was crucial in Chile during the Allende regime in order to develop the full potential of the *cordones industriales* as soviet-type formations that could organize the workers for the seizure of power. But whatever the appropriate form at any given time, this is a central question that must always be raised.

The unifying axis of the fight for a class-struggle leadership in the workers movement is the struggle for class independence from the bourgeoisie, particularly the fight for mass workers parties capable of challenging the ruling class on all political levels. This will best enable the working class to champion the struggles of all oppressed sectors of society, in particular, to forge a strong alliance between the workers and poor peasants against the common ruling class enemy. Only the working class, organized independently, can lead this struggle, but it must draw in the peasant masses behind it. Fighting for this perspective is a key step on the road to mobilizing the masses towards the overthrow of the capitalist governments and their replacement by workers and peasants governments.

34. The ultimate objective, on the road to independent working-class political action, is the construction of a mass revolutionary Marxist party capable of leading the socialist revolution to victory. But the revolutionary Marxist organizations are still only small nuclei and cannot yet present themselves in the eyes of the broad masses as a credible alternative to the bourgeois parties. Nor is it likely that the first results of the coming waves of class upsurge and radicalization will be to transform these

nuclei into mass parties of the working class.

Thus the likely way in which the need for independent class political action will express itself is in terms of steps to be taken by the workers organizations that the workers already look to as their own instruments. In some cases this will mean challenging the CPs (or other working-class parties, if they are looked to by large numbers of workers) to break from their class-collaborationist course and strike out on an independent path. But, except for Chile, the CPs tend to represent only a fraction of the class and do not have great authority. For the most part, the only truly mass organizations of the working class are the trade unions. Thus the fight for independent working-class political action will tend to center around the need for the trade unions themselves to take this step; that is, for the trade unions to take the initiative in creating mass-workers parties.

This is not a universal formula to be applied in every country and in every situation, but past and current experience shows that it is a key perspective to advance. The workers have often pressed their trade unions into initiating actions tending to go beyond the economic arena and towards confronting the bourgeoisie on the broader political front. The weakness has been that up to now these political steps have been only temporary and partial.

An example is the June 1975 general strike in Argentina, the first ever to confront a Peronist government. The strike brought down the hated minister and “strong man” of the regime, López Rega, as well as economics minister Celestino Rodrigo, and it won a big wage increase. But while the workers, especially through their factory committees, had created the conditions that forced the national Peronist union officials to officially call the general strike, the latter were able to keep it from becoming a more generalized political mobilization against the Peronist government.

The need, in cases such as this, is to make the break with the bourgeoisie permanent and complete.

The events of 1978-79 in Brazil and Bolivia also confirm the tendency of the trade-union organizations to take ever greater political steps. The movement for a Workers Party (PT)—clearly differentiated from the bourgeoisie—is activated by a layer of trade-union leaders and staff people who have participated fully in the great struggles and strikes that the industrial proletariat in the south of that country has undertaken. It is a direct expression of this impulse to establish a class organization.

In Bolivia, the Workers Confederation (COB) has been the most important pole of opposition and resistance to the series of coups that have taken place since the beginning of 1978 and the fall of the bloody Banzer dictatorship. Precisely this



action is what has impeded the stabilization of the military rulers. But the COB must express this opposition in a more finished form, that is, through a working-class party.

The call for political action by the trade unions in no way implies confidence in the class-collaborationist leaderships that dominate the trade-union movement today. On the contrary, the fight for the unions to initiate mass working-class parties is linked to the broader fight to create an alternative leadership that can transform the unions into fighting instruments of class struggle. In other words, the fight to create mass workers parties is linked to the fight for an overall program of action capable of uniting the working class and its allies against capitalist rule.

As in all other aspects of the class struggle, it is likely that movement by the trade unions in the direction of independent working-class political action will be uneven, especially to the degree that the existing bureaucratic leaderships hold sway. But any step in this direction, however partial or flawed, is to be supported. Whatever the initial leadership of such a mass workers party might be, its very formation would set a dynamic into motion that would be difficult to confine to class collaborationism. In the process of fighting for the establishment and growth of mass workers parties, and for a class-struggle program, the political influence of the revolutionary Marxists will grow and they will come into position to contend for leadership of the class as a whole. Thus the two processes (building the revolutionary Marxist party and building a mass workers party based on the trade unions) are not contradictory, but complementary.

A glimpse of the potential for such a development was given in the 1978 constituent assembly elections in Peru. Despite the undemocratic election procedure, more than 20% of the votes were cast for working-class candidates; 12% were cast for the class-struggle FOCEP slate. This was one of the clearest electoral expressions yet seen in Latin America in favor of independent working-class politics. The strong support for the FOCEP slate also shows that when sentiment for a working-class political alternative is expressed, it need not automatically favor the reformists; thus, a mass workers party will not of necessity be led by the reformists. The leadership will be decided in struggle. In conditions where the Communist parties or other class-collaborationist forces are not exceptionally strong, the revolutionary Marxists can place themselves in a good position from the outset to contest for leadership of a mass workers party.

From the point of view of political education, the FOCEP experience also provides a positive counterexample to that of the Unidad Popular in Chile and the Frente Amplio [Broad Front] in Uruguay. The latter two were not expressions of indepen-

dent working-class political action, but of class collaboration; they were multiclass political blocs including bourgeois forces. Part of the process of popularizing independent working-class political action is that of exposing the incorrectness of advocating a vote for multiclass blocs.

A mass independent workers party would run candidates in elections. But this should not be its reason for existence. The kind of party that is needed is not an electoral party but an organization that mobilizes the workers and their allies in action—in strikes, demonstrations, etc.—challenging the ruling class on all the political issues of the day. Within this framework, participation in elections is useful for propaganda purposes.

Part of the job of political education in favor of a mass workers party is that of presenting the aim of establishing a workers and peasants government as an alternative to the existing capitalist government. Thus a mass workers party would have to present itself as the champion of all progressive social struggles and the leader of all oppressed classes, in particular, the peasantry.

35. Economic and social conditions in Latin America do not permit long-term stable bourgeois-democratic openings. This gives special importance to the fight for democratic rights, as one of the fundamental issues of the class struggle.

The fight for democratic rights directly concerns the organization and mobilization of the workers as such (the right to strike and the right to organize unions, for example). It is crucial for the revival and reorganization of the workers movement in countries under military dictatorships. It is part of the fight for a class-struggle leadership to replace the bureaucrats in the mass organizations. Democratic liberties, in short, provide the most favorable conditions to defend the living conditions and promote the organization of the working class.

The fight for democratic rights includes the need for the masses to take measures to protect themselves against the legal and extra-legal attacks of the ruling class. The need for forms of self-defense will naturally arise as the army and police, or paramilitary bands linked to them, carry out terrorist attacks on demonstrations, strikes and other trade-union activities, neighborhood mobilizations in the *barrios*, and protest actions in general. The use of self-defense takes place within a process through which the masses attain greater and greater consciousness of their interests through the widening and deepening of democratic, trade-union, and other struggles of all types.

The specific form of self-defense organized by the mass movement is a tactical question, whether it be unarmed pickets or forms of armed self-defense. One of the most effective and important aspects of the fight against legal and extra-legal attacks

is the political preparation: gaining broad mass support; the use of defensive political formulations; and other methods of proletarian struggle designed to make it as difficult as possible for the ruling classes to attack. In these, as in all areas of mass activity, revolutionary Marxists lead with proposals appropriate to the given situation.

In the fight for democratic rights, many types of common actions for specific demands are possible between a wide range of political forces in the mass movement. These opportunities should be sought out in non-sectarian fashion. Common activities will also be possible at times with bourgeois groups, in defense of political prisoners, for example. Alliances on such issues are valuable, provided that they do not run counter to the political and organizational independence of the working-class organizations and do not imply their subordination to bourgeois forces.

The importance of the fight for democratic rights was shown in stark fashion in Argentina in 1975-76. As the class polarization intensified, the danger of a military coup against the bourgeois-democratic regime was increasingly apparent. In fact, bourgeois democratic rights were severely eroded even prior to the coup as the Isabel Perón government began shifting more and more to the right itself, laying the ground for its own overthrow.

The primary aim of the coup was to wrest away the democratic gains that the masses had won and to crush the mass movement. In face of dangers such as these—and the experience is certain to be repeated—it is crucial for the workers movement to mobilize against the reactionary threat, as the lesson of Chile so well demonstrates. Limited tactical agreements are possible with any forces to prevent a bourgeois-democratic regime from being overturned by a military coup. But in so doing it is a grave error to give political support to the bourgeois-democratic regime or to conclude long-term blocs or adopt common general political programs or strategies with bourgeois forces. The need is to present a line of class independence and to promote the use of proletarian methods of struggle and self-defense. This should be a constant element of revolutionary Marxist propaganda in Latin America.

In some situations the crisis of the dictatorships obliges them to seek a way out through electoral openings. Such conjunctures, however restrictive, offer big opportunities for organizing the mass movement.

More generally, running independent working-class candidates in elections offers a means of raising the level of understanding of the masses. Participation in elections in this way, or in bourgeois parliaments if elected, does not mean legitimizing the democratic pretensions of the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, it can be useful as a forum to expose the real nature of bourgeois rule and to help the masses

break with bourgeois institutions and shed their illusions in bourgeois-democratic ideology.

As the dictatorships go into crisis, the slogan of the constituent assembly will often become a pressing issue for the workers movement to take up as a means of counterposing popular sovereignty to dictatorial rule and to pose the need for a workers and farmers government. The slogan of a constituent assembly can also be utilized effectively in countries other than those ruled by outright military dictatorships, but in a situation where the masses readily see the need for popular sovereignty. The struggle against the continual application of states of emergency, against reactionary legislation, against constant press censorship, for the legality of the workers parties, against the assassination and tortures of political dissidents, trade-union and peasant leaders, etc., can then be generalized in the slogan of a constituent assembly.

The experience in Peru in 1978, in which the revolutionary Marxists took advantage of an opening around the issue of the constituent assembly and utilized it effectively, offers many lessons for the workers movement.

The military dictatorship in Peru, confronted by a big rise in the class struggle in 1977-78, decided to hold elections to a constituent assembly. According to the plans of the military regime, the aim was to draft a new constitution, ostensibly to prepare the way for civilian rule two years later. This was not a real guarantee of democratic rights, but rather a maneuver by the ruling class to defuse the mass movement and gain time.

In this situation revolutionary Marxists were able to reach broad masses with an independent working-class policy, along the following broad outlines:

a) Participation in the elections, through the working-class slate FOCEP, which stood for independence from the bourgeoisie and which counterposed class struggle to class collaborationism. At the same time, they exposed the fraudulent character of the constituent assembly as conceived by the generals, and denounced the undemocratic character of the elections, such as the ballot law requirements that were an obstacle to working-class participation, the refusal to allow illiterates—mainly Indians and other sectors of the most oppressed—to vote, and the deportation of popular mass leaders, including candidates. Thus, the revolutionary Marxists showed themselves to be the strongest and most consistent defenders of democratic rights.

b) The revolutionary Marxists were able to utilize the election campaign as a propaganda forum to raise a working-class solution to the key political problems of the day. This included propaganda for a socialist constitution and for a workers and peasants government.

c) After workers candidates were elected, the constituent assembly itself could be used as a forum. It then became possible to advocate that the constituent assembly be in no way bound by the restrictions that the military government sought to impose, that it exercise its powers on behalf of the masses, for example, to repudiate the foreign debt, to order the reinstatement of fired union militants, and to grant free land to the peasants. It became possible to advance a line designed to expose the military usurpers of popular sovereignty, as well as the bourgeois parties that gave backhanded support to the continuation of military rule. Proposals could be made in the constituent assembly to bring down the military government, to declare itself sovereign, to call free elections based on universal franchise, and to counterpose a workers and farmers government to all forms of bourgeois rule.

In this way it was possible to combine consistent defense of democratic rights with specific demands in the class interests of the workers, peasants and all the oppressed.

To the degree that the bourgeois parties, which represented a big majority in the constituent assembly, hesitated or rejected such proposals, they stood to lose the confidence of the masses. This was particularly important in the case of APRA, which has strong mass support. It was necessary to find a way to help the masses break from the APRA and see the need for a mass workers party and a workers and peasants government.

It was also possible to use the constituent assembly as a means to promote class-struggle unity between the deputies from all workers parties—thus helping set an example for the mass movement as a whole.

d) The overall aim was not to score electoral or parliamentary points. Rather it was to press for the full utilization and extension of democratic rights and to use the parliamentary forum as a means to promote the education, organization, and extraparlimentary mobilization of the masses.

36. Except for Cuba, all countries south of the Rio Bravo [Rio Grande] are dominated by foreign imperialism, principally U.S. imperialism. Outright colonies of U.S., British, French, and Dutch imperialism remain, in particular Puerto Rico, in which the U.S. imperialists have nearly \$20 billion in investments, and which is used as a key military base for U.S. imperialism in Latin America. The struggle for full national liberation against imperialist domination and superexploitation is a burning issue to the masses of Latin America, and anti-imperialist struggles are some of the most important forms of the class struggle.

Bourgeois-nationalist tendencies in Latin America have often portrayed themselves as the champions of anti-imperialism, and on this basis have been

able to disorient large sectors of the mass movement. Peronism in Argentina, the MNR in Bolivia, the APRA in Peru, the AD in Venezuela, and the PRI in Mexico are classical examples. More recently, sectors of the military, as illustrated by Torrijos in Panama, Torres in Bolivia, and Velasco in Peru have sought to stake out claims as anti-imperialists. But none of the bourgeois-nationalist tendencies has ever been willing or able to break completely with imperialism; nor, for fear of setting their own masses onto an uncontrollable course, will they ever do so. At best they have been able to use the pressure of the masses to wrest some concessions from the imperialists.

The experience of Cuba shows that a thoroughgoing struggle for independence from foreign imperialism must inexorably grow over into a socialist revolution. But the masses will come to this understanding only through their own experience. Thus, the working class must be organized to stand at the head of the anti-imperialist movement, and an alternative class-struggle leadership and program must be counterposed to that of the bourgeois nationalists. In this way a bridge can be built from the anti-imperialist consciousness of the masses to a broader understanding of the need for a socialist revolution and of the means of carrying it out.

To the extent that the classical bourgeois-national tendencies prove themselves incapable of breaking with imperialism and as newly-emerging industrial sectors of the national bourgeoisie ally openly with imperialism, the banner of anti-imperialism can more easily devolve to the working class—but only if a class-struggle leadership emerges at the head of the anti-imperialist struggle.

Such a leadership will seek to achieve unity in action with whatever forces are willing to participate in specific actions against imperialism. Tactical ad hoc agreements can be concluded with petty-bourgeois and even bourgeois elements provided that they actually participate in such actions, although in the latter case it is not likely that such agreements can be long-lasting. Critical support can be granted to practical measures, as distinct from mere rhetoric, against imperialism taken by bourgeois governments (for example, nationalization of imperialist companies). The radical difference between the class-struggle approach and the bourgeois or reformist concept of anti-imperialism is that the latter, in the name of "unity," seeks to hold the struggle within limits acceptable to the national bourgeoisie. A class-struggle leadership, by contrast, will not only be the most consistent and intransigent champion of anti-imperialist actions, but will at the same time promote the independent class interests of the workers and the most oppressed masses.

Anti-imperialist struggles generally unfold in the form of mobilizations around specific issues. The organizational forms



Hugo Blanco addressing July 1978 rally in Lima after return from exile to take seat in Peru's Constituent Assembly.

used to carry out and lead these mobilizations will generally be ad hoc fronts for action that do not maintain a permanent existence. But the orientation to anti-imperialist action is a permanent axis of revolutionary strategy in Latin America.

Some of the main issues around which anti-imperialist activities can be organized are the following:

a) Defend Cuba against U.S. military threats and economic pressure. End the economic blockade. U.S. out of Guantanamo naval base. For the diplomatic recognition of Cuba by all Latin American governments.

b) For the independence of Puerto Rico. For the immediate and unconditional dismantling of all U.S. military installations in Puerto Rico. For the immediate withdrawal of the U.S. Navy from the island of Vieques. For the independence of all countries that are still subjected to domination by U.S., British, French, and Dutch imperialism.

c) For the immediate return of the entire Canal Zone to Panama. For the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. military forces from Panamanian territory. Abrogate the Carter-Torrijos treaties.

d) For the immediate withdrawal of all imperialist military and police missions and bases from Latin America. Stop CIA intervention. End imperialist arming and financing of dictatorships.

e) Repudiate foreign debts to the imperialists. Against special economic privileges for the imperialists in trade and

investment. Against the economic manuevers and blackmail of the International Monetary Fund.

f) For the expropriation of all imperialist-owned enterprises. For the defense of nationalized enterprises against imperialist economic penetration.

g) Against the deportations of Latino working people from the United States. Defend the struggles of Latinos in the United States, West Indians in Britain and Canada, and Antilleans in France.

h) Support to the anti-imperialist struggles of the peoples of the world.

Despite the diversity and uneven development that exists within Latin America, the history of the region as a whole shows that it constitutes an economic and social unity. Imperialist domination tends to exacerbate divisions artificially, while upsurges in the class struggle tend to draw the peoples of Latin America closer together. Progress for the masses can be brought about by pooling the economic and social resources of the entire region, and making the tendency towards unity a living reality.

The socialist revolution will have its own rhythm and peculiarities in each of the countries of Latin America. But the culmination of the revolutionary process will bring about the organization of a federation of Latin American socialist republics: the Socialist United States of Latin America. This is the long-term programmatic objective of the Latin American Trotskyist movement.

## VIII. Immediate Tasks of the Fourth International in Latin America Today

37. Building revolutionary parties rooted in the working class is the central strategic task for the Fourth International in Latin America.

The struggle to build mass revolutionary parties is, in the last analysis, that of overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective conditions for socialist revolution in Latin America, as illustrated by the repeated revolutionary upsurges, and the proletariat's lack of a capable class-conscious leadership to guide the masses to victory.

Although the forces of the Fourth International are still weak in relation to the enormity of the task we propose to fulfill, although we have been cruelly decimated by repression in several countries, we can count on favorable openings to arise in the period ahead. If these opportunities are well utilized, decisive steps can be taken to solving the crisis of revolutionary leadership in Latin America. This involves three intertwined processes: (a) the defense and enrichment of the revolutionary Marxist program; (b) the recruitment, political and practical education of revolutionary Marxist cadres; (c) winning mass influence.

The political and economic situation varies considerably from one country to another in Latin America, as does the

stage of the class struggle. Thus, each party of the Fourth International must take account of the concrete situation it faces in its own country in applying our common strategic orientation. Within this framework, however, overall guidelines can be established for our work.

The following are among the immediate tasks of the parties of the Fourth International in Latin America:

a. The development of roots in the working class. To win the workers and all the oppressed and exploited masses and to lead them to victory over the ruling classes requires a party that is not only proletarian in program, but in composition as well. Only such a party can earn the respect of the workers because of its leadership role in the class struggle, and show the workers how to think socially and act politically. Only such a party can fully understand the needs and concerns of the workers and provide leadership in accordance with those needs.

The development of parties rooted in the working class will advance our work in all sectors of the mass movement and among the allies of the proletariat: the peasants and agricultural workers, the oppressed nationalities, the urban poor, women, and youth.

As the preceding analysis of political and social trends in Latin America shows, the working class, particularly the industrial working class, is more and more in the center of the class struggle. Thus, it is not only strategically correct, but also timely, to make a central effort at building our parties as parties that are working class in composition. The Argentine PST has done well in this regard, and Trotskyists elsewhere, as in Brazil and Mexico, are making progress.

It is especially important to develop functioning party units in the industries where the workers have been playing a vanguard role in the class struggle. By putting ourselves forward as the proponents of a class-struggle leadership of the working class, along the lines developed earlier in this document, the Fourth International stands to gain cadres and influence in the period ahead. Functioning cells or fractions in the important industries will not arise spontaneously. Conscious leadership effort, however, can overcome this problem, enabling our parties to make a turn towards rooting our cadres in the industrial working class. The key is to inspire and convince our parties of the political possibility and need to do so.

b. Gaining influence in the struggles of peasants, oppressed nationalities and national minorities, and the urban poor. Most of our organizations do not yet have the forces to develop a strong base in these movements, although some specific opportunities will arise in which Trotskyists can become actively involved, such as the Mexican Trotskyists' participation in the peasant movement in Sonora and elsewhere, the initiatives by FOCEP in Peru to organize shantytown dwellers, and the experience of the Costa Rican Trotskyists in the struggles of the Limoncito Black community. All organizations of the Fourth International in Latin America can, however, develop solidarity activities with such struggles and present our programmatic solutions to the problems they face, along the lines developed in this document.

Within the trade unions and other mass organizations our forces can initiate steps to develop alliances between the workers and peasants. Specific attention should be paid to aiding the organization of the agricultural and migrant workers.

c. Continuing active participation in the student movement and among broader sectors of youth. This has been one of the main arenas of political work and recruitment up to now, and it will continue to offer considerable opportunities for growth. The experience of the organized student movement in Mexico and Brazil illustrates the opportunities and shows the need for revolutionary Marxists to participate in the most effective organized manner. The formation of Trotskyist youth groups, organizationally independent of the party, would be of considerable aid in our work in the student and youth move-



ment. It would also enable us to increase our work among working-class youth and students in the technical schools.

d. Participation in the newly developing women's liberation movement. Our organizations already possess many experienced women political cadres who can play a leading role in the development and orientation of the newly emerging women's movement in Latin America. The Trotskyists are in an excellent position to make gains in comparison with other left-wing political tendencies that ignore or belittle the women's movement. But this potential can be realized only if the entire party—men and women—assumes responsibility for guiding our work in the women's movement, and integrates the issue of women's liberation in all areas of political work. The party leadership must also develop internal educational programs on this issue and insure that any manifestations of *machismo* within the party are combated.

e. Defense of democratic rights. Broad international campaigns are often possible in defense of the victims of repression in countries under the yoke of dictatorships, such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay. Such international efforts can be of great value in preventing the bloody dictatorships from acting with impunity. Even under less restrictive conditions defense campaigns can be extremely important, as in Mexico, where tens of thousands of people demonstrated in July and October 1978, for the release of all political prisoners and an end to the repressive policies of the Mexican government.

Important victories have been won as a result of the work of our movement, for example, the campaign in defense of imprisoned Brazilian socialist militants and in defense of Peruvian peasant leader and well-known Trotskyist, Hugo Blanco. The fight for the legalization of Trotskyist groups is an important part of our work in Latin America. As experiences in Brazil and Mexico show, this is not a mere matter of legal proceedings, but primarily of broad political campaigns that in themselves help build the organization.

f. International political solidarity campaigns. It is of great political and educational value to build international solidarity for and popularize the lessons of recent important upsurges such as those in Peru, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Some revolutionary developments elsewhere in the world have an impact in Latin America that calls for special initiatives, such as defense of the African liberation struggle, linked with the defense of Cuba, against imperialism.

Often collaboration can be established between Trotskyist groups in countries directly affected by the same events, such as the efforts by U.S. and Panamanian Trotskyists against the Carter-Torrijos pacts on the Panama Canal, or U.S. and Puerto Rican Trotskyists for the independence of Puerto Rico.

Defense of the millions of undocumented Mexican, Dominican, Colombian, Haitian, and other Latin American workers in the United States is very important, especially in view of the huge step-up in repression by Washington, which deports nearly one million undocumented workers each year. Héctor Marroquín's fight against deportation has proved to be a way to bring this issue to the attention of many people. In western Europe, where there are several hundred thousand Latin American political refugees, important collaboration can be carried out, not only in defense of democratic rights in Latin America, but also in defense of the rights of the Latin Americans in Europe.

g. Election campaigns. Within the organizations of the mass movement, we propose that independent class-struggle candidates be run. We vigorously support and popularize independent working-class campaigns whenever they occur, while at the same time promoting a clear class-struggle program for such campaigns. This is a priority in line with the preceding analysis of the need to fight for mass workers parties capable of challenging the ruling class on all political levels.

In recent years our movement in Latin America has gained more experience in running Trotskyist election campaigns. These offer a means of popularizing our ideas and of winning greater standing as a serious political current in the eyes of the masses. Running in elections also helps to preserve our legal rights.

The choice of candidates can be a useful means of popularizing the image of the Trotskyist parties as active participants on all fronts of the class struggle. This was the experience of the Argentine PST campaign in 1973, the Trotskyists on the Peruvian FOCEP slate in 1978, the UNIOS campaign and the PST candidates in Colombia in 1978, and the OST campaign in Costa Rica in 1977. The parties ran candidates known for their activity and symbolizing the parties' stands in the trade-union, peasant, and women's movements, and other areas. Through campaigns like these, our movement and some of its leaders became much more established in the eyes of the masses of these countries, and elsewhere in Latin America.

Sometimes it will be possible to participate in electoral alliances with other working-class and socialist forces, provided that the bases of such alliances are clearly independent of the capitalist class, present a clear line of class struggle as opposed to class collaboration, and the revolutionary Marxists can defend their own program without restriction.

Revolutionary Marxists support any genuine step towards class political independence by significant sectors of the working class, even though these steps may be accompanied by programmatic weaknesses.

38. The forces of the Trotskyist move-

ment in Latin America have been badly divided in recent years. This is one of the damaging legacies of an internal political struggle in the Fourth International. The unification process in Mexico that led to the establishment of the united PRT [Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers Party] in 1977 offers an example of how this problem was overcome. In Colombia and Peru important steps were also taken to unify some of our divided forces.

Progress in party building can be greatly enhanced if unprincipled splits can be avoided and principled unifications can be carried out, so that the Fourth International can speak to the masses through the voice of a united organization in each country. Our traditional guidelines for successful unifications include basic agreement on program and on the most important axes of work, as well as the guarantee of internal party democracy. Within this framework, there is ample room for discussion and debate on theoretical questions and on less pressing tactical issues.

New regroupments are also possible. In face of the crisis of various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist policies and reformist and centrist strategies, revolutionary-minded groupings will develop toward our anticapitalist, socialist conceptions. Revolutionary Marxists should take full advantage of the opportunity to actively work with these currents, with the aim of winning them to our movement.

As our organizations grow, the need will become ever greater to insure strong norms of organizational functioning, including the publication of a regular, frequent press and self-sufficient financing adequate to guarantee that the main political needs can be carried out. Of particular importance is the need to develop teamwork in the party leadership and in the organization as a whole, to maximize the strengths and skills of all.

Special efforts should be made to create the conditions enabling all party members to participate fully in the life of the Fourth International. This can be facilitated through collaborative efforts to publish a Spanish-language journal and to publish the international discussion bulletins in Spanish.

Continual political experience and theoretical education is necessary to develop a membership capable of thinking for itself and acting self-confidently in the class struggle. Conscious attention must be paid to the development of workers, women, and comrades of nationally oppressed peoples as rounded party leaders. A fully democratic internal party life must be guaranteed.

Strong organizational structures and norms such as the above are especially important because our forces in Latin America are often compelled to adjust their functioning to conditions of political instability, including extreme repression in



some cases. While it is a major leadership responsibility to educate the members so that they can be prepared for the possibility of functioning under conditions of repression, the central aim must always be

that of seeking maximum opportunities to function as publicly as possible.

Choosing the most appropriate political tasks to concentrate on, increasing our

capacities to participate in the class struggle, and developing strong organizational norms are three mutually interrelated aspects of party building, each of which will aid the others.

# Resolution on Women's Liberation



Susan Ellis/Mittent

United Auto Workers contingent at July 1978 march for equal rights for women in Washington, D.C.

# Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation

The basic Marxist positions on women's oppression are part of the programmatic foundations of the Fourth International. But this is the first full resolution on women's liberation adopted by the international. Its purpose is to set down our basic analysis of the character of women's op-

pression, and the place the struggle against that oppression occupies in our perspectives for all three sectors of the world revolution: the advanced capitalist countries, the colonial and semicolonial world, the workers states.

ment of the new rise of the world revolution.

2. This radicalization of women is unprecedented in the depth of the economic, social, and political ferment it expresses and in its implications for the struggle against capitalist oppression and exploitation.

In country after country, growing numbers of women are taking part in large-scale campaigns against reactionary abortion and contraception statutes, oppressive marriage laws, inadequate child-care facilities, and legal restrictions on equality. They are exposing and resisting the ways in which sexism is expressed in all spheres—from politics, employment, and education to the most intimate aspects

## I. The Character of Women's Oppression

### The New Rise of Women's Struggles

1. Since the late 1960s a growing revolt by women against their oppression as a sex has emerged. Throughout the world, millions of women, especially young women—students, working women, housewives—are beginning to challenge some of the most fundamental features of their centuries-old oppression.

The first country in which this radicalization of women appeared as a mass phenomenon was the United States. It was announced by the blossoming of thousands of women's liberation groups and in the mobilization of tens of thousands of women in the August 26, 1970, demonstrations commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the victorious conclusion of the American women's suffrage struggle.

But the new wave of struggles by women in North America was not an exceptional and isolated development, as the emergence of the women's liberation movement throughout the advanced capitalist countries soon demonstrated.

The new women's liberation movement came on the historical scene as part of a more general upsurge of the working class and all exploited and oppressed sectors of the world population. This upsurge has taken many forms, from economic strikes, to struggles against national oppression, to student demonstrations, to demands for

environmental protection, to an international movement against the imperialist war in Vietnam. Although the women's movement began among students and professional women, the demands it raised, combined with the growing contradictions within the capitalist system, began to mobilize much broader layers. It began to affect the consciousness, expectations, and actions of significant sections of the working class, male and female.

In many countries the new rise of women's struggles preceded any widespread changes in the combativity of organized labor. In others, such as Spain, it was intertwined with the explosive rise of struggles by the working class on every front. But in virtually every case, the movement rose outside of, and independent from, the existing mass organizations of the working class, which were then obliged to respond to this new phenomenon. The development of the women's movement has thus become an important factor in the political and ideological battle to weaken the hold of the bourgeoisie, and its agents within the working class.

The swift growth of the women's liberation movement, and the role it has played in the deepening class struggle, both internationally and in specific countries, confirm that the fight for women's liberation must be regarded as a fundamental compo-

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*This resolution was submitted by the United Secretariat. The vote of delegates and fraternal observers was: 100 for, 0.5 against, 6 abstentions, 6.5 not voting.*

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of daily life, including the weight of domestic drudgery and the violence and intimidation that women are subjected to in the home and on the street.

Women are raising demands that challenge the specific forms their oppression takes under capitalism today, and are calling into question the deep-rooted traditional division of labor between men and women, from the home to the factory. More and more they are demanding affirmative action to open the doors previously closed

to women in all arenas, and overcome the legacy of centuries of institutionalized discrimination.

They are insisting upon the right to participate with complete equality in all forms of social, economic and cultural activity—equal education, equal access to jobs, equal pay for equal work.

In order to make this equality possible, women are searching for ways to end their domestic servitude. They are demanding that women's household chores be socialized and no longer organized as "women's work." The most conscious recognize that society, as opposed to the individual family unit, should take responsibility for the young, the old, and the sick.

At the very center of the women's liberation movement has been the fight to decriminalize abortion and make it available to all women. The right to control their own bodies, to *choose* whether to bear children, when, and how many, is recognized by millions of women as an elementary precondition for their liberation.

Such demands go to the very heart of the specific oppression of women exercised through the family and strike at the pillars of class society. They indicate the degree to which the struggle for women's liberation is a fight to transform all human social relations and place them on a new and higher plane.

3. The fact that the women's liberation movement began to emerge as an international phenomenon even prior to the exacerbation of capitalism's worldwide economic contradictions in the mid-1970s only serves to underscore the deep roots of this rebellion. It is one of the clearest symptoms of the depth of the social crisis of the bourgeois order today.

These struggles illustrate the degree to which the outmoded capitalist relations and institutions generate deepening contradictions in every sector of society and precipitate new expressions of the class struggle. The death agony of capitalism brings new layers into direct conflict with the fundamental needs and prerogatives of the bourgeoisie, bringing forth new allies, and strengthening the working class in its struggle to overthrow the capitalist system. The development of the struggle by women against their oppression has already begun to deprive the ruling class of one of the principal weapons it has long used to divide and weaken the exploited and oppressed.

4. Women's oppression has been an essential feature of class society throughout the ages. But the practical tasks of uprooting its causes, as well as combating its effects, could not be posed on a mass scale before the era of the transition from capitalism to socialism. The fight for women's liberation is inseparable from the workers' struggle to abolish capitalism. It constitutes an integral part of the socialist revolution and the communist perspective of a classless society.

The replacement of the patriarchal fam-

ily system rooted in private property by a superior organization of human relations is a prime objective of the socialist revolution. This process will accelerate and deepen as the material and ideological foundations of the new communist order are brought into being.

The development of the women's liberation movement today advances the class struggle, strengthens its forces, and enhances the prospects for socialism.

5. Women can achieve their liberation only through the victory of the world socialist revolution. This goal can be realized only by mobilizing and organizing masses of women as a powerful component of the class struggle. Therein lies the objective revolutionary dynamic of the struggle for women's liberation and the fundamental reason why the Fourth International must concern itself with, and help to provide revolutionary leadership for, women struggling to achieve their liberation.

#### Origin and Nature of Women's Oppression

1. The oppression of women is not determined by their biology, as many contend. Its origins are economic and social in character. Throughout the evolution of pre-class and class society, women's childbearing function has always been the same. But their social status has not always been that of a degraded domestic servant, subject to man's control and command.

2. Before the development of class society, during the historical period that Marxists have traditionally referred to as primitive communism (subsistence societies), social production was organized communally and its product shared equally. There was therefore no exploitation or oppression of one group or sex by another because no material basis for such social relations existed. Both sexes participated in social production, helping to assure the sustenance and survival of all. The social status of both women and men reflected the indispensable roles that each of them played in this productive process.

3. The origin of women's oppression is intertwined with the transition from pre-class to class society. The exact process by which this complex transition took place is a continuing subject of research and discussion even among those who subscribe to a materialist historical view. However, the fundamental lines along which women's oppression emerged are clear. The change in women's status developed along with the growing productivity of human labor based on agriculture, the domestication of animals, and stock raising; the rise of new divisions of labor, craftsmanship, and commerce; the private appropriation of an increasing social surplus; and the development of the possibility for some humans to prosper from the exploitation of the labor of others.

In these specific socioeconomic conditions, as the exploitation of human beings became profitable for a privileged few,

women, because of their biological role in production, became valuable property. Like slaves and cattle, they were a source of wealth. They alone could produce new human beings whose labor power could be exploited. Thus the purchase of women by men, along with all rights to their future offspring, arose as one of the economic and social institutions of the new order based on private property. Women's primary social role was increasingly defined as domestic servant and child-bearer.

Along with the private accumulation of wealth, the patriarchal family developed as the institution by which responsibility for the unproductive members of society—especially the young—was transferred from society as a whole to an identifiable individual or small group of individuals. It was the primary socioeconomic institution for perpetuating from one generation to the next the class divisions of society—divisions between those who possessed property and lived off the wealth produced by the labor of others, and those who, owning no property, had to work for others to live. The destruction of the egalitarian and communal traditions and structures of primitive communism was essential for the rise of an exploiting class and its accelerated private accumulation of wealth.

This was the origin of the patriarchal family. In fact, the word family itself, which is still used in the Latin-based languages today, comes from the original Latin *famulus*, which means household slave, and *familia*, the totality of slaves belonging to one man.

Women ceased to have an independent place in social production. Their productive role was determined by the family to which they belonged, by the man to whom they were subordinate. This economic dependence determined the second-class social status of women, on which the cohesiveness and continuity of the patriarchal family has always depended. If women could simply take their children and leave, without suffering any economic or social hardship, the patriarchal family would not have survived through the millennia.

The patriarchal family and the subjugation of women thus came into existence along with the other institutions of emerging class society in order to buttress nascent class divisions and perpetuate the private accumulation of wealth. The state, with its police and armies, laws and courts, enforced this relationship. Ruling-class ideology, including religion, arose on this basis and played a vital role in justifying the degradation of the female sex.

Women, it was said, were physically and mentally inferior to men and therefore were "naturally" or biologically the second sex. While the subjugation of women has always had different consequences for women of distinct classes, all women regardless of class were and are oppressed as part of the female sex.

4. The family system is the fundamental institution of class society that determines

and maintains the specific character of the oppression of the female sex.

Throughout the history of class society, the family system has proved its value as an institution of class rule. The form of the family has evolved and adapted itself to the changing needs of the ruling classes as the modes of production and forms of private property have gone through different stages of development. The family system under classical slavery was different from the family system during feudalism (there was no real slave family). Both were quite different from what is often called the urban "nuclear family" of today.

Moreover, the family system simultaneously fulfills different social and economic requirements in reference to classes with different productive roles and property rights whose interests are diametrically opposed. For example, the "family" of the serf and the "family" of the nobleman were quite different socioeconomic formations. However, they were both part of the family system, an institution of class rule that has played an indispensable role at each stage in the history of class society.

In class society the family is the only place most people can turn to try to satisfy some basic human needs, such as love and companionship. However poorly the family may meet these needs for many, there is no real alternative as long as private property exists. The disintegration of the family under capitalism brings with it much misery and suffering precisely because no superior framework for human relations can yet emerge.

But providing for affection and companionship is not what defines the nature of the family system. It is an economic and social institution whose functions can be summarized as follows:

a. The family is the basic mechanism through which the ruling classes abrogate social responsibility for the economic well-being of those whose labor power they exploit—the masses of humanity. The ruling class tries, to the degree possible, to force each family to be responsible for its own, thus institutionalizing the unequal distribution of income, status and wealth.

b. The family system provides the means for passing on property ownership from one generation to the next. It is the basic social mechanism for perpetuating the division of society into classes.

c. For the ruling class, the family system provides the most inexpensive and ideologically acceptable mechanism for reproducing human labor. Making the family responsible for care of the young means that the portion of society's accumulated wealth—appropriated as private property—that is utilized to assure reproduction of the laboring classes is minimized. Furthermore, the fact that each family is an atomized unit, fighting to assure the survival of its own, hinders the most exploited and oppressed from uniting in common action.

d. The family system enforces a social

division of labor in which women are fundamentally defined by their childbearing role and assigned tasks immediately associated with this reproductive function: care of the other family members. Thus the family institution rests on and reinforces a social division of labor involving the domestic subjugation and economic dependence of women.

e. The family system is a repressive and conservatizing institution that reproduces within itself the hierarchical, authoritarian relationships necessary to the maintenance of class society as a whole. It fosters the possessive, competitive, and aggressive attitudes necessary to the perpetuation of class divisions.

It molds the behavior and character structure of children from infancy through adolescence. It trains, disciplines, and polices them, teaching submission to established authority. It then curbs rebellious, nonconformist impulses. It represses and distorts all sexuality, forcing it into socially acceptable channels of male and female sexual activity for reproductive purposes and socioeconomic roles. It inculcates all the social values and behavioral norms that individuals must acquire in order to survive in class society and submit to its domination. It distorts all human relationships by imposing on them the framework of economic compulsion, personal dependence, and sexual repression.

5. Under capitalism, as in previous historical epochs, the family has evolved. But the family system continues to be an indispensable institution of class rule, fulfilling all the economic and social functions outlined.

Among the bourgeoisie, the family provides for the transmission of private property from generation to generation. Marriages often assure profitable alliances or mergers of large blocs of capital, especially in the early stages of capital accumulation.

Among the classical petty bourgeoisie, such as farmers, craftsmen, or small shopkeepers, the family is also a unit of production based on the labor of family members.

For the working class, while the family provides some degree of mutual protection for its own members, in the most basic sense it is an alien class institution, one that is imposed on the working class, and serves the economic interests of the bourgeoisie not the workers. Yet working people are indoctrinated from childhood to regard it (like wage labor, private property and the state) as the most natural and imperishable of human relations.

a. With the rise of capitalism and the growth of the working class, the family unit among the workers ceases to be a petty-bourgeois unit of production although it remains the basic unit through which consumption and reproduction of labor power are organized. Each member of the family sells his or her labor power individually on the labor market. The basic economic bond that previously held together the family of the exploited and

oppressed—i.e., the fact that they had to work together cooperatively in order to survive—begins to dissolve. As women are drawn into the labor market they achieve some degree of economic independence for the first time since the rise of class society. This begins to undermine the acceptance by women of their domestic subjugation. As a result, the family system is undermined.

b. Thus there is a contradiction between the increasing integration of women in the labor market and the survival of the family. As women achieve greater economic independence and more equality, the family institution begins to disintegrate. But the family system is an indispensable pillar of class rule. It must be preserved if capitalism is to survive.

c. The growing number of women in the labor market creates a deep contradiction for the capitalist class, especially during periods of accelerated expansion. They must employ more women to profit from their superexploitation. Yet the employment of women cuts across their ability to carry out the basic unpaid domestic labor of child-rearing for which women are responsible. So the state must begin to buttress the family, helping to assure and subsidize some of the economic and social functions it used to fulfill, such as education, child care, etc.

But such social services are more costly than the unpaid domestic labor of women. They absorb some of the surplus value that would otherwise be appropriated by the owners of capital. They cut into profits. Moreover, social programs of this kind foster the idea that society, not the family, should be responsible for the welfare of its nonproductive members. They raise the social expectations of the working class.

d. Unpaid work by women in the home—cooking, cleaning, washing, caring for children—plays a specific role under capitalism. This household work is a necessary element in the reproduction of labor power sold to the capitalists (either a woman's own labor power, her husband's, or her children's, or that of any other member of the family).

Other things being equal, if women did not perform unpaid labor inside the families of the working class, the general wage level would have to rise. Real wages would have to be high enough to purchase the goods and services which are now produced within the family. (Of course, the general standard of living necessary for the reproduction of labor power is a historically determined given at any time in any country. It cannot be drastically reduced without a crushing defeat of the working class.) Any general decrease of unpaid domestic labor by women would thus cut into total profits, changing the proportion between profits and wages in favor of the proletariat.

However useful it may be, a woman's household work produces no commodities for the market and thus produces no value



or surplus value. Nor does it directly enter into the process of capitalist exploitation. In value terms, unpaid domestic work in the family affects the *rate* of surplus value. Indirectly, it increases the total mass of social surplus value. This holds true whether such labor is performed by women, or shared by men.

It is the capitalist class, not men in general, and certainly not male wage earners, which profits from women's unpaid labor in the household. This "exploitation" of the family of the toilers, the burden of which falls overwhelmingly on women, can be eradicated only by overthrowing capitalism and socializing domestic chores in the process of socialist reconstruction.

e. The indispensable role of the family and the dilemma that the growing employment of women creates for the ruling class becomes clearest in periods of economic crisis. The rulers must accomplish two goals.

They must drive a significant number of women from the work force to reestablish the reserve labor pool and lower wage levels.

They must cut the growing costs of social services provided by the state and transfer the economic burden and responsibility for these services back onto the individual family of the worker.

In order to accomplish both of these objectives, they must launch an ideological offensive against the very concept of women's equality and independence, and reinforce the responsibility of the individual family for its own children, its elderly, its sick. They must reinforce the image of the family as the only "natural" form of human relations, and convince women who have begun to rebel against their subordinate status that true happiness comes only through fulfilling their "natural" and primary role as wife-mother-housekeeper. To their dismay, the capitalists are now discovering that despite appeals to austerity and dire warnings of crisis, the more thoroughly women are integrated into the work force, the more difficult it is to push sufficient numbers back into the home.

f. In the early stages of industrialization the unregulated, unbridled, brutal exploitation of women and children often goes so far as to seriously erode the family structure in the working class and threaten its usefulness as a system for organizing, controlling, and reproducing the work force.

This was the trend that Marx and Engels drew attention to in nineteenth-century England. They predicted the rapid disappearance of the family in the working class. They were correct in their basic insight and understanding of the role of the family in capitalist society, but they misestimated the latent capacity of capitalism to slow down the pace of development of its inherent contradictions. They underestimated the ability of the ruling

class to step in to regulate the employment of women and children and shore up the family in order to preserve the capitalist system itself. Under strong pressure from the labor movement to ameliorate the brutal exploitation of women and children the state intervened in the long-term interests of the capitalist class—even though this cut across the aim of individual capitalists to squeeze every drop of blood out of each worker for sixteen hours a day and let them die at thirty.

g. Capitalist politicians responsible for shaping policies to protect and defend the interests of the ruling class are extremely conscious of the indispensable economic, social, and political role of the family and the need to maintain it as the basic social nucleus under capitalism. "Defense of the family" is not only some peculiar demagogic shibboleth of the ultraright. Maintenance of the family system is the basic political policy of every capitalist state, dictated by the social and economic needs of capitalism itself.

6. Under capitalism, the family system also provides the mechanism for the super-exploitation of women as wage workers.

a. It provides capitalism with an exceptionally flexible reservoir of labor power that can be drawn into the labor force or sent back into the home with fewer social consequences than any other component of the reserve army of labor.

Because the entire ideological superstructure reinforces the fiction that women's place is in the home, high unemployment rates for women cause relatively less social protest. After all, it is said, women work only to supplement an already existing source of income for the family. When they are unemployed, they are occupied with their household chores, and are not so obviously "out of work." The anger and resentment they feel is often dissipated as a serious social threat by the general isolation and atomization of women in separate, individual households. Thus in any period of economic crisis, the austerity measures of the ruling class always include attacks on women's right to work, including increased pressure on women to accept part-time employment, cutbacks in unemployment benefits for "housewives," and the reduction of social services such as child-care facilities.

b. Because women's "natural" place is supposed to be in the home, capitalism has a widely accepted rationalization for perpetuating:

1) the employment of women in low-paying, unskilled jobs. "They aren't worth training because they'll only get pregnant or married and quit."

2) unequal pay rates and low pay. "They're only working to buy gadgets and luxuries anyway."

3) deep divisions within the working class itself. "She's taking a job a man should have."

4) the fact that women workers are not proportionally integrated in the trade

unions and other organizations of the working class. "She shouldn't be running around going to meetings. She should be home taking care of the kids."

c. Since all wage structures are built from the bottom up, this superexploitation of women as a reserve work force plays an irreplaceable role in holding down men's wages as well.

d. The subjugation of women within the family system provides the economic, social, and ideological foundations that make their superexploitation possible. Women workers are exploited not only as wage labor but also as a pariah labor pool defined by sex.

7. Because the oppression of women is historically intertwined with the division of society into classes and with the role of the family as the basic unit of class society, this oppression can only be eradicated with the abolition of private ownership of the means of production. Today it is these class relations of production—not the productive capacities of humanity—which constitute the obstacle to transferring to society as a whole the social and economic functions borne under capitalism by the individual family.

8. The materialist analysis of the historical origin and economic roots of women's oppression is essential to developing a program and perspective capable of winning women's liberation. To reject this scientific explanation inevitably leads to one of two errors:

a. One error, made by many who claim to follow the Marxist method, is to deny, or at least downplay, the oppression of women as a sex throughout the entire history of class society. They see the oppression of women purely and simply as an aspect of the exploitation of the working class. This view gives weight and importance to struggles by women only in their capacity as wage workers on the job. It says women will be liberated, in passing, by the socialist revolution, so there is no special need for them to organize as women fighting for their own demands.

In rejecting the need for women to organize against their oppression, they only reinforce divisions within the working class, and retard the development of class consciousness among women who begin to rebel against their subordinate status.

b. A symmetrical error is made by those who argue that male domination of women existed before class society began to emerge. This was concretized, they hold, through a sexual division of labor. Thus, patriarchal oppression must be explained by reasons other than the development of private property and class society. They see patriarchy as a set of oppressive relations parallel to but independent of class relations.

Those who have developed this analysis in a systematic way usually isolate the fact of women's role in reproduction and concentrate on it alone. They largely ignore the primacy of cooperative labor, the

essence of human society, and place little weight on women's place in the process of production at each historical stage. Some even go so far as to theorize a timeless patriarchal mode of reproduction with male control over the means of reproduction (women). They often put forward psychoanalytical explanations which readily fall into ahistorical idealism, rooting oppression in biological and/or psychological drives torn out of the materialist framework of social relations.

This current, sometimes organized as "radical feminists," contains both conscious anti-Marxists and others who consider themselves to be making a "feminist redefinition of Marxism." But the view that women's oppression is parallel to, not rooted in, the emergence and development of class exploitation leads the most consistent to pose the need for a political party of women based on a "feminist" program that pretends to be independent of the class struggle. They are hostile to and reject the need for women and men to organize together on the basis of a revolutionary working-class program to end both class exploitation and sexual oppression. They see little need for alliances in struggle with others who are oppressed and exploited.

Both of these one-sided approaches deny the revolutionary dynamic of the struggle for women's liberation as a form of the class struggle. Both fail to recognize that the struggle for women's liberation, to be successful, must go beyond the bounds of capitalist property relations. Both reject the implications this fact has for the working class and its revolutionary Marxist leadership.

#### Roots of the New Radicalization of Women

1. The women's liberation movement of today stands on the shoulders of the earlier struggles by women at the turn of the century.

With the consolidation of industrial capitalism throughout the nineteenth century, increasing numbers of women were integrated into the labor market. The gap between the social and legal status of women inherited from feudalism and their new economic status as wage workers selling their labor power in the market produced glaring contradictions. For women of the ruling class, too, capitalism opened the door to economic independence. Out of these contradictions arose the first wave of women's struggles aimed at winning full legal equality with men.

Among those fighting for women's rights were different political currents. Many of the suffragist leaders were women who believed the vote should be won by showing the ruling class that they were loyal defenders of the capitalist system. Some linked the suffragist struggle to support for imperialism in World War I and often opposed the right to vote for propertyless men and women, immigrants, Blacks.

But there was also a strong current of socialist women in a number of countries who saw the fight for women's rights as part of the working-class struggle and mobilized support from working-class women and men on that basis. They fought for the right to vote and played a decisive role in the suffrage struggle in countries like the United States. They also raised and fought for other demands such as equal pay and contraception services.

Even some of the semicolonial countries such as Chile, Argentina, and Mexico saw the emergence of feminist groups during this same period.

Through struggle the women of the most advanced capitalist countries won, to varying degrees, several important democratic rights: the right to higher education, the right to engage in trades and professions, the right to receive and dispose of their own wages (which had been considered the right of the husband or father), the right to own property, the right to divorce, the right to participate in political organizations. In several countries this first upsurge culminated in mass struggles for the right to vote.

2. Women's suffrage, following or sometimes accompanying universal male suffrage, was an important objective gain for the working class. It reflected, and in turn helped advance, the changing social status of women. For the first time in class society, women were legally considered citizens fit to participate in public affairs, with the right to a voice on major political questions, not just private household matters.

Even though the underlying cause of the subordinate status of women lies in the very foundations of class society itself and women's special role within the family, not in the formal denial of equality under the law, the extension of democratic rights to women gave them greater latitude for action and helped later generations see that the sources of women's oppression lay deeper.

3. The roots of the new radicalization of women are to be found in the economic and social changes of the post-World War II years, which have effected deepening contradictions in the capitalist economy, in the status of women, and in the patriarchal family system. To varying degrees the same factors were at work in every country that remained within the world capitalist market. But it is not surprising that the resurgence of the women's movement today first came about in the most advanced capitalist countries—such as the United States, Canada, and Britain—where these changes and contradictions had developed the furthest.

a. Advances in medical science and technology in the field of birth control and abortion have created the means by which masses of women can have greater control over their reproductive functions. Control by women over their own bodies is a

precondition for women's liberation.

While such medical techniques are more widely available, reactionary laws, reinforced by bourgeois customs, religious bigotry, and the entire ideological superstructure of class society, often stand in the way of women exercising control over their own reproductive functions. Financial, legal, psychological, and "moral" barriers are fabricated to try to prevent women from demanding the right to choose whether and when to bear children. In addition, the limits placed on research due to capitalist profit considerations and sexist disregard for the lives of women have meant continuing health hazards for women using the most convenient methods of birth control.

This contradiction between what is possible and what actually exists affects the lives of all women. It has given rise to the powerful abortion rights struggles, which have been at the center of the women's movement on an international scale.

b. The prolonged boom conditions of the postwar expansion significantly increased the percentage of women in the labor force.

To take the United States as an example, in 1950, 33.9 percent of all women 18 to 64 years of age were in the labor force. By 1975 this had risen to 54 percent. Between 1960 and 1975, nearly two-thirds of all new jobs created were taken by women. Working women accounted for 29.1 percent of the total labor force in 1950; 43 percent by 1978.

Equally important, the percentage of working women with children increased dramatically, as did the percentage of working women who were heads of households.

In Spain, three times as many women are working today as in 1930.

In Britain, between 1881 and 1951 the proportion of women in employment was fairly stable, remaining at about 25 to 27 percent. By 1965, 34 percent of all women between 16 and 64 were in full-time employment, 17.9 percent were in part-time employment, and a total of 54.3 percent came within the category of "economically active." Nearly two-thirds of the working women were married.

Only some countries that still had a high percentage of agricultural workers after the Second World War have experienced a decline in female employment over the postwar period. This was due to the fact that with the migration to the cities, many women were not reintegrated into the so-called active population. In Italy, for example, where this factor was combined with the development of massive unemployment in small enterprises of the "typically female" sector, there has been a decline in the female percentage of the work force.

In extremely depressed regions such as southern Italy and northern Portugal, this retrogression has actually been coupled with the resurgence of cottage industry on

a significant scale. Women are induced to do piecework on their sewing machines at home, thus saving the bosses the costs of factory maintenance, health and social security payments, strikes and other "problems" caused by an organized work force.

As the influx of women into the labor force has taken place, there has been no substantial change in the degree of wage discrimination against women. In many countries this differential between the sexes has actually widened.

This is primarily because the increased employment of women has not been spread evenly over all job categories. In nearly all countries women represent from 70 to 90 percent of the work force employed in textiles, shoes, ready-to-wear clothing, tobacco, and other light industry—that is, sectors in which wages are lowest. Women also account for 70 percent or more of people employed in the service sector, with the greatest majority of women occupying the least remunerative positions: secretaries, file clerks, health workers, teachers in primary schools, keypunch operators.

Discrimination in sectors of employment—exacerbated by unequal pay for the same work in many cases—is the fundamental reason why, even in those countries where the labor movement has fought the hardest on this question, the average wage for women barely exceeds 75 percent of the average wage for men. This also explains why the differential may even widen with the massive entry of women into the lowest-paid sectors of the economy. This is the case in the United States, where the median income of full-time, year-round women workers was 64 percent of that of men in 1955 but dropped to 59 percent in 1977.

Despite their growing place in the work force, women are still forced to assume the majority, if not the totality, of domestic tasks in addition to their wage labor. As a consequence, they often quit working temporarily when they have children, especially when they are faced with many hours of forced overtime, and then have difficulty finding new jobs later. If they continue to work they are obliged to stay home when a child is sick.

This has led to a significant increase in part-time work by women—either because they cannot find full-time employment, or because they cannot otherwise cope with their domestic chores. But part-time work invariably brings with it lower wages, less job security, few social security benefits, and less likelihood of unionization.

The growing weight of women in the work force has had a strong impact on the attitudes of their male fellow workers. This is especially true where women have begun to fight their way into jobs in basic industry from which women were previously excluded.

But women workers still face many forms of discrimination and sexist abuse, promoted, organized and maintained by

the bosses. Their fellow workers are often not aware of them, and sometimes express the same backward attitudes. And the labor bureaucracy blocks the use of union power to overcome the special obstacles women face—such as the refusal to give paid time off for maternity leaves, health hazards that are doubly dangerous for pregnant women, and harassment by foremen and supervisors who use their control over jobs to try to pressure women into sexual relations.

c. The rise in the average educational level of women has further heightened the contradictions. As labor productivity increases and the general cultural level of the working class rises, more women finish their years of secondary education. Women are also accepted into institutions of higher education on a qualitatively larger scale than ever before.

Yet, as the employment statistics indicate, the percentage of women holding jobs commensurate with their educational level has not kept pace. In all areas of the job market, from industry to the professions, women with higher educational qualifications are usually bypassed by men with less education. Moreover, throughout primary and secondary school, girls continue to be pushed—through required courses of study or through more indirect pressures—into what are considered women's jobs and roles.

As they receive more education and as social struggles raise their individual expectations, the stifling and mind-deadening drudgery of household chores and the constrictions of family life become increasingly unbearable. Thus the heightened educational level of women, combined with an intensification of the class struggle, has deepened the contradiction between women's demonstrated abilities and broadened aspirations, and their actual social and economic status.

d. The functions of the family unit in advanced capitalist society have continually contracted. It has become less and less a unit of petty production—either agricultural or domestic (canning, weaving, sewing, baking, etc.). The urban nuclear family of today has come a long way from the productive farm family of previous centuries. At the same time, in their search for profits, consumer-oriented capitalist industry and advertising seek to maximize the atomization and duplication of domestic work in order to sell each household its own washer, dryer, dishwasher, vacuum cleaner, etc.

As the standard of living rises, the average number of children per family declines sharply. Industrially prepared foods and other conveniences become increasingly available. Yet, in spite of the technological advances, surveys in a number of imperialist countries have shown that women who have more than one child and a full-time job must put in 80 to 100 hours of work per week—more hours than similar surveys conducted in 1926

and 1952 revealed. While appliances have eased certain domestic tasks, the shrinking size of the average family unit has meant that women are less able to call on grandparents, aunts, or sisters to help.

With all these changes, the objective basis for confining women to the home becomes less and less compelling. Yet the needs of the ruling class dictate that the family system be preserved. Bourgeois ideology and social conditioning continue to reinforce the reactionary fiction that a woman's identity and fulfillment must come from her role as wife-mother-housekeeper. The contradiction between reality and myth becomes increasingly obvious and intolerable to growing numbers of women.

This state of affairs is frequently referred to as "the crisis of the family," which is expressed in the soaring divorce rates, increased numbers of runaway children and rising domestic violence.

4. Greater democratic rights and broader social opportunities have not "satisfied" women, or inclined them to a passive acceptance of their inferior social status and economic dependence. On the contrary, they have stimulated new struggles and more far-reaching demands.

It was generally the young, college-educated women, those who enjoyed a relatively greater freedom of choice, and those most affected by the youth radicalization of the 1960s, who first articulated the grievances of women in an organized and outspoken way. This led some who consider themselves Marxists to conclude that women's liberation is basically a middle-class or bourgeois protest movement that has no serious interest for revolutionists or the masses of working-class women. They could not be more wrong.

The initial development of the women's liberation movement served only to emphasize the depth and scope of women's oppression. Even those with many advantages in terms of education and other opportunities were and continue to be propelled into action. The most oppressed and exploited are not necessarily the first to articulate their discontent.

5. Contributing to the growth of the women's liberation movement in recent years, and increasing the involvement of working-class women, has been the drive to cut back social expenditures in most advanced capitalist countries. After the Second World War, in a context of heightened demands by the working class that more social services be provided by the state, the bourgeoisie, especially in Europe, was forced to expand housing developments, health services, and family allowance programs. Later, as the boom of the 1950s and 1960s generated a growing need for female labor power, facilities such as child-care centers and laundromats were extended in order to encourage women to seek employment.

Today, faced with deepening economic problems, the ruling class is slashing

social expenditures and trying to shift the burden back onto the individual family, with all the consequences that has for women. But resistance to being driven out of their newly acquired places in the work force, and broad female opposition to social cutbacks such as the closing of child-care centers, have created unexpectedly thorny problems for the rulers in many countries. Imbued with a growing feminist consciousness, women have been more combative and less willing than ever before to shoulder a disproportionate burden in the current economic crisis.

6. While the women's radicalization has an independent dynamic of its own, determined by the specific character of women's oppression and the objective changes that have been described, it is not isolated from the more general upsurge of the class struggle taking place today. It is not directly dependent on other social forces, subordinate to their leadership, or beholden to their initiative. At the same time, the women's movement has been and remains deeply interconnected with the rise of other social struggles, all of which have likewise affected the consciousness of the entire working class.

a. From the beginning, the new upsurge of women's struggles has been strongly affected by the international youth radicalization and the increased challenge to bourgeois values and institutions that accompanied it. Young people—both male and female—began to question religion; to

reject patriotism; to challenge authoritarian hierarchies from family, to school, to factory, to army; to reject the inevitability of a lifetime of alienated labor. Radicalized youth began to rebel against sexual repression and to challenge the traditional morality equating sex with reproduction. For women, this involved a challenge to the time-honored education of females to be sexually passive, sentimental, fearful, and timid. Masses of youth, including young women, became more conscious of their sexual misery and tried to search for more fulfilling types of personal relationships.

b. One of the factors contributing to the international youth radicalization has been the role played by the liberation struggles of oppressed nations and nationalities, both in the colonial world and in the advanced capitalist countries. Moreover, these have had a powerful impact on the consciousness concerning women's oppression in general. For example, the Black struggle in the United States played a crucial role in bringing about a widespread awareness and rejection of racist stereotypes. The obvious similarities between racist attitudes and sexist stereotypes of women as inferior, emotional, dependent, dumb-but-happy creatures produced an increasing sensitivity to and rejection of such caricatures.

As the feminist movement has developed in the advanced capitalist countries, women of the oppressed nationalities have begun to play an increasingly prominent

role. As oppressed nationalities, as women, and frequently as superexploited workers, these women suffer a double and often triple oppression. Their objective place in society means they are in a position to play a strategically important role in the working class and among its allies.

But there has generally been a lag in the pace with which women of oppressed nationalities have become conscious of their specific oppression as women. There are several reasons for this. For many, the depth of their national oppression initially overshadows their oppression as women. Many radical nationalist movements have refused to take up the demands of women, calling them divisive to the struggle for national liberation. The organized women's movement has often failed in its obligation to address itself to the needs of the most oppressed and exploited layers of women and understand the special difficulties they face. In addition, the hold of the family is often particularly strong among women of the oppressed nationalities, since the family sometimes seems to provide a partial buffer against the devastating pressures of racism and cultural annihilation.

Nevertheless, once the radicalization begins, experience has already shown it takes on an explosive character, propelling women of oppressed nationalities into the leadership of many social and political struggles, including struggles on the job, in the unions, on campuses and in the



South African women protest racist internal passport system.

communities, as well as the feminist movement. They rapidly come to understand that the struggle against their oppression as women does not weaken but strengthens the struggle against their national oppression.

c. Contributing to the rise of the women's movement has been the crisis of the traditional organized religions, especially the Catholic church. The weakening hold of the church (accompanied by a growth in occultism and mysticism) is a dramatic manifestation of the ideological crisis of bourgeois society. All organized religion, which is part of the superstructure of class society, is predicated on and reinforces the notion that women are inferior, if not the very incarnation of evil and animality. Christianity and Judaism, which mark the cultures of the advanced capitalist countries, have always upheld the inequality of women and denied them the right to separate sexuality from reproduction.

In countries where the Catholic church has had a particularly strong hold, it is often radicalizing women who are spearheading the challenge to the power and ideological hold of the church, as shown in the demonstrations of tens of thousands for the right to abortion in Italy, or the demonstrations in 1976 against the anti-adultery laws in Spain.

In Israel, too, the fight for abortion rights shook the stability of the Begin government.

In many oppressed nations such as Québec, Ireland, and Euzkadi (the Basque country), and among the Chicano people, the repressive ideology of the Catholic church has combined in a particularly oppressive way with the myth of the "woman-mother," the center of the family, as the only pole of social, emotional, and political stability, the only refuge from the ravages of national oppression. In Québec for years this amalgam was expressed in the concept of the "revenge of the cradle," suggesting the Québécois women must save the nation from assimilation by having many children.

d. The lesbian-feminist movement emerged as an interrelated but distinct aspect of the radicalization of women.

Lesbians have organized as a component of the gay rights movement, generally finding it necessary to fight within the gay movement for their specific demands as *gay women* to be recognized. But lesbians are also oppressed as women. Many radicalized as women first and felt the discrimination they suffered because of their sexual orientation was only one element of the social and economic limitations women face in trying to determine the course of their lives. Thus many lesbians were in the forefront of the feminist movement from the very beginning. They have been part of every political current within the women's liberation movement, from lesbian-separatists to revolutionary

Marxists, and they have helped to make the entire movement more conscious of the specific ways in which gay women are oppressed.

Because of the lesbian movement's insistence on the right of women to live independent of men, they often become the special target of attacks by reaction. From hate propaganda to violent physical assaults, the attacks on lesbians and the lesbian movement are really aimed against the women's movement as a whole. Attempts to divide the women's movement by lesbian-baiting must be rejected in a clear and uncompromising way if the struggle for women's liberation is to move forward.

e. In many of the advanced capitalist countries immigrant women workers have also played a special role. Not only are they superexploited as part of the work force. They are the victims of special discriminatory laws. As women, they often have no right to accompany their husbands to any given country unless they have been able to secure employment for themselves prior to immigrating. If they find work, they are often obliged to give it up to follow their husbands elsewhere. Government measures adopted in recent years to reduce the number of immigrant workers in many advanced capitalist countries have made these laws even more discriminatory.

In a country like Switzerland, where immigrant workers make up nearly 30 percent of the industrial work force, and in other European countries where immigrant women are a majority in some sectors such as the hospitals, immigrant women workers have played a decisive role in raising the political consciousness of the women's movement. They have helped lead struggles in industries that employ predominantly female workers. Even more importantly, they have helped stimulate discussion in the women's movement concerning the economic and social policies of the ruling class. Discriminatory laws in relationship to immigration in general; xenophobia and racism; the resulting divisions within the working class; the ways in which immigrant women are particularly affected by these divisions; the need for the trade unions and the women's movement to fight for the interests of the most superexploited layers; the problems faced by women who are isolated both in their own homes and by the hostile environment in which they live—all these are questions posed before the women's movement, helping to raise some of the most important aspects of a class-struggle perspective.

7. The fading of the postwar boom and the deepening economic, social, and political problems of imperialism on a world scale, highlighted by the 1974-75 international recession, led to an intensification of the attacks on women's rights on all levels. This did not lead to a decline in women's

struggles, or relegate them to the sidelines as more powerful social forces came to the fore. Far from diminishing as the struggles of the organized working class sharpened in recent years, feminist consciousness and struggles by women continue to spread and to become more deeply intertwined with the developing social consciousness and political combativity of working-class women and men. Women's resistance to the economic, political, and ideological offensive of the ruling class has been stiffened by the heightened feminist awareness. Their struggles have been a powerful motor force of social protest and political radicalization.

#### Responses From the Bourgeoisie and from Currents in the Workers Movement

1. Divisions rapidly appeared inside the capitalist class over how best to respond to the new rise of women's struggles in order to blunt their impact and deflect their radical thrust. After initial attempts to dismiss the women's movement with ridicule and scorn, however, the prevailing view within the ruling class has been to give lip service to the idea that women have at least some just grievances. There has been an attempt to appear concerned—by setting up some special government departments, commissions, or projects to catch women's attention, while working assiduously to integrate the leadership of the women's movement into the accepted patterns of class collaboration. In most countries, the ruling class was forced to make a few concessions that seemed least harmful economically and ideologically—and then steadily tried to take them back.

In each case the aim has been the same, whatever the tactics: to contain the nascent radicalization within the framework of minimal reforms of the capitalist system.

In many European countries, there have been moves to liberalize maternity benefits by extending leaves, raising the percentage of pay women receive while on leave, or by guaranteeing work after a maternity leave without pay. In other countries, governments have ostentatiously debated the justice of promises for equal pay laws, or liberalized divorce laws. In the United States both capitalist political parties have gone on record for passage of an equal rights amendment to the constitution while in practice they sabotage each attempt to muster enough votes to make it law.

But when it comes to social programs that would have immediate and significant economic impact—such as the expansion of child-care facilities—the gains have been virtually nonexistent.

The most serious gain extracted by the international women's movement in the decade since it arose has been the significant expansion of access to legal abortion. In more than twenty countries there has



been a marked liberalization of abortion laws.

In every country where women have made measurable progress toward establishing abortion as a right, it has rapidly become clear that this right is never secure under capitalism. Wherever women begin to fight for the right to control their own reproductive functions, the most reactionary defenders of the capitalist system have immediately mobilized to prevent that elementary precondition of women's liberation from being established. The right to choose is too great a challenge to the ideological underpinnings of women's oppression.

However, it is politically important to see clearly that far-right organizations such as "Laissez les vivre," "Oui à la vie," "Right to Life," and "Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child," which are linked to xenophobic, clerical, racist, or outright fascist currents, are nourished by official governmental policies. They function as fanatical protectors of the status quo, attempting to appeal to and mobilize the most backward prejudices that run deep in the working class and petty bourgeoisie, and they render a valuable service to the rulers. But without the backhanded—and sometimes open—encouragement of the dominant sectors of the ruling class, their role would be far less influential.

2. The emergence of the women's liberation movement has posed a profound challenge to all political currents claiming to represent the interests of the working class.

The Stalinists and Social Democrats especially were taken aback by the rapid development of a significant radicalization that did not look to them for leadership.

The responses given by the two mass reformist currents in the working class varied from one country to another depending on numerical strength, base in the working class and in the trade-union bureaucracies, and proximity to responsibility for the government of their own capitalist state. But in every case the reflexes of both Stalinists and Social Democrats have been determined by two sometimes conflicting objectives: their commitment to the basic institutions of class rule, including the family; and their need to maintain or strengthen their influence in the working class if they are to contain working-class struggles within the bounds of capitalist property relations.

The rise of the women's liberation movement forced both the Stalinists and Social Democrats to adapt to the changing political situation. The year 1975 in particular gave rise to a flurry of position-taking, partly in response to the initiatives of the bourgeoisie in the context of International Women's Year.

3. Under pressure from part of their own rank and file, Social Democratic parties have generally responded to the rise of the feminist movement more rapidly than the

Communist parties. Even though the SPs officially have been reluctant to recognize the existence of the independent women's movement, individual women members of the SPs have often participated actively in the new organizations that have emerged.

The formal positions taken by the SPs have frequently been more progressive than those of the Stalinist parties, especially in regard to abortion as a woman's right. Wherever Socialist parties have had the opportunity to polish up their image at low cost by coming out in favor of liberalized abortion laws, they have not hesitated to do so. Kreisky in Austria and Brandt in Germany initially took such a tack. Faced with a growing women's movement in Australia, the Australian Labor Party attempted to win political support by granting subsidies to numerous small projects initiated by the movement, such as women's health centers and refuges. While these moves cost the Social Democrats little in economic terms, they served to temporarily draw the attention of women away from the inadequacy of their overall policies (on abortion and child care, for example) and helped the ALP to project itself as a "pro-woman" government.

But when confronted with the first signs of reaction from sectors of the bourgeoisie, the Social Democratic parties have been quick to retreat.

While the Labour Party in Britain was on record in favor of the right to abortion on request, the party remained silent about the reactionary proposals before parliament aimed at rolling back abortion rights to their pre-1967 status. Initially introduced in 1975 by a Labour MP, the new proposals would restrict the period of time in which women are permitted to obtain abortions, limit access to abortions for immigrant women, and inflict stiff penalties for all violations of the law.

Only in 1977, after a massive campaign by the independent women's movement, organized through the National Abortion Campaign (NAC), and under the pressure of its own ranks, did the Labour Party conference adopt a resolution defending the 1967 law.

The Social Democrats have proved especially useful to the bosses when it comes to imposing austerity measures to reduce the standard of living of the working class. While loudly protesting their commitment to easing the burdens of working-class women, Social Democratic governments have not hesitated to make the cuts in social services demanded by the bourgeoisie. In Denmark they eliminated 5,000 child-care workers from the state payroll with one stroke of the pen.

4. From the 1930s on, after the Stalinist bureaucracy consolidated its control of the USSR and transformed the parties of the Third International into apologists for the counterrevolutionary policies of the Kremlin, defense of the family as the ideal framework of human relations has been the line of Stalinist parties throughout the

world. This not only served the needs of the bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union itself but coincided with the need to defend the capitalist status quo elsewhere. The openly reactionary theories of the French CP on the family were first expounded when the new family code was introduced in the USSR in 1934 and abortions were prohibited in 1936.

However demagogic they may be at times concerning women's double day of work, the demands raised by the CP today are most often proposals to rearrange things so women have an easier time meeting the tasks that fall on them in the home. From better maternity leaves, to shorter hours, to improved working conditions for women, the fight is often justified by the need to free women for their household chores—rather than from them by socializing the domestic burdens women bear. The other solution, which they sometimes propose, is to demand that men share the work load more equitably at home.

But the rise of the women's movement, the attempts of the bourgeoisie to capitalize on it, the responses of other currents in the workers movement, and the pressure of their own ranks have all compelled the Communist parties to modify and adjust their line. Even the most hidebound and rigid followers of the Kremlin, like the American Communist Party, have finally been forced to abandon some of their most reactionary positions such as opposition to an equal rights amendment to the constitution.

The deeper the radicalization, the more adroitly the CPs have had to maneuver by throwing themselves into the movement and adopting more radical verbiage.

The CPs have let women members engage in public discussion and develop scathing condemnations of capitalism's responsibilities for the miserable status of women. But when it comes to program and action, the CP's opposition to women's liberation duplicates their opposition to a class struggle fight for other needs of the working class. They are ready to shelve any demand or derail any struggle in the interests of consolidating or preserving whatever class-collaborationist alliance they are working for. Thus, despite the Italian CP's formal shift and decision to support liberalization of abortion laws, in 1976 the CP parliamentary deputies made a bloc with the Christian Democrats to kill abortion law reform because it was an obstacle to advancing toward the "historic compromise."

Moreover, there is often a conflict between the positions taken by the CP locally—where they sometimes express support for struggles to establish child-care centers or abortion-contraception clinics—and the actions of the CP nationally—where they support austerity measures to cut back on such social programs.

The discrepancy between the formal

positions of the Communist parties and their betrayals in the class struggle, have already brought about some sharp tensions within those parties and in the trade unions they dominate. This is especially true because the absence of internal democracy deepens the frustrations of many women who begin to see the contradictions between their own personal commitment to women's liberation and the line of their party. They have no way to influence the positions of their organization. Thus, when the Spanish CP signed the class-collaborationist Moncloa pact, women formed an opposition group in the Madrid CP to fight for internal democracy.

In France, when opposition groupings began to form in the CP in 1978, women members of the party organized around the magazine *Elles Voient Rouge* (They See Red). They sought to defend their positions and fight the sectarian policies of the party which rejected united front action with other political groups on the abortion question or any other issue.

Organizationally, too, the Stalinists have been forced to adjust. In a number of countries the Stalinists formed their own women's organizations after the Second World War. Faced with the new radicalization of women, they have invariably tried to pass these organizations off in the eyes of the working class as the only real women's movement. The independent movement threatens their pretense of being the party that speaks for working-class women, and their initial reaction has been to deepen their sectarian stance.

In Spain, for example, the CP-controlled MDM (Movimiento Democrático de la Mujer—Democratic Movement of Women) declared that it alone was the women's movement, and the CP proclaimed itself to be the party of women's liberation. But despite the strength of the CP, the MDM was unable to dominate the radicalization of women, which was expressed through the flourishing of women's groups on all levels throughout the Spanish state. Unable to establish the MDM by fiat, the CP was forced to recognize the existence of other groups and work with them.

5. Involvement in the women's movement has brought similar contradictions for the Social Democratic parties as well. But at the same time, the ability of both the Stalinists and Social Democrats to adapt to some of the issues raised by radicalizing women has enhanced their ability to influence the general course of the movement. When these parties decide to support one or another mass mobilization, as they have in a number of countries recently on the abortion question, their reformist positions have all the more impact on large numbers of women. It would be a mistake to underestimate their political weight.

6. The Maoists and centrist organizations have most often adopted sectarian, economist positions on the women's liberation movement, considering it to be petty

bourgeois and in conflict with their concept of the workers movement. Among these organizations, however, there have been basically two types of response. Some have refused to participate in the independent organizations and activities of the women's liberation movement. Many of these sectarian groups have set up their own auxiliary women's groups, which they counterpose to the living women's movement, arguing that such a course is the only genuinely communist strategy.

Other Maoist and centrist groups have oriented toward participating in the women's movement. But they have no understanding of the relationship between the class struggle and the fight for women's liberation. They reject a policy of united-front action, and simply tail-end the women's movement. This was an important factor contributing to the crises that tore many such groups apart at the end of the 1970s.

7. The trade-union movement has also felt the impact of the radicalization of women and its bureaucracies have been obliged to respond to the pressures from women inside and outside the organized labor movement.

Like the Stalinists and Social Democrats, even in the best of cases labor officials try to limit union responsibility for women's demands to economic questions, such as equal pay or maternity leaves. As long as possible, they resist involving labor in fighting for issues such as abortion. However, the mass character of the unions, the growing number of women in their ranks, many of whom are increasingly active in women's commissions, makes such a stance by the union bureaucracies more difficult. This was clearly seen in October 1979 when the British Trades Union Congress, under growing pressure from its own ranks, called for a national demonstration in defense of abortion rights. Some 50,000 men and women turned out. Questions such as child care and the socialization of domestic work, conditions for part-time workers, and affirmative action programs for women are raised with greater frequency today in the union movement. In some cases women are explicitly posing these demands in the general framework of the need to break down the traditional division of labor between men and women.

By forcing these issues, women workers are calling into question the reformists' attempts to maintain a division between economic and political issues and otherwise limit whatever struggles develop. They are helping the working class to think in broad social terms and encouraging the ranks of the unions to turn to and use their basic class organizations to fight for all their needs.

As women try to win the union ranks and leadership to support their demands, they are obliged to take up the question of union democracy as well. They have to fight for the right to express themselves

freely, to organize their own commissions or caucuses, to be represented in the union leaderships, and for the union to provide the kinds of facilities, such as child care during meetings, that will permit women to be fully active in the workers organizations.

Some unions have put out special literature, reactivated moribund women's commissions, organized meetings of women unionists, or established special training courses for women union leaders. In a number of countries special inter-union committees of women have been organized by the trade-union leadership on national, regional, or local levels. Elsewhere committees have been created under the impetus of the rank and file. The radicalization of women and the deepening economic crisis have also led to an increase in the rate of unionization of women workers in some advanced capitalist countries.

By and large, the creation of women's commissions within the unions has occurred with the blessing of the union bureaucracies. They hope to contain the radicalization of women in the unions and direct their energies in a way that will not threaten the comfortable status quo on any level—from the male monopoly of union leadership posts to the understanding between the bureaucracy and the bosses that the particular needs of women workers be ignored.

But this development reflects the huge impact that the women's liberation movement has already had on the organized labor movement. Such women's commissions within the unions are today more and more products of the women's movement as well as part of the labor movement. They stand at the intersection of the two and, if properly led, can help show the way forward for both.

#### **Women's Liberation in the Colonial and Semicolonial World**

1. Women's liberation is not a matter of interest only to women of the advanced capitalist countries with their relatively high educational level and standard of living. On the contrary, it is of vital concern and importance to the masses of women throughout the world. The colonial and semicolonial countries are no exception.

There is great diversity in the economic and social conditions and cultural traditions in the colonial and semicolonial countries. They range from extremely primitive conditions in some areas to considerable industrialization in countries such as Puerto Rico and Argentina. All semicolonial and colonial countries, however, are defined by the imperialist domination they suffer in common. This also has specific effects on women in these countries.

Imperialist domination has meant that capitalist relations of production have been superimposed on, and have combined with, archaic, precapitalist modes of pro-

duction and social relations, transforming them and incorporating them into the capitalist economy. In Western Europe the rise of capitalism was punctuated by bourgeois-democratic revolutions in the more advanced countries which broke the economic and political power of the old feudal ruling classes. But in the colonial countries imperialist penetration most often reinforced the privileges, hierarchies, and reactionary traditions of the precapitalist ruling classes, which it utilized wherever possible to maintain stability and maximize imperialist exploitation.

Using torture, extermination, rape, and other forms of terror on a mass scale, and in Africa through the outright enslavement of the native peoples, expanding European capitalism brutally colonized Latin America and parts of Asia and Africa and thrust them into the world market. With the European and eventually American conquerors came Christianity as well, which was often turned to advantage as one of the central links in the chain of subjugation.

For women in the semicolonial and colonial world the penetration of the capitalist market economy has a contradictory impact: on the one hand it introduces new economic relations that begin to lay the basis for women to overcome their centuries-old oppression. But on the other hand, it takes over and utilizes the archaic traditions, religious codes, and antiwoman prejudices, initially reinforcing them through new forms of discrimination and superexploitation.

In general, the situation of women is directly related to the degree of industrialization that has been achieved. But uneven and combined development in some societies can produce startling contradictions, such as relative economic independence for women who dominate very primitive agriculture in some areas of Africa.

2. In the colonial countries, the development of capitalist production proceeds according to the needs of imperialism. For this reason, industrialization takes place only slowly and in an unbalanced, distorted way, if at all. In most semicolonial countries, the majority of the population still lives on the land and is engaged in subsistence farming, utilizing extremely backward methods. The family—which generally includes various aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and grandparents—is the *basic unit of petty agricultural production*.

Women play a decisive economic role. Not only do they work long hours in the fields and home, but they produce children to share the burden of work and provide economic security in old age. They marry at puberty and often give birth to as many children as physically possible. Their worth is generally determined by the number of children they produce. A barren woman is considered a social disgrace and an economic disaster. Infertility is often grounds for divorce.

Because of its productive role, the hold of

the family on all its members, but specifically on women, is strong. Combined with a primitive level of economic development, this brings about extreme deprivation and degradation for peasant women in the rural areas. In practice, they scarcely have any legal or social rights as individuals, and are often barely considered human. They live under virtually total domination and control by male members of their family. In many cases the restricted resources of the family unit are allocated first of all to the male members of the family; it is not uncommon for female children to receive less food and care, leading to stunted growth or early death from malnutrition. Female infanticide, both direct and through deliberate neglect, is still practiced in many areas. Often illiteracy rates for women approach 100 percent.

3. The incorporation of the colonial and semicolonial countries into the world capitalist market inevitably has an impact on the rural areas, however. Inflation and the inability to compete with larger units utilizing more productive methods lead to continuous waves of migration from the countryside to the cities. Often this migration begins with the males of the family, leaving the women, children, and elderly with an even heavier burden as they try to eke out an impoverished existence from the land on their own.

The desperate search for a job eventually leads millions of workers to leave their country of birth and migrate to the advanced industrial countries, where if they are lucky enough to find a job, it will be under miserable conditions of superexploitation.

The isolation and backward traditions of the rural areas tend to be challenged and broken down not only by migration to and from the cities but also by the diffusion of the mass media, such as radio and television.

4. With migration to the cities, the new conditions of life and labor begin to challenge the traditional norms and myths about the role of women.

In the cities the petty-bourgeois family as a productive unit rapidly disappears for most. Each family member is obliged to sell his or her labor power on the market as an individual. However, due to the extremely precarious employment situation, and the financial responsibilities that the semiproletarian city dwellers often have vis-à-vis their rural relatives, the immediate family often still includes aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers and sisters and their children, besides father, mother, and children.

Among the urban middle class and the more stable sectors of the proletariat, however, the family unit begins to become more restricted.

As they migrate to the cities, women have greater opportunity for education, for broader social contact, and for economic independence. The needs of capitalism,

which bring increasing numbers of women out of family isolation, come into conflict with the old ideas about the role of women in society. In taking jobs as industrial or service workers, women begin to occupy positions that were previously forbidden them by backward prejudices and traditions. Those able to secure an education that permits them to break into professions, such as teaching and nursing, also serve as examples that contradict traditional attitudes, even in the eyes of those women who don't work. The myth of women's inferiority is increasingly called into question by this reality, which challenges their time-honored subordination.

Even for women who are not able to get an education or to work outside the home, city conditions help provide the possibility of escaping the mental prison that the rural family's isolation imposes on them. This happens through the greater impact of the mass media, the proximity of political life and struggles, the visibility of modern household appliances, laundries, etc.

5. In the colonial and semicolonial countries, women generally comprise a much lower percentage of the work force than in the imperialist countries. It tends to vary between 8 and 15 percent, although sometimes as high as 20 percent, as opposed to the advanced capitalist countries, where women make up roughly 30 to 40 percent.

As would be expected, women are concentrated in jobs that are the least skilled, lowest paying, and least protected by laws on safety conditions, minimum wages, etc. This is especially true for agricultural work, piecework in the home, and work as domestics, where a high proportion of women are employed. The average wage of female workers tends to be one-third to one-half of that of male workers. When women are able to get an education and acquire some skills, they are confined even more strictly than in the advanced capitalist countries to certain "female" occupations, such as nursing and teaching.

But women are also concentrated in industries such as textile, garment, food processing, and electrical parts and often make up a majority of the labor force employed there. Given the overwhelming predominance of such light industry in the more industrialized colonial countries, this means that, although they are a low percentage of the work force as a whole, women workers can occupy a strategically important place. In Puerto Rico, for example, women are the majority of the work force in the pharmaceutical and electrical industries, which are the major industries in the country.

The employment of women in such industries is crucial for the superprofits of the imperialists, both because they are a source of cheaper labor and also because the employment of women at lower wages or in lower-paying jobs allows the capitalists to divide and weaken the working class and keep down the overall wage

scale. The process of imperialist accumulation cannot be fully understood without explaining the role of the superexploitation of women workers in the semicolonial countries.

Throughout the colonial world, unemployment and underemployment are of crisis proportions, and much of this burden falls on women. To help their family survive, women are often forced to resort to such desperate and precarious sources of income as selling handicrafts or home-cooked food in the streets, or taking in laundry. Prostitution is frequently the only recourse. The endemic unemployment also exacerbates alcoholism and drug addiction, which results in greater violence against women as well as even more desperate poverty.

6. In many colonial and semicolonial countries, women have not yet won some of the most elementary democratic rights secured by women in the advanced capitalist countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Numerous countries still retain laws that place women under the legal control of their male relatives. These include, for example, laws that require the husband's permission for a woman to work, laws that give the husband control over his wife's wages, and laws that give the husband automatic guardianship of his children and control over the residence of his wife. In some countries women are still sold into marriage. They can be murdered with impunity for violating the "honor" of their men.

In countries where reforms have been made in the legal code, providing women with more rights, these often remain largely formal. Women are unable to assert these rights in practice because of the crushing weight of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, their economic dependence, and backward traditions that circumscribe their lives. Thus imperialism in its death agony stands as an obstacle to the most elementary democratic rights for women in the colonial world.

7. The power and influence of organized religion is especially strong in the colonial and semicolonial countries, because of the prevailing economic backwardness and because of the reinforcement and protection of the religious hierarchies by imperialism. In many countries there is no separation of religious institutions and state. Even where there is official separation, religious dogma and customs retain great weight. For example, many of the most barbaric antiwomen laws are based on religious codes. In India, the misery of millions of women is accentuated by the caste system, which, though no longer sanctioned by law, is based on the Hindu religion. In Muslim countries, the tradition of the veiling of women, which is still quite prevalent, is designed to totally banish women from public life and deny them any individuality. In Catholic countries the right to divorce is often restricted or denied.

8. Violence against women, which has

been inherent in their economic, social, and sexual degradation throughout all stages of development of class society, becomes accentuated by the contradictions bred under imperialist domination. The greater access of women to education and jobs, along with their broader participation in society in general, gives women the opportunities to lead a less protected, more public life, in violation of the old traditions and values. But attempts by women to take advantage of these opportunities and break out of the old roles often lead to reactions by male relatives or others, which can take the form of ostracization, beatings, mutilations, or even murder. Such barbaric violence against women is frequently sanctioned by law. Even where illegal, it is often so widely accepted in practice that it goes unpunished.

9. Educational opportunities for women in the colonial and semicolonial countries remain extremely limited by comparison with the advanced capitalist countries. This is reflected in the high female illiteracy rate. From the level of primary school to the university level, female enrollment is lower than male, and the gap generally increases the higher the educational level.

The educational system in the colonial and semicolonial countries is organized—often more blatantly than in the imperialist countries—to reinforce the exclusion of women from social life and to bolster the imposition of the role of mother-housekeeper-wife on all female children. Coeducation is notably less prevalent, with the schools for girls invariably receiving smaller budgets, fewer teachers, and worse facilities. Where coeducation exists, girls are still required to pursue separate courses of study such as cooking, sewing, and homemaking.

Within the framework of these disadvantages, however, the pressure of the world market has brought some changes in the educational opportunities open to women. The need for a layer of more highly trained technicians has opened the doors to higher education for at least a small layer of women.

10. Women in the colonial world have even less control over their reproductive functions than women in the imperialist countries. The poor educational opportunities for females, combined with the strong influence of religion over the content of education, means that women have little or no access to scientific information about reproduction or sex. Economically and socially they are under personal pressure to produce more, not fewer children. When there is access to birth control information and devices, this is almost always in the framework of racist population control programs imposed by imperialism. In some countries forced sterilization of masses of women has been carried out by the government. In Puerto Rico the forced sterilization policies promoted by the U.S. government have victimized more than one-third of the women of child-bearing age. Forced sterilization schemes are

foisted on oppressed groups within these countries as well, such as the Indian population of Bolivia.

Even in countries where forced sterilization is not official policy, the racist population control propaganda permeates society and constitutes an obstacle to the fight by women to gain control of their own bodies.

Women in semicolonial and colonial countries have been widely used as unwitting guinea pigs for testing birth control devices and drugs. And access to abortion, too, is tied to coercion, not freedom of choice. Each year, millions of women throughout the colonial world are forced to seek illegal abortions under the most unsanitary and degrading conditions possible, leading to an unknown number of deaths.

In all these ways, women are denied the right to choose when and if to bear children.

Under conditions of economic crisis, population control schemes will become more widespread and there will be more cases like Puerto Rico. The so-called "population explosion" will be blamed for the economic difficulties of the colonial and semicolonial countries in order to divert attention from the responsibility of imperialism for causing and maintaining this misery.

Racism and sexism are also imposed on the colonial world through the propagation of alien cultural standards. If the cosmetics merchants' standards of "beauty" for women in Europe and North America are oppressive to women in those areas, they are even more so when these same standards are foisted on women of the colonial and semicolonial countries through advertising, movies, and other forms of mass propaganda.

11. The strong influence of religion reinforces extreme backwardness regarding sexuality, which results in a special deprivation and degradation of women. The general proscription that women are supposed to be asexual themselves, but at the same time be a satisfying sexual slave to their husbands, is imposed more brutally on women in the colonial and semicolonial countries than in the imperialist countries, through traditions, laws, and the use of violence including the sexual mutilation of female children. Women are supposed to save their virginity for their husband. In many instances, if women do not provide sexual satisfaction to their husbands, or if they are charged with not being a virgin at the time of marriage, this is grounds for divorce. The dual standard of sexual conduct for men and women is more strictly enforced than in the imperialist countries. The practice of polygamy is merely an extreme example.

Another reflection of the backwardness regarding sexuality is the harsh oppression of homosexuals, both male and female.

12. The fact that capitalist development in the colonial world incorporated precapitalist economic and social relations, many

of which survive in distorted forms, means that to win their liberation, women, as well as all the oppressed and exploited, are confronted with combined tasks. The struggle against imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation often begins with the unresolved problems of national independence, land reform, and other democratic tasks.

Elementary democratic demands, such as those that give women rights as individuals independent of their husband's control, will have great weight in the struggle for women's liberation in the colonial and semicolonial countries. At the same time, they will immediately pose and be combined with social and economic issues whose solution requires the reorganization of all of society along socialist lines. Among such issues are rising prices, unemployment, inadequate health and educational facilities, and housing. They also include all the general demands that have been raised by the women's movement in the advanced capitalist countries, such as child-care centers, rights and medical facilities that would assure women the ability to control their reproductive lives, access to jobs and education. But none of these demands, including the most elementary democratic ones, can be won without the mobilization and organization of the working class, which constitutes the only social force capable of leading such struggles through to a victorious conclusion.

13. Because of the relative weakness of capitalism and of the ruling capitalist classes in the colonial and semicolonial countries, civil liberties, where they exist, are in general tenuous and often short-lived. Political repression is widespread. When women begin to struggle—as when other sectors of the population begin to rebel—they are often rapidly confronted with repression and with the necessity to fight for political liberties such as the right to hold meetings, to have their own organization, to have a newspaper or other publications, and to demonstrate. The struggle for women's liberation cannot be separated from the more general struggle for political freedoms.

The increased participation of women in social and political struggles has meant that women are a growing proportion of political prisoners in the colonial and semicolonial countries. In the prisons, women face particularly humiliating and brutal forms of torture. The struggle for freedom of all political prisoners, exposing the plight of women in particular, has been and will be an important part of the fight for women's liberation in these countries.

This struggle has an especially clear international dimension. Political prisoners exist not only in the colonial world but in the imperialist countries as well. Demands for their freedom will continue to be a rallying point for international solidarity within the women's movement.

14. The struggle for women's liberation has always been intertwined with the national liberation struggle. Whatever

women do, they come up against the might of imperialist control, and the need to throw off the chains of this domination is an urgent and overriding task for all the oppressed in these countries, as the examples of Iran and Nicaragua have once again clearly demonstrated. Large numbers of women become politically active for the first time through participation in national liberation movements. In the process of the developing struggle, it becomes evident that women can and must play an even greater role if victory is to be won. Women become transformed by doing things that were forbidden to them by the old traditions and habits. They become fighters, leaders, organizers, and political thinkers. The deep contradictions they live with stimulate revolt against their oppression as a sex, as well as demands for greater equality within the revolutionary movement. In Vietnam, Algeria, Cuba, Palestine, South Africa, the Sahara, and elsewhere, struggles by women to end the most brutal forms of the oppression they suffer have been closely intertwined with unfolding anti-imperialist struggles.

In Nicaragua, women organized through AMPRONAC (Association of Women Confronting the National Problem) played a crucial role in preparing for the final insurrection against the Somoza dictatorship. And 30 percent of the FSLN's forces were composed of women who were organized in women's brigades as well as integrated in other combat and support units.

In Iran, the participation of women in the struggle to topple the Shah brought millions into social and political life for the first time, awakening in them the desire to change their own status as well. Despite the weight of reactionary religious ideas and antiwoman measures, the deepening of mass anti-imperialist consciousness and struggle in Iran can only improve the conditions under which women will fight for greater equality and freedom.

The participation of women in the national liberation struggle also begins to transform the consciousness of men about women's capacities and role. In the process of struggling against their own exploitation and oppression, men can become more sensitized to the oppression of women, more conscious of the necessity to combat it, and more aware of the importance of women as an allied fighting force.

15. There also exist oppressed national minorities within the colonial and semicolonial countries. In Iran, for example, the oppressed nationalities constitute 60 percent of the population. In Latin America, the native Indian population is an oppressed minority. The women of these minorities face a double dimension of national oppression. Once they begin to move, their struggle can develop in an explosive manner.

The demands of women and of oppressed nationalities will often be intertwined and reinforce one another. For example, the demand of all women for the right to an

education will be combined with the demand of men and women of the oppressed nationalities for the right to education in their own languages.

16. Since the rise of the colonial revolution at the beginning of this century, women have participated in anti-imperialist upsurges, but there has not been a tradition of women organizing as women, around their specific demands, as a distinct component of these struggles. However, the development of the world capitalist system since World War II has sharpened the economic, social, and political contradictions in the colonial and semicolonial countries which will more and more propel women into struggle around their own demands.

a. In the period following World War II there was a rise in industrialization in the colonial and semicolonial countries, although the extent of this industrialization varied greatly in different countries and was distorted to fit the needs of the imperialist powers. This meant increased access by women to education and jobs.

b. Technological improvements in the areas of household tasks and control of reproduction—even though much less widely available than in the advanced countries—began to be known and showed the possibility of freeing women from domestic drudgery and allowing them to control their reproductive function.

c. The economic crisis of world capitalism which was signaled by the international depression of 1974-75 has had a magnified effect on the colonial world, as the imperialists attempted to foist the burden of this crisis onto the backs of the masses in these countries. A disproportionate weight of the economic crisis falls on women, in the form of rising prices, cutbacks in the rudimentary health and education facilities that exist, and increased misery in the countryside. Thus the gap between what is possible for women and what exists is widening.

d. The impact of this contradiction on the consciousness of women is reinforced today by the impact of the international women's liberation movement, which has inspired women around the world and popularized and legitimized their demands.

These factors point to the conclusion that struggles by women will become a more important component of the coming revolutionary struggles in the colonial and semicolonial countries.

This struggle by women can take on explosive dimensions due to the gap between the archaic norms and values and the possibilities for the liberation of women opened up by the technological advancements of capitalism. At the same time, the religious and traditional norms and values upheld by the imperialists and their servitors are in constant contradiction with the lives of growing numbers of women. This means that once women begin to challenge their oppression, even



on an elementary level, it can combine with other social ferment and lead very rapidly to the mobilization of masses of women in struggles that take on a radical, anticapitalist direction.

17. Attitudes and policies concerning the demands and needs of women in colonial and semicolonial countries are one of the acid tests of the revolutionary caliber, perspective, and program of any organization aspiring to lead the struggle against imperialism. The role and importance that we ascribe to the fight for women's liberation in these countries, and the program we put forward for achieving it, separate us from nonproletarian forces contending for leadership of the national liberation struggle.

This has long been a distinguishing feature of the program of revolutionary Marxism, as was reflected in the resolutions of the Third and Fourth Congresses of the Communist International. These resolutions drew special attention to the exemplary work of the Chinese Communists in organizing and leading mobilizations of women that preceded the second Chinese revolution of 1925-27.

If the revolutionary Marxist party does not see the importance of organizing and mobilizing women and winning the leadership of the struggle for women's liberation, the field will be open for bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces to succeed in gaining the leadership of women's movements and diverting them into reformist channels, or even into anti-working-class movements.

18. Only the road of the socialist revolution can open the way to a qualitative transformation in the lives of the masses of women of the semicolonial countries. The examples of Cuba, Vietnam, and China are a powerful beacon for the women of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. These socialist revolutions offer striking proof of the rapid advances possible once the working class in alliance with the peasantry breaks the chains of imperialist domination. When the laws of capitalist accumulation are replaced by those of a planned economy based on the nationalization of the decisive sectors of production, it becomes possible even in the impoverished countries of the semicolonial world to turn massive resources toward the development of education and childcare, medical services, and housing.

Once capitalism is eliminated, unemployment and underemployment become scourges of the past. On the contrary a shortage of labor draws women out of the home and into productive labor of all kinds in massive numbers. Social mores and traditions rooted in precapitalist and capitalist modes of production progressively disappear as this transformation develops and the working class becomes larger and more powerful.

19. Because of the extreme oppression they face, and the fact that there is no perspective for improving their lives under capitalism, women in the colonial and

semicolonial countries will be thrust into the vanguard of the struggle for social change. Through internal classes and similar educational activities, sections of the Fourth International must systematically prepare their own members to understand the importance of the fight for women's liberation, even if there are no mass struggles on the political horizon as yet. We must take a conscious attitude toward winning women to socialism and training and integrating the most determined as leaders of our movement.

#### **Women in the Workers States: Liberation Betrayed**

1. The October 1917 revolution in Russia and each subsequent socialist victory brought significant gains for women, including democratic rights and integration into the productive labor force. The measures enacted by the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky demonstratively showed that the proletarian revolution meant immediate steps forward for women.

Between 1917 and 1927 the Soviet government passed a series of laws giving women legal equality with men for the first time. Marriage became a simple registration process that had to be based on mutual consent. The concept of illegitimacy was abolished. Free, legal abortion was made every woman's right. By 1927, marriages did not have to be registered, and divorce was granted on the request of either partner. Antihomosexual laws were eliminated.

Free, compulsory education to the age of 16 was established for all children of both sexes. Legislation gave women workers special maternity benefits.

The 1919 program of the Communist Party stated: "The party's task at the present moment is primarily work in the realm of ideas and education so as to destroy utterly all traces of the former inequality or prejudices, particularly among backward strata of the proletariat and peasantry. Not confining itself to formal equality of women, the party strives to liberate them from the material burdens of obsolete household work by replacing it by communal houses, public eating places, central laundries, nurseries, etc." This program was implemented to the extent possible given the economic backwardness and poverty of the new Soviet Republic, and the devastation caused by almost a decade of war and civil war.

A conscious attempt was made to begin combating the reactionary social norms and attitudes toward women, which reflected the reality of a country whose population was still overwhelmingly peasant, where women were a relatively small percentage of the work force, and in which the dead weight of feudal traditions and customs hung over all social relations. As would be expected under such conditions, backward attitudes toward women were reflected within the Bolshevik Party as well, not excepting its leadership. The

party was by no means homogeneous in its understanding of the importance of carrying through the concrete and deepgoing measures necessary to fulfill its 1919 program.

2. The decimation and exhaustion of the working-class vanguard, and the crushing of the postwar revolutionary upsurges in Western Europe, laid the basis for the triumph of the counterrevolutionary bureaucratic caste, headed by Stalin, in the 1920s. While the economic foundations of the new workers state were not destroyed, a privileged social layer that appropriated for itself many of the benefits of the new economic order grew rapidly in the fertile soil of Russia's poverty. To protect and extend its new privileges, the bureaucracy reversed the policies of Lenin and Trotsky in virtually every sphere, from government based on soviet democracy, to control by the workers over economic planning, to the right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination, to a proletarian internationalist foreign policy.

By the late 1930s the counterrevolution had physically annihilated the entire surviving Bolshevik leadership and established a dictatorship that to this day keeps hundreds of thousands in prison camps, psychiatric hospitals, and exile, and ruthlessly crushes every murmur of opposition.

For women, the Stalinist counterrevolution led to a policy of reviving and fortifying the family system.

Trotsky described this process as follows: "Genuine emancipation of women is inconceivable without a general rise of economy and culture, without the destruction of the petty-bourgeois economic family unit, without the introduction of socialized food preparation and education. Meanwhile, guided by its conservative instinct, the bureaucracy has taken alarm at the 'disintegration' of the family. It began singing panegyrics to the family supper and the family laundry, that is, the household slavery of women. To cap it all, the bureaucracy has restored criminal punishments for abortions, officially returning women to the status of pack animals. In complete contradiction with the ABC of communism the ruling caste has thus restored the most reactionary and benighted nucleus of the class regime, i.e., the petty-bourgeois family" (*Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1937-38, 2nd ed., 1976, p. 129*).

3. The most important factor facilitating this retrogression was the cultural and material backwardness of Russian society, which did not have the resources necessary to construct adequate child-care centers, sufficient housing, public laundries, and housekeeping and dining facilities to eliminate the material basis for women's oppression. This backwardness also helped perpetuate the general social division of labor between men and women inherited from the tsarist period.

But beyond these objective limitations, the reactionary Stalinist bureaucracy consciously gave up the perspective of moving in a systematic way to socialize the

burdens carried by women, and instead began to glorify the family system, attempting to bind families together through legal restrictions and economic compulsion.

As Trotsky pointed out in *The Revolution Betrayed*, "The retreat not only assumes forms of disgusting hypocrisy, but it also is going infinitely farther than the iron economic necessity demands."

The bureaucracy reinforced the family system for one of the same reasons it is maintained by capitalist society—as a means of inculcating attitudes of submission to authority and for perpetuating the privileges of a minority. Trotsky explained that "the most compelling motive of the present cult of the family is undoubtedly the need of the bureaucracy for a stable hierarchy of relations, and for the disciplining of youth by means of forty million points of support for authority and power."

As part of this counterrevolution, the old tsarist laws against homosexuality were dusted off and reintroduced.

Reinforcement of the family enabled the bureaucracy to perpetuate an important division inside the working class: the division between man, as "head of the family and breadwinner," and woman, as responsible for tasks inside the home and shopping—in addition to whatever else she might do. On a more general level, it meant maintaining the division between private life and public life, with the resulting isolation that affects both men and women. Bolstering of the nuclear family also reinforced the bureaucracy through encouraging the attitude of "each family for itself," and within the framework of a policy of overall planning that has little to do with satisfying the needs of the workers, it allows the bureaucracy to minimize the costs of social services.

The conditions created by the proletarian revolution and Stalinist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union have not been mechanically reproduced in all the deformed workers states of Eastern Europe and Asia. Important differences exist, reflecting historical, cultural, economic, and social variations from one country to another, even one region to another. However, despite differences of degree in the participation of women in the process of production or the extent of child-care centers and similar social services, maintenance of the economic and social inequality of women and policies aimed at reinforcing and justifying the domestic labor of women remain official policy in all the deformed workers states.

4. According to the official 1970 Soviet Union census, 90 percent of all urban women between the ages of 16 and 54 hold jobs outside the home. Yet the average Soviet woman spends four to seven hours a day on housework in addition to eight hours on an outside job.

The perpetuation of the responsibility of women for the domestic chores associated with child-raising, cooking, cleaning, laundry, and caring for the personal needs

of other members of the family unit is the economic and social basis for the disadvantages and prejudices faced by women and the resulting discrimination in jobs and wages. This deeply affects the way women view themselves, their role in society, and the goals they seek to attain.

A survey made in Czechoslovakia at the end of the 1960s revealed that nearly 80 percent of women interviewed accepted the idea of staying in the home until their children reached the age of 3 years, if their husband agreed and if their income was sufficient to provide for the needs of the family. This is hardly surprising when one considers that, in the same period, out of 500 women interviewed who held supervisory positions on their jobs, half said they had to perform all of the domestic work in their homes (four or five hours per day).

While 50 percent of the wage earners in the Soviet Union are women, they are concentrated disproportionately in less-skilled, lower-paying, less responsible jobs, and in traditional female sectors of production and services. For example, 43.6 percent of all women still work in agriculture, while another quarter are employed in the textile industry. Eighty percent of all primary and secondary-school teachers, and 100 percent of all preschool teachers, are women. In 1970 only 6.6 percent of all industrial enterprises were headed by women. According to 1966 statistics, average women's wages in the Soviet Union were 69.3 percent of men's—up from 64.4 percent in 1924!

In 1970, in the East European countries as a whole, the salary differential ranged between 27 and 30 percent, despite the laws on equal pay that have been in effect for decades in these countries. This reflects the fact that women do not work the same jobs as men. Not only do they continue to be pushed toward the lower-paid "women's occupations," and not only are women often overqualified for the jobs they hold, but very few of those who complete apprenticeship programs for better-paying, more highly skilled jobs (notably, in heavy industry) continue working in these sectors. Domestic responsibilities make it difficult to keep up with new developments in one's specialty. Also protective laws establishing special conditions under which women can work often have discriminatory effects that prevent them from holding the same jobs as men.

In the Soviet Union in 1976, more than 40 percent of all scientists were women, but only 3 out of 243 full members of the Soviet Academy of Science were women. In the national political arena, only 8 of the 287 full members of the Communist Party Central Committee were women. There are no women in the Politburo.

In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, as in the advanced capitalist countries, sufficient material wealth and technology today exist to significantly alleviate the double burden of women. Yet the distortions introduced in economic planning and the productive process because of the ab-

sence of democratic control over production by the workers and the domination of the privileged bureaucratic caste are a source of resentments. Women feel the dead weight of the bureaucracy in this respect even more than men because they are forced to compensate for the distortions in the economy through the double day's labor they perform.

In the last decade, these potentially explosive resentments have forced the various bureaucratic castes to plan expanded production in consumer goods and increased social services. But the supply of consumer goods continues to lag behind the needs and growing expectations. Social services also remain sorely inadequate. For example, while child-care facilities are more widespread than in advanced capitalist countries, according to official figures in early 1978, child-care facilities in the Soviet Union could accommodate only 13 million of the more than 35 million preschool age children.

In Czechoslovakia and Poland at the beginning of the 1970s, only 10 percent of children under 3 could be accommodated in nurseries; of children between 3 and 6, there were places for only 37 and 45 percent, respectively. This is the case although women comprise between 40 and 45 percent of the work force in these two countries. Despite all the difficulties that such conditions create for working women, some of the Stalinist officials in these countries are reviving the theory of the "natural division of labor" between men and women. In Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the "solution" put forward to alleviate the lack of social services and at the same time attempt to reverse the declining birth rate is in essence a "salary for housework" allotted to mothers of one or two children until they reach the age of 3 years. This system is accompanied in Czechoslovakia by an increase in family allocations for the third and fourth child, as well as a substantial increase in the birth bonus for each child (which is nearly the equivalent of a month's salary). Obviously, such measures can only have the effect of pressing women to stay in the home, given the double day of work that accompanies having an outside job.

The number of public laundries is insignificant—in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the USSR the existing laundries satisfy only 5-10 percent of the needs.

Similarly, the number of men and women workers who eat in public cafeterias has sharply decreased since the 1950s. Because of high prices and bad quality, only 20 percent of the population in Czechoslovakia eat their main meal outside the home—as opposed to 50 percent in earlier years.

All these conditions go in the direction of burying women in the home, a tendency fostered by the propaganda of the bureaucracy in favor of part-time work for women. This is expressed in East Germany, for example, in the extra day off each month given to women so they can do



Women factory workers in China.

their housework. Of course, only women are given this "special privilege."

In October 1977 the same reactionary tendency was, in fact, incorporated into the revised Soviet constitution as an amendment to Article 35 that is supposed to guarantee equal rights to women. The amended constitution projects "the gradual shortening of the work-day for women with small children." Soviet leaders explained that this new constitutional provision reflected the line of the party and the Soviet state to improve the position of "women as workers, mothers, childraisers, and housewives."

This reinforcement of the social division of labor between men and women is also expressed through government policies in these countries aimed at increasing the birth rate to alleviate labor shortages. (East Germany is the only current exception.) At the same time that abortion has become more available to women in capitalist countries, the attempt to foster population growth has led to the restrictive measures concerning abortion throughout Eastern Europe.

In fact, the Stalinist bureaucracies have repudiated the view of Lenin and other leaders of the Russian revolution that unrestricted access to abortion is a woman's elementary democratic right. While legal abortion is generally available in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the ruling castes have repeatedly curtailed this right, frequently placing humiliating conditions as well as economic penalties on

women seeking abortions (such as denial of paid sick-leave time to obtain an abortion or refusal to cover abortions as a free medical procedure).

With the exception of Poland, sexual education and widespread information on contraceptive methods were explicitly rejected in most East European countries until very recently. Family planning centers were nonexistent, and access to contraceptive methods such as the pill or sterilization was strictly limited (in Czechoslovakia at the beginning of the 1970s, only 5 percent of women used such methods). But none of these measures have succeeded in reversing the continued stagnation in the birth rate or lowering the number of abortions. Faced with this "problem," the bureaucracy exercises great imagination in devising methods to encourage women to have more children. They consider everything *but* measures to socialize domestic tasks. In Poland, they are considering a "salary for housework," or a tax on the income of housewives who refuse to have children, or raising of the age of retirement for women from 60 to 65 years in order to release money for a maternity fund, or possibly lowering the retirement age for women to 55 years to enable them to help take care of small children.

In China, on the other hand, the Stalinist bureaucracy has introduced special economic penalties for couples with more than two children, in order to try to limit population growth. But the principle is the

same. The right to choose is subordinated to the economic decisions made by the bureaucracy.

In all the Eastern European countries and in China the bureaucracy promotes policies aimed at reinforcing sexual repression. The extreme housing shortage, the kind of education given to children from earliest infancy, the frequent refusal to rent hotel rooms to non-married couples, pressure to postpone marriage, all reflect the dominant social mores and the bureaucracy's opposition to any form of sexual liberation. Given their place within the family, women are of course the first to feel the weight of these repressive norms and policies.

5. Women in the deformed and degenerated workers states will not win their full liberation short of a political revolution that removes the bureaucratic caste from power and restores workers democracy. Although there are as yet few signs of any rising consciousness concerning the oppression of women, there is no impenetrable barrier between the advanced capitalist countries and the workers states. Women in the workers states will inevitably be affected by the radicalization of women elsewhere and the demands they are raising.

The struggle of women for their liberation will be a significant component of the process of challenging and overturning the privileged bureaucratic regimes and establishing socialist democracy. Demands for the socialization of domestic labor in par-

ticular are an important aspect of the transitional program for the coming political revolution.

In some respects, in comparison with the capitalist countries, the economic independence and status of women in the workers states provide a positive contrast. But Soviet history also strikingly confirms the fact that the family institution is the cornerstone of the oppression of women. As long as women's domestic servitude is sustained and nurtured by economic and political policy, as long as the functions of the family are not fully taken over by superior social institutions, the truly equal integration of women in productive life and all social affairs is impossible. The responsibility of women for domestic labor is the source of the inequalities they face in daily life, in education, in work, and in politics.

6. The Stalinist counterrevolution in respect to women and the family, the vast

inequality of women in the Soviet Union especially, more than 60 years after the October Revolution, today comprises one of the obstacles to winning radicalized women elsewhere to revolutionary Marxism. As with all other questions, the policies of Stalinism are often equated with Leninism rather than recognized for what they are—the negation of Leninism. Women fighting for their liberation elsewhere often look to the USSR and the deformed workers states and say, "If this is what socialism does for women, we don't need it." Many anti-Marxists point to the situation of women in these countries as "proof" that the road to women's liberation is not through class struggle. Thus the fight to win the leadership of feminists in other parts of the world is interrelated with the development of the political revolution in the deformed and degenerated workers states, as well as with our ability to project a different image of the socialism we as authentic Marxists are fighting for.

whose support the working class must win.

d. While all women are oppressed, the effects of that oppression are different for women of different classes. Those who suffer the greatest economic exploitation are generally those who also suffer the most from their oppression as women. Thus the women's liberation movement provides an avenue to reach and mobilize many of the most oppressed and exploited women who might not otherwise be touched so rapidly by the struggles of the working class.

e. While all women are affected by their oppression as women, the mass women's liberation movement we strive to build must be basically working-class in composition, orientation, and leadership. Only such a movement, with roots in the most exploited layers of working-class women, will be able to carry the struggle for women's liberation through to the end in an uncompromising way, allying itself with the social forces whose class interests parallel and intersect those of women. Only such a movement will be able to play a progressive role under conditions of sharpening class polarization.

f. In this long-term perspective, struggles by women in the unions and on the job have a special importance, reflecting the vital interrelationship of the women's movement and the workers movement and their impact on each other.

This is testified to by the deepening radicalization of working-class women today, the growing understanding of forces in the women's liberation movement that they must orient to the struggles of working women, and the willingness of sections of the trade-union bureaucracy in some countries to begin to take a few initiatives around women's demands. All these developments point to the future character and composition of the women's liberation movement and the kind of class forces who will come forward to provide leadership.

g. Struggles by women against their oppression as a sex are interrelated with, but not totally dependent on or identical with, struggles by workers as a class. Women cannot win their liberation except in alliance with the organized power of the working class. But this historical necessity in no way means that women should postpone any of their struggles until the current labor officialdom is replaced by a revolutionary leadership that picks up the banner of women's liberation. Nor should women wait until the socialist revolution has created the material basis for ending their oppression. On the contrary, women fighting for their liberation must wait for no one to show them the way. They should take the lead in opening the fight and carrying it forward. In doing so they will play a leadership role within the workers movement as a whole, and can help create the kind of class-struggle leadership necessary to advance on all fronts.

h. Sexism is one of the most powerful weapons utilized by the ruling class to

## II. The Fourth International and the Struggle for Women's Liberation

### Our Perspective

1. The Fourth International welcomes and champions the emergence of a new wave of struggles by women to end their centuries-old oppression. By fighting in the front lines of these battles, we demonstrate that the world party of socialist revolution can provide a leadership capable of carrying the struggle for women's liberation through to its conclusion. Our goal is to win the confidence and leadership of the masses of women by showing that our program and our class-struggle policies will lead to the elimination of women's oppression along the path of successful proletarian revolution and the socialist reconstruction of society.

2. The perspective of the Fourth International stands in the long tradition of revolutionary Marxism. It is based on the following considerations:

a. The oppression of women emerged with the transition from preclass to class society. It is indispensable to the maintenance of class society in general and capitalism in particular. Therefore, struggle by masses of women against their oppression is a form of the struggle against capitalist rule.

b. Women are both a significant component of the working class, and a potentially powerful ally of the working class in the struggle to overthrow capitalism. Without the socialist revolution, women cannot establish the preconditions for their liberation. Without the mobilization of masses of women in struggle for their own liberation, the working class cannot accomplish its historic tasks. The destruction of the bourgeois state, the eradication of capitalist property, the transformation of the economic bases and priorities of society, the

consolidation of a new state power based on the democratic organization of the working class and its allies, and the continuing struggle to eliminate all forms of oppressive social relations inherited from class society—all this can ultimately be accomplished only with the conscious participation and leadership of an independent women's liberation movement.

Thus our support for building an independent women's liberation movement is part of the strategy of the revolutionary working-class party. It stems from the very character of women's oppression, the social divisions created by capitalism itself and the way these are used to divide and weaken the working class and its allies in the struggle to abolish class society.

c. All women are oppressed as women. Struggles around specific aspects of women's oppression necessarily involve women from different classes and social layers. Even some bourgeois women, revolting against their oppression as women, can break with their class and be won to the side of the revolutionary workers movement as the road to liberation.

As Lenin pointed out in his discussions with Clara Zetkin, action around aspects of women's oppression has the potential to reach into the heart of the enemy class, to "foment and increase unrest, uncertainty and contradictions and conflicts in the camp of the bourgeoisie and its reformist friends. . . . Every weakening of the enemy is tantamount to a strengthening of our forces."

Even more important from the point of view of the revolutionary Marxist party is the fact that resentment against their oppression as women can often be the starting point in the radicalization of decisive layers of petty-bourgeois women,

divide and weaken the workers movement. But it does not simply divide men against women. Its conservatizing weight cuts across sex lines, affecting both men and women.

Its hold is rooted in the class character of society itself, and the manifold ways in which bourgeois ideology is inculcated in every individual from birth. The bosses pit each section of the working class against all others. They promote the belief that women's equality can be achieved only at the *expense* of men—by taking men's jobs away from them, by lowering their wages, and by depriving them of domestic comforts. The reformist bureaucracy of the labor movement, of course, also plays upon these divisions to maintain its control.

Educating the masses of workers, male and female, through propaganda, agitation, and action around the needs of women is an essential part of the struggle to break the stranglehold of reactionary bourgeois ideology within the working class. It is an indispensable part of the politicalization and revolutionary education of the workers movement.

i. The full power and united strength of the working class can only be realized as the workers movement begins to overcome its deep internal divisions. This will only be achieved as the workers come to understand that those at the top of the wage-scale do not owe their relative material advantages to the fact that others are discriminated against and specially oppressed. Rather it is the bosses who profit from such stratification and division. The class interests of *all* workers are identical with the demands and needs of the most oppressed and exploited layers of the class—the women, the oppressed nationalities, the immigrant workers, the youth, the unorganized, the unemployed. The women's movement has a particularly important role to play in helping the working class to understand this truth.

j. Winning the organized labor movement to fight for the demands of women is part of educating the working class to think socially and act politically. It is a central axis of the fight to transform the trade unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle in the interests of the entire working class.

In countering the efforts of the employers to keep the working class divided, we strive to win the ranks of the unions, and especially the young, combative rebels. The more successful we are in winning this battle, the more we will see the labor bureaucracy divide. Those who refuse to defend the interests of the great majority of the most oppressed and exploited will be progressively pushed aside.

The struggle by the revolutionary party to win hegemony and leadership in the working class is inseparable from the battle to convince the working class and its organizations to recognize and champion struggles by women as their own.

k. The struggle against the oppression

of women is not a secondary or peripheral issue. It is a life-and-death matter for the workers movement, especially in a period of sharpening class polarization.

Because women's place in class society generates many deep-seated insecurities and fears, and because the ideology that buttresses women's inferior status still retains a powerful hold, especially outside the working class, women are a particular target for all clerical, reactionary, and fascist organizations. Whether it is the Christian Democrats, the Falange, or the opponents of abortion rights, reaction makes a special appeal to women for support, claiming to address women's particular needs, taking advantage of their economic dependence under capitalism, and promising to relieve the inordinate burden women bear during any period of social crisis.

From the "kinder-kirche-kueche" propaganda of the Nazi movement to the Christian Democrats' mobilization of middle-class women in Chile for the march of the empty pots in 1971, history has demonstrated time and again that the reactionary mystique of motherhood-and-family is one of the most powerful conservatizing weapons wielded by the ruling class.

Chile once again tragically showed that if the workers movement fails to put forward and fight for a program and revolutionary perspective answering the needs of the masses of women, many petty-bourgeois and even working-class women will either be mobilized on the side of reaction, or neutralized as potential supporters of the proletariat.

The objective changes in women's economic and social role, the new radicalization of women and the changes in consciousness and attitudes this has brought about, make it more difficult for reaction to prevail. This is a new source of revolutionary optimism for the working class. The mass explosion of feminist consciousness in Spain as one of the most significant components of the rising class struggle in the post-Franco era also demonstrates the speed with which the ideological hold of the church and state can begin to crumble in a period of revolutionary ferment, even in sectors of the population where it has been very strong.

1. While the victorious proletarian revolution can create the material foundations for the socialization of domestic labor and lay the basis for the complete economic and social equality of women, this socialist reconstruction of society, placing all human relations on a new foundation, will not be accomplished immediately or automatically. During the period of transition to socialism the fight to eradicate all forms of oppression inherited from class society will continue. For example, the social division of labor into feminine and masculine tasks must be eliminated in all spheres of activity from daily life to the factories. Decisions will have to be made concerning the allocation of scarce resour-

ces. An economic plan that reflects the social needs of women, and provides for the most rapid possible socialization of domestic tasks, will have to be developed. The continuing autonomous organization of women will be a precondition for democratically arriving at the correct economic and social decisions. Thus even after the revolution the independent women's liberation movement will play an indispensable role in assuring the ability of the working class as a whole, male and female, to carry this process through to a successful conclusion.

Our class-struggle strategy for the fight against women's oppression, our answer to the question of how to mobilize the working class on the side of women, and the masses of women on the side of the working class, has three facets: our political demands, our methods of struggle, and our class independence.

### Our Demands

Through the totality of the system of demands we put forward—which deal with every issue from freedom of political association, to unemployment and inflation, to abortion and child care, to workers control and the arming of the proletariat—we seek to build a bridge from the current needs and struggles of the working masses and their level of consciousness to the culminating point of socialist revolution. As part of this transitional program we put forward demands that speak to the specific oppression of women.

Our program points to the issues around which women can begin to struggle to loosen the bonds of their oppression and challenge the prerogatives of the ruling class. It recognizes and provides answers for all aspects of women's oppression—legal, economic, social, sexual.

We direct our demands against those responsible for the economic and social conditions in which women's oppression is rooted—the ruling class, its government and agencies. We orient the women's liberation movement toward clear political goals. We present our demands and propaganda in such a way as to show how a society no longer based on private property, exploitation, and oppression would radically transform the lives of women in all spheres.

Our interlocking set of tasks and slogans includes immediate, democratic, and transitional demands. Some can and will be wrested from the ruling class in the course of the struggle leading toward the socialist revolution. Such victories bring inspiration, increasing confidence, and self-reliance. Other demands will be partially met. The most fundamental will be resisted to the end by those who control the property and wealth. They can be won only in the course of the conquest of power and the socialist reconstruction of society.

In fighting for these demands—both those providing solutions to the specific oppression of women and those answering



other needs of the oppressed nationalities and working class as a whole—masses of women will come to understand the interrelationship of their oppression as victims of class rule.

Our demands directed toward eliminating the specific oppression of women are centered on the following points:

1. *Full legal, political, and social equality for women.*

No discrimination on the bases of sex. For the right of all women to vote, engage in public activity, form or join political associations, live and travel where they want, engage in any occupations they choose. An end to all laws and regulations with special penalties for women. The extension to women of all democratic rights won by men.

2. *The right of women to control their own bodies.*

A woman has the sole right to choose whether or not to prevent or terminate pregnancy. This includes the rejection of population-control schemes which are tools of racism or class prejudice and which attempt to blame the evils of class society on the masses of working people and peasants.

a. An end to all government restrictions on abortion and contraception, including for minors, immigrant workers, and other noncitizens.

b. Free abortion on demand; no forced sterilization or any other government interference with the right of women to choose whether or when to bear children. Right to choose whatever method of abortion or contraception a woman prefers.

c. Free, widely disseminated birth control information and devices. State-financed birth control and sex education centers in schools, neighborhoods, hospitals, and factories.

d. Priority in medical research to development of totally safe, 100 percent effective contraceptives for men and women; an end to all medical and drug experimentation on women without their full, informed consent; nationalization of the drug industry.

3. *An end to the hypocrisy, debasement, and coercion of bourgeois and feudal family laws.*

a. Separation of church and state.

b. An end to all forced marriages and the buying and selling of wives. Abrogation of all laws against adultery. Abolition of laws giving men "conjugal rights" over their wives. An end to all laws, secular or religious, sanctioning penalties, physical abuse, or even murder of wives, sisters, and daughters for so-called crimes against male "honor."

c. Abolition of all laws forbidding marriage between men and women of different races, religions, or nationalities.

d. Marriage to be a voluntary process of civil registration.

e. The right to automatic divorce on request of either partner. State provision for economic welfare and job training for the divorced woman.

f. Abolition of the concept of "illegitimacy." An end to all discrimination against unwed mothers and their children. An end to the prisonlike conditions that govern special centers set up to take care of unwed mothers and other women who have nowhere else to go.

g. The rearing, social welfare, and education of children to be the responsibility of society, rather than the burden of individual parents. Abolition of all laws granting parents property rights and total control over children. Strict laws against child abuse.

h. An end to all laws victimizing prostitutes. An end to all laws reinforcing the double standard for men and women in sexual matters. An end to all laws and regulations victimizing youth for sexual activities.

i. An end to the mutilation of women through the practice of infibulation or clitorrectomy.

j. Abrogation of all antihomosexual laws. An end to all discrimination against homosexuals in employment, housing, child custody. An end to the insulting stereotyping of homosexuals in textbooks and mass media, or portrayal of homosexual relations as perverted and against nature.

k. Violence against women—often sanctioned by reactionary family laws—is a daily reality that all women experience in some form. If it is not the extreme of rape or beatings, there is still the ever present threat of sexual assault implicit in the widespread circulation of pornographic literature, and the obscene comments and gestures women are constantly subjected to in the streets and on the job.

We demand the elimination of laws predicated on the assumption that female rape victims are the guilty party; establishment of centers—independent of the police and courts—designed to welcome, counsel, and help battered wives, rape victims, and other female victims of sexual violence; improvement of public transportation, street lighting, and other public services that make it safer for women to go out alone.

Violence against women is a vicious product of the general social and economic conditions of class society. It inevitably increases during periods of social crisis. But we strive to educate women and men that sexual violence cannot be eradicated without changing the foundation from which the economic, social, and sexual degradation of women flows. We expose the racist and anti-working class use of antirape laws to victimize men of oppressed nationalities. We oppose demands raised by some feminists to inflict drastic penalties on convicted rapists or to strengthen the repressive apparatus of the state, whose cops are among the most notorious brutalizers of women.

We oppose any kind of censorship of literature, even under the guise of campaigns against pornography.

4. *Full economic independence for women.*

a. Guaranteed jobs at union wages for all women who want to work, coupled with a sliding scale of hours and wages to combat inflation and unemployment among men and women. A shorter work-week for all.

b. Elimination of laws that discriminate against women's right to receive and dispose of their own wages and property.

c. Equal pay for equal work. For a national minimum wage based on union scale.

d. No discrimination against women in any trade, profession, job category, apprenticeship, or training program.

e. Preferential hiring, training, job upgrading, and seniority adjustments for women and other superexploited layers of the labor force in order to overcome the effects of decades of systematic discrimination against them. No preferential hiring for men in traditionally female-dominated trades and industries.

f. Paid maternity leaves for father and mother with no loss of job or seniority.

g. Paid work leaves to care for sick children to be given to men and women alike.

h. The extension of beneficial protective legislation (providing special working conditions to women) to cover men, in order to improve working conditions for both men and women and prevent the use of protective legislation to discriminate against women.

i. A uniform retirement age for men and women, with each individual free to take retirement or not.

j. Part-time workers to be guaranteed the same hourly wages and benefits as full-time workers.

k. Compensation at union rates throughout periods of unemployment for all women and men, including youth who cannot find a place in the work force, regardless of marital status, or previous employment record. Unemployment compensation to be protected against inflation by automatic increases.

5. *Equal educational opportunities.*

a. Free, open admissions for all women to all institutions of education and all programs of study, including on-the-job training programs. Special preferential admissions programs to encourage women to enter traditionally male-dominated fields and learn skills and trades from which they have previously been excluded.

b. An end to all forms of pressuring women to prepare themselves for "women's work," such as homemaking, secretarial work, nursing, and teaching.

c. Special education and refresher courses to aid women reentering the job market.

d. An end to portrayal in textbooks and mass media of women as sex objects and stupid, weak, emotionally dependent creatures. Courses designed to teach the true history of women's struggles against their oppression. Physical education courses to

teach women to develop their strength and be proud of their athletic abilities.

e. No expulsion of pregnant students or unwed mothers, or segregation into special facilities.

#### 6. *Reorganization of society to eliminate domestic slavery of women.*

The family as an economic unit cannot be "abolished" by fiat. It can only be replaced over time. The goal of the socialist revolution is to create economic and social alternatives that are superior to the present family institution and better able to provide for the needs currently met, however poorly, by the family, so that personal relationships will be a matter of free choice and not of economic compulsion. To ultraleft propaganda and agitation for the "abolition" of the family, we counterpose:

a. Free, government-financed twenty-four-hour childcare centers and schools, conveniently located and open to all children from infancy to early adolescence regardless of parents' income, employment situation, or marital status; trained male and female personnel; elimination of all sexist educational practices; child-care policies to be decided by those who use the centers.

b. Free medical care for all and special child-care facilities for children who are ill.

c. Systematic development of low-cost, high-quality social services such as cafeterias, restaurants, and take-out food centers available to all; collective laundry facilities; housecleaning services organized on an industrial basis.

d. A crash, government-financed development program to provide healthful, uncrowded housing for all; no rent to exceed 10 percent of income; no discrimination against single women or women with children.

\* \* \*

These demands indicate the issues around which women will fight for their liberation, and show how this fight is interrelated with the demands raised by other oppressed sectors of society and the needs of the working class as a whole. It is in struggle along these lines that the working class will be educated to understand and oppose sexism in all its forms and expressions.

The women's liberation movement raises many issues. The development of the movement has already demonstrated that not all will come to the fore with equal force at any given time. Which demands to raise at any particular time in the course of a particular struggle, the best way to formulate specific demands so that they are understandable to the masses and able to mobilize them in action, when to advance new demands to move the struggle forward—the answer to those tactical problems is the function of the revolutionary party, the art of politics itself.

#### **Our Methods of Struggle**

1. We utilize proletarian methods of

mobilization and action in order to achieve these demands. Everything we do is geared to bring the masses themselves into motion, into struggle, whatever their current level of consciousness. The masses do not learn simply by being exposed to ideas or by the exemplary action of others. Only through their own direct involvement will the political consciousness of the masses develop, grow, and be transformed. Only through their own experience will millions of women be won as allies in the revolutionary struggle and come to understand the need to get rid of an economic system based on exploitation.

Our goal is to teach the masses to rely on their own united power. We utilize elections and other institutions of bourgeois democracy to clearly present our program to the broadest possible numbers of workers. But we counterpose extraparliamentary mass action—demonstrations, meetings, strikes, occupations—to reliance on elections, lobbying, parliaments, legislatures, and the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians who haunt them.

Our class-struggle methods are geared to awakening the initiatives of the great majority of women; to bring them together; to destroy their domestic isolation and their lack of confidence in their own abilities, intelligence, independence, and strength. Struggling together with them, we aim to show that class exploitation is the root of women's oppression and its elimination the only road to emancipation.

Just as we strive to develop the class consciousness of the women's liberation movement, we try to win the workers movement to take up the struggle against each aspect of women's oppression.

In every struggle, we aim to educate women to understand the class inequality that sharpens the oppression of the most exploited. We try to lead the movement to address itself first and foremost to mobilizing women of the working class and oppressed nationalities. Through the system of demands we advance and the propaganda we put forward, we strive to move the struggle in an anticapitalist direction. We highlight the social implications of demands and expose the logic of profit and the conditions of class society that limit the capacity of the ruling class to implement in practice even the concessions wrung from it through struggle.

2. The oppression of women as a sex constitutes the objective basis for the mobilization of women in struggle through their own organizations. For that reason the Fourth International supports and helps build the women's liberation movement.

By the women's movement we mean all the women who organize themselves at one level or another to struggle against the oppression imposed on them by this society: women's liberation groups, consciousness-raising groups, neighborhood groups, student groups, groups organized at workplaces, trade-union commissions, organizations of women of

oppressed nationalities, lesbian-feminist groups, action coalitions around specific demands. The women's movement is characterized by its heterogeneity, its penetration into all layers of society, and the fact that it is not tied to any particular political organization, even though various currents are active within it. Moreover, some groups and action coalitions, though led and sustained by women, are open to men as well, such as the National Organization for Women in the United States and the National Abortion Campaign in Britain.

While most women's groups initially developed outside the mass organizations of the working class, the deepening radicalization has led more and more working-class women to find ways to organize themselves within their class organizations. In Spain, large numbers of women joined the COs (Workers' Commissions) and brought life to their women's committees. In France, thousands of women now participate in trade-union commissions as well as Family Planning organizations and women's groups. In Bolivia, miners' wives have formed housewives' committees affiliated to the COB (Bolivian Workers Federation).

But all these are forms of the turbulent and still largely unstructured reality called the independent or autonomous women's movement.

By independent or autonomous we do not mean independent of the class struggle or the needs of the working class. On the contrary, only by fusing the objectives and demands of the women's movement with the struggle of the working class will the necessary forces be assembled to achieve women's goals.

By independent or autonomous we mean that the movement is organized and led by women; that it takes the fight for women's rights and needs as its first priority, refusing to subordinate that fight to any other interests; that it is not subordinate to the decisions or policy needs of any political tendency or any other social group; that it is willing to carry through the fight by whatever means and together with whatever forces prove necessary.

Clearly, not every group within the movement measures up to those criteria fully or equally, but such is the character of the independent women's liberation movement we seek to build.

3. The dominant organizational form of the women's movement has been all-female groups. These have emerged in virtually all arenas from the schools and churches to the factories and trade unions. This expresses the determination of women to take the leadership of their own organizations in which they can learn and develop and lead without fear of being put down or dictated to by men or having to compete with them from the start.

Before women can lead others they must throw off their feelings of inferiority and self-deprecation. They must learn to lead themselves. Feminist groups that con-

sciously and deliberately exclude men help many women to take the first steps toward discarding their own slave mentality, gaining confidence, pride, and courage to act as political beings.

The small "consciousness raising" groups that have emerged everywhere as one of the most prevalent forms of the new radicalization help many women to realize that their problems do not arise from personal shortcomings, but are socially created and common to other women.

If they remain inward-turned and limit themselves to discussion circles as a substitute for joining with others to act, they can become an obstacle to the further political development of the women involved. But they most often lay the groundwork for women to break out of their isolation for the first time, to gain confidence, and to move into action.

The desire of women to organize themselves in all-female groups is the opposite of the practice followed by many mass Stalinist parties that organize separate male and female youth organizations for the purpose of repressing sexual activity and reinforcing sex-stereotyped behavior—i.e., the inferiority of women. The independent all-female groups that have emerged today express in part the distrust many radicalizing women feel for the mass reformist organizations of the working class, which have failed so miserably to fight for their needs.

Our support for and work to build the independent women's liberation movement distinguishes the Fourth International today from many sectarian groups that claim to stand on Marxist orthodoxy as represented by their interpretations of the resolutions of the first four congresses of the Third International. Such groups reject the construction of any women's organizations except those tied directly to and under the political control of their party.

To those "Marxists" who claim that women's liberation groups organized on the basis of women only divide the working class along sex lines, we say it is not those fighting against their oppression who are responsible for creating or maintaining divisions. Capitalism divides the working class—by race, by sex, by age, by nationality, by skill levels, and by every other means possible. Our job is to organize and support the battles of the most oppressed and exploited layers who are raising demands that represent the interests of the entire class and who will lead the struggle for socialism. Those who suffer most from the old will fight the most energetically for the new.

4. The forms through which we work can vary greatly depending on the concrete circumstances in which our organizations find themselves. Our tactics are dictated by our strategic aim, which is to educate and lead in action forces much broader than ourselves, especially the decisive forces of the working class, to help build a mass women's liberation move-

ment, to strengthen a class-struggle wing of the women's movement, and to recruit the best cadre to the revolutionary party.

Factors that must be taken into account include the strength of our own forces; the size, character, and political level of the women's liberation forces; the strength of the liberal, Social Democratic, Stalinist, and centrist forces against whom we must contend; and the general political context in which we are working. It's a tactical question whether we should organize women's liberation groups on a broad socialist program, work through existing organizations of the women's liberation movement, build broad action coalitions around specific issues, work through trade-union commissions or caucuses in other mass organizations, combine several of these activities, or work through some altogether different forms.

No matter what organizational form we adopt, the fundamental question to be decided is the same: What specific issues and demands should be raised under the given circumstances in order to most effectively mobilize women and their allies in struggle?

5. There is no contradiction between supporting and building all-female organizations to fight for women's liberation, or for specific demands relating to women's oppression, and simultaneously building mass action coalitions involving both men and women to fight for the same demands. Campaigns around the right to abortion have provided a good example of this. Women will be the backbone of such campaigns, but since the fight is in the interests of the working masses as a whole, our perspective is to win support for the movement from all organizations of the working class and the oppressed.

6. Our perspective of trying to mobilize masses of women in action can often best be achieved in the present period through united-front-type action campaigns, which mobilize the broadest possible support around concrete demands. This is all the more true, given the relative weakness of the sections of the Fourth International and the relative strength of the liberals and our reformist, class-collaborationist opponents. For many women and men, participation in the actions organized by such campaigns has been their first step toward support for the political goals of the women's liberation movement. The united-front-type abortion campaigns in numerous countries provide an example of this type of action.

Through such united-front-type actions we can bring the greatest power to bear against the capitalist government and educate women and the working class concerning their own strength. Insofar as the liberal "friends" of women, the Stalinists, Social Democrats, and trade-union bureaucrats refuse to support such united campaigns for women's needs, they will isolate and expose themselves by their own inaction, opposition, or willingness to sub-

ordinate women's needs to their search for an alliance with the supposedly "progressive" sectors of the ruling class. And if mass pressure obliges them to support such actions, this can only broaden the mass appeal of the campaigns and increase the contradictions within the reformist and liberal forces.

As we have already seen so clearly around the abortion question, such united-front-type action campaigns are of particular importance in deepening the interaction between the independent women's movement and the labor movement, since they put the greatest pressure on the labor bureaucracy to respond.

7. Because our orientation is to build a women's movement that is basically working-class in composition and leadership, and because of the interconnection between the fight for women's liberation and the transformation of the trade unions into instruments that effectively defend the interests of the whole class, we give special importance to struggles by women in the unions and on the job. Our aim is to organize women to actively participate in their unions and in the women's liberation movement.

Here as elsewhere in capitalist society, women are subject to male domination, to discrimination as an inferior sex that is out of its "natural place." But the growing number of women in the work force and their deepening consciousness of their double oppression, have already brought significant changes in the attitudes of working women, strengthening their inclination to organize, unionize, and fight for their rights.

Women workers are involved in many struggles for general demands relating to the economic needs and job conditions of all workers. They also frequently raise the special needs of women workers such as equal pay, maternity benefits, child-care facilities, and preferential hiring and training. Both are central to the struggle for women's liberation as well as to the working class in general. Such struggles and demands by women workers will assume a greater weight as the class struggle deepens under the impact of the economic crisis. They will have a greater and greater impact on the women's liberation movement.

Most women who enter into such struggles do not think of themselves as feminists. They simply think they are entitled to equal pay for doing the same job as a man, or believe they have a right to be employed in some traditionally "masculine" line of work. They often protest vigorously that they are not feminists.

Working women who become involved in struggles on the job confront the same issues and conditions that have given rise to the independent women's movement.

They often face sexist harassment and abuse which is organized and promoted by their foremen and supervisors. Even when it comes from their fellow workers, it is

often the result of an atmosphere fostered by the employer. Women face the sometimes difficult job of fighting to convince the union to defend them against serious harassment and victimization by management personnel. They have to convince fellow workers that when they give women a hard time on the job, they are only doing the boss's job for him, and playing into his divide-and-rule tactics.

As women begin to play an active role, to take on leadership responsibilities, to prove their leadership capacities to themselves and others, to gain confidence and play an independent role, they develop a greater understanding of what the women's liberation movement is fighting for. The correct presentation of clear, concrete demands and objectives by the feminist movement is indispensable in reaching and involving millions of working women whose conscious political development begins as they try to confront their problems as women who must also work a job to earn a living.

8. The growing weight and role of women in the labor movement has an important impact on the consciousness of many male workers, who begin to see women more as equal partners in struggle and less as weak creatures who must be coddled and protected.

In this context, demands for preferential hiring, training, and job promotion for women in the traditionally male-dominated sectors of the economy have a special importance.

a. They challenge the division within the working class along sex lines, divisions that are fostered and maintained by the bosses in order to weaken the working class and hold down the wages and working conditions of the entire class.

b. They help educate both male and female workers to appreciate the material effects of discrimination against women, and the need for conscious measures to overcome the effects of centuries of enforced subjugation.

c. As women begin to break down the traditional division of labor along sex lines and establish their equal right to employment and their ability to perform "male" jobs as well as men, sexist attitudes and assumptions within the working class are undercut and the social division of labor in all spheres is challenged.

Struggles that open the doors for women to enter the educational, occupational, and leadership realms previously dominated by men pose in the clearest possible manner the eradication of women's inferior social status. Along with demands that raise the basic democratic rights of women, and those that go toward socializing the domestic labor women perform, such as the expansion and improvement of child-care facilities, they have a powerful educational impact within the working class.

9. Such demands also have a special importance as part of the fight to transform the unions into revolutionary instru-

ments of class struggle and challenge the sexist bias of the labor bureaucracy. The union bureaucracy bases itself on the most privileged layers of male workers, who usually see preferential demands as a threat to their immediate prerogatives. The most conscious elements of the bureaucracy thus adamantly oppose those demands raised by the most oppressed and exploited sectors of the working class which are aimed at eradicating the deep divisions within the class.

An important part of our strategic orientation to develop a class-struggle left wing in the trade-union movement is to utilize the growing weight of forces like the women's liberation movement to pose the key social and political issues on which the labor movement should be playing a leadership role.

As the ranks of the unions are won to support such struggles the reactionary antiwoman and therefore anti-working class policies of the labor bureaucracy will be exposed and new forces will come forward to lead.

10. There are many difficulties in organizing women workers. Precisely because of their oppression as women, they are less likely to be unionized or to have a strong class consciousness. Their participation in the labor force is frequently more sporadic. Their double burden of responsibilities and chores at home is fatiguing and time-consuming, leaving them less energy for political and trade-union activity. The gross inadequacy of child-care facilities makes participation in meetings especially difficult.

For these reasons, the fight to convince the trade unions to take up the special demands of women is inseparable from the fight for trade-union democracy. Trade-union democracy includes not only issues such as the right of the membership to vote on all question, election of all leadership bodies and personnel, and the right to form tendencies. It also implies special measures that permit women to participate with full equality—child-care facilities organized by the union during meetings, union commissions that deal specifically with women's needs, the right to meet in women's caucuses when necessary, special provisions to meet during working hours, and measures to assure adequate representation of women on all leadership bodies. Within the workers movement, challenging sexist attitudes and practices is an integral part of the fight for trade-union democracy and class solidarity.

11. If we give special importance to the struggles of women working outside the home it is not because we deprecate the oppression suffered by housewives. On the contrary, we understand and put forward a program that answers the deep problems faced by women in the home, the overwhelming majority of whom are working-class women, who will spend some part of their life in the labor market in addition to carrying out their domestic responsibili-

ties. We offer a perspective of escape from the mind-deadening drudgery of housework, the isolation it imposes on each individual woman, the economic dependence of housewives, and the fear and insecurity this produces. We counterpose our program of socialization of housework and the integration of women into the productive labor force on an equal basis to the alternatives offered by reaction—a glorification of housework and motherhood and proposals to compensate women for their domestic slavery through wages for housework or similar superficially alluring schemes.

As capitalism in crisis shifts more and more economic burdens onto the individual family, it is often housewives, responsible for trying to stretch the family income to cover the basic necessities, who first take to the streets in protest over food shortages and soaring inflation. Such movements can be a first step toward political consciousness and collective action for thousands of women. They offer an opening and a challenge to the labor movement to join with and help provide leadership and direction for such protests—which can develop with explosive rapidity. Demands for joint worker-consumer price surveillance committees provide common ground for the labor movement, protesting housewives, and other consumers.

Unlike housewives, however, working women are already semiorganized by the labor market. Their place within the working class, within the workers movement, and their economic status put them in a position to play a pivotal leadership role in the struggles of women and of the working class as a whole.

12. There is no contradiction between building the independent women's liberation movement, building trade unions, and building a revolutionary Marxist party of women and men.

The struggle for socialism requires all three. They serve different functions. The mass feminist movement mobilizes women in struggle around their needs and through their own independent forms of organization. The trade unions are the basic economic defense organizations of the working class. The mass revolutionary Marxist party, through program and action, provides leadership for the working class and its allies, including women, and uncompromisingly orients all facets of the class struggle toward a combined drive to establish a workers government and abolish capitalism.

There is no objective basis for a separate revolutionary Marxist women's organization. Unless women and men share equally in the rights and responsibilities of membership and leadership in a party that develops a political program and activities that represent the interests of all the oppressed and exploited, the party can never lead the working class to accomplish its historic tasks.

We maintain that there are no exclu-

sively "women's issues." Every question of concern to the female half of humanity is likewise a broader social question of vital interest to the working class as a whole. While we raise demands that deal with the specific oppression of women, we have no separate program for women's liberation. Our demands are an integral part of our transitional program for the socialist revolution.

13. The program of the revolutionary party synthesizes the lessons of struggles against all forms of economic and social exploitation and oppression. The party expresses the historic interests of the proletariat through its program and action. Thus it not only learns from the participation of its members in the women's liberation movement. It also has an indispensable role to play. Through our work to build the independent women's movement, we deepen the party's understanding of women's oppression and the struggle against it. And we also strive to win ever greater forces to an effective strategy for women's liberation, that is, to a class-struggle perspective.

We do not demand agreement with our program as a precondition for building the independent women's movement. On the contrary, a broad-based movement, within which a wide range of personal experiences and political perspectives can contend in a framework of democratic debate and discussion, can only strengthen the political confidence and combativity of the movement. It enhances the possibility of developing a correct perspective.

However, we do not strive for the organic unity of all components of the women's movement at all costs. We fight for the broadest possible unity *in action* on the basis of demands and activities that genuinely reflect the objective needs of women, which is also the program in the interests of the working class.

We try to build the strongest possible wing within the women's liberation movement of those who share our class-struggle perspectives. A consistent struggle against all aspects of women's oppression means resolutely combatting all attempts to divert women's struggles into the reformist deadend of managing the rulers' austerity programs, or towards a search for individual solutions. We strive to recruit the most conscious and combative to the revolutionary party.

Our goal is to win the leadership of the women's liberation movement by showing women in practice that we have the program and perspectives that can lead to liberation. This is not a sectarian stance. Nor does it indicate a manipulative attempt to dominate or control the mass movement. On the contrary, it reflects our conviction that the struggle against women's oppression can be won only if the feminist movement develops in an anticapitalist direction. Such an evolution is not automatic. It depends on the demands put forward, the class forces toward

which the feminist movement orients, and the forms of action in which it engages. Only the conscious intervention of the revolutionary party and its ability to win the confidence and leadership of women fighting for their liberation offers any guarantee that the women's struggle will ultimately be victorious.

14. We are concerned with all aspects of women's oppression. However, as a political party based on a program that represents the historic interests of the working class and all the oppressed, our prime task is to help direct the women's liberation movement toward political action that can effectively lead to the eradication of private property in which that oppression is rooted. Around every facet of women's oppression we strive to develop demands and actions that challenge the social and economic policies of the bourgeoisie and point toward the solutions that would be possible were it not for the fact that all social policies are decided on the basis of maximizing private profits.

Our approach to the struggle for women's liberation as an eminently political question often brings us into conflict with petty-bourgeois radical-feminist currents, who counterpose the development of new individual "life-styles" to political action directed against the state. They blame men instead of capitalism. They counterpose reforming men as individuals, trying to make them less sexist, to organizing against the bourgeois government which defends and sustains the institutions of class society responsible for male supremacy and women's oppression. They often attempt to build utopian "counterinstitutions" in the midst of class society.

As revolutionists we recognize that the problems many women seek to resolve in this way are real and preoccupying. Our criticism is not directed against individuals who try to find a personal way out from under the intolerable pressures capitalist society places on them. But we point out that for the masses of workers there is no "individual" solution. They must fight collectively to change society before their "life-style" will be significantly altered. Ultimately there are no purely private solutions for any of us. Individual escapism is a form of utopianism that can only end in disillusionment and the dispersal of revolutionary forces.

#### Our Class Independence

1. Political independence is the third facet of our class-struggle strategy for the fight against women's oppression. We do not defer or subordinate any demand, action, or struggle of women to the political needs and concerns of either the bourgeois or reformist political forces with their parliamentary shadowboxing and electoral maneuvers.

2. We fight to keep women's liberation organizations and struggles independent of all bourgeois forces and parties. We oppose attempts to divert women's strug-

gles toward the construction of women's caucuses inside of or oriented to capitalist parties or bourgeois politics, as has occurred in the United States, Canada, and Australia. We oppose the formation of a women's political party, such as arose in Belgium and has been advocated by some feminist groups in Spain and elsewhere. The election of more women to public office on a liberal-bourgeois or radical petty-bourgeois program, while a reflection of changing attitudes, can do nothing to further the interests of women.

Women's liberation is part of the historic struggle of the working class against capitalism. We strive to make that link a conscious one on the part of women and of the working class. But we do not reject support from bourgeois figures or politicians who voice their agreement with any of our demands or goals. That strengthens our side, not theirs. It is their contradiction, not ours.

We strive for united-front action on specific demands and campaigns with the broadest possible forces, especially the mass reformist parties of the working class. But we reject the political perspectives of the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties.

The policies and conduct of both these currents within the working-class movement are based on preserving the institutions of the capitalist system, including the family, regardless of any lip service they may pay to the struggles of women against their oppression. Both are ready to subordinate the needs of women to whatever class-collaborationist deal they are trying to negotiate at the moment, whether it be with the monarchy in Spain, the Christian Democrats in Italy, or the bourgeois opposition parties in West Germany or Britain. The Stalinists never tire of telling women that the road to happiness is through "advanced democracy" or the "antimonopoly coalition." They advise women not to demand more than "democracy" (i.e., capitalism) can give. The Social Democrats, especially when they are managing "austerity" programs for the bourgeoisie, are never slow to implement the cutbacks in social services demanded by the ruling class, measures that frequently hit women the hardest.

4. It is only through an uncompromising programmatic and organizational break from the bourgeoisie and all forms of class collaborationism that the working class and its allies, including women struggling for their liberation, can be mobilized as a powerful and self-confident force capable of carrying the socialist revolution through to the end. The task of the revolutionary Marxist party is to provide the leadership to educate the working masses, including the women's movement, through action and propaganda in this class-struggle perspective.

#### Tasks of the Fourth International Today

1. The new rise of the women's libera-



tion movement has proceeded unevenly on a world scale, and feminist consciousness has had varying degrees of impact. But the speed with which revolutionary ideas and lessons of struggle are transmitted from one country to another, and from one sector of the world revolution to another, ensures the continuing spread of women's liberation struggles. Increasingly widespread questioning of the traditional role of women creates an atmosphere conducive to Marxist education and propaganda, as well as concrete action in support of the liberation of women. Through our press and propaganda activities the Fourth International has growing opportunities to explain the source and nature of women's oppression, our program for eradicating that oppression along with the class society in which it is rooted, and the revolutionary dynamic of women's struggle for liberation.

2. The involvement of our sections and sympathizing organizations in the women's liberation movement in numerous countries has shown that considerable potential exists for helping to organize and lead action campaigns around issues raised in the struggle against women's oppression. Such campaigns often provide opportunities especially for our women comrades to gain valuable experience and to play a leadership role in the mass movement. They are frequently an avenue through which even relatively small numbers of comrades can play a significant political role and win influence among much broader forces. Our support for and active participation in the women's liberation movement has already won us many new members.

The orientation of the sections and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International is to commit our forces to building the women's liberation movement and action campaigns around specific issues like abortion, child care, the right to a job, and other aspects of our program.

We also encourage international solidarity in the women's movement, and where possible, international coordination of action campaigns around common issues. The international campaign on abortion rights, in which our sections have frequently played a decisive role, is a good example of the type of international coordination that is possible.

3. In addition to participating in all the various independent organizational forms that have emerged as part of the radicalization of women, we must integrate women's liberation propaganda and activity into all our areas of work, from the trade unions to the student milieu. It is especially among the youth—students, young workers, young housewives—that we will find the greatest receptivity to our ideas and program and readiness for action.

Women's liberation work is not the responsibility of women comrades alone, although they will have to lead it. As with

every other question, the entire membership and leadership of the party must be knowledgeable about our work, collectively participate in determining our political line, and take responsibility for carrying out our campaigns and propaganda into all areas of the class struggle where we are active. Male as well as female comrades will help to drive this forward.

4. To organize and carry out systematic women's liberation work, sections of the Fourth International should establish commissions or fractions composed of those involved in this work. Such fractions would include male as well as female comrades depending on the activities in which we are involved.

They should help the appropriate leadership bodies to give regular attention to all aspects of our work around issues and demands raised by the women's liberation movement, including proposals for internal education of our own membership. By establishing such commissions and fractions which—together with the leadership bodies—are responsible for discussing and implementing systematic work we can take maximum advantage of the opportunities and openings, and make our own membership fully aware of the political importance of the struggle for women's liberation.

5. Systematic education about the history of women's oppression and struggles, and the theoretical and political questions involved, should be organized within the sections of the Fourth International. This education should not be limited to special schools from time to time but must become part of the daily life of the organization. It must be part of the basic political education of each member as they acquire and deepen their understanding of the fundamental positions of revolutionary Marxism.

We have no illusions that sections can be islands of the future socialist society floating in a capitalist morass, or that individual comrades can fully escape the education and conditioning absorbed from the everyday effort to survive in class society. Sexist attitudes can and do sometimes find expression within the ranks of the Fourth International. But it is a condition of membership in the Fourth International that the conduct of comrades and sections be in harmony with the principles on which we stand. We educate the members of the Fourth International to a full understanding of the character of women's oppression and the pernicious ways in which it is expressed. We strive to create an organization in which language, jokes, personal violence, and other acts expressing chauvinist bigotry toward women are not tolerated, any more than acts and expressions of racist bigotry would be allowed to pass unchallenged.

6. Women members of our organizations face special problems, both material and psychological, stemming from their oppression in class society. They often face

the same time-consuming domestic responsibilities as other women, especially if they have children. They are marked by the same lack of self-confidence, timidity, and fear of leadership that all women are educated from birth to consider as "natural." These obstacles to the recruitment, integration, and leadership development of women comrades must be discussed and consciously dealt with within the party.

As on all other questions, the leadership has the responsibility to take the lead:

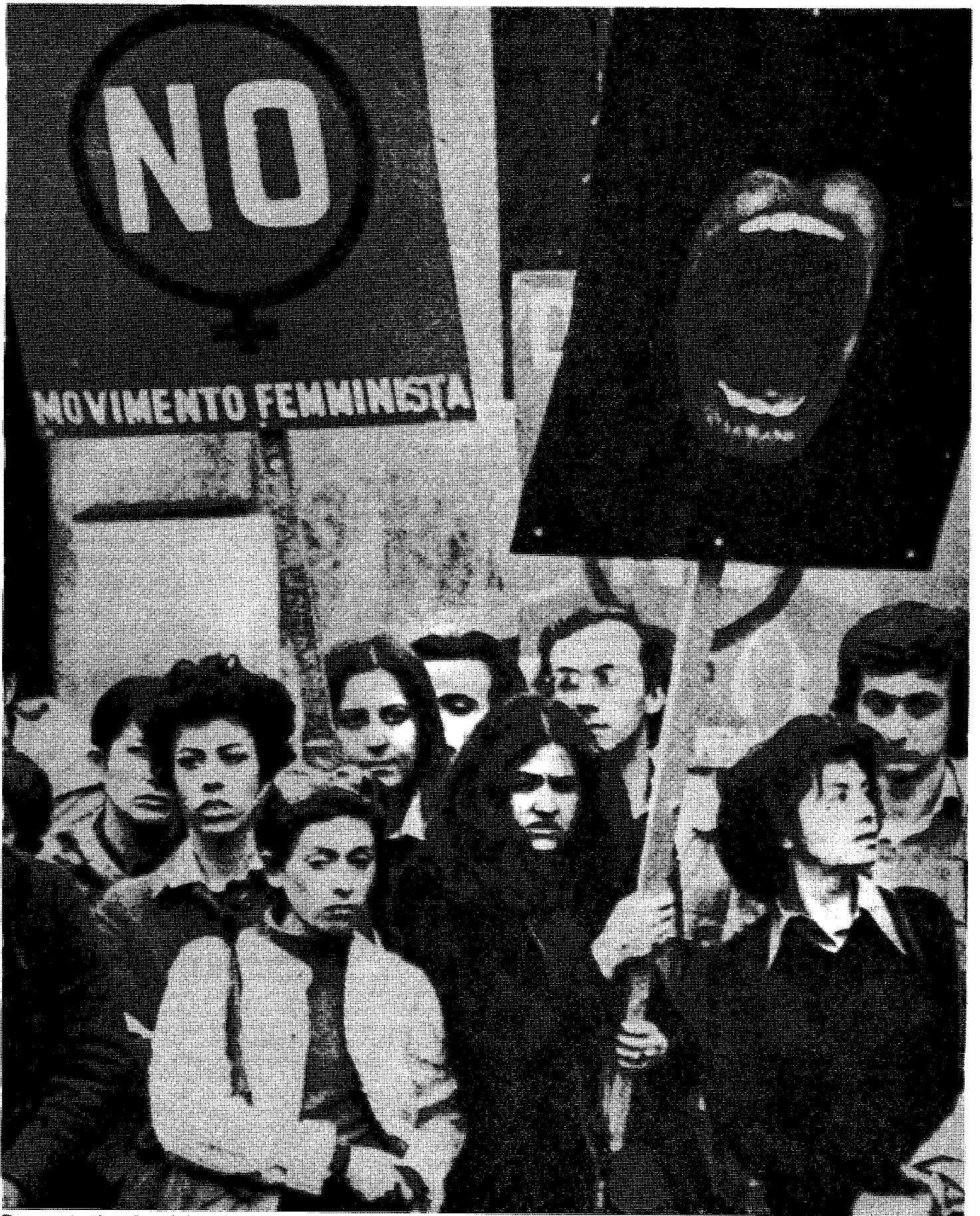
Conscious attention must be given to the education, political development, and leadership training of women comrades. This should be a constant concern of all leadership bodies at all levels of the sections and the international. Consideration should be given to assuring that women are encouraged and, more importantly, helped to take on assignments that challenge them to develop their full capacities—teaching classes, writing articles, giving political reports, being public spokespersons and candidates for the organization, leading areas of work. Only by taking such deliberate and conscious measures can we maximize the development of our women cadre and assure that when they are elected to leadership bodies at all levels, this reflects a genuine expansion of a self-confident and strong political leadership cadre, not an artificial measure that can prove destructive to both individual comrades and the organization as a whole.

Within such a general framework of conscious leadership development, we strive to maximize the number of women in the central leadership bodies of our sections and sympathizing organizations and international.

This process will be facilitated by the fact that a growing number of comrades will be in the vanguard of women fighting their way into non-traditional jobs as part of the industrial working class. The self-confidence they gain from being part of the most powerful and organized sectors of the proletariat, the respect they earn from both male and female workers, and the experience they acquire as leaders of our class, are a crucial part of transforming the consciousness of our organization and developing party leaders who are women.

For women comrades especially the difficulties created by the gross inadequacy of state-funded child-care facilities are often a barrier to their full participation in meetings and other activities. As our sections grow and become more working class in composition, we will be recruiting more comrades who have children.

In our public activities and through our intervention in the mass movement, we strive to make broader social forces conscious of the need for organized child care. We try to win the labor movement to support and put high priority on the fight for socially organized and funded child-care services. We demand that mass workers organizations such as trade unions organize meeting times to facilitate



Demonstration for right of divorce in Italy.

the participation of women members, and utilize their resources to provide child-care facilities.

Internally our comrades must be constantly aware of the extra burdens and obstacles that stem from social and economic inequality generated by capitalism, especially for women and comrades of oppressed nationalities. We make allowances for this. In this perspective the leadership has the obligation to work with comrades who have family responsibilities to try to find collective solutions that will enable them to minimize the obstacles to their political activity. For example, when a comrade with children is asked to take on a full-time assignment, the leadership has the responsibility to discuss and try to resolve the special needs, financial or otherwise.

At the same time, we recognize that there are limits to what the party can do. The party itself cannot assume the material obligation to eliminate the economic and social inequalities among comrades created by class society. We cannot assure

the social services capitalism does not provide. The party does not have a generalized obligation to provide child care in order to equalize the personal situations of all comrades, nor can child-care duties be imposed on any comrade.

Such an approach would change the very purpose and character of the party as a political organization. What binds us together is our common determination to destroy the system that perpetuates inequality, our agreement on the program to accomplish that aim, and our loyalty to the party based on that program.

The process of educating our own members will take place along with, and be facilitated by, the growing involvement of our sections in the struggle for women's liberation. The impact of this struggle on the consciousness and attitudes of all comrades has already been profound. The transformation of the women cadre of the international, reflecting our involvement in the struggle for women's liberation, is a development of historic dimensions. The growing self-confidence, political maturity,

and leadership capacities of the women comrades of the Fourth International constitute a significant expansion of the effective forces of revolutionary leadership on a world scale.

The new rise of women's struggles internationally and the emergence of a strong women's liberation movement prior to revolutionary struggles for power is a development of prime importance to the world party of socialist revolution. It increases the political power of the working class and the likelihood that the international revolution will be successful in carrying through to the end its task of socialist reconstruction. The rise of the women's liberation movement is an additional guarantee against the bureaucratic degeneration of future revolutions.

The struggle to liberate women from the bondage in which class society has placed them is a struggle to free all human relationships from the shackles of economic compulsion and to propel humanity along the road to a higher social order.

November 1979

## Resolution on Internal Women's Caucuses

In recent years a number of sections of the Fourth International have adopted resolutions permitting the organization of women's caucuses—that is, internal meetings open to women comrades only.

While we support and fight for the right of women to form such caucuses in non-Leninist organizations, we are opposed to such groups within the revolutionary party.

The emergence of women's caucuses in some sections has reflected very real political problems and leadership defaults.

There has been insensitivity to the depth of the special problems women comrades face, failure to understand the political importance of the women's liberation movement and its place in the class struggle, slowness in responding to the rise of the feminist movement, or reluctance to assign comrades to women's liberation work and integrate it into all arenas of our political activity. Because of these errors we have unnecessarily lost valuable cadres and political opportunities. This kind of situation has frequently led to an explosion of resentment by comrades, especially women, who recognize that sexist attitudes often underlie these errors and make them more difficult to correct.

In an effort to change this kind of situation, women comrades in a number of sections have demanded the right to meet together in caucuses, from which all male comrades are excluded, to discuss the internal situation in the party.

Our support for the *right of women to caucus* in organizations in the mass move-

ment flows from the fact that other organizations are not based on a revolutionary Marxist program that represents the historical interests of women and the working class. Their leaderships are not democratically elected to defend such a program. There is a contradiction, for example, between the interests of the trade-union bureaucracy and the needs of the union membership and of women. In that situation the right to organize women's caucuses becomes a question of elementary democracy and part of the struggle to put the union on a class-struggle political course.

But the revolutionary Marxist party can accomplish the historic tasks it has set itself only if it is capable of uniting in its ranks and leadership the most conscious and combative representatives of the working class and especially its most oppressed and exploited layers. To do this it must overcome the deep divisions fostered by capitalism and forge a cadre that has profound confidence in its common commitment and understanding of the tasks. This is concretized in the program of the revolutionary Marxist party, which synthesizes the experiences, demands, and interrelation between the struggles of all the exploited and oppressed and integrates them in a strategic line of march toward the proletarian revolution.

From this program we derive our organizational norms. Just as we have only one program, we have only one class of membership. Every comrade, male or female, Black or white, worker or petty bourgeois,

young or old, literate or illiterate, has the same rights when it comes to determining the party's program and activity, the same responsibilities for implementing those decisions. The party's political program, line of intervention, and internal functioning must be democratically discussed and decided with all members participating. All internal fractions, commissions, tendencies, or other formations must be organized democratically—i.e., open to all members assigned to a particular area of

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*This resolution was submitted by the United Secretariat. The vote of delegates and fraternal observers was: 63 for, 36.5 against, 3 abstentions, 10.5 not voting.*

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work or all members who agree on the platform of a tendency, regardless of sex, race, age, language, class origin, or whatever.

In a revolutionary Marxist party, whatever its shortcomings and weaknesses may be, there is no inherent contradiction between program, leadership, and ranks. Thus the organization of women-only caucuses cuts across the internal democracy of the party and the construction of the kind of organization we need to realize our

working-class program.

Since they are usually established for the express purpose of discussing internal problems *only*, women's caucuses are incapable of charting a course to resolve internal contradictions. That can only be done by charting a correct course of intervention in the mass movement to build the party. In the process the membership is educated and transformed.

Repeated experiences have shown—in practice as well as in theory—that the formation of women's caucuses does not help to resolve the problems that led to their formation. Rather they create centrifugal dynamics, fostering the impression that the party is a federation of conflicting interest groups each one fighting for its own program and priorities rather than an

organization united on the basis of a common program and assessment of tasks. Often the caucuses reinforce the attitude that it is only the women comrades who are responsible for resolving the problems. They turn the women in on themselves in a destructive way. They deepen the frustration and political disorientation of both male and female comrades, and often hasten rather than prevent the departure of women from the organization.

Because they are not based on internal democracy caucuses also undermine our centralism in action. They stand in contradiction to our program and our democratic centralist organizational norms.

Strong pressure to organize such caucuses is a danger sign that the *leadership* has failed to meet the political challenge

of educating the party on all aspects of the struggle for women's liberation and its place in the work of the party. The problems cannot be resolved by condemning the women comrades who are seeking a solution. The response must be fundamentally political, not organizational, and the leadership must take the responsibility for correcting errors, and educating and leading.

The problems that exist can be resolved only through a full political discussion leading to (a) the implementation of consistent work on women's liberation, integrated into all areas of activity; and (b) conscious measures of cadre development which can integrate women comrades and overcome sexist habits and attitudes.

November 1979



# Resolution on Europe



Striking autoworkers in Madrid.



# The Crisis in Capitalist Europe and the Present Tasks of the Fourth International

1. May 1968 marked a fundamental shift in the relationship of class forces in capitalist Europe. This turn occurred in the context of a deepening crisis of both Stalinism and imperialism—the shakeup of bureaucratic control and the new rise of mass struggle in the deformed workers states (Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, and China); the development of the Indochinese revolution; and the stepping up of the national liberation struggle in

the Portuguese colonies. At the same time that the Kremlin and imperialism were signing accords formalizing the division of Europe established at Potsdam and Yalta (the Berlin Accords of the Four, treaties between the Federal Republic of Germany, the Democratic Republic of Germany, the Soviet Union, and Poland), the working classes of capitalist Europe and the “people’s democracies” were challenging the status quo.

methods—but also by the nature of the demands and the forms of these struggles.

Wage demands remained primary, but the demand for equal wage increases for all occupied a more and more prominent place. This was accompanied by challenges to some of the more despotic aspects of the capitalist organization of work (elements of workers control were introduced), as well as the functions and powers of supervisory personnel, and working and safety conditions. Struggles around jobs and the demand for a shorter work week to resist the intensification of exploitation due to the introduction of new techniques and forms of organization of work, were already beginning to be seen. More generally, struggles to defend and extend freedom of trade-union activity on the job were a constant feature of working-class mobilizations in most countries of capitalist Europe. Factory occupations and the tend-

## The Period Opened in 1968

2. The fundamental features of this turn and the ensuing prolonged crisis in capitalist Europe are as follows:

2.1. The new upsurge of working-class struggles reflects the qualitative change in the class relationship of forces. The roots of this upsurge lie in a sharpening of the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production after more than two decades of expansion, which had socially reinforced the working class.

2.2. A profound crisis of all social relations and bourgeois institutions has emerged in capitalist Europe. The first effects of this crisis became apparent prior to May 1968, and have deepened since. One of the most significant expressions of this was the youth radicalization, which found its first voice in the student movement. This movement was fed both by the social crisis affecting the educational system and by the successful anti-imperialist struggles of the Cuban, Algerian, Indochinese, and African peoples. It was in the course of student mobilizations that the first signs emerged of the women’s libera-

tion movement, which was to burgeon in the following years. (See the world congress resolution, “Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women’s Liberation.”)

2.3. In the early 1960s—Belgium in 1960-61, Spain in 1962, France in 1963, Italy in 1962, Britain in 1962—the combativity of the working class began to rise. These struggles expressed workers’ resistance to capitalist rationalization of crisis-ridden branches of industry (such as mining), as well as the potential for mobilizing layers of the working class concentrated in fast-developing industries (such as steel, automobiles, chemicals, and petrochemicals). These mobilizations, even though they were followed by a pause or retreat, were harbingers of the turn of 1968-69.

May 1968 in France and the autumn of 1969 in Italy were characterized not only by an explosive increase in the number of strikes, by the breadth of working-class participation, by the irresistible and semi-spontaneous upsurge of the mass movement, which tended to come into conflict with the labor bureaucracy and its

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*This resolution was submitted by the United Secretariat. The vote of delegates and fraternal observers was: 89 for, 12.5 against, 7.5 abstentions, 4 not voting.*

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ency toward self-organization (Strike committees, factory committees, etc.)—despite all their limitations—revealed the aspirations of the masses and the depth of the crisis of capitalist relations of production.

2.4. The emergence of or development toward prerevolutionary crises in France in May-June 1968, Italy in the autumn of 1969, Portugal from March to November 1975, and Spain at the end of 1976, as well as the tendency toward a simultaneous

appearance of revolutionary upsurges in these four southern European countries between 1974 and 1976, highlight the character of the period opened up by the French May. So too does the struggle against British imperialism in the North of Ireland which began in October 1968.

Socialist revolution is once again on the agenda in capitalist Europe, not only in the historic but in the immediate sense.

However, this workers upsurge developed very unevenly from one country to another. It varied according to the diverse experiences of the workers in the period leading up to 1968, the dissimilarity of political traditions and leadership in the working class, as well as the historic resources possessed by each ruling class. Moreover, the upsurge proceeded in anything but a linear fashion. However, in most countries the workers struggle oscillated around a higher level than in the previous period. Where setbacks occurred, the masses showed a great capacity for recovery.

2.5. The organized workers movement has been strengthened in all the countries of capitalist Europe. The trade unions have increased their influence in the key branches of industry. The growing industrialization of all economic activity has given rise to a growing proletarianization of sectors of the so-called new middle classes. These layers of wage earners have joined trade unions. They increasingly identify with the working class (e.g., bank, insurance company, and public service employees, technicians). The mass organizations have proven their power of attraction, and when the unions take initiatives that correspond to the needs and aspirations of the masses, they receive wide support, even where the degree of unionization is not very high (as in France). Legalization of the trade unions, and the formation of an important trade-union movement in Portugal and Spain, along with the growth of the trade unions in Greece and Turkey, have added to the arsenal of the working class across Europe. This constitutes an organizational expression of the change taking place in this period.

Along with the growth of the organized workers movement, there has been a change in the relationship of forces inside these organizations between the bureaucratic leaderships and a broad layer of advanced workers.

Of course, there remain important gaps in the workers' system of defense, such as the lack of unionization among millions of immigrant workers, and their relegation to the most menial jobs, and the low level of unionization of the female work force—which constitutes the majority in several branches, such as textiles, clothing, health, and services—although some progress has been made. These gaps have widened since the recession and in the framework of the prolonged stagnation.

2.6. The rise in the level of organization of wage earners, and the upsurge of struggles, have also been reflected in a general

trend toward a swelling of the ranks of the workers parties and a broadening of their electoral support among sectors of the masses who are entering politics for the first time. Their influence is widening. Their control over the mass movement, though weaker than in the period prior to 1968, is still effective, above all in the electoral and overall political arena. However, the process of politicalization, which is reflected in these parties' own growth, has the potential to undermine their hold. A growing layer of advanced workers has emerged. These workers have served their apprenticeship in numerous struggles, and have acquired trade-union, and often political, experience. On several occasions they have challenged the orders of the bureaucratic leaderships. They represent a decisive factor in the building of a revolutionary party of the working class. On the electoral plane, this phenomenon has been partly expressed in the votes won in various countries by centrist or Trotskyist organizations, which even workers belonging to, or influenced by, the SPs and CPs have voted for. By doing so, they were registering a protest against the line of their leaderships.

2.7. The change in the class relationship of forces has led to a political crisis for a series of regimes and governments (e.g., the crises of the center-left in Italy; Gaullist bonapartism in France; the Conservative government in Britain in 1972-74; the CDU-CSU regime and the "big-party" coalition in West Germany; the dictatorships in Spain, Portugal, and Greece; and the dissolution of the Stormont regime in Northern Ireland).

The bourgeois parties are riddled with factionalism and some have split apart. The driving force behind these conflicts is not differences over technical-economic options, but disagreement on how to respond to the workers upsurge. This is not simply a feature of the bourgeois democracies. It was also present in Greece, Portu-

gal, and Spain prior to the disappearance of the dictatorial regimes, and signaled their approaching end.

2.8. The limitations we have noted in these impetuous upsurges of the mass movement do not stem from the inherent strength of bourgeois institutions. True, the bourgeoisie has considerable political experience in manipulating all the devices of bourgeois democracy. The reserves built up over the long period of expansion could thus be used to brake the momentum of mobilizations. However, the decisive factor has been the policy of the bureaucratic leaderships of the trade unions and workers parties. In one or another variant, they have put forward their policy of class collaboration, fragmenting mobilizations and strictly limiting their scope. At all the high points of workers upsurges, they have given the bourgeoisie its main weapons, including propping up the institutions of bourgeois democracy and extolling their alleged virtues as against trends such as the growth of factory committees that point toward workers councils. To do this, they play upon illusions of the masses in identifying democratic freedoms and material gains with bourgeois democracy, illusions which have been reinforced by the experience of Stalinism and fascism, as well as by the fact that the period of material gains for the working class since 1945 occurred largely under regimes of bourgeois democracy. The reformist leaderships represent the central obstacle to a proletarian victory. Despite the opportunism and compromises of these leaderships, the working class will not throw them off until big class confrontations take place, a large number of recognized worker cadres already exists, organized in a revolutionary party whose base and numerical strength are sufficient for it to be seen by broad layers as an alternative instrument, and unless the basic elements of a class-struggle left wing in the trade unions exist.

### **The Capitalist Recession in Europe, Interimperialist Contradictions, and the Bourgeois Offensive**

3. In 1974-75, all the big imperialist powers were hit simultaneously by a recession. The recession was the outcome of a phase of falling profit rates, which could be seen in all the capitalist economies, combined with an expansion of excess production capacity (overproduction) in a growing number of key branches of industry. This crisis of overproduction overlapped with the end of the long period of expansion following the 1948-49 years. While the scope of the recession cannot be compared to the 1929-32 crisis, its major symptoms will remain a constant feature of the years to come.

The recovery since 1976 has been uneven among the different European countries, as well as among the different branches of the economy. On the world market, de-

mand is increasing very slowly, and the rate of productive investments remains very low in most branches of industry. This counteracts the cumulative effects of the upturn.

A new recession hitting the main imperialist countries approaches.

Even at the highest point of the recovery, industrial production remained either only slightly above or even below the level reached during the last boom. The limited nature of the recovery, combined with steps toward rationalization and raising productivity, has meant that unemployment has remained steady and is even growing in most countries. Inflation remains high, especially in comparison to the average level in the 1950s and 1960s.

3.1. The recession changed the context in

which the class struggle in capitalist Europe is unfolding.

The bourgeoisie is no longer capable of making major concessions in an attempt to stem mobilizations. It is compelled by economic necessity to launch a wide-ranging attack on the gains won by the workers during the years of expansion. These blows must be struck above all in the decisive sectors of the capitalist economy (industry, transportation, communications). At the beginning of the crisis, the bourgeoisie was able to single out the weakest sectors for attack. Now it must strike at the main body of the working class.

This battle is being fought in the context of a further shift in the international relationship of class forces to the detriment of imperialism, as a result of the weakening of world capitalism by the defeat of American imperialism in Indochina and the first worldwide recession since 1937-38.

The recession broke out in the context of a change in the class relationship of forces in capitalist Europe, which shifted to the advantage of the proletariat in 1968-69. Before the development of the economic crisis and the launching of austerity policies, the European working class had not suffered any big political defeats similar to the defeat of 1945-47 or even 1958 in France. In spite of unemployment and attacks on their standard of living, the workers retain confidence in their strength and in their mass organizations. Thus, the capitalist class has launched its offensive from a position of weakness. This explains why it is having trouble implementing on the social level the few partial victories it has scored in the political arena. It also explains why governmental instability is a permanent feature.

The credibility of the reforms proposed by the bureaucratic leaderships is objectively undermined by the gravity and duration of the crisis. Moreover, they all tend to go along with austerity, presenting it as the only solution for overcoming the crisis and "reforming the system." In this new social and economic situation, the limitations of a spontaneous upsurge of the mass movement can be seen. The need for an overall political solution permeates all major working class mobilizations.

The recession has weakened the bourgeoisie's positions. The working class has its strength intact to fight back against the capitalists' attacks. Nowhere has the working class suffered a serious setback, nowhere has the bourgeoisie imposed its solution to the crisis. The decisive battles are still ahead.

4. The recession, the creeping recovery, and the relative stagnation of the world market have intensified competition among the imperialist powers in the search for markets. At a time when all the imperialist bourgeoisies are putting the emphasis on a revival of exports as the "solution" to their problems, the trend is

toward protectionism. These practices create further obstacles to a cumulative upturn.

While the 1974-75 crisis provoked this wave of protectionism, the fact remains that the bulk of international trade agreements have held up. Despite the magnitude of the crisis, the EEC has withstood it; protectionism has not been allowed to run rampant among its member countries.

The crisis has, of course, slowed down the implementation or advancement of various projects, such as the Economic and Monetary Union or the European Regional Development Fund. The root of these delays and bottlenecks actually lies in the fact that the social, economic and monetary situations of the member countries—including rates of inflation and the balance of payments—have developed differently.

The crisis of the Greek, Portuguese, and Spanish dictatorships has placed on the agenda the question of these countries entering the EEC. Their bourgeoisies are demanding that they be rapidly admitted to the Common Market. But some of the EEC member countries have balked at this, and there is strong opposition within each country to admitting the three applicants.

Nevertheless, the persistence of semi-stagnation, the opposition to trade agreements with the United States, the effects of the dollar's plunge, and the advantages of forming a combined market that would amount to a total of one-fourth of world trade could hasten decisions pointing the way toward a gradual inclusion of the three countries of southern Europe. These could include special long-term reservations, and would always be subject to withdrawal.

For the moment, the major contradiction that characterizes the EEC is the discrepancy between the progress made in achieving economic interpenetration in the areas of trade and banking, and the deadlock in the monetary and political spheres. Nevertheless, the West German government, in agreement with the French, has made a step toward European integration by putting in place a European monetary system. The 1979 election for the European parliament, whose powers are largely fictitious, is aimed, nonetheless, at a more open coordination of bourgeois policies vis-à-vis the workers who refuse to pay for the crisis; at putting a democratic veneer on the real decisions made by the European commissioners; and finally, at opening the way for coopting the workers organizations to ensure their collaboration in the bourgeoisie's European policy, which also bears the trademark of austerity.

But social, economic, and political disparities will remain obstacles to any real and effective moves toward European integration.

5. The winning of independence by the Portuguese colonies marked a new stage in the historic crisis of the traditional Euro-

pean colonialist powers. Between 1948 and 1975, Britain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal lost almost all their former colonies.

This retreat from direct domination by the European imperialist powers did not deter them from organizing a system of indirect domination. As the principal European capitalist economies grew stronger, especially the West German economy, the European imperialists' field of action widened, bringing them into competition with the U.S. and Japan.

Since the 1960s, the dominant feature of the historic trend in interimperialist relations between Europe and the United States has been a shift in the economic relationship of forces in favor of the European imperialists, especially West German imperialism. This transformation can be seen in the weakening of the big American corporations' position relative to the multinational trusts of various European countries in major industrial sectors (chemicals, automobiles, machines, electrical equipment, and pharmaceutical goods) over the last twenty years. These transformations have also been reflected in the role West German imperialism has acquired in world trade. By 1974 it had taken first place in the export of manufactured goods on the world market, and gained a strong foothold in trade with the USSR and "people's democracies." West Germany is vying with Japan to see who will be the second-ranking imperialist power in the economic field. In recent years it has gone on a real offensive to export capital. Since 1970, its foreign investments have grown at an annual rate of 20%-30%. It took advantage of the decline of the dollar to step up its investments in the United States, setting an example for Britain, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and France to follow.

West Germany is now in a leading position on the arms export market, along with French imperialism. It is in the forefront in the construction of nuclear reactors, along with France, and is giving the United States some serious competition in this field.

Time and again, the West German bourgeoisie has intervened politically in support of capitalist forces threatened by an upsurge of the working class in Europe, notably in Italy, Portugal, and Spain. Social stability in West Germany has freed the hands of the bourgeoisie, and its current mouthpiece, the SPD, for such activities. But the beginnings of renewed activity on the part of the West German working class in the face of continuing unemployment and capitalist rationalization of industry may reduce West German imperialism's margin of maneuver.

Moreover, for all its arrogance, the West German bourgeoisie has not played a decisive role in the outcome of political events in any of the countries where it has intervened. The class-collaborationist line followed by the bureaucratic leaderships in

those countries was a much more decisive factor.

5.1. The European imperialist powers have used the EEC's institutions to preserve all the advantages of an imperialist presence in their former colonies within the framework of so-called decolonization. The Lomé accords, signed in 1975 with forty-six African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries, aimed not only at preserving the gains of the Yaoundé convention (1963) in the areas of trade, finance, and industry, but also at setting up a system that would guarantee the imperialist powers in the EEC a steady source of raw materials.

Although the Latin American military regimes offered the European capitalists opportunities for investment, Africa is the main arena for direct intervention by the various European imperialist powers, especially France, Britain, West Germany, and Belgium.

Taking advantage of U.S. imperialism's difficulties after its rout in Indochina, French imperialism asserted its claim in Africa and stepped up its military intervention. It was able to use the opening provided by Washington's indecisiveness to defend its own interests as best it could. But its degree of independence is still limited by the relative scantiness of its resources. Its policy, especially in military matters, falls within the general framework of the dominant imperialist power, the United States.

As for West Germany, while it primarily plays its economic card, it has no qualms about providing military aid and training to Somalia, Iran, Argentina, and Chile.

British imperialism has stepped up its military occupation of Northern Ireland. One-third of the fighting forces of the British army are stationed in the Six Counties. It is concentrating its efforts on southern Africa to prevent a further deepening of the crisis affecting the regimes in the area. Given the enormity of the stakes for world imperialism, Washington, London, and Bonn—however much they may compete for influence—are carrying out a joint counterrevolutionary operation in southern Africa.

This new expansion by the European imperialist powers is continually threatened by the explosion of working-class and mass upsurges in the semicolonial countries, and by the depth and scope of the crisis in southern Africa (see the world congress resolution, "The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International."

5.2. Interimperialist contradictions between the European powers, Japan, and the United States were given a fresh stimulus by the 1974-75 recession and the dim outlook for the international capitalist economy. Nevertheless, capitalist Europe, the main area of contact between the imperialist military bloc and that of the bureaucratized workers states, remains in the straitjacket of the imperialist system imposed at the end of World War II. It was

shaped by the 1954 Paris Accords, which provided for capitalist Europe's entry into NATO. In this area, U.S. political and military hegemony is undiminished.

West Germany has considerably increased its military capacity in terms of conventional warfare. However, since it is in the front lines of the imperialist military forces ranged against those of the Warsaw Pact, and since it lacks a powerful nuclear arsenal, all it can do is build its entire strategy around NATO.

After de Gaulle's decision in 1966 to withdraw French military forces from the NATO command, France developed its own nuclear arsenal. Today, its collaboration with the NATO command—which was never totally interrupted—is again on the increase.

Thus, NATO is still the backbone of the European imperialist powers' military policy. At most, they seek to establish a slightly better relationship of forces within the Atlantic Council, where the United States continues to set policy. They are also involved in efforts to coordinate and streamline their military industries (weapons, aircraft, and electronics) to strengthen their position vis-à-vis the United States, including in the battle for control of the world market in the sale of weapons and planes.

6. The hesitant recovery, and the relative stagnation of productive investments, are a result of the fact that the growth of surplus value has not been enough to bring about a sufficient increase in the rate of profit. This failure for the capitalists has social and political roots. It follows that in the next few years, the central objective for the capitalist class will be to achieve a sharp and substantial rise in the rate of exploitation of the working class, first and foremost in the decisive sectors of the economy.

Austerity—the capitalists' solution to the crisis of their own system—was and will remain the fundamental orientation of the governments of the European bourgeoisie. As usual, the bourgeoisie has tried to turn the crisis to its own advantage, but the degree of organization and the combativity of the working class have jammed the gears up to now. That is why the bourgeoisie must centralize its forces to deal harsher blows and carry out its plans.

To that end, the bourgeoisie has relied on the complicity or collaboration of the SP, CP, and trade-union bureaucracies. The emergence of ruling-class figures onto the political scene has shown how hard the bourgeoisie is looking for a fast solution, as well as its difficulties in finding one, given the class relationship of forces.

6.1. In all the countries of capitalist Europe, an onslaught is shaping up to one degree or another. It combines an attack on direct and indirect wages and social spending with the rebuilding of an industrial reserve army. This combination reflects the new dimensions of the bosses' strategy since the 1974-75 crisis. Direct

wages are the primary target, for from the end of the 1960s to the mid-1970s, the workers, taking advantage of the situation of full employment, carried out mobilizations resulting in substantial wage increases. Next, the bosses are using the threat of unemployment to institute speed-up and harsher working conditions.

Britain and Portugal are where the farthest-reaching austerity policies have been put into effect. As early as July 1975, the Wilson and Callaghan governments, in collaboration with the Trades Union Congress (TUC) bureaucracy, launched a policy of drastically limiting wage increases. By 1977, wage earners' real incomes had been pushed back to 1970 levels. Nevertheless, in 1978 and the first months of 1979, workers in the industrial sector won real wage increases, recovering what they lost in the 1975-77 period. The new Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher has launched a new and sharper attack against living standards, spending for social services, and the trade unions.

It took two successive governments headed by Social Democrat Mario Soares, and the de facto complicity of the CGTP-Intersindical, to launch a full-scale attack in February 1977 against the gains won by Portuguese workers. By the end of 1977, their wages were already at a level close to what they had been prior to April 25, 1974. From mid-1978 and 1979, under the so-called technocratic governments, real wages were driven down even further.

However, neither in Portugal nor in Britain has there been a significant recovery of investments.

In France, Spain, Italy, and Belgium, the implementation of austerity plans has not produced the results hoped for by the bourgeoisie.

The various Barre plans that have followed one after another since 1976, have succeeded in slowing down the rate of increase of real wages, but they have not been able to force them down.

In Spain, the Moncloa Pact was instituted with the help of the leaderships of the PSOE and UGT, and the CP and Workers Commissions. But in spite of the limited political and economic benefits that the bourgeoisie got out of this pact, the big capitalists were far from satisfied with it, and demanded "firmer" measures. The Government Economic Program proposed by Suarez and the bosses in the autumn of 1979 is designed to meet these demands.

In Italy, the CP and three trade-union federations had to take the lead in the austerity campaign before the plans that had continually been postponed by Christian Democratic governments could be implemented. However, working-class resistance, and the impact of automatic cost-of-living adjustments for wages and social benefits, have sharply limited the drop in real wages for workers in the key branches of industry. It is no accident that the bosses and their government are focusing

their attacks on the sliding scale of wages, which was won after 1969.

In countries like West Germany, Switzerland, or Austria, the policy of the employers, with the complicity of the Social Democracy and trade-union leaderships, has consisted mainly of putting limits on the growth of real wages, which is far less than the increase in industrial productivity. This ensured a redistribution of income in favor of the capitalists.

As in most other countries, direct and indirect taxation has cut into the growth of wage earners' buying power for the first time in twenty years.

The attack on indirect wages (dismantling of the social security system, restrictions on benefits, increase in payroll taxes, and the use of tax money to pay for social services formerly provided by employers in Italy and the Netherlands) is aimed at reducing the employers' "social responsibilities." Social wages are also under attack. There have been spending cuts in the areas of health, education, housing, and social services in general. This is another form of attack on the living standards of wage earners.

All these measures show what the bourgeoisie's real plans are for the coming years. But to achieve goals that are sufficient for a real recovery of capitalist accumulation, what is necessary is a redistribution of national income, favoring profits at the expense of wages. This will be more massive and brutal than current plans even timidly intimate.

6.2. For the bourgeoisie, the function of the crisis is simply to make "full employment" with its effects on the labor market and thus on wages, a thing of the past. The crisis must reintroduce long-term unemployment. That is one of the levers the capitalists intend to lean on to carry out their austerity plans in the medium term and impose "labor discipline."

At the bottom of the recession in the European capitalist economies, according to official figures, seven million workers were unemployed. In 1977, in the midst of a "recovery," unemployment hit eight million. In the nine countries of the EEC, the unemployed represented 2.9% of the active population in 1974, 5% in 1975, 5.3% in 1977, and 5.6% in 1978 and 1979.

This increase stems from the following: The investments to carry out capitalist restructuring and rationalization, common in periods of crisis, result in a rise in productivity much greater than the increase in industrial production. This means not only layoffs but also a sharp drop in the creation of new industrial jobs at the same time that job openings in the services are being restricted. Thus the masses of youth entering the labor market cannot find jobs. Women are either disproportionately pushed out of production (especially given the "fat-trimming" in public services and the crisis of certain branches such as textiles and clothing), or remain perpetual "job seekers."

Unskilled workers, youth, and women are prime candidates for unemployment. In the EEC, the proportion of women registered as unemployed rose from 29.2% in 1971 to 41% in 1977. In the same period, the proportion of unemployed youth under twenty-five years of age went from 27% to 37.4%, although they represented only 17% of the active population. Older workers, even technicians, also have great difficulty finding a new job after being laid off.

The recession has also highlighted the way the capitalists in the imperialist countries use immigrant workers. They have become a permanent, organic component of the work force in the highly industrialized capitalist countries. In a number of industries (automobiles, steel, mining, textiles, construction, etc.), they represent—as in France, West Germany, or Switzerland—more than 25% of the work force. They serve as a "shock absorber" for the explosion of unemployment. France, Belgium, Switzerland, and West Germany export their unemployed, thus reducing the social and political cost of their "anti-inflationary" measures. From 1973 to early 1976, 1.3 million immigrant workers lost their jobs (600,000 in West Germany, 300,000 in Switzerland and France). Most of them were forced to return to their native countries, where unemployment and underemployment are already rampant. Several of the European imperialist bourgeoisies have taken measures making it possible for this mobile industrial reserve army to be used in a more flexible way, while meeting their structural needs for labor power. The British ruling class has adopted the same fundamental course. Although it tries to retain the benefits of the Commonwealth, it would be glad to get rid of all the legal obstacles this institution puts in the way of imposing an immigration policy more in line with the interests of a declining imperialism.

6.3. The breadth and persistence of unemployment have begun to undermine the illusions of broad layers of wage earners and youth in the capacity of the present system to meet fundamental social needs. The glaring failure of all the "job programs" of the European governments has deeply shaken the myth of the "welfare state" propagated by the Social Democracy. Indeed, the number of workers who have experienced a few months of unemployment—in some cases more than once—is considerable. The number who are becoming long-term unemployed is slowly rising. But unlike in the 1930s, they still have many kinds of social insurance resulting from the gains of the workers movement in the two previous decades. Moreover, many unemployed workers still have hopes of finding a job.

Still, in countries where the boom of the 1960s arrived late (Portugal, Greece, and Spain), and in some underdeveloped regions, or those suffering from a long-term structural crisis in one branch of industry (the south of Italy, Wales, the Lorraine in

France, the Hainaut in Belgium), unemployment has begun to weaken the structure of the working class. Large poverty belts have appeared. They likewise exist in the working-class suburbs outside the industrialized urban areas.

Finally, unemployment among youth, women, and immigrant workers has created a "secondary job market" (moonlighting, temporary jobs, part-time jobs, cottage industries) that makes possible a brutal offensive by the capitalists (the lack of any social security, arbitrariness on the part of the employer, degradation of skills, lack of regard for safe working conditions, outright banning or restrictions on trade-union activity).

The international reorganization of production is one of the weapons the capitalists use to reduce employment. The big monopolies, in search of low wages, move their factories either to the semicolonial countries, or to areas of Europe where high unemployment and a low level of union organization ensure a high rate of exploitation.

6.4. Another aspect of the austerity policy consists of putting nationalized sectors of industry on a profit-making basis (in France, Britain, and Italy, for instance), turning profitable sectors back over to private ownership (in Portugal, this is a central objective for the bourgeoisie), and running public services (the post office and railroads) at a profit, with corresponding effects on the benefits, jobs, and wages of their employees.

6.5. The sphere of activity of rank-and-file bodies at the factory level has been reduced, frequently with the direct aid of the bureaucracy. This is what happened to the workers commissions in Portugal in 1976. In Britain, the TUC bureaucracy is trying to limit the shop stewards' freedom of action by taking away their powers and bringing them into joint labor-management structures and the trade-union apparatus.

In Spain, the factory committees and councils, which were legitimized by union elections, are facing attempts to impose restrictive regulations. In Italy, the delegate councils have been stripped of part of their functions by concentrating decision-making power in the executive bodies, which are tightly controlled by the bureaucracy. In France, Portugal, and Spain, the bosses are trying to infringe on the recognized rights of shop stewards, and firing them by the dozens. The expulsion of sixty-one worker militants in FIAT in October 1979, and of a shop stewards' convener at British Leyland in November 1979, express a new offensive by the bosses against the unions in Italy and Great Britain.

In several countries, the trade-union bureaucracies have agreed to extend the life of contracts signed earlier, by deferring renegotiation, agreeing to designate periods in which wages cannot be discussed, and so on. Freedom to negotiate over wages and contract terms in general is



under attack everywhere in one form or another. The right to strike is also a target.

The use of repressive bodies against strike pickets and factory occupations has widened. In Belgium, France, Portugal, and Spain, the police, CRS, GNR, and Civil Guard frequently intervene. In West Germany, during the 1977 printing workers strike, and in Britain during the 1977 Grunwick strike, police forces moved into action. In Portugal the Republican National Guard has intervened brutally against agricultural workers and small peasants in the Alentejo as part of the government's drive to roll back the land reform, as well as against workers occupying factories.

Finally, on the pretext of "fighting terrorism," emergency legislation has been enacted, sometimes with the cooperation of the reformist leaderships, that constitutes a direct threat to activists in the workers movement. Such legislation could be used on a broader scale in case of a setback for the working class.

Once again, the crisis of capitalism has revealed the inherent tendency of bourgeois regimes to chip away at democratic rights and build up their repressive apparatuses. But for the time being, in no European country has the bourgeoisie been able to sufficiently weaken the working class, or to assemble the social and political forces from among the petty-bourgeois layers, the so-called new middle classes, or the unemployed, to enable it to drive toward a confrontation aimed at establishing a strong regime, or indeed, a dictatorship.

The fascist organizations, while stepping up their activity, have not been able to attract a mass social base, and their influence, for the time being, is limited. The exception to this is Fuerza Nueva (New Force) in Spain, which draws its strength and resources from the legacy of Francoism, and takes advantage of the cowardice of the reformist leaderships.

However, as long as the economic and social crisis persists, the resurgence in one form or another of substantial, active, extreme right-wing forces will remain a danger facing the workers movement.

6.6 The climate of recession, and mounting unemployment, lend themselves to racist and antiforeigner campaigns aimed at giving credit to the idea that the roots of unemployment lie in "too many foreigners." This attack has been launched deliberately at a time when a series of job struggles (sit-ins to protest factory closings and demands for sharp reductions of work time) are fostering the conviction in workers' minds that unemployment is not inevitable.

The fascist far right has become the main purveyor of these racist, xenophobic ideas. This is true of the National Front in Britain and the Parti des Forces Nouvelles (New Forces Party) in France.

Furthermore, the Conservative Party in Britain, led by Margaret Thatcher,

launched in 1978 a vast campaign against immigrant workers, aimed at rebuilding its

base among the intermediate social strata and backward layers of workers.

## Workers Resistance to the Capitalist Offensive

7. The effects of the generalized recession of 1974-75 and the end of the postwar expansion period on the activity and political radicalization of the masses depend on two factors: on the one hand, the total gains, including their organizational strength, won by the workers during the previous period of expansion; and on the other hand, the sharpness and duration of the crisis itself.

In addition, the first wave of working-class reactions was strongly influenced by the political and social context in each country at the outbreak of the recession, which explains their unevenness.

The working class that entered the crisis is one whose social weight has grown considerably in recent decades. The number of wage earners has greatly increased. Unionization has increased, both in the key industries and in many branches tied to the sphere of reproduction or the civil administration.

The working class, which made substantial gains in the preceding years, is aware of its strength in this new economic situation. Its bargaining power is high. The resistance of organized layers to mass layoffs is strong. The social insurance available to those thrown out of work means that most of the unemployed are not plunged into pauperization, which has disintegrating effects on the unity and fighting capacity of the entire class, as was the case in the prewar period.

Moreover, in a number of countries, a layer of advanced workers has been forged in the course of several years of struggles. In no European country has the working class lost a decisive battle, either before or during the recession. The attack on buying power, and especially on jobs, is seen by the working class as a real assault. The crisis has not generated demoralization or disorganization among the majority of the working class. It is promoting a political radicalization in all the capitalist countries, at different speeds and in different forms.

Several factors, such as the steadiness or growth of unemployment in the midst of a "recovery," the accelerating crisis of whole industries, the bosses' fierce efforts to force workers out of the production process, and the sharpness of the government's attacks, are changing the attitudes of ever broader layers of workers. They are making a more or less distinct connection between the present crisis, the anarchy of capitalism, and the policies of the bosses and their state.

Thus, profound changes are beginning to appear even among the West German working class, the biggest in capitalist Europe, which had shown a definite wait-and-see attitude when the economic down-

turn began. The crisis appears to be structural and long-lasting, contrary to what the bosses and trade-union leaders said initially. The continuing attacks on previous gains, particularly jobs, are transforming workers' reactions, including in such traditional bastions as the steel industry. The fear of losing one's job does not block the determination to fight back to protect gains that workers think should be taken for granted.

Throughout Europe, the political radicalization is rooted in the overlap between a series of struggles initiated in 1968-69 by an organizationally strong working class, and the end of the period of economic expansion for capitalism internationally. This implies that the chances of coopting the mass movement through substantial concessions are smaller in the medium term. Here, we find one of the major differences with the dynamic of the working-class upsurge in the immediate postwar period. That upsurge was to end in a phase of economic upswing, which enabled the employers to make concessions to a working class just emerging from a period of defeat, and whose living standards were low.

8. The thrust of the reactions and mood of the working class can best be seen in the evolution of the trade unions.

Thus, in Italy, from 1973 to 1977, the three trade-union federations (CGIL, CISL, and UIL) continued to experience a growth in membership. In 1977, the rate of unionization among wage earners reached 45.5%, compared to 31% in 1967. From 1978 membership stagnated. In France, the CGT has experienced a stagnation in membership since 1973, and even an erosion since 1978, as a result of acting as a transmission belt for the CP at the time of the March 1978 elections. On the other hand, the CFDT has seen its ranks swell greatly since 1968, even if it has experienced a relative stagnation since 1976. But the most significant feature of the development of the trade-union movement in France is the spread of union locals in the workplace, which grew at an even faster pace between 1974 and 1978. In West Germany in 1977, despite unemployment and the departure of immigrant workers, trade-union membership reached a record level since World War II. The same trend can be seen in Britain, where from 1974 to 1977, membership in the TUC grew by 14.7%, and the number of shop stewards jumped considerably.

In Spain, the winning of trade-union legalization in June 1977 gave rise to a rapid growth of the trade-union federations, the Workers Commissions and UGT. However, the class-collaborationist policies of the union leaderships and the weakness of the union structures—the material

assets of the old CNS remained in the government's hands—has resulted in a significant drop in union membership since 1978.

In Portugal, after the upsurge in 1975, and the setback in November of the same year, the trade-union movement has taken giant strides. It now boasts 2 million members, 1.6 million of whom are in the CGTP-Intersindical. This is out of a working population of 3 million. In 1978, however, there was a certain erosion of union membership.

Even in countries where the level of mass activity remains low, workers' natural reactions to the crisis are leading them to join trade unions.

Finally, experience shows that when the unions call for effective mobilizations, the workers generally respond massively.

9. However, four phenomena must be noted, to give a fuller profile of the labor movement, four years after the profound change in the economic climate.

First, some traditional sectors of the trade-union movement have been weakened. This attrition is the product of a structural crisis affecting certain branches—in some cases for more than a decade—which deepened with the recession, as well as a sweeping restructuring of industry through the massive introduction of new techniques, or both factors at once (mining, textiles, shoes, steel, shipbuilding, printing, and construction since 1973-74).

However, the situation of the working class in a given branch of industry varies according to country and even according to region in a given country. The potential for fighting back against a massive attack is frequently great, as was shown in West Germany (printing workers) or France (steel and shipbuilding).

Second, the growth in membership in the trade-union federations is partly the result of the influx of members in sectors with little previous union organization and no long experience of struggle (e.g., banks and insurance companies). In many countries, class-struggle traditions are weak, the degree of proletarian consciousness is highly uneven, and the number of trade-union activists is small.

Third, the unemployed, particularly the youth, have not been organized into the trade-union movement. Immigrant workers are likewise poorly organized, or do not take part in union activities.

Fourth, while a drive to organize women in unions can be seen in all countries, union membership remains low in many plants and branches of industry where the work force is primarily female.

These four elements have not cut into the overall combativity of the working class up to now, even though in the long run they may serve to open gaps in the workers' lines of defense. They are an obstacle to achieving working-class unity. The bosses can try to use them to carry out maneuvers aimed at dividing the trade-union movement.

10. The capacity for resistance and undiminished combativity of the working class in most European capitalist countries are also reflected in the number of strikes, despite conjunctural ebbs and flows.

The way in which this combativity is expressed is shaped by the changes that have occurred in the economic and social situation. The obstacles created by the objective situation, and those set up by the bureaucratic leaderships, make it much more difficult to launch vast, semispontaneous movements like those that broke out in 1968-69 and immediately after.

It is one thing to strike back immediately against the most brutal attacks by the bosses on wages, working conditions, and even against layoffs. It is quite another to mount an effective opposition to a governmental policy of austerity pursued in all fields, to prevent the closing of factories in crisis-struck industries, to fight back against a general rise in unemployment, or even to wage successful struggles against massive layoffs.

At this level, the semispontaneous mass movement runs up against its limits. Here, the full force is felt of the need to go beyond whatever scattered victories are possible, the need for an alternative to the orientation maintained by the apparatuses that serve as instruments of the austerity policy within the working class and which derive their power essentially from their material capacity to keep opposition dispersed.

The working-class vanguard is not yet in a position to offer a clear and credible alternative to the policy of the leaderships, either because of its numerical weakness, or because of its political heterogeneity and the fact that it is not organized into a class-struggle left wing in the trade unions.

Thus, the ebbs and flows of strikes do not mechanically reflect the mood of the toiling masses and their confidence in their own strength.

The reaction to the recession by the different European working classes was highly varied. In the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, and Norway there has been no qualitative increase in working-class combativity.

The situation in these countries is rooted in a number of factors whose weight varies in each case. These include: economic reserves possessed by the bourgeoisie, which in the first phase made it possible to limit the attacks on the masses' living conditions; illusions held by the working class in the possibility of maintaining its standard of living through the power of the trade unions, union-management boards and comanagement bodies, as well as governmental action by the Social Democratic parties; and an overall level of combativity and consciousness on the part of the class that was still low at the outset of the crisis, as a result of long traditions of class collaboration, the predominance of Social Democratic and parliamentarist

ideology, and limited, fragmented experiences of struggle since 1968. However, under the impact of the economic crisis, a number of trade-union militants have begun to question the orientation of the bureaucracy.

On the other hand, in France, Spain, Italy, and Portugal, the crisis broke out at a time when the mass struggle was more clearly on the upswing. Government economic offensives and the bosses' opposition to demands for wage increases and a shorter work week accelerated the strike wave. They also deepened the anticapitalist dynamic of working-class struggles and the political radicalization. Broad masses are beginning to see the winning of their demands as more and more connected with political change.

This upturn in working-class activity reached a very high level in 1975-76. But control by the reformist apparatuses, and the consequences of their policies, had an impact on the tempo and breadth of direct action by the masses.

The working class in these countries must reorder its fighting forces in a new phase of the economic offensive by the bourgeoisie, which is trying to implement on the social level the few points it was able to score on the political level.

In Britain, it took close collaboration between the Labour government and the trade-union bureaucracy—including its so-called left wing—to channel the strike wave into the framework of class collaboration. In 1975, and especially in 1976, there was a clear drop in the number of strikes. But the level of struggles in 1977 and 1978 indicated that the fighting potential of the working class is still high. The number of person-strike days in 1979, one of the highest in ten years, confirms this. The workers' capacity for resistance was also manifested in Denmark (the political strike against the government in 1978), Belgium (mobilization against the austerity plan in autumn 1979) and even in West Germany.

In Italy in 1979 during contract negotiations for important sectors such as metal and chemical workers, the degree and forms of worker mobilizations recalled those of 1969.

In Spain, in the first months of 1979, a strike wave broke out, essentially over wage demands, in important sectors of the economy. In autumn 1979 there was a new rise in workers mobilizations. In France, the working class, which was not deeply demoralized by the electoral defeat of March 1978, has refused to bear the cost of the crisis. This was demonstrated by the strike movement in steel and metal-working, in the public services, etc.

11. The crisis is forcing the workers to raise a number of demands focusing mainly on defending jobs and buying power. There is a tendency for the same demands to be raised in all the European capitalist countries. Thus, in less than two years, pressure from the workers' strong



Volkswagen workers in West Germany protest plant shutdown.

sentiments and struggles in favor of a thirty-five- or thirty-six-hour week forced a large number of trade-union federations to take up this demand. To be sure, the leaderships have kept from making this an immediate goal and are prolonging the timetable for implementing it.

The economic situation makes defensive demands necessary. Demands that were traditionally raised in the period prior to the recession are frequently combined with demands relating to the struggle to protect earlier gains. In response to the attack on jobs, experiences of struggle against the capitalist organization of work, sometimes including elements of workers control, are being used to advantage. To defend buying power, at a time when unemployment is tending to sharpen the divisions in the working class, the demand for equal pay increases and equal cost-of-living increases in unemployment benefits is spreading.

In response to the proliferation of factory closings, or attempts at mass layoffs, the demand for nationalization, particu-

larly in the branches chronically hit by crisis, is being raised more and more often. Here we see the same tendency toward a deepening of the objectively anticapitalist aspect of the demands.

A characteristic feature of recent years has been the incorporation of a number of demands relating to the specific needs of working women in trade-union platforms. Demands have developed in six areas: wages (equal pay for equal work), jobs (against hiring women workers on an as-needed or temporary basis; against discriminatory layoffs), training, working conditions, social services, and abortion. The growing participation of working women in strikes and mobilizations, and the bigger role of demands aimed at the exploitation and oppression of working women, are helping to link up struggles to defend previous gains with those that challenge bourgeois social relations. This brings demands that were originally raised by a movement that developed outside the mass workers organizations into the ranks of the workers movement.

ment of waves of immigration from the less developed countries of southern Europe to the industrial centers. The rapid concentration of capital considerably reduced the categories of the traditional petty bourgeoisie. All of these transformations have a profound impact on the consciousness of broad social layers. These changes are reflected in the student movement, the women's liberation movement, and the partial mobilizations of immigrant workers.

Thus, the fact that the imperialist economies have entered a phase in which the productive forces are stagnating has implications that go well beyond the economic sphere alone. The recession, and budget-tightening by bourgeois governments, are exacerbating a general social crisis that reflects the historic decline of an entire system and mode of production. In addition, a multitude of social needs that had been asserted during the boom are now being denied, often brutally.

12.1. In the health-care field, budget cutbacks and the dismantling of social security have revealed the inadequacy of the health-care system in the most advanced capitalist countries. Mobilizations by health-care workers have focused not only on working conditions for hospital employees, but also on the capitalist organization of health services. This has eased the way for the inclusion in trade-union platforms of demands that challenged the organization of health services in capital-

### The General Crisis of Social Relations and the Mass Movements

12. The long period of capitalist expansion introduced profound changes in the training and nature of the labor force. These included a substantial growth in enrollment at the high-school and univer-

sity level; the need to raise the level of skills of many categories of wage earners; the massive entry of women into professional schools and universities; the growth in female employment; and the develop-

ist society (e.g., for free, quality medical care). Furthermore, the interrelation between such mobilizations and those protesting health hazards in the workplace is leading to a more radical questioning of social relations of production.

12.2. The unchecked rise of real-estate speculation, the decay of urban structures, and limits on government spending for public housing and social services have given rise to movements that combine demands around housing, social services, and transportation. They are generally organized on a neighborhood basis. Sometimes such groups have ties to the trade unions, whose platforms give greater emphasis to their demands.

13. Since 1974, the high-school and university student population has generally continued to grow, although there has been a tendency for it to stagnate in some countries since 1978.

The social composition of the student milieu is continuing to change. The percentage of students from bourgeois backgrounds is decreasing, even though students from working-class backgrounds still represent only a small proportion. A growing number of students have to work part-time to support themselves. Job opportunities are dwindling for good in a greater and greater number of fields. Unemployment is the road increasingly trodden by those seeking to enter "professional life." The jobs found by many university graduates either do not correspond to their training, or create a large gap between their level of skills and the use that is made of their labor power.

The attacks on the system of training, the intensification of tracking at the high-school level, and the often harsh limits placed on access to higher education have dealt a harsh blow to reformist illusions about the "democratization of education" and "equal access to education." The proportion of students who have been affected by tracking that bars them from further study, by the prospect of unemployment, and by cutbacks in financial aid continues to grow. That is the root of the massive mobilizations by high-school and university students in a series of countries.

To be sure, the pressure of unemployment, the threat of competition, and occasionally repression can cause high-school and university students to seek individual solutions, and can act as a brake on mobilizations. Moreover, the policy of the reformist leaderships makes it more difficult for mass movements to develop. Given the economic situation, and governmental policy, such movements soon run up against the need for a change in the entire political system. Thus, the orientation of the reformist leaderships increases divisions among the youth, and even helps relegate certain sectors of the student population to a permanently semiemployed status. The most glaring example of this can be seen in Italy and Spain.

However, the potential for explosions

among the student population has been confirmed in many countries (e.g., France, Italy, Belgium, Portugal) over the last few years. The emphasis given in these movements to demands related to the material conditions and professional futures of high-school and university students points not only to a new stage in the development of the student radicalization since 1968, but also to the often stated need for a linkup with the workers movement.

Regardless of the ebbs and flows of student mobilizations in the different capitalist countries, reactionary currents have not been able to win back a major foothold, despite some occasional partial gains.

The underpinnings of the ideological crisis among high-school and student youth remains firmly rooted. This crisis takes manifold forms of expression. The participation of high-school and university students in movements against the capitalist destruction of the environment or the dangers involved in civilian uses of nuclear energy is one form. The feminist radicalization among high-school and college women, as well as the rejection of the hypocritical norms of bourgeois morality, is another. Moreover, the fact that broad layers of youth have rallied to antimperialist or antimilitarist mobilizations—even if less than in the early 1970s—is a sign of the enduring nature of the changes that took place in the early 1960s.

14. The struggle of the working class, its increased questioning of the bosses' power, its refusal to foot the bill for the crisis, and its rejection of the inevitability of unemployment have reinforced and spread the rebellion among broad sectors of youth against the many kinds of oppression produced and reproduced by the very workings of the system. This questioning focuses on the institutions of bourgeois society that carry out the process of socialization and social reproduction, particularly the family and the schools. The uncertainty that hangs over the future of large layers of youth can only exacerbate the crisis of bourgeois values. Rejection of the work ethic, the social hierarchy, and traditional social norms in general is spreading.

The change in the economic situation has forcefully revealed the inability of capitalist society to meet the economic, social, and cultural needs—sometimes even the most elementary ones—of broad layers of students, young workers, and unemployed youth. The austerity policy represents a direct assault on large numbers of youth. Unemployment and superexploitation (apprenticeship conditions, temporary jobs, lack of a steady job, illegal employment, wage discrimination) have become the lot of many young people. This only brings into sharper focus the way bourgeois society assigns them the status of "minors," by keeping the age of "adulthood" at eighteen or twenty, denying or limiting their right to organize

politically and in the trade unions, maintaining sexual repression and sexist discrimination in the schools and on the job, and keeping up dependence on the family, with all of its resulting obligations.

The potential for radicalization remains high among broad layers of youth. The forms in which this radicalization is expressed, as well as its dynamic, fundamentally depend on the working class's assertion of its capacity to radically change society.

15. The transformation of women's role in society, specifically in the labor process, has created similar objective factors leading to a radicalization of women in all the European capitalist countries. The crisis has exacerbated these factors. Attacks on education, jobs, and social services bear down particularly on women.

The women's movement has made great strides in all the European countries since the beginning of the 1970s, but its development per se, as well as its impact and public presence in the workers movement, still vary considerably. This results from a complex interaction of ideological, cultural, social, and institutional factors, and those having to do with the general development of the class struggle.

However, there is a tendency everywhere for the women's movement to no longer remain completely outside the workers movement, its struggles and demands. The breadth and social impact of the women's movement have hastened its emergence among the ranks of working women. Independent initiatives by women within the mass organizations of the working class, especially the trade unions, have multiplied since 1975-76.

On the one hand, the women's movement is greatly stimulated and strengthened by the development of struggles and demands by working women organized in the trade unions. On the other hand, the impact of the women's movement and its demands on the trade-union movement is helping to strengthen it as well, and to deepen the anticapitalist consciousness of its members.

The women's movement has fully maintained its capacity for independent mobilization. The battles for free abortion on demand have revealed this huge potential; so have the struggles to overcome the resistance to implementing portions of the laws that the bourgeoisie was forced to enact which are most favorable to women. The independent women's movement can spur the radicalization of the broad layers of women, students and workers, who are still outside the activity and organizations of the labor movement.

15.1. There exists no social factor that would inevitably drive the various social movements either into conflict with the workers and their organizations, or to diverge from their historic interests and struggles. But none of these social movements by itself can deal decisive blows to bourgeois rule and the bourgeois state.

Unless their forces are combined with those of the workers as a whole, and unless the workers movement adopts their demands as its own—while respecting and defending their organizational independence (e.g., the women's movement)—the anticapitalist potential these movements represent may wear thin and be deflected into actions and an ideology that can either isolate them or bring them back into the bourgeois orbit. One of the indispensable conditions for ensuring this linkup between the social movements and the workers movement is the emergence of an alternative leadership to that of the reformist bureaucrats. The emergence of these social movements—whose growth is conditioned, in the last analysis, by the class relationship of forces—is one more factor prolonging the social instability and crisis of political leadership of the bourgeoisie.

16. As a result of the rise in oil prices in 1973, and pressure from the trusts for investment in the nuclear power industry, plans for construction of nuclear power plants and the opening of new sites have proliferated. This could only lead to the blossoming of a mass movement against nuclear power in France, West Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, and Belgium.

This mass movement has its basis in the real peril to humanity that the use of nuclear reactors represents, given the anarchy of the capitalist system and the general level of technological and scientific knowledge.

This movement has been sustained by the fact that many leading scientific figures have condemned these appalling dangers. For the first time in capitalism's history, such a movement is giving rise to a vast debate on how society's development is to be organized. In opposing the opening or establishment of nuclear facilities, the movement has run up against the collusion between the bourgeois state—the protector of profits—and the big nuclear power trusts. This represents one of the concrete bases for its taking on an anticapitalist dynamic. Furthermore, the antinuclear movement tends to expose the nature of bourgeois democracy, whose basic limitation lies in private ownership of the means of production and in the inalienable right of a handful of capitalists to decide by themselves on making investments that place the very future of the majority of the population in jeopardy.

This movement, regardless of its conjunctural ups and downs, is one that is likely to include large sectors of the population in its ranks in the long run.

The mass movements against nuclear facilities have generally come into existence outside the workers organizations. Moreover, several factors make a spontaneous linkup between the mass workers organizations and the antinuclear movement difficult. These include the widespread "zero growth" and antiscientific ideology in the movement; the statements

of the reformist leaders, who endorse the decisions of big business in regard to nuclear development—when they are not the main proponents of them, as in West Germany; and the supposed neutrality of the technology that is being applied.

However, the popularity of the demands put forward by the movement—as shown by the referendum in Austria in November 1978—and the appeals issuing from scientific quarters and sometimes from workers and unionized technicians in the nuclear power industry, are increasing the pressure within the reformist parties. Some of their leaderships have even been compelled to tone down their open support to nuclear development plans. In different countries, sectors of the union movement and of the reformist parties have begun to support the antinuclear movement.

The antinuclear movement cannot develop its potential for struggling against the system that leads to the use of such deadly technologies except insofar as it becomes a participant in the anticapitalist struggle of the working class.

17. In recent years, mobilizations by small and middle farmers, as well as agricultural workers, have marked the social and political situation to varying degrees in a number of European capitalist countries (Portugal, Spain, Greece, Italy, and France particularly).

Beyond the specific features that shape the agrarian situation in the various European capitalist countries, some basic trends have emerged. Under the impact of the increasing takeover of agriculture by the big agribusiness companies, and government policies, the active rural population is undergoing a rapid decline, which has further accelerated in recent years. A layer of small farmers has not been able to keep up with the trend toward modernization of agricultural methods. They make up a pauperized social layer.

Whether they own their farms or engage in tenant-farming, small farmers trying to keep pace with modern agriculture have wound up in debt, squeezed between the capitalist companies they buy from (fertilizer, machinery) and those they sell to (the agribusiness trusts). They have become a dependent link in the chain of a real agribusiness industry. Their living conditions are getting worse and worse.

The exploitation of family members is sharpening. The work day is lengthening. Working two jobs is often the only way to survive. Buying power is falling.

Mobilizations by small and middle farmers have taken place around demands focusing on market prices of farm products and guaranteed outlets for them; the role of the big distribution and canning companies; the gap between the prices of agricultural and industrial products; credit; and farm leases.

For agricultural workers, working conditions (length of the work day, vacations, social security, wages, etc.) and job security are at the heart of their struggles.

In Spain, Portugal, Greece, Ireland, and southern Italy, the agrarian question has a qualitatively greater social weight than in the other countries of capitalist Europe. In these countries, the fundamental tendency of mobilizations poses the problem of a genuine agrarian reform, as was shown in an exemplary way in Portugal.

A new characteristic of farmers mobilizations in recent years is that in the course of struggles, links have been forged—still in a piecemeal way, of course—between industrial workers and those who work the land.

However, despite the sharpening of social divisions among farmers, the organizations representing small farmers still remain ideologically dominated by the agribusiness spokesmen. Moreover, the general attitude of the reformist leaderships of the workers movement, as well as the repellent example of land collectivization in the USSR and some of the "people's democracies," can only slow the process of winning poor peasants to the struggles and demands of the working class, and thus retard the forming of an alliance on an anticapitalist basis.

18. Since the beginning of the 1970s, nationalist or regionalist movements have developed, revived, or come into existence in several European capitalist states, which has accentuated the social crisis and the crisis of bourgeois leadership.

In Spain, the historic nationalist movements in Euzkadi and Catalonia express most sharply the explosive potential of the national question. In addition, various movements in Galicia, Valencia, Andalusia, and the Canary Islands have developed. In France, such movements have appeared in Corsica and Brittany, as well as Occitania and Alsace. In Britain, they have appeared in Scotland and Wales; in Italy, in Sardinia; in Austria, in Carinthia. In Belgium, the question of the Walloons and Flemings is still unresolved, although the economic and social development of the past two decades has changed the terms in which it has historically been posed.

The roots of these movements can often be traced to the process of formation of the capitalist states in Europe which was achieved through the violent assimilation of diverse nationalities, who retain their own cultural and linguistic traits. In most cases, these movements are socially rooted in the disparities produced among different regions in terms of development and the distribution of social wealth by the type of capitalist development that took place over the last thirty years.

The long phase of growth created an unequal distribution of investments, a selective choice of locations for industry based on labor costs, and a transfer of resources (capital and labor power) from one region to another and from one country to another. Multinational corporations have been the motor force in carrying out this uneven development, particularly



since the Common Market was established.

The generalized social crisis has unleashed challenges to cultural, linguistic, and social forms of oppression, which are combined with the effects of regional underdevelopment. Such movements—whether they come across as nationalist or regionalist, whether they demand autonomy or separation—are a vehicle for the social indignation of the workers, poor farmers and other petty-bourgeois layers that participate in them. The social and historical roots of these movements vary greatly. Some are of recent origin, basically reflecting the unevenness of economic development, with all its social consequences. They express also opposition to the bureaucratic and often discriminatory centralization of the state administration. Basing themselves on the persistence of distinct cultural and linguistic traits, they express opposition to super-exploitation and oppression in nationalist terms, and have a mass following. The youth form a large section of the active forces in these movements, which provide a framework for their radicalization.

In Catalonia and Euzkadi, there exist nationalist movements whose historic roots lie in the irreconcilable contradictions created within the bourgeoisie itself by the bourgeois revolution and the formation of the Spanish state. It was against this backdrop that these two nationalist movements developed. They combine national-democratic demands with a series of democratic demands related to the struggle against the Franco regime. The nationalist movement in Catalonia and Euzkadi cannot be put in the same category as those that are the product of regional or structural economic crises. As a matter of fact, Catalonia and Euzkadi—at different speeds and in different ways—have become the pacesetters of capitalism in the Spanish state.

Some groups which support the "strategy of armed struggle," such as ETA in Euzkadi, play at times a significant role in the framework of these movements; they express the exasperation of sectors of the population (which, in Euzkadi, for example, was reflected in the electoral results obtained by the radical organization Herri Batasuna) and a petty-bourgeois approach, putting the accent on actions by small groups against a proletarian orientation of the mobilization of the masses.

Certain political formations that play a big role in several of these movements have a petty-bourgeois and bourgeois social base. This is true, for example, in Carinthia, Scotland (the SNP), Wales (Plaid Cymru), Corsica (the ANC), Wallonia and Flanders (RW and VU), etc. Finally, given the very origins of the historic nationalist movements in Euzkadi and Catalonia, and the Catalan and Basque social formations, bourgeois parties such as the PNV and CDC have a great deal of influence within these movements. It is

used against the interests of the toiling masses, who are mobilizing to defend their democratic rights, nationalist aspirations, and class interests.

The bureaucratic leaderships of the workers movement, with their policies of class collaboration, are not providing effective answers to the social problems behind the emergence of these movements and mobilizations, are not fighting for democratic demands in an effective way, and defend state institutions which the nationalist movements often oppose. This increases the chances that bourgeois and petty-bourgeois formations and ideology will maintain their hold over the toiling masses.

18.1. The centuries-old struggle of the Irish people against British domination is of special importance. Ireland has been divided into two states since 1921. One, which is directly controlled by British imperialism, is cut off from the rest of the country; the other is in the clutches of imperialism and under indirect political domination. The winning of formal independence for one part of the island represented a partial victory for the movement of national liberation. But the blocking of the process allowed imperialism to reestablish its control through its Irish bourgeois clients.

A new upturn in the Irish struggle began in the late 1960s. It was aimed against the system of discrimination imperialism had set up in the North and the repression it carried out there. London reacted to this upsurge by sending thousands of troops to strengthen its military occupation. In 1972 it was forced to suspend the local Stormont parliament. At this point the credibility of the Northern Catholic bourgeois politicians (organized in the Social Democratic and Labor Party) had dramatically declined. The Catholic population in large measure supported the Republican movement. Sections of certain cities (the "no go" areas) were under the control of the Catholic population. The Southern bourgeoisie was under considerable pressure.

But the petty-bourgeois nationalist lead-

ership of the resistance was unable to organize and lead the masses in a renewed assault on imperialist control of the island. Despite their claims to be socialist, both major wings of the Republican movement developed an erroneous line. The Official IRA turned away from the anti-imperialist struggle, sank into reformism and economism, and lost its mass base in the Catholic ghettos. The Provisional IRA continued to subordinate the mobilization of the masses around specific social, economic, and anti-imperialist objectives to their "military" campaign. They have even at times opposed and obstructed moves to reunify the mass resistance movement. Thus they leave the road open to bourgeois politicians who have no interest in bringing the national oppression to an end.

Imperialism gained a breathing space and formulated a scheme of "power sharing" within the framework of partition. Its aim was to integrate the Catholic masses into the six-county statelet by giving its bourgeois political representatives a say in the running of the government. This attempt failed. The extreme wing of the Unionist bourgeoisie—the Loyalists—rapidly gained ground among the Protestant masses. A reactionary strike by Protestant workers brought down the "power sharing" executive in May 1974, after only five months of existence.

Imperialism has since stepped up repression against the nationalist masses. In spite of the disorientation introduced by the lack of a revolutionary proletarian leadership, these masses retain their capacity to launch new struggles, as the strikes in the South and the recent mobilizations in the North show. The ability of imperialism to restore stability is increasingly in jeopardy, particularly in view of the deepening social and economic crisis in the South.

Ireland remains an important country for British imperialism. The fight against British domination is not only central to the Irish proletarian revolution, but is a key element of the revolution in Britain as well.

## The Bourgeoisie's Crisis of Political Leadership

19. The deepening of the economic and social crisis, and the high level of combativity of the toiling masses, have shaken bourgeois forms of rule within the bourgeoisie's own state. This has frequently been accompanied by unstable governments, shaky parliaments, and the rapid spread of conflicts within the bourgeois parties.

To ensure a recovery of productive investments, the bourgeoisie needs a free hand to carry out an extensive, ruthless restructuring of capital and raise the rate of exploitation considerably. The present class relationship of forces stands in the way of completing this task, at least in the short run. There lie the roots of the bour-

geoisie's crisis of political leadership.

The bourgeoisie remains trapped in a fundamental contradiction. It does not have enough of a base to launch an attack against the gains of the working class on the scale that is urgently needed for capital accumulation. Nor does it have the reserves that would enable it to make sufficient concessions to make the bureaucratic leaderships' job easier in carrying out their class-collaborationist orientation. Thus, the latter are having a hard time supporting government policies because they are not getting anything in return. They have to face challenges from sectors of the class in the unions they control and in their own parties. This also contributes

to political instability on the governmental level.

20. The wrangling that goes on inside the bourgeois parties, and among them, reflects the bourgeois crisis of leadership. Under the impact of the changing economic climate and the speedier concentration and centralization of capital, and given the helplessness of the bourgeois parties to offer a way out of the crisis, during the first half of the 1970s sectors of the petty bourgeoisie or "new middle classes" shifted their votes away from parties that have long held the reins. They swung these votes both to bourgeois parties playing the role of outsiders and to the Social Democracy and even the Italian CP. This reduced the electoral strength of well-established parties such as the Christian Democrats in Italy and the Gaullists in France, many of which were implicated in scandals. These shifts in votes have brought an element of uncertainty into the parliamentary arena. They have spurred battles between warring factions inside these parties, which sometimes also reflect conflicts of interest between capitalist sectors and the parasitic state political apparatuses. In the last two years there has been another shift of votes of the petty bourgeoisie or "new middle classes" which has allowed the bourgeois parties to partially regain their electoral strength (Italy, France, Portugal, and Britain).

21. However, this crisis of political leadership for the bourgeoisie does not automatically put the working class in a better position. The cracks in the bourgeoisie's system of rule are papered over by the SP and CP leaderships. The trade-union bureaucracy's long years of integration into the various cogs of the bourgeois state apparatus has prepared these leaderships to come to the rescue of bourgeois regimes in distress.

The capitalist class, with its centuries of political experience, has once again shown its skill at using the labor bureaucracies' propensity for keeping the boat from springing leaks everywhere. This enables the ruling class to bring the coopting mechanisms of bourgeois democracy into play, and to call on its remaining economic resources to carry out some readjustments. This situation reveals less about the strength of bourgeois democratic institutions than about the lack of consciousness, organization, and revolutionary leadership on the part of the proletariat.

22. The bourgeoisie is stepping up the trend toward centralization of power, which has been under way for some time. The real decision-making power of parliamentary bodies is rapidly shrinking. The power of the executive branch is growing, and within this branch, a number of committees that set general policy in key areas (economic, industrial, and financial policy on the national and international scale; military policy; the repressive apparatus) are clearly predominant. In this period of upheavals and sudden turna-

bouts, the function of such bodies, which escape the hazards of political and parliamentary life, and ensure that the interests of big business are directly represented, can be seen even better. But a good many of the decisions dreamed up in these exclusive clubs are being called into question by the stubborn reality of the class relationship of forces.

Hence, the collaboration of the reformist parties is the key to ensuring the maximum effectiveness of this centralized power. With their consent or participation, the ruling class is assembling the legislative, judicial, and repressive arsenal that will be needed in a confrontation with the workers and their vanguard, once the political situation is ripe for it.

Thus, we see how well the function and organization of the bourgeois state correspond to the two fundamental tendencies of bourgeois politics in the period of capitalist decline. One tendency is for the bureaucracies of the working-class organizations to become openly integrated into the state; the other is for the tools of repression to be strengthened. The bourgeoisie swings back and forth between these two aspects and sometimes combines them.

23. A crisis is developing that is splintering the institutions of the bourgeois state. It is the result of the change in the class relationship of forces and of its byproducts. These include the shakeup of social relations; the ruling class's inability to

find a way out of the crisis, and its occasional near-paralysis when initiatives are called for, as well as the atmosphere of corruption pervading ruling-class circles; and the radicalization of new working-class layers employed by a state whose field of intervention has been considerably widened. To varying degrees, the army—soldiers and even noncommissioned officers—police, and courts are affected, not to mention the schools, mass media, and the church. The fiscal crunch plaguing most regimes, with the budget-tightening it leads to, is helping to deepen this crisis.

This crisis of bourgeois institutions is both a cause and an effect of the ruling-class crisis of political leadership. However, it is necessary to fight the illusion that this crisis could lead to paralysis of the state, rendering it incapable of reactionary and repressive moves, or to a loss of the capacity to maneuver of an experienced bourgeoisie. In no way can it lead to a kind of disintegration of the very function of the bourgeois state, which is to reproduce a given social structure—namely, the domination of capital over labor. At best, this crisis can provide an opportunity to more fully expose the qualitative limits of bourgeois democracy (see the statements of the "judges' unions" in France and Italy), and to educate on the necessity and significance of destroying the bourgeois state.

### The Crisis of Proletarian Leadership

24. The period begun in 1968-69 has lasted much longer than similar periods of crisis in the past.

As this situation continues, as the gears of bourgeois society become jammed, and as dissatisfaction grows among the masses, confrontations loom on the horizon. To defend their own interests, the bureaucratic leaderships put up a wall of class collaboration, in an attempt to avoid a head-on battle and to derail and fragment a working-class upsurge.

To win acceptance of this policy, above all in countries where the workers have challenged bourgeois order most openly, the leaderships of the trade unions and SPs and CPs, in the wake of the recession, have taken up the leitmotiv of the bourgeois politicians and economists about austerity, and often drop references to the "peaceful transition to socialism" from their propaganda, or have launched an ideological campaign aiming to show that it is impossible for the working class to abolish capitalism and overturn the bourgeois state.

A sober look at the masses' level of activity, the goals that broad vanguard layers have taken on in the course of their struggles, the contrast between these goals and the orientation of the reformist leaderships, and the limited but real outflanking of the bureaucracies that has taken place,

leads to an entirely different conclusion. It reveals the importance of concrete factors in the evolution of the class struggle over the past ten years, such as the political parties and trade unions, their program, leadership, and continuing control over the working class. This is especially true given the absence of a revolutionary party, which, in the course of the various waves of struggles, could have drawn in a large number of worker cadres with authority in the plants and mass organizations, who would be capable of giving leadership to a class-struggle left wing in the trade unions.

The chief characteristic of the period is not the masses' self-subordination to the goals of the reformist bureaucracies, even though the reformists have by and large kept majority control over them. The outstanding feature is the crisis of proletarian leadership. That is what is keeping prerevolutionary crises from turning into revolutionary situations. The example of Portugal confirmed this.

25. To protect the thousand and one ties they have to bourgeois society, the reformist leaderships have gone to the aid of a class whose rule was being challenged or endangered.

Thus, the Social Democratic leaders in West Germany, Britain, the Scandinavian countries, Belgium, the Netherlands, Swit-

zerland, Portugal, and Spain have become staunch defenders of the "market economy," making the public sector profitable, limiting direct and indirect wages and government spending, and restricting the right to strike.

In nearly all of these countries, they have played a decisive role in getting the trade-union leaderships to adopt austerity policies, despite opposition from some sectors of them.

In order to get a majority in parliament, Social Democratic parties have either been flanked by liberal watchdogs (West Germany, Denmark), or included in broader coalition governments (the Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal, Switzerland). This is also because the capitalists distrust the Social Democrats' very ability—because of their ties to the working class and the trade unions—to take the kind of anti-working-class measures that the gravity of the economic crisis calls for.

26. Likewise, the leaderships of the Communist parties have rushed to the rescue of bourgeois regimes in trouble or on the point of collapse. Leaving aside the specifically Italian aspects of the "historic compromise," the line of the Communist parties of Western Europe falls within this strategic framework. If the international political context is different, if the period itself is by no means similar, and if the root causes of this orientation are not identical, the fact remains that the general outlines of this strategy remain those drawn by the Stalinist international at its Seventh Congress (1935).

The capitalists' mounting attacks have aroused a tendency among the toiling masses to begin to fight back in a unified way, and to put forward anticapitalist demands. The very function of the CPs' policy is to divert this movement towards goals and forms of governments that are compatible with bourgeois interests and with the survival of private ownership and its state institutions.

However, except in Portugal—and leaving aside the case of Finland, which is based on international political considerations—the CPs have not been brought into the government.

On the one hand, the bourgeoisie was not forced by an impetuous mass upsurge to do this. It did not want to pay the price, and firmly marshaled its ranks against this possibility with the backing of U.S. imperialism. On the other hand, in the present economic context, the CP leaderships were unenthusiastic about coming to power on the crest of a broad wave of mobilizations, necessary to force the bourgeoisie to give up its opposition to their participation in the government.

They even tried to head off and defuse mobilizations. Political and trade-union divisions, and those between various categories of workers engaged in struggle, were the tools of this operation. The ups and downs of the Union of the Left in France or the "historic compromise" in Italy

flowed from the same source.

Of course, in the event of mass explosions capable of threatening the capitalist system, the CPs could always be brought into a coalition government as a means of derailing the mass movement and making sure the ruling class stays in power.

26.1. The policy of the Italian CP from 1973 to 1978 gives a perfect picture of the logic of the "historic compromise." Berlinguer actually went from the prospect of a coalition government with the Christian Democrats to outright support for a Christian Democratic government. The Italian CP became the chief public defender of the austerity policy, "law and order," strike-breaking, and restrictions on trade-union freedom. This policy helped undermine the gains won by the working class in 1975-76. It surrendered the field to a worm-eaten Christian Democracy, whose goal was precisely to wear out the CP by keeping it waiting endlessly on the threshold of power for the sake of "national unity." This was translated into an electoral setback for the CP in the June 1979 elections.

26.2. In Spain, the PSOE and CP leaderships allowed Juan Carlos and Suárez to make the transition from the Franco regime to one of bourgeois parliamentary democracy centered around the army, the repressive apparatus inherited from Francoism, and the monarchy. In 1975, the Franco regime had been pushed into a corner. Spanish capitalism was deep in a morass; workers struggles were on the rise; and Franco's death had raised the awkward problem of a successor. The bourgeoisie was floundering in an acute crisis of leadership, caught between the rebuffs of the "bunker" (the irreconcilable supporters of Franco), and the upsurge of the mass movement. It was forced to put off all economic measures of any scope, despite the severity of the recession.

Thus, the reform of Francoism would be played out on two apparently separate stages. But everything proceeded as if the players of each side knew the script of the other. Mass struggles sometimes forced a change in the plot, but the denouement sought by both parties—the Suárez government and the reformist PSOE and CP leaderships—remained the same. It was necessary to avoid a confrontation, to save the capitalist system.

At each critical stage, the leaderships of the PSOE and CP broadened their policy of class collaboration. After merging the Democratic Junta with the Platform of Democratic Convergence to form the Democratic Coordination in March 1976, they set up the Liaison Commission of the Democratic Opposition in September 1976, which included nearly all the bourgeois opposition parties.

The bureaucratic leaderships strove to fragment the strike wave that spread widely at the end of 1976. Through direct negotiations with Suárez, the CP and PSOE would ease the way for the monarchy's first political victory with the refer-

endum on the reform law (December 1976). Their support to the new constitution (referendum in 1978) was in the same vein.

The June 1977 elections, in which the UCD won a plurality of votes, fortified the government's position. But the results also reflected the breadth of proletarian mobilizations. In the big industrial centers, the workers parties won a clear majority. In the autumn of 1977, the strike wave intensified. Achieving a social pact thus became the number one goal of the bourgeoisie. The bureaucratic leaderships complied. They signed the Moncloa pact in October 1977, which opened the road for the UCD government to launch, in 1979, its Economic Program and to propose a Statute of Labor, an antiworking-class law which puts severe limits on the most elementary social and union rights of the workers.

Around the time of the trade-union elections, in early 1978, the policy of division carried out by the leaderships of the UGT-PSOE and the Workers Commissions-CP overlapped with that of "national unity." It disoriented the workers and resulted in limiting and fragmenting struggles against the austerity policy.

The UGT-PSOE proposed "negotiations" to counter the new economic plan of the government and did not oppose the Statute of Labor. The COs, even though they gave verbal opposition, refused to coordinate and generalize any fight back.

26.3. In Portugal, the role of the SP and CP leaderships in the revolutionary upsurge made it perfectly clear what the function of their class-collaborationist policy was—to contain the mass upsurge, divide it up, reduce its independence, and make its objectives compatible with the survival of a market economy and bourgeois state institutions.

Immediately after April 25, 1974, the SP and CP leaderships declined to call for a constituent assembly elected on the basis of universal suffrage and proportional representation. They gave the bourgeoisie time to organize its political forces under the wings of the military hierarchy. In the name of "national unity," the SP and CP participated in various coalition governments, backed Spínola, even after the civilian attempt at a coup d'état in September 1974, and bowed to the dictates of the "pact between the political parties and the MFA."

After the April 1975 elections, the workers parties refused to form a government that reflected their absolute majority in the constituent assembly. They were perfectly aware that an SP-CP government without military officers would strengthen the masses' drive toward unity and encourage independent political action by the working class.

In response to the workers and neighborhood commissions, which arose on a massive scale in the wake of the mass resistance to the abortive coup attempt of March 11, the Soares leadership spearheaded the bourgeois counteroffensive. In the name of

fighting "anarcho-populism," Soares aimed to smash the movement toward self-organization that was developing among the workers and even in the army. He openly championed bourgeois democracy and private ownership. The SP campaign widened the split that the CP's sectarian maneuvers had produced among the toiling masses.

The CP's line was the counterpart to the SP's. In the name of defending the "national democratic revolution," the Cunhal leadership subordinated the mass upsurge to support for the MFA, that is, for a section of the imperialist army in crisis. The CP leadership sabotaged the formation of the soldiers commissions, seeking to tie them to the MFA. It tried to turn the workers commissions into a weapon in the "battle for production." Its multiple sectarian maneuvers, attacks on the freedom of expression of other currents in the workers movement, and manipulation of all the embryonic coordinating bodies, especially under the Fifth Provisional Government, became an obstacle to the broadening and centralization of these potential organs of workers power.

The SP and CP leaderships, each in their own way, did all they could to block the development and coordination of the workers and soldiers commissions, and prevent them from being transformed into broad united-front-type bodies. In this way, the masses could not derive all the possible advantages from the acute crisis of the bourgeois state apparatus to strengthen their position. The gap between this crisis of state institutions and the level of self-organization of the masses was maintained. The bourgeoisie took advantage of it to gather its forces, to regain its capacity for initiative, which was shown on November 25, 1975. It was then in a position to reestablish its power, to restart the machinery of bourgeois parliamentary democracy and the presidential system.

The policy of the centrist groups wavered between ultraleftism and tail-ending the MFA, CP, and even the Fifth Provisional Government. Sometimes both aspects were combined. In this way, they made the SP and CP leaderships' job easier.

By characterizing the SP as "social fascist," by their sectarianism and rejection of the principles of workers democracy, and by the illusions they fostered about the MFA, they helped reinforce divisions among the workers. Their inability to put forward a correct united front policy, and their failure to understand the class nature of the government, were a major political obstacle to organizing a mobilization of the masses, who were seeking different solutions from those offered by the SP and CP leaderships. Their adventurism likewise facilitated the maneuver of November 25, 1975.

In the following years, not only did the SP governments initiate an austerity policy, but in August 1977 created the legal

basis for an attack against the agrarian reform which was carried through by the governments of Nobre da Costa, Mota Pinto, and Maria de Lurdes Pintassilgo. By their support or abstention, the SP and CP allowed the formation of these antiworking-class governments, even though together they had a majority in parliament. During this period, both maintained their policy of dividing the working class.

26.4. In France, the objective of the reformist leaders was to prevent a repetition of May 1968, which caught them by surprise, to divert the advancing radicalization to their own advantage and gain control of it. This was the purpose of the formation of the Union of the Left on the basis of the governmental common program signed in 1972. It was a coalition between the two workers parties and a small bourgeois party, the Movement of Left Radicals. This program challenged neither the essential mechanisms of the capitalist economy, nor the bonapartist constitution imposed as a result of the coup d'état of May 13, 1958.

The reformist parties were to use the electoral gains they made in the presidential elections in 1974, the cantonal elections of 1976, and the municipal elections of 1977, to dampen and divide the response of the working class to the attacks of the bosses and the government. In the name of broadening the Union of the Left, they scaled down the demands. They preached patience to the workers, dangling before them the promise of a victory right on the horizon in the March 1978 elections. The Union of the Left subordinated the mobilization, activity, and organization of the workers to its parliamentary and class-collaborationist perspectives.

The conjunction between the effects of the recession, which overshadowed the proposals for economic reforms contained in the Common Program, and the deepening of the radicalization and politicalization of the workers introduced an imbalance into the plans of the SP and CP. In fact, the situation threatened to lead to a challenging of the CP bureaucracy's exclusive control over the CGT, a challenge to the Maire leadership in the CFDT, as well as difficulties in the relationship between the latter and the SP.

Then, the SP leadership offered some guarantees to the bourgeoisie by reaffirming its respects for the constraints of the "profit economy," the "international economic environment," and interimperialist competition. The CFDT bureaucracy followed suit by giving priority to so-called qualitative demands at the expense of so-called quantitative ones.

The CP leadership concentrated its fire on what it claimed was "the SP's right turn." It launched a demagogic assault on the austerity policy advocated by Mitterrand all the more readily because it itself steered clear of organizing any major counterattack against the austerity im-

posed by Barre. The CGT bureaucracy followed in its footsteps and lined up the union confederation with the CP's positions. After several months of a crossfire of invectives, the division in the workers ranks was driven deep, because the union bureaucrats promoted it and exploited it as a way of avoiding doing anything to mobilize the workers.

The division created by the CP and SP leaderships, especially after September 1977, had the effect not only of smothering any counterattack by the workers but also of breaking the momentum of the Union of the Left in the electoral arena. The beginning of the electoral campaign was marked by Marchais's refusal to make a commitment that CP candidates would withdraw in favor of SP candidates in the second round in those districts where the latter were ahead. In order to justify this orientation, the CP claimed to be the only party of the working class. It openly took the risk of bringing about a defeat of the Union of the Left in the elections in order to protect its interests as a bureaucratic apparatus. These interests could have suffered as a result of the CP being involved in running the government during a period of deep economic crisis. The narrow victory of the UDP and the RPR in March 1978 was the result of this divisionist and class-collaborationist policy of the CP and the SP. Since March 1978, the masses' aspiration for unity has been shown in the by-elections showing a majority for the workers parties (but with the SP gaining at the expense of the CP). This tendency was confirmed in the cantonal elections of March 1979.

The policy of division of the trade-union leaderships broke out in the open in the spring of 1979 when they refused to centralize the struggle of the steelworkers and organize a general offensive against unemployment and the Barre plans.

Then they used the division they were responsible for as a pretext to demobilize the workers. The mutual recriminations between the CP and SP, the watering down of their demands by the CGT and CFDT, the restriction and fragmentation of mobilizations, fake proposals for "unity of the rank and file,"—all that, in fact, revealed the desire of the union leaderships to adapt their policies to the needs of capitalism flowing from the crisis and to avoid a confrontation with the government.

26.5. In a context of sharp class polarization, the policy of the reformist leaderships, while not leading to any significant defeats up to now, has had certain negative effects that have enabled the bourgeoisie to gain a little ground in some countries and to inflict some defeats on the workers movement.

This has been reflected over the past three years by:

a. partial downturns in mobilizations, in relation to those of the 1974-76 period; the acceptance—following real resistance—of



Rising joblessness fills unemployment office in Britain.

restructuring measures implying massive firings (for example at British Leyland in Britain);

b. defeats and setbacks for the workers parties in legislative elections (for example France, Portugal, Britain, and Italy);

c. stagnation and in some cases a decline in membership of the unions (for example, in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France);

d. a decline in the power of attraction of the workers movement over radicalized

layers, often coming from the petty bourgeoisie, and over the student movement, which has in some cases gone into deep crisis;

e. among sectors of the youth, the appearance of ideologies which pretend to be in opposition to the dominant ideas but actually come into contradiction with the general aims of the workers movement;

f. a decline in the influence of Marxism among intellectuals, and an impact of the bourgeois anti-Marxist offensive.

stayed in the framework of the overall political solutions proposed by the reformist leaderships. This was the case in Portugal during the summer and fall of 1975; in Italy at the time of the 1975 and 1976 elections; in Spain in the period of the Moncloa Pact; in Great Britain, when in the fall of 1975 the Labour government adopted its antilabor measures.

Nevertheless many workers have begun to draw a balance sheet of the strategy of the SPs, the CPs, and the union leaderships, as well as its results on both the general political level and on the level of the material conditions imposed on the workers. The orientation of the bureaucracies is being seen not simply as an obstacle to organizing struggles democratically, extending them, carrying them forward, or deepening them as regards their objectives. It is beginning to be seen as direct assistance to maintain the ruling regimes or governments (Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Belgium) or as loyally managing the interests of the bourgeoisie, or as an ineffective means for defending the workers' gains against bosses who are less and less inclined to make concessions (West Germany, Britain, Denmark).

The limitations of this workers vanguard on the trade-union and political levels arise from the fact that the revolutionary Marxist organizations have too weak a base at present in the key sectors of the industrial working class and therefore have too few revolutionary worker cadres

### A Period of Sharp Turns

27. Over the past ten years, in many countries, in the course of struggles that have at times converged from a certain angle with the line of the reformist leaderships, a layer of advanced workers has been forged. To some extent, it has revived, and even extended, the accumulated experience of the working class as a whole in trade-union and political struggles. In this way new workers cadres and leaders emerge who have led struggles and who have the confidence of workers in their factories and trade unions. They often have broken in practice with the methods and directives of the union bureaucracy, and in a partial way have opposed their class-collaborationist orientation.

On more than one occasion, these advanced workers have forced the bureaucracy to make limited turns or adaptations to their pressure in order to hang onto its

positions. When the reformist leaderships have shown their hands, coming out openly in support of austerity policies, these workers have frequently expressed repudiation of such capitulation, which has led some intermediate sections of the union apparatus to also challenge the policies of the central union leadership.

But nowhere have these opposition tendencies yet attained the coherent policy, organizational solidity, authority throughout the entire union organization, or even in extensive sections of it, that would give them the means for mounting an effective fight against the bureaucratic apparatuses and presenting an alternative strategy with credibility on the practical level.

This weakness has been revealed most clearly when the question of power, in the form of a governmental alternative, was posed. These workers have generally



able to oppose the negative political and theoretical effects of the long period of uncontested social-democratic and Stalinist domination. If the revolutionary Marxist program and organization do not become more rooted in the working class, the process of organizing this layer of advanced workers in a class-struggle left wing will remain limited, and the potential of the tendencies moving to the left in the reformist parties will not be realized. The bureaucratic leaderships will not have to confront the challenge of an alternative leadership.

27.1. All this explains why the reformist apparatuses have been able so far to succeed in their operation of bailing out the capitalist system. On this question, Trotsky wrote:

"Imitating the liberals, our sages tacitly accept the axiom that every class gets the leadership it deserves. In reality leadership is not at all a mere 'reflection' of a class or the product of its own free creativeness. A leadership is shaped in the process of clashes between the different classes or the friction between the different layers within a given class. Having once arisen, the leadership invariably rises above its class and thereby becomes predisposed to the pressure and influence of other classes. The proletariat may 'tolerate' for a long time a leadership that has already suffered a complete inner degeneration but has not as yet had the opportunity to express this degeneration amid great events.

"A great historic shock is necessary to reveal sharply the contradictions between the leadership and the class. . . . But even in cases where the old leadership has revealed its internal corruption, the class cannot immediately improvise a new leadership, especially if it has not inherited from the previous period strong revolutionary cadres capable of utilizing the collapse of the old leading party. . . .

"As regards new leadership, the choice is very limited. Only gradually, only on the basis of their own experience through several stages, can the broad layers of the masses become convinced that a new leadership is firmer, more reliable, more loyal than the old. To be sure, during a revolution, i.e., when events move swiftly, a weak party can quickly grow into a mighty one provided it lucidly understands the course of the revolution and possesses staunch cadres that do not become intoxicated with phrases and are not terrorized by persecution. But such a party must be available prior to the revolution inasmuch as the process of educating the cadres requires a considerable period of time and the revolution does not afford this time."

27.2. The points scored by the bourgeoisie, thanks to the help of the bureaucratic apparatuses, have not involved any qualitative change in the relationship of forces. But the introduction of antilabor plans by governments has been facilitated, and a general counterattack by the workers made more difficult, by the political con-

text created by the November 25, 1975, crackdown in Portugal and the advantage won by the Democratic Alliance in the December 1979 elections; the freezing of the political situation after June 1976 in Italy, with the Christian Democrats maintaining their electoral position in the June 1979 elections, while the CP suffered a setback; the signing of the Moncloa pact (October 1979), the "national unity" accord on the constitution (December 1978), and broad consensus on some of the pacts on autonomy in Spain; the defeat of the Union of the Left in France in the March 1978 elections; and the Conservative election victory in May 1979 in Britain.

However, working-class resistance remains strong. Counterattacks in one branch of industry or an important sector can win gains and may even open up political crises. Any serious struggle for a partial objective can lead rapidly to a large-scale battle. A revival of workers struggles in an industry less hard hit by the crisis can rapidly stimulate a resurgence of mobilizations in sectors of the working class that have already engaged in struggles without achieving any significant results. This reflects the mood of the working class as a whole. The attempts of the governments, despite the hardening attitude of the bosses, to co-opt the unions by means of pacts in their way reflect the nature of the period.

Thus, the bourgeoisie cannot in the short run upset the balance of forces that was established years ago and shift the relationship of forces decisively in its favor. It

## The Crisis of the Organizations of the Workers Movement

28. A wide range of different levels of consciousness has developed in the working class over this past decade. Some layers of wage earners have attained trade-union consciousness for the first time. Others have acquired elementary political consciousness, joining workers parties. On the basis of their experiences in struggle, sections of workers see joining these parties and being active in their unions in a perspective of bringing about a radical change in society. Some of them no longer go along with the campaigns mounted by the bureaucrats against the centrist and revolutionary Marxist organizations and their members. They already engage in, or demand, unity in action with these forces. However, the course of their political development has not yet led them to lose their faith in the reformist leaderships, even if they are working for a change in the internal life and in the line of their party.

In reality, these levels of consciousness are more numerous than enumerated here and they overlap in a more complex way. The essential thing is that this upswing, the growth of internal contradictions, and the emergence of opposition currents in the parties and unions are rooted in a process

needs the reformist political and union apparatuses to contain the mass movement in order to try to wear out working class resistance over a long period, relying on the demoralizing effect of the crisis, before it risks a head-on confrontation. It could even score some relative successes in applying its austerity plans. But in every new stage of this offensive, profound tremors could develop.

The inability of the two main classes to impose their own general solution in a context of deepening economic, social, and political crisis is leading to a relatively prolonged period of major class struggles, a period marked by prerevolutionary crises, large-scale bourgeois offensives in some countries, and sharp political turns. In the course of these clashes the bourgeoisie will try to assemble the forces needed to carry through its plans. But at the same time, these shifts will offer opportunities to take steps forward toward solving the crisis of proletarian leadership.

The working-class vanguard is thus going to go through numerous sharp political fluctuations. This offers a favorable ground for an apprenticeship in strategy and tactics at a time when the facade of the reformist organizations that dominate the working class is crumbling. This period is rich in possibilities for rooting the sections of the Fourth International more deeply in the working class, for recruiting and training revolutionary worker cadres, and for applying a conscious long-term policy of training leadership teams in these sections.

of transformation of the consciousness of the working masses.

The base and audience that the centrist and revolutionary Marxist organizations have won in the working class are part and parcel of this reshaping of the attitude of the proletariat.

Against this background, a general crisis is unfolding in the bureaucratic workers organizations, both in the parties and in the unions. It arises from the interrelation between two factors—the crisis of imperialism and that of Stalinism.

The crisis of imperialism is undermining the material bases of reformism. The strategy and methods of action of the bureaucrats are beginning to be seen as illusory by significant sections of the class. The bureaucratic apparatuses are finding themselves more and more trapped in an impasse by the conjunction of a deteriorating economic climate and strong working class militancy.

The new stage in the crisis of Stalinism has brought the end of monolithism in the "international Communist movement" into most of the European CPs.

One of the major features of this phase of recomposition in the workers movement is the capitulation of left currents or "oppo-

sitions" in the SPs and CPs, as well as the unions, to the ideology and policy of austerity defended by the bureaucratic apparatuses. They have often covered up this surrender with talk about a "left form of austerity" as an instrument of reform. The vacuum left by the retreat of these currents is tending to be filled today by a new generation of activists who have participated in, or led, many struggles.

Finally, the youth, which has not been scarred by defeats in the past and is worried about its future, is showing a

## The Social Democracy

29. The objective role that the Social Democracy plays has been confirmed once again in this period.

The counterrevolutionary role of the Social Democracy is not limited to defending bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology in the ranks of the proletariat, diverting upsurges of wage earners, and integrating the workers and their organizations into the mechanisms of capitalist society. Social Democratic parties may advocate labor-management boards on the German, Swedish, or English models; or Rocard's version of "self-management," which is only a form of sharing of responsibility for management; or the sort of "workers control" preached by the Portuguese SP in 1974-75.

In its role as a buttress of the bourgeois order, the Social Democracy has more than once applied repressive measures directly against the working class.

In its tradition of defending imperialism, which led it to carry out massacres of the colonial peoples fighting for their liberation, the Social Democracy has taken up the cudgels for neocolonialism. In Sweden, West Germany, Belgium, and Switzerland, it helps the big trusts export capital to the underdeveloped countries. This promotion of imperialist superprofits is also concealed under the mask of "aid to the third world."

In Asia and Latin America, the Social Democracy plays the role of democratic ambassador of the European imperialist powers. It is working there to put together alternative solutions (forming SPs with the backing of sections of the local bourgeoisie or integration of bourgeois parties in the Second International) to dictatorships that are always in danger of being rocked by popular explosions.

This mission as the political agent of imperialism stands out more sharply in view of the impact of the class struggles in capitalist Europe and the weight they are bringing to bear on the world balance of forces.

29.1. The Social Democratic parties serve the imperialist bourgeoisie, but they are based on the workers. They are in fact the "labor lieutenants of capital." As a result, their place in the state apparatus

strong suspicion of the bureaucratic practices and petty-bourgeois ideology of the reformist leaderships. These youth express doubts about the effectiveness of the class-collaborationist orientation of the SPs and CPs and a clear rejection of imperialist barbarism as well as bureaucratic dictatorship in the workers states. The SPs and CPs are thus encountering difficulties in organizing the student and worker youth solidly and on a large scale. Moreover, there are many critical elements in the youth organizations of the Social Democracy and the CPs.

and their manifold links with bourgeois society depend very largely on the relationship of forces between the classes and the degree of organization and activity of the workers.

In the last analysis, these two aspects explain, for example, the fluctuating fortunes of the Swedish SP or the SPD in the electoral arena. Demobilizing the workers for a long period and refusing to appeal for their active support, as the SPD did in the 1976 election campaign, can lead to an erosion of the vote for such parties.

The same two aspects explain the swelling of the ranks of the French, Spanish, and Portuguese SPs since the beginning of the 1970s. In addition, the revival of these parties is explained more precisely by the following factors:

First, important sections of the working class are entering political life for the first time under the impact of a crisis that has hit suddenly after twenty years of capitalist expansion. Some of them are turning toward the SPs, since these parties' historical links with the workers movement, their presence in some struggles, and their professions of faith give them the image of big workers parties that could introduce reforms to assure the maintenance and improvement of the workers standard of living.

Secondly, the traumatic experience of fascism and Stalinism lends special acuteness to the question of democratic rights and the relationship between democracy and socialism. The Social Democratic parties have been able to tap these democratic aspirations by means of demagogic postures.

Third, the expansion of sectors such as distribution, banking, insurance, and secondary and higher education, as well as the tendency more generally for intellectual labor to be reintegrated into productive labor (technicians, engineers) have given birth to new strata of wage earners in which the SPs have found part of their social base. These sectors generally lack a class-struggle tradition. They often enjoy a position of material privilege. They are particularly prone to the ideology disseminated by the SPs about the possibilities for using the state apparatus to introduce

reforms through a "stricter application of political economy," and "utilizing talents and skills" wasted by an archaic hierarchical system.

Fourth, in contrast to the image and style of functioning shown by the bureaucratic leaderships of the CPs, the SPs have seemed to offer possibilities for more discussion, the expression of a range of opinions, and even the existence of public currents. While maintaining this democratic facade as much as possible, of course, the Social Democratic leaderships keep tight control over all the centers of political decision making.

As a result of decades of incrustation in the bourgeois state apparatus, these bourgeois workers parties are experiencing a shift in the balance between the various components in their leaderships. While their relationship with the unions—with the exception of Portugal—remains their main tie to the working class, the role assumed by state functionaries, ministers, city council members, and technocrats is more and more preponderant. This transformation within the SPs has repercussions on various levels. Ideological degeneration has deepened still more. The leaderships are increasingly filled up with bourgeois politicians for whom these parties are simply springboards for their career.

The independence that sections of the SP leaderships have acquired vis-à-vis the mass movement remains, however, relative. The electoral support for these parties still comes overwhelmingly from wage earners. This may lead these parties, in certain circumstances, to call on the workers to mobilize. We saw this in 1972 in West Germany at the time of Barzel's attempted parliamentary coup d'état. Other examples have been seen in Belgium when the local SP renegotiated its place into the government (the February-March 1977 strike); and in Portugal in July 1978, when, faced with the ultimatum from the CDS and his ouster by President Eanes, Soares raised the threat of mobilizing in the streets against the danger from the right. He quickly dropped this threat, and paid the price in the December 1979 elections for his policies of austerity, and demobilization and division of the workers.

29.2. The internal cohesion of the Social Democracy can break down when the contradiction sharpens between the level of activity, consciousness, and organization of the class, and the objective role played by the leadership. Thus, the tensions in the Labour Party, on the one hand; and the calm prevailing in the Austrian Social Democracy, on the other, reflect the higher levels of militancy and organization of British workers relative to the Austrian working class.

Understanding this fundamental mechanism makes it possible both to avoid academic disputes about the "extent of bourgeoisification" of the Social Democratic parties and to grasp all the opportunities for dialogue with workers in the

SPs or influenced by them.

The forms taken by the contradiction between the role of the leaderships and the radicalization of workers in the ranks and in the periphery of Social Democratic parties also vary, depending on whether these parties hold a long-established dominant position in the working class or must confront the competition of CPs that lead unions.

In countries such as Norway, Sweden, West Germany, Austria, Denmark, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, the Social Democratic parties influence the attitudes of the overwhelming majority, or at least a decisive section, of the working class on both political and trade-union questions.

In such SPs, tensions and the appearance of opposition groups can be generated by the following factors: Dissatisfaction in the unions with the way the party is running the government, or conflict over this between sections of the unions and the dominant circles in both the party and the trade-union movement. The development of a wave of wildcat strikes, led by working-class cadres at the rank-and-file level of these parties. Rebellion of sections of the parliamentary party that balk at the overly flagrant way the top party leadership panders to the needs of the capitalists.

In France, Portugal, Spain, and Italy, the Socialist parties have to contend with CPs. The adaptations they may make at certain times to mass upsurges and the demagogic declarations that they make in the attempt to outbid the CPs change nothing as regards their Social Democratic nature. In the electoral arena, these parties seek to win the broadest possible base in order to assure themselves a key position in any governmental combination. But even when they have acquired significant electoral weight (France, Spain, Portugal), their footing remains unstable. They are thrown on the horns of a dilemma that faces the entire party as well as the unions, to turn to an alliance with the CP or a coalition with the bourgeois parties excluding the CP.

These contradictory options provoke debates and internal clashes over problems of overall political strategy, unity of the workers parties, and the governmental question (for example in the PSOE and the Portuguese SP).

The SPs need to acquire a trade-union transmission belt. Without this, they cannot put over their policies, gain credibility in the eyes of the bourgeoisie as candidates for forming a government, or hold their own very long in competing with the CPs for influence in the workers movement. This is a difficult undertaking (as is shown by the weak impact on the working class by the UGTF, launched in October 1978 in Portugal). Even when successes are achieved, as in Spain with the UGT, or partially even in France with the CFTD, they remain fragile. These SPs do not have

a stable base in the factories that could serve as the backbone of a trade-union fraction.

In these SPs, currents with roots in the unions may serve to voice opposition to both the strategic policy of the top party leadership and its line in the unions. To varying degrees, this has happened in Spain, Portugal, and France.

More generally, under the impact of developments in the class struggle, leftward moving currents may arise in the SPs.

The existing "left tendencies" that boast of having developed their own alternative to the strategy of the Social Democratic leaderships are strongly marked by gradualism. They reduce everything to "processes," and "movements," thereby conjuring away the question of the goal—that is, the conquest of power. In doing so, they in effect eliminate strategy, or at least reduce

the question of socialist revolution to a combination of modifications in the organization of work, life style, institutions ("decentralization," "regionalization"), and the "cultural hegemony" of the workers parties, which is supposed to transform the consciousness of the masses. They tend, thus, to put an equal sign between the partial and temporary breaches that the mass movement can open up in some peripheral spheres of the institutions of the bourgeois state (for example, education) and breakthroughs in the central areas—private power of decision over investments, the functioning of the market economy, the links with the world capitalist market, and the repressive apparatuses of the bourgeois state (the army and police). The revolutionary crisis and dual power are dumped by these tendencies in favor of an illusory "prolonged process of structural reforms."

### The Communist Parties

30. In the historical context of the unfolding of the world revolution, the breakdown of the Stalinist system is occurring on three interdependent levels: (1) Difficulties in the Kremlin bureaucracy's relationship with the ruling Communist parties. (2) A crisis of the bureaucracies' control over the societies of the degenerated or deformed workers states. (3) Tensions between the Soviet Communist Party and the CPs in the capitalist countries. The policy of "socialism in one country" leads, among other things, to transforming the CPs into instruments of the Kremlin's diplomacy and to stimulating chauvinist tendencies within them.

As the European CPs have become more and more enconced in city administrations, regional governments and councils, the machinery of the bourgeois state, gotten involved in running a vast network of cooperatives (in the case of the Italian CP) and infiltrated layers of functionaries, they have become increasingly integrated into bourgeois society. This is the material basis for the nationalist centrifugal tendencies in this part of the "international Communist movement," for the "Eurocommunist" parties' attempts to dissociate themselves from the Kremlin, for the limited conflicts between their leaderships and that of the Soviet CP, as well as for the dissensions among them.

At the Berlin Conference of CPs in June 1976, the Italian, Spanish, and French CPs, supported by the Romanian CP and the Yugoslav League of Communists, questioned even the usefulness of such meetings as this, although since the dissolution of the Cominform they are the only place where the CPs come together to make decisions.

30.1. On the one hand, the CPs still maintain ties with the Soviet bureaucracy, even though these are very strained. On the other hand, they are more and more dependent on the base they have acquired

in bourgeois society. The process of change itself through which most of the CPs in capitalist Europe are going—with the exceptions of the Portuguese CP; the West German CP, which is an agent of the East German regime; and the Austrian CP—reflects this contradictory situation in which they have become immersed.

• Increasingly since 1968, the CP leaderships have dissociated themselves from, and condemned the most notorious examples of repression in the USSR and the People's Democracies. They have been led to challenge publicly the Soviet bureaucracy's attempts to present "real socialism" (the present set-up in the Soviet Union) as a model.

These West European CPs were not unaware of bureaucratic domination and Stalinist repression in the past. They have been forced to adopt their present attitude for four reasons: First, in the course of struggles, broad sections of the workers movement in West Europe have become more acutely sensitive to questions of democracy. In these battles, the masses have shown a desire to take over the running of production themselves, along with a strong tendency to self-organization and a strong surge of opposition to all forms of hierarchy. They have demanded democracy in the unions. So, the leaderships of the CPs could not continue to cover up totally for bureaucratic dictatorship and the suppression of all workers democracy in the USSR and "East Europe" without running the risk of having to pay a heavy price. Secondly, their competition with the SPs also forced them to try to assume the mantle of "defenders of democratic rights," and not just in capitalist Europe. Thirdly, the CPs were anxious to increase their credibility as a possible government party in the eyes of the bourgeoisie and this obliged them to demonstrate a certain independence from the Kremlin. Fourthly, the bureaucracy of

the West European CPs, which to a large extent has its own material base, is not ready to be ejected from its positions by a mere gesture from the Kremlin. Dubcek's fate confirmed their suspicions of the Kremlin masters.

- The strategic orientation of the CPs is rooted in the Stalinist revisions necessary to justify defending the bourgeois order and the Kremlin's diplomatic maneuvers. In this respect, the line of the "historic compromise" in Italy and the "union of the people of France" represent a continuity of the policy of "national unity" that was followed in both countries immediately following the second world war.

Nonetheless, the vacuum created by dropping references to the "socialism in the USSR" as the goal to be attained and the model to be followed is forcing the CP leaderships to take new steps forward in systematizing their revision of Marxism. They have to provide an ideological cover for their extreme forms of class collaboration. They have to consolidate their political identity. They have to forge cadres in a modified mold.

After going through the formality of removing the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat from their platforms—which had long since become totally alien to their actual activity and line—they have launched a revisionist ideological offensive on other levels. In logical course, they have focused their attack on two points—the nature of the bourgeois state, which is supposed to have lost all class content; and the source of the capitalist crisis. The objective is obvious—to justify a "solution" to this crisis within the framework of the market economy. The Italian and Spanish CPs are doing the pioneer work in this area.

- Within the CPs, the wave of recruitment following 1968 and the turnover in membership have considerably reduced the relative weight of those members trained in the school of the resistance and later of the cold war. In the apparatus and the leaderships, the role of administrators has increased relative to the sectors that have come directly out of the workers movement. These administrators have gotten their training in city governments, regional authorities, or cooperatives and large public or semipublic enterprises. Activists coming from the intelligentsia occupy many more posts than in the past. Such changes tend to seriously increase the shakiness of the political education members receive, which consists of a mélange of references to the historical traditions of the party, the October revolution, the USSR, and the new positions. It is difficult to achieve ideological cohesion among the ranks.

30.2. The leaderships of the Eurocommunist CPs claim to have broken with Stalinism. However, they refuse to consider doing away with the decisive elements that link them to the bureaucratic caste and the Stalinist "theoretical" legacy. Their determination to take more distance

from the Soviet bureaucracy as well as from their past and their need to avoid a complete break with the USSR, the result of the October revolution, reflects the dilemma in which these parties have been trapped in the present period by the crisis of Stalinism.

- However extensive their criticisms of the bureaucracy's repressive system and their challenges to the universal validity of the "Soviet model," the leaderships of the CPs as such continue to characterize the USSR and the People's Democracies as "socialist states." Rejecting any conception of a workers state based on democratic workers councils, these leaders justify the existence of such a "variant of socialism" on the basis of the legacy of Czarist society, "cultural backwardness," and the "absence of an industrial revolution and an enlightened bourgeoisie." This sort of objectivist argumentation has two advantages from their point of view. It serves to justify a strategy of gradual transformation of the bourgeois parliamentary democracies. It enables them to combine rejection of the "Soviet model" with legitimizing Dubcek-style reformist schemes that are supported by factions of the bureaucratic caste.

- None of the Eurocommunist CPs has stopped supporting the theory of "socialism in one country" and its implications, notably peaceful coexistence. On this level, from the Moscow Conference in 1969 to the one in Berlin in 1976 continuity rather than change has remained characteristic. According to these CPs, the USSR and the "socialist camp" represent the key force among those fighting "against imperialism for independence and peace, for democracy and socialism." The Soviet bureaucracy and those of the CPs recognize a convergence of their interests with respect to the need for defending the international status quo. The Soviet bureaucracy fears seeing its base undermined by the effects of a revolutionary breakthrough in capitalist Europe. The CPs want to safeguard their apparatus and their innumerable ties to bourgeois society by trying to achieve a "historic compromise" with capital. Moreover, the leadership of the Italian, French, and Spanish CPs, as well as of the Portuguese CP, understand very well their role in maintaining the international status quo. Their policy of a "national coalition" and pushing back the mass movement fits into this context. They are also aware of the importance of maintaining links with the bureaucracies in power in order to increase their leverage in negotiating with their own bourgeoisies in pursuit of their own interests. In order to increase their room for maneuver, they may diversify their links. Rather than rely on the Kremlin alone, they may open up avenues to Bucharest, Belgrade, Budapest, or even Peking. Nonetheless, they continue to maintain these political, ideological, and even material ties.

The agreement between the Kremlin

bureaucracy and the leaderships of the CPs on the main options in international policy reflects this reality.

Nonetheless, conflicts between the Kremlin's international objectives and the choices made in national politics by the CPs in capitalist Europe may touch off open conflicts, even on international questions. Berlinguer's official pronouncements on NATO, and the position taken by one of the leading members of the Italian CP Political Bureau, Giancarlo Pajetta, against the Ethiopian military intervention against Eritrea, testify to the acuteness of this problem.

- If the Eurocommunist CPs condemn the sort of relationship that the Soviet CP established with them, they are careful not to denounce explicitly the internal regime of their sister party in the USSR. They continue to extoll the virtues of bureaucratic centralism, which they fraudulently present as democratic centralism.

These parties' criticisms in the area of internal norms are particularly superficial since they realize that any recognition of the right of tendencies and factions and of internal and public debate would constitute a threat to their political survival.

30.3. The tremors running through the West European CPs are of a different order from previous ones owing to the interaction of the general effects of the crisis of reformism and the specific ones of the new phase in the crisis of Stalinism.

The political cohesion of the Stalinist parties rested on an interlocking of three positions: affirmation of the role of the CP as the only leading party of the working class; as the party that rallied the people behind the banner of the national tradition and interests; and finally as the defender of the "fatherland of socialism."

Invoking this "socialist model," as well as the needs of "defending the USSR," made it possible to justify more easily compromises with the bourgeoisie at the same time as their claim to be the sole defenders of the interests of the working class.

- The necessity of dropping their identification with the "socialist model of the USSR" is shaking the whole edifice of the CPs. Thus a threat hangs over these leaderships that is made still clearer by the fundamental similarity between their class-collaborationist orientation and that of the SPs. The continual denials of any resemblance to Social Democracy by the Carrillos or Berlinguers represent in their way an admission of this danger.

In order to extricate themselves from this uncomfortable political position and preserve their specific bureaucratic interests, the CPs are adopting a more and more sectarian attitude. They are reiterating their claims to be the only defender of the working class, especially at the factory level, and the true defender of the national interests. Moreover, aside from all the criticisms, the historic, political, ideological, and material ties of the CPs to the

Soviet bureaucracy, even if they no longer involve total submission to the Kremlin, are still an important aspect of their specific identity as a bureaucracy in the workers movement, differentiating them from the Social Democratic parties.

- The sectarianism being displayed by the CPs argues against their professions of faith in pluralism and engenders conflicts in their own ranks.

The CPs' proclamation of their democratic principles is also contradicted by their sectarian and bureaucratic behavior in the mass organizations. They strangle any democracy in the unions they control and resort to all sorts of manipulation to maintain their hold on mass movements. In this area also they are beginning to pay a price, as is indicated by the debates in the French CGT before and after the 1978 elections. The same phenomenon is beginning to appear in the Workers' Commissions in Spain.

The leaderships of the CPs continually reaffirm their "attachment to the principles of independence for every party, non-interference in the internal affairs of other parties, and equal rights for every party." At the same time, they proclaim the need for "strengthening and developing fraternal cooperation and mutual solidarity." This is what they have to dish out to their activists today as a substitute for internationalism. The Eurocommunist leaders use international meetings as an opportunity for bolstering each other in their delicate dealings with Moscow. They also use them as a way of projecting an image as working-class parties that differentiates them from the Social Democracy. However, the chauvinism of the CPs and their increasing tendency to line up behind the interests of their own bourgeoisies are causing sharp antagonisms among these parties. Despite their attempts at coordination, they find it impossible to avoid jarring discords in several areas (immigrant workers, elections to the European parliament, entry of certain countries into the Common Market).

In the eyes of the CP adherents who, in their trade-union work, feel the need for international coordination of their struggle, such public friction or outright wrangling can only undermine the credibility of the CPs' loudly proclaimed intentions of "collaborating on a Europe-wide scale."

- The possibility of getting into governments, which seemed within the grasp of more than one mass CP in the mid-1970s, has receded. For the moment, the bureaucracies of the CPs are being driven to resort to every possible means to preserve the electoral base they have. To this end, they are tightening their control of the unions and projecting a policy of "national unity coalitions," whose chances for success, however, do not seem great. A crisis of strategic perspectives is opening up in the CPs. The highly touted "new Eurocommunist strategy" is already beginning to sound like a dud, even in the Italian,

Spanish, and French CPs.

In the unions, the CPs' line is running into opposition among their own worker activists. This resistance by the CPs' union activists does not immediately take the form of challenging the overall political orientation of the leaderships. However, it makes it more difficult for these leaderships to apply their line. It tends to challenge the suppression of all democracy in the unions, which is required in order to support an austerity policy or to maintain a posture blocking any serious counterattack against it. It promotes scattered but constant discussion about the effectiveness of the options taken by the leaderships. Finally, this opposition can lead to questioning the CPs' overall political strategy with regard to the crisis.

- In the recent period, critical movements led by feminist activists have sprung up in several CPs. The bureaucrats' reluctance to mount any effective struggle to win the demands of the women's movement, especially free abortion on demand, has provoked a rebellion by women activists and led them to take independent initiatives in the mass movement. (This has happened in the Italian, Spanish, and French CPs.) Such disputes are also caused by the status and rights accorded to these women activists, who often participate in the mobilizations of the women's movement despite the directives of the party, as well as by the most backward expressions of sexism inside the CPs themselves.

30.4. The taking of public stands by various CP members or groups of members against aspects of the party's line and internal regime are the most visible symptom of the crisis opening up in the CPs.

There are as yet no crystallized currents in the CPs. The range of opinions is very wide. Some of the oppositionists obviously draw their inspiration from Bernsteinian gradualism. They question the usefulness of founding the Third International and advocate reunification of the CPs and SPs. Advocates of such views are to be found in the leading circles of the Italian and Spanish CPs. They openly support a process of Social Democratization.

Other oppositionists in the CPs seek to reconcile gradual transformation of the bourgeois state and direct intervention in the mass movement. To this end, they offer warmed-over dishes from the table of Austromarxism. Still others reject the elimination of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the theoretical innovations about the nature of the state. But they reject the conception of a state based on democratic workers councils and the right of more than one party to exist. At best, they are silent about these questions. This sometimes enables unreconstructed Stalinists to attach themselves to this current of opinion.

None of these opposition tendencies has any consistency. At most, they may challenge a point in the analysis of the bourgeois state or monopoly capitalism. They

all endorse the strategy of the popular front. Even those who want to develop a left critique are reluctant to hark back to the norms of democratic centralism defended by Lenin and Trotsky. Moreover, they repeat the leadership's statements about a "single international center" being useless or even harmful. Under this cover, they deny the need for an international and espouse the theory of "socialism in one country."

The crisis of the CPs cannot be reduced to the appearance of these currents, which are still essentially confined to intellectual circles within the CPs. These currents are only the first manifestations of forces at work deep under the surface in the Eurocommunist parties, forces that may emerge in other forms and through other channels (notably, oppositions in the trade unions).

The existence of these currents of opinion, however, is stimulating a revival of discussion, and this is a favorable factor for the development of genuinely critical, leftward moving currents. Such tendencies now have a certain margin for maneuver. After all the pledges that it has made that it will not backslide into its old errors, the apparatus cannot revive the purges of yesteryear. So, the monolithic centralism is showing cracks. But it would be an illusion to think that the apparatus will not resort to any and every means to isolate, stifle, and expel opposition tendencies when the occasion arises.

30.5. The Soviet CP is intervening more or less openly in the present crisis of the CPs. What exasperates the bureaucrats in Moscow are the repeated condemnations by the leaderships of the CPs of repression in the USSR, the statements that socialism and democracy are inseparably linked and that the right to strike should be recognized, and the constant proclamation of the principle of "noninterference in the internal affairs of any party." All these declarations tend to put the authority of the West European workers movement behind the struggles and demands of the workers in the USSR and East Europe for independent trade unions and the right to strike. They also promote centrifugal processes within the bureaucracies in East Europe.

Despite these serious problems, which explain the sharpness of Moscow's attacks, the Soviet CP does not want to break with the Eurocommunist CPs. Its links with these parties, even though loose, enable it to enjoy a special relationship with an important section of the workers movement in capitalist Europe. It can utilize this in its international policy, among other things, in the Third World.

The Soviet bureaucracy, thus, hesitates to promote splits, in which a favorable outcome would be more than dubious. It prefers to pursue a flexible course of action on two levels. First, it engages in public polemics with these parties and fans the discontent of those elements nostalgic for the period of Stalinist monolithism. Se-



cond, it strives for conciliation with those leaderships that "respect the general interests of the USSR."

The development of the crisis of the CPs will not proceed in a linear way. Since 1967-68, there have been a series of splits in many CPs—the Greek CP, the Austrian, Swiss, Norwegian, and more recently the

Swedish, Finnish, and British. Although these splits often do not involve large numbers of activists, they attest to the breakdown of monolithism in the CPs. This crisis will be a characteristic feature of the present period and will put its imprint on the process of political recomposition in the workers movement.

### The Centrist and Mao-Stalinist Organizations

31. From 1968-69 on, favorable conditions existed for the appearance on the political scene of organizations that defined themselves as "antireformist forces." They were the result of the confluence of nuclei of activists who had come out of the Social Democratic or Communist parties in the 1960s and sections of radicalized youth.

For a period, a certain resonance developed between these groups and sections of the mass movement in which they were able to challenge the leadership of the reformist parties (that is, the student movement, the antimilitarist movement, the anti-imperialist movement, and some mobilizations over questions such as transportation and housing).

At the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, these groups sometimes played a significant role in supporting and even, on occasion, giving impetus to deep-going workers struggles in individual plants. Generally their political orientation was dominated by ultraleft features, although this did not exclude opportunist positions vis-à-vis the policy of the traditional workers parties.

These organizations were to run up against strategy questions that were put on the agenda by the recession and its effects on the political plane. They were to experience a crisis rooted primarily in problems of program, which often resulted in an erosion of their organizational strength. The inability of the centrist and Mao-Stalinist organizations to respond to the policies of the bureaucratic apparatuses was the real source of the crisis that was to grip them.

31.1. In Italy, facing the PCI's strategy, the centrist organizations (Lotta continua, Avanguardia operaia, and Manifesto-PDUP) for a whole period ignored the governmental question and the problem of a political solution. Then they advocated the formation of a "government of the left parties." This slogan masked a perspective of an alliance between workers parties (the PCI and PSI) and a bourgeois party representing significant sectors of the capitalist class—the Partito Repubblicano. This signified on the one hand, that they do not exclude a policy of alliances with bourgeois forces, and, on the other, that their arguments were rooted in parliamentary arithmetic.

In Spain, the PT, ORT, and MCE joined coalitions embracing workers parties and bourgeois and bourgeois-nationalist forces. In some cases, they joined the Democratic

Junta and in others Democratic Convergence. In the preceding period, these organizations joined all the regional blocs that foreshadowed these fronts—the Mesas Democráticas [Democratic Roundtables] and the Assembly of Catalonia.

As an alternative to the PCE and PSOE's policy of national unity and Carrillo's proposals for "a government of democratic concentration," the PTE raised the slogan of a "government of democratic salvation." The ORT campaigned around the slogan of a "government of the working-class and people's forces." Finally, the MCE agitated for a "government of left unity." For the PTE and the ORT, these formulas justified combinations with bourgeois forces, especially among the minority nationalities. For the MCE, they left the door open to such combinations.

In France, the PSU joined the Union of the Left in 1976. The OCT, while characterizing the SP as a bourgeois party and the CP as being in the same category although maintaining "a different kind of relationship to the working class," called for voting for the Union of the Left in 1978. It made no distinction between the candidates of the CP, the SP, the Left Radicals, or the left Gaullists.

31.2. The attitude of these organizations to the reformist parties led most of them to political bankruptcy, and sometimes to organizational bankruptcy as well.

• These groups proved incapable of understanding the dialectical relationship between the uneven development of working-class consciousness and the traditional parties of the workers movement. Thus, they could not come to terms with the spectacular growth of the SPs in France, Portugal, and Spain; or with the fact that in the midst of an economic crisis, the Social Democracy maintained its hold over the working class in the northern European countries; or with the growth in the influence of the PCI in Italy.

In most cases, these groups showed a total lack of understanding of the nature of these parties. They called them bourgeois parties, thinking that in this way they could eliminate the problem. Sometimes, they even called them "social fascist" parties.

The Chinese bureaucracy's position on "Russian social imperialism" and its various analyses of "state capitalism" in the USSR naturally led the Maoist organizations to see the CPs as bourgeois or "social fascist" parties.

The failure of the Mao-Stalinist and

centrist parties to understand the reasons for the extraordinary growth of the reformist parties and the nature of these parties logically led them to fail to see the need for a united-front policy. Their lack of any method or criteria for approaching the central problem of the grip held by the reformists led them to be buffeted back and forth between triumphalist sectarianism and adaptation, sometimes seeing the CPs as having advantages over the SPs, sometimes the other way around.

• On various occasions, some of these organizations envisaged the possibility that the masses could spontaneously go around the traditional parties and remain outside the control of the apparatuses for an extended period. They also looked forward to an imminent collapse of the CPs. On the basis of this perspective, they did their bit to deepen division in the working class.

Promoting division and leaving the organized workers movement to the reformist leaderships were also consequences of the characterization the Maoists made of the traditional parties. For them, the SPs represented at best the democratic bourgeoisie, with which they might ally themselves against fascism and "social fascism." The CPs, as agents of Russian socialist imperialism, represented the main enemy. It was on such foundations that these organizations based their line for "rebuilding the workers movement" around themselves, in every case! The sectarianism flowing from such positions was all the greater because they had no substantial differences with a popular-front or national unity line such as advocated by the CPs. This led them often to split the trade-union movement (as for example, the PTE and ORT did in Spain, or the PCP-ml in Portugal), and to try to build "red unions," or what they called "class-struggle" unions.

• In the case of most of the organizations that appeared after 1968 and took Maoism, its mythology, and the "great proletarian cultural revolution" as their political framework, the foreign policy of the Chinese bureaucracy and the vicissitudes of its internal struggles were to cause a growing political crisis, or to accelerate their degeneration into Mao-Stalinist sects. The whole system of reference on which they based their view of the world has become still more disjointed as a result of the conflicts between Vietnam and Cambodia, Vietnam and China, and between China and Albania.

31.3. Since 1976-77, a political realignment has been taking form in the various centrist organizations and currents.

• One of the threads in this process comes from the analysis some of them make of the period that opened up in 1968. They tend to attribute the limitations encountered by the rising mass movement to the innate strength of bourgeois democracy and its institutions. In this way, they remove the problem of the role of the bureaucratic apparatuses in the develop-

ment of the class struggle. But this position has a disastrous logic. If the analysis is correct, it is necessary to have a strategy aimed essentially at "introducing contradictions into the institutions of the bourgeois state" and to wage the struggle there.

Gradualism gets the upper hand, and they seek to subordinate the mass movement to this perspective. From this it is a short step to an orientation that involves paying more and more heed to the siren songs of Eurocommunism, even if in its left variants.

There is a danger that this tendency will become still stronger in the future. It is the culmination of the crisis of the centrist organizations. In order to cover their retreat, more than one of these organizations is mounting an offensive on the theme of the "crisis of Marxism." Some CPs that have understood this evolution have consciously chosen to mount an ideological attack on these organizations.

As a result of the disillusionment caused by November 25, 1975 in Portugal; the results of the June 1976 elections in Italy; and the electoral setback in March 1978 in France, another tendency is taking shape in or around the centrist organizations. It is expressed in a withdrawal from the field of politics and an inclination to fetishize mass movements on questions such as nuclear power plants or the environment.

Along with this attitude, there is a questioning of the objective possibility of building a revolutionary party in the present period.

In Italy, the breakup of Lotta continua in 1976 indicated how rapidly and widely these positions were catching on. The "1977 Movement" in Bologna, Rome, and other cities was another expression of this. In other countries, this trend had an impact on the internal life of several organizations.

- The Mao-Stalinist organizations accelerated their sectarian course. In a pattern that follows the lines of cleavage and the conflicts between China and Albania, they have undergone deep new splits and divisions all over Europe. Once again, the logic of socialism in one country can be seen operating.

In accordance with the needs of Peking's diplomacy, these organizations are calling for strengthening NATO and the national defense of the imperialist countries against "Russian social imperialism." As a result, they find themselves in the company of the most reactionary sectors of the bourgeoisie.

Some of these groups or factions within them may make startling revisions on the nature of the Chinese state, as well. It is going to become capitalist after the fall of the Gang of Four. There may even be some staggering revisions about the very possibility of socialism.

- Massive unemployment among the youth, including the student youth, and the resulting consignment of these layers to a marginal life, the breakup and loss of influence of the centrist organizations, and especially the austerity policy upheld by

the bureaucratic apparatuses, have given rise to a current of so-called "autonomi." And a section of these have taken the road of "military action."

A component of this current of "autonomi" bears similarities to what Lenin described in *"Left-Wing" Communism: an Infantile Disorder*: "A petty bourgeois driven to frenzy by the horrors of capitalism . . . The instability of such revolutionism, its barrenness, and its tendency to turn rapidly into submission, apathy, phantasms . . . all this is common knowledge." Their prevailing characteristics are moving away from the workers movement, joining the anti-Communist chorus of the bourgeoisie, and fostering nihilism.

By their actions and their ideology, the "armed groups" emerging from the current of the "autonomi" tend to come into conflict openly and sometimes directly with the workers movement and its organizations.

This current is most widespread in Italy, but depending on the evolution of the social and political situation, it may assume a similar scope in other countries.

In the course of this crisis and in the shuffling going on in and among the centrist or Maoist organizations, all the major questions of strategy have been widely debated. In this context, we have seen a series of activists raise doubts about the whole past orientation and show an openness to the explanations and answers offered by the Trotskyists.



Union of the Left rally in France.

## Trotskyist Organizations

31.4. The two most important currents in the Trotskyist tradition standing outside the Fourth International are the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI) and the French Lutte Ouvrière (LO).

The OCRFI has no section of any significance in capitalist Europe apart from its French organization, the OCI, which is the decisive component of the OCRFI.

The OCRFI was founded in 1972 following the break-up of a current that rejected the 1963 reunification of the main forces that made up the Fourth International at the time of the split in 1953.

This rejection of the reunification was based on deep disagreements over the process of permanent revolution in Algeria and Cuba, and the practical conclusions to be drawn in terms of support and solidarity work with these revolutions in process. The OCRFI—and the OCI—have still not characterized the Cuban state as a workers state.

In the course of its evolution, the OCI has developed an analysis of bureaucracy and of Stalinism which leads it to picture the crisis of the CPs as a simple reflection of the conflicts among the various factions (among others, a “restorationist faction”) of the Soviet bureaucracy. It tries to introduce a qualitative difference between the SPs—reformist “parliamentary bourgeois-workers parties”—and the CPs, which are “counterrevolutionary.” In practice, this leads the OCI and organizations of the OCRFI to make opportunist errors toward the Social Democracy (in Portugal, in France, in Germany, in Spain, and in Belgium).

The organizations of the OCRFI in Europe deny that union organizations as important as the CFDT (France), the CISL (Italy), the CSC (Belgium), and the Workers Commissions (Spain) are workers unions, which has grave implications for the struggle to unify the workers ranks.

Finally, the OCI has an approach to the united front which combines appeals for unity with the formation of “committees for unity,” and “democratic assemblies” which are not designed to mobilize the workers as a whole around concrete demands or to raise their level of consciousness, but are mere front groups of the OCI. From this concept of the united front often flows a sectarian and manipulative approach to participation in the mass movement. The OCI also rejects the building of a mass independent women’s movement.

## The Union Movement

32. The growth of the trade unions, which now in general embrace a larger percentage of the proletariat than at any time in their past, also means that they now encompass workers at very different levels of consciousness and with highly

In 1977 the OCI was able to tap the sentiment in the working class for unity following the break-up of the Union of the Left. Its campaign, directed to the CP and SP to withdraw in favor of the candidate of either who had the best showing in the first round of the March 1978 elections, even though it at the same time unnecessarily downplayed the fight for the Trotskyist program, had a broad impact.

To justify their plan of “reconstruction of the Fourth International” after 1963, the OCRFI developed a sectarian orientation toward the Fourth International, at the same time that it built an international faction (functioning on the basis of unanimity and not democratic centralism), within which the debates that arose led on more than one occasion to organizational ruptures.

Nevertheless, the nature of the period in Europe and the tasks that flow from it for revolutionary Marxists forcefully impose inside the OCRFI the question of its relations with the Fourth International and its sections, as well as the problem of reunification of forces adhering to Trotskyism.

The French organization Lutte Ouvrière has never really involved itself in the construction of the Fourth International. All of its attempts to organize a non-centralized international current by means of “open conferences” have ended in failure.

This situation has encouraged a “national” view of developments in the class struggle on a world scale and has further weakened their understanding of the revolutionary upsurge in the colonial and semicolonial countries since the end of the Second World War (where, according to them, no socialist revolutions have taken place), and of the deepening of the crisis of Stalinism in the countries of Eastern Europe, which, with the exception of the USSR, they do not consider to be workers states.

In its political intervention, Lutte Ouvrière in fact does not have a united-front orientation, including on the level of governmental slogans, and its economism leads it to downplay the struggle for transitional demands.

On the basis of a certain evolution in its political intervention, Lutte Ouvrière maintains collaborative relations with the LCR (the French section), which could be the basis for a change in its approach to the construction of the Fourth International.

uneven traditions.

In this regard, Trotsky pointed out: “The broader these [organized] masses, the closer is the trade union to accomplishing its task. But what the organization gains in breadth, it inevitably loses in depth.

Opportunist, nationalist, religious tendencies in the trade unions and their leadership express the fact that the trade unions embrace not only the vanguard but also heavy reserves. The weak side of the unions thus comes from their strong side.” (“The Economic Offensive of the Counter-revolution and the Unions,” 1933.)

In the present period, the union movement thus forms the crucible in which very broad layers can go through their experiences in struggle and raise their level of consciousness. It is here that the masses can be drawn toward the vanguard. But the very breadth of the unions means that this process can only be a long and contradictory one.

Most of the bureaucrats initially viewed the economic crisis as something like a traffic accident. But they had to face the facts, the crisis was going to be lasting. So, then, in every country they tried to work out a deal, directly or indirectly, with the bosses and the government about how to administer it. Over and above the differences in ideology, this is the common feature that emerges from practice of the leaderships over the recent years. On this level, the parallel between the German DGB and the Italian CGIL is striking.

As a corollary to its participation in the plans of the bourgeoisie, the union bureaucracy has had to consolidate its own instruments for taming the union ranks and the most active sections of them. In all the unions, the leaderships have striven to restrict the decision-making powers of the rank-and-file bodies. They have sought to deprive these bodies of any possibility of playing a role in the rest of the union and they try to put control in the hands of the apparatus.

In other countries, the bureaucracy is trying to prevent the appearance of such rank-and-file bodies, offering as an alternative consultative bodies in which the bureaucracy wields the decisive weight. Finally, the union leaderships do not hesitate to take steps to expel critical activists.

32.1. The bureaucracy has not been able to pursue this orientation without arousing opposition and criticism within the unions and even inside itself.

In the first place, helping to “administer the crisis” runs counter to the experience accumulated in the recent past by the workers and to their most immediate needs. The bosses’ determination not to make any significant concessions reveals the emptiness of formulas such as “structural reforms” and other “qualitative improvements” of the type that have filled the speeches of union leaders. Wages, jobs, and social benefits are a lot closer to the workers’ hearts than schemes for codetermination and participation by their representatives in consultative bodies along with management.

Secondly, since 1968-69 in a series of countries (Italy, Spain, France, Portugal, Great Britain, Belgium, Denmark), a new generation of activists has risen to posi-

tions of union leadership at the plant and district levels, and even at the national level in individual unions. They are more sensitive to the needs of the masses, more receptive to the impetus from the ranks, and they often take the lead in counterattacks. A section of these leaders works in the local units of the union, in the plants. They thus form a close-knit network that tends not to coincide with the structure of the union apparatus (for example, the workforce delegates in France, shop delegates in Italy, and shop stewards in Great Britain).

This layer continually jams the gears of the bureaucratic apparatus and serves as a fulcrum for internal differentiation among union officials.

The fact that this layer remains embryonic in the German, Swedish, Dutch, Swiss and Austrian unions also explains why the bureaucracy has kept a firmer grip over the union movement in those countries.

Thirdly, the bureaucracy has to take into consideration other things besides just the pressure of the ranks. It is being subjected to a barrage of veritable provocations by the bosses and the government, which are forcing it to react, to mobilize the workers, in order to defend its influence and its base. We have seen this in West Germany, Belgium, and Denmark.

Fourthly, after decades of cooptation and "social peace," some union apparatuses are experiencing extreme ossification. This causes a crisis of leadership that can surface in wildcat strikes in response to heavy-handed attacks by the bosses. In such cases, the union bureaucrats may find themselves outflanked by large sections of workers. But experience has shown, in West Germany, Switzerland, and Sweden, for example, that the union bureaucrats have the capacity to adapt to, and even to utilize left-wing sections of the union previously kept isolated, so as to retain their hold. Nonetheless, these movements can serve as an initial springboard for the emergence of new cadres, or even opposition groups among the paid union officials.

Fifthly, the new features that mark the recent evolution of the unions have created a series of dislocations. That is, their organization has widened, and their composition has changed, as a result of the organization of women and immigrants. They now play the central role in a context shaped by an austerity policy that affects all facets of social and political life. Thus, all of the problems that arise from the whole body of problems created by the generalized crisis of bourgeois society are reflected in the unions. Therefore, their platform has to cover an increasing number of subjects that are being discussed in these organizations. The division between economics and politics is tending to fade. This is another factor that serves as a catalyst in the emergence of major internal contradictions.

Under the impact of the crisis and the

bosses' offensive, intermediate layers of the bureaucracy may play an important role in giving impetus to workers struggles (as in the case of the steel workers strike in West Germany in 1978) and oppose the more hardened sections of the central bureaucracy of the unions. They are capable of giving support to mobilizations on various themes (antinuclear, abortion) that can be key in preventing isolation of these actions and in linking them up with the organized workers movement.

In the political vacuum created by the reformist parties following a "national unity" orientation, a section of a union or even an individual national union may at a certain moment become the active representative of working-class opposition to the strategy of the reformist leaderships. This is what happened in 1977 and 1979 in Italy, when the FLM organized a national strike of steelworkers, or in 1978 when it adopted a platform of demands partially conflicting with the austerity policy of the CP and the CGIL.

Pressure for trade-union unity appeared during the rise of workers struggles. It has been reinforced by the need to confront the capitalist offensive launched after the onset of the crisis. Everywhere there are several union confederations, this pressure has posed the question of unity in action or of unification of the trade-union movement (in France, Spain, Italy, and Belgium, for example). The united character and direct democracy of organs formed in the course of great struggles (the workers commissions in Portugal in 1975, the plant committees in Spain in 1976-77, councils of delegates in Italy in 1969-70) have given momentum to the demand for trade-union

unification.

32.2. The international concentration and centralization of capital—of which the multinational companies are the expression—the growth of the Common Market, the intensification of migratory movements of labor power and the similarity of the policies followed by the governments and the bosses provide the objective basis for establishing closer links among the unions in capitalist Europe.

The European Confederation of Unions (CES) was formed in 1973. In 1979, it embraced unions in eighteen countries with forty million members. In April 1978, the CES held a day of symbolic actions against unemployment.

This organization bears the full imprint of the bureaucratic character of the leaderships that make it up. It has a more formal than real existence.

The World Federation of Trade Unions, which along with the unions in East Europe includes those led by the CPs in capitalist Europe, has been hit by the rebound of the crisis of Stalinism. The only union confederation in a capitalist country that remains a member is the CGT in France. Since the last congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions in 1978, the CGT has been in the process of breaking with this Prague-based organization. The CGIL has only observer status. Moreover, it is a member of the CES, in which the CGT, the COs, and the CGTP are applying for membership.

Despite all its limitations, the CES testifies to the need and possibility of real coordination of workers struggles against austerity in Europe and against the maneuvers of the multinationals.

## The Axes of a Revolutionary Strategy

33. In all of capitalist Europe, although with varying degrees of acuteness, the recession and its effects are making it clearer in the eyes of the working masses that the capitalist system cannot meet all their economic, social, and cultural needs. In more than one country, a sizable proportion of the population finds that not even their most elementary needs are being met.

A growing number of wage workers are coming around to the idea that the only solution for satisfying their needs lies in a rational organization of the economy, direct control of production by the working class, a workers government.

The capitalist offensive is showing the precariousness of the gains that the workers won in preceding years. The achievements of workers struggles are continually put in question as long as the bourgeoisie continues to control the means of production, labor power, and the state machine—the political power of capital.

The experience of the revolutionary upsurge in Portugal has shown also that the workers cannot upset the relationships of production at the plant level (through

occupation and workers control) and leave intact the state power. The bourgeoisie quickly regained its footing, based on the state apparatus, and then went on to win back its positions in the factories and the countryside. The capitalist mode of production has a structure that inseparably links the relations of production with the state apparatus.

All this indicates the impasse into which the workers can be led by a strategy that limits its horizon to immediate demands, a strategy that does not foresee the need to prevent the bourgeoisie from taking back, and then some, with one hand what it was obliged to give with the other. All this indicates the blind alley into which the workers can be led by any strategy that reduces the conquest of power to a series of changes over a long period of time in the prerogatives of wage workers in their workplaces alone. All this points up the failure of a strategy that relies on gradually transforming the bourgeois state and its institutions.

The generalized crisis of bourgeois social relations and the mobilizations of op-

pressed layers attest to the ripeness of the objective conditions for reconstructing society along socialist lines. In fact, a distinctive sign of a society that has played out its historical role and is ripe for replacement is that not only the revolutionary class, the one that will play the decisive role in building a new social order, the proletariat, but other social layers can expect nothing progressive from the present society. It is up to the working class to offer answers to the needs of these strata. It is incumbent on the vanguard to point out ways making it possible to bring to bear the revolutionary potential of all the oppressed in a joint struggle with the proletariat for socialism. This course runs counter to the policy of the reformists, who propose alliances with the "middle layers" or the parties that claim to represent them, on the basis of preserving the existing social order.

The crisis of the relations of production does not manifest itself simply at the plant level (i.e., in a challenge to the capitalist organization of labor); it also affects the bourgeois nation-state in the imperialist countries. Long ago, the growth of the productive forces outstripped the narrow framework of the bourgeois nation-state. The concentration and centralization of capital are more and more international. The internationalization of the ownership of capital and of all economic life in turn is producing an internationalization of the class struggle.

All that needs to be done to show that any socialist strategy must be international is to point to the examples of the miners, steelworkers, petrochemical workers, or the immediate necessity for responding to the maneuvers of the bourgeoisie on the level of the Common Market.

The breadth and scope of workers struggles in a series of countries in capitalist Europe have laid the bases for reducing the gap between the ripeness of the internal contradictions of the capitalist system and the level of consciousness of the working masses. But the disproportion existing between the objective factors and the subjective factor—the level of consciousness of the class, its organization, and its leadership—has made it possible for the bureaucratic apparatus to fragment or divert the upsurge of the mass movement. Certain sections of working-class activists are increasingly suspicious of the reformist leaderships.

This lack of confidence in the reformist leaders can lead these workers to join a revolutionary party if the organizations of the Fourth International appear capable of fighting effectively for a program corresponding to the main tasks that are objectively posed by the present stage of the class struggle.

Therefore, building up a Trotskyist vanguard in the factories, the plants, the workplaces, and in the unions and advancing its work is a top priority task.

34. Whatever the conjunctural ups and downs, the decisive battles are yet to come.

The working class has the strength to emerge victorious from these tests. In the present situation, what is called for is not a strategic retreat but the preparation of a strategic counteroffensive in struggles to defend and extend the gains of the working masses and support the demands of all the oppressed strata.

"The strategic task of the next period—a prerevolutionary period of agitation, propaganda, and organization—consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard. . . . It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." (The Transitional Program.)

Such a program must express the interests and the objective tasks of the working class in the period. It cannot be based on the mood of the class in a given period but must be founded on the needs the masses come up against as they confront the economic, social, and political crisis of capitalism.

These objective needs have been shaped by the three past decades of growth of the productive forces, with all their consequences on the social, economic, and cultural levels. These needs have not remained frozen for a half century. In the course of mass movements, many of them have been expressed in new forms (such as the demands raised by the women's liberation movement). In other cases, mass movements have developed around new needs, such as the movement against nuclear power plants and against the destruction of the environment.

The austerity policy has put the focus on the needs of the workers as sellers of their labor power (jobs, wages, social security) and highlights the need to defend democratic rights (freedom of action for the workers movement, etc.). But the form in which these demands present themselves today is the result of the social and economic conditions in the past period and the gains of the struggles that have taken place since 1968-69. This also reinforces the timeliness and impact of transitional demands.

34.1. In selecting what concrete demands to put forward in a specific context, how to formulate them, and what sort of actions are appropriate for fighting for them, it is necessary to take account of the level of consciousness of the masses and its evolution in the course of the struggle themselves. For example, the demand for a thirty-five-hour week with no cut in pay that has been raised in many union congresses can serve today as a basis for

explaining the need for a sliding scale of wages and hours. On this footing, we can begin a fight to advance the fundamental idea of dividing up the available work among all, and this can make it possible for the consciousness of the working class to rise to the level needed to respond to the objective conditions. An effective struggle against unemployment calls for such a demand, which in turn prefigures the socialist organization of society.

Starting from the objective conditions, revolutionary organizations advance transitional demands. They test them in practice. They assess what support such demands can win among the masses in selecting which ones to put forward in organizing propaganda and agitational campaigns. They do not fail to put forward demands required by the situation, even if these may run up against the prejudices or backwardness of the working masses.

The struggle for these demands requires first of all mobilizing the workers and their allies directly. It cannot be subordinated to elections or parliamentary combinations, as it always is by the bureaucratic apparatuses. Only through their independent action can the masses establish a favorable relationship of forces, build confidence in their ability to contend for power, win to their side the hesitant sections of the proletariat and the oppressed layers, and, finally, neutralize sections of the petty bourgeoisie and win over its oppressed and impoverished strata.

On the basis of democratic demands and more immediate demands in defense of jobs, wages, and working conditions or other more immediate demands concerning political and social questions, it is necessary to move toward raising the level of organization of the working class, including the unions, and toward creating democratic structures (strike committees, factory committees, and so on) in order to enable the workers to fight more effectively and enrich the class-struggle methods of a growing number of workers.

From the same starting point, propaganda or even agitation can be carried out for workers control with a view toward showing how and to what extent the capitalist system is at the root of the difficulties the workers encounter and making it clear to the workers that such control is incompatible with the capitalists' directing production.

At their highest point, mobilizations around the demands in the Transitional Program lead to an understanding jointly of the need for organizing in trade unions, for organizing politically independent of the bourgeoisie, for establishing a workers government, for forming workers councils that consolidate the broadest possible unity of workers in action and are incompatible with maintenance of the institutions of the bourgeois state, for overthrowing capitalism, and for the advent of socialism.

Intervention by a revolutionary party



and the growth of its influence are indispensable factors in the political ripening of this process.

This strategy is in total contradiction to that of the reformist apparatuses, which seek to divert the mass movement and break its momentum in order to try to avoid confrontations. However, working class resistance to the attacks of the bosses and the government make such confronta-

tions inevitable. The strategy based on the Transitional Program takes account of the inevitability of such a test of strength. It aims, in the course of the manifold battles that precede this confrontation to forge a leadership and prepare a broad layer of workers to take on the tasks related to the need for overthrowing this system and replacing the bourgeois state with a state based on democratically elected workers councils.

### The Fight Against Austerity

35. In a context of economic crisis and the imposition of austerity, mass mobilizations can be based on immediate or democratic demands and move rapidly to raising transitional demands.

Therefore, it is necessary not only to seek to combine various demands but also to understand when some demands lose their force or when the stress should be put on others. The very nature of the period, with its sudden and abrupt shifts on the social and political levels makes it necessary to avoid routinism in determining slogans and forms of organization.

Furthermore, the method of the Transitional Program contrasts with the line that counterposes so-called revolutionary demands to "reformist" ones. Rather it counterposes a class-struggle orientation to a class-collaborationist one. In fact, in this epoch of the decay of bourgeois society, such a method makes it possible to seize on the most immediate and most elementary demands and on this basis offer an alternative to the ideas propagated by the bureaucratic apparatuses and to the style of fighting and organization that follows from a class-collaborationist line.

35.1. The working-class counterattack against the austerity policies of the governments, against the blows the bosses have dealt them, and the restrictions of democratic rights will be the pivot around which the class battle will be organized in the coming years.

• The sections of the Fourth International are carrying on consistent work to explain the falsity of all ideologies disseminated by the reformist political and union leaderships about the nature of the economic crisis. We will expose the arguments that the workers movement has to "make hard choices in managing the crisis," that the workers movement has to offer its own version of austerity, one that would make it possible to avert capitalist anarchy without breaking with the market economy and at the same time not doing severe damage to the interests of the workers. We will seize on all the facts of economic and social life to show that the crisis is rooted in the contradictions of capitalism and that only the overthrow of the system offers the masses a road out.

• Along the same lines, it is necessary to systematically denounce all laws and schemes designed to consolidate or intro-

duce joint management between the bosses and representatives of the workers, or "codetermination," or other forms of tying labor to management under the cover of establishing "industrial democracy." It can be proven on the basis of concrete examples that these "solutions" in no way offer an effective instrument for defending jobs, the workers' standard of living, or working conditions. In fact, they have the opposite result. In a market economy, co-management necessarily leads to tying the workers to the defense of the profitability of "their" plant, to introducing into the ranks of the workers a capitalist competition that stands in contradiction to the most elementary principles of class solidarity. It is therefore an instrument for dividing the workers and weakening the class as a whole against the bosses' attack.

It is necessary to oppose these schemes with a fighting strategy based on the immediate demands of the workers and a denunciation of the secrecy imposed on workers' representatives in joint labor-management boards and of the impotence of these bodies, a strategy that calls for mobilizing the workers and for winning workers control as more reliable levers for winning their demands and defending their gains.

• In order to deal with the divisions that have been sharpened by the austerity policy, with which the reformists have collaborated, it is essential to propose the sort of demands that unify the workers. This is a key element in rallying the workers for an effective counterattack.

A systematic campaign must be waged to get the organizations of the working class to take up the demands of those sections of the proletariat hardest hit by the capitalist attack and which have been subjected to multiple forms of discrimination (women workers, immigrant workers, unemployed, youth in precarious jobs, and apprentices). In order to advance this perspective, the Trotskyists support the mobilizations of these most exploited and oppressed layers for their specific interests, as well as the demands they raise related to their special problems.

The Trotskyists also fight to get the mass organizations of the proletariat to support mobilizations on such questions as schools, health, housing, transport, and opposition to nuclear power plants, or for

the right of abortion, etc. The sections of the Fourth International strive to get the workers organizations to cooperate actively with the various mass social movements or with mobilizing committees fighting for objectives that favor the development of the anticapitalist struggle and raising the general level of consciousness of the proletariat. In fact, it is only by taking an active part in these struggles that the working class can overcome the divisions created by capitalism and mobilize all its forces.

• It is necessary, obviously, for the sections to utilize immediate demands and all struggles, no matter how limited, against austerity as a springboard for their work. It is nonetheless necessary to explain that these struggles cannot block the governments' measures unless they lead to real united mobilization on a national scale. On the basis of mass struggles, it is necessary to campaign for the extension and centralization of the struggles and for the workers organizations to adopt a plan of action for fighting the crisis. This is a way to raise concretely the goal of a nationwide mobilization and a general strike.

Finally, the fight against austerity has to be put in the framework of political solutions that give direction to and offer a perspective for, national mobilizations. Only a workers government can provide a basis for introducing real changes and offering a way out of the crisis that is in the interest of all the workers. Focusing on these overall political answers also makes it possible to influence and convince those working-class activists who are losing their illusions in the orientation of the reformist leaderships. Otherwise, these activists might confine themselves to a syndicalist and economist agitation, or be attracted to the political solutions outlined by left reformist or centrist currents. Thus, by placing our fight against austerity in an overall political perspective we acquire the means for winning to our ranks workers who are looking for an alternative to the class-collaborationist policy of the apparatuses.

35.2. In the present situation, a working-class counterattack against austerity is taking shape around the following main interlocking themes. The list is obviously not an exhaustive one.

• A struggle against all forms of incomes policies, "social pacts," and "negotiated social peace" will be central for the coming period. Unless they reject all forms of class collaboration, the workers cannot free their hands to effectively defend their standard of living and to undertake a struggle to impose their solutions in place of those of the ruling class.

It flows from this that the workers must reject any ceiling on wage increases, any tying of raises to increases in productivity, the lengthening of the period of contracts, and the introduction of any "social peace" clause into their contracts.

- On this basis, it is possible to organize an effective struggle to defend and increase the buying power of the workers by fighting for the following demands: A guaranteed minimum wage on the basis of a standard family budget established by the unions. Equal raises for all. Equal pay for equal work, especially for women. A sliding scale of wages based on a price index established by the unions. Extending the sliding scale to social benefits (pensions, family allowances, unemployment insurance). Abolition of all indirect taxes on items of mass consumption. Establishing an indexing system to adjust income tax rates to compensate for inflation. A sharply progressive tax on income from capital and sources of income other than wages. Oppose the dismantling of the social welfare system and cutbacks of social spending.

- In view of the capitalists' determination to recreate a vast industrial reserve army, the fight against unemployment becomes an urgent task for the workers movement. There is no way to block the attack on the level of employment except by very determined mobilizations, utilizing the entire legacy of the experience in struggle of the workers movement on an international scale.

The fight against unemployment begins with the battle against the right of the bosses to fire workers. This means, for example, that the workers must have the right of veto over firings. There should be no layoffs unless every attempt is made first to transfer workers to other jobs at the same pay and in the same region.

The absorption of unemployment demands a drastic reduction in the work-week. The call for a thirty-five-hour week with no cut in pay should take a central place in the list of demands that have to be put forward. Such a reduction of the work-week, coupled with a reversal of the speed-up and an increase in the workforce, would seriously reduce unemployment. Along with this slogan, a systematic campaign can be mounted to explain the importance of undertaking major public works to meet real needs of the working masses and the most deprived layers (community facilities, hospitals, housing, environmental protection projects, etc.).

At the same time as fighting unemployment, the greatest attention must be paid to finding the best ways of bringing the unemployed into the framework of the union movement. The lack of organizations of the unemployed leads in the long run to weakening the unions and can even offer openings for racist and fascist maneuvers. Specific demands for the unemployed should be put forward, such as free public transportation, a moratorium on debts (consumer credit and rent and housing loans), a presalary for youth and women looking for their first jobs equal to the minimum wage demanded by the unions, benefits for unemployed workers

equal to their previous wage, vocational training with pay.

- Every specific demand for defending and increasing buying power and countering the attack on the level of employment can be directed toward workers control and organizing the workers to exercise it (factory committees, committees of worker-consumers, unemployed committees in the framework of the union movement, democratic union committees). For example, in order for the workers to be able to participate directly in working out a unified price index for the use of the union, the need arises immediately for workers control over the cost of production and prices to consumers. The same holds true for assuring observance of the principle of equal pay for equal work. In order to reverse the speedup, oppose all layoffs, enforce a thirty-five-hour week, get jobs for women, youth, and immigrants, and enforce the sliding scale of wages, there must be workers control over working conditions, over the volume and composition of hiring, over inventories and orders, over the productive capacity of the machines, over vocational training, and over the books. Every initiative taken to exercise workers control and organize the workers to carry it through represents a real beginning of the apprenticeship in workers democracy and workers management.

- In order to overcome the crisis and unemployment, a general counterattack is needed, a real plan of working-class solutions leading to planning of production, along with a reorganization of whole branches of the economy under workers control. To achieve this, the capitalists have to be expropriated. To oppose the maneuvers of the capitalists, speculators, bankers, and multinational corporations, it is necessary to abolish business and banking secrets and to establish a unified

banking system as well as a monopoly of foreign trade.

One of the cornerstones of such a plan is the nationalization of the key industries without compensation (with the possible exception of very small stockholders) and under workers control. In order to popularize this demand, we may, for example, base ourselves on the demands of workers who occupy a plant demanding job security. Or we might use the example of a decision by the bosses to lay off workers in a plant that has gotten various kinds of aid from the bourgeois state. Or we could use the example of a boss caught red-handed in falsifying the books or engaging in sabotage in order to justify shutting down a plant. It is also possible to base ourselves on union demands calling for the nationalization of certain industries. But in order to break capitalist domination of the economy, it is necessary to strike at the foundations of a system based on the private appropriation of the major means of production and exchange and of the big banks. This means that our program calls for the nationalization of all those sectors that play a key role in social and economic life.

In the fight to achieve these nationalizations, workers control is the only effective way to block saboteurs, as the experience of the Portuguese revolution demonstrated in 1975. It is, moreover, an instrument for meeting the real needs for extending the nationalizations, cutting through the legal partitions that the trusts have built up between the various companies and subsidiaries. Finally, it is a useful tool for drawing up a balance sheet of the resources of a country and the needs of the working masses. When the workers organize to exercise workers control in the course of the class struggle, this leads them to take the first steps toward running public affairs.

## Democratic Demands

36. Fighting in a united and nonexclusionist way in defense of democratic rights is a task of the highest importance.

When democratic rights are threatened or cut back, this hits the working class most directly. We fight relentlessly for the formation of a united front against repression and against all forms of special powers, because these are always aimed against working-class activists. That is, we fight against antistrike laws, political blacklisting, restrictions on free circulation of persons and ideas, censorship measures, attempts to eliminate the right of asylum, and military tribunals. We campaign for the dissolution of the repressive bodies or against the establishment of such bodies. More generally, we energetically defend and seek to extend the right of organization, expression, and assembly for the workers movement on the trade-union and political level, and we denounce capitalist

domination of the mass media.

The development of the women's liberation movement has also highlighted the importance of mass mobilizations—which tend to take on an anticapitalist dynamic—against all forms of sexist oppression and for a series of democratic demands (abortion, contraception, divorce, equal rights for women before the law, ending the reactionary family legislation, etc.).

The sharpness of the bosses' offensive against the immigrant workers, the importance of integrating these workers into the struggles of the proletariat, the role that they can play in mobilizations, and the need for a counterattack against antiforeigner and racist operations lend a particular importance to the demand for "equal union and political rights for all workers, including immigrants."

The mobilizations of youth have, like

wise, highlighted the aspiration of a large sector of young people for doing away with a number of different kinds of persecution and discrimination that they suffer (denial of the right to vote, restricted legal rights, difficulty of access to contraception and abortion and to vocational training).

The mobilizations of homosexuals against the various forms of repression and discrimination that they suffer in employment and other areas are an integral part of the struggle for democratic rights and against such reactionary manifestations of the dominant ideology.

In some countries, such as Italy, Spain, the South of Ireland, and Portugal, the question is still posed of achieving the complete separation of church and state or of clerical domination of the educational system. In these conditions, demands may arise directed against religious obscurantism, calling for the secularization of education. Such demands sometimes interlock with the demands for the right of abortion, sex education, and divorce.

One of the most glaring expressions of the decline of capitalism and the decadence of bourgeois democracy is the use of torture as a means of repressing labor, anti-imperialist, or nationalist activists. The scientific methods used for this purpose by the British army in Ireland indicate how ready the bourgeoisie is, in order to safeguard its privileges, to trample on its own codes and resort to the "less civilized" methods.

This society, which exudes violence from all its pores, is stepping up its attacks on those it imprisons as "criminals" (reform schools and other guarded educational centers, prisons). Reactionary campaigns, which are often orchestrated by governments, in favor of restoring the death penalty in their own way highlight this.

It is the duty of the sections of the Fourth International to consistently denounce all violations of human rights and to call on the union movement, the workers parties, and the professional associations (jurists' unions, groups of progressive doctors) to take concrete steps to expose the violations of the fundamental rights of persons and all complicity in such practices by members of the medical profession, the bar, and the police.

36.1. Extraparliamentary struggles around democratic slogans can be an avenue for taking parts of the Transitional Program to the working masses and, in accordance with the method of the Transitional Program, leading them to take on the bourgeois state and capitalist private property. Democratic slogans are thus instruments for mobilizing the masses in order to improve the relationship between the classes.

This conception is completely opposed to the orientation maintained by the CP and some centrist groups on the question of democratic demands. In their case, they limit themselves to advancing democratic demands, especially in the political arena,

under the pretext that the struggle for socialism is not on the agenda. And they expect to achieve these demands by parliamentary maneuvers. However, in fact, they abdicate from waging any effective struggle for these democratic demands. Our conception also stands in contradiction to notions that parliamentary democratic illusions represent barriers to broad direct actions by the masses. In fact, extraparliamentary mobilizations for democratic objectives can lead to struggles going beyond anything that would seem possible at first glance, considering the illusions these masses have in bourgeois democracy as a result of past history and the policy of the reformists. This offers a classical example of the dialectical relationship between the objective situation, the experience of class battles, and the contradictory development of class consciousness.

We approach the fight for democratic rights from the angle of defending the political independence of the working class and its organizations, as well as of maintaining and extending all the rights won by the workers movement within the framework of bourgeois democracy. All attempts to equate democratic rights with the bourgeois democratic system must be combated. The task is not to keep alive a decadent imperialist bourgeois democracy and to protect its institutions, but to end the rule of the bourgeoisie in all its forms in order to replace it with a workers government and socialist democracy based on workers councils.

While fighting for one or another such democratic demand, it is necessary to take care to expose all forms of democratic obfuscation. It is precisely because the workers attach great importance to democratic rights that it is necessary to expose all the limitations of bourgeois democracy.

In building a campaign centering on one or more democratic demands, which can serve to mobilize the masses, it is necessary, within the framework of the rhythm of the mobilization, not to isolate these demands from the body of transitional demands. It is essential to use proletarian methods of struggle as much as possible in order to win such demands. Extraparliamentary mobilizations must not be subordinated to parliamentary maneuvers. In certain cases, such demands—as for example the demand for immediate elections to the Constituent Assembly in Portugal in April 1974—can be used to draw an immediate dividing line between a policy of coalition and national unity and a policy of class independence.

Democratic slogans concerning the government correspond to a moment in the activity of the masses as they react to an obstacle looming up on the road to their emancipation, when it is not yet clear what the final result of this mobilization will be. This is why, as a general rule, we leave open the exact conditions for establishing a Constituent Assembly. It is for

this reason also that we combine democratic slogans and transitional demands that make it possible to go beyond the framework of capitalist society. The course of the class struggle itself will indicate the following stage.

36.2. In several countries of capitalist Europe, a growing role is being played by struggles linked to historic nationality questions, by various movements of a nationalist character. In these countries, the revolution is confronted with the democratic task of assuring national self-determination and of satisfying a series of demands specific to these various movements.

In approaching these questions, Trotskyists do not start from abstract and formal principles but first of all from a clear understanding of the historic, social, and economic circumstances in which each of these problems arose. Secondly, they make a clear distinction between the real interests of the working masses and so-called national interests which mask those of the ruling class. Finally, they base themselves on the actual reality of the mobilization of the people.

The task of the sections of the Fourth International is to defend the right to self-determination of the national minorities. They support the struggle for all the concrete demands that are associated with the struggle for self-determination on the political, cultural, and linguistic levels, including, under some circumstances, the demand for independence.

For example, the British section of the Fourth International stands for the reunification and independence of Ireland, and demands the immediate withdrawal of British troops from the North of Ireland. It has declared its support for the right of Scotland to self-determination, against any limitation on the powers of the Scottish national assembly, for the right of the people of Scotland to determine the nature of their relations with the British state.

The section of the Fourth International in the Spanish state supports the right to self-determination of the oppressed nationalities, notably Euzkadi, and Catalonia, and also for Galicia and the Canaries; and for the right of autonomy for the regions, e.g. Andalusia. However, we explain to the workers that a unified economy, with extensive autonomy for the nationalities, would offer advantages on all levels, social, economic, as well as cultural. Thus, the Basque branch of the Spanish section (the LKI) proposes a federation that would make it possible to guarantee autonomy within the framework of economic unity.

Inasmuch as the economic and social basis for a number of these movements lies in the uneven development of the regions or in an acute regional economic crisis, it is of prime importance to include specific demands suited to the economic, social, linguistic, and cultural needs of these areas in drawing up a working-class plan for a way out of the crisis.

In view of the weight of the proletariat in most of the regions where such national movements have arisen and the centralizing and repressive policy of the bourgeois state, a proletarian anticapitalist dynamic tends to become predominant in these movements. While we fight without any reservations for the democratic demands that are raised by the masses, these must be interlocked with a coherent body of transitional demands. By supporting these struggles and participating in them, putting the social questions to the fore—that is, who should own the means of production, what's going to happen to the land, who will determine the economic and political orientations—it is possible to combat petty-bourgeois nationalist illusions. Such illusions can constitute an obstacle to the political independence of the working class, they can divide the working class of a country into "national sectors" and

thereby weaken it.

It follows from this that the sections of the Fourth International fight for the right to self-determination, for the political independence of the working class, and for a united front of the workers parties against the bourgeois parties (for example, against the Conservatives and the SNP in Scotland, against the PNV and the UCD in Euzkadi). At the same time they can seek united actions with radical nationalist organizations in order to stimulate the independent mobilization of the masses. They promote working class solidarity in other parts of the country by building mobilizations for demands related to the right of self-determination. They likewise encourage every possible linkup between the workers and the small peasants in the course of these struggles in the regions that have been deprived and ruined by the policies of the capitalists.

### **Class Unity, the Working-Class United Front, and the Allies of the Proletariat**

37. Unity of the proletariat, forged in action, must be at the heart of any strategy for a socialist revolution in the imperialist countries of Europe.

The unification of the key sectors of the proletariat—essentially, those in industry, transport, and communications—is the cornerstone of building such unity and of rallying the oppressed and exploited layers, those who have no objective interest in preserving private ownership of the major means of production, behind the cause of the working class.

An alliance calling for an alliance with the so-called middle classes on the basis of respecting private ownership of the means of production and the market economy, as is involved in a class-collaborationist policy, creates division in the ranks of the wage earners. A section of these are impelled, even to defend their elementary demands, such as halting layoffs, to want to do away with capitalist ownership here and now.

Such workers tend immediately to refuse to subordinate their interests to the needs of an alliance with "antimonopoly sectors" of the bourgeoisie, or even with the monopolist bourgeoisie itself, as is the case in the Italian "historic compromise." The orientation of the reformists thus dampens their spirits, may discourage them, and keep them from winning more backward layers to their cause.

Other sections of the working class, which are not confronted with the same difficulties, do not have the same experience in struggle, and have not yet been won over to independent working-class action, may wait and see what the results of such a class-collaborationist policy are. But their expectations will be disappointed, with the resulting risks of an erosion of their forces.

Thus, any strategy of alliances on a

conservative basis with "middle layers," any class-collaborationist policy, introduces a dividing line into the working class itself. The unity of the workers is thus inextricably tied up with class independence.

37.1. Such strategies make the unity of the workers organizations and their leaderships a prior condition for any mobilization of the exploited and oppressed layers themselves for their demands. To the contrary, any real mass movement may serve as a catalyst in unifying the proletariat.

For example, if the unemployed are organized and led in struggle, this can inspire sections of the proletariat that are tending to be reduced to a precarious existence by the crisis with a confidence in their power. Along with this, such action can raise in the mass workers organizations the question of uniting the proletariat.

Moreover, if immigrant workers go into action in defense of their specific demands, this also provides a basis for raising the need for uniting the class, that is, for bringing the immigrants into a united battle line of the working class as a whole. In such mobilizations, we support demands and forms of action that facilitate a linkup with the workers movement.

37.2. Achieving an alliance with sections of the petty bourgeoisie—small shopkeepers, small farmers, and artisans—remains an important problem for the workers. An alliance with the small peasants is a strategic question first of all because of the social weight they wield in a series of countries (Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Spain, southern Italy, and certain regions of France). But it is a vital question also as a result of the role they play in supplying food to the urban complexes in most European countries.

It is necessary to convince the small

peasants, artisans, and shopkeepers, many of whom are being expropriated by big capital, that the expropriation of the expropriators is not aimed at confiscating small property. What needs to be done is to show that a working-class plan for solutions to the crisis offers the means for meeting their own special needs.

In Portugal, among sections of the peasantry in the north, of the small shopkeepers, and artisans, the hope of getting long-term credit at very low interest rates as a result of the nationalization of the banks created a favorable attitude toward the nascent revolution for a period. The same reaction could be seen when the Portuguese petrochemical trust (SACOR) was nationalized under workers control, and the possibility appeared of its supplying fertilizer on unprecedentedly favorable credit terms.

Every means possible has to be used to demonstrate to these petty-bourgeois layers that there is no antagonism between workers control over the banks and industry, a monopoly of foreign trade, and setting up a unified banking system, on the one hand, and what is favorable to their interests. They look for distribution of the land, getting what is necessary to cultivate it (fertilizer, machinery), and easy credit terms. It is necessary also to demonstrate to the peasants, artisans, and small merchants that there is no contradiction between these first steps in setting up a planned economy and their enjoying favorable conditions for buying raw materials and distributing their products. This can encourage them to organize in cooperatives on a voluntary basis.

A series of working-class demands may also answer the most pressing needs of such petty-bourgeois layers—improving or establishing a genuine social welfare system, developing social and collective infrastructures (hospitals, housing, nurseries, etc.), education and vocational training in all fields (crafts, industry, agriculture).

Decisiveness on the part of the workers movement in providing positive answers to crucial socio-economic problems, such as the destruction of the environment, capitalist squandering of energy potential, the anarchy in scientific research and its subordination to the narrow needs of monopolies such as the military-industrial complex, and the threadbare system of public health can attract to the side of the workers sections of the "new middle layers of wage earners" (engineers, scientists, university teachers, and house physicians in hospitals, etc.)

38. In order to forge the unity of the working class in action and advance the proletariat along the road of class independence, the united front tactic assumes an important role.

The strategy of uniting the proletariat for the conquest of power must not be reduced to this tactic alone. This strategy requires a complex combination of actions

and methods and slogans to go along with them.

Nonetheless, the tactic of the workers united front assumes a special place today among the tasks to be pursued by the sections for the following reasons: The economic offensive of the bourgeoisie. The objective division that this offensive is creating in the working class, helped along by the bureaucratic apparatuses. Growing violations of democratic rights. The divisiveness engendered directly by the reformist leaderships on the trade-union and political levels. The need for large-scale mobilizations to block the austerity policies of the governments and the bosses during which large sectors of the masses can test the validity of the alternative policy we put forward. The urgent need to offer a rallying point for the struggles of the various social movements.

The united front tactic cannot be focused exclusively on agreements between the major organizations in the working class. Nonetheless, such accords are often decisive in mobilizing the class, since the new layers of the working class that are going into action insist on unity, an attitude they take in response to the attacks of the capitalists. This aspect of the united front takes on its greatest importance in those countries where the workers movement is split from top to bottom along party lines (SP, CP).

The united front at the top must not be counterposed to unity in action in various forms at the rank-and-file level or in specific sectors. What is important is to start from the objective needs of the working masses and to combine this activity with an orientation to the workers organizations, both at the top and at the bottom.

The Trotskyists do not take a wait-and-see attitude, making their initiatives dependent on a prior agreement or understanding among the big workers organizations. By themselves, or together with other organizations, they can and must promote mobilizations. But in formulating slogans and selecting forms of action, they have to combine two objectives. One is to broaden the mobilization as much as possible by including, if feasible, activists and sections of the traditional organizations. The other is to maintain a united-front approach to these organizations, even when the chances of achieving any unity with them are slight.

Differentiations within the reformist parties, as well as changes in the relationship of forces between the apparatuses and the working-class vanguard may offer greater opportunities for the sections to formulate their proposals for unity in concrete terms on all the levels on which they raise them.

Depending on the relationship of forces and the concrete political situation, propaganda as well as agitation for a working-class united front may be focused primarily on a united front *between the big organizations of the working class on the*

national level—for example, united actions of the SP and the CP and the trade-union organizations led by them against an austerity plan.

38.1. We campaign constantly to explain our entire program to as broad an audience as possible, posing it as an alternative to the program of the reformist leaderships.

But this is not enough to win broad layers of workers away from the influence of the reformists or even of the centrists. Only experience in action can raise the consciousness of major sections of the working class. This enables them to see in practice what an obstacle the reformist policy represents to the advancement of the movement in which they are involved.

Of course, we do not make acceptance of our program a condition for establishing a united front. We base our united-front initiatives on the tasks flowing from the needs of the masses, which are dictated by the objective situation. To this end, we put forward immediate, democratic, or transitional demands that offer a basis for the unity in action of the masses and the organizations of the workers movement both in the plants and outside. At the same time, we campaign to get the workers organizations to break with the bourgeoisie. This can take different forms, depending on the country and the situation. We

## The Governmental Question

39. The question of a workers government or a workers and farmers government stands in the forefront in the fight for the political independence of the proletariat.

In the present phase, this slogan has a dual function. In the first place, it offers a political perspective for the partial struggles and facilitates the task of raising the demands of the masses to the political level, of politicalizing economic and social demands, of educating the largest possible number of workers to think politically. It must foster the initiatives of the workers on the political level. It must lead the working masses in their struggle for the demands of the Transitional Program to break with the parties of the bourgeoisie, to defy its domination, to form their own government, to establish their own state. Secondly, it is an instrument for speeding up the masses' break with the reformist leaderships, to unmask the class-collaborationist policy of these leaderships.

A governmental slogan must be raised, based on concrete political, social, and economic questions. The workers mobilize for specific demands that have to do with their material living conditions, the defense of their democratic rights, and broad social questions. They may also hope to see their parties gain a majority in parliament. The Trotskyists state clearly that they fight together with the workers to win

may focus on the need to break with a bourgeois party, oppose restrictions on the right to strike, oppose participation (by the unions or workers parties) in labor-management boards, etc. Although such a break from the bourgeoisie cannot be complete except on the basis of the revolutionary program and although the Trotskyists explain this publicly, they do not make adopting the revolutionary program a precondition for movements going in this direction.

In the framework of this battle for unifying the working class and achieving its political independence, we maintain the need for building a revolutionary party to facilitate united action by the masses and to make it easier for them to take the initiative on the political level.

The united-front tactic is not an end in itself, but a means for mobilizing the masses, for winning influence over them, and wresting them away from the domination of the reformist leaderships. Our objective remains the advancement of united, broad, and militant mass mobilizations, democratically organized and led. The highest form of such class unity is embodied in the setting up, extension, and coordination of councils and committees. When this is achieved, the power of the ruling class on the governmental and state level will in fact be put in question.

these demands, or, for example, that they will do everything to help them assure that their parties will get a majority in parliament. But in order to advance the working class, in order to improve the relationship of forces and thereby enable the working masses to achieve these objectives, they have to be offered a slogan that can unify them and buttress their strength, a slogan calling for a workers government.

At the same time, we explain, on the basis of examples taken from the program and the present and past activity of the traditional workers parties, that we have no confidence either in the desire of the reformist leaderships to actually fight to win the demands of the masses, or in the effectiveness of parliamentary means to achieve these demands.

We are, nonetheless, ready, since the masses still place their confidence in these parties and leaderships, to go through the experience with them of having a government of these parties. But in order to assure the development of the mobilizations, we stress the need for the major workers parties to break all their ties with the bourgeoisie. We point out that these mobilizations represent the only reliable way of winning the economic and social demands of the masses, or of throwing the bourgeois government out of office and replacing it with a government of these parties through elections as well as direct action. They are the only guarantee that





Immigrant workers demonstrate for rights in Paris.

the workers will be able to press the government to meet their demands as well as to counterattack against the moves by the reactionaries.

The sections of the Fourth International do not make the adoption of their program a prerequisite or a prior condition for fighting for a government of one or more of the big workers parties. But at the same time they carry on a constant agitation around transitional demands, which in their opinion should form the program of a workers government that will pave the way to power for the workers. Moreover, the Trotskyists stress the importance of united, independent mass organization (committees, or councils) to achieve the demands of the masses and their aspirations, as well as for taking all the initiatives needed to defend the interests of the masses vis-à-vis the policy of the government.

39.1. A number of different specific forms might be adopted to project the general perspective of rallying the working class politically against the bourgeoisie and to expose in a pedagogical way the class-collaborationist policy of the CPs and SPs. The choice depends on the situation in the various countries, the relationship between the reformist parties and the class, and the level of consciousness and activity of the working class.

In countries where a major part of the proletariat remains tied to, or strongly influenced by, the bourgeois parties

(Greece, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, and Ireland, for example), it is essential to mount a struggle on two fronts. On the one hand, it is necessary on various occasions (elections, referendums, parliamentary debates, social conflicts) to explain why, in order to conduct their struggle more effectively, the workers must withdraw their support for the bourgeois parties and vote for and back their own class parties. Such a call for working-class forces to withdraw their support to a bourgeois party may also be expressed concretely in a slogan calling for breaking the link between a union and a bourgeois party and for forming a workers party based on such unions (for example, the CSC [the Catholic union] in Belgium). Secondly, it is necessary to wage a campaign to get the workers parties to help bring about such a break from the bourgeois parties by actively taking up the demands of all the workers. Parallel to this, it is essential to couple this propaganda with agitation pointing out that a policy of class independence involves breaking from "social peace" and pushing forward direct action.

In those countries where there is an all-SP government, it is necessary to raise the demand that this government meet the demands of the workers who put it in office and not serve the needs of capitalist profit.

At the same time, in answer to the arguments raised by the leaderships of the SPD or the British Labour Party about the

threat of the Christian Democrats or the Conservatives returning to power, the Trotskyists explain that the workers must fight for their demands, because mobilizations are the best means of struggling against any return of the bourgeois parties to the government. This must be combined with a campaign presenting a series of demands that can serve as a basis for opposing the austerity policy of the capitalists and the government.

In situations such as those arising in Great Britain in 1977-78, Trotskyists start from the following considerations in order to determine their attitude on the governmental question. The bourgeoisie has not succeeded in changing the relationship of forces among the classes, but it has won some successes thanks to the collaboration of the bureaucratic leaderships. The strength of the bourgeoisie does not, thus, lie in the vitality of its own parties but in the limited politicalization of the working class as a whole and the relative weakness of the working-class vanguard. In these conditions, a defeat for Labour would in no way represent a step forward for the workers. To the contrary, a Conservative government would turn to a more reactionary policy, not only in the economic field but also in the social sphere and in the area of democratic rights. On this basis, new illusions would take form among the masses, including a part of the advanced workers, about the role and nature of a Labour government. Thus, the task of the

Trotskyists in the elections was to call for a Labour government, from which the workers will demand satisfaction of their demands. They will take a similar course in Germany toward the SPD, at the same time stressing the need for this party to end its coalition with the Liberals.

In those countries where the SP and the CP hold a large majority in the working class (Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France), we will mount the following battle: To fight the austerity policy, it is necessary to build the unity of the workers and their organizations on the basis of demands corresponding to their needs, the need of the workers to throw the bourgeois government out of office and to force the installation of a government of the big workers parties, the SP and CP. In order to achieve such unity in action, the SP and CP must break politically from the bourgeoisie, from its parties, its institutions, and from any defense of its interests.

39.2. In accordance with the circumstances, the main function of putting a governmental slogan in our propaganda can be to prepare working-class cadres to confront the central political problems the masses are going to run up against as their struggle develops. In such conditions, this question has a place in our propaganda. But what has to be placed in the forefront are demands and slogans corresponding to the tasks of the workers in mounting their initial counterattack against the capitalist

## Prerevolutionary Situation and Revolutionary Crisis

40. May 1968 in France, fall 1969 in Italy, and especially the summer and fall of 1975 in Portugal have shown that a prerevolutionary crisis cannot be reduced to a wave of strikes or a general strike. Rather such a crisis is the result of an interrelation between the direct action of the masses coming onto the political scene, and a crisis of the mechanisms of bourgeois rule, which cannot be equated simply with a governmental crisis.

As the masses themselves take the initiative more and more, experiments in self-organization multiply in the plants and localities. Along with this, there are more and more examples of workers control going beyond the strict framework of the workplace. As this process develops, nascent workers power begins to be exercised in a wider and wider field. Then, conflicts sharpen not only with the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state and armed bands which are used to drive back the mass movement, but also with the institutions of bourgeois representative democracy.

The bourgeoisie and reformist leaderships seek to counterpose the legitimacy of these bourgeois democratic institutions to the growing sovereignty of the committees or councils, in order to reduce the latter bodies' sphere of authority, stifle their development, and finally liquidate them.

offensive.

On the other hand, at certain times propaganda and agitation around a governmental slogan and set of transitional demands may be given the main stress in our work. In the event of a governmental crisis, an election, or a nationwide struggle, agitation around the governmental slogan may temporarily assume the central role. The call for breaking off alliances between working-class parties and bourgeois parties cannot by itself say everything that needs to be said about the question of the working class breaking with the bourgeoisie. Nonetheless, such a slogan should make it possible to explain concretely to the workers how such alliances between the reformist leaders and one or more bourgeois parties are means for applying a class-collaborationist policy, how they conflict with advancing working class demands and improving the relationship of forces for the workers.

Our approach in using the governmental slogan is guided by our desire to explain to the workers the need for breaking politically with the bourgeoisie. The way in which this slogan is put forward must be finely adjusted to the concrete political situation, the dynamic of the mass movement, and whether or not the workers are likely in the short term to set out on a course of extraparliamentary struggle against a government of the bourgeois parties or a coalition government.

The opening up of such a situation leads inevitably to more or less general confrontations. These lead either to an ebb in the mass movement, which may be momentary, or to decisive steps forward toward real centralization of the organs of workers power and the emergence of a full-blown situation of dual power.

40.1. Thus, based on the degree of mass activity and the crisis of bourgeois society in every country, revolutionary Marxists will consciously prepare the advanced workers to confront the tasks posed by the emergence of a prerevolutionary situation.

In this work, they will focus on the following themes:

- Union democracy, the election of strike committees responsible to general assemblies and subject to recall by these assemblies.

- The coordination and generalization of scattered workers struggles in order to overcome the lack of effectiveness of such dispersed actions and to make them into battlegrounds for mounting a struggle against the government's austerity policy.

- The possibility of coordinating on a local, sectoral, and regional level strike committees, struggle committees, and factory committees, and even of calling a national assembly of strike committees.

- Extending the tasks of the various committees (strike committees, factory

committees, trade-union committees, etc.) beyond simply directing the struggle within the narrow confines of the enterprise toward functions that involve an aspect of challenging the state power (organizing public services during a general strike, organizing popular vigilance as was done in September 1974 and March 1975 in Portugal, organizing the distribution of supplies, etc.).

- The need to defend the struggles and organizations of the workers against the actions of armed gangs and the repressive forces of the bourgeoisie, which will not hesitate to resort to all forms of violence in order to maintain its rule.

- The vital importance of unstinting support by the organizations of the workers movement to the fight of the soldiers against the military hierarchy and for their democratic rights.

Beyond a certain threshold of development of the structures of self-organization (workers councils of various types) and extension of their range of activity, it becomes a major task to coordinate them and centralize them on a regional and national scale. They must be based on the objective needs of the workers—the extension and interlocking of workers control (liaison between the banking, industrial, and agricultural sectors), establishment of a plan for working-class solutions to the crisis, the organization of a counterattack against repression or reactionary intrigues, as well as economic sabotage, and so forth.

This must be coupled with a united-front orientation putting defense of the independence and unity in action of the class to the forefront. The call for a united front of the major political and trade-union organizations of the working class, which is vital for maintaining and consolidating the united action of the working masses, must be combined with taking advantage of every possibility to make such unity concrete in the form of committees or councils.

As this united-front campaign is extended, propaganda and agitation for a governmental slogan must popularize the need for the working class to envisage the solution to its problems in terms of power.

In order to assure the development of structures of self-organization, to guarantee the unity of the working class, the fight for strict respect of workers democracy in the committees and councils takes on a vital importance.

40.2. The appearance of a situation of dual power involves a combined process of the breakdown of bourgeois power—even if a central bourgeois authority may be able to maintain itself based on the repressive apparatus of the state—and the emergence of workers power, which must be centralized in order to be consolidated.

But in order for the state power of the bourgeoisie to be overthrown and the power of the councils established, the crisis of the legitimacy of the bourgeois institutions must first have reached a breaking

point in the eyes of the masses. The masses have to go through the practical experience of struggles and mobilizations in which they can test the limits that the bourgeois institutions place on their activity and in which the repressive character of the bourgeois system, the defender of private property, is bared. In their struggles, they must go through an apprenticeship in higher and new forms of democracy.

The very growth of the councils and of their sphere of activity produces a breakdown of the bourgeois state apparatus, narrowing the sphere in which the central power of the bourgeoisie exercises direct control (communications, transport, the media, banking, etc.).

The process of the breakdown of the bourgeois state apparatus also spreads to the army. Under the impetus of working-class mobilizations, of antimilitarist work in the bourgeois army, and of the struggle for the democratic rights of the soldiers, soldiers committees may appear, posing a major obstacle to the functioning of the military apparatus and making it possible to win the soldiers to the cause of the workers.

In answer to the legal and extralegal violence that will be unleashed by the bourgeoisie, the masses must organize to defend their activities, the workers organizations, their headquarters, and their press. In the unions and councils, we will put forward the need for forming workers self-defense groups and, at a certain moment, raise the slogan of forming workers militias.

A situation of dual power inevitably leads to a decisive confrontation between the classes. The fate of society depends on its outcome. The indispensable precondition to assure the possibility of establishing the power of the councils lies in the existence of a revolutionary party rooted in the industrial working class, capable of winning the political leadership of the overwhelming majority of the working class away from the reformist apparatuses.

41. Attempts to reinforce and centralize the power of the capitalist class on a European level can only run counter to the interests of the working class, of advancing its struggle, and of the socialist revolution.

Our propaganda against the Europe of the monopolies and banks, against the European institutions of the capitalist class, must be carried forward on the basis of offering the perspective of a Socialist United States of Europe. Such an orientation is grounded both on the needs of the working masses and the historical need to go beyond the framework of the nation-state, which for decades has been an impediment to the development of the productive forces in Europe.

The fight for a Socialist United States of Europe immediately raises the question of the dialectical relationship between the

socialist revolution in capitalist Europe and the political revolution in the bureaucratized workers states. The rise of workers struggles in the "people's democracies" today strikes a strong chord among the workers in Western Europe. It is helping to sharpen the crisis of the CPs, which in turn creates new possibilities for the workers in capitalist Europe to take steps to support the antibureaucratic struggle. What is more, the demands that have emerged in the course of mass mobilizations in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, and other countries have begun to give concrete form to certain aspects of the program of political revolution. These struggles also make it possible to explain the fundamental links that exist between the historic objectives of the working class in the capitalist countries and those of the workers in the bureaucratized workers states. Likewise, the anticapitalist battles and the broad discussion developing in the Western workers movement on the relationship between democracy and socialism help to reinforce the antibureaucratic struggle. The political revolution and the social revolution are dialectically linked.

It is in Germany, which is divided between two states representing different social systems, the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic, that this question is posed in the most tangible way. The division of Germany is a major factor in maintaining the status quo. It is a brake on the most powerful

proletariat in Europe. But, on the other hand, any upsurge in mass mobilizations in one part of Germany will have an impact on the other, and more generally on Europe as a whole.

We link ending the division of the German nation with the socialist unification of Germany, based on the political revolution in the German Democratic Republic and on the social revolution in the German Federal Republic. We oppose any unification that involves dismantling the economic foundations of the workers state in the German Democratic Republic.

We support the demand for withdrawal of occupation troops from the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic, respectively allied troops—first of all the American forces—and those of the USSR. In fact, this double military occupation is designed to assure stabilization of the political and social situation on both sides of the line in this key area of confrontation between the imperialist camp and the bureaucratized workers states. In the long term, it is also aimed at blocking both the socialist revolution in the German Federal Republic and the political revolution in the German Democratic Republic.

The stationing of powerful armies equipped with gigantic nuclear arsenals in both parts of Germany poses a danger of nuclear war, with the catastrophic consequences that would flow from this for the future of humanity as a whole.

## Building Sections of the Fourth International

42. Building sections of the Fourth International and defending their overall political orientation requires that Trotskyists concentrate their forces on central campaigns. Rooting the sections in the working class, and systematic mass work do not conflict with this orientation. These long-term campaigns make it possible to combine dissemination of the general analyses and positions of Trotskyism with advocating demands and slogans that correspond to the needs of the workers, and whose adoption would favor raising their level of consciousness and activity. They focus the forces of the sections on the most important objectives. They offer the sections a framework for unifying their work. They facilitate recruitment.

These campaigns interlock on different levels.

• The sections should develop specific propaganda and agitational campaigns around slogans or demands that epitomize their response to key political and social events. The press of the sections and the publication of special materials play an important role in launching and advancing such political campaigns. There are many examples—the campaign for dissolving the National Assembly and for a CP-SF government in France after the municipal elections in March 1977; the campaign

for immediate elections and for a constituent assembly in Portugal after April 25, 1974; the campaign against the "historic compromise" line and for a SP-CP government in Italy after the 1975 regional elections; the campaign for a general strike organized by the Trade-Union United Front in Belgium at the beginning of 1977 in Belgium; the campaign for total amnesty for all political prisoners and dissolution of the repressive forces in Spain in 1975.

• The sections may take united-front initiatives directed at the big parties of the working class, trade-union organizations, and centrist groups in order to form united bodies or blocs to promote the struggle for certain slogans. They undertake this task together with all persons or organizations that declare their willingness to carry it through. They do not make the possibility of including the big workers parties a prior condition for launching such a campaign. Experience has demonstrated that once such united action is set in motion, it exercises a power of attraction on sectors organized or influenced by the reformist parties. This may force these parties or sections of them to join in such campaigns, if the sections couple these initiatives with sustained agitation for a united front of the organizations of the working class.

- The impact of these campaigns can be carried into the mass organizations and into the unions. For example, in the unions members of the sections try to get motions adopted and actions taken that will make it possible to bolster these mobilizations. These proposals must help to stimulate a discussion during which the Trotskyists can link explaining the validity of the proposed slogans with their overall political program.

42.1. Over and above the unevennesses, the common features exhibited by the class struggle in capitalist Europe point up the possibility for the sections to undertake campaigns around various themes.

The following may be mentioned by way of example:

- A campaign for a coordinated counter-attack by wage earners on a European scale against the maneuvers of the multinational trusts and for ongoing coordination of the union delegates representing workers in the multinational companies.

- A campaign for a joint offensive by the trade-union organizations on a European scale for a thirty-five-hour week with no cut in pay, as an immediate step to fight unemployment.

- A campaign for the right of free access to abortion for all, including minors and immigrants, and for assuring the material conditions necessary to exercise this right. This should provide the basis for reactivating the women's movement and linking it up with the workers organizations. Such a campaign can give rise to broad united actions that can be coordinated on a Europe-wide scale.

- The development, beginning in 1974-1975, of a mass movement against the building and fueling of nuclear power plants or for halting those already in operation offers major opportunities for coordinated intervention by the sections.

In our intervention, we strive to build a mass movement, democratically organized with the backing of the working-class organizations, that can mobilize all the potentially active support such a struggle may attract. The modes of action must be subordinated to this objective.

We will also aim, by various tactical approaches (moratoria, referendums, etc.) to involve the organized workers movement, or sections of it, in these struggles, and to broaden the antinuclear movement. We combine our opposition to the building and fueling of nuclear power plants and our demand for shutting down those already in operation with a call for nationalizing the energy sector under workers control and redirecting it. We link these demands with every possible slogan that can expose the interlocking of private capitalist interests with the state's role in building these power plants (such as the call for opening the books). In turn, we couple all these demands with others designed to make it possible to maintain every sort of check useful in fighting to

defend the safety of the workers and to advance the struggle against pollution.

- A campaign to expose the repressive role that the armies can play against the peoples' struggles in semicolonial countries and against the working class in the imperialist countries of Europe. We encourage the formation of soldiers committees, independent of the military hierarchy and formed on the basis of defending the right of expression and organization of the ranks of draftees. In the unions, we take every initiative that may promote the linkup of these committees with the union movement. We fight to get the workers movement to come to the defense of the soldiers fighting for their rights.

- In several European countries, the development of the crisis has given a certain renewed impetus to the far-right or fascist organizations. Whatever their present limitations, these organizations represent a real danger that must be continually combated by the sections of the Fourth International.

The approach of the Trotskyists to the fight against the far-right and fascist organizations will be based essentially on the need to mobilize the mass movement in a struggle against fascism. This line of mass action is totally foreign to any orientation that substitutes mobilizing some groups of activists for a broad campaign. It is also opposed to the line of the reformist parties, which as a general rule conceal their passivity behind blustery declarations calling on the bourgeois state to repress the fascists. Trotsky strongly condemned this approach in 1938 in his article "Freedom of the Press and the Working Class":

"... workers cannot let the repressive fist of the bourgeois state substitute for the struggle that they must wage through their own organizations and their own press. Today the state may appear to be 'kindly' disposed to the workers' organizations; tomorrow the government may fall, will inevitably fall, into the hands of the most reactionary elements of the bourgeoisie. In that case, whatever restrictive legislation that exists will be thrown at the workers. Only adventurers with no thought other than for the needs of the moment would fail to heed such a danger."

In the fight against the fascists, we must not offer the bourgeoisie any pretext for restricting any right of expression or organization, even if it might be exploited by such groups. Any restriction of this kind would be used in fact as a club against the working class. The struggle against the Brown Plague has to be the task of the workers organizations united in action and drawing the great masses of the people in behind them.

- A new step-up in the military and political activity of the European imperialists, especially in Africa, together with the explosive growth of mass movements in countries dominated by imperialism, high-

light the importance of anti-imperialist mobilizations.

The sections of the Fourth International must keep up a steady propaganda campaign on anti-imperialist issues. Whenever necessary, they must work to build united-front anti-imperialist committees. Moreover, those sections in countries whose bourgeoisie is intervening militarily against the anti-imperialist liberation struggle of any people have a special responsibility to take initiatives to build mass organizations demanding the immediate withdrawal of imperialist troops and to defend the right of these peoples to self-determination. The responses to the military interventions in Zaire, Lebanon, Chad, and Mauritania offer examples of such internationalist work, in which the youth organizations linked to the Fourth International can also serve as a driving force. The fight for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland is another example.

In the framework of our antimilitarist and anti-imperialist campaigns, we project the demand for every state to break its ties with NATO and with all interimperialist alliances within capitalist Europe itself.

A campaign in defense of democratic rights in the degenerated and deformed workers states is needed in order to support the workers, intellectuals, and especially the minority-nationality activists who are being victimized by Stalinist repression. In calling for the release of all victims of bureaucratic repression, we are particularly anxious to encourage the workers movement to organize in defense of the political prisoners who consider themselves socialists and communists. One example of such campaigns was that which successfully won the liberation of Rudolf Bahro. A similar campaign must be organized in solidarity with Peter Uhl and his comrades imprisoned in Czechoslovakia. We are building a special campaign directed at the CPs and the unions they control to get them to come out for the immediate release of these prisoners. We are also anxious to get the support of the workers organizations for actions in defense of the right to strike and of trade-union independence in the bureaucratized workers states.

- The number of imprisoned and tortured class-struggle victims is constantly growing. The work in defense of political prisoners that the sections of the Fourth International have carried on for long years in united-front committees must be given new impetus from time to time by campaigns around specially symbolic cases that can arouse broad sections of the workers movement to the need for such elementary class solidarity. The defense of the organizations of the Fourth International or their members obviously must take priority in the work of Trotskyist activists.

## Election Campaigns

43. In the present period in the capitalist countries of Europe, elections clearly reflect the class polarization. They bring to center stage discussion of all the political, social, and economic questions—the question of the government, austerity policy, alliances between bourgeois and workers parties, etc.

As a general rule, we must take advantage of such situations, running candidates in order to make known our overall political answers, to reach a broader audience, and to build our sections.

Stress must be placed on presenting in a simple and educational way the decisive elements of program that offer answers to the social and economic crisis. Election campaigns must be an occasion for us to popularize an orientation of political independence for the working class. This should be done in particular by raising the perspective of a government of the big workers parties.

What is more, we will seize on all the examples of struggles, manifestations of oppression, and social and economic events that make it possible to illustrate the relevance of transitional demands.

Depending on the circumstances, it may prove useful to form electoral alliances with other organizations in the workers movement. Such a tactical decision must not lead to throwing out the key elements

of our overall political solutions from a common electoral program. Still less should it lead to supporting an electoral program including political solutions that lend support to class-collaborationist formulas. Likewise, accepting a program that, for example, includes a wrong characterization of the big workers parties may prevent us from reaching the ranks of these parties and the masses in general with our program.

When sections do not run candidates, or do so only in certain districts, or in the first round in two-round elections, they generally call for a class vote for the workers parties. Such a call does not involve either approval or critical support of the program or orientation of these parties. It is based both on the need for upholding a policy of class independence, expressed in this case by a class vote; and on an assessment of the objective effects of a defeat of the bourgeois parties in the elections, or of a strengthening of the working-class parties in this arena as well. The directions we give for voting are a tactical question. Obviously the way they are formulated is linked to our analysis of the concrete political situation. The only principle is our absolute refusal to vote for bourgeois or petty-bourgeois formations, because that runs counter to the line of class independence.

## Work in the Trade-Union Movement

44. The primary task of the sections of the Fourth International is to link themselves to the movement of hundreds of thousands and millions of working men and women, especially in the decisive sectors of industry, who look to the unions as instruments for defending their interests and fighting to protect and improve their standard of living against the offensive by the bosses and the government.

The objective of the Trotskyists in their trade-union work is to strengthen the organization of the union, improve the fighting spirit of the membership, and make the unions into effective instruments for conducting the ongoing, daily struggle of the workers against capitalist exploitation. The objective of this is to prepare the broad masses of workers to take over the running of society by providing them experience in organizing and leading their struggles. Whatever the various tactics dictated by the specific conditions of the struggle, the perspective for our work is to raise the level of consciousness of the union members, arm them with a program and a leadership, until they see clearly for themselves the irreconcilable antagonism between their interests and their aspirations to put an end to exploitation and oppression, and the class-collaborationist policy of the bureaucratic apparatuses. Whatever the manifold ways in which this

is translated into the concrete, on the union level as well, revolutionary Marxist activists proceed from the standpoint that only the socialist revolution can provide a solution for the fundamental needs of the toiling masses.

It is the combination of such an orientation and tenacious activity in the struggles in which the union movement is engaged that can win Trotskyist activists the respect of broad layers of organized workers as well as of the most advanced elements involved in the union. Union work is an essential element of building a working-class revolutionary party. The progress of this work makes it possible to measure the progress made in building such a party.

44.1. The axis of our trade-union strategy is determined defense of the independence of the union movement from the bourgeois state. This involves:

1. A fight for the right of union organization in the factories, to defend the right to strike against all the measures designed to restrict the freedom of action and freedom to negotiate of the unions, against the system that requires prior notice and compulsory arbitration before beginning a labor conflict, against fines levied for "abuse" of the right to strike, against compulsory arbitration imposed by law to determine whether or not a strike can be continued, against restrictions on the right

to organize strike pickets, etc.

2. A fight for trade-union democracy on all levels, including the right of tendencies. This is necessary to mobilize all the power of the union ranks against the bosses and the government and to demonstrate the strength of the union organizations. We denounce all attempts by the union bureaucracy to limit the right to strike, which tend to lend legitimacy to the argument that the workers struggles are a source of the deepgoing crisis of the capitalist system. In this framework, the sections will give special attention to combating the attempts by the bureaucrats to expell revolutionary activists from the ranks of the unions.

In defending these two central elements of our strategy, it is necessary to link them with our proposals to fight against the austerity programs.

Unions must first of all become a real weapon for all working men and women. This is why we favor the union organizations taking up the demands raised by all the exploited and oppressed layers.

We fight for full and complete participation by women, immigrant workers, the unemployed, and young workers in the life of the unions, and we defend their right to have their own organizations in which they can discuss and formulate their specific demands so as to be able to mobilize the maximum forces against the capitalist offensive. At the same time, we warn against the bureaucratic attempts to divert the demands of working women, immigrants, or youth into the ghetto of trade-union commissions outside the regular bodies of the union, since such commissions are impotent and are all the more easily subjected to the tutelage of the bureaucracy.

The instinctive thrust of the workers during an upsurge of struggles to close ranks in order to more effectively confront the capitalist assault poses with greater force the question of unity in action and of the unification of the union movement.

In countries where there are several national confederations, the Trotskyists fight in all the unions in which they work for unity in action on all levels. Likewise, they fight for transforming the professional associations that exist in some sectors of wage labor (nurses associations, employee associations) into unions and getting them affiliated to the union confederations.

In the same way, they put forward the perspective of forming a single independent and democratic confederation of labor. The union bureaucracies perpetuate the organizational division for the purpose of upholding the privileges enjoyed by the separate apparatuses and in order to hold back the organization of a general counter-attack by all wage workers. Revolutionary Marxists do not make accepting the right of tendencies a precondition for the fusion of the different labor organizations.



44.2. The very problems that the workers run up against in their mobilizations for immediate demands as well as the general orientation of the bureaucratic apparatuses point up the inadequacy of partial criticisms directed at one or another aspect of the line of these bureaucracies.

Moreover, the way in which general political questions find their reflection within the unions also highlights the need for an overall alternative to the class-collaborationist policy of the leaderships. Finally, the strength of the apparatuses rests on their capacity to keep the opposition to their policy fragmented.

All these factors point up the importance of a strategy for building a class-struggle left wing to win the leadership of the unions away from the SP and CP apparatuses, to insure their total independence from the bourgeois state, and to make them into instruments for emancipating the working class.

There is no class-struggle left wing now, not even an incipient one, in any European union. Nonetheless, broad layers of workers are seeking new answers to the problems with which they are confronted and will be won to such a perspective in the course of the struggle.

In many unions, groupings of activists have begun to form opposing the line of the apparatus. They have appeared on the local, regional, and national levels in various unions. Their degree of organization varies widely.

Such opposition groups have raised their heads at the time of union congresses. They have at times been given impetus by intermediary leaderships during the discussion prior to the conclusion of new contracts, or during the debates over what general line the unions should take toward the policy of austerity.

In Italy, for example, such opposition tendencies have been manifested in the form of assemblies of hundreds of factory delegates (for example, in Milan in 1977) to discuss an alternative to the policy of the confederation leaderships. Likewise, broad assemblies of delegates adopted motions opposing the platform proposed by the three confederations during the regional conventions leading up to the national congress in January 1978, which was going to adopt a position openly favorable to austerity. Opposition currents appeared again in mobilizations around contract negotiations in 1979.

In France, such opposition groups came out into the open during the national congress of the CFDT. They function on a more permanent basis in the various member unions of the CGT and CFDT.

In Portugal at the time of elections for the leadership of unions, opposition groupings have been formed around slates challenging the line of the reformist leaderships.

In Spain, in the congresses of the UGT and the CO, a large percentage of the delegates rallied around motions that more or less openly conflicted with the general orientation proposed by the bureaucracy. The potential for opposition among the factory union delegates or even the intermediary leaderships was revealed at the time of the discussions around the signing of the Moncloa Pact and those around the Government Economic Program and the Statute of Labor.

In Great Britain, in Belgium, in Denmark, and even in West Germany, the same phenomenon has developed, although in these countries it has taken more limited and less politicalized forms.

The growth of such opposition currents cannot lead, through simple numerical accretion, to the formation of a class-struggle left wing. Oppositions that appear now and again against a leadership, or a simple grouping of revolutionists in a union, cannot be confused with a class-struggle left wing. To have a class-struggle left wing, you have to have a class-struggle orientation and program offering an alternative to the class-collaborationist policy of the reformists, as well as a relatively high level of organization and leadership. Such a group would have to be the result of a process of internal differentiation, including in the union leaderships themselves, that would make it possible to regroup whole sectors of the union and to put forward in struggle a credible alternative revolutionary leadership. The advance of such a process depends on the interaction of the following factors: the rise in the level of consciousness of the vanguard workers over a period of sharpening class struggle, the relationship of forces between this vanguard and the bureaucratic apparatuses, the ability of the worker activists in our sections to win more and more workers for such an orientation. Nonetheless, the appearance of the opposition currents described above is an important step in the formation of a class-struggle left wing. In fact, these groupings propose demands that represent components of a class-struggle program. They show that it is both necessary and possible to organize to put forward alternatives to the class-collaborationist policy of the leaderships. They point up the key importance of the fight for trade-union democracy in the process of transforming the unions into an effective instrument of struggle for all workers. They have made it possible for significant layers of advanced workers to raise their level of consciousness and prove themselves as potential revolutionary leaders of the union.

In the present phase, our work in the unions must focus particularly on these various opposition groupings. While taking account of the various rates at which they may evolve, we have to fight for the following objectives: To clarify and round out the programmatic bases of these groupings; to make it clear that a key part of

fighting the bureaucratic apparatus is to outline a concrete alternative strategy for struggling against the policy of the capitalists and the government; to block any tendency to chronic oppositionism; and to uphold and defend our strategic aim, which is to provide the union movement with a revolutionary leadership. It flows from this that these currents must organize within the framework of the union structures, and, if the relationship of forces permits, win leadership positions. The class-struggle left wing that we are fighting to build will include people who are union leaders now and will be won to this perspective, and who, from the union bodies where they find themselves, will present their positions to the union as a whole. It will fight to win the leadership of the unions at all levels so that they can mobilize all the power of these organizations in the fight against capitalism. The class-struggle left wing is not separated from the union, nor is it a mere regroupment around a revolutionary platform put forward by a few militants.

In order to stimulate this process of differentiation and to advance the development of groupings offering elements of a class-struggle program, we may bloc with currents supporting progressive positions. Likewise, in the event of a clash within the union apparatus between a critical sector and the leaderships, we may offer support to the opposition, depending on our assessment of what is at stake in this conflict for the evolution of the union as a whole, as well as of the specific points around which the fight takes place. The essential thing in all these situations is not to downplay our propaganda for the answers required to meet the needs of the anticapitalist struggle and to maintain firmly our own fraction within the union.

We can also help to step up this process of differentiation and of challenging class-collaborationist orientations by promoting the actions around themes such as the fight for the right of abortion or the struggle against the building and fueling of nuclear power plants.

Whatever forms may be made necessary by bureaucratic persecution, the fight to promote the formation of a class-struggle left wing involves explaining politically our concept of trade-union democracy. This concept calls for currents based on different platforms for the union, not on allegiance to different parties. It calls for the union to respect the principles of workers democracy in the mass movement by accepting the democratic decisions of struggle committees, strike or factory committees, and sovereign assemblies of all the workers in the workplace. The unions must be the driving force in such democratic structures.

44.3. The key role of union work in building sections of the Fourth International means that this activity must be placed under the direct supervision of those who lead the day-to-day work of the

organization. This close relationship between the political leadership of a section and trade-union work must assist all the union activists in the task of carrying forward the overall political line of the organization in their work. This does not mean adopting an ultimatum or sectarian position. It means that we have to be able to popularize Trotskyist political analyses and orientations among our trade-union

### Work Directed at the SPs and CPs

45. The orientation on the part of the European sections of the Fourth International toward the masses influenced or organized by the reformist parties is, consequently, toward these parties themselves. This orientation is designed fundamentally to offer an alternative strategy to that of the reformist leaderships.

In no way does this orientation conflict with working to build the mass movements in those arenas neglected or ignored by the reformists. To the contrary, the growth of such movements can facilitate the work we do directed at the reformist parties. It can increase the internal tensions and debates within these parties, resulting in increased possibilities for concrete application of a united-front line.

45.1. In those countries where a Social Democratic party holds a dominant or very influential position in the working class, shifts in the attitude of the workers and in the political climate will inevitably be reflected in the ranks of such a party itself. Debates and internal conflicts will arise. Currents may develop with a certain degree of organization nationally or locally. This gives still more importance to maintaining a firm united front orientation based on concrete proposals for unity in action in various areas.

The ways in which the Social Democratic Parties are organized make it easier to achieve such unity in action on the local or regional level. Likewise, the sort of relationship that exists between the Social Democratic youth organizations and parties favors the development of joint activities with the youth. It is on this basis that a discussion of orientation with opposition groups or critical currents can be most fruitful. In such discussions, the focus has to be on a critique of the line put forward by the leaderships, and this has to be coupled to a historic balance sheet of the Social Democracy and its role in bailing out capitalist society. It is necessary, therefore, to combat any illusions that these parties may correct their course or be regenerated.

It is essential in these debates with "left tendencies" in the Social Democracy to put forward all our strategic answers and our criticisms, with the aim of demonstrating the vital need of building a revolutionary party.

45.2. The new stage in the crisis of Stalinism is opening up very important

activists based on the concrete problems that arise in the life of the union.

Furthermore, in order to forestall adaptation to economist pressures or petty-bourgeois ideologies, it is important to extend systematic political education, and for our union activists to be organized in fractions, in which they will be able to work more effectively through acting collectively.

possibilities for intervention and growth by the sections of the Fourth International.

The debates in the CPs focus on the history of the Communist International, the way it and the CPs became Stalinized, the nature of "real socialism" in the USSR and in the "people's democracies," and the international policy of the Kremlin bureaucracy. They go hand in hand with growing questions about the current line and what the CP leaderships are doing with regard to the austerity policies of the various governments. Moreover, as soon as the attempts by the CP leading circles to gain a new legitimacy in the eyes of the membership lead to conflicts with the Soviet bureaucracy, these leaders find themselves obliged to revise the official history of their party, the CPSU, and of the Third International. They are led, as a result, to reevaluate the role of the various currents and tendencies in the CPSU, as well as to take up the problem of rehabilitating the leaders of the Bolshevik Party who were liquidated by Stalin. In this way, they become mired in new contradictions that can scarcely be concealed by their slippery formulations.

The united-front tactic should be used as a special tool in an offensive by the sections directed against the CPs. This must enable the sections to gain recognition as a current in the workers movement and create conditions favorable to a debate on the line of the CPs itself on the basis of experiences in united action on various levels.

We must mount a prolonged political campaign directed at the CPs, constantly explaining the connection between their present class-collaborationist policy and its origins in the thermidorian counterrevolution in the USSR and the rise of Stalinism.

The sections can take advantage of the self-critical declarations of the CP leaderships to bring out the contradictions in a course that consists of citing a series of successive "errors" whose causes are supposed to be accidental and to have nothing to do with any specific line. In this way, the CPs claim to have broken with Stalinism but without making any real critique of their own Stalinist "past." The spotlight has to be focused on this inconsistency, from which they cannot extricate themselves.

Along the same lines, the sections must mount a sustained campaign for the rehabilitation of the Bolshevik "old guard," and Trotsky first of all. This campaign must be the occasion for demanding that the CP leaderships call publicly on the Soviet government and the CPSU to rehabilitate the leaders of the Bolshevik Party who were murdered by Stalin. It should offer a framework for understanding that real rehabilitation would involve explicitly recognizing the dichotomy between the party of Lenin and Trotsky and the one led by the Stalinist bureaucracy, that is, the discontinuity between Leninism and Stalinism. In it, we must call on the CP leaderships to shed light on the methods used in liquidating oppositionists in their own parties. Likewise, we must show the link between the elimination of the leaders who argued and fought against the bureaucratic usurpation of Stalinism and the liquidation of the democratic principles of revolutionary centralism in the Russian party and in the Third International.

At a time when voices are being raised in the CPs demanding more democracy, and these demands are sometimes being taken up for tactical reasons within the apparatus itself, the sections must warn against any illusions that a "democratization" of the CPs means that they will be regenerated as revolutionary parties. The sections will stress the roots of the class-collaborationist policy of the CP leaderships and the link between their bureaucratic distrust of the mass movement and bureaucratic centralism. Parallel to this, they will defend democratic centralism, which involves the right of tendencies and factions, explaining the importance of political centralization nationally and internationally for a revolutionary strategy by which the workers can win power.

It has to be shown how theoretically incoherent the criticisms of the system in the USSR and the "people's democracies" made by the Eurocommunist CPs are. But it is important above all to show this in practice by carrying on a two-sided campaign. The first thing that has to be done is to demand that the CPs make it clear that they support the main demands that emerged in the incipient political revolutions in East Germany in 1953, Poland and Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968. These demands are as follows: separation of the party and state, recognition of the right to strike, independence of the unions, ending censorship, dissolution of the political police, an end to the one-party system, full civil and democratic rights, rule by democratic workers councils, etc. Secondly, the CPs must be called on to respect workers democracy in their own countries, in the unions or strike committees, and to reject exclusionism against other currents in the workers movement.

With the critical currents that are arising in the CPs, the sections must undertake a debate on the basic strategic ques-



French steelworkers march on Paris, March 1979.

tions. In this, they will strive to show concretely the fundamental contradiction that exists between a revolutionary strategy and the past and present orientation of these bureaucratized parties. On this basis, they will explain the impossibility of rehabilitating these parties and the need for building a revolutionary party and a revolutionary International that can win the workers away from the influence of the reformist leaderships of the CPs. In cases of bureaucratic repression against oppositionists or critical currents, we must support the victims against these measures, without however making any political concession to them.

45.3. Such an orientation toward the workers organized or influenced by the big reformist parties must be seen as a long-term one. The nature of the period makes it possible for the sections to improve the relationship of forces between themselves and the traditional workers parties and

### Proletarianization and Party Building

46. The sections of the Fourth International now have important opportunities to take decisive steps in rooting themselves in the working class, especially the industrial proletariat. This is owing to the relationship of forces that now exists between the classes and between the bureaucratic apparatus and the advanced workers. It is also a result of a combination of actual experience in struggle with a rising political level.

In many countries, the majority of comrades are members of unions. But the task of building solid union fractions in industry remains to be done. The sections must centralize and plan their work in order to make a qualitative advance in rooting themselves in these key sectors of the working class. This also requires sending into industry members recruited in the previous period. The sections must be led into making this turn without delay. If the leaderships do not consciously organize the shift into this new stage, comrades will naturally tend to take jobs in nonindustrial sectors, often as a result of the kind of education they have received. They have to be motivated politically by stressing the vital contribution they can make today in qualitatively reinforcing our work in the working class, which is the perspective that led them to take part in building the revolutionary party.

Orienting toward increasing our base in the industrial working class flows from our general political perspective, and will increase the effectiveness of our united front tactic and our intervention towards the reformist parties, for example. If we do not harness ourselves to this task, we risk seeing our activity reduced to commentary from the sidelines of the great class battles that are coming.

Building strong fractions in the industrial unions will help our work in all areas,

thereby to increase the impact of their political views on sections of these parties. It is the task of the leaderships of the sections to accord the highest priority to politically educating the membership as a whole so as to prepare them for such systematic work. Moreover, doing this work requires adequate propaganda materials.

In certain conditions, fraction work may be started up in these parties or in their youth organizations. This requires tight organization and political preparation of the activists. Sometimes it may be undertaken with better chances for success in the youth organizations of the CPs and the SPs, and might be taken charge of by the youth organizations of the sections. In Great Britain, the nature of the Labour Party dictates doing long-term fraction work, combined with union work in the key industrial sectors, and reinforcement of the independent work of the Trotskyists.

including in the other unions such as the bank workers, teachers or other white-collar unions, hospital workers, etc. The resolution entitled "The World Political Situation and the Tasks of the Fourth International" points out about building such fractions that:

"... participation in trade-union fraction work from the base of jobs in industry can perceptibly increase the rate of successes of the party's political campaigns—as Trotsky put it in discussing the Transitional Program—by showing the workers how to think socially and act politically. It will facilitate paying the necessary attention to building class-struggle left wings. It will improve the progress of similar work in the mass movement and among the allies of the proletariat. It will help develop links with the struggles of the superexploited—women, youth, and the oppressed nationalities or immigrant workers. It will also enhance sensitivity to the moods of the workers and give greater stability to the sections and their work."

Such proletarianization cannot be carried out at the same rate or by the same means in all the sections. The implementation of this orientation will depend on the social and political situation and on the level we have attained in the accumulation of forces. However, what has been said above means that we must begin now to do the work of conscious political and organizational preparation. A centralized and determined effort will be necessary to redirect our resources and our members in accordance with this perspective. Trade-union work must be given first place in the work of the central leaderships. Comrades have to be helped to find jobs and do recruiting in the key sectors. An educational system has to be set up with internal and propaganda materials that can assure that our worker comrades are politi-

cally assimilated and made into working-class political cadres. A mode of functioning has to be established that will enable workers to participate fully in the normal activity of the organization.

The aim is to build parties of worker-Bolshevik cadres, representatives of all the oppressed, increasingly recognized by their fellow working people on the job and in the neighborhoods as the natural leaders of their class and its allies. These cadres must be able to offer general solutions to all aspects of the economic, social, and political crisis. They must be able to unite the proletariat and win over its potential allies. They have to be able to lead the masses toward the conquest of power.

47. Along with this systematic effort to root ourselves in the working class, we must carry forward mass work in the youth, where there is important potential for recruitment. In order to do this, the sections must devote a great deal of attention to assisting the existing youth organizations or to examining the possibilities for establishing such organizations. By the same token, work on the campuses and the mass student organizations must remain a major area of work in building the sections.

48. The basis for the work of the party is its program. It is the program that assures the cohesion of its ranks. The program provides a common strategic orientation on which the vanguard can organize. It is in this sense that the sections of the Fourth International represent the nucleus of the revolutionary party that is to be built. The program of the Fourth International constitutes the synthesis of the experiences of the working class on an international scale. The capacity of the sections of the International and the world party to enrich this synthesis in the light of developments in the class struggle is the confirmation of their close ties with the great mobilizations of the working class and the oppressed layers and of the validity of the method of the Transitional Program.

On the basis of this program, a leadership has to be built that is capable of applying it, of seizing all the opportunities to take steps forward in building the party, of understanding quickly the changes in the political situation, of carrying forward political and theoretical development. It flows from this that building a leadership can only be accomplished as the result of a conscious long-term effort.

The formation of such a leadership involves unity on the basis of program and the development of a common understanding of the strategic tasks of the building of the party, and not of a temporary tactical agreement. It must be a collective leadership with the function of increasing the number of leading cadres capable of directing the work of the organization as a whole. Therefore, one of the aspects of the work of a leadership is to pay constant attention to training a broader and



broader team of cadres, to regularly bring comrades into responsible national and international assignments, giving priority to the development of women and worker cadres. In order to accomplish this, it is essential that the leaderships find a method, based on objective criteria, of working together.

The establishment of a leadership that can learn and function on this basis is the *sine qua non* for the party leading all the areas of its work, for it to maintain the central political direction necessary for increasing its effectiveness in action and at the same time develop its line through democratic internal discussion. This is the only way of fighting sectoralism, which may lead a section of the organization to lose the overall revolutionary perspective and induce it to develop positions that come into conflict with the program and the general line of the organization.

Conscious building of leaderships is, basically, the other side of the process of proletarianization, which itself demands a greater concentration of energies and stronger central political direction.

Reinforcing the apparatus of the organization under the direct political responsibility of the political leadership should help in increasing the aid given to day-to-day work in the unions, the factories, and in national political activities.

The sections must develop real plans for recruitment to go along with their political campaigns. Organizational cohesion and political homogeneity on the part of the sections will facilitate such recruitment and enable them to turn resolutely outward.

49. A revolutionary party cannot be built on the basis of a simple linear growth of its forces. The process necessarily involves regroupments and fusions. This reflects the different rates of development in the consciousness of the masses and the recomposition of the forces in the workers movement that results from it.

However, any fusion process carried out with a perspective for qualitatively strengthening the party on the basis of the program of the Fourth International requires firmly projecting the political line of the section as well as a political struggle. This in no way conflicts with seeking unity in action and flexibility in preparing for possible future fusions.

In this stage, unifications can facilitate our work directed at the workers parties by helping to build a pole of attraction for worker activists, including in these mass parties.

49.1 In various countries, the crisis of the

centrist organizations and their political evolution may call for mounting regroupment offensives toward them.

In such cases, it is necessary to avoid an abstract approach that relies just on the statements and documents that these organizations may produce at a given moment. What is most important is to understand the history of their development and their direction of movement and to read their positions in the light of this. In addition, it is necessary to know how concretely to assess questions such as the relationship of forces, the political and organizational homogeneity of such organizations, as well as the cohesion and political preparedness of the section. Not only the general political approach depends on this but the specific modes and rhythms of a regroupment or fusion offensive.

A condition for the success of such operations is a clear definition of intent from the outset. The approach cannot be to negotiate over fundamental aspects of program but to determine courses of common action and discussion that will accelerate the evolution in these centrist organizations, and, after a certain time, put the programmatic discussion on another basis. Thus, there are no ready-made recipes for fusions and regroupments. To forestall sectarianism, we have to begin by clearly putting forward our program, as well as assessing the political development of these organizations, and on this basis propose the appropriate common initiatives.

49.2. The British SWP, which despite its blocs with the ultraleft centrists in Portugal and Italy, has itself avoided traveling on the same path. Its evolution over the past decade has been towards revolutionary positions in the class struggle. It stands on the basis of the first Four Congresses of the Communist International, but has important disagreements with the Transitional Program. A unified organization consisting of the SWP and the British section of the Fourth International would create a powerful pole of attraction for militants in Britain. We are therefore in favor of fighting to win the SWP to the Fourth International.

• The world situation, and in particular the joint crisis of imperialism and Stalinism, objectively opens new perspectives for pursuing the policy adopted by the 1963 Reunification Congress to unify the world Trotskyist movement within the Fourth International, that is, those organizations that claim to be Trotskyist, in particular the Organizing Committee for the Recon-

struction of the Fourth International (OCRFI) and the current led by Lutte Ouvrière (LO).

For a whole period, the OCRFI was moving toward the Fourth International, and agreed to discuss with us on the basis of the resolutions prepared for this World Congress with a view toward fusion. On the eve of the World Congress, however, the OCRFI joined in an operation to split the Fourth International, and has begun a public campaign charging the FI with "liquidationism" and other crimes. Obviously, the OCRFI must reverse its new course before discussion with them can resume or any progress toward fusion can be made.

In a sectarian and shortsighted manner, the OCRFI opted for quick and fragile small gains, turning its back on the longer term objective necessity of unifying the forces of Trotskyism.

A fusion of these forces would strengthen the Fourth International as the World Party of Socialist Revolution and lead to a significant growth of its sections in some countries. Such a fusion could begin to change the relationship of forces between revolutionary Marxists and the reformist leaderships, and sharpen the process of differentiation underway within the reformist and centrist organizations. This process could lead in a revolutionary direction on the political and organizational level only to the extent that there are Trotskyist organizations quantitatively larger than the existing ones, qualitatively better rooted within the proletariat, and capable of regroupment not only with oppositional individuals and nuclei, but also with numerically larger currents.

Unification within the Fourth International with those organizations that claim to be Trotskyist can only be based on a political battle that helps clarify possible agreements and disagreements on program, political convergence, relations in regard to intervention in the class struggle, and the concept of building a democratic-centralist revolutionary organization at both the national (election of leadership, rights of tendencies and factions) and international levels.

We should proceed in accordance with the method employed at the time of the reunification in 1963. That is, if we achieve agreement on the central strategic tasks, we should verify the real content of agreement on the program of the Fourth International. By this we mean determining whether there is common understanding of events and of the tasks that flow from the experiences and great events of the class struggle on a world scale.



## Glossary of Initials Used in Text

**Europe-wide:** EEC—European Economic Community. Nine countries belonging to the EEC are: Britain, Belgium, Denmark, France, West Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands.

### Belgium

CSC: Confederation of Christian Trade Unions  
RW: Party of Walloon Unity  
VU: National Unity

### Corsica

ANC: Alliance of Corsican Nationalists

### France

CFDT: French Democratic Confederation of Labor  
CGT: General Confederation of Labor  
OCT: Communist Workers Organization  
PSU: United Socialist Party

RPR: Assembly for the Republic  
UDF: Union for French Democracy

### Italy

CGIL: Italian General Confederation of Labor  
CISL: Italian Confederation of Free Trade Unions  
FLM: Metalworkers Federation  
UIL: Italian Federation of Trade Unions

### Portugal

CDS: Social Democratic Center  
CGTP: General Confederation of Portuguese Workers  
MFA: Armed Forces Movement  
PCP-ML: Portuguese Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)  
UGTP: General Union of Portuguese Workers

### Scotland

SNP: Scottish National Party

### Spain

CO: workers commissions  
CDC: Democratic Convergence of Catalonia  
MCE: Communist Movement of Spain  
ORT: Revolutionary Workers Organization  
PDC: Christian Democratic Party  
PNV: Basque Nationalist Party  
PSOE: Spanish Socialist Workers Party  
PT: Labor Party [of Spain]  
UCD: Democratic Center Union  
UGT: General Workers Union

### West Germany

CDU: Christian Democratic Union  
CSU: Christian Social Union  
DGB: German Trade-Union Federation  
SPD: Social Democratic Party of Germany

## Report on Youth



Young workers in West Germany protest unemployment.

## Appeal for Solidarity with Nicaragua by Youth Organizations of the Fourth International

The revolutionary youth organized in political solidarity with the Fourth International around the world hail the tremendous victory of the Nicaraguan people led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) over the bloody Somoza dictatorship. The fall of the Somoza military regime, on July 19, 1979, funded and armed by the United States government for forty-five years, was a heavy blow to imperialism in Central and Latin America and an inspiration to the millions of impoverished victims of that system.

We welcome the deep and popular revolution opened up by this victory which is posing the creation of a new Nicaragua free from tyranny, injustice and exploitation. We salute the heroic and self-sacrificing struggle of our brothers and sisters, "los muchachos," the young generation of Nicaragua.

The victory of the Nicaraguan people and youth is our victory too.

In a desperate effort to crush the youthful rebellion, Somoza's National Guard had carried out torture and mass murder against youth simply for the crime of being young and therefore potential Sandinista rebels. This was followed by systematic bombing of towns and working-class neighborhoods. But even this genocidal war could not defeat the Nicaraguan people. Guns and homemade bombs in hand, the Sandinista youth led the mass uprising which overthrew the hated dictatorship.

Somoza's desperate war on the Nicaraguan people took 50,000 lives and left 600,000 homeless with 40,000 orphans. As a result of the war over half of the two and a half million people of this already impoverished country are facing starvation. Four hundred tons of food per day are needed to feed the hungry, as well as medical sup-

plies and emergency aid. On top of this Nicaragua faces the massive task of teaching over 60 percent of its population how to read and write.

However, despite these severe difficulties, the Nicaraguan revolution is moving forward under the leadership of the FSLN with the youth in the vanguard. In the Sandinista Defense Committees, in the workers unions and peasant associations, in the massive literacy and health campaigns, in the popular militias and the new revolutionary army, it is the young generation who are shouldering the greatest responsibility for rebuilding Nicaragua in the interests of the workers and peasants.

But this young revolution has powerful enemies. The regrouped National Guard, backed by Somoza's stolen millions and by Washington, pose the threat of invasion. In addition, the current approach of world imperialism seems to be to try to use their economic aid to bolster the exploiters inside the country with a view to checking the Nicaraguan revolution's advance towards socialism.

What remains essential is that every youth organization internationally takes up the cause of our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters. The youth organizations of the Fourth International pledge ourselves to make both the political and material defense of the Nicaraguan revolution our priority.

Our first task is to get out the truth about the Nicaraguan revolution to as many people as possible. On this basis we want to build the broadest campaign of solidarity possible. We call on all governments to follow the example set by Cuba and send humanitarian aid. Cuba has come under fire from imperialism for its energetic role in providing material aid

and politically defending the revolution in Nicaragua. Therefore, defense of the Cuban revolution is linked up with a campaign to defend the Nicaraguan revolution.

Young people should unite in every country to build such a campaign. We pledge to work within the labor, student, and women's movements to obtain political and material aid for Nicaragua, and we call on all the organizations who speak on behalf of the workers, the youth, and the

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*This appeal was issued by the representatives of youth organizations attending the world congress of the Fourth International.*

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peasants to build a united front to defend the Nicaraguan revolution in every country.

We call on all youth organizations around the world to work together in such a solidarity campaign. The youth of Nicaragua are showing the way to liberate the oppressed from the heel of tyranny and social injustice. In return, youth everywhere who want to fight for the future of humanity must come to the aid and defense of this revolution.

Socialistische Jonge Wacht (Belgium)  
Young Socialist Alliance (United States)  
Young Socialist Group (Hong Kong)  
Socialist Youth Alliance (Australia)  
Communist Youth League (Japan)  
Young Socialists (New Zealand)  
Jeunesses Communistes Révolutionnaires (France)  
Juventud Comunista Revolucionaria (Spain)

# Building Revolutionary Youth Organizations

by Margaret Jayko

On the first two evenings of this World Congress, comrades from youth groups, sections, and sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International met to discuss our youth work.

Of particular importance were our tasks in relation to defense of the Nicaraguan revolution, and the decision of this world congress to turn the membership of the sections of the Fourth International toward the growing political openings in the industrial working class. Youth organizations were invited to send observers to the past two World Congresses, but this is the first time organized meetings have been held during a Congress to exchange ideas and experiences. We hope to have another youth gathering at the time of the next meeting of the International Executive Committee.

The aim of this report is to present to all the delegates and observers at the Congress an account of our discussions.

The purpose of our meeting, in addition to exchanging experiences, was to help prepare a discussion on youth work for a future United Secretariat meeting. The goal is for the International to move toward drafting a new resolution to build on and update the document on the worldwide youth radicalization that was discussed at the 1969 World Congress.\*

Comrades from about twenty countries attended the meeting.

In ten countries there are Trotskyist youth groups associated with sections or sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International. They are: the Young Socialist Group of Hong Kong, the Japan Communist Youth, the Young Socialists of New Zealand, the Socialist Youth Alliance of Australia, the Young Socialist Alliance of the United States, the Vanguard Youth of

Martinique, the Revolutionary Communist Youth of Spain, the Revolutionary Communist Youth of France, and the Young Socialist Guard from the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium.

In Great Britain, there are young people grouped around the paper *Revolution*, which is put out by the International Marxist Group. The IMG is organizing a conference of these young people to draw up a political program as the basis for an independent youth organization.

In addition, comrades in several other countries are discussing setting up youth groups. In Peru, Italy, and Sweden, for example, the sections publish a youth paper. And the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS) is seriously discussing setting up a youth group.

The capacity of the Fourth International to relate to the needs and interests of young people particularly young workers, and to recruit them is key to our ability to build proletarian parties. This is true in every country.

## Conditions Facing Youth

In our meetings, we did not attempt to have a comprehensive discussion on the objective situation facing youth today, or the big changes that have taken place since 1969, when we last drafted an international youth document. We felt that was a discussion that should be prepared and carried out in the entire international.

We were able to make some obvious generalizations to aid us in discussing our work today, however.

The first thing we noted is that especially since the worldwide recession of 1974-75, the austerity drive of the ruling classes has hit young people very hard. Everywhere there is skyrocketing youth unemployment, cutbacks in education, and an erosion of our democratic rights.

But the second generalization we made is that there is resistance to these ruling-class attacks, with the current extent and tempo varying from country to country. This resistance, both inside and outside the trade unions, is bringing forward a

layer of young militants who are leading many of today's struggles by workers and their allies.

We can see this most clearly in Iran and Nicaragua, but it's not limited to countries where revolutions are under way. The struggles to rid the world of nuclear power; to win abortion rights for women; against the construction of the Narita airport in Japan; for union recognition in Newport News, Virginia, in the United States— young people are in the forefront of all these battles.

The last trend we noted is the wretched

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*This report from a meeting of representatives of youth organizations attending the world congress of the Fourth International was for the information of the delegates. No vote was taken.*

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default in defending the interests of youth by the current leaderships of the trade unions and mass reformist workers parties. Comrades from Italy and Spain emphasized the disaffection of many young people from these organizations because of their refusal to champion the demands and concerns of youth or any other section of the oppressed and exploited.

## Opportunities for the Fourth International

These three factors indicate that tremendous opportunities exist right now for the Fourth International to recruit young fighters to our ranks. By and large, it is in the countries where we already have youth groups that we have best been able to take advantage of these opportunities.

We began our discussion with some of the important political questions involved in building youth groups.

\*That document, "Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International," is available as a pamphlet under the title, *A Strategy for Revolutionary Youth* (Pathfinder Press, New York, \$.50) or in the special 1969 World Congress issue of *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 7, No. 26, July 14, 1969.

We discussed why the revolutionary socialist youth movement needs youth groups that are organizationally *independent*. Liebknecht, Lenin, and Trotsky all believed that the formation of independent youth groups is an irreplaceable aid to forging proletarian parties.

There's a period in everyone's life when we are young. That's a biological fact—whether every comrade personally remembers it or not! As Lenin put it, youth is a temporary condition that *everyone* passes through.

Each generation comes to socialism by its own road—a road many older people may not understand. They grew up in a different period and were affected by different conditions.

Young people need to talk politics with our peers and go through our own successes and mistakes. That's how we best gain confidence and experience. It comes from having our own organization.

Young people are generally less settled, more footloose, more energetic, and more open to change. We're less experienced, but we're also less apt to be prejudiced, jaded, or worn out. Young people, who are just finding out about the world, are the most likely to be rebellious and attracted to revolutionary ideas and social movements. This has been true throughout history.

A revolutionary youth organization helps the socialist movement maximize the chances of winning young people just when we are deciding what to do with our lives—before we've become more set in our ways.

The very function of a separate youth group means that its norms and atmosphere will be different in significant ways from that of the party. Joining a youth organization should be less of a big step than joining the party, requiring less commitment; one of the aims of the youth group is to educate and instill commitment to the revolutionary movement. It is a training ground for party cadres.

A youth organization has to have an activist atmosphere, a campaigning spirit, and a flexible approach to each new recruit and his or her particular concerns. It has to have a well organized program of social activities where members get to know each other, talk politics, and draw around new people.

To illustrate these points, the Australian comrades talked about their experiences in recruiting and integrating high school youth and young workers just out of high school.

Of course, one of the most important tasks of a youth organization is systematic Marxist education. And we have to be creative in thinking of ways of doing this and motivating members to read and study on their own.

The particular oppression and exploitation of youth becomes more and more acute as capitalism prolongs its death agony. Youth groups are indispensable in

orienting sections to intervene in the struggles of youth and in helping them to win the best young militants to our banner.

#### Party and Youth Relations

As a training ground for young socialists, youth groups also serve another function. They allow our movement to recruit young people when they are first ready to join a socialist organization, without having to lower the standards of membership and norms of functioning of sections.

We felt that our youth groups should have a Trotskyist program and be in political solidarity with the Fourth International and its national section in their country. This is merely the application today of Lenin's conception that youth groups should be organizationally independent, but politically subordinate, to the party.

Our aim is to build simultaneously a revolutionary youth movement and party on the same program, each one strengthening the other, but always with the strategic goal of constructing the mass proletarian party needed to lead our class to victory. This indissoluble link to the party helps give the youth groups stability. Without such a conception, the youth groups could not politically educate their members and chart a correct political course.

But it is impossible to have this kind of united movement without the closest collaboration on both the local and national level between the party and the youth. I think it's accurate to say that this was the biggest question on the minds of many of the youth representatives. Without exception, in every country, the biggest problems facing the youth organizations were closely linked to a lack of sufficient collaboration with the local and national leaderships of the sections.

The Revolutionary Communist Youth of Spain has gotten significantly smaller than it was at its founding. The Spanish comrades explained that the lack of political direction and help from the party has been a factor in this. The comrades have had a deepgoing political discussion reaffirming the absolute necessity of close collaboration with the party.

The comrade from the Belgian Young Socialist Guard explained their problems in figuring out what political campaigns to organize, as well as some of their organizational problems. They stressed that much of this confusion stemmed from the party not politically leading on the youth work.

The comrade from the Japan Communist Youth explained that in the last few years, they had recruited many new members. They now face a big task in educating and integrating these militants. This can only be accomplished with the aid of more experienced comrades from the section there.

This question of party-youth collaboration has also been at the center of the recent discussions in the Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party. The

YSA is convinced that among the biggest benefits of our turn to industry will be a reknitting of close political collaboration with the party. This had tended to break down over the past several years, with bad results for both the YSA and SWP.

#### Young Industrial Workers

Another central question facing our youth groups has also been at the heart of the discussions at this World Congress. What should be the main arena for our youth work? Toward what milieus should we be directing our propaganda? On which layer of youth should small organizations such as ours focus our attention in order to make the biggest impact?

There's general agreement that the radicalization today is no longer centered on the college campuses. In most countries there has been a real decline in the student movement.

Of course, there is much fruitful political work to be done on the campuses. It's important for the Fourth International to participate in these political activities and to link up the struggles and concerns of students with those of the working class. The revolution in Iran has shown that a big rise in the overall class struggle sets large numbers of students in motion as an important ally of the workers and farmers.

During this past year, the youth groups in New Zealand and the United States decided to get a majority of their members into basic industry. Several other youth groups are beginning to discuss how to relate to young workers, particularly young industrial workers.

During the discussions here, the Young Socialist Alliance of the United States explained why its National Committee voted in May to begin leading the big majority of its members into industry.

The YSA's turn was a timely response to an opportunity that hasn't existed since the YSA was founded twenty years ago—the opportunity to become a youth organization with a working-class composition that can center its political work among our generation in the working class. Making this turn puts the YSA in the best position not only to recruit young workers, but also high school and unemployed youth. The YSA's industrial base makes it an attractive alternative to revolutionary-minded college students and enhances its ability to recruit them to a working-class perspective.

Being rooted in industry today puts us in the best possible position to get industrial unions involved in the fight against nuclear power, the struggle for jobs for youth at decent wages, the campaign against anti-abortion laws, the fight to defend the right to an education, and so on. From this base, we can reach out to all other layers of youth and play a key role in fighting to bring union power behind their struggles.

#### Solidarity with Nicaragua

In our discussions we decided that solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution



should be a central campaign of every youth group.

The Nicaraguan revolution will be an inspiration to our generation. It will help radicalize a whole layer of young people, as the Cuban revolution did two decades ago.

This is *our* revolution. We fully identify with it. And want to be identified with it.

Our aim is to reach every young person we can to tell them about what happened in Nicaragua and why they have a stake in supporting and defending the revolution.

This revolution has an added special significance for our youth organizations. It was the most youthful revolution ever. Thousands of children and other young people were slaughtered by Somoza and his National Guard. Young Sandinistas participated arms in hand in making the revolution, and they are playing an indispensable role today in defending it and in reconstructing Nicaragua.

The young fighters of Nicaragua have given us another important example we can point to in explaining to young people all over the world that revolutions *do* happen, and the necessity of young people getting involved in the struggle for a better world.

We saw our solidarity tasks as two-fold: (1) getting out the truth about what's happening in Nicaragua; and (2) helping to get as much material aid as possible sent to Nicaragua.

We've drawn up an appeal to all youth organizations from the youth of the Fourth International urging them to work to-

gether with us on this kind of campaign. We can use this appeal to carry out solidarity work in our respective countries.

We also plan to send a copy of the appeal to the FSLN and their youth group, the July 19 Sandinista Youth. We want them to know the young militants of the Fourth International stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them in their struggle to move the revolution forward.

In the September 15 issue of *Barricada*, the daily newspaper of the FSLN, there was an article entitled, "It's Not Possible To Speak of the Vanguard Without Speaking of the Youth." In that article, German Ruiz, a member of the Provisional Committee of the July 19 Sandinista Youth, said that among the groups with whom they had established friendly and fraternal relations was the Young Socialist Alliance of the United States. We hope to deepen fraternal relations between the Sandinista youth and all the youth groups of the Fourth International.

The French JCR is on a campaign to collect 50,000 francs for the literacy campaign in Nicaragua. In Australia, we're working with a Nicaragua solidarity committee to get a trade-union delegation to visit Nicaragua.

#### International Youth Collaboration

The last point we discussed is how to step up and systematize collaboration between the youth groups. In the past, there's been very little communication among the different groups. This is especially unfortunate given the newness of

most of the groups. There is a great deal we could all be learning from each other as we think out many of the same questions.

We think that at this stage, our world movement's youth work must be better coordinated internationally through the leadership bodies of the Fourth International, in collaboration with the leaderships of the existing youth organizations. All of us eagerly look toward the day when we will have a youth international. But this is not yet on the agenda.

We want youth groups and sections to be more conscious of exchanging information, sending each other our newspapers, discussion bulletins, minutes.

We want to try to attend each other's congresses. We want to interview each other's leaders for our newspapers and cover the activities of comrades in other countries.

The YSA of the United States has just published an International Youth Information Bulletin in English. It contains contributions on youth work from comrades in the United States, Britain, Holland, New Zealand, Spain, and France. Reading these contributions will be a valuable aid in thinking out our tasks.

Finally, I think that the two discussions here marked a real step forward. We were able to exchange experiences and learn from each other. And we helped lay the basis for a political discussion in the Fourth International on how our movement can win young militants today, and transform them into revolutionary cadre who will lead the working class to power tomorrow.



Student demonstrators in Soweto, South Africa, in 1976.

# Resolutions on Nicaragua



Mass rally in Managua in first weeks following Sandinista victory.

## Revolution on the March

1. The revolutionary overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship in July 1979 opened the road of socialist revolution in Central America. It was the most serious blow to American imperialism in Latin America since the upsurge of the Cuban revolution in 1959.

The Pentagon considers the entire area contained within a radius starting from Florida, going through the Caribbean, Cuba (with the Guantánamo base), Puerto Rico, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Central America including Nicaragua, and ending at the southern tip of the Panama Canal, as a special preserve.

After the victory of the Cuban revolution, moreover, American imperialism tightened its grip over this region, especially in Central America. The military dictatorships were more and more closely integrated on the military and political plane, into the counterrevolutionary imperialist system. In 1961, the invaders of Cuba, who suffered a stinging defeat at the Bay of Pigs, started out from Somoza's Nicaragua. The anti-Cuban press campaign was then organized by the Inter-american Press Association, whose vice-president was none other than Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, leader of the bourgeois opposition to Somoza.

The revolution broke out in Nicaragua at a time when the crisis of the dictatorial regimes was intensifying in Central America, especially in El Salvador.

The victory of the Nicaraguan masses, led by the Sandinist National Liberation Front (FSLN), over the Somoza regime has a great power of attraction for the workers, peasants, and revolutionists throughout Latin America. The wiping out of the Somozaist regime is part of a new upsurge of activity by the working masses on the continent, as shown by the working-class and mass mobilizations of 1977 in Colombia, the working-class upsurge in Brazil in 1978 and 1979, the general strike and political radicalization expressed in the vote received by the FOCEP slate in the

1978 elections in Peru, the struggles and general strike in Bolivia in 1979, the intensification of the working-class resistance in Argentina, the uprising of the people of Grenada in 1979.

The imperialist strategists and politicians will do everything possible to contain and crush the revolution on the march in Nicaragua.

2. The death agony of Somozaism was extended for nearly two years. Beginning in September 1977, guerrilla actions, strikes, demonstrations, and urban uprisings progressively multiplied and culminated in a popular insurrection extending over one-and-a-half months.

This activity of the mass movement, its degree of organization, and its goals, bore witness to its tendency to assert its independent role and not subordinate itself to the class needs of the opposition bourgeoisie. The latter focused all its energy on finding a negotiated solution to the crisis of Somozaism, in order to ensure—beyond a few changes—the continuity of the state structures, above all the National Guard (GN).

The Somozaist state was largely the creation of American imperialism. Militarily present in Nicaragua since 1911, the United States in 1933 placed Anastasio Somoza García at the head of the GN. In 1936, through a power play ratified by phony elections, he became president.

The origin of Somozaism as a regime imposed and backed to the hilt by the United States, was an important factor in the combining of the antidictatorial and anti-imperialist struggles that took place immediately in any opposition movement having sufficient breadth.

In an attempt to strengthen its legitimacy, the dictatorship conceded the right of existence to a bourgeois opposition party, the Conservative Party. The strict control over the state apparatus, the GN and the Liberal Party by the Somoza family gave this two-party system its real content. The dictatorship had to resort to

rigged elections (1957 and 1967), constitutional maneuvers (1953), a state of siege (1974-77) and fierce repression to try to respond to the festering crisis of its system of domination.

The opposition bourgeoisie gained a stronger economic position during the 1960s. It benefited from the process of economic integration of Central America (the Central American Common Market) that favored the development of agro-exporting and industrial sectors. Whole bourgeois groups broadened their bases in industry, agribusiness, and banking. They

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*This resolution was submitted by a majority of the United Secretariat. The vote of delegates and fraternal observers was: 66.5 for, 35 against, 10 abstentions, 1.5 not voting.*

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opposed the Somoza family and its allies who acted as "disloyal" competitors. However, they needed the regime's armed might to ensure the general conditions for superexploitation of the workers and agricultural laborers and to counteract the military offensives of the FSLN.

The state of siege instituted in December 1974, after the capture by the FSLN of many of the regime's dignitaries, intensified the interbourgeois crisis, already stimulated by the dictatorship's inability to respond to the problems created by the terrible earthquake in 1972 and by the many swindles that the dictator engaged in at that time. The state of siege enabled the bourgeoisie as a whole to break the strike wave (in the building and hospitals sectors in 1973-74). In this way, it was useful to the bourgeoisie, enabling it to

carry out the structural transformations made necessary by the international capitalist recession. But emergency laws and military tribunals were exploited in a unilateral way by the Somozaist clique to monopolize speculative operations and get their hands on the most profitable deals. This far too unequal game could not continue in a climate of more and more open economic crisis.

No oppositionist could be considered safe from a repression whose ferocity stripped the regime of any element of legitimacy, while at the same time legitimizing the use of *armed struggle* by the masses as a component of political action. The opposition bourgeoisie had to take its distances more clearly and call for the departure of the dictator. In September 1977, the Somozaist regime was politically isolated on the national level, and its decline on the international level was accelerating.

3. From the end of 1977 to the end of 1978, the different factions of the opposition bourgeoisie sought in vain to take the leadership of the mass movement, while multiplying the initiatives aimed at obtaining the departure of Somoza and those close to him.

On January 10, 1978, the assassination by the Somozaists of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro Cardenal, owner of the big daily *La Prensa*, unleashed a cumulative process. The opposition bourgeoisie and imperialism were deprived of an alternative leadership to Somoza having a following among broad layers of the petty bourgeoisie and even among the popular masses. Chamorro, since 1974, had united significant sectors of the bourgeoisie within the Democratic Union for Liberation (UDEL). As the head of *La Prensa*, he had forged a reputation as a resolute oppositionist. His disappearance intensified the interbourgeois crisis and made the containment of the mass movement a more awkward matter.

On January 24, the UDEL issued a call for an "employers' strike," which paralyzed a big part of the economy. Under this pressure, the Conservative Party broke the pact with the Liberal Party. Despite the repression, street demonstrations developed in Matagalpa and Managua, where the FSLN's political presence was strong. The armed actions of the FSLN took on a new dimension at the beginning of February, with the attack on the National Guard barracks in the cities of Granada and Rivas.

When the UDEL suspended the "employers' strike" on February 6, the attempt by the trade-union leaderships to turn it into a strike by workers failed. This revealed the relationship of forces that shaped the opposition movement at that stage. But two weeks later, the popular uprisings of Monimbó (a district of Masaya) and Subtiava (a district of León) already foreshadowed the insurrectional dynamic that

characterized the final phase of the struggle against the dictatorship. The prerevolutionary crisis was intensifying.

Under the spur of the activity of the masses and the growing prestige of the FSLN, the opposition bourgeoisie reorganized its forces and sought again to negotiate the dictator's departure. In July 1978, the Broad Opposition Front (FAO), which included, among others, the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) of Alfonso Robelo Callejas, the UDEL, and the Group of Twelve (figures connected with industry, commerce, and the liberal professions) was created. The Group of Twelve had ties with a current in the FSLN, the "tercerista" tendency. It saw armed struggle as the surest way of forcing Somoza out, and favored the setting up of a government including the FSLN. The two factions of the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), a Stalinist party, also participated in the FAO. The Catholic church also came out openly in favor of Somoza's resignation.

But the resistance by Somoza—who made use of the relative autonomy he enjoyed as a result of several decades of domination over the state apparatus, the army, and a part of the country's economy—put the bourgeois opposition in a difficult position. This was especially true inasmuch as the FSLN's armed actions—especially the spectacular occupation of the National Palace on August 22-24 which ended in the release of the FSLN prisoners—made it, in the eyes of the masses, the only pole clearly situated outside the negotiations for the succession to the regime and determined to have a showdown with Somoza.

The FAO, with its back to the wall, issued a new call for the shutdown of all economic activity on August 25. The industrialists' association—in contrast to the protest strike in March called by the UDEL—went along with the movement. Its consequences were threefold: the economic crisis deepened and the workers were the first ones to pay for it, which intensified the class division within the anti-Somoza front; the mass movement displayed growing independence from the bourgeois leadership in comparison with the "bosses' strike" in January; with this momentum, the FSLN launched its military offensive of September 9 in the cities of León, Estelí, Masaya, Chinandega, and others, where popular uprisings culminated in a takeover of those areas by the population.

The counterattack by the GN was sharp and brutal; its military victory was confirmed by the end of September. It launched a real massacre against the youth and all who were suspected of sympathy for the Sandinistas. But the FSLN forces were not liquidated. They swelled under the influx of hundreds of youth who joined their fight to escape the repression and to avenge those who had fallen. The mass insurrection combined with armed struggle appeared to all currents of the

FSLN and to broad sectors of the masses as the road to follow to get rid of the tyranny.

Somoza had won a military battle, but politically, he came out of it weakened and very isolated on the international level. The opposition bourgeoisie tried to use this weakness, as well as the temporary retreat of the masses, to again engage in a final negotiation to establish what the FSLN described as "Somozaism without Somoza."

Under the aegis of a mediation panel—on which the United States was flanked by Guatemala and the Dominican Republic—the FAO began the "dialogue" with the dictatorship.

The direct intervention of American imperialism in these negotiations in October 1978 led the "tercerista" tendency of the FSLN to take the step of rejecting mediation and breaking its ties with the FAO. It was followed by the Group of Twelve. This narrowed the FAO's negotiating capacity. The "dialogue" with the dictatorship failed in mid-January 1979, despite the numerous concessions made by the FAO.

A new stage in the organization of the anti-Somoza front opened after this break. The National Patriotic Front (FPN) was formed. The bourgeois leadership of the anti-Somoza front lost ground. United within the FPN were some minor bourgeois formations, the Group of Twelve, the United People's Movement (MPU), which encompassed various mass organizations, often influenced by the FSLN, and, significantly, the trade-union federations. On January 10, 1979, the first anniversary of the Chamorro assassination, tens of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of Managua at the call of the FPN. In the afternoon, the workers went out on strike until the end of the day.

Three changes underlay this new phase of the struggle: first, the FPN's goals more directly took up the demands of the popular masses who were hit by the crisis and for the first time demanded expropriation of the Somoza clique's assets, as well as the dissolution of the National Guard; second, the political organization of the mass movement by the FSLN was consolidated with the formation of the MPU, and thus prepared the way for the organization of popular committees; third, the convergence between the different tendencies in the FSLN was made easier after the break by the "terceristas" with the FAO. The movement against Somoza again combined in an inseparable way the antidictatorial and anti-imperialist fight. The conditions for generalized insurrection were ripening.

4. The revolutionary overthrow of the Somoza regime by a general strike that was transformed into an insurrection in the country's main cities was prepared for and preceded by an overall military offensive launched by the FSLN.

The social forces that supported and



participated in this heroic battle against imperialism and the dictatorship were concentrated in the semiproletarianized masses in the cities, the proletariat, the agricultural proletariat, the semiproletarianized and pauperized peasantry, and sections of the radicalized petty bourgeoisie (the student movement and women's movement, organized in AMPRONAC—Association of Women Concerned With the National Problem). A big part of these forces were represented and organized in the organizations that were grouped under the emblem of the MPU.

The penetration of imperialist and local capital into the countryside during the last two decades, and the growth of an agribusiness sector—based on the raising and exportation of cotton, coffee, sugar, and meat—had a twofold consequence: on the one hand, the expulsion of impoverished peasants from the countryside; on the other hand, the broadening of the ranks of the agricultural proletariat employed on the big modernized estates.

Industrial development was tied to agricultural exports (canning, food industries), to industries aimed at the Central American Common Market (textiles, pesticides, fertilizers, food), and to a new wave of imperialist investments (assembly or finishing plants, including the “free economic zone” in Managua, where 85 percent of the secondary activities were concentrated). The industrial proletariat, therefore, had been consolidated during the last few years, even if it remained relatively weak. The workers in the building industry (a sector that was heavily developed immediately after the 1972 earthquake) and in transportation represented a force of about 75,000 persons out of an economically active population bordering on 700,000 in 1978.

The urban population grew by 50 percent between 1970 and 1978. In that year, it rose to 1,265,000 persons, out of a total of 2,400,000. This reflected not only the growth of the proletariat, but also of the semiproletariat, underemployed or unemployed masses who clustered around the main cities. The central role of urban insurrections in the battle was directly related to these changes in the social structure.

The agricultural proletariat counted in its ranks about 300,000 workers, the major part of whom were in cotton-raising. It was subjected to temporary work in its great majority. Women and children formed a big share of this labor force, which migrated according to the rhythms imposed by the agricultural cycle. Ferociously exploited, these workers saw their meager wages taken back by their employers, who ran the shops where they bought necessities.

The degree of concentration of land ownership was very high: in 1972, 0.6 percent of the landowners—those owning 1,000 manzanas (670 hectares) or more—

monopolized 30.5 percent of the arable lands. Among these *latifundists*, the Somoza family occupied a chief place, owning 25 to 30 percent. At the other end of the spectrum, 50.8 percent of landowners, those owning less than 10 manzanas (6.7 hectares)—owned only 3.4 percent of the lands. Among them was a large section of very poor peasants, working their plots of land and forced to sell their labor power in order to survive. These figures also reveal the existence of a not insignificant intermediary layer of small peasants who were not as poor, and a layer of medium-sized landowners.

The economic crisis, which intensified after 1975, dealt a harsh blow to the working class, rural proletariat, and semiproletarianized small peasants, all of whom were already in a state of poverty that was one of the worst in Central America. The economic collapse in 1978-79, the disruption of the agricultural cycle as a result of the civil war, the devaluation of the cordoba by 43 percent in April 1979 which led to a burst of inflation—all of this made the life of the toiling masses unbearable. An ever-greater number—close to 50 percent of the economically active population in mid-1979—was doomed to unemployment. The urban petty bourgeoisie was also hard hit. Added to this was the massive repression, which was the government's only instrument after the breakdown in negotiations with the FAO. With their backs to the wall, the masses saw the overthrow of the tyranny as the only way to survive. Social polarization became acute.

In Nicaragua, the working class, like the agricultural proletariat and pauperized peasantry, did not have as long a tradition of organized struggles as they had in Cuba or Guatemala, for example. Nevertheless, in 1973-74, the trade-union movement made significant gains. In 1977, the formation of the Association of Rural Workers (ATC) marked a step forward in the organization of that social layer.

In the last months preceding the fall of the regime, land occupations, general strikes, and urban uprisings, along with military attacks on the cities by the FSLN and the activities of its guerrilla columns, reflected the combined entry into a head-on struggle against Somoza of these exploited and oppressed social layers, which were and are the motor force of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The two years of open combat against the dictatorship acted as a powerful stimulant to the development of the masses' level of consciousness. The process of self-organization in the form of neighborhood committees or self-defense organs put a distinctive stamp on the last ten months of the struggle. It was a factor in the unleashing of the dynamic of permanent revolution.

Sandinism gave an ideological and political coherence to the fight against the dictatorship. The power of the Nicaraguan

ruling classes was closely dependent on the wishes of American imperialism, and it appeared as such in the eyes of the masses. After the ouster of Santos Zelaya by the United States in 1909, no significant sector of the local oligarchy put up any resistance to American control. Thus, the military struggle of Augusto César Sandino against imperialism from 1927 to 1933 was identified with the struggle against the dictatorship installed by the “marines.” The anti-imperialist struggle, antidictatorship struggle, and armed struggle thus corresponded to a class division and encompassed the basic features of Sandinism, a revolutionary nationalism of petty-bourgeois origin, but with very deep roots among the masses.

5. The FSLN, at its founding in 1961 under the impact of the Cuban socialist revolution, was able to take hold of the tradition of this radical anti-imperialist movement for its struggle, which gave it a special profile in comparison with other armed struggle movements that arose at the same time. That is what explains its influence among the masses when they went into action.

In addition, the very origin of the dictatorship, the overwhelming role of the National Guard in the Somozaist apparatus, the regime's inability to broaden its social base and acquire legitimacy, and the impossibility for the petty bourgeoisie to find any niche whatsoever in this political system, created fertile ground for the FSLN's activity.

After the second half of the 1970s, all these factors came to the fore against a backdrop of economic crisis. This led in mid-1978 to the massive integration of young workers, poor peasants, agricultural workers, students and young unemployed into the FSLN's military actions. Women workers and students engaged in the battle in large numbers.

The division of the FSLN into three tendencies in 1975 (each of which had their own organization) revealed the sharpness of the debates over the forms of struggle against the dictatorship. However, their content reflected the maturing of the objective conditions favoring the fight to overthrow Somoza. These discussions centered on the relations between armed struggle and the mobilization of the masses, the respective role of the mobilization of the urban masses and those of the peasantry, the role and scope of the radicalization of sections of the petty bourgeoisie, the relations between military work and political work, and the function and importance of pacts with the opposition bourgeoisie.

Two tendencies claimed to be Marxist: the “prolonged people's war” tendency and the “proletarian (Marxist-Leninist)” tendency. The former, which based itself on the Chinese, but above all on the Vietnamese experience, anticipated a prolonged war of liberation that would be based on a heavy implantation in the rural areas and could thus deal decisive blows to the cities. The

latter put the emphasis on urban work, particularly in the working-class neighborhoods, and on implantation in the workers movement, student movement, and women's movement, as preparation for an urban insurrection combined with armed actions by the FSLN. It had the most reservations about a policy of alliances with the bourgeoisie, and did not spare its criticisms of the third tendency, the "terceristas." The latter represented the largest force numerically. They were the most active in terms of military actions, and also the most involved in relations with sectors of the bourgeoisie within the FAO. A section of their leadership had ties with the international Social Democracy.

None of the three tendencies expressed a clear understanding of the dynamic of permanent revolution that would be opened by the revolutionary overthrow of the dictatorship. Whereas some advocated the necessity of limiting the goals of the struggle to the establishment of a "bourgeois-democratic stage," others envisioned it simply as an intermediate passage on the road to the socialist revolution.

The political debate conducted by these tendencies favored the political maturing of the front as a whole.

An important transformation took place within the FSLN as a result of its unification in December 1978. According to the FSLN's joint declaration, it was intended to "guarantee that our people should not be dispossessed of their heroic struggle by the maneuvers of Yankee imperialism and sectors of the local bourgeoisie who are ready to sell out the fatherland."

As a result of the needs for organization stemming from the conduct of the civil war and popular insurrection, the structures of the former tendencies broke up, and the unification led to a fusion of the leading bodies of the former tendencies. The scope of the mass mobilizations, and the semi-spontaneous rise of committees and militias, stimulated the ideological evolution of the FSLN cadres leading this movement, whose impetuosity forced them to make continual readjustments. The collapse of the institutions of the Somozaist regime determined a revolutionary process that did not fit the preestablished schemas of the "democratic stage." The FSLN also underwent a profound transformation that made the old lines of cleavage obsolete in part.

The heroic history of the FSLN's uncompromising fight, its leading role in the first phase of the revolution, its ties with living forces of the revolution, and the lessons that this pragmatic and heterogeneous leadership has already drawn from this powerful upsurge of the class struggle, testify to the FSLN cadres' potential for political development.

6. At the end of May 1979, the FSLN launched a new wave of military attacks. It opened up several fronts, which tended to disperse the forces of the National

Guard and to weaken the control of the repressive apparatus over the cities.

On June 4, a general strike, this time called by the FSLN, paralyzed the entire country.

In the days that followed, insurrections broke out in the cities of Chinandega, León, Matagalpa, Estelí, Masaya, Granada, and Carazo.

In fact, the FSLN leadership had been carefully preparing for this insurrection since March. The Civil Defense Committees (CDCs) launched a political campaign to prepare the masses for the insurrection. In this way, it was responding to one of the weaknesses noted by the FSLN in September 1978. The CDCs were to make it possible to integrate growing sectors of the masses into the organization of the insurrection. The CDCs were to collect the material necessary for building barricades as well as various munitions (Molotov cocktails, explosives), form surveillance groups in the neighborhoods, set up clandestine dispensaries and clinics and procure medicines for them, establish operating centers and secret printshops with minimal printing equipment, provide links with the FSLN units and furnish them with supplies, and inform the FSLN about the movements of the National Guard and the activities of Somoza's followers. Workers Defense Committees (CDTs) arose in the plants, which were to take control of factories having a strategic importance, help manufacture weapons, try to control the means of communication, and establish ties between the workers and the neighborhood residents. Committees also arose on the large plantations.

A spontaneous insurrectionary movement broke out on June 10 in the main working-class neighborhoods of Managua. "Liberated zones" arose in the capital. The National Guard had to concentrate bigger forces there, which facilitated the FSLN's military operations on the various fronts and the advance of its troops from the northern front toward the capital. The people of Managua, with the youth in the front ranks, withstood an eighteen-day siege—against the aircraft, artillery, and armored tanks of the National Guard. Their courage and determination enabled them to resist despite the weakness of their weaponry. On June 28, the FSLN organized an orderly retreat by 6,000 persons to Masaya, a city twenty-eight kilometers away. This was an outstanding proof of the authority and prestige of the FSLN among the toiling population and the residents of the working-class neighborhoods, as well as their high degree of self-discipline.

On June 17, the Junta of the Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction (GRNN) was formed. This coalition government with sectors of the bourgeoisie essentially reflected the regroupment of forces that had taken place within the FPN. Its five members were Violeta de

Chamorro, widow of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro (leader of the UDEL), Sergio Ramírez Mercado (a member of the Group of Twelve), Alfonso Robelo Callejas (industrialist and founder of the MDN), Daniel Ortega (representing the FSLN), and Moises Hassan (representing the MPU).

On June 24, the OAS declared its opposition to Somoza, whose isolation within the country was symbolized by his "bunker." Internationally, he got support only from the dictatorships in Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. Israel was delivering weapons to him. Imperialism took some distance from Somoza but only with reluctance and hesitation. To enable Somoza to ferociously attack the workers and peasants remained a constant element of their policy, representing a necessary preparation for a smooth transition to a new bourgeois regime.

The national bourgeoisies of Venezuela, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Panama—with the consent of American imperialism—did everything possible so that the conduct of the civil war should not break the continuity of the state institutions, and so that a sector of the National Guard should fuse with the FSLN. In this perspective, they recognized the GRNN.

The civil war and the drive toward insurrection had a profound impact on the organization of the masses and on the armed forces of the FSLN. *Dual power took shape in Nicaragua.*

In the liberated cities, the CDCs became organs of people's power. They substituted themselves for the administrative structures of the Somozaist regime, which had broken up. They carried out multiple tasks connected with the distribution of food rations, the organization of medical care, the maintenance of order, neutralization of the Somozaists, and elementary municipal administration.

Popular militias were formed in the course of the insurrection—they also appeared in a few rural areas—and strengthened the FSLN's military potential, although they had only handmade weapons. While they arose spontaneously as a result of the need to resist the counterattacks of the National Guard, they were generally officered by FSLN members and placed themselves under the command of the Front. They appeared under various emblems: Popular Action Committees (CAPs), People's Revolutionary Commandos (CRPs), Revolutionary Youth Brigades (BRJs).

Finally, the FSLN's regular troops were strengthened.

On the northern and southern fronts, the FSLN forces more and more took on the features of a regular army, whose weaponry permitted a higher-level confrontation with the National Guard. The latter possessed a hard core of some 7,000 men, while forced recruitment since September 1978 had raised its number to 15,000. On

the other hand, the FSLN troops, armed with light artillery weapons, were only about 5,000 men, to which were added the few thousand fighters, often very young, from the cities. The synchronization of the urban insurrections, the fierce resistance of the population of the working-class neighborhoods of Managua, and the coordinated attacks by the FSLN on several fronts, more and more confined the National Guard, whose morale was collapsing, to the strict task of defending its barracks and the "bunker."

Somoza's flight on July 17 opened the final phase of the overthrow of the regime. The Somozaist Francisco Urcuyo, a deputy in the Congress, was to transfer power to the Junta of the GRNN. But above all, he was to make possible—according to American plans—a transition that would ensure a role for the National Guard, or at least an important section of it, in the military organization of the new regime. His appeals to the combatants to lay down their arms, and his declared wish to remain in office until the close of the 1981 presidential elections, provoked a sharp response from the FSLN, and brought down the house of cards known as "change amid continuity."

The FSLN launched a new military offensive to drive out Urcuyo. The population of Managua again rose up massively. Militia fighters and residents of the working-class neighborhoods seized control of the "bunker" and distributed the tens of thousands of weapons that they found there. The National Guard went to pieces. A large part fled with weapons and baggage to Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. The FSLN troops entered the capital and allowed the Junta of the GRNN to be established in Managua.

7. The FSLN inherited a devastated country. About 40,000 persons were killed during the civil war. The wounded numbered about 80,000. A part of the social infrastructure (schools, hospitals) was destroyed. The productive apparatus was heavily damaged and many enterprises had their activities disrupted. The agricultural production cycle was greatly hampered, which intensifies the shortage of food products. The shortage will further intensify during the first months of 1980; a million persons will have to be fed, 45 percent of whom are children under fifteen years old. Unemployment and underemployment were very high. They will further increase in January 1980, that is, at the end of the harvest period. The foreign debt of \$1.5 billion is a crushing burden, while the Somozaists left practically nothing in the state coffers.

The various decrees adopted by the Junta of the GRNN, in the course of the first three months of its existence, show the direction of the process of permanent revolution unleashed by the victorious popular insurrection.

- The total assets of Somoza and the

Somozaists were expropriated by July 20. They were located in sectors as diverse as the banks, industry, commerce, transportation, fishing, agriculture, real estate, harbor facilities, newspapers and the media.

- The banks and savings institutions were nationalized, and the operations of the imperialist banks are tightly controlled. This is a necessary first step in order to channel resources and direct them toward sectors such as education or hospitals, and institute economic planning measures. Nationalization of the insurance companies at the end of October further increased state control over the financial sector.

- On the monetary level, the withdrawal of 500- and 1,000-cordoba bills partially decapitalized the Somozaists, and dealt a blow to those whose speculative activities had benefited from the war period. All deposits no larger than 3,000 cordobas were returned. This measure also had an anti-inflationary function. At the end of October, this volume of currency began to be put into circulation.

- All of the mines, which essentially belonged to imperialist companies, were nationalized, which clearly reinforced the measures of control already taken over all of the country's natural resources.

- The bulk of overland transportation, as well as marine and air transportation, was nationalized.

- Television and a part of the radio stations were expropriated and serve as FSLN outlets. The printshop that used to publish Somoza's newspaper is now used to print *Barricada*, the FSLN daily.

- The agrarian reform was initiated with the state expropriation of the lands and estates belonging to the Somoza family, lands distributed by Somoza to his allies, properties abandoned by their owner, plantations having debts to financial institutions which enjoyed special privileges thanks to direct support from Somoza, and lands whose owners are under indictment for tax evasion. This already represents about 40 percent of the cultivable lands.

These lands were confiscated and placed under the control of the Nicaraguan Institute for Agrarian Reform (INRA). The INRA set up state farms and cooperatives (associated units) that work the land but cannot subdivide it. In addition, the INRA is providing incentives for the formation of production and marketing cooperatives by the small peasants. Plots of land were distributed when small peasants requested them. However, the INRA is not in favor of the type of "agrarian reform" which is demanded by sectors of the bourgeoisie. In addition, the government abolished the expropriation of small peasants for non-payment of debts.

- State enterprises were set up to sell basic agricultural products—cotton, coffee, sugar, meat, and fishing byproducts—on the domestic and foreign market. A state

enterprise (ENABAS) was put in charge of marketing cereal staples. The same goes for agrichemical products.

- The entire school system was restructured and free education was provided. A huge literacy campaign involving 700,000 persons is being prepared for the beginning of 1980. Illiteracy is widespread in Nicaragua, and is especially rampant among the entire rural population. All students above the sixth grade are being mobilized for the "literacy crusade." Schools will be closed for four months in order to enable maximum participation by teachers and students. Cuba is providing technical and material assistance as well as educators for this campaign, which is explicitly modeled on the Cuban experience at the beginning of the 1960s. Such a campaign can be an important instrument in winning over the poor peasants to the revolution.

- A unified health-care system was established to provide medical care throughout the country; vast sanitary campaigns were launched for the first time in Nicaraguan history. A social security system is being implemented. Initial steps have been taken to ensure the distribution of drinking water to the poorest neighborhoods and to provide them with elementary social infrastructures (nurseries, clinics).

- After forty-two years of dictatorship, the democratic rights of the masses were guaranteed—freedom of assembly, association, press, and speech. The participation by women in the struggle elicited measures favoring an equal status.

- A decree was adopted controlling prices on basic food commodities. The Sandinista Defense Committees (CDSs) can function as bodies to guarantee its implementation. A campaign was launched against speculation on food staples. Measures were taken by the government to rebuild houses in the devastated working-class neighborhoods, and state control was extended to dwellings built illegally.

- The Nicaraguan government took an anti-imperialist position on various questions (Middle East, South Africa, etc.) and showed determined opposition to the military maneuvers against Cuba in the Caribbean and in Central America. A demonstration of 30,000 persons was organized to greet Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong.

- After the coup d'état in El Salvador, the FSLN denounced this coup prepared by Washington.

The sum total of these measures, taken in a short period of time, dealt significant blows to the bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless, Somoza's holdings in the industrial domain were more limited than the traditional estimates indicated. Fideicomiso—the organization in charge of administering all of the expropriated property except for the lands—manages only a fairly small portion of all the industrial enterprises. Moreover, many



Ousted dictator Somoza left devastation in his wake.

Somoza enterprises were in deficit, and made a profit only as a result of the secret aid they got from the state. About 15,000 wage earners work in the various sectors controlled by Fideicomiso.

Nationalization of the banks enabled the state to acquire interests in many companies. However, it is estimated that the share of *industrial production* classified as under state control does not exceed 20 to 25 percent, including the mixed sector.

*Agricultural production* remains largely in the hands of the private sector—especially agricultural goods for export such as cotton, coffee—although it is true that about 40 percent of the cultivable lands belong to the INRA. Currently, out of an agriculturally-active population of 325,000 persons, only about 30,000 work in the sector placed directly under the control of INRA.

The economic strength of the ruling classes, therefore, remains great, greater than the FSLN leadership imagined when measures were taken to expropriate the Somozaists. The bourgeoisie has significant resources at its disposal to try to reestablish its positions on the political level.

In the short run, seeking to achieve a minimal restarting of private industrial enterprises and a recovery of agricultural production (harvesting, seeding, refraining from selling livestock outside the country)

on the big and medium-sized farms that are still in their owners' hands stems from an objective necessity.

However, this should not create illusions about the function that the bourgeoisie can fulfill in reconstructing the country in the interests of the working masses. But for several weeks, statements by the FSLN leadership have stressed the important and necessary role of the national private sector in the "reconstruction of Nicaragua" and the "strengthening of a national economy" to break the ties of dependency, the interdependence of the state, mixed, and private sectors, and the fact that sectors of the "democratic and progressive bourgeoisie" are "actually on the side of the revolution and should work for the revolution" (*Barricada*, November 3, 1979).

Moreover, any economic recovery of a certain scope within the framework of a "mixed economy," or any capitalist investment, will be made only if international loans, banking credits at not too high interest rates, and various guarantees (convertibility of currency, favorable exchange rates, free importation of raw materials, wage limits) are given to the capitalists. The bourgeoisie will not be satisfied with general promises.

Pushed to the wall by the acute social and economic crisis and by the constraints of the international environment, the leadership of the FSLN and the Junta of the

GRNN, in order to obtain participation of the private sector, are driven to give assurances to the bourgeoisie. Thus, Carlos Núñez, a Commander of the Revolution, explained on October 21, 1979 that credits would be allocated at favorable rates to the industrial, agricultural, and commercial sectors; that guarantees were being given concerning imports, provision of foreign exchange, and convertibility of the currency; that BID loans would also be used to aid the private sector; and that a wage plan would be implemented so that the wage demands stimulated by the organizational reinforcement of the working class should not go beyond a critical threshold that would endanger a recovery. Nevertheless, the FSLN is keeping the private sector under the threat of nationalization if it does not go along with the game.

In this stage of the revolutionary process, therefore, we are at a meeting-point between a series of economic measures that have struck the politically very weakened ruling classes, and short-term projects that, in order to meet the urgent needs created by the country's devastation, rely on the recovery of an economy whose current structure is divided into three spheres—private, mixed, and state-owned.

The foreign debt is a crushing burden. A big part of it, for the private as well as the state sector, consists of short- and medium-term loans. More than 50 percent of these

loans were contracted with private banking institutions under worse terms than those granted by the imperialist financial institutions. At present, the GRNN has declared that it does not recognize three categories of debts—those concerning the supplying of weapons by Israel and Argentina (three percent of the total debt); those contracted under terms that violate the traditional rules of international loans; and those made up of loans that fattened Somoza's foreign bank accounts. All of these exceptions somewhat reduce the volume of debt, but do not change the fundamental problem.

The Junta of the GRNN states that it is prepared to renegotiate the debt, but no important decision has been made for the time being. Moreover, a de facto moratorium exists, given the financial situation. The nature of the decisions to be adopted in the future will indicate the course that the FSLN leadership will take in this area.

8. The mass insurrection resulted in a high degree of self-organization. The social relationships of forces emerging from the victory are very largely in favor of the toiling masses. The bourgeoisie has lost all control over the armed forces. It is in this very favorable context that the activity and organization of the masses can develop.

The FSLN is now encouraging the creation and broadening of the CDSs. It is giving them a chief role in performing a number of tasks in the neighborhoods and at the municipal level. Delegates from the CDSs make up the Sandinista Neighborhood Committees. Representatives to the District Council are chosen from within the neighborhood committees. The same is true at the provincial level. Organization at the municipal and provincial level is still very uneven among the different regions.

The CDSs combine functions of administration, surveillance, organizing cultural and athletic activities, agitation, and political propaganda. They also represent the main organizations through which the political leadership of the FSLN is exercised on the local level.

The FSLN stimulated and led the formation of the Sandinist Workers Federation (CST). It initiated negotiations with the other, smaller trade-union federations with the goal of forming a single workers' federation. The movement for trade-union organization progressed rapidly after the victory, and the leadership of the FSLN supports this movement which helps consolidate a relationship of forces in favor of the workers.

Nevertheless, the FSLN's lack of traditions in trade-union work, and the shortage of experienced trade-union cadres, means that despite their political prestige, they are encountering difficulties in integrating layers of workers previously belonging to other trade unions, or unorganized, into the ranks of the CST. The FSLN is learning that more than political pres-

tige and authority are necessary in order to integrate workers formerly belonging to other trade unions into the CST, and that the attempts to dispense with political education and persuasion can only facilitate the efforts of the trade-union bureaucracies tied to the bourgeois political parties to divide the workers.

The deep decline of the productive forces—a result not only of the civil war but also of the crisis of the capitalist system worldwide since 1975—demands an effort to raise production and imposes fairly strict limits on satisfying the demands of the working masses. But the whole problem is whether this effort will serve to produce a surplus to be absorbed by capitalist accumulation—which is inevitably the case with the present structure of the Nicaraguan economy—or whether it will aid in the development of an economy in transition to socialism in which restrictive measures would not be aimed at one part of the population in order to favor another part, the private owners of the means of production.

Since October, the central role assigned to the trade unions in the battle for production has tended to introduce dangerous confusion as to the function of the trade-union organization in the present stage, especially since it is in addition to a policy of limiting wage increases.

In an economy where the private sector is still largely dominant, where labor power is a commodity, the trade-union organization must preserve its primary role of defending the workers as sellers of labor power, which is, moreover, an important element in the mobilization of the masses for the struggle to overthrow capitalism. Of course, in the state-owned sector, the trade-union organization can be an instrument for the development of experiences of workers management, but this should not lead to eliminating its independence from the state or its fundamental role, which is determined by the overall nature of the economy. It is in this way that the trade union can help the leadership of the revolution to become conscious of the new problems and to outline new tasks.

A gigantic effort to organize agricultural workers and small peasants has been made by the FSLN. They are organized in the Association of Rural Workers (ATC) which is fully participating in the development of the agrarian reform. The same ambiguity exists with regard to the role of the ATC as with regard to the CST in the present stage. If it persists, this could lead to a disorientation of the agricultural workers and poor peasants, hampering the preparation of the necessary battles for the expropriation of the agribusiness sectors, which the bulk of the economy depend on, and for the defense of their immediate interests.

Finally, the FSLN is organizing broad layers of youth and women within the "July 19 Sandinist Youth" and the "Asso-

ciation of Nicaraguan Women." In addition, teachers are organized in the ANDEN. These three organizations can be important levers of mass mobilization.

The confrontation with imperialism is what the leadership of the FSLN is feverishly preparing for. It has correctly devoted a big part of its energies to building an army—the Sandinista People's Army (EPS)—based first and foremost on the troops stemming from the guerrilla struggle, to which the popular militias have been integrated. Only a strong and efficient regular army can diminish the human cost of fighting back against direct or indirect intervention by imperialism and its local allies, who can count on the forces of the National Guard concentrated in Honduras, which have already launched some hit-and-run attacks.

The leadership of the FSLN states that the absorption of the popular militias into the EPS is aimed at consolidating it by giving priority to the integration of those who actually took up arms in the struggle against Somoza. It states its intention to set up popular militias in the future structured around production units and workplaces, and formed on a voluntary basis. For the time being, the FSLN is planning to form, at a later stage, a vanguard party rooted in the masses organized within the CDSs.

This vast effort to organize the working masses, youth, and women is tending to consolidate the class relationship of forces stemming from the revolutionary overthrow of the dictatorship.

Up to the present, the GRNN has not been seen by the workers and peasants as an obstacle to the revolution. At the initiative of the FSLN, it has taken or ratified a series of measures tending to weaken the economic and political power of the bourgeoisie. It is thus identified in the eyes of the masses with the gains of the revolution.

After the dismantling of the repressive bodies of the Somozaist state, the bourgeoisie can no longer dictate its will, while the worker and peasant alliance cannot yet take all power into its hands. The masses' level of consciousness is no longer merely molded by the democratic goals of the struggle against Somoza and imperialism. The masses' class consciousness increasingly bears the stamp of the anticapitalist mobilizations. The anticapitalist content of the revolution should deepen in the face of the test of the economic crisis, which cannot be resolved by seeking to conciliate antagonistic class interests.

In these conditions, the primary task which dominates all others remains the organization, education, and raising of the level of consciousness of the masses, to prepare for the outcome of this transitional situation.

It is legitimate that the Sandinista leadership should seek to buy time if that time is utilized to jointly build and consolidate the instruments of military and political



defense of the revolution. No ultraleft plunge can replace this necessary preparation, without which the masses would be the first victims of any attempt to precipitate a premature confrontation.

To make the mobilized masses conscious that these battles are inevitable, and to do so without adventuristically forcing the pace of the class struggle in its international context, is one of the most important and difficult tasks for the leadership of this revolution.

The FSLN leadership tends to use the position of strength it has acquired from its absolute control over the armed forces to try to control all of the social forces that have been set in motion by this revolution. However, those forces cannot be bent to the will either of a revolutionary leadership or of the bourgeoisie. The pace of radicalization will depend on the blows and counterblows between the masses and the exploiters.

Semispontaneous mobilizations of the workers and peasants, often going beyond the plans set by their leadership, will change the relationship of forces. Going beyond the government's measures, the masses, goaded by their most pressing needs and capitalist sabotage, will themselves take initiatives with respect to the land, factories, and housing. That is the historic lesson of all revolutions.

The strength of the FSLN rests not only on the EPS, but above all on the degree of mass organization and mobilization, which directly influences the role and evolution of that army. Any weakness in orientation in this area could be reflected in:

- An underestimation of the function of the semispontaneous mass mobilizations in changing the relationship of forces, and their role in the development of consciousness by sectors of the masses that lack a long tradition of organized struggles;

- A desire to control and prevent "out-flanking" and the conviction that the FSLN alone embodies the revolutionary process. (This has already led it to use administrative and repressive measures against the "ultralefts," who are placed in the category of "counterrevolutionaries" for this purpose.)

- An underestimation of the possibilities offered the bourgeoisie on the political level after a certain period due to their economic resources, and the idea that any alliance with a bourgeois sector can remain a mere maneuver, completely and easily controllable.

9. Imperialism will use all of its options to try to contain, halt, and violently disrupt the revolution in progress.

It still holds in reserve the possibility of direct military intervention, and can prepare it from neighboring countries by carrying out multiple acts of sabotage or forming a counterrevolutionary "guerrilla" force. The prospect of intervention itself

puts pressure on the FSLN to moderate its decisions.

In the present phase, the imperialist powers, above all American imperialism, are not trying to strangle the Nicaraguan revolution for fear of pushing it into a more radical course. They want to inject loans into Nicaragua to increase the value of the capitalist sector's role and function. The pressing need for food, financial, technical, and economic aid is also used as a means of pressure, because of the ever-present threat that food shortages and dramatic social problems will accumulate in the first six months of 1980 and provoke discontent that could weaken the mass support and authority enjoyed by the Sandinista leadership.

Imperialism has a pernicious weapon of intervention through the foreign debt. It is not seeking to precipitate events. It appears ready to accept a long-term restructuring plan and even a temporary moratorium. Its goal is to involve the GRNN in a real renegotiation of the debt that would imply, on the one hand, recognition of a number of obligations toward the international financial institutions, and, on the other hand, direct intervention by the IMF to one degree or another in the Nicaraguan economy.

This last maneuver, like the support given to industrial or agricultural exporting sectors, is aimed at maintaining ties with the capitalist world market. In this operation, the policy of some Latin American bourgeoisies—whatever their apparent or real conflicts with American imperialism in the short run—also function to persuade Nicaragua not to break its ties with the Latin American market and take the Cuban road. In the latter case, a test of strength with imperialism is inevitable.

The liquidation of the National Guard and dismemberment of the Somozaist state are not equivalent to the destruction and defeat of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie as a whole. The latter still possesses the bulk of the industrial means of production, a large share of the lands devoted to cash crops (cotton, coffee), and livestock.

A section of the bourgeoisie enjoys a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of a part of the population, for it was an integral part of the struggle against Somoza. That is also the case for a sector of the religious hierarchy, for example, the archbishop of Managua, Miguel Obando y Bravo.

It is using this legitimacy and its economic power to negotiate its "participation in the process." This formula reflects the choice made by those who see in it the best way to control the course of the revolution, that is, to lead it into the rut of a "mixed economy."

However, the reactions within the bourgeois class are differentiated; an investment strike and sabotage are also favored. It is exploiting to the hilt its ties with imperialism and the Latin American bourgeoisies. Thus, the Superior Council of Private Enterprise is making multiple

entreaties for support from its sister organizations in Latin America and for large loans from the imperialist financial institutions, with the goal of strengthening its bargaining power in the framework of "national reconstruction."

The bourgeoisie is seeking to politically exploit its participation in the government, which the FSLN granted it in the name of a temporary alliance with a bourgeois sector. It is holding it up to the world bourgeoisie as the guarantee that "democracy" and private property will be respected in Nicaragua. Its presence in the government constitutes an implicit veto power over a series of radical anticapitalist measures; their adoption would immediately be followed by a break in its participation in the government and the Central Bank. Therefore, a very harsh battle would immediately ensue at the international as well as national level. The Nicaraguan bourgeoisie is thus trying to repeat in peacetime the experience of the FAO and even the FPN, which failed in wartime owing to the mass insurrection and the breakup of the National Guard.

Any plan to consolidate a bourgeois state is made more difficult to concretize owing to the dislocation of the old army and its replacement by the FSLN troops. To compensate for this weakness, the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, in concert with the bourgeoisies of various Latin American countries, will try to apply pressure in order to "regularize" the Sandinist People's Army, at the slightest sign of an ebb in the mass mobilizations.

Plantation owners and industrialists are seeking to form ties with the petty bourgeoisie in order to consolidate their social base of support and be able to negotiate or fight back under better conditions.

The political offensive of the bourgeoisie is focused on one point—actual implementation of the "Fundamental Statute of the Republic," which reflects the agreements made in June 1979. For the bourgeoisie, it is a matter of making the country's legal institutions the only real decision-making centers. It is calling for the convening of the Council of State, which, according to the GRNN's program, was supposed to draft a constitution and electoral law, and could veto the Junta's decisions by a two-thirds majority. It is demanding that the Supreme Court assert its power. It has already launched the issue of free elections and a constituent assembly. Institutionalization and the fight for "free elections" represent the classic blows of the bourgeois-democratic counterrevolution.

The FSLN postponed the convening of the Council of State until May 1980. It stresses the need to change the composition of that body to increase the representation of the mass organizations, to the detriment of the most conservative sectors of the bourgeoisie. Nonetheless, it states that "the fatherland more than ever needs its children and the united action of the entire nation—workers, peasants, the petty

bourgeoisie, and the democratic, progressive sectors of the bourgeoisie.”

10. Although greatly dismembered, a bourgeois state persists, with its fundamental laws that protect private ownership of the means of production (land property, industry), hence capitalist accumulation.

The special situation of dual power stemming from the revolutionary overthrow of the Somozaist dictatorship is the result of the combination of the two most characteristic elements of the beginning of this revolution—first, a prolonged mass insurrection in the country's main urban centers and a military victory by the armed forces of the FSLN; second, the shattering of the National Guard and repressive forces around which the entire organization of the Somozaist state power was structured.

The ruling classes, without control over the repressive apparatus, nevertheless have various centers of power at their disposal, based mainly on their economic strength. They are counterposed to the mass centers of power formed in the course and in the wake of the victory.

The bourgeoisie controls economic institutions (Higher Council on Industry, Chamber of Commerce, etc.) supported by imperialism and the Latin American bourgeoisies. The landowners' networks of *caciques* continue to exist in the countryside, although weakened. The representatives of big business are present in the Junta, the ministries—above all the economic ministries—in the civil administrative apparatus, and in the Central Bank. Through this medium, they have control over the decision-making mechanisms and running implementation of those decisions.

The Catholic church hierarchy supports the bourgeoisie. Some bourgeois parties, like the MDN, are present in the government. Other bourgeois sectors are trying to rebuild “new” political parties—the Social Democratic Party, Social Christian Party, and Democratic Conservatives.

Pitted against this bourgeois camp are the CDSs, the mass organizations such as the CST, ATC, July 19 Sandinista Youth, the Association of Nicaraguan Women, and the ANDEN. Finally, and especially, the leadership of the FSLN totally controls the *Sandinist People's Army*, the direct outgrowth of the FSLN's revolutionary armed struggle and of the insurrectionary upsurge of the urban masses and poor peasants. On this basis, and in the framework of the current relationship of forces between the classes, the FSLN currently holds decision-making power over the strategic political questions.

Thus, the special nature of this situation of dual power is reflected on one side by the nonexistence of a centralized executive power of the bourgeoisie within a government (whatever its limited decision-making capacities), which is generally the

case in situations of dual power. On the other side, while the emerging popular power does not have a real centralized expression, the degree of FSLN control over the real executive power is directly related to the role occupied by the EPS in the organization of the state. This is reflected, moreover, in the form of a contradiction between the legal norms of the state apparatus and the actual power residing in the EPS command, which blends with the FSLN leadership.

This organization developed an anti-imperialist and antidictatorial orientation under the influence of the Cuban revolution. Marxist currents arose within it. Socially and politically heterogeneous, it underwent a transformation under the impact of the revolutionary mass upsurge that in turn impelled it to take conscious steps to mobilize the masses. This evolution was reflected in a growing integration and implantation of the FSLN among the working masses, as well as by the growth of the tendencies claiming to be Marxist.

The present phase of the revolution poses new problems and new choices to this organization which is still heterogeneous. It can only stimulate debates and differentiations within it. Sectors of the Nicaraguan and Latin American bourgeoisies, and even of imperialism, will seek to provoke splits on the right in order to exploit them, contain the revolution, and prevent its growing over into a socialist revolution. The place, role, and nature of the GRNN, a coalition government between the FSLN and a sector of the bourgeoisie, must be grasped in the context of this transitional phase.

The two poles of power are reflected within the government, and partly within the FSLN. They are intertwined in the various decision-making bodies of the state apparatus (ministries, Central Bank, organizations of economic management in the nationalized sector, etc.). For example, the personnel of the Central Bank, like its management, are still mainly in the hands of representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie and of the technocrats. On the other hand, the INRA, established by the FSLN, constitutes in itself a kind of miniature government directly under its control, which strips the Ministry of Agriculture of its content. The bourgeoisie will try to reestablish its political positions by exploiting its presence in the state apparatus and government.

Such a situation cannot last very long: it must find a solution. It can lead either to the course followed by the Algerian revolution or the path traced by the Cuban revolution. Any new advance for the revolution will necessitate a breakup—in one form or another—of the governmental coalition, and, in that sense, will lead to a situation similar to that which the Cuban revolution went through between June and October 1959.

This fundamentally depends on the dia-

lectic that is established among the mass movement, the degree of its organization, the initiatives taken by the FSLN, and the FSLN's own political evolution, that is, on the political hegemony gained by those currents within it that have the most ties, to the working masses and that put forward proletarian positions.

11. The semicolonial character of Nicaragua, and the extent of the devastation, mean that the most immediate needs of the masses cannot be satisfied in the framework of a so-called mixed economy, which can only be capitalist, and whose development will be reversed by the forces of the capitalist world market. The reconstruction effort of the working masses would thus be rewarded by austerity, which is necessary for the relaunching of a new investment cycle.

To be sure, rapid measures to expropriate the ruling class would lead to an immediate confrontation with the national and international bourgeoisie. Aid would be immediately cut off. The Nicaraguan people would have to face imperialist intervention. The danger of an economic paralysis would be acute, unless Nicaragua's international isolation were broken with the help of the USSR. But it is also certain that a relatively prolonged period of bourgeois accumulation and strengthening of the private sector would consolidate the ties between imperialism and the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. It would give the latter the forces with which to vie with the FSLN for political power and decide the situation to its own benefit.

The only guarantee of avoiding a counterrevolutionary solution to this crisis—whatever its intermediary stages—is to strengthen the existing ties between the FSLN, which must adopt a correct revolutionary orientation as the leadership of the revolution, and the mobilized masses.

Any advance of the revolution depends on the mobilization of the workers and peasants around revolutionary goals—understood and accepted by them—and on the strengthening of their organization. Any step backward, on the contrary, leads to a decline in the mobilization, in the level of mass organization, and in the popular support won by the FSLN in the struggle.

The course of the class struggle in Nicaragua indicates the following central tasks of reconstruction in the interests of the workers and peasants:

a. The strengthening of the CST as the single workers federation. The best way to convince the workers as a whole of the advantage of trade-union unification within a single federation is, on the one hand, to initiate a broad political discussion with the members and leaderships of the other, smaller federations; and, on the other hand, to ensure internal democracy enabling the workers to choose the leadership that they place their confidence in.

In a situation of scarcity caused by the destruction of the civil war and interna-

tional isolation, it is inevitable that the battle for reconstruction and the restarting of the economy should translate into big sacrifices on the part of the workers. But these sacrifices will only be comprehensible and compatible with the strengthening of a trade union if the workers can freely discuss within all of their organizations and decide themselves on the allocation of the social surplus, and if workers control develops in the sector that remains privately owned. The type of trade-union organization best adapted to these tasks is one whose rank-and-file structures are based on the workplaces, and which also strives to organize the semiproletarianized layers and small artisans.

b. Developing and strengthening the ATC, the only organization that can keep the revolution a vital force in the countryside, organize the small peasants and agricultural workers, taking up their demands and needs and getting them directly involved in the activity of the INRA. Consolidation of the ATC is a decisive factor for propelling further INRA's expropriations of the big landowners who control an important segment of cash crops for export, and who remain one of the most solid forces of the counterrevolution. The alliance between the CST and the ATC also serves to cement the bloc of the two decisive social forces, i.e. the worker-peasant alliance, for the deepening of the anticapitalist struggle.

c. Coordinating and democratically centralizing the CDSs on the regional and national levels, establishing their links with the workplaces, and their real participation in the sum total of socioeconomic decisions as organs of people's power. In this way they will broaden out their present tasks (surveillance, solving immediate neighborhood problems) and will take on the character of organs of power.

d. Arming the masses as the point toward which the entire movement for the organization of the oppressed and exploited converges. The priority is, of course, to form a regular army having all the technical means available with which to counter the imperialist threats and counterrevolutionary conspiracies.

But to really form militias in the workplaces, in conformity with the plans announced by the FSLN, is the most effective way of arming the workers. They must collectively control the weapons. With the technical support of the regular army, the working masses, organized in the CST, ATC, student and women's organizations, can form their own armed militias to support the revolution and defend their gains, their organizations, and the organs of power.

e. Construction of a revolutionary socialist, proletarian party. It is the necessary instrument in order to unite the leadership and the masses, and permit swift reactions to sharp changes in the class struggle. It is the necessary instrument for the political

education of cadres, for discussion of all the key problems of the revolution, and for the collective development of a revolutionary policy for the new stage opened up by the military and insurrectionary victory. A democratically centralized party is the best guarantee of consolidating the gains of the workers through the creation of a workers state based on the centralization of the mass workers', peasants', and soldiers' committees.

Unity of the forces of the workers movement, where different currents exist, is not achieved through the formation of a single party imposed by state coercion. But the effort to unify revolutionists in a vanguard party that respects the right to hold different opinions is the most powerful tool, not only for expropriating the bourgeoisie, but for accomplishing the tasks of reconstructing society on a planned and rational basis.

However, the right of different workers parties to exist is one of the conditions that can guarantee the democratic rights of the working masses, the unity of the masses regardless of their different levels of consciousness at a given moment, and the broadest and most direct exercise of power.

As the development of the revolutionary process shows, a transitional program for the period ahead especially includes the following points:

- Deepening of the agrarian reform through expropriation of the agricultural exporting bourgeoisie (cotton, coffee) whose ties with the imperialist market are strong and whose capacity for economic sabotage is high. More generally, the agrarian reform cannot achieve its proclaimed goals in the medium term without a close connection with industry, which will require nationalization under workers control.

- Shifting the tax burden to the most comfortable layers of the population.

- Expropriation of the banks and imperialist companies, and establishment of a single bank.

- Establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade, with its consequences on the monetary plane.

- Refusal to be tied to the imperialist financial institutions through the vehicle of the foreign debt. These institutions would then dictate their economic and social decisions.

- Establishment, with the participation of the mass organizations, of an economic plan of reconstruction based on state control of the land, industry, and natural resources. Such a plan must take into account the requirements of state accumulation and the fundamental needs of the masses.

- Adoption of measures (housing, health, social infrastructure) that raise the standard of living of the popular masses, both rural and urban, and that can be carried out by the mass organizations (CDS, ATC). These measures are indispen-

sable to strengthen mobilizations at a time when an intense production effort is demanded.

- Application of egalitarian norms in the realm of wages and use of state property (houses, cars, etc.) by officials.

- Full distribution of information to the population to facilitate its participation and ability to make decisions in the organs of people's power.

- Continual repression of Somozaist activities and organizations and of the agents of imperialism; and establishment of people's tribunals, elected by the mass organizations, to judge their crimes.

- Development of a revolutionary internationalist policy aiming to extend the revolution as the best way to defend the Nicaraguan revolution.

- To put forward the slogan today of a constituent assembly based on "free elections" would amount to impeding the assertion of the anticapitalist strength of the proletariat. It would be to counterpose the creation of bourgeois parliamentary institutions to the development and centralization on the national level of the organs of power of the masses. Such institutions can only facilitate the bourgeoisie's political counteroffensive, derail the dynamic of the mass movement, and break the dynamic that has been established between the activity of the masses and the leadership of the FSLN.

It is by supporting all the decisions that make it possible to respond to the needs of the working population that the clashes to come in the struggle to build a workers and peasants government are most effectively prepared for.

12. The Nicaraguan revolution is the direct object of a confrontation between classes on the international scale. The difficulties that the United States encountered at the end of 1978 in putting its views across, and in intervening in 1979 (OAS resolution) reveal American imperialism's deep crisis after the defeat it suffered in Vietnam in 1975.

But these difficulties for Carter should not lead us to conclude that imperialism will not do everything it can to smash this revolution that has broken out right in its own back yard. Washington does not want to be caught short by a new Cuba. Thus the future of this revolution is also closely tied to the relationship of forces on the international level.

The Cuban leadership provided decisive support to the battle against the Somoza dictatorship. Cuba is massively aiding the revolution after its victory with material, technical, and food aid. Hundreds of teachers, doctors, and nurses are providing assistance to the struggle of the working masses of Nicaragua. The internationalism of the Cuban leadership has clearly shown itself in favor of this revolution.

Each new advance of the revolution in Nicaragua, with the shock wave it directly causes throughout Central America, not

only raises the possibility of an extension of the revolution, but places before the Cuban leadership two objective contradictions.

First of all, to loosen American imperialism's stranglehold over Cuba, the Cuban leadership is correctly trying to develop economic relations with the countries of Latin America (Mexico, Venezuela, etc.). However, while these bourgeoisies can accept and even support an antidictatorial movement—with the aim of winning easier access to the Central American market—they are determined to prevent the emergence of a socialist revolution in Central America. They will therefore bargain the extension and strengthening of their commercial and diplomatic relations with Cuba against this goal.

Furthermore, the entire orientation of the Soviet bureaucracy is opposed to a break in the international status quo, in the political and military spheres, especially in a part of the world of such interest to the United States. The Cuban leadership must also take this counterrevolutionary choice into account, since only the USSR and the workers states could furnish the necessary aid to Nicaragua in the event of a break with the capitalist world market. Thus, the revolutionary upsurge in Nicaragua is an important test for the Cuban leadership.

The counterattack launched by the United States against Cuba on the pretext of the "discovery" of Soviet "combat troops" on the island, was aimed not only at issuing a warning to Castro, but also at intervening in the negotiations between Havana and Moscow, to get Moscow to pressure Cuba to not only reduce its aid to the Nicaraguan revolution, but apply pressure to prevent its growing over into a socialist revolution.

Therefore, the defense of Cuba against imperialist pressure and the lifting of the economic blockade are tied to the defense of the Nicaraguan revolution.

13. The shock wave produced by the example of the Nicaraguan revolution is shaking the countries of Central America, especially since the duration of the open and massive struggle against Somoza had already made possible the forming of ties between the vanguard movements of the area.

The victory of the FSLN had a powerful impact on all of Central America, but especially on El Salvador, where the maturing of the social and political crisis is most advanced.

The agrarian question is at the center of the crisis of El Salvador, a country where more than 4,200,000 people are crowded into an area six times smaller than Nicaragua. Underemployment and unemployment are having devastating effects. More than 30 percent of the "economically active" rural population works only two or three months a year and 20 percent work a maximum of six months a year.

Under the pressure of American

imperialism—which while firmly supporting the military government, wanted to install some safety valves—a limited agrarian reform plan was launched in 1977 under President Arturo Armando Molina. It was quickly shelved, not only because of the rejection by the landholding oligarchy, but because the combativity of the agricultural workers and pauperized peasants threatened to break through the narrow limits of this reform.

The social and political crisis was exacerbated after 1978, in an ever darker economic climate. The imperialist companies froze their investments; capital fled the country.

Strikes spread; workers occupied companies that closed down or laid them off. They challenged the security forces with increasing assurance.

The audacity of the armed actions undertaken by the urban resistance fronts increased. Mass demonstrations in the capital, San Salvador, became regular occurrences, despite the brutality of the military repression.

American imperialism feared a second Nicaragua. The "democratic opening" announced by Romero—and decided by Washington—for the 1980 elections appeared less and less likely to prevent a popular insurrection. The social base of the dictatorship was rapidly shrinking; the class polarization was intensifying; the following of the revolutionary organizations was growing.

In mid-October, Washington concocted a coup d'état that permitted it to get rid of Romero in a suitable manner and to reorganize the ruling class's system of power around military officers and the Christian Democratic Party.

Through this imperialism and the Salvadorian bourgeoisie were aiming to win back sectors of the petty bourgeoisie, to make use of the shameful support the CP is giving the junta, and to isolate the revolutionary organizations.

The coup d'état may, of course, change the pace and the forms of the class conflicts taking place. However, the close relationship that exists between any plan for a "democratic opening" and the agrarian question raises serious questions about the substitute liberalizations cooked up by Washington. The strikes, land occupations, and clashes with the police that took place after October 15 reflect the deep instability as well as the social and political crisis that remain the dominant traits of the situation in El Salvador.

The impact on *Latin America* as a whole of the Nicaraguan revolution, and its direct repercussions in Central America, is considerable.

First of all, it was the oldest dictatorship in Latin America, whose weight was felt throughout Central America, that was ousted.

Further, the emergence of this revolution takes place in the context of a rising curve of mass activity on the continent since

1977, and can only strengthen that trend.

Finally, the general traits of the Nicaraguan revolutionary process, beyond their specific features, can now be assimilated by the most conscious sectors of the proletariat as elements in the definition of a revolutionary strategy.

Thus, this revolution has brought a number of factors into relief. Among these are: the opening wedge that can be made by the intercapitalist contradictions and the crisis of bourgeois leadership under the combined blows of the urban semiproletarianized masses, working class, agricultural laborers, pauperized peasants, and sectors of the petty bourgeoisie; the overlapping of the anti-imperialist and antidictatorial struggles and their anticapitalist dynamic; the central role of the masses' own organization in the struggle against the dictatorship and in the maturing of conditions making for a convergence between a general strike, armed struggle, and mass insurrection; the predominance in the first phase of the struggle of proletarian forms of organization—trade-union and self-defense pickets, popular militias, CDCs, CDT, and armed detachments—and their dislocating effects on the bourgeois army; the leading role of the industrial and rural proletariat and the pauperized peasants in the deepening of the permanent revolution; the vital necessity of a revolutionary leadership to guide this process to its finish, that is, to expropriate the capitalists and nationalize the sum total of the means of production, destroy the bourgeois state, institutions, and army, build a state based on the workers' organs of power, draw up an overall economic plan corresponding to the interests of the toiling population, and defend the gains of the revolution by arming the people.

14. The Fourth International and its sections must mobilize all their forces to defend the Nicaraguan revolution and support the FSLN.

The American imperialists are already fomenting their plans for intervention to prevent the birth of a new Cuba in Latin America. To do so, they will need the complicity and open participation, to one degree or another, of the Latin American bourgeoisies.

The militants of the Fourth International in all countries of the world—especially those in the Latin American sections and their comrades fighting in the very heart of the imperialist bastion—must revive the example of proletarian internationalism shown by the movement against the imperialist war in Vietnam, which helped inflict a resounding defeat on Washington.

The economic and food weapon is also part of the international bourgeoisie's arsenal of reprisals against a revolution that inherited the ruins bequeathed to it by a bloody dictatorship.

The unified solidarity and aid movement will have to use all available means to give material support to Nicaragua.

It will demand that the mass workers organizations, humanitarian institutions, and religious organizations pool their resources to meet the immediate needs of the Nicaraguan people.

It will expose those governments that indulge in humanitarian declarations while doling out with an eye-dropper sums that are laughable compared with the needs of a population deprived of food and medical care. It will demand that these governments provide massive aid, without delay or strings attached, to the authorities of free Nicaragua.

The organizations of the Fourth International, in building the solidarity and aid movement, will strive to create a united front of all the workers parties and trade unions, in order to forge the chain of class solidarity with the workers of Nicaragua. In this context, they shall renew the urgent appeal to the workers states that Che Guevara made to them for defense of the

Vietnamese revolution. Following Cuba's example, the workers states should all contribute massive, unconditional material aid to the Nicaraguan revolution.

In setting forth its program and conceptions, the Fourth International places itself firmly on the side of the FSLN's fight to ensure the victory of the socialist revolution.

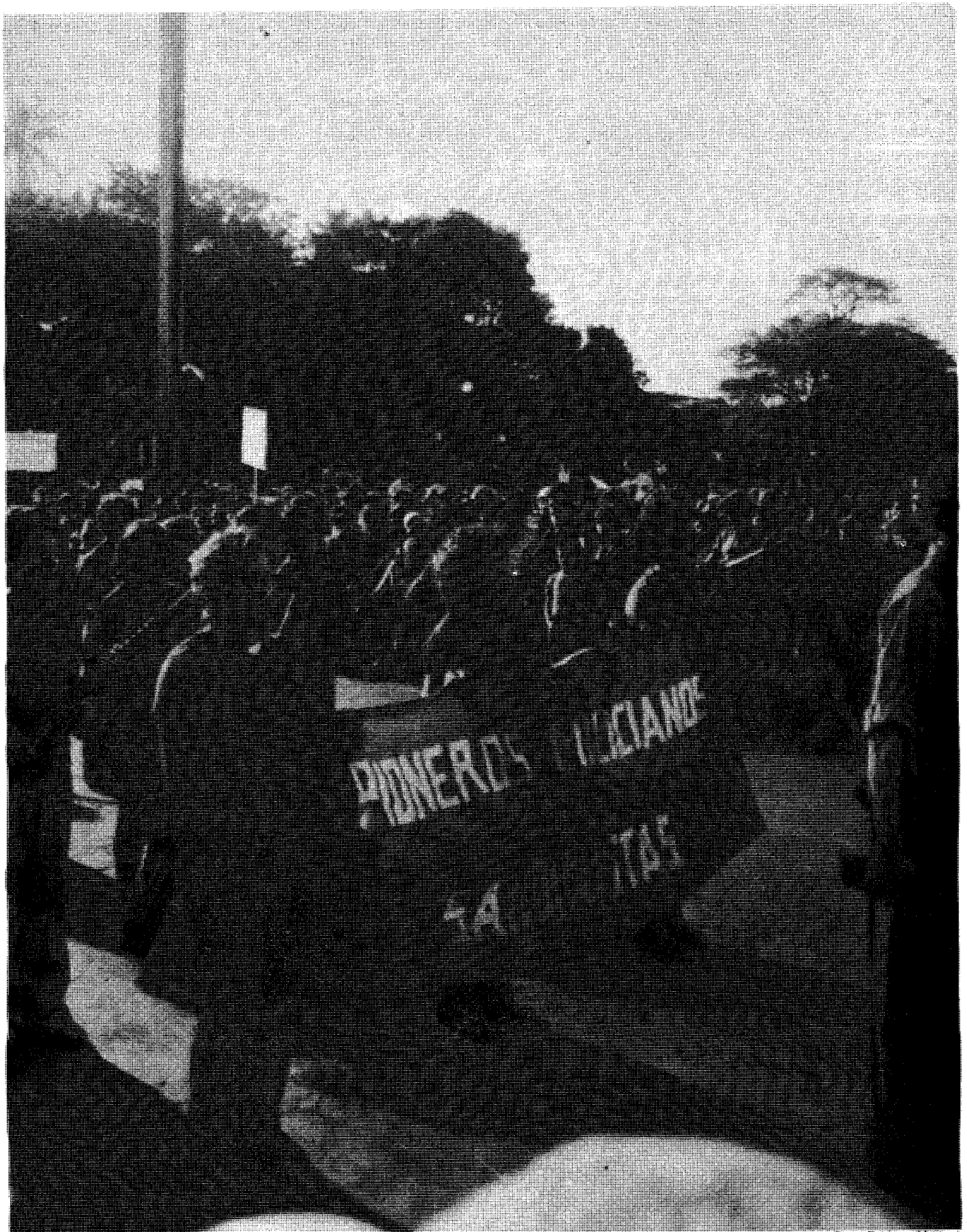
The revolutionary upsurge in Nicaragua, and the FSLN's evolution in the course of the battle, offer the Fourth International an enormous opportunity and big responsibility to go forward in our historic task of solving the crisis of leadership of the world working class, and building the international party of socialist revolution. The cadres of the world Trotskyist movement constitute the irreplaceable nucleus of this world proletarian party. We defend the Leninist program and the method of the transitional program, which are essential to the victory of the working masses over

the nuclear annihilation that will otherwise engulf humanity.

Due to the crimes of Social Democracy and of Stalinism, however, the building of a mass revolutionary workers international is a task whose solution is only at an initial stage. The development of revolutionary currents independent of Stalinism, as happened in Cuba and as is happening in Nicaragua, is therefore of great importance for the Fourth International and for increasing the impact of our revolutionary program and perspectives.

The organized militants of the Fourth International in Nicaragua shall be an integral part of any FSLN project to build a vanguard party. They will join with the best militants and cadres, who are in fact driving forward the revolutionary process, and will defend our entire program for building a workers state, for democratic soviet-type organization of the working masses, and for proletarian internationalism.





Sandinista militiawomen in Managua's Plaza of the Revolution.

Gary Bridges/Militant

## Theses on the Nicaraguan Revolution

The primary purpose of the following theses is to clarify (1) the class character of the Nicaraguan government today, and (2) why the Nicaraguan revolution and the evolution of the Sandinista National Liberation Front are central to our strategic task of building the world party of socialist revolution necessary to lead the toilers in the overthrow of world capitalism.

These theses are in agreement with the campaign for Nicaragua aid work adopted by the 1979 world congress of the Fourth International as part of the tasks report on the World Political Resolution

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1. Between late May and July 19, 1979, deepgoing popular insurrections in the main cities of Nicaragua—prepared by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and coordinated with an FSLN military offensive—toppled the United States-backed dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza. The victory was the culmination of two months of general strikes and armed uprisings in the cities by the workers, semiproletarian masses, youth, and sectors of the petty bourgeoisie; land occupations and other mobilizations by the poor peasants and agricultural laborers in the rural districts; and stepped-up guerrilla operations and a concerted military drive by the FSLN.

These were the motor forces of the climactic stage in the struggle against the dictatorship and U.S. imperialism. They gave the revolution a powerful anticapitalist impulse.

The final year of the revolutionary struggle was marked by widespread organization of the masses in neighborhood committees and self-defense units, as well as by increased organization in workplaces and the countryside. This occurred both on the initiative of the FSLN and spontaneously in response to the worsening living conditions and brutal repression under Somoza. In addition, as the final struggle

gathered momentum the ranks of the FSLN's military units were swelled by thousands of young workers, poor peasants, students, the unemployed, and radicalized petty-bourgeois forces. This included many Latin Americans from other countries who joined the fight against Somozaism and Yankee imperialism.

As one city after another was liberated from Somoza's National Guard under the combined blows of FSLN units and popular insurrections, Civil Defense Committees (CDC) and militias organized military defense and took over such vital tasks in the neighborhoods as food distribution, health care, sanitation, and the dispensation of justice to Somozaist torturers. Sandinista Workers Defense Committees (CDTS) arose in some factories and workplaces, the nuclei of what was to become the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST). Other mass organizations—the women's group AMPRONAC (later to become the Association of Nicaraguan Women), the Rural Workers Association (ATC), the July 19 Sandinista Youth, the teachers union (ANDEN)—also got their start in the period before and during the insurrection.

Alongside this intervention of the toiling masses and development of proletarian forms of organization, the bourgeois forces opposed to Somoza underwent a process of disintegration. Most desperately sought a compromise with the dictatorship while some belatedly threw in their lot with the insurrection. This sharp shift in the relationship of class forces is a key factor in explaining the dynamics of the socialist revolution now unfolding in Nicaragua.

2. Following Somoza's flight on July 17, the disintegration of the National Guard accelerated. His stand-in Francisco Urcuyo had promised to transfer power to a five-person junta of the Government of National Reconstruction (GRN). This was supposed to pave the way for the integration of some National Guard units into the new army and the appointment of a bour-

geois-dominated Council of State. The formation of this junta and its responsibilities had been announced July 9 in Costa Rica as part of the post-Somoza governmental program agreed to by the FSLN and some of the bourgeois opposition forces.

With United States support, however, Urcuyo attempted to hold on to state power, and demanded the FSLN lay down its arms. This provoked the final FSLN push on Managua and a popular mass uprising there in which Somoza's "bunker" was captured and tens of thou-

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*This resolution was submitted by a minority of the United Secretariat. The vote of delegates and fraternal observers was: 35 for, 71.5 against, 5 abstentions, 1.5 not voting.*

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sands of weapons were seized and distributed. The GRN program had stated that the new army would incorporate "soldiers and officers who demonstrated honest and patriotic conduct" and were not guilty of "corruption, repression, [and] crimes against the people." But the section of Somoza's National Guard that did not escape to Honduras scattered under the impact of the mass insurrection.

The revolutionary triumph over Somoza was thus a sweeping one, in which large sections of the previous state apparatus—in particular the entire repressive apparatus—were dismantled and replaced, resolving the situation of dual power that had developed in Nicaragua in the final weeks prior to Somoza's fall. As a

result, the effort to establish a well-trained professional Sandinista army is being entirely built around a cadre of FSLN guerrillas and militia fighters.

The triumph in Managua, following that in other main cities, achieved with organized mass participation and by revolutionary means, established both the FSLN's leadership authority among the masses and its decisive political decision-making power. The contrast during the drive to victory between the courage and dedication of the Sandinistas and the hesitations and maneuvers of the bourgeois opposition did not go unnoticed in the working-class neighborhoods or in the countryside. It had a profound impact on the consciousness of FSLN militants and leaders, and on the political course they have followed.

3. It soon became obvious that the new governing power—the way in which important decisions of state were actually being made and implemented—was qualitatively different from the bourgeois coalition government projected in the July 9 GRN program and the Fundamental Statute decreed July 20.

The five-person junta that replaced Somoza took the form of a coalition of three FSLN leaders with two figures from the bourgeois opposition. This is also the form taken by the junta's cabinet of ministries: several are headed by FSLN leaders (e.g., Interior, Agrarian Reform, and Social Welfare), while others—including the Central Bank—are headed by bourgeois figures, often with FSLN vice-ministers.

But this is not the totality of the actual government. In fact, the key elements of the new state structure fall outside the framework promised in the July 9 program of the GRN.

The government itself includes the FSLN leadership, the Sandinista armed forces, as well as INRA (Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform) and to some extent the mass organizations led by the FSLN.

The GRN program stipulated the appointment of a Council of State. This body was to "share legislative powers" with the junta, draw up drafts of a new constitution and electoral law, appoint the judiciary, and have the power to veto, with a two-thirds vote, decisions taken by the junta.

By agreement prior to the Managua insurrection, the Council of State was to be composed of thirty-three representatives from the bourgeois opposition parties, the chambers of commerce and industry and other capitalist organs, the Catholic Church hierarchy, the FSLN, trade unions, and other groups. Its proposed composition guaranteed bourgeois domination. For its part the FSLN was to have had somewhere in the range of six members. The Nicaraguan capitalists and imperialism counted on the council to serve as a brake on the social and economic measures instituted following Somoza's downfall and to

be the institution that exercises sovereignty. It was to draft a bourgeois constitution according to which a bourgeois judicial system, headed by a Supreme Court, would block "unconstitutional" inroads on property and other "normal" bourgeois prerogatives.

In the first weeks following July 19, it was widely assumed that the Council of State would be rapidly installed. A tentative convocation date of September 15 was even announced. But that date came and went, and amid growing agitation by bourgeois forces for the convocation of the Council of State, the junta announced October 22 that convocation of the council was being postponed until May 4, 1980. In the intervening months it was to be "restructured" to provide representation above all to the new mass organizations—the CDSs, CST, ATC, women's association, Sandinista youth, etc. These organizations, with FSLN backing, have launched a campaign demanding the Council of State be a council of toilers dominated by CDS representation and that of other mass organizations.

The postponement and proposed restructuring of the Council of State represents one of the major results on the governmental level so far of the dramatic shift in the relationship of class forces as the revolutionary process has deepened in Nicaragua.

Nothing has been done to begin drafting a bourgeois constitution to provide legitimacy to capitalist rule. Instead, in late August the junta decreed a "Statute on the Rights of Nicaraguans" that not only guarantees basic political freedoms such as speech, press, and assembly, but also women's equality and the priority of the social and economic rights of the toilers over the property and prerogatives of the capitalists.

Furthermore, the entire judicial system was purged, and while a Supreme Court has been appointed, as described in the GRN program, its functions are limited to matters such as divorce cases.

In addition, some important ministries headed by bourgeois figures have no fundamental decision-making authority. The most striking example of this is the Ministry of Defense, nominally headed by ex-National Guard Col. Bernardino Larios (who led a coup attempt against Somoza in 1978 and later fled to Panama). Larios has no authority whatsoever over the Sandinista People's Army (ESP), which is firmly under the command of the Sandinista Front. The commander-in-chief of the army, FSLN leader Humberto Ortega, was named not by Larios or by the GRN junta, but rather by the FSLN Joint National Directorate. (The decision was later ratified by the junta.) The Sandinista police, constructed from the bottom up out of young Sandinista fighters, fall under the Department of Interior, headed by FSLN Comandante Tomás Borge. Almost imme-

diately after July 19, Minister of Defense Larios was sent on an extended journey to Europe and North Africa to seek aid. As of November 1 he had issued no statements, held no news conferences, and had not even appeared once at a public event.

The minister of agricultural development, a landowner, is in a position similar to that of Larios. Major decisions and statements on agricultural policy are all made and implemented by the Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA), which has branches in every province of the country and is headed by FSLN Comandante Jaime Wheelock. Modeled after Cuba's INRA, this agency was not mentioned in the GRN's July 9 program or the Fundamental Statute. Wheelock was named agrarian reform minister immediately after July 19, displacing "Group of 12" member Ricardo Coronel Kautz.

The FSLN's National Directorate functions as a source and wielder of governing power outside the terms of the GRN accord. This was politically codified on September 1, 1979, when, during a military parade and rally to spur construction of the EPS, the nine members of the National Directorate were proclaimed "Comandantes de la Revolución," that is, of the entire process and not simply of the army or the formal government. During this initial stage of the revolution, it is the Comandantes of the Revolution—not the bourgeoisie operating through the Council of State as they had planned—who have played the decisive role governing together with the Sandinista-dominated junta.

The rising importance of new mass organizations and especially of the CDSs (none of which were contemplated in the GRN program) is among the most outstanding of the postliberation developments. It is on the expansion and consolidation of the CDSs, the unions of workers and peasants, the other mass organizations, and the Sandinista Army, that the authority of the FSLN is largely based. To varying degrees, all of these are already taking on decision-making and administrative functions at the workplace, farm, neighborhood, and municipal levels. Province-wide and national coordination of the CDS structure is projected and is already under way.

So the government that was consolidated soon after Somoza's fall is not that projected by the GRN program.

4. The accumulation of progressive social and economic measures in the first months of the revolution demonstrates that the Nicaraguan toilers, under FSLN leadership, have set off down a promising road oriented toward expropriation of the bourgeoisie:

- The new government immediately nationalized the entire Somoza and Somozist assets in agriculture, real estate, banking, industry, commerce, transport, fishing fleets, shipyard and port equipment, and communications media property.

- It nationalized all domestic banking and imposed strict controls on foreign banks. This is a necessary first step toward channeling resources, directing them to expanding such needs as education, housing, and hospitals, and initiating measures of economic planning.

- It launched an extensive agrarian reform on Somozaist land, bringing under state control some 60 percent of the big landholdings currently under cultivation. In collaboration with the ATC, INRA is transforming these haciendas into state farms on which the agricultural laborers will participate in administrative tasks. Peasant cooperatives are being encouraged on the smaller nationalized holdings, and some land redistribution has taken place in response to the demands of peasants with tiny plots. Debt foreclosure on the farms of small proprietors has been abolished.

- The government took control over all export trade of agricultural cash commodities such as cotton, coffee, sugar, beef, and fish. A state monopoly (ENABAS) has been established for the purchase and sale of all grains and agricultural products. Similar state monopolies have been set up for the purchase and sale of all other major crops (coffee, cotton, sugar, etc.).

- While pledging to renegotiate and honor Nicaragua's legitimate foreign debt, the government immediately cancelled Somoza's arms debts to the Israeli and Argentine governments. It then announced it would study carefully all other debts contracted by the dictatorship to determine which ones were illegitimate—that is, had been arranged through corrupt dealings or had simply wound up in private Somocista bank accounts abroad. Meanwhile, given the virtually empty treasury left by Somoza, the new government has declared a de facto moratorium on interest and repayment.

- It nationalized the essential means of land, sea, and air transport. The television system and several of the radio networks have been expropriated and are being used by the FSLN to present its views to the population. The Sandinista daily *Barriada* is produced in the plant that previously printed the Somozaist newspaper, *Novedades*.

- It launched programs to reorganize and upgrade education, health care, social security, and other social services.

- The government issued a radical currency reform measure that—under the slogan “Let's take back from Somocismo the money that belongs to the people”—stopped Somozaists or other businessmen abroad from exchanging their cordobas for dollars held inside Nicaragua. All 500 and 1000 cordoba notes were withdrawn and investigations were begun into many large holdings. This measure helped slow the devaluation of the cordoba, and combat capitalist economic sabotage. Deposits under 3,000 cordobas were returned within

a few days of the measure; at the end of October, following registration of the bank notes, the government began redeeming the certificates of deposit issued to holders of the notes inside Nicaragua.

- It has adopted an outspoken anti-imperialist stance on vital world political questions such as Indochina, the Mideast, southern Africa, and Carter's war moves against Cuba, the Caribbean, and Central America. The outpouring of more than 30,000 in Managua to greet Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong, one of the largest mass demonstrations since the revolutionary victory, was a big blow to the imperialist campaign to isolate Vietnam as an international pariah. U.S. imperialism was condemned for its aggression during the “Soviet brigade” crisis.

Following the October military coup in El Salvador, Moscow was quick to approve the new Washington-backed regime, signalling to the imperialists its willingness to help preserve capitalist stability in the area. The Nicaragua government, along with the Cuban, refused to do so.

- The new government has continued its efforts to construct a centralized professional army to defend the revolutionary conquests against imperialism, the Somozaist forces and other class enemies both inside Nicaragua and beyond its borders.

- Having integrated most of the militia fighters into the EPS and Sandinista police, FSLN leaders have announced their intention to strengthen and reorganize a volunteer national militia on the basis of regular training in the workplace and in high schools and universities. Weapons are to be kept in the factories and controlled by the milicianos.

- After decades of tyrannical rule under which even the most elementary bourgeois-democratic liberties were ground into the dust, there has been an enormous expansion of democratic rights, including institutions of workers democracy, fostered by the new government. The CDSs and other popular bodies operate on the basis of democratic elections. The Bill of Rights guarantees not only basic freedoms such as speech, press, and assembly, but also the right to unionize and strike and to “organize political parties or groups, or to belong to them.” The FSLN has strengthened the Sandinista-led CST trade-union federation in political competition with the old union federations led by the Stalinists, Christian Democrats and bourgeois business-unionists closely linked to the U.S. AFL-CIO bureaucracy. Workers have held democratic assemblies to choose their leaders and decide which federation to affiliate with; this has often resulted in unions previously part of one of the old federations joining the CST.

- The agrarian reform has also included “interventions” (that is, takeovers short of outright nationalization) of some lands owned by members of the bourgeois anti-Somoza opposition. Since there is a top

priority on raising crops for food and vital foreign exchange, this most often targets landlords who refuse to cultivate their land.

- There have been further nationalizations and interventions; again including properties of “anti-Somozaist” capitalists. These have been carried out on the basis of economic need or because of illegitimate or antilabor operations by the owners. All insurance companies were nationalized in mid-October. This complements the nationalizations of the banks by giving the government further control over the flow of capital and lays the foundation for future economic planning.

- The FSLN is campaigning to organize peasants and rural laborers into the ATC and workers into the CST. In addition, the Sandinistas are taking steps to prepare and extend workers control over production in the nationalized sectors.

- At the beginning of November, the first major imperialist property was nationalized—the mines. (Domestic holdings in the mining sector were also taken over.) This further strengthens the government control over the country's natural resources and lays the basis for improving the wretched and extremely dangerous conditions under which Nicaragua's miners were forced to work.

- Housing reconstruction aid in the devastated popular neighborhoods has been initiated by the government. State control has been applied in housing developments built or operating in violation of real estate and tax laws. The first major public works projects have been initiated in this sector.

- A big increase in pensions and other social benefits to the aged and indigent has been decreed.

- Price controls have been established on basic food items. The government has authorized the CDSs to operate as price committees to enforce these controls, and the CDSs in the big open-air markets of Managua have taken the lead in this task.

- An enormous nationwide drive has been launched to wipe out illiteracy, a problem that is prevalent throughout Nicaragua but especially widespread among the rural population. All students above the sixth-grade level are to be mobilized in this “crusade for literacy”; and the country's schools are to be shut down for four months so that these students and all teachers can fully participate. Material, technical, and personnel aid is coming from Cuba for this campaign, which is being explicitly modeled on the way that country wiped out illiteracy in the early 1960s. As that experience showed, such a literacy drive is an important aid to firmly winning the poor peasantry to the side of the revolution, and defending it against counterrevolution.

5. The FSLN-led government, based on Nicaragua's proletarian, semiproletarian, peasant, and radicalized petty-bourgeois

masses, has initiated deepgoing inroads against capitalist property in agriculture, industry, and finance. It has launched an ambitious program of social and cultural betterment for the Nicaraguan toilers. It has begun to construct a new armed power through the EPS and Sandinista police. Its radical policies have helped the FSLN spur the development of proletarian organizations through the CDSs, the trade unions, and other mass organizations. It has continued to foster mass mobilizations. The latest—a November 7 demonstration to honor FSLN founder Carlos Fonseca Amador—brought over 100,000 people into the streets of Managua. It was the largest outpouring since Somoza's fall.

The structures and direction of development established through all these measures indicate that this new regime has not only broken the armed might of the bourgeoisie. It has displaced the *political* power of the capitalists, taken decisive steps to block the establishment of a bourgeois government and refused to subordinate the interests of the exploited to the bourgeoisie's needs either nationally or internationally.

All this points to the conclusion that the Sandinista-led regime in Nicaragua is neither definitively bourgeois nor proletarian at this time. It is a *workers and peasants government*, of the kind described in the Transitional Program as "a government independent of the bourgeoisie" and at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International as a government that is "born out of the struggle of the masses, is supported by workers' bodies that are capable of fighting, bodies created by the most oppressed sections of the working masses."

By recognizing the new government in Nicaragua as a workers and peasants government, we signify:

a. its origin in an anti-dictatorial and anti-imperialist movement with a radical political program;

b. its coming to power as the result of a popular mass struggle, culminating in a civil war and tumultuous urban insurrections;

c. its resoluteness in combating and disarming the counterrevolution;

d. its tendency to respond by practical measures to popular demands for action against the urban and rural exploiters and against imperialism;

e. the capacity of its leading force, the FSLN, with whatever hesitations and political limitations, to undertake measures against bourgeois political and economic power and prerogatives. The exact stage in the development of these measures is not decisive in determining the class character of the regime; the decisive factor is the capacity and tendency of the leadership to move in this direction.

Combined with these factors is the FSLN's explicit identification of the revolutionary process in Nicaragua with the

Cuban workers state, and with the anti-imperialist internationalism of the Castro leadership. Cuba's accomplishments under its social system are repeatedly held up as a model—in speeches, in *Barricada*, and over radio and television.

The Nicaraguan workers and peasants government, despite its many unique features, is similar to the regimes described by the Fourth International that arose and governed in Cuba from mid-1959 to late 1960 (when the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the consolidation of the workers state was completed); and in Algeria from late 1963 to mid-1965 (when Boumedienne ousted Ben Bella and restored a stable capitalist regime). The appearance of governments of this type was foreseen in the "Theses on Tactics" adopted by the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, and pointed to by Trotsky in the Transitional Program as a possible forerunner of the establishment of a workers state.

While the Nicaraguan workers and peasants government is politically independent of the bourgeoisie, the latter's economic and social power have so far only been weakened. Remnants of the old state structure remain intact. Bourgeois and petty-bourgeois figures hold governmental posts. Capitalist ownership and control over major sectors of industry, commerce, and agriculture have not been broken, which means the class character of the state remains bourgeois.

If this contradiction between workers and peasants government and bourgeois state is not resolved by a thoroughgoing expropriation of the big imperialist and domestic bourgeoisie and repudiation of the foreign debt, the capitalists—backed up by Washington, international finance organizations, and capitalist regimes in Central and South America—will use their economic positions and growing economic hardships to erode the power of the new government, sabotage economic reconstruction, foster division among the toilers, reconstruct their own political and military power, and reverse the revolutionary process initiated by the Nicaraguan masses led by the FSLN.

6. Although the revolutionary process now under way in Nicaragua bears many resemblances to those which occurred under the workers and peasants governments established in Cuba and Algeria, each of these cases has its own particular characteristics.

In Nicaragua, the establishment of a workers and peasants government after the fall of the dictatorship was not preceded by a period of rule by an unstable bourgeois coalition regime. In Cuba and Algeria, on the other hand, the political power and influence of bourgeois governmental figures at the outset of the revolution were greater than in Nicaragua. As a result, in Cuba and Algeria these bourgeois figures felt more confident in openly

resisting or balking at purges of the old state apparatus, in opposing the acceleration of mass mobilizations and the accumulation of radical measures aimed at carrying out the programs of the Cuban July 26 Movement and the Algerian FLN. Thus the transition from a bourgeois coalition government to a workers and peasants government in both Cuba and Algeria was marked by changes in the composition of the government as well as by radical measures and mass mobilizations in support of them. In Cuba Osvaldo Dorticos replaced Manuel Urrutia as President. Che Guevara replaced Felipe Pazos as head of the National Bank, and Cuba's ambassador to Washington, Miró Cardona, defected. In Algeria Mohammed Khider, Ferhat Abbas, and other bourgeois leaders were successively ousted.

In Nicaragua, the initial impact of the deepening revolutionary situation was expressed, on the governmental level, in the decisions taken by the FSLN. In light of the class relationship of forces established by the massive urban insurrections, they decided to postpone and restructure the class composition of the Council of State. They created a governmental setup in which all decisive decision-making power from the outset clearly rested in the FSLN's hands, although bourgeois figures participated. This was different from the very first stages of either the Cuban or Algerian postliberation regimes.

In both the latter countries however, as in Nicaragua, bourgeois figures were still in major government posts at the time that the workers and peasants governments came into being. In Cuba, some were not purged until the early 1960s; in Algeria some were never purged.

The acceleration of mass mobilizations and the steady accumulation of an anti-capitalist measures has certainly met with resistance from the greatly weakened bourgeoisie in Nicaragua. But most Nicaraguan capitalists still fear that an open provocation or head-on confrontation at this time would redound to their detriment. Within the government, bourgeois figures try to use *de facto* veto—as the relationship of class forces allows—over the most radical measures. At some stage this will pass over into denunciatory resignations or recalcitrant obstructionism which will force the FSLN to remove them.

The more consistently radical course of the new Nicaraguan government from its first day (compared to the bourgeois coalition regimes in either Cuba or Algeria) reflects its different nature. Bourgeois figures in those governments carried out antilabor measures and openly attempted to block progressive ones. The bourgeois Supreme Court, basing itself on the 1940 constitution, resisted the Castro leadership's land reform. There were attempts from inside the government to reestablish a bourgeois army. Such moves by the bourgeoisie spurred the class confronta-



tions in Cuba that led to the workers and peasants government.

The greater speed of events in Nicaragua is accounted for primarily by the broadly insurrectional character of the victory there. It accelerated the development of mass organizations of the urban and rural toilers on a scale unmatched in Cuba. Because of the dramatic shift in the relationship of class forces created by this massive upsurge, the FSLN took the opportunity, which it had not previously expected, to conduct a preemptive purge of capitalist political power and set off along a course that radically diverged from its earlier agreements with bourgeois forces in the anti-Somoza opposition.

In Algeria, in a number of big ways, the revolutionary process was much less advanced during the workers and farmers government there than in Nicaragua today. For example, mineral, banking, and insurance sectors remained in private hands and the FLN government did not implement radical currency or trade controls of the type already imposed by the FSLN-led government in Nicaragua.

In Cuba, the conflict between the workers and peasants government consolidated by late 1959 and the bourgeois state was resolved by August-October 1960 with the establishment of a state foreign-trade monopoly, further agrarian expro-

priations, and the nationalization of virtually all U.S. and Cuban industry. Despite the absence of a Leninist party, the anticapitalist measures carried out by the revolutionary Castro leadership, relying on mass workers mobilizations, could not have been rolled back short of a full-scale civil war backed to the hilt by the massive intervention of Yankee imperialism. A workers state had thereby been established.

In Algeria, on the other hand, the revolutionary process initiated in 1963 with the emergence of a workers and peasants government under Ahmed Ben Bella was cut short. Unlike the Castro leadership, Ben Bella responded to pressure from the right and accommodated to the demands of French imperialism. The regime turned away from mass mobilizations and from creating a militia and attempted to slow the tempo of change. The foundations of the workers and peasants government began rotting away. When army commander Houari Boumediene took advantage of the vacillating leadership and declining mobilizations to stage a coup in June 1965, the Algerian government changed direction and reversed many of the earlier progressive measures. A capitalist government was put in the saddle. The capitalist state was preserved and subsequently reinforced.

In Nicaragua, the outcome of this fundamental contradiction between the class character of the workers and peasants government and the capitalist state still hangs in the balance. The designation of Nicaragua today as a workers and peasants government in no way implies that a workers state will automatically be the outcome of the process under way. The big class conflicts that will settle that question still lie ahead. As the workers and peasants press forward to win their demands, the imperialists and Nicaraguan bourgeoisie will strike blows. They will have to be met with counterblows. Each new encroachment against capitalist property and prerogatives will meet stiffening resistance by the reaction. Open breaks will occur within the government and all other Nicaraguan institutions.

A workers and peasants government is by its very nature an unstable and transitory formation: It must either *move forward* to the establishment of a workers state, or—failing to decisively break the economic power of the bourgeoisie—*fall back* and open the way to a reassertion of capitalist political power and reinforcement of the bourgeois state. How this unstable situation will be resolved in Nicaragua depends in large part on how well the FSLN responds to the initiatives of the masses and succeeds in educating, organ-



Sandinista fighters cheer taking of National Guard outpost during final drive for liberation.

izing, and mobilizing them. They will have to defeat the counterrevolutionary threats. And they must be prepared to face the eventuality of direct U.S. military intervention aimed at preventing the triumph of a second workers state in the Western Hemisphere.

7. The FSLN was formed at the beginning of the 1960s under the impact of the socialist revolution in Cuba. It was able to tap the popular tradition of radical anti-imperialist struggle symbolized by Augusto César Sandino's rebel peasant and worker army in the 1920s and early 1930s.

From its origins, the FSLN was shaped by its strong identification with the experience and Marxist evolution of the Castro-Guevara team, and the Cuban revolution. While of similar social composition to the July 26 Movement, it started out with an advantage—the ability to learn from the example of the Cuban workers state and from the further political evolution, experiences, and false starts of the Castro leadership team. In addition, many FSLN cadres were recruited out of the worldwide youth radicalization of the 1960s and early 1970s and gave more serious consideration to Marxist ideas, including those of Lenin and Trotsky, than the early cadres of the July 26 Movement.

Under the impact of the defeats its guerrilla units suffered in the 1960s and the dramatic growth of the urban proletarian and semiproletarian population in the 1960s and the early 1970s, a discussion developed in the FSLN over an assessment of its guerrilla strategy. This led in 1975 to a division into three tendencies that later became three separate public factions. Their differences reflected debates over the relation of armed struggle and mass mobilizations, the respective roles of the urban and rural toilers, the relation between military and political struggle, and the purpose and acceptable limits of pacts with the opposition bourgeoisie.

In the final analysis, these differences boiled down to contending points of view around a decisive question: *How to topple Somoza and throw off imperialist domination of Nicaragua.* The answer was to be given in practice before the decade was over.

The political content of these debates reflected the ripening objective conditions for the overthrow of Somoza and contributed to the overall political education and development of all three tendencies. Challenged to meet the responsibilities posed by accelerating revolutionary developments, the tendencies reached agreement on unity in action in June 1978 and reunified in December of that year. Their leadership bodies fused and old divisions in the ranks broke down, as the tasks posed by the rising class struggle resolved in life many previously disputed questions.

The FSLN leadership was profoundly affected by the largely unanticipated scope and power of the 1978-79 urban mobiliza-

tions and by the spread of popular committees and militias—sometimes at the initiative of the FSLN, often through spontaneous mass emulation. The revolutionary process gave a powerful thrust toward bypassing the bourgeois coalition government that the FSLN had, on the eve of the insurrection, considered inevitable.

The actual course of the insurrection caused the FSLN to move in an increasingly anticapitalist direction. This course has demonstrated the FSLN's will and capacity to learn from and respond to the actions and aspirations of the workers and peasants. Relying on the organization and mobilization of the masses, the FSLN has led the process that has brought a workers and peasants government into being. This is consistent with its efforts to learn from the Cuban experience.

By learning from the example of the Cuban revolution and Castro leadership, the FSLN bypassed Stalinism and Social Democracy and has been able to carry out an intransigent and victorious struggle against Somoza and his imperialist backers, opening the door to the fight for the second workers state in the Americas.

The advances already registered under the leadership of the FSLN, like the July 26 Movement victory in Cuba twenty years ago, constitute a blow to world Stalinism. The central founder of the FSLN, Carlos Fonseca Amador, broke from the Partido Socialista Nicaragüense (PSN), the Nicaraguan Stalinist party, and the FSLN was built in opposition to the PSN. By bypassing the Stalinists *in action*, the FSLN further deflated the Stalinists' claim to be the only current ever to stand at the head of revolutionary mass upsurges. And by unyielding struggle at the head of the insurrectionary proletarian and plebian masses, the Sandinistas provided in practice a living alternative to the Stalinist line of "two-stage" revolution in which the interests of the toilers are subordinated to the interests of the bourgeoisie. Thus, the FSLN-led revolution in Nicaragua has strengthened the revolutionary current within the workers movement internationally and has shifted the relationship of forces against the Stalinist camp.

Despite its expressed desire to establish workers and peasants power in Nicaragua, the FSLN leadership has thus far not organized a mass Leninist party that would best insure the positive resolution of the class contradiction between the government and state.

But the direction of the FSLN shows that it would be a grave error to think that any *a priori* limits exist on how far its leadership and cadres can develop and how fast they can act as the class struggle deepens in Nicaragua.

The FSLN has announced its intention to launch a vanguard party rooted in the masses. The construction of a revolutionary socialist proletarian party within

which the political vanguard of the Nicaraguan working class can democratically debate and decide the important questions facing the revolution would be a major step in advancing and consolidating the gains of the toilers and expropriating the remaining bourgeoisie.

8. Yankee imperialism failed in its efforts first to salvage Somoza and then, in the final weeks, to establish Somozism without Somoza. Washington's attempts through the governments of Costa Rica, Venezuela, Panama, and other Latin American ruling classes to insure installation of a bourgeois-dominated government were no more successful than its proposal for a joint military intervention sponsored by the Organization of American States, or its attempt to base troop-carrying attack helicopters in northern Costa Rica on the eve of Somoza's fall. Dashing the hopes of the U.S. rulers, the government that was consolidated not only included the FSLN, but was one in which the Sandinistas held decisive political power.

The fall of Somoza and rapid consolidation of a workers and peasants government in Nicaragua has had a profound impact in Central America—most dramatically in El Salvador—and the Caribbean. This was a giant blow to imperialism's efforts to isolate the Cuban revolution and bolster capitalist rule south of its borders. Today Washington faces increasing isolation in Central and South America and in the Caribbean.

Washington's incapacity so far to directly intervene militarily in Nicaragua fundamentally reflects two factors: (1) the deep solidarity of the Latin American toilers with the Nicaraguan struggle and consequent political cost for any government too openly identified with U.S. imperialism's counterrevolutionary policies; and (2) the constraints on the direct use of U.S. military might as a result of the post-Vietnam antiwar attitudes and suspicion of U.S. foreign policy goals among American workers.

Despite these initial reversals, however, it is precluded that Washington will passively look on while "another Cuba" is established in its own backyard. It is acutely aware that the deepening of the revolution in Nicaragua has already had profound ramifications in Grenada and El Salvador, and will have further repercussions throughout the Caribbean and Central America.

Imperialism's goal is to contain, stall, disrupt, and, at the right moment, crush the Nicaraguan revolution. Along with the economic cudgels wielded by world imperialism, its two strongest weapons in achieving these goals are: (1) the desire of the Kremlin bureaucracy to avoid any disruption of its diplomatic relations with Washington, the fruit of its overall class collaborationist-policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism; and (2) Washington's own massive military power.

The U.S. rulers initially adopted an openly aggressive stance toward the revolution. They warned the new government against radical measures and against any close association with Cuba. In this way, the imperialists sought to strengthen the hand of what they had hoped would be a politically viable bourgeois wing in the government. When it became clear that the FSLN was in political control of the government, beginning in late August, big business media, especially in the United States, made a noticeable shift in its treatment of the Nicaraguan events. This reflected imperialism's tactical judgment that use of open force, or the overt threat of open force, could politically backfire in the short run.

News from Nicaragua virtually dropped from the papers and news broadcasts. And editors toned down their earlier dire warnings about the dangers of an FSLN-led government.

Imperialism's tactics up until now have revolved around maintaining an outward appearance of fairness and friendliness toward the new government, while exploiting the economic devastation to arrest and prepare to reverse the revolutionary process. Somoza inflicted massive destruction on the country during his final year in power. More than 35,000 people were killed in the last year alone, and 100,000 wounded. Damage to schools, hospitals, and social services amounted to \$80 million. Agricultural production was severely disrupted and 40 percent of the population goes without adequate food. More than half the active population is unemployed, and a quarter of industrial plants were damaged by Somoza's bombs.

All this was superimposed on the growing misery caused by the 1972 earthquake damage (Somoza stole millions of dollars in international reconstruction aid to expand his personal financial empire), by other consequences of the dictator's grand-scale corruption, and by the blows of the world capitalist economic crisis. These economic problems will be exacerbated as an inevitable food crop shortage develops during the early months of 1980.

Taking advantage of this social and economic dislocation, Washington is seeking to limit the flow of aid into Nicaragua to intensify the pressures bearing down on the FSLN-led government and on the morale of the Nicaraguan masses. The Carter administration promises credits, both loans and aid. But aside from some initially limited food aid, they have not given a single penny. At the same time, a certain amount of the aid from its imperialist allies, is funneled not to the government but to projects directly strengthening imperialist links with the private sector, thus reinforcing the remaining points of support for the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. The policy as a whole revolves around buying time for the Nicaraguan capitalists. Washington is counting on the

coming economic pressures to alienate the petty bourgeoisie and parts of the toilers and hopes this will gradually demobilize the masses and divide the FSLN itself.

The imperialists are organizing these pressures on Nicaragua through their international financial institutions; their domination of trade and distribution in the world capitalist market; the Latin American bourgeoisies, who desperately fear a new Cuba; and the international apparatus of the Social Democracy, which acts as a political tool of world capitalism, especially for the Western European powers.

By avoiding a public propaganda campaign against the Sandinista revolution, Washington at the same time aims to erode international solidarity with Nicaragua. It wants to project the image that adequate aid is being sent and that there is no danger of imperialist-orchestrated military intervention. It even hopes to foster the knee-jerk sectarian reaction among some radicals that if Washington isn't openly yelping, then the Nicaraguan government must be betraying the masses. Unfortunately, the petty-bourgeois left has largely taken the bait in the United States, the country whose government poses the greatest threat to Nicaragua. Those sectarians that are not already advocating the overthrow of the new government and denouncing the FSLN, are mimicking the low-key coverage of the bourgeois press and abstaining from solidarity efforts.

Meanwhile, Nicaragua's aid needs are not close to being met. And there is a real danger of military intervention connected to the coming conflicts with the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie or explosions over the extension of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The U.S. and Honduran governments are aiding and intimately collaborating with the remnants of the Somocista National Guard. Moreover, Washington has launched an aggressive military buildup in the Caribbean and renewed calls for a Latin American "regional military peace-keeping force." By mid-November 1979, Somocista National Guard units, some integrated into the Honduran army, began incursions into Nicaragua to engage the FSLN in battle. The Honduran air force began illegal overflights of Nicaragua. Nicaraguan diplomats faced intense harassment—including arrests and beatings—in the Honduran capital, to such a degree that all personnel but one chargé d'affaires were withdrawn from the Tegucigalpa embassy by the Nicaraguan junta. Washington's silence in the face of the attacks on Managua's emissaries in Honduras stands in sharp contrast to its hue and cry over the events in Tehran in the same period.

9. Washington launched a new series of threats against Cuba in September on the pretext that a Soviet "combat brigade" was stationed there. This was linked both with their attempts to discredit Cuba's leadership of the non-aligned conference

and with the squeeze on Nicaragua. The Cuban government has responded with enthusiastic solidarity and material assistance to Nicaragua. It has issued an embarrassing challenge to the U.S. government for an emulation competition to see who can provide the most aid to reconstruct Nicaragua. Moreover, Washington knows that Cuba is aiding the new government on the island of Grenada and liberation groups throughout Central America. In a September 30 interview presented for nationwide broadcast over CBS television's "60 Minutes" show in the United States, Castro was questioned about Cuban aid to the opponents of the dictatorship in El Salvador. Castro said: "I neither confirm it nor deny it. I proclaim it as a right; furthermore, as a duty."

Above all, the U.S. rulers know that Cuban aid to Nicaragua helps counteract imperialist pressure and thereby strengthens the ability of the FSLN-led government to reconstruct Nicaragua along socialist lines. They know that the FSLN looks to the Cuban workers state as a model for social and economic development.

Furthermore, in light of Cuba's role in Africa, the imperialists are convinced that Cuba will come to the aid of Nicaragua in the event of a direct U.S. or U.S.-engineered attack, posing a confrontation of international proportions.

Carter's moves in the Caribbean are also a warning to the Soviet Union. Washington is telling the Kremlin that it won't tolerate any substantial Soviet aid to Nicaragua. And it is pressuring Moscow to put the squeeze on Cuba to abandon its internationalist policies, including its aid to Nicaragua.

Cuba has made clear that it won't be intimidated, however. It responded to Carter's moves by asserting that "Cuba's dignity and sovereignty, its right to defend itself by any means it regards as appropriate, as well as its internationalist policy, will remain unshakeable." Castro pointedly included "our sister socialist nations" in his call for an emulation contest to aid Nicaragua.

In contrast to the anti-imperialist policies of the Castro leadership, the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Kremlin seeks to gain trade and diplomatic concessions from imperialism in return for using its power and influence to sabotage revolutionary struggles. So far, Moscow has heeded Washington's warning to withhold major assistance from Nicaragua. And following Moscow's lead, Stalinist parties around the world have given little coverage to the Nicaraguan revolution in their press and have not used their full influence to mount solidarity campaigns.

The aggressive maneuvers by the Carter administration over the past several months, together with Moscow's refusal to provide adequate aid to Nicaragua and its demonstrative support to the new military

regime in El Salvador, show that defending Cuba against imperialist pressure and fighting to lift the economic blockade are intertwined with defense of the Nicaraguan revolution.

10. As yet, the Sandinistas still lack the mass democratic-centralist proletarian party that would best enable them to meet the challenges and opportunities they face. Moreover, the FSLN faces huge obstacles: economic dislocation, which will produce great hardships—and class conflicts—in the early months of the 1980s; a shortage of political cadres; the inexperience of the new mass organizations; cultural deprivation imposed by imperialist subjugation; and maneuvers by imperialism and the indigenous capitalists.

Yet the FSLN's course up to now, together with the growing militancy and political class consciousness of the workers, gives no cause for pessimism.

Faced with the threat of imperialist intervention and counterrevolutionary subversion, the Sandinistas have moved rapidly to build a professional revolutionary army, as well as a new police force under FSLN control. It has also announced plans to construct a large workplace-based militia, and draw the CDSs into the fight against rightist terror.

But direct military threats are not the only danger to the revolution. The economy's fundamental economic laws foster capital accumulation and expanding capitalist economic power on the basis of the large remaining blocs of private property in the means of production.

The economic chaos caused by Somoza is the biggest factor operating to the benefit of the exploiters inside and outside Nicaragua. Despite the measures that the government has already taken in health, education, and other areas of social welfare, an austerity situation has been imposed on the country.

As the government has correctly taken steps to revive a minimum of industrial and agricultural production, in the private as well as the public sector, the economic power of the bourgeoisie and the inevitable dangers associated with that power have become more obvious. The capitalists insist on credit and currency concessions, alleviation of trade controls, and assurances that wage demands resulting from the growing unionization of workers will not undercut profitability. A confrontation is looming over these issues.

The bourgeoisie retain their Chambers of Commerce and Industry, which are supported by their counterparts elsewhere in Central America and by international financial institutions. While the bourgeois political parties—the Social Democrats, Social Christians, Democratic Conservatives, and others—presently have a very narrow popular appeal, they nonetheless serve as a vehicle for organizing propaganda campaigns against the government and mass organizations. The Catholic

Church hierarchy retains some credibility among the Nicaraguan masses. Sections of it are another potential support for rebuilding bourgeois political power.

The most important bourgeois propaganda instrument in this regard is the country's largest daily, *La Prensa*, though even this is limited by the necessity, given conditions in Nicaragua, for *La Prensa* to open its pages every day to FSLN leaders, laying out the Sandinista perspective or responding to criticisms of policies of the government or FSLN.

The presence of bourgeois figures in the junta and cabinet is not a mere decoration. It is an expression of the fact that the contradiction between the class character of the workers and peasants government and the bourgeois state has yet to be resolved. As the government is buffeted by conflicting class pressures, by the initiatives and counterinitiatives of the toilers and the exploiters, movement toward or away from establishment of a workers state will find its reflection in alterations in personnel in the junta, the ministries, and the central bank.

It would be a blunder to conclude from this, however, that progress toward a progressive resolution of this contradiction can be furthered by agitation around the slogan, "Bourgeois ministers out of the government!" Such a schema ignores the real location of military and political power, the deepgoing character of the break in continuity with the old regime, the progression of radical measures by the new workers and peasants government, and the real process through which the masses will advance their consciousness to drive the revolution forward. It would be infantile leftism to deliberately provoke a premature confrontation with the bourgeoisie over the composition of the junta and cabinet. The decisive conflicts will grow out of the intensification of the class struggle, which will be reflected in the government; as the bourgeois forces in the government make themselves known by their deeds, it will then become timely to fight for their ouster.

The Nicaraguan capitalists face the growing power of the Sandinista army and police, the CDSs, the CST, the ATC, the women's and youth organizations. The FSLN has sought ways to organize their power, including taking more governmental prerogatives. It encourages the democratic organization of these committees on a neighborhood and district level, and has projected the next stage as consolidation on a municipal level. National gatherings of CDS and ATC activists have already been held, and a provisional National Council of the CDSs has been set up. Congresses of CDS and CST delegates are scheduled to be held in early 1980.

The Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, on the other hand, is virulently opposed to attributing any governmental authority to these organizations, insisting that they are

merely FSLN bodies. This dispute has become a public debate.

The coordination and centralization of these mass organizations on a municipal, regional, and national level—together with the extension of workers control over all areas of production and economic activity, both privately owned and nationalized—would further weaken the social and economic power of the capitalists and sharpen the class confrontation. Such steps would prepare the way for the establishment of a workers state based on these mass organizations and generalized workers control evolving toward workers management as democratic participation by the toilers in national economic and social planning is established.

Prospects for development toward institutionalized workers democracy along these lines show the sectarian error of placing the demand on the Nicaraguan government to organize the election of a constituent assembly. Those in the radical movement who advance this slogan seek to promote the false idea that the government is a bourgeois coalition regime, or that the FSLN is depriving the masses of their democratic rights in order to reconsolidate capitalist power. However, it is these sectarians themselves who actually counterpose an unfounded schema to the process by which the Nicaraguan toilers have already begun to assert their own power against that of the class enemy. It's no accident that variations on the same theme are one of the complaints hurled by the bourgeoisie against the Sandinistas.

The FSLN's stated intention to develop the mass organizations as the basis for popular power in Nicaragua opens up the most positive framework, as *Barricada* has explained, for the masses to create "their own means of resolving their political, social, and economic problems," "to defend themselves against their enemies, and to consolidate the revolution." It is this dynamic of the revolution that the capitalists will oppose most strongly, demanding that the junta take steps to regulate and hold back the extension of the power of the mass organizations.

11. The success of the FSLN, and the revolutionary workers who join them, in building a mass-based vanguard party will be an extremely important factor in increasing the chances that the workers and peasants government will culminate in the establishment of a workers state that can effectively fight to defend and extend the revolution. No single element is more important to the consolidation of the gains of the revolution than forging a party of the Nicaraguan working class that takes the political leadership in building a centralized system of democratic workers and peasants councils to assume governmental power.

Combating capitalist sabotage and reconstructing Nicaragua will require an ever-wider exchange of viewpoints within

the camp of the toilers over how best to move forward to solve their problems. The greatest possible democracy and the cultivation of an atmosphere encouraging the free expression of ideas can only strengthen the revolution and the commitment of the masses to it. It is the only means to tap the full talents of the workers and peasants, who must be drawn into the revolutionary movement in increasing numbers and become the overwhelming bulk of its cadres and leaders.

It is natural that different currents of thought will emerge, even among the most advanced workers collaborating to build their vanguard party. Various tendencies or parties will arise, reflecting the uneven development of class consciousness among the workers. The Sandinistas know from their own experience that tendencies and political differences, even sharp ones, can develop among revolutionists.

Impatience with the serious political errors and often provocative behavior of some sectarian organizations, however, led the FSLN in September and October to publicly lump these groups together with the Somocistas. During the campaign against right-wing terror launched under the slogan "Control Somocismo—defend the revolution," the "ultralefts" were mentioned in speeches, on the radio, and in *Barricada* as being among the counterrevolutionary forces that had to be smashed. Detentions and other administrative measures were taken against members of some of these organizations, without presentation of proof of any likely or actual crimes that would justify such measures.

By November a modification in the FSLN's approach to the sectarian-led organizations was becoming evident. FSLN leaders announced that evidence now showed that bank robberies previously attributed to MILPAS\* had been committed by Somocistas posing as radicals. Speeches by some FSLN leaders, while containing contradictory statements, included offers to open a "dialogue" with the sectarian groups. In addition, all of those detained were released.

Nonetheless, there has still been no definitive public political clarification on this important matter by FSLN leaders.

The pro-Moscow Stalinists in Nicaragua, who had always attacked the FSLN itself for being "ultraleft," will continue to push in the direction of stifling workers democracy. Their attacks are in reality aimed at the toiling masses and at all revolutionists—above all the FSLN—since

their objective is to arrest the revolution at the "bourgeois democratic stage." Any policy of repression within the workers movement would play into their hands.

Equating Somozaism and counterrevolution with those under the influence of petty-bourgeois pressures and ideas could also lead to an underestimation of the dangers posed by the real class enemy—both among the capitalists who backed Somoza, those who opposed him for whatever reason, and their powerful allies centered in the United States. As the class polarization deepens, it will be the forces of the bourgeoisie that spearhead the counterrevolution.

The revolutionary leadership must be able to distinguish between those in the radical movement who operate within the framework of the revolution and those who—and there will be some—desert to the camp of the class enemy and carry out crimes against the revolution.

The problems the Nicaraguan revolution faces and must immediately cope with are real and cannot be waved aside. It is sometimes necessary to make tactical concessions to the capitalists to avert economic reverses and premature confrontations.

The sectarian groups are wrong in their tendency to view such necessary concessions as incorrect in principle or betrayals of the revolution. They are a vital necessity in Nicaragua. At the same time, however, these organizations can sometimes reflect in a distorted way moods of sections of the masses. In order to effectively lead the masses, the revolutionary vanguard should openly explain its considerations to the workers and peasants when it believes concessions are necessary.

An important part of this process of interaction between the masses and their vanguard is politically confronting the ultraleft sectarians and explaining what is wrong with their infantile proposals. Repression cuts across this political clarification, and makes it more difficult to win these cadres to a genuinely revolutionary course.

Furthermore, the workers and peasants will take initiatives that go beyond the leadership's immediate plans. This is one of the keys to all revolutionary uprisings and victories. The leadership's capacity to respond positively to such initiatives to drive the process forward will be a prime element in the consummation of the objectives of the revolution.

The FSLN's contradictory moves this fall toward repression of its opponents on the left stand as an exception to their generally revolutionary course toward the development of mass popular organizations and respect for democratic rights. If this overall tendency prevails, the direction of the Nicaraguan revolution in this important respect will represent a significant advance over revolutionary Cuba. It could also stimulate motion toward the develop-

ment of democratic forms of proletarian power based on workers and peasants councils in Cuba.

12. Given the desperate economic situation in Nicaragua, a pressing objective of the government has been to restore a minimal level of production in the privately owned industries and on the big and medium-sized farms still in the hands of their owners. It has appealed for aid from all countries to obtain credits and food.

As the example of Cuba has proven, however, the needs of the masses cannot be met if private ownership is maintained in the basic means of production. The laws of capitalist accumulation will distort the country's economy, subordinating real economic development and social betterment to the quest for profits and to imperialist exploitation. This would be the inevitable outcome of the maintenance of a "mixed economy" such as that described in the July 9 GRN program.

Thus the reconstruction of Nicaragua in the interests of the workers and poor peasants makes it necessary to extend workers control of production; shift the tax burden to the exploiters; repulse attempts by the imperialist financial institutions to use foreign debt as a means of pressure; nationalize the remaining privately owned large landholdings, industries, and big firms; develop the CDSs and unions, and widen the scope of their authority; expropriate the imperialist banks and enterprises; establish a monopoly on foreign trade; and thus lay the foundation for real economic and social planning.

It is along this road that the system of capitalist accumulation and labor exploitation can be destroyed. Once the qualitative turning point has been passed, and a workers state established, capitalist property relations could be restored only through an all-out civil war, requiring ruthless and massive military intervention by imperialism.

These measures, of course, would mark the final showdown with the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie and its backers in Washington and on Wall Street. The FSLN has correctly acted on the recognition that steps in this direction go hand in hand with, and must be preceded by raising the consciousness and organization of the toilers. The class struggle must be taken into the countryside. The CDSs, CST, ATC, Sandinista army, and the new youth and women's organizations must all be expanded and strengthened. The new militias must be established and trained. The new party must be built. All this requires time, and premature confrontations can set back rather than advance the process.

While it would be adventuristic to try to force the rhythm of the class struggle, it is also true that the pace of polarization and confrontation cannot be controlled by preconceived plans. The tempo will be dictated by the blows and

\*The Frente Obrero (Workers Front), the trade-union arm of a centrist group with Maoist origins that earlier had split from the FSLN, was the main target of the antiultraleft campaign. It had an armed wing during the *insurrection* called the Milicias Populares Antisomocistas (MILPAS—Anti-Somoza People's Militias).



counterblows between the masses and FSLN on one side, and the exploiters on the other. With each new encroachment against the property and prerogatives of the landlords and business interests, the likelihood grows that some section of the bourgeoisie will throw down the gauntlet. In addition to radical measures by the government, the workers and peasants—suffering under economic burdens, capitalist sabotage, and social dislocation—will themselves take initiatives on the land, in their factories, and in the barrios. This is the historic record of the Russian, Cuban, and every other socialist revolution; there is an accelerating dialectical interplay between the leadership and the initiatives and responses by the masses, often unforeseen by the leadership.

In revolutionary situations above all, history confirms Frederick Engels' observation that when controlled forces are put in motion, uncontrolled forces are inevitably put in motion as well. No amount of political preparation can annul this consequence of the class struggle. Instead, the aim of such preparation must be to increase the self-confidence and readiness of the masses to respond to new turns by defending their conquests and propelling their struggle forward. That is where their consciousness, organization, and mobilization will prove decisive. It is correct to make concessions to the class enemy when the relationship of forces leaves no alternative. But the masses must be told the class truth about such concessions, so that they can be better prepared to ward off the concomitant dangers.

All this highlights the need for a revolutionary-Marxist proletarian party to unify and lead the workers and their allies in accomplishing these tasks and defeating their class enemy. Forging the initial cadres of such a party out of the leadership and ranks of the FSLN would not only facilitate the socialist reconstruction of Nicaragua, but would mark an advance for the entire international workers movement in the fight to resolve the historic crisis of proletarian leadership.

13. The revolution in Nicaragua and the political evolution of the FSLN present an enormous opportunity and responsibility for the Fourth International. These developments pose new tests for us as we strive to measure up to our historic task of solving the leadership crisis of the world working class and constructing an international party of socialist revolution. The cadres of the world Trotskyist movement are the irreplaceable nucleus of that world proletarian party. We carry forward the Leninist program and transitional method indispensable to the victory of the toilers over the economic and social catastrophe and nuclear annihilation that will otherwise be brought down on humanity by imperialism.

Due to the crimes and obstructions of the Social-Democracy and Stalinism, however,

the construction of a mass revolutionary workers international is a task that is still only at its beginning stage. The development of revolutionary currents that bypass Stalinism such as those in Cuba, and now in Nicaragua, are thus of the greatest importance to the Fourth International and to the further development of our prospects and our revolutionary program.

As Trotsky explained, in the death agony of capitalism revolutionists of action will continually emerge out of the class battles provoked by the exploiters' ruthless drive for profits. These fighters will arise not only out of the anti-imperialist struggle, but within the labor movement and other organizations of the oppressed in the imperialist countries. History will judge the Fourth International by our capacity to link up with these currents, integrate ourselves in them, learn from them, and help steel them politically in the program of Leninism, and in that process build the world proletarian party that can take on the imperialists in battle and defeat them.

Along this strategic line of march, we recognize in the leadership of the FSLN fellow revolutionists who have already demonstrated their internationalism, their desire to move forward to a socialist Nicaragua, and their intention to build a vanguard party. On that basis, the Fourth International seeks political collaboration with them on all the big questions facing the workers of Nicaragua and of the entire world.

This course runs directly counter to that taken by several organizations that consider themselves Trotskyist—by the Bolshevik Faction, by the Socialist Workers Organization of Costa Rica (OST) and its Nicaraguan sister organization, Revolutionary Socialist Group (GRS), and by the Revolutionary Marxist League (LMR) in Nicaragua. Boiled down to its essentials, the political line of all three of the above has been opposition to the new Nicaraguan government as a bourgeois government and the construction of political parties in opposition to that projected by the FSLN.

The Simón Bolívar Brigade (BSB) established under the direction of the Bolshevik Faction, carried this sectarian line to the point of criminal adventure—sending to Nicaragua and maintaining there an armed unit outside the discipline of the new revolutionary army or the people's militia. The BSB falsely portrayed itself as an FSLN unit in order to win popular sympathy. As a result, the FSLN leadership—after attempting to persuade the BSB to take its place among the forces striving to advance the revolution and respecting revolutionary legality—expelled the Brigade's non-Nicaraguan members.

Having been called to order by leading bodies of the Fourth International for its utterly undisciplined and disloyal course, which was not conceived to advance the interests of the workers and peasants of Nicaragua, the Bolshevik Faction orga-

nized a split on the eve of the International's World Congress. It has been joined in this walkout by the leadership of the Nicaraguan LMR and the Costa Rican OST, and is now attempting to organize a rump "world conference" with other sectarian groups internationally that call themselves Trotskyist and who share a sectarian disdain for and lack of comprehension of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The Fourth International condemns and repudiates the activities of the Simón Bolívar Brigade and rejects the political views on the Nicaraguan Revolution of the Bolshevik Faction, the LMR, and the OST. The Fourth International has no organized forces in Nicaragua—the activities of the latter groups have been organized outside the guidance of, or collaboration with, the elected leadership bodies of the Fourth International. As mentioned earlier, these groups have now split from the Fourth International. The policies of these groups are diametrically opposed to those of the Fourth International and can only harm the opportunities to win a hearing for Trotskyist ideas in Nicaragua and advance our international party-building perspective.

Partisans of the Fourth International present their ideas as loyal and hard-working militants in the framework of the organization that led the overthrow of Somoza and is today guiding the revolution forward.

By advancing our program and perspectives, the Fourth International places itself firmly on the side of the FSLN's battle to promote and achieve the victory of the socialist revolution in Nicaragua. Our main contributions in this regard are:

- Active participation inside and outside Nicaragua in efforts to reconstruct the country and defend the revolution from all its enemies, above all U.S. imperialism

- Advancing the development of the unions, of mass organizations and of democratic workers and peasants councils to bring the masses into decision-making and strengthen the revolution; and

- Loyal participation in the FSLN's efforts to construct a revolutionary proletarian party, putting forward the fundamental program of Leninism in order to advance toward the mass world party of socialist revolution whose construction will be decisive in the defeat of exploitation and oppression on an international scale.

14. Outside Nicaragua, the Fourth International and its sections will mobilize all their forces to build broad, united solidarity and aid campaigns with the Nicaraguan revolution and help defend it against the threat of imperialist-orchestrated counterrevolution. Part of this will be a campaign against the blockade and other hostile acts against revolutionary Cuba. We will energetically work with others to involve the labor movement, farmers organizations, organizations of oppressed national minorities, women's groups,

youth organizations, and others in a vast effort to publicize the truth about what's happening in Nicaragua and mobilize solidarity and aid with the Nicaraguan people.

This is an especially important responsibility for members of the Fourth International in Latin America, where the direct impact of the Nicaraguan revolution is the greatest, and in the United States, which not only installed and maintained the Somoza tyranny in power but today represents the most powerful enemy of the revolution. In placing ourselves in the front ranks of such a solidarity and aid campaign, the Fourth International will help revive the example of proletarian internationalism demonstrated by the worldwide movement against the imperialist war in Vietnam.

We will demand that the imperialist governments provide whatever economic, agricultural, and medical aid is asked for by the Nicaraguan government—channeled through the official government and mass organizations and with no strings attached. We will back up Commandante Daniel Ortega's proposal before the United Nations that Nicaragua's burdensome debt should be assumed "by the developed countries, by the economically powerful countries, and especially those that fed Somozaism with financing." That means demanding that the imperialist governments and all imperialist financial institutions cancel all of Nicaragua's debts.

The Fourth International calls on the mass workers and farmers organizations throughout the world to make resources available to aid their Nicaraguan brothers and sisters.

We know that political and material solidarity can be decisive to the outcome of the revolutionary process in Nicaragua. The FSLN's steps to encourage the development of such an international campaign show that it too recognizes this fact.

The Fourth International also understands that the socialist revolution that has begun in Nicaragua is an important breakthrough in combatting the isolation of Cuba and hastening revolutionary prospects throughout Central and South America and in the Caribbean.

Finally, we know that the establishment of the second workers state in the Western Hemisphere would further weaken world imperialism, inspire and educate the oppressed and exploited around the world, and buy precious time for the workers in the advanced capitalist countries to take political power out of the hands of the warmakers and exploiters and open the road to a peaceful and prosperous socialist future for all humanity.

15. The outcome of the deepening confrontation of class forces in Nicaragua will profoundly affect the Cuban workers and peasants and the outlook of their leadership. The future of the two revolutions are now inextricably linked.

The establishment of a workers state in Nicaragua would make possible another

huge step forward in the struggle to resolve the crisis of leadership of the world proletariat. It would have an immediate, positive impact inside Cuba, and its weight would be felt throughout the Caribbean and Central America. It would spur the development of revolutionary forces, and strengthen them in their conflict with Stalinist and Social Democratic betrayers, and centrist vacillators.

As a result, the door would be opened further to a process that could lead the Castroist leadership, the FSLN, and other revolutionists linking up with the Fourth International in steps toward building a mass world party of socialist revolution.

The Fourth International must prepare for the showdown that is approaching in a matter of months. Decisive moves towards the establishment of a workers state in Nicaragua will entail a head on confrontation with the Central American bourgeoisies and the power of Yankee imperialism. The leadership of the Cuban revolution will face one of its biggest tests since the missile crisis of 1962. Every current claiming to be revolutionary will be tested to the end.

Today it is the heroic workers and peasants of Nicaragua who are on the front lines of the advancing world socialist revolution. We will be tested by our capacity to respond with courage and decisiveness, to throw our forces into the struggle without hesitation or delay, to mobilize and lead all those we influence. Only along that road can we advance the construction of the world party of socialist revolution.

# Counterline Amendments to 'Revolution on the March'

## The Economic Situation and the Political Consequences

At end of point 7, following "... take in this area" insert:

The basic choice faced by the toilers in Nicaragua, and by the FSLN is clear. There is nothing wrong in principle with limited tactical economic concessions to the capitalists. However, it is absolutely illusory to believe that any serious relaunching of the capitalist economy can take place with purely cosmetic concessions to the bourgeoisie. Any serious increase in production on a capitalist basis would only be undertaken if accompanied by really significant moves of austerity against the working class—moves which would disorient and demobilize sections of the toilers, slow down mass mobilizations, and give greater room for capitalist political maneuvers.

Above all, however, what the bourgeoisie would demand for a significant increase in production on a capitalist basis would be guarantees against its own expropriation—guarantees which could not be purely verbal but which would have to involve placing a brake on the mass mobilizations and organizations. This crucial condition is not today fulfilled in Nicaragua, nor could it be without a process which would seriously endanger the revolution. For this reason no serious relaunching of production on a capitalist basis will in fact take place in Nicaragua.

Any illusion that, by "clever" concessions, a prolonged period of coexistence with bourgeois economy can be maintained in the present political relationship of forces is, therefore, extremely dangerous. The FSLN will not be able to avoid the basic choice of moving to expropriate the capitalist class, or of blocking the mobilizations of the masses in order to

maintain an alliance with sections of the bourgeoisie. This latter course would inevitably result in a significant move in the political relationship of forces in favor of capitalism.

This choice will be made even more stark by the policy which imperialism will adopt. It is quite false to believe that the policy of economic concessions and of incessant military pressure are counterposed ones for imperialism. On the contrary, the two complement each other. The aim will be to provide the Nicaraguan masses with the apparent choice of bloody intervention by imperialism if they move toward a "Cuban" solution and the establishment of a workers state, or of economic aid and relief if they make concessions to capitalism. This twin interlinked approach will undoubtedly be increasingly applied in the coming months as the economic situation continues to deteriorate—particularly as next year is entered, as real conditions of economic dislocation, mass unemployment, and literal mass hunger develop further.

It is also by these means that the capitalist class in Nicaragua, which is today greatly weakened, can have the weight of imperialism put behind it. The capitalist forces in Nicaragua, including those in the

GRN, will attempt to appear before the masses as promising real economic relief and aid to immediate problems if their solutions are adopted. This combination of external military threats and simultaneously of promised economic concessions, the policy of "Marshall aid," is a classic one of imperialism.

In this interplay of economic and politi-

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*These amendments to the majority resolution "Revolution on the March" were submitted by United Secretariat member Alan Jones. The vote of delegates and fraternal observers was: 7 for, 82 against, 17.5 abstentions, 6.5 not voting.*

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cal developments, it is the latter which are decisive. Any limited economic concessions to the capitalists which are found useful today must be placed firmly in the context that it is only increasing the scope of mobilization and organization of the masses that can develop the existing relationship of class forces. Any blocking of this process of mass mobilization and organization is far more dangerous in Nicaragua today than any failure to make tactical economic concessions to capitalist sectors.

## On the Government

At the end of point 10, paragraph 9, following "... this transitional phase," insert:

Although at present gravely weakened, the presence of representatives of sectors

of the bourgeoisie within this government gives to the capitalist class a potential point of leverage for slowing down, and at a later stage challenging, the progress of the revolution. This will be particularly the case as they are intertwined with interna-

tional imperialist and capitalist interests—a policy which will be consciously fostered by imperialism. Any serious development of the revolution will inevitably involve a confrontation with these bourgeois forces and a split in the government. The social and political transformation to a workers state in Nicaragua therefore cannot be executed without a split of the GRN. It is, in the final analysis, despite its radical measures, a bourgeois government.

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*Point 10, paragraph 11, delete second sentence:*

“It can lead either to the course followed by the Algerian revolution or the path traced by the Cuban revolution.”

*Insert:*

Either the bourgeois forces in the country, intertwined with imperialism, will slow down and stall the revolution and thereby permit the rebuilding of bourgeois power, or the government will split—inaugurating a workers and peasants government and a clash between the classes

which can only culminate in the creation of a workers state or the defeat of the workers and peasants government (i.e., a Cuban or an Algerian development).

\* \* \*

*At end of point 11, following “. . . most effectively prepared for” insert:*

A workers and peasants government based on the popular mass organizations can lead the revolution in the final confrontation with the bourgeoisie and the creation of the second workers state in Latin America.

A political line for state power and resolving the question of government in Nicaragua today must concentrate on the construction, consolidation, and centralization of the mass organizations which grew up during and following the civil war. The coordination of defense committees (CDSs) and militias shows the way forward.

The goal is to build up the necessary base for a national structure of mass organizations with the aim of creating a workers and peasants government independent of the bourgeoisie.

## On the Role of Cuba

*Point 10, paragraph 9, after the first of three amendments entitled ‘On the Government,’ following “. . . a bourgeois government,” insert:*

A major element in attempting to confront these problems is the role played by the Cuban leadership. Wide sectors of the FSLN leadership were given their political and military training on a Cuban line. Cuba has put major material resources into Nicaragua, and the prestige and links of the Cuban leadership with the top cadre of the FSLN and with the masses in Nicaragua is immense.

In relation to the material aid given by the Cuban workers state, this is exemplary. If the bureaucratic leaderships of the other workers states, and in the first place the USSR, put even a tiny part of the resources available to them, compared to Cuba, into aid to Nicaragua the political and material situation would be transformed. The imperialist and bourgeois offensive to present the only alternative to following their line of imperialist aid and capitalist economy as being that of mass economic dislocation and poverty would lose a considerable amount of its effect. The fact that the USSR refuses to do this in the interests of “detente” with the United States once again demonstrates the nature of the Soviet bureaucracy. The fact that the Cuban state is prepared to put major material aid into Nicaragua is hailed by all revolutionaries.

When it comes to the political advice and proposals put forward by the Cuban leadership, however, such unequivocally enthusiastic support cannot be given. The Cu-

ban masses unequivocally wish to see the destruction of capitalism in Nicaragua and the creation of the second free territory of the Americas. But in the international relationship of forces which exists today in Central America, such a goal will require not only honest and earnest intentions, but also a clear political orientation to the creation of a workers state and the steps and dynamic necessary to achieve this.

On the political level, however, the orientation of the Cuban leadership today does not give such a clear orientation of the type which is needed—particularly in relation to alliances with bourgeois forces. In Ethiopia, Angola, and Jamaica a policy of long-term alliances with sections of the bourgeoisie has been put forward. Such an orientation for Latin America was explicitly reaffirmed at the 1975 Havana conference of Communist parties. In relation to Nicaragua, Fidel Castro has unequivocally raised the slogan of “Long live the Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction”—that is, a government of coalition with sections of the bourgeoisie, and paid tribute to “something new in Latin American relations, something that sets an example for other regions in the world; namely, the way in which the governments of Panama, Costa Rica, and Mexico, as well as the member countries of the subregional Andean Pact—Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela—

acted in concert and solidarity to achieve a just solution of the Nicaraguan problem.”<sup>2</sup> Fidel has talked of “a great democratic, pro-independence, and anti-interventionist front developed tacitly in Latin America, something of historic significance and enormous importance,” and stated that, “In the creation of this democratic anti-interventionist front which has formed, we must mention the names of people as well as countries: the names of Torrijos, Carazo, López Portillo, Manley, and Bishop. And it is also only fair to recall the name of a person who, although he is no longer president of his country, contributed a great deal to the development of its solidarity with the Sandinista struggle, the former president of Venezuela, Carlos Andrés Pérez.”<sup>3</sup>

We must state openly that we do not agree with these views at all. These statements are not those of the real road taken by the Cuban revolution but by the leaders of the USSR and the Communist Party which have served the people of Latin America so badly for so long.

If Torrijos, or López Portillo, or Pérez aided the struggle in Nicaragua, it was because of the pressure of the masses of their country who felt solidarity with the struggle of the Nicaraguan people and not because they are part of a “democratic anti-interventionist front” seeking a “just solution in Nicaragua.” Torrijos, López Portillo, or Pérez, and those like them, are implacably opposed to the creation of a workers state in Nicaragua—the only road which can truly gain national liberation and meet the just needs of the Nicaraguan people. They would prefer Nicaragua to be brought under the heel of imperialism than to see a second Cuba in Latin America. To take, and ask for material aid from Panama, Venezuela, or any other country is correct. But to place any political confidence in the present leaders of these countries, or to believe that they would seriously defend it against imperialist attacks, would be a grave error.

Also in Nicaragua itself we do not say with Fidel “Long live the Government of Reconstruction.” On the contrary, the bourgeois in this government will attempt to slow down and destroy the revolution. Any progress to socialism, the only solution for national liberation in Nicaragua, will lead to a clash and split with the bourgeoisie in this government, and not to its long life. To attempt to slow down the revolution, to attempt to have a long-term alliance with sectors of the capitalist class would be disastrous.

We believe the only road forward for Nicaragua is not the one which Fidel puts forward now but the one which the Cuban

2. Speech to the United Nations, October 12, 1979.

3. Speech, “The Triumph of Nicaraguan Independence,” July 26, 1979.

1. Speech, “The Triumph of Nicaraguan Independence,” July 26, 1979.

people themselves undertook in actions in 1959 and 1960. To remember that the only choice is either socialist revolution or a caricature of a revolution. The capitalist members of the GRN are not part of a "democratic anti-imperialist front" but the Urrutias, Pazos, and Fresquets of Nicaragua. To honor the Cuban revolution is not to follow some of the words of its leaders now but to remember its great deeds when it overthrew capitalism and created the first state really free of imperialism in Latin America.

We welcome the undying friendship of the Nicaraguan and Cuban people. We hail

### **On the Section of the Fourth International**

*Point 14, delete last three paragraphs, insert:*

In order to carry out the line of this resolution it is necessary to build a section of the Fourth International in Nicaragua. Given the concrete situation in that country the correct way to do this is to work as an organized current in the FSLN and the mass organizations it controls or has built.

Given the character of this organization, its leadership in the revolutionary overthrow of Somoza and the heroic and revolutionary role of its militants, this activity

the aid given by the Cuban government and people to Nicaragua. We welcome every call made by Fidel and the other leaders of Cuba to follow the real road taken by that revolution when it was born. But we call for struggle against all views, even when they come from Cuba, which tie the Nicaraguan workers to the capitalist class in the government, in the economy, or internationally. The great lesson that Fidel Castro and the Cuban people taught to Latin America was not of a "democratic anti-interventionist front" but that the only choice is either socialist revolution or no revolution at all.

is not at all that of the type of entryism in the mass reformist parties. We do not today place any limits on any section of the FSLN, including its leadership, to develop to revolutionary Marxist positions and our approach is on this basis. As long as the FSLN defends the revolutionary interests of the working class we operate as organized, loyal militants of this organization seeking to win it to the positions we consider correct by means of democratic discussion. We argue for the FSLN to establish a mass working-class party in Nicaragua and not to delay this process. If

it moves to establish a party of a different type we should argue for it to become such a workers party. We should argue and act in any party set up by the FSLN in the same way.

In the event that the FSLN will not agree to our participating as an organized current in this way, or fails to establish a party, and that we are, therefore, forced to set up an independent group, we nevertheless should continue to operate toward the FSLN with the same attitude outlined above. We should show by our action that there is no contradiction whatever between our program and the aspirations of revolutionary militants of the FSLN—on the contrary we aim to show by honest comradesly debate and struggle that our ideas best express the revolutionary ideals the Sandinista fighters are struggling for. We are not maneuvering but honest in expressing our position that we will be exemplary loyal militants of an FSLN which defends the revolutionary interests of the working class. All our militants must conduct themselves with this spirit even if today we are outside the FSLN, and must seek to show by their activity in Nicaragua itself, and by the international campaign of the FI, the right of Trotskyists to take their place as an organized current within the mass Leninist Party which must be built.



# Statement on Nicaragua

## The Beginning of the Proletarian Revolution

The flight of Somoza—who symbolized the unity of the state and held the National Guard together—through a combination of military activity by the FSLN and an insurrection of the masses of workers, both semiproletarians and peasants, signified the beginning of the proletarian revolution.

The insurrection meant the disarming of the National Guard, the beginning of land occupations, factory occupations, and the formation of thousands of committees. The plans of the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, which had agreed to maintain a substantial sector of the National Guard as a bulwark for reconstruction of the state, were defeated.

The impact of the Nicaraguan revolution is spreading rapidly in Central and Latin America. The military coup in El Salvador, encouraged by the United States and supported by the Soviet bureaucracy, is an attempt to prevent a revolutionary upsurge. But its effects have reached as far as Bolivia, where an impressive general strike against the military coup shook the foundations of the state.

We are on the eve of a shift in favor of the proletariat throughout the continent which can overcome the defeats in Chile (1973) and Argentina (1976).

## Nicaragua Endangers the 'Status Quo'

The danger that the Nicaraguan revolution may shake up the "status quo," makes all of the counterrevolutionary forces act in a concerted way.

U.S. imperialism is heavily involved. Direct military intervention cannot be ruled out, although because of the relationship of forces, this is highly improbable. Imperialist pressure is being applied with the help of the bourgeoisies in the region (Honduras, Panama, Costa Rica), through using aid and credits as a means of blackmail and trying to directly influence a sector of the Sandinista leadership.

For this reason, an international campaign of aid to the Nicaraguan revolution must have as its axis the struggle against imperialist pressure, and not, as Fidel Castro said on July 26 in Holguin, a campaign together with imperialism.

The Soviet bureaucracy has two arms with which to intervene in Nicaragua:

On the one hand, the three local Stalinist factions (PSN-R), (PSN-S), and (CP)—which, even though they are greatly discre-

dated in the eyes of the masses, are active—and on the other hand, the instrument which is more effective because of its prestige, that is, Castroism or the Communist Party of Cuba. Castro in his own words, on July 26 in Holguin, supported the Government of National Reconstruction in its effort to achieve stabilization and give credibility to the proimperialist bourgeoisies bordering on Nicaragua, openly declared that he does not want another Cuba.

## The Mass Movement and the FSLN

Nicaraguan Stalinism, which originally collaborated with Somoza and later subordinated itself to the anti-Somozaist bourgeoisie, is, together with Somozaist repression, primarily responsible for the organizational and trade-union backwardness of the Nicaraguan proletariat.

The FSLN, which arose in 1962 under the impact of the Cuban revolution and took up the anti-imperialist struggle of General Sandino, has a program that does not go beyond the nationalist and radical-democratic framework, calling for a policy of alliances with the bourgeoisie.

But we cannot compare the betrayals of the Stalinists with the militant struggles of the FSLN, in which hundreds gave their lives.

The masses struggle for their demands. To do this, they must get rid of the dictatorship. They need an organized *instrument*.

Owing to the absence of a mass-based working-class organization, the masses look to the FSLN, magnify it, endow it with all their demands and illusions and also with all their strength.

The policy of the FSLN leadership is caught in the contradiction between *its compromise with the bourgeoisie* and the activity of the masses to which it is not indifferent (unlike a Stalinist or Social-Democratic party).

The action of the masses was so impressive that in the final offensive only 15 percent of the combatants carried FSLN infantry weapons. For the anti-Somozaist bourgeoisie it was essential to collaborate with the leadership of the FSLN, and they did so under the leadership of Torrijos (Panama) and the Venezuelan and Mexican bourgeoisies.

## The Government of National Reconstruction

After dismantling the bourgeois state,

the masses conferred all power on the FSLN. Its leadership, determined to maintain the bourgeois-democratic stage, formed the Government of National Reconstruction.

Based on its policy, program, and composition, this government is one of class conciliation. It is bourgeois and is attempting to reconstruct the capitalist state. But this government needs the FSLN in order to develop its policy and carry out the tasks of government. The weakness of this government makes the political responsibility of the FSLN leadership all the greater, since it is the main support of the government vis-à-vis the masses.

The FSLN is not a bourgeois organization. Since the masses place their hopes in it, it is caught in a flagrant contradiction that is as yet unresolved.

A break by the leadership of the FSLN with imperialism and the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie is possible; the hypothesis contained in the Transitional Program is

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*This resolution was submitted by the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency. The vote of delegates and fraternal observers was: 5 for, 102.5 against, 1 abstention, 4.5 not voting.*

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possible. But a hypothetical future possibility cannot provide a cover for current policy. We Trotskyists must press for this break through *mass action*. Polarization not only of the ranks of the FSLN but also of a large sector of its leadership is possible. The Fourth International must encourage this.

## A Policy of Reconstructing The Bourgeois State

This is the program of the GRN. To carry it out, it needs three conditions: the political and economic reconstitution of the bourgeoisie; the reconstruction of the army as the bullwark of the state; and the dismemberment of the mass movement.

Let us look at the character of some of the most important measures that have been taken and how they fit in with these objectives:

- *Nationalization of the Bank.* With the destruction of capital, this means the nationalization of losses; as *Le Monde* said on October 12, the measure caused more

relief than consternation to those affected by it. It is a measure that favors the reconstruction of finance capital.

- Partial nationalization of foreign trade (suspended for two years). With freedom of action for industrial exports and imports—which are controlled by the multinationals.

- Reconstruction of private organizations: chambers of Commerce and Industry.

- Private high schools and universities remain untouched.

- Establishment of the Supreme Court (judicial power) with the anti-Somozaist bourgeoisie.

- Convening of the Council of State (legislative power) for the upcoming year (May).

These are some of the measures taken in a situation in which the bourgeois parties are cautiously reappearing and reorganizing.

In relation to the mass organizations:

- They propose to return the land of the anti-Somozaists to their owners, as Jaime Wheelock (minister of agriculture) said; this is leading to a struggle with the peasants, who are opposed to leaving the occupied lands.

- The government is attempting to control the Sandinista Defense Committees elected in the working-class neighborhoods to prevent their centralization.

- At first they called for the disarming of the militias, but because of the difficulties they are attempting to integrate them into the regular army.

- In the factories they are attempting to involve the committees and trade unions in comanagement of the companies, in “comanagement of reconstruction.”

All this is tied to the attempt to restrict liberties, with the first arrests of working-class leaders (the “sectarians,” according to *Perspectiva Mundial*); the establishment of fees for publishing newspapers; restrictions on contraceptives; and the arrest in recent weeks of doctors who performed abortions.

*In relation to the army:*

The reconstruction of a disciplined army, the bulwark of the GRN and its policy, is fundamental for the bourgeoisie.

The current objective is the *integration of the militias*. To do this, it is necessary to select its members and *detach them from the defense committees that are the sources of encouragement and mass support for the militias*. This is the current task, the most difficult one, since many militias are opposed to being disarmed in the first place and being sent to the barracks thereafter.

From all of the measures developed by the GRN and applied by the leadership of the FSLN, with many difficulties and contradictions, we can see that the leadership of the FSLN is not oriented at the present time toward a break with the bourgeoisie.

### Tasks That The Fourth International Must Propose To The Nicaraguan Masses

The repurchase of destroyed capital, guaranteeing of the exporters' profits, protection of the factories and land of the anti-Somozaists, and maintenance of the lifestyle of high officials are not measures that can satisfy the needs of the masses. Satisfying those needs is incompatible with the survival of capitalism.

The Fourth International wants the reconstruction of Nicaragua, *reconstruction in the interests of the working masses, the semiproletarians and peasants*.

The Government of National Reconstruction wants the *capitalist reconstruction of Nicaragua*. The struggle for “bread, land and liberty” is incompatible with the bourgeoisie and imperialism.

The Fourth International must intervene in the Nicaraguan mass movement to help the masses win their demands. The Fourth International does not have a sectarian position toward the FSLN. It must help the FSLN to break its agreements with the bourgeoisie. Its work among the masses is aimed at this objective. We must explain that the GRN is not Somoza and therefore the break is called for based on the current level of the masses. The Fourth International and Trotskyist militants should *under no circumstances encourage the FSLN's fatal illusions in its pact with the bourgeoisie*. Trotskyists point the way toward a workers and farmers government with each concrete step taken by the masses. To do this we need *a program and a party*.

*The struggle to satisfy the demands of the masses means the struggle for the independent organization of the masses as an indispensable instrument.*

We say *no to the disarming of the militias*, no to their integration. We struggle for the coordination and centralization of the militias within a revolutionary militia nationwide, defending the gains of the revolution.

However, the militias have *their reason for being as an armed expression of the CDSs and the factory committees, etc. No to their being sent to the barracks, no to their separation from the masses*.

The CDSs must be democratically centralized on a national level and coordinated with the factories, trade unions and peasants, pointing toward an alternative power and toward a *congress of the committees*.

Somoza's labor code must be abolished, and full union rights must be established, oppose comanagement and the attempt to convert the Sandinist trade-union federation into the “single federation.” *For a congress of trade unions*.

The Fourth International struggles with the masses, for the independence of their organizations from the state, *for what the masses urgently need*.

For thoroughgoing agrarian reform. Occupation of both Somozaist and non-

Somozaist estates. For guaranteeing of buying power and the right to a job. For the demands of women and youth; against the disarming of the militias, for the right of trade unions to organize and be independent.

For the completion of democratic tasks not yet completed, against all repressive measures (arrests), for freedom of the press. For a constituent assembly where the illegitimacy of the presence of bourgeois figures in the government could be raised without making a fetish of this slogan, as a slogan to be raised episodically in conjunction with the struggle for the organization of the masses (committees, trade unions) and break with the bourgeoisie, enabling us to raise concretely the demand for “bourgeois ministers out.” This will help us in the fight for a workers and farmers government (whose exact composition means a Sandinista government without bourgeois figures or something else that would be determined by the Nicaraguan Trotskyists).

### The Construction of a Trotskyist Party

The repetition of the Cuban model is possible; but even in this case we need an independent party—just like we need in Cuba.

The guarantee of the political process in Nicaragua developing in favor of the working class is a revolutionary program and party.

We must struggle to win the majority of FSLN militants, but to do this *we need real Trotskyists who intervene with their own program in mass actions* (not from editorial offices, but as part of the masses).

It is possible that a fitting tactic would be to enter the FSLN with flags unfurled, like a faction that defends its program. But this is not the problem in this discussion.

At the present time, the leadership of the FSLN is carrying on a debate over the Sandinist party and its formation. The Stalinists of the PSN consistently defend a single party, a single trade-union federation, women's and youth organizations that are arms of the party, ultimately of the state. They are trying to emulate the Cuban PSP that transformed the July 26th Movement.

We Trotskyists intervened in this polemic. We are for a workers party, not a single party, that breaks with the bourgeoisie, without bourgeois figures. And we demonstrate in mass action what program it must have.

The Fourth International outside Nicaragua has a great responsibility, not only to give a good political orientation to Nicaraguan Trotskyists and not impose its decisions, but first and foremost to carry out a solidarity campaign. But this campaign should not hide the deficiencies and dangers or the character of the government. It should not confuse the banners of the Fourth International with the present policy of the FSLN leadership.

# Resolutions on Indochina



U.S. bombs pulverized Kampuchea.

## The Sino-Indochinese Crisis

### I.

1. After carrying on a devastating war in Indochina for many years and creating immense ruin, American imperialism suffered a major defeat in 1975. The failure of the American intervention, brought about by the determined resistance of the Indochinese peoples as well as the rise of antiwar mobilizations and feeling in the United States, reflected the shift taking place in the world relationship of forces to the detriment of imperialism. It helped to accentuate this turn.

The heroic struggle of the Indochinese peoples showed that it was possible to win even against the powerful American army. The deep opposition among the masses to a new war, the social crisis in the United States, as well as the international situation resulting from the imperialist defeat, made it extremely difficult for the American government to resort again to sending large expeditionary forces in to prop up the neocolonial order.

Washington's credibility as the gendarme of the capitalist world was damaged. In these conditions, a crisis of political leadership opened up for the imperialists. The effects of this crisis have made themselves felt in the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, in all of southern Africa, in Ethiopia, and most recently in Iran and the Middle East.

In Indochina, the imperialist defeat led to the triumph of a process of permanent revolution throughout the region, in which national liberation and proletarian revolution were combined. This made possible the establishment of new workers states in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. In Southeast Asia, and first of all in Thailand, the American defeat promoted the development of liberation struggles and an upsurge of mobilizations of the urban masses and the poor peasants.

The entire system of imperialist domination in eastern Asia that was constructed by Washington in the 1960s and 1970s has been shaken to its foundations.

2. Even before the imperialist defeat,

tensions had appeared between the leaderships of the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Chinese Communist parties over political, economic, and diplomatic questions as well as the problem of borders. These tensions gradually developed into military confrontations, and led, four years after the victory, to the entry of regular Vietnamese troops into Kampuchea, as well as to the intervention of the Chinese army in Vietnam. The conflicts arising between bureaucratized workers states assumed an unprecedented gravity.

Today, resources that are vitally needed for the social and economic development of the Indochinese countries, which were devastated by the imperialist war, and to meet the fundamental needs of the working masses are being diverted to military ends. The imperialists are pursuing an active counterrevolutionary policy in the region. After some vacillation in the wake of the 1975 defeat, American imperialism has once again stepped up its pressure in eastern Asia. It maintains a strong military presence in South Korea and has beefed up the Park dictatorship's army. It has given massive support to the Thai regime and more generally to the regimes in the ASEAN countries. It has consolidated its air and naval forces and island bases in the Pacific. It maintains "special" ties with Taiwan. It has mounted an economic blockade of Vietnam.

These measures were designed to halt the processes that were set in motion by the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, whose impact on the working masses of eastern Asia was considerable. They were aimed at containing and crushing as rapidly as possible the anti-imperialist national liberation movements.

On the international level, the ideologies of the bourgeoisie have mounted a vast anticommunist campaign focusing on Cambodia and Vietnam. This campaign was begun as soon as it became clear that the Americans were going to be defeated in Indochina.

It is the duty of the international

workers movement to mobilize to defend the Indochinese revolutions, which are being threatened by imperialist maneuvers at the same time as they are being weakened by interbureaucratic conflicts. It is also the duty of the international workers movement to do everything possible to end the military confrontations between bureaucratized workers states, clashes for which the workers and peasants are paying a heavy price in blood. This is another tragic illustration of the price humanity must pay for the delay of the world revolution.

### II.

3. In face of the imperialist escalation in Indochina, the Chinese and Soviet leaderships should have continued their material aid, limited as it was, to the Indochinese revolution. To the contrary, after the defeat of the imperialists and the weakening of their capacity for action in Indochina, the Sino-Soviet conflict was to exercise a great weight in the evolution of the situation in the region.

At the root of this conflict—besides the *objectively* different positions in which the USSR and China stand in relation to imperialism—was the determination of the Soviet bureaucracy to maintain its control over the world Communist movement. This is an essential factor for preserving Stalinist monolithism and for applying the Soviet bureaucracy's policy of peaceful coexistence.

The maintenance of this monolithism was seen by the Soviet leadership as an important factor in assuring the stability of its rule within the Soviet Union. To advance its policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism, the Soviet bureaucracy needed to tighten its grip on the strategically key areas so as to avoid uncontrolled developments. Faced with the Chinese revolution, whose victory it was unable to prevent and a leadership over which it could not guarantee its control, it opted for isolating and weakening the Chinese workers state.



In 1960, this orientation led the USSR to cut off its technical aid to China, to inflict very grave blows on its economy, and to withdraw its military aid, despite the imperialist threat Beijing faced. Then, the Kremlin proceeded to station up to a third of its armed forces along the border with China.

In the context of the imperialists' change in attitude toward Beijing, the Chinese bureaucratic caste has affirmed its own national interests in opposition to the Kremlin. Beset by a grave internal crisis, the Chinese bureaucracy is relying on a policy of peaceful coexistence to meet the needs related to its economic choices, to reestablish a status quo in the region, and to limit as much as possible the repercussions of the victory of the Indochinese revolutions.

Hanoi's aim is not to spur the anti-imperialist struggles in the ASEAN countries. However, the orientation of the Vietnamese leadership—which tends toward de facto unification of Indochina under its control—as well as the links that this leadership has forged with the Soviet bureaucracy, constitute a factor that could endanger the Chinese leadership's plans for this region, which it considers should form part of its own sphere of influence.

Unable to establish its control over the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP), the Chinese bureaucracy is trying to isolate and weaken the Vietnamese workers state by methods analogous to those that the Soviet bureaucracy used against Beijing—diplomatic isolation, political denunciation, a halt to economic aid, military pressure.

4. Going back before 1975, the Soviet bureaucracy's defense of its own special interests, followed by the same policy on the part of the Chinese bureaucracy, had already forced the Indochinese peoples to pay a heavy price. The 1954 Geneva Accords robbed them of a large part of the victories they won on the battleground against French imperialism. The passivity of the USSR enabled Washington to build up the Diem regime and undertake a new war of aggression. Doling out its aid with an eyedropper, the Kremlin let the American intervention drag on.

As for Beijing, it, like Moscow, opposed the resumption of the armed resistance in South Vietnam in 1960. Beijing made it easier for Moscow to justify its meager aid to Vietnam by refusing to call publicly for forming a real united front in defense of the Indochinese revolutions. It remained unmoved by the pressure for this brought to bear in 1964 by the VCP, the Japanese and other Asian CPs, as well as by the Cuban leadership. The Soviet leadership, for its part, refused to break in fact with the Lon Nol regime in Cambodia, which was brought to power in 1970 by a CIA-fomented coup, because it was apprehensive about Beijing's influence over the

Cambodian CP and even over Sihanouk.

Subsequent to the new shifts in the Chinese bureaucracy's international policy that were carried out after the end of the Cultural Revolution, the effects of the combination of peaceful coexistence and the Sino-Soviet conflict made themselves felt more forcefully in Indochina. In July 1971, Nixon was given a public invitation to visit Beijing. In 1972, he met with Mao and then went to Moscow. The isolation of the Indochinese revolution was accentuated at a time when the imperialist military escalation was steadily increasing. Later, the Chinese bureaucracy officially adopted the "theory of three worlds." In the eyes of the Maoist leadership, the USSR became the "main enemy" of China, and therefore—following the logic typical of the bureaucracy—of the peoples of the world.

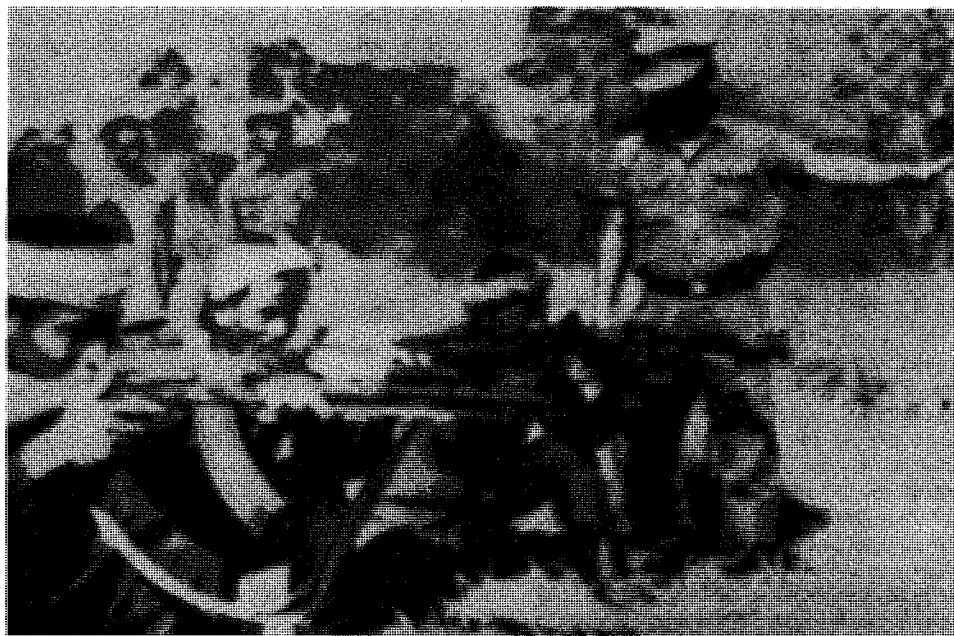
5. Differences had long ago appeared between the Vietnamese, Soviet, Chinese, and Cambodian leaderships. After the victory of the Indochinese revolutions, these differences were placed in a new context. The clashes between the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Chinese regimes developed within the framework of the Sino-Soviet conflict. This was a result of the relationships maintained by Moscow with Vietnam and China with Cambodia, the ruthlessness with which the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies defend their own interests, and the specific ways in which their policy of peaceful coexistence fitted in with the counteroffensive of the imperialists in the region, who had to rely on considerably lesser means of action than they had before their defeat in 1975.

### III.

6. Regardless of the weight exercised by the Sino-Soviet conflict in the crisis that is rending the Indochinese peninsula, this crisis cannot be explained simply by inter-bureaucratic duels taking place in a world from which imperialism is absent. Washington is no passive spectator to the events that are unfolding. It has not failed to see the opportunities for it offered by the worsening of the Sino-Soviet conflict in Asia as well as by the Chinese bureaucracy's policy of peaceful coexistence.

7. A century of colonial and neocolonial rule and almost forty years of war have drained the countries of Indochina. The ecology of the area was profoundly disrupted by the American military escalation. The economic infrastructure has been systematically destroyed. The draft animals essential to agriculture have been decimated. The irrigation network has suffered considerable damage. The human and social cost of this imperialist war is immeasurable. About 600,000 persons are estimated to have died in Cambodia during the five years of American intervention. About 50 percent of the total population of South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia was forcibly uprooted.

The situation that prevailed at the liberation of South Vietnam is an indication. More than 16 percent of the population had been killed or crippled; 56 percent had been left homeless. There were 3.5 million unemployed, with 4.5 million dependents. This gives an idea of the tragic scope of the economic and social problems that faced the Indochinese revolutions in the aftermath of victory. Such a situation could not fail to give rise to social and



Kampuchean opponents of Pol Pot in training in late 1978.



political tensions within the various countries and on the regional level.

This state of affairs, however, was not simply the objective consequence of the imperialist war. It was also the result of a conscious policy. The American imperialists maximized the destruction and slaughter in order to weaken in advance the regimes that were going to come out of the victory of the revolutions that they were failing to crush. After the collapse of their forces in 1975, they continued this policy of strangulation. They set up an economic blockade of the countries of Indochina. They rejected all diplomatic overtures, even though Hanoi dropped all preconditions for normalizing relations with the United States. They stepped up their pressure on Laos through Thailand, helping the Thai generals organize Meo, Lao, and Khmer counterrevolutionary groups.

8. The bogging down of its forces in Indochina and the rise of the antiwar movement in the United States forced Washington to recognize the People's Republic of China and profoundly revise its Asian strategy of "containment and roll back." It laid out a new orientation that took full account of the Chinese bureaucracy's desire to conduct a policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism. This policy began to be applied with the Kissinger and Nixon visits in 1971 and 1972. This radical change in the orientation of American policy in Asia—which made possible the turn in Chinese foreign policy—has been expressed most recently in the signing of treaties between China and the United States, and China and Japan that included the "antihgemony" clause demanded by Beijing.

American imperialism is not ready to pay the price for its alliance with Beijing of abandoning its policy of peaceful coexistence with Moscow. Peaceful coexistence with the Soviet bureaucracy remains essential in order to maintain insofar as possible the status quo in such important regions as Western Europe, the Mideast, and Latin America. Although the USSR today does not wield decisive weight in eastern Asia, it has shown its good will, for example, by giving assurances to the Thai regime. Washington also accords great political importance to signing strategic arms agreements with the Soviet bureaucracy.

However, the American imperialists are counting primarily on the Chinese bureaucracy to help them shore up the stability of neocolonial rule in eastern Asia, an important region for them both economically and strategically. They need Beijing's agreement to prepare the way for gaining international recognition of the "two Koreas" and thus freezing the situation on that peninsula; to create a climate favorable to the further rearmament of Japan—which is desired by both the Japanese and American bourgeoisies—to reconsolidate their military forces in the Pacific; to keep

their ties with Taiwan from interfering with Sino-American relations; to reassure the ASEAN regimes; to try to close the breach open since 1973 in Thailand; and to weaken and isolate the Indochinese revolutions.

The economic attractiveness of the market opened up by the Deng Xiaoping leadership's orientation for developing China is not sufficient in and of itself to explain the "Chinese option" Washington has taken in its Asian policy. This is all the more evident since the experience of trade agreements in the past between the imperialist powers and the bureaucratized workers states shows the gap between the promises of contracts and their actual fulfillment. It is apt to be revealed all too quickly how relatively modest China's means are for paying. Washington has taken this option primarily out of strategic considerations. For its own political reasons, the Chinese bureaucracy is making deals today with Washington and Tokyo aiming to establish a new status quo in eastern Asia.

9. The American government's policy was shown clearly at the time of the Chinese intervention in Vietnam, which must certainly have been discussed during Deng Xiaoping's visit to the United States in January 1979. Indeed, the attitude that Washington took on the occasion of this intervention contrasted sharply with the one it took in the aftermath of the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime by the Vietnamese army and the FUNKSN (Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation), or the stance it took in January 1978 when the Vietnamese-Cambodian conflict came out into the open.

The American government did not launch a violent anti-Chinese campaign on the order of the one it had unleashed previously against Vietnam. Instead, it issued belated and timid diplomatic statements calling simply for the withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam and for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from

Cambodia. It did not cancel the scheduled visit to Beijing by its secretary of commerce and in fact concluded new economic agreements with the Chinese. While the battle was raging, it raised the status of its diplomatic mission in Beijing to that of an embassy.

10. American imperialism is trying to exploit the consequences of the Sino-Soviet conflict in Asia to the fullest in order to strike blows against the Indochinese revolution. It is well aware of the economic, social, and political problems assailing Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. It is trying to aggravate these difficulties so as to choke off the revolutionary processes in the area that were given impetus by its defeat, and to tarnish in the eyes of the masses of Southeast Asia the example given by the struggle of the peoples of Indochina. Imperialism is reacting today to the victory of the Indochinese revolutions in the same way as it has done in the past to all revolutionary victories. It is doing everything it can to make stabilizing the new regimes more difficult. This includes promoting every possible factor of crisis and stepping up counterrevolutionary pressures.

#### IV.

11. The imperialists are determined to strike back at the liberation struggles of the peoples of Indochina because they saw very early what was really at stake in the process of permanent revolution going on throughout the peninsula. Since the 1940s, the American intervention has been motivated by the following international objectives: 1. To break the momentum of the Asian revolution in Vietnam, where the social mobilizations have been the biggest. 2. To lay the basis in this way for a new offensive against the Chinese revolution. 3. To assure the general conditions for maintaining imperialist order in eastern Asia. It was for these same three objectives that the Kennedy administration decided in the 1960s to begin the murderous escala-



Deng and Carter at White House, January 31.

tion of the Second Indochina war. This was part of a vast imperialist offensive unleashed against the advances of the colonial revolution in the aftermath of the victory of the Cuban revolution. The blows of this counterattack fell on Santo Domingo, Brazil, Indonesia, and the Congo, among other countries.

12. It is considerations of the same sort, in a different international context, that have dictated the policy the imperialists have followed since 1975. The stakes involved in the struggles begun on the Indochinese peninsula were in fact confirmed after the April 1975 victory, which opened the way for the establishment of a workers state in South Vietnam and marked the beginning of a rapid process of unification between the North and South of the country. In southern Vietnam, the bourgeois state disintegrated with the collapse of the Saigon army, which was its backbone. Far from trying to repair and make use of this neocolonial state apparatus, the Vietnamese Communist Party dismantled what remained of it. It immediately banned all the bourgeois political formations and placed the bulk of the military officers and high functionaries of Thieu's army and administration under detention.

In fact, the political and administrative leadership of Vietnam as a whole became one. The North Vietnamese army was fused with the liberation army in the South. A new administrative structure was set up under the direction of the VCP in the form of provisional military administration committees, and then of civilian people's committees. A general administrative reorganization was studied, and the entire country was divided into thirty-five new provinces in February 1976. On this basis, elections for the National Assembly were held on April 25, 1976. The official founding of the new Socialist Republic of Vietnam was proclaimed on July 2, 1976.

The economic measures taken in the aftermath of the victory followed the same lines as the administrative, political, and military ones. The state rapidly extended its control over the bulk of the industrial enterprises (whose owners had very often fled), the big plantations, and the imperialist holdings. A state trading network was slowly built up, following the immediate establishment of a state monopoly of foreign trade. The banking system was nationalized. In September 1975, the first measures were taken to bring the monetary systems in the North and South into line.

In southern Vietnam, the old currency was immediately withdrawn from circulation and replaced by a new dong whose value was set at parity with that of the North. Private fortunes, notably, were brought under the control of the national bank. Priority was given to reviving the agricultural economy, where the agrarian reform was extended. The nationalization

measures were carefully kept within limits designed not to upset the small peasant proprietors in the Mekong delta. However, as a result of the nationalization of the plantations and the setting up of "new economic zones," the collectivized and state sector of agriculture was rapidly strengthened. The need for moving ahead to large-scale socialist agricultural production was systematically stressed.

Study was quickly begun on a single, central plan for developing the country, dealing with the major branches of industry and based on these first nationalizations and extensions of the state sector. This resulted in the birth of the 1976-1980 five-year plan, which was adopted at the Fourth Congress of the VCP in December 1976 and put into application in 1977. However, the systematic sabotage of the Sino-Vietnamese commercial bourgeoisie blocked the implementation of the measures decided upon by the state in the field of distribution. This had negative repercussions on the rate of collectivization in agriculture as well as on the functioning of the plans in the nationalized industrial sector. This trading bourgeoisie, centered notably in the Cholon district of Saigon, succeeded in limiting the effects of the successive monetary measures taken by the regime by dispersing their holdings and producing counterfeit money.

In face of this resistance and these undermining operations, and after three years of growing social and political conflicts, the state decided to nationalize all that remained of the capitalist trading sector and took decisive steps to unify the monetary system.

The process of reunifying the country was able to get under way immediately after the victory thanks to the measures that were taken to destroy the bourgeois state. It was already incipient in the organization of the liberated areas and of the resistance before April 1975.

13. In view of the region-wide impact of the American defeat, the imperialists looked with disquiet on the reunification of Vietnam, which was now a country of more than 50 million inhabitants with a large and well trained army. It was also disturbed by the policy the Vietnamese leadership was following in Indochina, which was illustrated by the signing in July 1977 of the "treaty of friendship and cooperation" between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which was officially founded on December 2, 1975.

The situation in Thailand provided another source of worry. The fragility of bourgeois rule in that country was shown by the fall of the dictatorship of Generals Thanom and Prapass in October 1973; the opening of a semidemocratic period lasting three years during which there was a considerable growth of social and political struggles both in the countryside and the cities; and by a qualitative growth in this

period and continuing after the bloody October 1976 coup of the guerrilla forces led by the Thai Communist Party, which is now allied with the Socialist Party.

Incapable of resorting again to direct counterrevolutionary military intervention, Washington was no less determined to pursue a policy of "destabilizing" the Indochinese regimes, exploiting the Vietnam-Kampuchea and Vietnam-China conflicts for this purpose. Overall, the imperialist powers followed an orientation close to that of the American government toward the Vietnamese regime.

14. Hanoi has been led by these imperialist pressures, the growing crisis in its relations with Beijing, the economic situation it inherited from the war, and by the additional difficulties brought on by natural calamities to turn more and more exclusively to the USSR and its allies for international support and for economic, technical, and military aid. Vietnam's objective dependence on Moscow has increased. In June 1978 Vietnam became a member of Comecon, and in November it signed a treaty of "friendship and cooperation" with the Soviet Union.

Both Washington and Beijing, each for its own reasons, therefore, had to step up their pressure on Vietnam.

## V.

15. The evolution of the situation in Kampuchea after the seizure of power by the Kampuchean Communist Party (KCP) and after the Pol Pot regime adopted the orientation that it did was to add a specific factor of crisis in Indochina.

The revival of mass struggles did not occur in Cambodia until after 1967. This lag did not prevent the main lines of the social process at work in Vietnam and Laos from showing up in Cambodia as well.

In 1963, the KCP leaders began to prepare new guerrilla bases. In 1967, a peasant revolt broke out in the province of Battambang. This provided a new social base for the struggle undertaken by the KCP. The repression sharpened. It was in this context that the Khmer Rouge guerrilla forces began to grow.

The 1970 coup—which marked both the failure of Sihanoukism and the determination of the U.S. government to stop at nothing to isolate the forces of the National Liberation Front (NLF) in South Vietnam—along with the entry of U.S. and Saigon troops into the country threw the neocolonial society in Cambodia into crisis. These factors enabled the FUNK (National United Front of Kampuchea), aided by the VCP and the NLF, to expand rapidly. Within the FUNK the KCP extended its influence and won effective leadership, isolating those elements loyal to Prince Sihanouk, who took refuge in Beijing.

On the ground, the peasant struggles assumed a more radical character, and

mobilizations against the Lon Nol regime erupted in the cities as well. Alongside the industrial plantations and the large and middle-sized estates, small peasant holdings have been very important in Cambodia. In the areas liberated by the FUNK, usury and the power of the old exploitive administration were broken. Cooperatives sprung up and a radical campaign of collective labor was undertaken.

16. Based on the momentum of the social mobilizations that had impelled the liberation struggle for years, the victory of the FUNK forces in April 1975 opened the way for the establishment of a workers state in Kampuchea. The Lon Nol army collapsed. The political and administrative structures of the bourgeois state were systematically broken up. Sihanouk was put under house arrest. An extensive repression was launched against the administrative and military personnel of the old regime.

Once in power, the KCP leadership abruptly decreed a series of anticapitalist measures. Industry and the plantations were nationalized. Private property was abolished to an unprecedented extent. An authoritarian course was set to collectivize all economic and social life in the countryside very rapidly. Commercial and monetary operations were almost completely eliminated. The ties of dependency to imperialism were broken, all foreign investments were seized. For a time, the country shut itself off entirely from the outside world, with the exception of the relations it had with China. International trading operations were resumed only very gradually, hesitantly, and under strict governmental controls. The same is true of diplomatic relations.

The economic, social, state, and political bases of capitalism and imperialist domination were destroyed. In the areas of Thailand close to Cambodia, the new state forged ties with the Thai national liberation movement led politically by the Thai Communist Party.

17. The regime was not content with carrying out an unusually brutal repression against the bourgeois forces. Its decrees culminated in the deportation of the majority of the working masses. The population of the capital was totally evacuated in a few days. The same thing happened in other urban centers and in newly liberated *villages*. The scope, rapidity, and the authoritarian form of these measures cannot be explained simply by immediate pressing needs (the threat of famine after the ending of the U.S. food airlift, on which the areas controlled by the Lon Nol government had become completely dependent after 1970; the overconcentration of refugees in Phnompenh; and the lack, due to the war damage, of a transportation system capable of moving food quickly). These decisions consolidated the KCP's bureaucratic power, destroying the capacity for collective action of the masses who had

suffered severely in the preceding five years. This combination of anticapitalist measures and terrorist methods by the government against the masses is reminiscent of the period of forced collectivization in the USSR under Stalin, which resulted in millions of deaths. It also recalls the measures taken against the Baltic peoples in 1939-40.

18. The establishment of a new workers state—with extreme bureaucratic deformations—in Kampuchea can only be understood in the context of the victory of a region-wide process of permanent revolution, in which the historic driving force

call for mobilizing against the “foreign danger” was to justify demanding an intense and prolonged exertion by the masses to assure that the needs of production would be met. The autarkic economic orientation of the Pol Pot leadership, which carried the Stalinist policy of “building socialism in one country” to the point of absurdity, led to imposing a terrible burden on the working people in an attempt to “overcome the backwardness of the country.” The regime came to depend solely on the army and the KCP apparatus.

The Pol Pot-Saloth Sar leadership's nar-



Inhabitants greet Khmer Rouge troops in Phnompenh.

was the Vietnamese revolution. In Cambodia, although an agrarian crisis emerged in the 1960s, it was still limited in scope. The degree of industrialization in the country was particularly low. The urban and rural proletariat, the agrarian semi-proletariat, and the landless peasantry were relatively small and dispersed social layers. Thus, the tempo of the Cambodian revolution was considerably accelerated by the country's integration into a region-wide process of wars and revolutions.

19. The policy of the Pol Pot regime was to have extremely grave consequences both for Kampuchea and for Indochina. Given the prevailing conditions of public health and nutrition, the human cost of the mass deportations was terribly high. Politically and socially atomized, the working masses were plunged into passivity. The government set up a system of forced labor and embarked on a campaign of unbridled nationalism, which rapidly veered toward antiforeignism. It took repressive measures against the Chinese and Vietnamese minorities, which made up a large part of the urban and rural proletariat, as well as of the petty bourgeoisie. The

rowly nationalist policy is explained partially by its history. In the early 1960s it gained the leadership of the KCP in opposition to the old “Indochinese” tradition of the Communist movement in Cambodia. Educated in Paris in the 1950s, it drew its own balance sheet of the Geneva Accords, in which the Khmer Communists were denied a voice. Its nationalist orientation was further hardened by the USSR's attitude toward Lon Nol and by a certain number of disagreements with the Vietnamese leadership (over whether it was opportune to resume the armed struggle in 1967 and over the implications for Cambodia of the 1972-73 Paris Accords).

Differences emerged within the KCP and even in its leading team and in the army. A policy of physically purging opposition elements was to decimate all those suspected of pro-Vietnamese sympathies. Centers of opposition were to crop up in several regions in 1978.

The policy of the Pol Pot regime endangered the bases of the workers state in Cambodia. In the long run, it could only favor the reappearance in force of procapitalist and proimperialist opposition groups linked to the Thai dictatorship. The expe-

rience of past forced collectivizations in agriculture have shown how short lived the "positive" results in production are and what kind of a price the workers have to pay for such policies in the medium and long run. For the moment the regime had the advantage that the counterrevolutionary forces were weak, having fallen apart after their 1975 defeat. But the methods of terror used against the masses provided a fertile ground for relaunching counterrevolutionary movements, especially if an opposition ready to defend the social gains of the revolution did not move first.

## VI.

20. The Vietnamese-Cambodian conflict was never essentially over border disputes. As early as 1975, it clearly took the form of a political conflict concentrating all the elements of crisis that were brewing in the region in the aftermath of the victory. The policy of the Cambodian bureaucracy tended to deny the objective interests linking the struggles of the three Indochinese people after the victory, interests that had already been demonstrated in their common fight for liberation. It offered an opening for the maneuvers of the imperialists, who were seeking to exploit the tensions among the different Indochinese states. This became evident when Thailand organized a brief blockade of Laos. The Cambodian regime's policy blocked the mechanisms that the Vietnamese government wanted to set up on an all-Indochina level to deal with economic, diplomatic, political, and military matters. Finally, Kampuchea became an important element in the Sino-Vietnamese conflict and therefore in the Sino-Soviet one.

21. Beijing sent increasing aid to Pnompenh, regardless of the different interests and positions dividing the Deng Xiaoping and Pol Pot leaderships. Cambodia became very largely dependent on Chinese financial, diplomatic, and technical aid. The Cambodian army was strengthened through an influx of a very large number of Chinese military advisers. Its arsenal was improved to the point of including a substantial amount of long-range artillery and MIG 19s. The Khmer-Chinese alliance was consummated with the triumphal visit of Pol Pot to Beijing in September 1977, while violent military incidents were breaking out along the Vietnamese border. In 1978, the People's Republic of China continued to beef up Cambodian military potential, while helping to prepare guerrilla bases in the country in case the Pol Pot regime was overthrown.

With its relations with China becoming more antagonistic, Hanoi faced a not inconsiderable military problem. An armed force of about 70,000 men—supplied and trained by China—had been built up on its flank. Although this force was not sufficient to challenge Hanoi's military power, it posed serious problems in a whole region of Vietnam.

In the fall of 1977, Sino-Vietnamese relations took a major new turn for the worse. The growing clashes on the Khmer-Vietnamese border were a clear symptom of this. They foreshadowed the events of 1978. In the course of 1977, the Vietnamese leadership decided to settle accounts with the Pol Pot regime. To accomplish this, it sent its regular army into Kampuchea in December. In 1978, Beijing seized the nationalization of private commerce, the weight of which fell largely on bourgeois layers of Chinese origin in Saigon-Cholon, as a pretext to launch a vast campaign of political denunciations of the Vietnamese regime. It also officially announced the cessation of economic aid to Vietnam, although in practice it had been halted for months. In 1978, the flight of 160,000 Hoas (Vietnamese of Chinese origin) into China also gave rise to grave tensions along the border. In that year also, the Sino-Japanese treaty was signed and the Sino-American treaty was on its way toward being signed.

22. It was in this context that Hanoi launched a vast offensive into Cambodia in December 1978-January 1979, in which elements of the FUNKSN were incorporated. The Vietnamese army, which included 100,000 troops and some of the best divisions in the regular armed forces, captured Pnompenh within a few weeks and subsequently occupied key positions throughout the country. The Khmer Rouge forces then began guerrilla operations.

Since the onset of the border clashes, revolutionary Marxists have clearly opposed a policy that could lead to a military occupation of Cambodia by regular Vietnamese armed forces and the replacement of the Pol Pot leadership by a team totally dependent on the presence of Hanoi's troops. They condemned the Vietnamese intervention.

It would have been a different thing to give material and political support to the development of an opposition to the Pol Pot regime, an opposition that while defending the fundamental gains of the Cambodian revolution would have undertaken to abolish the terror measures of the Pol Pot government. These measures were already gravely endangering some of the gains for which the Cambodian people paid a high price in their struggle for liberation. They threatened, moreover, to smooth the way for future counterrevolutionary operations. No one could remain indifferent to the extreme gravity of the policy being followed by Pnompenh and to the suffering it was inflicting on the Khmer people and on the national minorities.

But to overthrow the Pol Pot regime by means of the power of the Vietnamese regular army was inadmissible. Yet this is exactly what happened. Centers of opposition did, indeed, appear in several regions of Cambodia in 1978, but they remained very weak. The FUNKSN was formed only

shortly before the Vietnamese intervention. Given the scope of the purges that had taken place in the ranks of the KCP and the army and the political passivity of the population, the FUNKSN would have needed time to expand its popular base and demonstrate its capacity to overthrow the Pol Pot regime, relying essentially on its own strength. It was only thus that a Cambodian opposition could have established an autonomous decision-making power as well as concrete political independence vis-à-vis the Vietnamese bureaucracy.

The Vietnamese intervention ran counter to such a development, as did the policy of the Vietnamese government before the complete breakoff of ties with Pnompenh in December 1977. In fact, while today Hanoi is denouncing the "crimes of Pol Pot," at that time it kept silent about the tragedy being experienced by the Cambodian people. Indeed, for a long time it officially praised the successes of the Pol Pot regime. By combining this political silence and military intervention, Hanoi is playing the game of those forces that want to exploit national feeling in the attempt to restore capitalist and imperialist domination in Cambodia.

23. The assessment made above is not simply a moral one but a political judgment on a question whose importance was understood by Lenin in his time. In his report on the party program, which was presented on March 19, 1919, to the Eighth Congress of the Russian CP, he rejected the accusation that the Bolsheviks were tempted to use their army to help overthrow the bourgeoisie in the countries neighboring Russia. It was on the basis of the national question that he rejected such a perspective:

The demarcation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is proceeding in different countries in their own specific ways. Here we must act with utmost caution. We must be particularly cautious with regard to the various nations, for there is nothing worse than lack of confidence on the part of a nation. . . . No decree has yet been issued stating that all countries must live according to the Bolshevik revolutionary calendar; and even if it were issued, it would not be observed. . . . We cannot help reckoning with the fact that things there [in Poland] are proceeding in rather a peculiar way, and we cannot say: "Down with the right of nations to self-determination! We grant the right of self-determination only to the working people." . . . We must decree nothing from Moscow. [*Collected Works*, vol. 29, pp. 174-75.]

What was true for a bourgeois state shaken by the rise of class struggle is still more true in the case of a workers state. The Vietnamese bureaucracy wanted to force the struggle in Cambodia to follow Hanoi's calendar. This will poison relations between Vietnamese and Khmers, since it is all too obvious that the new regime in Pnompenh is dependent on the support it gets from Hanoi.

In a general sense, the Vietnamese inter-

vention in Cambodia has once again sharply posed the question of an Indochinese Socialist Federation. The unity of the Indochinese revolution is a necessity from the standpoint of the objective interests of the masses. It is indispensable for defending and extending the gains of the Vietnamese revolution in the face of imperialist pressure. But to be genuine, such unity must be freely accepted by all the peoples concerned. Real freedom to exercise the right of self-determination must be guaranteed, as well as lasting respect for the rights of the minority peoples. The latter must enjoy equal rights in fact with the majority population. Without such guarantees, the unification of Indochina, even if it takes the form of agreements among formally independent states, will in the long run only work in favor of the strongest state, or rather its bureaucracy—that is, in favor of Vietnam. Only the establishment of a real Federation of United Socialist States of Indochina, fully guaranteeing the right of self-determination, can make possible the achievement of these objectives.

The question of the means a leadership adopts to assure respect for the rights of minorities in fact is not a matter of secondary importance. It was not by chance that Lenin made several points on this question in his last writings, after assessing the ravages wrought by Great Russian chauvinism in Georgia.

He stressed the distinction that had to be made not only between the “nationalism of the oppressor nation and that of the oppressed nation,” but also more generally between the “nationalism of a big nation and that of a small nation.”

In respect of the second kind of nationalism we, nationals of a big nation, have nearly always been guilty, in historic practice, of an infinite number of cases of violence; furthermore, we commit violence and insult an infinite number of times without noticing it. . . .

That is why internationalism on the part of oppressors or “great nations,” as they are called (though they are great only in their violence, only great as bullies), must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations, but even in an inequality of the oppressor nation, the great nation, that must make up for the inequality which obtains in actual practice. . . . That is why, in this case, the fundamental interest of proletarian solidarity . . . requires that we never adopt a formal attitude to the national question. . . . [Lenin's Last Letters and Articles, pp. 19-21]

It is important to recall these lines now. Because the Vietnamese government is claiming that the equality of the Indochinese nations is guaranteed by treaties that link these nations together formally on the basis of their being totally independent states but which in fact set the seal on a tight integration of Laos, the “new” Kampuchea, and Vietnam under Hanoi's control. The Vietnamese leadership is also mounting a huge propaganda campaign to exalt the “four thousand year history” of the “great” Vietnamese nation. Moreover,

the precolonial and colonial history of these countries, as well as the central role of the struggle for national liberation in the Indochinese revolutions, have provided fertile ground for the exacerbation of these nationalisms.

The Vietnamese intervention is tending to reinforce the power of the Vietnamese bureaucracy in Vietnam itself, as well as in Indochina as a whole. It is helping to accentuate the nationalist tendencies and increase the weight of the military elements in the society. It is illusory to hope



that the Vietnamese leadership—which in its own country defends a bureaucratic monopoly of information and political decision making and, in rapport with the Soviet bureaucracy, sets its international orientation within the framework of peaceful coexistence—can either stimulate the masses to mobilize to take power directly or establish relations of equality among the peoples and states of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

Today, no solution favorable to the fundamental interests of the Cambodian workers and peasants is possible in a context dominated by the presence within the country of Vietnamese armed forces.

It is necessary to help the Cambodian working people to build councils and mass organizations, to give them food and technical aid, to ensure the arming of the masses. This is necessary to avert a situation in which the indispensable withdrawal of Vietnamese troops could be exploited by the capitalist and imperialist forces, and in order to enable the peoples to defend themselves against any reprisals by the Pol Pot forces. Such an orientation is simply the continuation, in the present situation, of the correct policy for the previous period which consisted of helping

the masses and relying on them and their organizations to fight the Pol Pot regime.

The Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea has not removed the threat that China posed on the country's northern border. There, the fact that Hanoi did not limit itself to responding to the attacks of Khmer units but overthrew the Pol Pot regime has enabled the Chinese bureaucracy, as well as American imperialism, to launch a new campaign of denunciations against Vietnam. This campaign, in turn, facilitated the Chinese intervention in February 1979.

## VII.

24. The Chinese government used Hanoi's military initiative in Cambodia as a pretext for attacking Vietnam. However, this intervention, as we saw, fits into a broader context that gives it its real meaning and portent. It is a stark illustration of the counterrevolutionary course on which the Chinese bureaucracy has set out in eastern Asia and must be denounced as such.

Beijing has maintained the fiction that this intervention was “limited retaliation” in response to increasing incidents on the Sino-Vietnamese border. But in its scope, the extent of the troops and matériel brought into action, its duration, and the nature of the targets (including a number of urban centers), the Chinese intervention was a real act of war.

The Chinese leadership, moreover, has not concealed certain aspects of its counterrevolutionary orientation. It has reproached the imperialist powers for exhibiting weakness toward “social imperialism” in Africa and the Mideast. It has declared its determination to show greater “firmness” in Southeast Asia, a strategic area owing to the straits linking the Pacific to the Indian ocean. Calling Hanoi an “Asian Cuba,” the Chinese leadership has more clearly than ever avowed its determination to weaken the Vietnamese state by every means, including military ones, and to force it to loosen its ties with Moscow.

The considerable importance accorded to this objective today by the Chinese leadership has been confirmed by its decision to intervene in the way it has in Vietnam. Because the Chinese bureaucracy had to pay a not inconsiderable price in order to do this. It gave Vietnam an opportunity to regain the diplomatic initiative with respect to a number of semicolonial countries, most of which disapproved of Hanoi's intervention in Cambodia. And Beijing did this precisely at a time when its own prestige in the eyes of the national liberation movements had become tarnished. It apparently had to face opposition within the Chinese population, and even within the party and state apparatus. Finally, the operation itself was probably very costly economically in men as well as in matériel.



25. The intervention in Vietnam seems to have produced only very limited immediate results. Hanoi was not forced to throw the bulk of its regular forces into the front lines to contain the thrust by the Chinese troops; nor did it have to call back many of the divisions operating in Cambodia. Beijing can only expect to draw medium-term benefits from such initiatives. But it is well aware of the economic and social price that the Vietnamese regime is going to have to pay to maintain its defenses under conditions of constant military pressure.

The Soviet leadership has made very clear, both through Brezhnev's speech and through its actions, that its priority is to continue its policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism, that it is not prepared to put its international orientation in question by getting too deeply involved on the side of Vietnam, and that it is following the same course in its relations with the Chinese bureaucracy.

Beijing, therefore, is free to pursue its campaign of attrition against the Vietnamese regime, on the sole condition that it does not go "too far." We have to expect that the Chinese leadership will continue and sharpen its policy aimed at weakening the Vietnamese regime.

#### VIII.

26. The bourgeois propagandists are on a rampage. They are taking advantage of this occasion to try to make people forget a century of imperialist wars that have cost humanity many tens of millions dead. It would have people believe both that the USSR and its allies may launch an offensive against the imperialist powers and that there is a danger that a third world war may result from the conflicts among the bureaucratized workers states. The primary objective of this campaign is clear. It is to create a climate of opinion among the working masses, above all in the United States, more favorable for justifying the intervention of American armed forces against a new breakthrough of the world revolution. We must systematically expose this propaganda campaign, which conceals an attempt by the imperialists to resume their direct counterrevolutionary activities after the defeat they suffered in Indochina. We must expose the constant danger of world war posed by imperialism.

We must also explain the foundations of the counterrevolutionary policy of the bureaucracy in power in the workers states, whose crimes make the job of the imperialist propagandists easier.

27. The bureaucracies' claim that they can "build socialism" in "their" respective countries and their defense of their own interests as parasitic castes involve a policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism and the liquidation of any proletarian internationalist perspective. This is what led the Soviet bureaucracy to trans-



Vietnamese infantry moves toward Chinese positions.

form the Communist International from an instrument of the world revolution into a tool of its own diplomatic interests, before finally abolishing it. A chauvinist messianic mystique, the complement of bureaucratic nationalism, provided the justification for the Stalinist leadership's first purges of those who opposed the establishment of its dictatorship in the USSR and the Communist International. It went on, in the same vein, to excommunicate the leaderships brought to power by revolutions that developed against the Kremlin's will. The Yugoslavs were first, followed by the Chinese. The bloody purges that broke the independence of the Communist International and the subsequent dissolution of this organization were the international concomitant of the rise of bureaucratic power in the USSR itself.

Since Stalin's condemnation of the Yugoslav "schism" in 1948, the conflicts among bureaucratized workers states have taken graver and graver forms. This process continues today, with the stationing of massive numbers of Soviet troops along the Chinese frontier, with Beijing militarily aiding the army of the Pol Pot regime, with the proliferation of incidents on the Vietnamese-Khmer border, with the moving of large numbers of Vietnamese regular army troops into all of Cambodia, and with the Chinese intervention in Vietnam.

The confrontation under way has an extremely dangerous dynamic, and must be halted at all costs. It has been imposed on the Indochinese and Chinese masses, who were led into bloody clashes, to the detriment of their own interests. It is doing great harm to the international workers movement. It is setting precedents that could have tragic consequences on the Sino-Soviet border or in Eastern Europe when the Soviet bureaucracy's domination of the People's Democracies is once again

challenged by the proletariat, or if the Sino-Soviet conflict sharpens.

28. Care should be taken to avoid making any shortsightedly conjunctural or sectoral judgments on these questions. Nothing could be more dangerous than to yield to the temptations of a false political "realism" that would lead sections of the revolution to try to estimate which of the bureaucracies—Soviet or Chinese—is for the moment "less counterrevolutionary," and to divide the world into "two camps," with the USSR, Vietnam, and Cuba on one side; and the United States and China on the other.

The policies of the Chinese and Soviet bureaucracies reflect the same interests and the same objectives. Both seek to ensure the political monolithism and control in "their" spheres of influence. The aim is to assure the maintenance of the monopoly of power that they exercise in their respective countries, which is the source of their social privileges. They also seek to acquire the means for conducting a policy of peaceful coexistence, by ensuring their ability to play a direct role in the maintenance of the international status quo. Beijing's support for Pinochet is matched by Moscow's for Videla.

The Sino-Soviet conflict is not the result of an "economic expansionist drive" analogous to that exhibited by imperialism. It stems from the determination of each of these bureaucracies to ensure the best political conditions domestically and internationally for preserving their social and political monopoly of state power in their own country.

It is the worldwide policies of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies that have to be assessed. Both are counterrevolutionary. It is the bases themselves of the interbureaucratic conflict between China and the USSR that have to be attacked. Along

with exposing the policy of the imperialists, it is necessary to stress the importance of fighting today for political revolution and for establishing governments based on real socialist democracy. Only the political revolution can put an end to the power of the bureaucracy and thus to the conflicts between bureaucratized workers states. In face of the imperialist propaganda, it is necessary to restate that these bureaucratic castes by no means represent socialism. Under real workers and peasants power there will be no more war; nationalism will wane decisively.

**IX.**

29. The conflicts that have rent Indochina and locked China and Vietnam in confrontation obviously have very grave implications for the masses in Southeast Asia. This is particularly true for Thailand, since this is where the most significant struggle against imperialism in the region is being fought. The victory of the Indochinese revolutions had greatly improved the conditions in which the Thai movement was carrying on its struggle.

But today the Thai resistance has felt the full backlash of the Indochinese crisis and the sharpening of the Sino-Vietnamese and Sino-Soviet conflicts in eastern Asia. It is threatened with being isolated politically and cut off from material support. Moscow, Beijing, Hanoi, and just recently Pnompenh have in turn courted the Bangkok regime, seeking to get into its diplomatic good graces. The Chinese leadership declares openly that it sees Kriangsak's Thailand as a new "line of defense" in the region against the danger of "hegemony." The Vietnamese leadership is trying at any price to reassure



Thai strongman Kriangsak.

ASEAN in order to break out of the diplomatic isolation to which it has been subjected. Moscow, likewise, is doing the same.

The Thai resistance, which embraces organizations of different political outlooks, could become a pawn in the Sino-Vietnamese conflict. It may come under pressure to take a position publicly in support of one of the parties to the dispute (which it has refused so far to do). This would only accentuate the divisions in the Thai resistance and paralyze its capacity for action.

The isolation of the Thai struggle would be all the more grave because American imperialism and the Thai bourgeoisie are

going to try to take advantage of the situation to deal severe blows to a movement whose recent successes have worried them. It is the duty of all anti-imperialist activists to actively demonstrate their solidarity with the liberation struggles in Thailand and throughout Southeast Asia and to call for a united front of the workers states in defense of these revolutionary fighters.

Such support for the anti-imperialist struggles in Southeast Asia is an essential task that goes hand in hand with defending the Indochinese revolution. The spread of revolution in Thailand and in the region would deal a decisive blow to the imperialist attempt to stifle the Indochinese workers states. More favorable objective conditions would then exist for overcoming the economic, social, and political problems they are experiencing.

In a more general way, new advances of anticapitalist and anti-imperialist struggles, especially in the United States and Japan, would have the same effect.

**X.**

30. It is also the duty of the international workers movement to mobilize in defense of the Indochinese revolutions, which are being threatened by imperialist maneuvers at a time when they have been weakened by interbureaucratic conflicts. In the medium and long term, the Chinese bureaucracy's policy can only run counter to the interests of defending the Chinese workers state, which could find itself being threatened once again as a result of the reinforcement of the imperialist presence in the region.

Washington is not going to rest content

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Thai army paratroop detachment.

today with just trying to stabilize the neocolonial state in Thailand. It is going to expand its military aid to the Thai army considerably. It is to be feared that it will step up its pressure once again on Laos, using the remains of the counterrevolutionary army of the Meo General Vang Pao and the groups now in Thailand that are linked to the former Laotian regime and to the feudal lordships in the southern part of the country. At the same time, the Chinese influence in the north of the country remains considerable.

The reappearance on the international scene of Prince Sihanouk and the appeals he is launching for convening a new international conference on Indochina may give the United States the opportunity to mount a political and diplomatic offensive on the Cambodian question, in conjunction with an attempt to revive the subversive activity of the rightist Khmer Serai groups. The United States is continuing its policy designed to maintain the economic blockade and diplomatic isolation of the Vietnamese revolution.

The international workers movement must raise a hue and cry against these pressures that the imperialists are bringing to bear on the Indochinese revolutions and prevent them from becoming worse! It must struggle to get the U.S. blockade of Vietnam ended and to force the powers

that bear the responsibility for forty years of devastation and slaughter in the three Indochinese countries to offer them economic aid with no strings attached! It must raise an outcry against the economic blockade of Cambodia, which is threatened with famine! It must demand that the bourgeois governments extend diplomatic recognition to the Indochinese regimes! It must oppose the imperialist propaganda campaign against the Indochinese revolutions and the giving of military support to the Thai dictatorship! It must demand the withdrawal of the American Seventh Fleet from the Pacific and the dismantling of the American bases! In view of the danger of imperialist aggression, which is historically always present, it must call for the formation of a united front of workers states!

31. If a final lesson must be drawn from the recent Indochinese events, in view of the sufferings these peoples continue to endure, it is the urgent need to fight for the revival of real proletarian internationalism and socialist democracy.

The activists of the Fourth International have been engaged in this struggle since their movement was founded in response to the Stalinist degeneration of the first workers state and of the Communist International. In the forty years of history of the workers movement since that time, this

fight has lost none of its immediacy; quite the contrary.

This fight is for building a mass revolutionary International, for world revolution, for a federation of socialist united states of the world.

April 6, 1979

*Nota bene:* The crisis rocking the Indochinese peninsula cannot be understood without taking account of the whole series of factors analyzed in the resolution adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on April 6, 1979. Unless this is done, it is impossible to take a correct overall position with regard to these conflicts.

The January 1978 and January 1979 statements by the United Secretariat obscured the interlocking between the inter-bureaucratic conflicts and a renewed imperialist offensive, an interlocking that took place in the framework of the policy of peaceful coexistence. They did not sufficiently stress the immediacy of the tasks of defending the Indochinese revolutions against imperialism. The February 1979 statement focusing on the Chinese intervention in Vietnam did not make clear the new political situation existing in Kampuchea and in the region after the entry of the Vietnamese regular army into Kampuchea and the orientation that had then to be assumed by revolutionary Marxists.

## Advances In Indochinese Revolution and Imperialism's Response

### I. The Class-Struggle Framework of World Politics

The toppling of the Pol Pot regime by rebel Kampuchean forces and Vietnamese troops in December 1978-January 1979, and the February-March 1979 invasion of Vietnam by Chinese troops, put the Indochinese revolution once again in the center of world politics.

The Vietnamese revolution, the weightiest component of the Indochinese revolution, directly involves the destiny of 50 million people. It profoundly affects the fate of more than 300 million people in Southeast Asia, an area of vital shipping lanes and sources of tin, tungsten, oil, and rubber. Beyond that, Vietnam has for many years been a central battleground between imperialism and the world revolution.

The blow the imperialists suffered in 1975 marked a turning point in post-World War II world politics. It exposed the limitations on Washington's capacity to simultaneously maintain a preponderant military position in the world; use its own armed forces against any outbreak of the world revolution; compete effectively with its capitalist rivals; maintain a stable international monetary system; and preserve social peace at home. The defeat of the U.S. imperialists in Indochina, followed by the worldwide capitalist economic recession of 1974-1975, shifted the world relationship of class forces in favor of the working class.

Understanding the repercussions of this shift is essential to understanding the 1978-79 developments in Indochina. The following aspects of the new situation stand out.

The axis of world politics remains the class struggle between the capitalists, principally the imperialists, on the one hand, and the working class and its toiling allies on the other.

Although the imperialists were dealt a body blow in Indochina in 1975, they did not give up and walk away. They sought, under much more unfavorable conditions, to find the best way to assert their inter-

ests against the working masses of Indochina and all of Southeast Asia. Their goal remains that of weakening, and ultimately destroying, the workers state in Vietnam.

They intensified their campaign against the Vietnamese revolution in reaction to the final elimination of capitalist property relations in southern Vietnam in 1978, the toppling of the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea, and the dangers that these developments posed to the maintenance of capitalism elsewhere in Southeast Asia. They initiated a drive to halt the new advances in the class struggle.

This stepped-up counterrevolutionary drive by the imperialists is the framework for understanding the civil war in Kampuchea and Beijing's invasion of Vietnam.

The weakened condition of American imperialism after 1975 made open military intervention too risky because of the anti-war attitudes of the American workers. Other direct counterrevolutionary measures (diplomatic isolation and economic boycott of Vietnam, military aid to the neighboring capitalist regimes and rightist guerrillas in Laos and Kampuchea) proved insufficient to turn the situation to imperialism's advantage. For this reason they needed Beijing's invasion of Vietnam.

The weakened condition of imperialism has forced the capitalist rulers into a policy of détente with both Moscow and Beijing. Although they have never given up their ultimate aim of destroying the two major workers states and restoring capitalism there, the imperialists have had to modify their immediate objectives. In place of the earlier strategy of containment and rollback, they have sought to reach political agreements with both Moscow and Beijing, based on mutual opposition to revolutionary change and collaboration to halt it. They have also sought to establish significant trading relationships.

The counterrevolutionary betrayals by Moscow and Beijing, which are the essence of these détente relationships, do not represent a change in policy on their part. On the contrary, they are a continuation of

the policy of peaceful coexistence, which flows from the Stalinists' opposition—for reasons of their own self-preservation—to any advance of the world revolution. What is new over the past decade is Washington's decision to respond to the long-standing overtures of the bureaucratic castes.

Within the framework of their détente agreements, however, Moscow and Beijing have responded differently to the imperialist drive against the Vietnamese revolution.

Because of geographical proximity, the impact of revolutionary advances in Southeast Asia is more directly threatening to Beijing than to Moscow. This is particularly true at the present time, when the Beijing-based caste is under severe internal strain. So, while Beijing reacted to the advance of the Vietnamese revolution by openly expressing its visceral hatred, the Moscow-based caste, although likewise hostile to advances of the Vietnamese revolution, did not feel its impact with the same urgency.

Furthermore, Southeast Asia is one of the few areas in the world where Beijing has significant political and military weight and is thus under great pressure from the imperialists to prove its reliability as a counterrevolutionary force. Moscow, by contrast, has greater options for maneuver with imperialism. The Kremlin sought to exert increased leverage in its dealings with Washington by establishing a formal alliance with Hanoi.

To try to contain the Vietnamese revolution, the imperialists turned to Beijing for military aid, and to Moscow for diplomatic aid. While Beijing invaded Vietnam, Moscow pressured Hanoi to reach a Geneva-type settlement over Kampuchea acceptable to the imperialists.

### II. Imperialist Pressure and the Sino-Soviet Conflict

The current world situation, marked by the Washington-Moscow and Washington-Beijing détente arrangements, has intensi-

fied the Sino-Soviet conflict, to the advantage of the imperialists.

Both Moscow and Beijing fear that imperialism's relations with the other will be pursued at the expense of their own détente plans. Each of the castes, to enhance its own bargaining strength with imperialism, strives for influence over mass organizations throughout the world, and, in particular, for influence over the regimes of the other workers states. Moscow, as the stronger power by far, is in a much better bargaining position on a world scale. But Beijing has significant strength in its immediate border areas in Southeast Asia, where it is determined to resist Moscow's inroads in its leverage.

This competition serves to weaken all the workers states in face of imperialism. Each caste, to counterbalance the other, makes greater and greater concessions to imperialism.

The Moscow-Beijing competition is not rooted in an inherent drive to expand their national base at the expense of the other. It does not reflect a jockeying for position in preparation for a major war between these two world powers, although short-lived border wars are possible.

The Sino-Soviet conflict itself takes place within the basic framework of the world class struggle, in which the ruling classes confront the workers and their allies. On the decisive questions—such as revolutions—the bureaucratic castes in Moscow and Beijing are not independent agents. The castes can be forced into situations in which they must defend against imperialist attack the states and the property relations from which they derive their privileges. But the fundamental interests of the castes are opposed to the interests of the workers. The castes need to seek accommodation with imperialism; thus they basically act as transmission belts for imperialist pressure against the working class.

The Sino-Soviet dispute is a result of the fact that imperialist pressure takes different forms and operates at different rhythms toward each of the national bureaucratic castes. This provokes differing and conflicting responses on their parts, as they compete to obtain favorable relations with imperialism.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, imperialism began pulling back from its extreme "containment/rollback" stance toward the Soviet Union. At the same time it continued to maintain a very aggressive posture toward China. There the socialist revolution was fresher, and its immediate impact was still felt throughout the colonial world.

Moscow's effort to curry favor with the imperialists necessitated betrayal of the Chinese workers state in face of imperialist economic boycott and military pressure. The withdrawal of Soviet economic aid; the refusal to defend China in the Sino-Indian war; and the failure to guarantee China's defense in the event of an impe-



Soldiers in Hanoi rally against Chinese invasion.

rialist military attack were notable examples. The difference on the level of material interests was reflected politically. Beijing, facing acute imperialist pressure, responded by escalating its anti-imperialist rhetoric and pretenses of economic self-sufficiency, while denouncing Soviet "revisionism." Moscow could not permit the example of the Chinese revolution to challenge the monolithic political framework it was trying to maintain.

In Southeast Asia today it is the fresh Vietnamese revolution that has been subjected to the fiercest immediate aggression of the imperialists. And it is to Beijing as well as Moscow that the imperialists have turned for help, exploiting the Sino-Soviet dispute for their own ends.

From this standpoint, the Sino-Soviet conflict was a factor in the recent events in Indochina. But it is subordinate to the contending class forces of imperialism on one side and the workers and peasants on the other—because the Sino-Soviet conflict itself is a product of imperialist pressure.

The strongest imperialist powers—the USA, Japan, West Germany, France, and Britain—have all been competing for trade relations with Beijing as well as Moscow. The Japanese capitalists gained the initial advantage in this competition over trade with Beijing. But the British and American capitalists are now closing the gap, negotiating expanded trade deals—and arms deals, as well. Beijing has also been able to take advantage of this rivalry to gain better terms of trade with Tokyo.

Despite its weakened condition, American imperialism proved that it still retains great economic capacities *vis-à-vis* its rivals. It also showed its ability to use the leverage of its preponderant military power to economic advantage.

The imperialist propaganda campaign during Beijing's invasion of Vietnam showed that an important component of its political strategy today is to try to reverse the existing antiwar feelings of the masses and create a climate in which working people will once again accept the large-scale use of imperialist troops against the world revolution. Behind the talk of preserving peace and stability lies preparations for new wars. This campaign is closely linked to the capitalist economic offensive against the working class in all the imperialist countries.

### III. The Invasion of Vietnam

On February 17, 1979, troops of the People's Republic of China invaded the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, initiating a large-scale border war. Within less than three weeks, Beijing began withdrawing its troops, although it has held on to some territory and has threatened to provoke a new flareup of armed conflict.

Considerable material damage and loss of life were inflicted on the Vietnamese people. But Washington and the Beijing Stalinists failed to achieve their main goals.

The roots of the China-Vietnam border war lay in Washington's stepped-up campaign against the Vietnamese revolution and against the threat of anticapitalist advances elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

The major concerns for the imperialists were:

1. The anticapitalist measures taken in southern Vietnam between 1975-1978, bringing about the political unification of the country, the expropriation of the remaining capitalist strongholds in the South, and the consolidation of a workers



state throughout Vietnam.

2. The toppling of the capitalist Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea in December 1978-January 1979 by the combined military efforts of the anti-Pol Pot Kampuchean forces and the Vietnamese army. This gave encouragement to the masses of Kampuchea and upset the imperialists' plans to use the Pol Pot regime as a buffer against the spread of socialist revolution elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

3. The heightened threat of anticapitalist mass mobilizations elsewhere in Southeast Asia—particularly in Thailand, where the Kriangsak dictatorship has been weakened and its opponents encouraged both in the urban centers and the countryside; and in Laos, where the social revolution has deepened under the impact of the recent events.

As part of their effort to stem the advance of the socialist revolution in Southeast Asia, Washington and the other major imperialist governments have been trying to shore up the capitalist regimes of the ASEAN regional alliance (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand). In particular, Washington has stepped up arms aid to the Thai military dictatorship. Bangkok has also been used as a funnel for military aid to rightist guerrillas in Kampuchea and Laos.

Hanoi considered that it was compelled, as a defensive measure, to take action to overturn the hostile Pol Pot regime. The main immediate objective of the imperialists has been to force Hanoi to remove its troops from Kampuchea, facilitating the overturn of the new Kampuchean government and the imposition of a proimperialist government there.

But to attempt to overthrow the new government in Kampuchea required a greater military effort than was possible by the Pol Pot and Khmer Serai forces. Rather than taking on the antiwar workers in their own countries by open military intervention, the imperialists enlisted the help of Beijing. In return for improved diplomatic relations and the promise of major economic aid, the Chinese Stalinists endeavored to "teach Vietnam a lesson." Their objective was to carry out a punitive expedition to prove their reliability as a counterrevolutionary force against the spread of the Indochinese revolution. The goal was to force Vietnam out of Kampuchea, as the imperialists wanted.

An additional objective of the imperialists was to use the war to propaganda advantage to discredit Marxism and weaken the labor movement. This propaganda objective was particularly important to Washington, which has been engaged in an ongoing effort to reverse the still-widespread antiwar attitudes of the American people, so that they will once again accept the use of U.S. troops to intervene in the affairs of other countries.

Key events before and during Beijing's

invasion of Vietnam confirmed the collusion between imperialism and the Chinese Stalinists.

The expropriation of the last capitalist bastions in the southern part of Vietnam and the consolidation of the workers state throughout the country was met by universal hostility from the imperialists. This included a hypocritical propaganda campaign on behalf of the expropriated mer-

tween Washington and Beijing; high-level trade missions to Beijing and the negotiation of major economic agreements by both London and Washington; and the continued efforts by Bonn and Tokyo to consolidate major trade deals with Beijing. In addition, with varying degrees of forthrightness, most of the major capitalist media in the imperialist countries backed Beijing's invasion.



Pol Pot's peasant soldiers defeated Lon Nol regime.

chants and traders (the "boat people") and the former functionaries of the old Saigon regime (portrayed as victims of a so-called Vietnamese Gulag); continuation of economic and diplomatic pressure against Vietnam; bolstering imperialist economic and military aid to the surrounding capitalist states; renewing and stepping up economic and diplomatic relations with the Pol Pot regime; and speeding up the establishment of closer relations with Beijing, especially by Washington and Tokyo.

Consultations on Beijing's invasion plans were carried out in Washington and Tokyo. During his visits to these capitals, Deng publicly announced Beijing's intention to "punish" Vietnam. Although Washington initially feigned innocence about the actual invasion, the State Department later admitted that it had been informed in advance of the plans.

During the invasion, the imperialists demonstratively adopted a posture of "business as usual" toward Beijing. The aim was to make clear their full backing for the invasion without taking direct responsibility for it. This stance included ceremonies establishing full diplomatic relations be-

As a deterrent to Soviet aid to Vietnam, Washington dispatched a nuclear-armed naval task force off the Vietnamese coast during the war. In addition, Washington made a point of publicly stepping up its military aid to the Thai regime.

The imperialists launched a concerted diplomatic campaign to win support for a solution to the conflict that, in the guise of evenhandedness, fully reflected their objectives. This included the proposal for reciprocal withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea and Chinese troops from Vietnam, and a Geneva-type conference to impose an ostensibly neutral (but actually capitalist and proimperialist) government in Kampuchea. Beijing, of course, immediately accepted the formula for reciprocal withdrawal, as well as the proposal for a "neutral" Kampuchea to be headed by a capitalist figure such as Sihanouk.

The invasion of Vietnam, however, failed to produce the imperialist's main objectives. Vietnamese troops were not forced to withdraw from Kampuchea, nor has a proimperialist regime been installed there. To the contrary, while the China-Vietnam border war was raging, Pol Pot

forces were routed from the last provincial capitals they held. Struggles by the toiling masses throughout the region have been facilitated. The capacity of the imperialists and Stalinists to block revolutionary advances has been weakened.

The Beijing Stalinists also suffered a setback. Although they demonstrated their willingness to go to war to prove their usefulness to the imperialists, they exposed their own weaknesses. They laid waste the areas they occupied but were unable to deal a "punishing" military blow to the Vietnamese army. On the political level, Beijing suffered a clear setback. Widespread dissatisfaction or opposition to the war came to the surface within China. This will create difficulties for the Deng regime in the period ahead, and could further open the door to the expression of working-class and peasant opposition to Stalinist policies. The Beijing Stalinists also won near universal condemnation in the world working-class movement; never have they been so isolated as they are today.

Despite improved diplomatic and trade relations with the imperialists, the Chinese workers state has been made more vulnerable to imperialist pressure, and weakened in face of the ultimate danger of military attack aimed at capitalist restoration.

Although Hanoi succeeded in organizing the military defense of Vietnam, due to its Stalinist character it failed to carry out an internationalist campaign directed at winning the support of the Chinese people, including the soldiers of the Chinese army. In Kampuchea Hanoi still seeks to arrive at a *modus vivendi* with imperialism, rather than promoting a socialist revolution.

The withdrawal of the Chinese army from Vietnam, however, and the consolidation of the victory against the Pol Pot forces will encourage action by the masses there. The impulse given to socialist revolution elsewhere in Southeast Asia, particularly in Laos and Thailand, will ultimately work to undermine the hold of the bureaucratic caste in Hanoi over the Vietnamese masses.

Moscow's stance in face of the current imperialist offensive against Vietnam has been fundamentally the same as it was during the height of the massive U.S. military intervention. Its military and economic aid to Vietnam has been far below what Vietnam needs, and has been used to exert pressure on Hanoi to meet Moscow's foreign policy objectives. The Moscow Stalinists have been in complicity with Washington's diplomatic pressure on Hanoi.

Moscow's central concern has been that the Washington-Beijing alliance will impair Soviet-U.S. relations. In line with this stance, Moscow systematically covered up for U.S. imperialism. The clearest expression of this came in Brezhnev's major policy speech on the China-Vietnam

border war, given on March 2, 1979. Brezhnev branded China "the most serious threat to peace in the whole world," while failing even to mention Washington's role in the invasion. Moscow's competition with Beijing for imperialism's favor has led it to wage a racist anti-Chinese propaganda campaign within the USSR.

In contrast to Moscow's class-collaborationist line, the position of the Castro leadership was marked by: 1. assertion of the need to aid the Vietnamese



POL POT

revolution to the fullest extent possible; 2. mobilization of the Cuban masses in a spirit of internationalist solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution; 3. condemnation of Washington's responsibility in the conflict; 4. exposure of the Washington-Beijing objective of restoring a proimperialist regime in Kampuchea; 5. differentiation between the Beijing regime (condemned for its traitorous action) and the Chinese people (to whom solidarity was extended). Cuba's position was a continuation of its proletarian internationalist line, as expressed in Che Guevara's famous slogan, "Create Two, Three . . . Many Vietnams!"

The statements by the Cuban government that it was prepared, if requested, to send troops to aid Vietnam was not only a declaration of internationalism, a defiance of imperialism, and a condemnation of Beijing. It was also a clear criticism (within the diplomatic constraints imposed on Havana) of Moscow's stinginess in giving aid to Vietnam. It helped Vietnam fend off the intense imperialist pressure for withdrawal from Kampuchea.

The revolutionary position taken by the Cuban leadership—once again risking retaliation from Washington—confirms that

they continue to believe that the fate of Cuba itself depends first of all on the defense and extension of the world revolution. The popularization of this view aids the working people and peasants of Indochina. As a result of this stand, the prestige of the Castro leadership will rise in the eyes of the revolutionary-minded working people throughout the world.

As part of their continuing offensive against the world revolution, the imperialists utilized the China-Vietnam border war to wage a propaganda offensive that included the following main themes:

1. That Washington and the other imperialist powers were not responsible for the invasion of Vietnam; that it was a war rooted in rivalries between "socialist countries," unrelated to any imperialist drive against revolutionary change in Southeast Asia; that the imperialists' role in such conflicts could be that of an "honest broker," helping to restore peace and stability.

2. That workers states have a built-in drive toward war; that communists (and socialists) are prone to fratricidal conflicts; that Marxism, which claims that socialism will eliminate the roots of war, is now a proven failure.

3. That the Sino-Soviet dispute and the rivalry between Beijing and Hanoi for spheres of influence in Southeast Asia was the basic framework for the border war; that the Sino-Soviet dispute could escalate into a third world war; that world politics is entering a new era marked by wars among workers states.

4. That war is caused by age-old problems that exist independently of economic or social systems—problems such as nationalism and national hatreds, struggles over spheres of influence, the need to respond to affronts to national prestige and power rather than "lose face" on the international arena.

5. That after the imperialist armed forces were driven out of Indochina in 1975, the inherent instability in this backward and benighted region exploded into war.

The thrust of this propaganda campaign was designed to win support for the idea that "enlightened" diplomatic and military action by the imperialists, particularly by Washington, could contain the destabilizing impact of developments that threaten world war. In the words of the *Wall Street Journal*, "the spiral into disorder can be averted only if the U.S. starts to assert itself once again."

This attempt by the U.S. imperialists to chip away at the mass antiwar sentiment that exists met with little success in the American working class. Open U.S. military interventions in other countries would still be met by profound suspicion and massive opposition.

However, the worldwide capitalist ideological offensive did manage to create social-patriotic pressure and exacerbate disorientation and demoralization among

petty-bourgeois sectors of the working-class movement and radical circles, which echoed many aspects of the propaganda themes promoted by the imperialists.

In particular, many of these tendencies advanced essentially the same political solution to the conflict as the imperialists: reciprocal withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea and Chinese troops from Vietnam. In general, the explanations for the war that were given by the petty-bourgeois tendencies also deemphasized the centrality of the imperialist drive against revolutionary change in Southeast Asia. They generally discounted the continuing imperialist role.

In contrast to these capitulatory tendencies, the revolutionary Marxist position on the war centered its fire on the imperialists, and stressed slogans along the following lines:

**Hands off Vietnam! Stop the imperialist campaign against the Vietnamese revolution! Solidarity with the struggles of the masses of Kampuchea, Laos, and Thailand against imperialist domination! For massive economic aid to rebuild Indochina!**

Within that framework, revolutionary Marxists demanded the immediate withdrawal of Beijing's troops from Vietnam. Revolutionists called on the Soviet Union to give the Vietnamese whatever military supplies they needed—no strings attached—to fend off Beijing's attack, while warning the Kremlin bureaucracy to keep hands off China.

#### IV. Consolidation of Vietnamese Workers State

The victory of the liberation forces in Vietnam on April 30, 1975, was greeted with an explosion of popular enthusiasm by the masses of workers and peasants.

Workers seized factories to prevent sabotage and theft by fleeing capitalists. Factory and neighborhood committees were formed to organize social and economic life, usually under the leadership of Vietnamese CP cadres. The actions of the masses showed that they looked forward to the speedy overturn of capitalism and the reunification of the country.

The imperialists left behind massive devastation and a disrupted economy. Unemployment was 3.5 million. There were hundreds of thousands of homeless. Prostitution, drug addiction, and disease were widespread in the urban centers. Huge amounts of once-fertile farmland were bomb-cratered, defoliated, and unproductive. Millions of peasants had been forced into the cities.

The Vietnamese CP leaders at first sought to preserve a separate government and capitalist property relations in southern Vietnam. They hoped this would enable them to obtain aid and establish trade with the imperialists, and that the remaining capitalists in the South could be in-

duced to help revive the shattered economy.

Le Duan outlined the VCP's policy in a speech on May 15, 1975. He projected



LE DUAN

“socialist construction” for the North, but the creation of “a prosperous national-democratic economy” for the South. The Provisional Revolutionary Government was installed as a separate entity in the South on June 6, 1975.

The mass workers mobilization that emerged with liberation was dampened by this class-collaborationist policy, but it was not crushed or eliminated.

The new regime did not allow democratic rights. But it enjoyed sufficient prestige, in the absence of any alternative anticapitalist leadership, to keep control of the masses without resort to extreme repression.

The policy of courting imperialist help and reviving the economy on a capitalist basis failed. Washington reneged on its 1973 promise to give \$2.2 billion in reconstruction aid and instead imposed a tight economic boycott. Trade with other imperialist powers was minimal; they had no confidence in the VCP's capacity to stabilize capitalism in the South, preferring instead to use economic pressure to weaken the regime.

The Vietnamese capitalists who had remained in the South made no new investments, and profited from their near-total control of commerce. Vietnam remained plagued by inflation, unemployment, and shortages.

As for Vietnam's professed allies, things were not much better. Beijing demanded payment for rice. Moscow stingily extended interest-bearing loans, insufficient

to meet Vietnam's needs, and refused to grant long-term credits requested by Hanoi.

In this situation, and under constant pressure from the masses, the VCP was forced to shift from acting as the guardian of capitalist property relations.

The stage of a workers and farmers government was reached after August 1975, when banks were nationalized, some leading merchants were arrested, and a currency reform was carried out. These moves were accompanied by popular demonstrations of outrage against price-gouging, hoarding merchants.

In November 1975 a unified National Assembly for all Vietnam was projected. In July 1976 this body met and formally carried out reunification.

But Hanoi hesitated to expropriate the Southern capitalists, still hoping for imperialist aid, trade, credits, and investment (particularly in offshore oil).

By early 1978, however, it was clear that the imperialists were maintaining and increasing their diplomatic, economic, and military pressure. Furthermore, devastating floods and droughts in 1976 and 1977 forced a drastic reduction of the rice ration; popular anger rose against the hoarding, black-marketeering merchants who profited from their control of trade under shortage conditions. The attempt to apply a national economic plan to contradictory economic structures had failed, dangerously increasing dislocations in the North as well. Significant numbers of Stalinist cadres in the South had been forging close and profitable links to the capitalists.

In March 1978 thousands of people were organized under the direction of army cadres to seize the shops and goods of the big merchants. The expropriation of 30,000 firms was announced. Soon after, mass demonstrations were organized to crack down on the black market. In May, a single currency was introduced for the country.

These measures signaled the economic unification of Vietnam, establishing a workers state of 50 million people, the third largest in the world.

Vietnam is a deformed workers state. The parasitic caste that dominates the workers and peasants can only be removed by a political revolution and the establishment of workers democracy.

The social revolution in Vietnam has great accomplishments to its credit, despite the grave difficulties caused by the imperialist war, the subsequent economic blockade, and natural disasters.

Capitalism has been abolished, and Vietnam is free of imperialist domination. Unemployment has been vastly reduced. Education and medical care are being extended steadily, with the reduction of illiteracy and the elimination of formerly common epidemic diseases. Through rationing, a more equitable system of food distribution lessens the disastrous effects of food shortages. About 1 million people

have been persuaded to move from the overcrowded cities to "new economic zones," where agriculture is being restored under extremely difficult living conditions. The institution of national economic planning for all of Vietnam opens the door to significant improvement in the standard of living.

These conquests, consolidated through the mobilization of mass pressure, contrast sharply with the social disaster in Kampuchea during the same period.

The Vietnamese masses have many criticisms of the VCP for its privileges, its antidemocratic practices, for its corruption and mismanagement. But they are ready to fight to defend their gains against any attack.

Towards the end of 1977, as Vietnam headed toward elimination of the last strongholds of capitalism, the imperialists began a new offensive. Their immediate aim was to contain the revolution, to weaken it, to destabilize Vietnam economically, and to prevent the extension of the revolutionary impulse to Laos, Kampuchea, and Thailand.

The Pol Pot regime, in concert with the imperialist efforts, broke relations with Hanoi and stepped up raids against Vietnam's borders, particularly in the areas of the "new economic zones." At the same time, the Pol Pot regime began to mend its fences with the Kriangsak dictatorship in Thailand and the other ASEAN regimes. Beijing, for its part, showed increasing hostility to Vietnam, building up its troop strength on the border. Thus both Pnompenh and Beijing signaled their collusion with imperialism against the Vietnamese revolution.

Despite numerous diplomatic overtures by Hanoi, Washington reaffirmed its refusal to recognize the Vietnamese government. With the massive expropriations in early 1978, imperialist hostility to Vietnam increased. In September 1978, at the very time that Hanoi was appealing for emergency food aid, Carter reaffirmed the U.S. trade embargo against Vietnam.

In face of this hostility and encirclement, Hanoi felt compelled to act while it still had a favorable opportunity, to take a military initiative against Pol Pot in cooperation with Kampuchean rebels. The orientation to topple the increasingly proimperialist Pol Pot regime was an act of self-defense for the Vietnamese workers state. The fall of Pol Pot was a step forward for the Vietnamese revolution and for the Kampuchean workers and peasants.

Accompanying the imperialists' military and economic pressures has been a propaganda campaign centering on three themes:

1. They bemoan the "tragic" fate of the "boat people," who are said to be fleeing oppression in Vietnam. Actually, most of the "boat people" are expropriated merchants, traders, and the like who left

Vietnam voluntarily after losing their property and privileges. The imperialists, whose bombs forced millions of people into homelessness, have hypocritically closed their own doors to the "boat people."

2. They charge that there is a "Gulag" in southern Vietnam, claiming that the regime is just as repressive as its U.S.-backed predecessor. But those people being held in "reeducation camps" are mostly the officials and army officers of the old regime, many of them guilty of war crimes. They have not been treated in the horrendous manner they once treated the liberation fighters who fell into their hands.

There are no equivalents in southern Vietnam to Stalin's "Gulag" prison camps, in which millions of working-class dissenters perished. The capitalist propaganda on this helps divert attention from the very real capitalist "Gulags" elsewhere in Southeast Asia such as Indonesia and the Philippines. It is also aimed at justifying the imperialist war in Vietnam, and laying the groundwork for imperialist military intervention elsewhere.

3. They claim that Vietnam is an expansionist power, seeking to enlarge its ancient "sphere of influence" and dominate the people of Indochina. This propaganda line is designed to discredit resistance to imperialist maneuvers, the alliance between Laos and Vietnam, and the toppling of Pol Pot.

The Fourth International exposes and condemns these lies and explains the truth about Vietnam.

The devastation of war, imperialist economic pressure, and the effects of recent droughts and flooding weigh heavily on the people of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea. The Fourth International places the blame for this first and foremost on imperialism and calls for massive assistance to reconstruct these countries. We call for full diplomatic relations with the government of Vietnam and the new government of Kampuchea, and for an end to the U.S. economic blockade. We demand that the imperialists end their arms shipments to Southeast Asia and withdraw the U.S. Seventh Fleet and all military bases now!

## V. The Class Struggle in Kampuchea

In March 1970 a U.S.-backed coup toppled the Sihanouk regime and installed Lon Nol's military dictatorship in Kampuchea. Long-simmering unrest exploded.

The Vietnamese CP had supported Sihanouk's landlord-capitalist regime in exchange for the use of eastern Kampuchea as a military base. When the Lon Nol regime, with U.S. and Saigon army backing, moved to crush these bases, the Vietnamese acted in self-defense. They joined with Kampuchean Communist Party-led guerrillas to fight Lon Nol. An uprising swept the countryside, and a powerful peasant army of 50,000 was mobilized. The "Khmer Rouge" army quickly won control of almost the entire countryside.

Like the Vietnamese CP, the Kampuchean CP was a Stalinist party. Part of an international current in the workers movement, the KCP was petty-bourgeois in program, composition, and leadership. It advocated the preservation of a reformed capitalism, rather than the establishment of a workers state. For this purpose, the KCP created the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK), headed by Prince Sihanouk and encompassing other landlord-capitalist politicians.

At the time of the Paris Accords of January 1973, the VCP pressed the KCP leaders to reach a settlement with the Lon Nol dictatorship. Most Khmer Rouge leaders appear to have opposed this. In response, the Vietnamese Stalinists sharply reduced their military assistance, leaving the Kampuchean fighters isolated during the most savage U.S. bombing of the Indochina war.

The wing of the Kampuchean CP led by Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, and Khieu Samphan used this as a pretext to purge the party of those suspected of "pro-Vietnamese" sympathies. At the same time, they carried out sweeping repression in the liberated zones most tightly under their control, robbing the land of poor peasants as well as expropriating the exploiters, and carrying out forced population transfers.

The fall of Pnompenh to Khmer Rouge forces on April 17, 1975, placed the KCP leaders at the head of a nation whose social and economic structure had been shattered by civil war and U.S. bombing. Massive starvation was a real danger. Under these circumstances, only the establishment of a workers and peasants government and the mobilization of the oppressed and exploited masses to topple capitalism could have blocked economic and social catastrophe, and opened the road forward.

But the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary-Khieu Samphan wing of the Khmer Rouge followed an opposite course.

Upon coming to power, the Pol Pot regime carried out sweeping nationalizations of private property. Not only were the imperialists, the Kampuchean bourgeoisie, and the landlords expropriated, but the property of the poorer peasants and petty urban traders and peddlers was seized as well. The Pol Pot forces executed, imprisoned, and suppressed not only the former officials of the old regime, but real or imagined dissidents of any kind. The city workers and other technically skilled and educated persons were particularly suspect.

From its first day in Pnompenh, the regime launched a brutal reactionary drive against the workers and urban poor, forcibly expelling them to the countryside and treating them as enemies. Shortly thereafter the regime moved brutally to disperse the poor peasants throughout Kampuchea, conducting forced migrations to agricultural labor camps. Even cooking utensils and extra clothing belonging to the poor





Phnompenh on April 17, 1975, the day the Lon Nol regime fell.

peasants were eventually confiscated. The aim was to atomize the urban and rural masses and prevent resistance. The cost was great human suffering: death, illness, and starvation.

The Pol Pot regime slashed or eliminated public services of all kinds. They decreed the seven-day workweek and extended the hours of the working day. They instituted child labor. They eliminated all higher education and most elementary education, as well as most medical care. Transportation and communications networks were slashed to a minimum or collapsed altogether.

At the same time privileges enabling better living conditions were granted the Khmer Rouge.

To enforce this brutal reduction in the expectations and living standards of the masses, the regime instituted a totalitarian repression that enveloped every aspect of every individual's life.

The Pol Pot regime's "nationalizations" and "collectivizations" had nothing in common with the expropriation of the capitalists and landlords for which the workers and peasants had fought. The workers were dispersed; industrial production and manufacture were set back. The peasant mobilizations that had brought the Khmer Rouge to power were reversed. The social forces capable of advancing the anticapitalist struggle were crushed.

The capitalist state apparatus that had previously existed was smashed, but the emergence of a workers and peasants government was blocked. Any chance for a political alliance between the proletariat and the poor rural toilers was destroyed. The brutal and sudden expropriation of the poor peasants was a blow to the interests of the workers. The working class was not able to replace the shattered foundations of Kampuchean society with a new social order. The so-called suppression of money

did not, and could not, eliminate either commodity circulation or the use of money commodities. This was a temporary, administrative measure, whose goal and main effect was a further restriction of the consumption of the masses in favor of the privileged apparatus.

Without a thoroughgoing social revolution—clear economic and social advances for the toiling masses which they are willing to defend against all attempts to reverse them—there is only one possible outcome of sweeping expropriations by a petty-bourgeois leadership. That is increasing private capitalist accumulation by the petty bourgeoisie in the government bureaucracy, the army, the agricultural labor camps, and in assorted nooks and crannies of the economy. In this respect, Kampuchea, albeit with a primitive, highly dislocated economy, resembled other capitalist states where sweeping nationalization has



occurred, rather than workers states such as China or Vietnam.

The nationalization of property is not of itself sufficient to establish a workers state. Also necessary is the establishment of the workers as the ruling class through the transformation of the relations of production in the interests of the workers and their allies.

This was demonstrated most clearly in the Russian and Cuban revolutions, where revolutionary leaderships consciously guided the mass upheaval. It was also shown in the socialist revolutions that were deformed by Stalinist misleadership—from the overturns in Eastern Europe and China to the social transformations that reached a qualitative turning point in Vietnam last year. The nationalizations and forced labor camps in Kampuchea were not a conquest of the workers and in no way constituted a step toward solving the social and economic problems facing the Kampuchean masses.

Despite a temporary estrangement, the Pol Pot regime found that it required imperialist backing as the ultimate weapon against the workers and peasants, particularly in face of the revolutionary process in Vietnam. Pnompenh's alliance with Beijing also grew closer, as the latter bid more and more openly for imperialist aid.

The imperialists at first greatly distrusted the Khmer Rouge regime and exploited its brutal actions for anticommunist propaganda purposes. But as the revolutionary process deepened in Vietnam, the imperialists and the neighboring capitalist regimes began looking at Kampuchea in a new light.

From the beginning, the Pol Pot regime resorted to anti-Vietnamese chauvinism and provoked military conflicts on the border, in hopes of sealing off the impact of the Vietnamese revolution. These incidents accelerated to the level of a border war in late 1977, forcing Vietnam to evacuate hundreds of thousands of people from the border regions. On December 31, 1977, Kampuchea broke relations with Vietnam.

The Pol Pot regime established diplomatic relations with Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. It moved toward establishing relations with Australia.

Border incidents between Kampuchea and Thailand receded. Border incidents between Kampuchea and Laos stepped up.

News reports in the capitalist press began to softpedal the violations of human rights in Kampuchea. Instead, capitalist propaganda focused on the threat of "Vietnamese expansionism." In late 1978, the U.S. State Department stressed—in reference to Kampuchea—the need for "a stable system of independent states." Japanese imperialism started making plans to aid the Pol Pot regime, to try to make it economically viable in face of the threatening example of the Vietnamese revolution.

Oppositionists in Kampuchea, however,

who responded to the pressure of the workers and peasants, hoped for support from the Vietnamese revolution.

In mid-1978—after the Kampuchean regime had broken diplomatic relations with Vietnam, after Pnompenh launched increasingly bloody border raids despite Vietnamese retaliation, and after Pnompenh rejected all offers to negotiate, indicating they felt confident of powerful backing—Hanoi abandoned its earlier goal of resolving the differences peacefully. In addition to the aid that Pnompenh received from Beijing, Hanoi had good reason to assume that Pol Pot would soon be receiving U.S. economic, diplomatic, and military help as part of the imperialist efforts to put pressure on Vietnam.

In face of this situation, Hanoi strengthened its ties with oppositionists within the KCP and the Khmer Rouge apparatus. Guerrilla warfare against the Pol Pot regime started up in eastern Kampuchea. Other rebellions occurred elsewhere.

The need to defend the Vietnamese workers state led Hanoi to send massive numbers of troops into Kampuchea in December 1978, helping the rebels to establish a new government.

The Fourth International hails the fall of Pol Pot as an advance for the Kampuchean revolution. This creates an opening for the masses to struggle for a workers and peasants government that can undertake the measures and lead the mobilizations necessary to establish a workers state.

The class-collaborationist line of the Vietnamese Stalinists and the new Heng Samrin government in Kampuchea stand in the way of such an advance. Nevertheless, in response to the pressure of the imperialists and the demands of the masses, they may be forced to go further than they originally intended in undertaking anticapitalist measures.

Immediately after the fall of Pol Pot, the new government and its Vietnamese backers were put under heavy pressure in three key policy areas: 1. to reorganize and restore agricultural production and take steps to undo the damage done by Pol Pot's forced labor camps; 2. to renew and expand industrial production and manufacture and to provide for the livelihood of the people returning to the cities and villages; and 3. to establish administrative and military structures that can mobilize and arm the masses to protect the population from punitive raids by the Khmer Rouge.

Although the Heng Samrin government has had to rely to a degree on popular mobilizations, it cannot be given any confidence to carry out the measures needed. This requires the active intervention of the workers and peasants. The goal of the Fourth International is to support and participate in the struggles of the Kampuchean workers and peasants in order to help forge a mass revolutionary

Marxist, genuinely internationalist party in Kampuchea.

A key immediate need is for food, medical supplies, and reconstruction aid. An international campaign should be launched demanding that all governments, particularly the imperialists, who bear the main responsibility, grant massive aid to reconstruct Kampuchea and stave off the threat of famine; for recognition of the new Pnompenh regime; and for an end to imperialist, Thai, and Beijing backing for the Pol Pot and Khmer Serai forces.

## VI. Revolutionary Change in Southeast Asia

The victory of the liberation forces in Vietnam in 1975 shifted the relationship of class forces throughout Southeast Asia in favor of the working class and its toiling allies.

The greatest advances in the intervening years outside Vietnam have been in Laos, one of the poorest and smallest countries of Asia.

Following the 1973 Paris Accords, a coalition government, including both the Stalinist Pathet Lao and proimperialist forces, was established in Vientiane. But after the 1975 victory in Vietnam, mobilizations of workers, students, and urban poor precipitated the breakup of the coalition. In December 1975 the Pathet Lao dispersed the coalition and took sole responsibility for the government.

In the following three years, the government of Premier Kaysone Phomvihane has followed a vacillating but increasingly anticapitalist course. The royal army was disbanded. The monarchy was abolished. The big landlords were expropriated, and land distributed to landless peasants. The privileges of the caste of Buddhist monks were reduced. Foreign firms were expropriated and most Laotian-owned businesses were placed under state or joint state-private ownership. Education and medical care were rapidly expanded. Although much trade still remains in private hands, the rationing of necessities was introduced.

The Phomvihane government is trying to end large-scale cultivation and trade in opium. (Opium had been the country's principal export under the old regime and the biggest concentration of merchant capital; its continued production facilitates imperialist economic penetration and poses a military threat from the strong, imperialist-backed mercenary armies connected with the opium trade.)

These moves mark the Laotian government as a workers and peasants government, although one that is dominated by a Stalinist party that ensures its own control over the mass mobilizations and does not allow democratic decision-making by the workers and peasants.

The Laotian government has forged a close alliance with Vietnam, formalized in the twenty-five-year military and economic

pact signed in July 1977. For this, the capitalist media denounces Laos as a "puppet" of Vietnam. In fact, Laos and Vietnam were brought closer together as a result of the developing social revolution in both countries.

The Fourth International rejects the counterrevolutionary slander campaign against the Laotian revolution. But we grant no political confidence to the Laotian Stalinists, who have indicated their fear of the spreading revolution by signing an "antisubversion" agreement with Thailand and by pressuring the Thai guerrillas to leave their bases in Laos. We stand for the construction of an independent revolutionary Marxist leadership in Laos, as in Vietnam and Kampuchea.

In the other countries of Southeast Asia the example of the Vietnamese and Laotian revolutions, combined with the effects of the imperialist economic crisis, has produced growing social unrest.

Most deeply affected was Thailand. It had already been shaken by an upsurge of workers, peasants and students in 1973, which toppled the dictatorship of Thanom Kittikachorn. A capitalist counteroffensive was launched in October 1976, with a rightist military coup that installed General Thanin Kravichien. A bloody repression began.

Popular unrest continued to deepen, however. The workers in trade unions and the peasants fighting for land refused to be intimidated. The capitalist rulers then changed course. A new coup brought General Kriangsak Chamanan to power in 1977. He tried to contain unrest by holding elections and introducing Thailand's first minimum wage. But in the existing conditions of economic crisis, the workers and peasants have become more impoverished under his rule.

A peasant war has been gaining momentum in the Thai countryside, particularly in the north and northeast. It has the support of the Peasants Federation of Thailand, which organized massive peasant demonstrations in Bangkok in the mid-1970s. Peasant insurgents headed by the Communist Party of Thailand are now reported to be operating in forty-six of Thailand's seventy-three provinces.

The Kriangsak regime saw the example of the Vietnamese revolution as a deadly threat and sought to prop up the Pol Pot regime as a buffer against the spread of the revolution. But Bangkok was dealt a blow when the overthrow of Pol Pot and the continued deepening of the revolution in Laos brought the revolutionary threat to Thailand's borders. In addition to asking Beijing to counsel restraint to the Thai CP, Kriangsak visited Moscow to seek its help in Kampuchea.

Elsewhere in the region—in Burma, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia—the social crisis continues, although in less intense form than in Indochina.

U.S. imperialism realizes that its ASEAN satellites cannot by themselves resist the spread of revolution. Massive direct use of imperialist military forces will be needed. Hence the current propaganda campaign that portrays "Vietnamese expansionism" or "Sino-Soviet competition" in Southeast Asia as the source of the war danger in that region. Behind this smoke-screen imperialism has canceled troop withdrawals from South Korea, and is moving to strengthen the Seventh Fleet, rearm Japan, and assure military ties with the Taiwan regime.

The Fourth International denounces the imperialist moves in East and Southeast Asia. We unconditionally defend the steps that the Vietnamese revolution has taken in response to the imperialist moves.

But we grant no political confidence to Hanoi. Hanoi does not aim to take advantage of the opportunities to extend the revolution in Southeast Asia. Like Beijing and Moscow, the caste in Vietnam seeks a class-collaborationist deal with U.S. imperialism. Pham Van Dong's declarations of opposition to the peasant struggle in Thailand during his tour of Southeast Asia in late 1978 indicate the willingness of the Hanoi leaders to move against revolutionary-minded workers and peasants if imperialism will agree to a détente with Vietnam.

However, the measures taken by Hanoi to defend the workers state encourage the workers and peasants of Vietnam and elsewhere in the region, and can facilitate class mobilizations that will take the social revolution further than the Stalinist misleaders intend.

## VII. Washington and Beijing

The Chinese Stalinist leadership has been increasingly open in promoting its counterrevolutionary line.

This posture was already blatant in the early 1970s. Mao's regime established friendly relations with the Nixon government at the very time that Washington was brutalizing Vietnam with saturation bombing. Politically, it was not a very big step from that form of complicity with imperialism to the more direct form that Beijing took by invading Vietnam in 1979. The Beijing Stalinists have always sought peaceful coexistence. Even in the heyday of its leftist rhetoric, in 1968, the Mao regime made clear overtures to Washington. But it was not until U.S. imperialism ran into deeper trouble in Indochina that Washington decided to accept Beijing's standing offer.

Washington's turn towards détente with Beijing released the Chinese Stalinists from the constraints on their official stance that had been previously imposed, owing to the hostility of U.S. imperialism. Beijing became brazen in its support for imperialism and the worst capitalist dictatorships of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It gave support to the shah's dictator-

ship in Iran and the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile; it endorsed the 1978 imperialist military intervention in Zaïre by French and Belgian troops backed by the United States and Britain; it hails NATO and the U.S.-Japan military treaty; it calls for American imperialism to "punish" the Cuban revolution.

Beijing has bid for a preferential détente relationship with Washington to the detriment of Moscow. Trade arrangements are increasing. For Washington, however, the relationship it has with Moscow remains central. The Soviet Union has qualitatively greater weight militarily. Moreover, Moscow retains far greater influence in the world working-class movement than Beijing, and can much more effectively intervene and affect the course of events in many countries to the benefit of imperialism. In most areas of the world Beijing's influence in the working class is limited. Nonetheless, in speaking in the name of 900 million people, its extreme verbal support for imperialism not only brings discredit to Chinese Stalinism but is useful to world capitalism.

The Chinese Stalinists do, however, have the capacity to directly affect developments in Southeast Asia.

During the long Indochina war Beijing continually urged restraint on the part of the liberation fighters. The continuation of this line was signaled most recently by: 1. Beijing's campaign in defense of the expropriated capitalist merchants and traders of southern Vietnam and its bitter hostility to the extension and consolidation of the Vietnamese workers state in the South; 2. Beijing's efforts to undermine the workers and farmers government in Laos; 3. Beijing's support for the brutal repression of workers and peasants by the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea, and its success in helping to draw that regime closer to imperialism and the capitalist states of the region; 4. Beijing's open endorsement of the ASEAN capitalist regional bloc aiming to prevent the spread of revolution in the area.

Beijing has significant influence in the Stalinist parties of Southeast Asia, including in the Thai CP, which plays a prominent role in peasant struggles in the countryside.

Although Beijing continues to profess support for the struggles in Thailand, it has been acting to betray them. A high-level source in Bangkok described his government's reaction to Beijing's current policy as follows: "actions speak louder than words. We see no evidence of increased Chinese support for insurgency. So in this case the actions are different from the words." (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 10, 1978.) Bangkok sees accurately that Beijing's role in Thailand is to try to prevent the class struggle from threatening the ruling order.

Bangkok is also reported to have the following view of Beijing's role in South-

east Asia as a whole: "Nor do the Thais fully sympathize with Hanoi's charge that Peking's control of communist insurgency, the influence of the Overseas Chinese, and its economic weight are weapons designed to dominate Southeast Asia. The Thais view Chinese influence from within as potential support for the regime, if Thailand's foreign policy conforms to Peking's basic interests." (*Ibid.*)

This is an accurate assessment of Beijing's objective. Contrary to Hanoi's claims, Beijing is not aiming to dominate Southeast Asia and turn it into a Chinese "sphere of influence." Nor is it aiming to conquer or dominate Vietnam, or to topple the Hanoi government.

As a workers state, China does not have a built-in expansionist drive to exploit or dominate the working masses of other countries. It is fundamentally different from a capitalist state in this respect. On the contrary, the Chinese workers state is under constant pressure from imperialism and the imperialists' capitalist footholds in the region.

The government of China is dominated by a parasitic caste. The basic aim of this Stalinist caste is to preserve its privileges within the framework of the workers state. These privileges are in the area of consumption. The caste does not accumulate capital, and it does not have a drive to expand into new areas of trade or investment.

What the caste seeks, above all, is to steer a course toward *stability*, under pressure both from the imperialists and the class struggle.

*Vis-à-vis* the imperialists, and the neighboring capitalist states dominated by imperialism, such as those of ASEAN, Beijing seeks peaceful coexistence, that is, guarantees against attack and, if possible, friendly relations, technology, and trade.

*Vis-à-vis* the Chinese working people and peasants, and the toiling masses of the world, Beijing also seeks to be left alone, that is, to preserve the status quo. They constantly crush any motion toward workers democracy; they aim to head off the destabilizing impact of revolutionary outbursts in other countries; and they need to deliver economic progress in China to stave off mass discontent.

Deng Xiaoping's government is under particular pressure domestically at this time to deliver rapidly on its promise of the "Four Modernizations." This flows from the economic failures inherited from the Mao era—the hovering of agricultural production at subsistence level for two decades and the stagnation of industrial development—combined with popular discontent with the extreme political and cultural repression of the years following the so-called Cultural Revolution. This domestic pressure has made the bureaucracy especially anxious to obtain an infusion of advanced technology from Western imperialism.



Modernization is a pressing task in China.

This framework explains the Chinese invasion of Vietnam.

In return for improved diplomatic relations with the imperialists and economic aid and trade, Beijing has undertaken to do what it can to prevent revolutionary change, particularly in Southeast Asia. Beijing's invasion of Vietnam was a move in the service of imperialism against the threatening example of the Vietnamese revolution.

This framework also clarifies how the Sino-Soviet conflict relates to Southeast Asia.

Both Moscow and Beijing are motivated primarily by their objective of peaceful coexistence with imperialism. Each sees the other as a competitor in that objective (a rivalry that the imperialists continually aim to exacerbate and exploit).

Despite the bitter verbal attacks, neither Beijing nor Moscow is out to dominate or conquer the other. They are not competing for "spheres of influence" designed to protect themselves from economic offensives or military attacks by the other. The tension between them in Southeast Asia is not a spillover from the tension on the Sino-Soviet border.

Nor is the situation comparable to that when Moscow invaded Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968 to put down developments leading toward political revolution. There, the Kremlin sought to check unfolding processes that threatened the caste's own privileged position at home.

Politically motivated border wars are possible between Beijing and Moscow (one large-scale clash already occurred on the Ussuri River in 1969), just as they are possible between Beijing and Hanoi. But

the ruling class in each of the workers states—that is, the working class—will not permit the interbureaucratic rivalries to reach the point of imperiling their most fundamental class conquest, the workers states themselves.

Thus, the verbal violence of the Sino-Soviet dispute does not point to a new era of major wars between workers states. It is, rather, a sign that the respective Stalinist castes are desperate in their need to firm up their détente relationships with imperialism, and that each sees the other as a bitter competitor in that effort.

Far from pushing toward an era of "socialist world wars," the criminal policies of the Stalinist castes in Beijing and Moscow are undermining their stranglehold over the Soviet and Chinese workers, thereby bringing closer the day of final reckoning through the political revolution.

#### VIII. Where United Secretariat Majority Went Wrong

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International issued three declarations in the course of the developments in Indochina over the past period.

- A January 16, 1978, statement, "The Border 'War' Between Hanoi and Pnompenh," adopted unanimously by the Bureau of the United Secretariat and issued in the name of the United Secretariat. (Published in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 6, 1978.)

- A February 1, 1979, statement, "The War Between Hanoi and Pnompenh," approved by a majority of the Bureau of the United Secretariat. (Published in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 5, 1979.)

- A February 21, 1979, statement, "Chi-

nese Troops Out of Vietnam!" adopted by a majority of the Bureau of the United Secretariat. (Published in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, March 12, 1979.)

The line and analyses of all three statements are fundamentally wrong. Five major errors can be singled out.

1. *Failure to take the class struggle as the point of departure and see the responsibility of the imperialists in the conflicts.*

Neither the February 1, 1979, nor the February 21, 1979, statements takes note of the overturns of capitalist property relations in southern Vietnam as a factor in the conflicts. Neither statement recognizes the positive impact given to the class struggle in Kampuchea as a result of the overturn of the Pol Pot regime.

The February 1 statement, the major statement on the Vietnam-Kampuchea conflict, treats the *current* imperialist campaign against Vietnam as a factor of fifth-rate importance, barely mentioning it at the conclusion of the statements.

No mention is made in any of the three statements of the significance of the imperialists' prior turn toward the Pol Pot regime.

No consideration is given to the positive impact on the class struggle throughout Southeast Asia of the recent developments in Vietnam and Kampuchea.

The January 16, 1978, statement describes the conflict between Vietnam and Kampuchea at that time as a "fratricidal war," a "bloody border conflict." Although correctly foreseeing that the conflict "could deteriorate into a broader military conflict," no mention is made of the imperialist objectives in Indochina, other than their attempt to exploit the conflict for anticommunist propaganda.

The February 1, 1979, statement says that in relation to the Vietnam-Kampuchea war, revolutionary Marxists concentrate "their main fire against imperialism." But imperialism is not presented as a causal factor in the conflict. The imperialists are charged only with the sin of hypocrisy—supporting Kampuchea's "national sovereignty" after having so ruthlessly bombed it in previous years, and with trying to profit politically from this issue, using it as a "pretext" against Vietnam. The imperialists' *actual objective* of installing a proimperialist government in Kampuchea is overlooked.

Despite the reference to concentrating the "main fire on the imperialists," the source of the conflict is presented as "the responsibility of the ruling bureaucracies" of the USSR, China, Vietnam, and Kampuchea, "without any distinction among them."

The January 16, 1968, statement does not specifically mention the class character of Kampuchea. The February 1, 1979, statement implies that Kampuchea is a workers state, by saying that the Vietnam-Kampuchea conflict is one of the "fratricidal wars and threats of military action between workers states." This is wrong.

In the February 21, 1979, statement on Beijing's invasion of Vietnam, the imperialists are presented only as trying to "exploit" the conflict to their advantage. The statement notes that Beijing acted in response to the overturn of the Pol Pot regime, but rejects imperialism's objectives in Kampuchea as a causal factor. The direct collusion between Beijing and Washington is not noted. (No mention is made of Deng Xiaoping's prior consultations in Washington and Tokyo, for example.) Beijing is presented only as "objectively" aiding the imperialists' goal of weakening Vietnam and strengthening the capitalist states of the region.

The February 21 statement asserts that Beijing's aggression "falls within a broader political context that gives it its true significance and scope. It is the conflict between the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies, for which the Kremlin bears the historic responsibility, that constitutes the framework for the clashes between the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Khmer Rouge leaderships."

Thus, the axis of the statements of the United Secretariat was wrong.

2. *Failure to promote a correct revolutionary Marxist line in the conflicts.*

Grave errors in line flowed directly from the incorrect evaluations noted above.

The January 16, 1978, statement called for "an immediate suspension of the armed clashes" between Vietnam and Kampuchea and said "the border issue should be settled through open and public negotiations." It failed to raise the need to defend the Vietnamese workers state against the imperialist drive being carried out through the increasingly proimperialist government in Kampuchea.

The February 1, 1979, statement came out for "opposing the invasion of Cambo-

dia by the regular Vietnamese army." It advocated "immediate withdrawal of the Vietnamese army from Cambodia." It thus failed to support the defensive military measures taken by the Vietnamese workers state.

Although stating opposition to the Pol Pot regime, the effect of the immediate withdrawal line, if implemented, would have facilitated the efforts of the Pol Pot forces to reestablish a proimperialist regime in Kampuchea, threatening the Vietnamese revolution as well. The line of the statement offered no perspective for the Kampuchean masses to assert their independent interests.

The February 21, 1979, statement on Beijing's invasion failed to direct its main slogans against imperialism.

Although the statement correctly called for the immediate withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam and correctly warned against Soviet attacks against China, it failed to call on Moscow to give Vietnam whatever military supplies it needed to defend itself. This gave the impression of a pacifist appeal for Beijing to pull out.

Another error, albeit less grave, was the way in which the January 16, 1978, statement raised the call for a "Socialist United States of Indochina" and the February 1, 1979, statement the slogan of a "democratic socialist federation of the Indochinese peoples." Although this general objective is correct, the two statements presented it as an abstract substitute for addressing the immediate central problem confronting the Indochinese revolution. The way the slogan was raised suggested that the major problem was to overcome fratricidal conflict among the Indochinese workers states and the danger of Vietnamese domination over the Laotian and Kampuchean peoples.



Pol Pot soldier issues orders at gunpoint during April 1975 forced evacuation of Pnompenh.

This framework was wrong. It was simply another way of saying that the real problem was Vietnamese "expansionism."

To the contrary, the central problem in Kampuchea at the present time is two-fold: 1. To crush the remnants of the reactionary Pol Pot forces. Rather than showing hostility to the Vietnamese forces, the Kampuchean masses have welcomed the aid and protection they received from Vietnam in the fight against Pol Pot. 2. To take steps to reorganize the Kampuchean economy and society through the establishment of a workers state.

The perspective of a socialist federation of Indochina makes political sense only within this framework.

### 3. Failure to correctly explain the conflicts.

All three statements maintain that the central responsibility for the conflicts lies with the bureaucracies of the workers states. The two main explanations for their actions are the Sino-Soviet dispute and nationalism.

#### a. The Sino-Soviet dispute.

The January 16, 1978, statement asserts that "the Sino-Soviet conflict has played a direct role in the deterioration of relations between Vietnam and Cambodia." Moscow is said to be acting out of "fear of the pro-Chinese sympathies of Sihanouk and the Khmer Rouge." Beijing's goal was "to resist the spread of Vietnamese [and Soviet] influence in the area." Thus, "the Soviet and Chinese leaderships are both covering up for their 'ally' in the conflict between Vietnam and Cambodia. . . ."

The February 1, 1979, statement asserts that by its policies over the years, "the Soviet bureaucracy created the framework for the unfolding of the ensuing tragedy"; that "the Chinese bureaucracy in turn used its hegemony over the Cambodian CP leadership to whip up a systematic anti-Soviet and anti-Vietnamese campaign"; and that "the Vietnamese bureaucracy transformed the concept of [an Indochinese] federation into a formula scarcely hiding Vietnamese domination and control." "Under these circumstances," the statement continues, "it was inevitable that traditional Cambodian nationalist hostility to the Vietnamese would again unfold and give both the Chinese bureaucracy and its stooges in Pnompenh the necessary basis for their irresponsible campaigns against the Vietnamese workers state."

Although the statement asserts that "each of these bureaucracies" was acting "with arms in hand" in order "to defend its own immediate interests," it never explains what material interests were involved.

Both statements tend to present the conflicts as stemming from false ideas. The January 16, 1978, statement says: "Had the Stalinist ideology of 'socialism in one country' not triumphed, the sharpness of the confrontation between Vietnam and



Hungarians toss Stalin's portrait on bonfire in 1956.

Cambodia would be inconceivable." The February 1, 1979, statement says that the conflicts "represent the coming to maturity of the poisonous fruits of Stalin's theory of 'socialism in one country.'"

The February 21, 1979, statement on the China-Vietnam border war asserts that in addition to seeking capitalist stability in Southeast Asia, the Soviet bureaucracy seeks to "extend its own influence by capitalizing on its ties with the Vietnamese regime," while Beijing, on the other hand, considers the area "part of its sphere of influence."

In all these explanations, the central factors in the Sino-Soviet rivalry are omitted or their importance is rejected: the competition between the castes for relations with the imperialists and the attempt to defend their privileges in the area of consumption by trying to contain the class struggle and prevent the spread of revolutionary developments.

Rejecting these considerations, the February 1, 1979, statement says that Hanoi took an "irresponsible" action in Kampuchea and the February 21, 1979, statement says that Beijing was "showing its blindness" in invading Vietnam. In fact, however, both Hanoi and Beijing acted rationally from their own caste standpoints. Despite Hanoi's Stalinist methods, however, its action coincided with the interests of the Vietnamese and Kampuchean workers; Beijing's action, to the contrary, damaged the interests of the Chinese workers and the defense of their social gains.

Instead of seeing the bureaucratic castes as nonexpansionist by nature, the assumption is that workers states dominated by bureaucratic castes have a built-in drive towards war, based on trying to extend their spheres of influence. The February 21, 1979, statement says that "the infernal logic of interbureaucratic conflicts has prevailed." Even worse, it says, "the debacle suffered by the U.S. forces in Indochina, and the weakening of imperialism's position in Asia, have made it harder for

the imperialists to intervene directly, and have made it easier for conflicts between bureaucracies following an orientation of building 'socialism in one country' to take a military form."

If drawn out to its logical conclusions, this assessment would call into question the Trotskyist position rejecting the notion that the workers states, even bureaucratically degenerated or deformed, have no built-in drive toward war.

#### b. Nationalism.

Both the January 16, 1978, and the February 1, 1979, statements place strong emphasis on nationalism as a causal factor in the Vietnam-Kampuchea conflict. A virulent form of nationalism is ascribed not only to the regimes in Kampuchea and Vietnam, but to the masses as well. No distinction is made between the nationalism of the masses and the nationalism of the regimes. Nor is any distinction made between the nationalism of the bureaucratic caste in Vietnam and the nationalism of the capitalist Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea.

The January 16, 1978, statement says, "The weight of Stalinism internationally and the Stalinist training of the Vietnamese and Cambodian leaderships partly explain the extent of the resurgence of nationalism in Indochina."

The February 1, 1979, statement says that "Stalin's theory of 'socialism in one country'" led to "nationalism and nationalistic messianism getting the upper hand in bureaucratized communist parties."

While it is true that Stalinist castes conceive of and present their own interests in nationalist terms, this is not the fundamental cause of their actions. In defending their own *caste interests*, they falsely identify these interests with those of the nation as a whole. Their nationalism is but a guise for their interests as a parasitic caste. Capitalist regimes likewise identify their *class interests* with those of the nation as a whole. Here, too, it is necessary to delve below the ideology to expose the material class interests at work.

Hanoi was guided by the necessity of defending its caste interests in face of the growing imperialist pressure, in particular in face of the imperialist turn toward using the Pol Pot regime against the Vietnamese workers state. Thus Hanoi moved against the Pol Pot regime, while at the same time trying to keep the lid on struggles by the workers and peasants.

The capitalist Pol Pot regime, on the other hand, was guided by the necessity of defending its class interests against the threatened spread of the example of the Vietnamese socialist revolution.

Although both regimes resorted to chauvinistic appeals, their ideological views stemmed from different sources. Failure to distinguish the material roots of nationalism led the United Secretariat majority's statements into the trap of a



nonmaterialist explanation for the conflict.

The nationalism of the toiling masses is a different matter. Although the workers and peasants can be misled into following the chauvinistic ideologies of the respective governing regimes, this is not the only source for the nationalism of the masses. Often it reflects not a false ideology but a partial recognition of their real class interests. An example is the intense anti-imperialist nationalism of the workers and peasants of Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea during the imperialist military interventions in Indochina. As an expression, albeit partial, of the real class interests of the workers and peasants, this nationalism was and remains progressive, advancing rather than hindering the development of proletarian internationalism.

It is false to speak, as the February 1, 1979, statement does, of a "traditional Cambodian nationalist hostility to the Vietnamese," as if this were a constant attribute of the consciousness of the masses. It is likewise false to assert, as the January 16, 1978, statement does, that there has been a "resurgence of nationalism in Indochina" and to imply that for the masses the "historic animosity [was] deliberately intensified by imperialism" and that their "outlook [was] molded by more than thirty years of long-isolated national liberation struggles."

On the contrary, the anti-imperialist nationalism of the masses that arose in response to the imperialists drew the Kampuchean and Vietnamese people closer together, not further apart.

Furthermore, there is no evidence that the Vietnamese action in Kampuchea provoked nationalist hostility among the Kampuchean masses. On the contrary, there is evidence that the Kampuchean masses supported the new turn of events and saw their own interests advanced as a result—a situation that is inexplicable in the framework given in the United Secretariat declarations.

It is also to be noted that the February 1 statement neglects to explain how the "resurgence of nationalism in Indochina" applies to Laos. Here, it seems, the "historic animosity" toward Vietnam has not been evident. But, then, the revolutionary process in Laos has been advancing, drawing Laos and Vietnam closer together.

It is true that as long as the Stalinists rule in Hanoi, the possibility of Vietnamese great-power domination exists. But it is false to say that this is an overriding problem in the eyes of the Laotian and Kampuchean masses today. In fact, to the degree that steps are taken to advance the socialist revolution in Kampuchea and to deepen the social revolution in Laos, this threat, as well as the power of the Vietnamese Stalinist caste, will diminish.

The United Secretariat's declarations are unable to explain the ideological processes because of their failure to distin-

guish correctly the social processes at work in Laos, Kampuchea, and Vietnam. As a result the line presented is false.

#### 4. Failure to correctly assess the results of the conflicts.

This error flowed directly from the incorrect analysis and line of the three statements.

The January 16, 1978, statement asserted that a broader conflict between Vietnam and Kampuchea "may deal a hard blow to the revolutionary struggles under way in Southeast Asia." The February 1, 1979, statement described the broader conflict that broke out as "disastrous." The exact opposite was the case.

The February 1, 1979, statement says, "The very interests of defending the Vietnamese workers state against imperialism make an immediate withdrawal of the Vietnamese army from Cambodia absolutely imperative." In actuality, however, the withdrawal of the Vietnamese army from Kampuchea was precisely the objective that the imperialists aimed for in their drive against the Vietnamese workers state.

The February 1, 1979, statement asserts that the further presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea "will also strongly inflame Cambodian national feelings against foreign occupation and risk to trigger off long-term mass resistance—even in the form of prolonged guerrilla warfare—which under the present circumstances could make it easier for the Thai reactionary dictatorship and imperialism to prepare a comeback against the Vietnamese revolution for the first time since its crushing defeat in 1975."

In actuality, rightist guerrilla resistance has been going on, backed by the imperialists, and armed via Bangkok; the immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese forces would make it easier, not more difficult, for the imperialists.

While it is true that the long-term presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea could spark mass hostility, this would occur only under conditions in which Hanoi was acting to prevent the masses of Kampuchea from asserting their independent interests. The imperialists would have nothing to gain from backing the independent struggles of Kampuchean workers and peasants against the Hanoi Stalinists.

Thus, all three statements draw conclusions that are the exact opposite of the real impact of the recent developments on the class struggle in Indochina.

#### 5. Inability to counter the imperialist propaganda campaign and offer a clear alternative to the disorientation of the petty-bourgeois left.

The February 1 and February 21, 1979, statements correctly point out that the imperialists have seized on the developments in Indochina to wage an anticommunist propaganda campaign, and assert the need to combat it.

Very little is said, however, about the specific content of the imperialists' argu-

ments. This omission is glaring.

In fact, the line and analyses advanced in the February 1 and February 21 statements demand the immediate withdrawal of Vietnam from Kampuchea; reject demanding Soviet military aid to Vietnam; deemphasize the causal role of imperialism in the conflicts; and advance instead the view that the conflicts developed out of the Sino-Soviet dispute and the resurgence of nationalism. These positions could only disarm revolutionists in face of the arguments raised in the imperialist propaganda campaign.

The February 1, 1979, statement attacks "the attempts by international capital and by demoralized petty-bourgeois intellectuals to make a hue and cry over the 'Cambodian tragedy.'" Later on in the very same statement, however, the statement uses this very tone; it talks of "the unfolding of the ensuing tragedy" in Kampuchea, and calls it a "disaster." It was the opposite. It opened the possibility for a new advance of the Kampuchean revolution for the first time in three and a half years.

The lessons to be drawn from Vietnam's action in toppling the Pol Pot regime are compared with the lessons to be drawn at "the moment when Soviet tanks crushed the Hungarian revolution in 1956 and the Prague Spring in 1968." But these were examples that illustrated Stalinism's crushing of the workers (which was favored by the imperialists). The toppling of the Pol Pot regime, on the other hand, was an advance for the workers (which was opposed by the imperialists).

From this standpoint, it was impossible for the February 1, 1979, statement to counteract what it recognizes as the "disorientation, cynicism, and demoralization in big sectors of the international working class and anti-imperialist fighters in the colonial and semicolonial countries."

It was untrue to assert that "Today, the huge fund of sympathy built up by the Indochinese revolution among the toilers of the world has been to a great extent jeopardized."

This was not the reaction of the toilers of the world. It was the reaction of many demoralized petty-bourgeois radicals, however. And, unfortunately, this failing spirit was not effectively countered in the statement of the USFI Bureau majority.

The incorrect line and hand-wringing tone of the statements released in the name of the United Secretariat contributed to disorienting many sections of the Fourth International. Many sections published positions in their press similar to those of the United Secretariat statements, and in some cases more extreme.

These errors must be rectified to prevent further political damage.

Only a thorough discussion can clarify the issues and open the door to reorienting the Fourth International along a correct axis in relation to the conflicts in Indochina and their implications for revolutionary Marxists.

May 12, 1979

## Resolution on Indochina

1. The bureaucratized workers states do not constitute a "Stalinist bloc." The development of each of them is specific and should be grasped in its own uniqueness.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, conflicts among them should not be approached simply as conflicts among similarly bureaucratized workers states, and we do not necessarily take an abstentionist and neutralist position toward these conflicts.

2. The Cambodian workers state under the Pol Pot regime was an extreme expression of the practice of socialism in one country, totally rejecting any cooperation with Vietnam as a major workers state in Indochina. It thus pushed its bureaucratic ultraleftism almost to the point of genocide.

The Pol Pot leadership not only rejected close cooperation among the three workers states with Vietnam as its center—which was and is fundamental for the toiling masses of the three countries—but also provoked the "border war" between Vietnam and Cambodia, which was a big blow to the three Indochinese workers states and their masses.

3. The bureaucratic leadership of the Chinese workers state, which made a reactionary bloc with imperialism, was opposed to the development of close cooperation among the three Indochinese workers states with Vietnam as its center.

This is especially so because the strengthening of the Indochinese revolution constitutes a real threat to imperialism and the neocolonialist regimes in Southeast Asia, and will bring a crisis to the reactionary international bloc between the Chinese bureaucracy and imperialism.

And the conflict between Vietnam and Cambodia became an integral part of the international conflict between Vietnam

and the Chinese bureaucracy. In this framework, the Pol Pot regime was an instrument of the reactionary international policy of the Chinese bureaucracy.

4. The Pol Pot regime had to be overthrown in the interest of cooperation among the three workers states and their masses, and in the interest of the Cambodian masses themselves. In Cambodia, the Pol Pot line was creating dangerous room for the local reactionary forces and the counterrevolutionary intervention of imperialism.

In fact, the very quick fall of the Pol Pot regime shows that the regime lacked any active support from the Cambodian masses.

5. The FUNSK was formed by the oppositionists in the liberation forces to the Pol Pot regime; it is neither simply an agent nor creation of the Vietnamese state.

While it is supported by Vietnam, the FUNSK does not have a mass base. This weakness of the FUNSK comes mainly from the difficulties which the Cambodian masses have experienced and which they are now living under.

6. Due to the international economic blockade by international imperialism, the military provocations and threats from the Chinese bureaucracy, and serious economic difficulties, Vietnam couldn't afford to spend a long time waiting until the opposition current in Cambodia organized the masses step by step. In this context, the direct military intervention by Vietnam was a forced decision and an act of self-defense.

The Vietnamese intervention liberated the masses from the repressive regime of Pol Pot and avoided the collapse of the workers state itself under the Pol Pot regime.

Vietnam continues to defend Cambodia from the remaining Pol Pot forces, which are supported by the Chinese bureaucracy, imperialism, and counterrevolutionary forces. Laos has become an integral part of the confrontation between the Indochinese revolution and the bloc formed by the

Chinese bureaucracy and imperialism.

7. The Vietnamese workers state—constituted as a result of the most devastating war for national and social liberation ever seen in the world—is, to be sure, a bureaucratically deformed workers state. Its reliance upon the Soviet Union, however questionable, was the condition it accepted as the cost of this, and does not make Vietnam an agency of the USSR.

The Vietnamese revolution and the Indochinese revolution as a whole are at a

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*This resolution was submitted by delegates Hoffman, Lucienda, Jaber, Spathas, and the delegates of the Japanese section. The indicative vote of delegates and fraternal observers was: 12 for, 96 against, 2.5 abstentions, 2.5 not voting.*

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crossroads. The great difficulties which the three workers states face put a great pressure on the VCP and its policy. This is shown by its increasing international dependence on the USSR and the Soviet bureaucracy, its "peaceful coexistence" policy toward the neocolonialist regimes in Southeast Asia, and the possibility of deepening bureaucratization in Vietnam. The VCP stands basically on the ideology of socialism in one country and is strongly nationalist.

The struggle continues in Cambodia under extremely difficult conditions, and the Vietnamese workers state is subjected to reactionary pressures from the Chinese bureaucracy, imperialism, and the local neocolonialist regimes.

In this situation, it is an imperative necessity for the international working-class movement to defend with all possible

<sup>1</sup> There are workers states under the counterrevolutionary Thermidorian bureaucracies and those which are not.

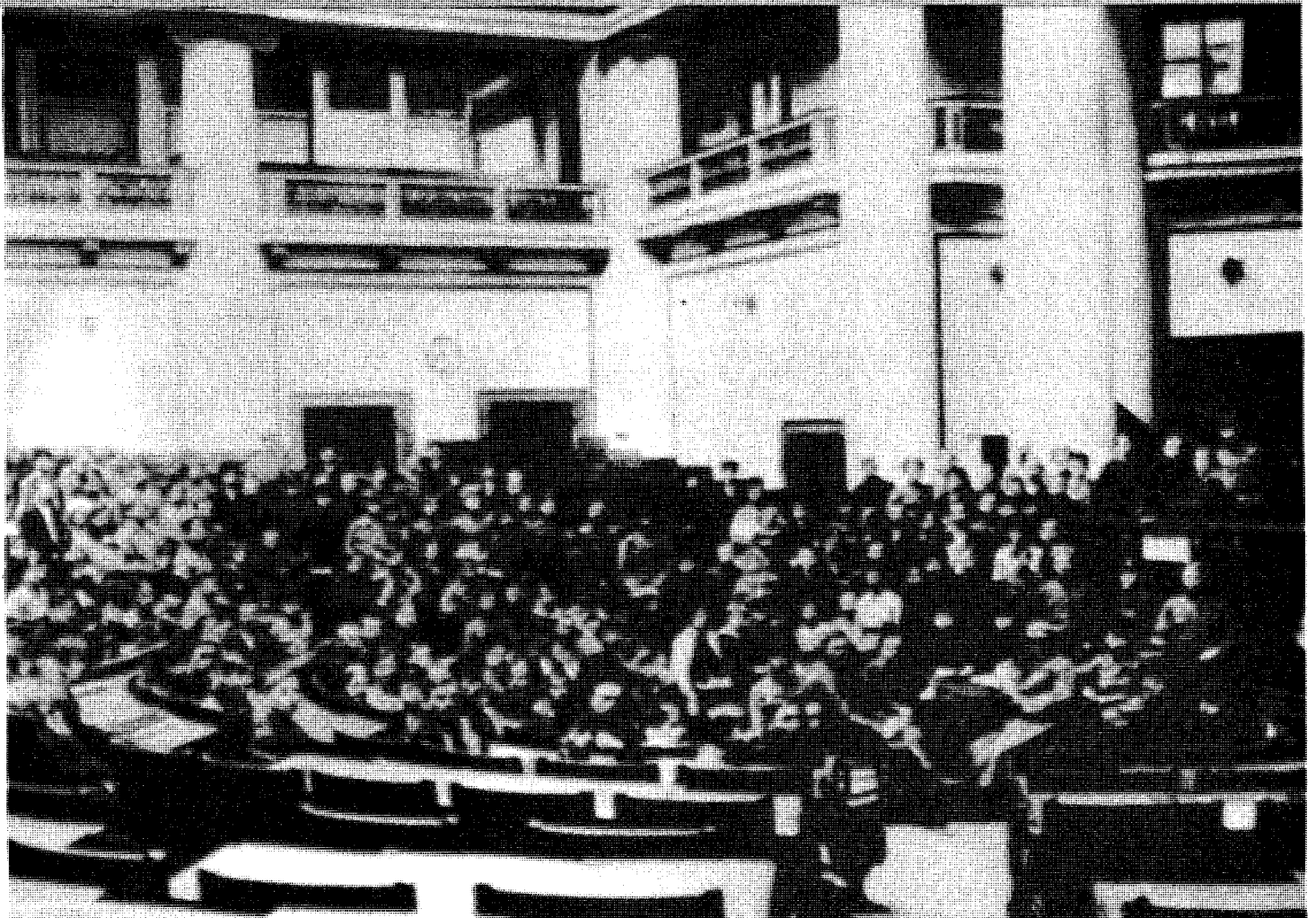
means the three Indochinese workers states and their toiling masses against the reactionary bloc of the Chinese bureaucracy, imperialism, and the local neocolonialists. This is imperative for fighting against the danger of deepening of the bureaucratization in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. The only definite proletarian perspective for the three workers states lies

in the development of international class struggles in Southeast Asia, the Far East, and the world as a whole, and in the struggle for a democratically organized Indochinese Socialist Federation of the workers-peasants Soviet Republics based on the right of national self-determination, the guarantee of full democratic rights for the various national minorities, and demo-

cratically organized joint economic planning.

The Fourth International will launch, as a main task at present, an international campaign to defend and support the Indochinese revolution and for the international recognition of the new Cambodian government.

# Resolutions on Socialism and Democracy



Petrograd soviet of workers and soldiers deputies in 1917.

# Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The current debate in the international labor movement over differing conceptions of socialist democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat is the most deepgoing since the years following the Russian revolution of October 1917. It is a product of the impetuous growth of workers struggles in the capitalist countries and their more radical goals and forms of organization, of the combined crisis of capitalism and the rule of the bureaucratic castes over the bureaucratized workers states, of the combined rise of the permanent revolution, the proletarian revolution, and the antibu-

reaucratic political revolution. It is likewise a product of the deepening awareness, inside the international working class, of the real nature of Stalinism and of bureaucracy in general. All these factors take the debate out of the realm of more or less academic polemics into the field of practical politics. A clear position on this question is required to advance the revolutionary processes in the world today in a practical sense. It is therefore necessary for the Fourth International to state its programmatic positions on this subject.

in state institutions; regular rotation of elected officials; restriction of their income to that of skilled workers; the right to recall them at all times; simultaneous exercise of legislative and executive power by soviet-type institutions; drastic reduction of the number of permanent functionaries and greater and greater transfer of administrative functions to bodies run by the mass of the concerned toilers themselves. In other words, a combination of a soviet as opposed to a parliamentary type of representative democracy with a qualitative growth of direct democracy.

As Lenin stated, the workers state is the first state in human history that upholds

## 1. What is the Dictatorship of the Proletariat?

The fundamental difference between reformists and centrists of all varieties on the one hand and revolutionary Marxists, i.e., Bolshevik-Leninists on the other hand, regarding the conquest of state power, the need for a socialist revolution, the nature of the proletarian state, and the meaning of the dictatorship of the proletariat consists of:

a. The recognition by revolutionary Marxists of the *class* nature of all states and of the state apparatus as an instrument of maintaining class rule.

b. The illusion propagated by the reformists and many centrists that "democracy" or "democratic state institutions" stand above classes and the class struggle, and the rejection of that illusion by revolutionary Marxists.

c. The recognition by revolutionary Marxists that the state apparatus and state institutions of even the most democratic bourgeois states serve to uphold the power and the rule of the capitalist class (and, in addition, in the imperialist countries, the exploitation of the people of the semicolonial countries), and therefore cannot be instruments with which to overthrow that rule and transfer power from

the capitalist class to the working class.

d. The recognition by revolutionary Marxists that the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus, in the first place destruction of the bourgeois repressive apparatus, is a necessary prerequisite for the conquest of political power by the working class.

e. The recognition by revolutionary Marxists of the necessity for the development of the consciousness and mass organization of the workers in order to carry through the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat.

f. The necessary conclusion drawn by revolutionary Marxists as a consequence: that the working class by itself can exercise state power only within the framework of state institutions of a type different from those of the bourgeois state, state institutions arising out of sovereign and democratically elected and centralized workers councils (soviets), with the fundamental characteristics outlined by Lenin in *State and Revolution*—the election of all functionaries, judges, commanders of the workers or workers and peasants militias, and all delegates representing the toilers

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*This resolution was submitted by a majority of the United Secretariat. Only an indicative vote was taken. The result was: 66.5 for, 25.5 against, 3.5 abstentions, 17.5 not voting.*

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the rule of the majority of the population against exploitative and oppressive minorities. "Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfill all these functions, and the more the functions of a state power are performed by the people as a whole, the less need there is for the existence of this power." (*State and Revolution, Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 419-420.) Thus, the dictatorship of the proletariat in the programmatic sense of the word is nothing other than a workers democracy: "By its very essence, the dictatorship of the proletariat can and must be the utmost flowering of proletarian demo-



cracy" (L. Trotsky, *Oeuvres*, Vol. V, pp. 206-7.) It is in this sense that the dictatorship of the proletariat should *begin* to wither away almost from its inception.

The concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which summarizes all these points, is a basic part of the Marxist theory of the state, of the proletarian revolution, and of the process toward building a classless society. The word "dictatorship" has a concrete meaning in that context: it is a mechanism for the disarmament and expropriation of the bourgeois class and the exercise of state power by the working class, a mechanism to prevent any reestablishment of bourgeois state power or of private property in the means of production, and thus any reintroduction of the exploitation of wage-earners by capitalists. But it in no way means dictatorial rule over the vast majority of people. The founding congress of the Communist International states explicitly that "proletarian dictatorship is the forcible oppression of the resistance of the exploiters, i.e., an insignificant minority of the population, the landowners and capitalists. It follows that proletarian dictatorship must inevitably entail not only a change in democratic forms and institutions, generally speaking, but precisely such a change as provides an unparalleled extension of the enjoyment of democracy by those oppressed by capitalism—the toiling classes . . . all this implies and presents to the toiling classes, i.e., the vast majority of the population, greater practical opportunities for enjoying democratic rights and liberties than ever existed before, even approximately, in the best and the most democratic bourgeois republics." ("Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 464-5.)

It follows that we reject the allegation of the reformists and many centrists—influenced by bourgeois ideology on this point, or apologists of the Stalinist dictatorship—that the basic difference between proponents and adversaries of the dictatorship of the proletariat lies either in the defense of a one-party system by the former and its rejection by the latter, or in the need to severely restrict or even suppress democratic freedoms on the part of the former and the staunch defense of those freedoms by the latter. The argument is all the more hypocritical in the light of historical evidence which shows the willingness of the reformists to severely restrict the democratic freedom of the masses when they threaten to overthrow the bourgeois order, even using police and military repression to that end (Noske!), and their inability and unwillingness to effectively defend democratic freedom even within bourgeois society against ultraright threats, inasmuch as such a defense involves mass mobilization on the broadest scale, including arming of the masses.

Against the now avowed programmatic

revisionism of many Communist parties and centrist formations, the Fourth International defends these classical concepts of Marx and Lenin. A socialist society is not possible without the collective ownership of the means of production and the social surplus product, economic planning and administration by the working class as a whole through democratically centralized workers councils, i.e., planned management by the toilers. No such socialization is possible unless the capitalists are economically and politically expropriated and state power is wielded by the working class. No fully developed socialist society can emerge within the narrow boundaries of the nation state. It needs the framework of at least the majority of the principal countries of the world to reach its final achievement.

Especially after the tragic Chilean experience, which confirmed so many previous lessons of history, the reformist concept now shared by the so-called Eurocommunist parties, the Japanese CP, and several other CPs as well as centrist formations and the Social Democrats, according to which the labor movement can fully attain its goals within the framework of bourgeois parliamentary institutions, through reliance on parliamentary elections and

## 2. Workers-Council Power and the Extension of Democratic Rights for the Toiling Masses

The dictatorship of the proletariat as proletarian democracy means the exercise of state power by democratically elected soviets, workers councils. Marx's and Lenin's whole critique of the limitations of bourgeois democracy is based on the fact that private property and capitalist exploitation (i.e., social and economic inequality), coupled with the specific class structure of bourgeois society (atomization and alienation of the working class, legislation defending private property, function of the repressive apparatus, etc.) result in the violent *restriction* of the practical application of democratic rights and the practical enjoyment of democratic freedoms by the big majority of the toiling masses, even in the most democratic bourgeois regimes. The logical conclusion flowing from this critique is that workers democracy must be superior to bourgeois democracy both in the economic and social sphere—such as the right to work, a secure existence, free education, leisure time, etc.—and in the scope and extent of democratic rights enjoyed by the workers and all layers of toilers in the political and social sphere. To grant a single party or so-called "mass organizations" or "professional associations" (like writers associations) controlled by that single party, a monopoly of access to the printing presses, radio, television, and other mass media, to assembly halls, etc., would, in fact, *restrict and not extend* the democratic rights of the proletariat compared to those enjoyed under contem-

porary bourgeois democracy. The right of the toilers, including those with dissenting views, to have access to the material means of exercising democratic freedoms (freedom of the press, of assembly, of demonstration, the right to strike, etc.) is essential, as is the independence of the trade unions from the state and from control by the ruling party or parties. Therefore, an extension of democratic rights for the toilers beyond those already enjoyed under conditions of advanced bourgeois democracy is incompatible with the restriction of the right to form political groupings, tendencies, or parties on programmatic or ideological grounds. Moreover, self-activity and self-administration by the toiling masses under the dictatorship of the proletariat will take on many new facets and extend the concepts of "political activity," "political parties," "political programs," and "democratic rights" far beyond anything characteristic of political life under bourgeois democracy. This applies not only to the combined flowering of more advanced forms of representative indirect democracy (soviet congresses) with growing manifestations of direct democracy, with political instruments like referendums on specific questions being used to enable the mass of the toilers to decide directly on a whole number of key questions of policy. It applies also and especially to the very content of "politics."

Under capitalism and even beyond it, under precapitalist forms of commodity production, it is the law of value, i.e., objective economic laws operating behind the backs of men and women, which basically regulates economic life, above all the distribution of economic resources among key sectors of the economy. The socialist revolution implies the possibility of a giant leap forward towards a conscious regulation of humanity's economic and social destiny instead of a blind anarchic one. While this process can only come to full and harmonious completion in a worldwide socialist society, it starts with conscious planning of the socialized economy during the transition period between capitalism and socialism, in the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat. While the influence of the law of value cannot be completely eliminated during that period, its domination must be overcome or the economy cannot be planned.

But planning means allocation of economic resources according to socially established priorities instead of according to blind market forces and the rule of profit. *Who will establish these priorities*, which involve the well-being of tens and hundreds of millions of human beings and whose implications, consequences, and results in turn influence the behavior of the mass of the producers and the toilers?

Basically, there are only two mechanisms which can be substituted for the rule of the law of value: either bureaucratic choices *imposed* upon the mass of the producers/consumers from the top (whatever their origin and character may be, from benign technocratic paternalism to extreme arbitrary despotism of Stalin's type), or choices *made by the mass of the producers themselves*, through the mechanism of democratically centralized workers power, i.e., through the mechanism of socialist democracy. *This will be the main contents of political debate and struggle, of socialist democracy under the dictatorship of the proletariat.*

Experience has shown that the first mechanism is extremely wasteful and inefficient. This is true not only because of direct waste of material resources and productive capacities and great dislocations in the plan, but also and especially because of the systematic stifling of the creative and productive potential of the working class. Theoretical and empirical analysis concurs in the conclusion that the second mechanism can and will greatly reduce these shortcomings. In any case, it is the only one permitting a gradual transition to that which is the goal of the dictatorship of the proletariat: a classless socialist community of self-administrating producers and consumers.

Experience has, however, also shown that this mechanism of democratically centralized workers' power through a system of workers councils cannot master all

the social and economic contradictions of the building of socialism without the existence of supplementary correctives independent from the soviet state apparatus. Independent trade unions and a labor law guaranteeing the right to strike are essential in this sense.

Building a classless socialist society also involves a gigantic process of remolding all aspects of social life. It involves constant change in the relations of production, in the mode of distribution, in the labor process, in the forms of administration of the economy and society, and in the customs, habits, and ways of thinking of the great majority of people. It involves the fundamental reconstruction of all living conditions: reconstruction of cities, complete revolution in the education system, restoration and protection of the ecological equilibrium, technological innovations to conserve scarce natural resources, etc.

Previously, the highest acquisitions of culture have been the property of the ruling class, with special prerogatives and privileges accruing to the intelligentsia. Members of this special grouping function as transmitters and developers of science, art, and the professions for the ruling class. That intelligentsia will gradually disappear as the masses progressively appropriate for themselves the full cultural heritage of the past and begin to create a socialist culture. In this way, the distinction between "manual" and "intellectual" labor will also disappear, while at the same time each individual will be able to develop their own capacities and talents.

All these endeavors, for which humanity possesses no blueprints, will give rise to momentous ideological and political debates and struggles. Different political platforms, arising around these combined issues, will play a much greater role than nostalgic references to the bourgeois past or abstract affirmations of the communist ideal. Any restriction of these debates, struggles, and formations of parties and groupings, under the pretext that this or that platform "objectively" reflects bourgeois or petty-bourgeois pressure and interests and, "if logically carried out to the end," could "lead to the restoration of capitalism," can only hinder the emergence of majority agreement around the most effective solutions of these burning problems *from the point of view of building socialism*, i.e., from the point of view of the overall *class* interests of the proletariat, as opposed to sectoral, regional, "national," group interests, etc.

More specifically, it should be pointed out that important struggles will continue throughout the process of building a classless society, struggles that concern social evils that are rooted in class society but will not disappear immediately with the elimination of capitalist exploitation or wage labor. The oppression of women, the oppression of national and racial minori-

ties, and the oppression and alienation of youth are archetypes of such problems, which cannot automatically be subsumed under the general heading "class struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie," except by divorcing the categories "working class" and "bourgeoisie" from their classical Marxist, materialist definitions and foundations, as is done by the Maoists and various ultraleft currents.

Political freedom under socialist democracy therefore also implies freedom of organization and action for independent women's liberation, national liberation, and youth movements, i.e., movements broader than the working class in the scientific sense of the word, not to speak of the revolutionary Marxist current within the working class. The revolutionary party will be able to win political leadership in these movements and to ideologically defeat various reactionary ideological currents not through administrative or repressive measures, but on the contrary, only by promoting the broadest possible mass democracy within their ranks and by uncompromisingly upholding the right of all tendencies to defend their opinions and platforms before society as a whole.

It should likewise be recognized that the specific *form* of the workers state implies a unique dialectical combination of centralization and decentralization. The withering away of the state, to be initiated from the inception of the dictatorship of the proletariat, expresses itself through a process of gradual devolution of the right of administration in broad sectors of social activity (health system, educational system, postal-railway-telecommunications systems, etc.) internationally, nationally, regionally, and locally (communes), once the central congress of workers councils (i.e., the proletariat as a *class*, expressing its *class interests* as opposed to sectorial interests) has by majority vote allocated to each of these sectors that part of human and material resources at the disposal of society as a whole. This again implies specific forms and contents of political debates and struggles which cannot be predicted in advance, or in any way reduced to simplistic and mechanical "class struggle" criteria.

Finally, in the building of a classless society, the participation of millions of people not only in a more or less passive way through their votes, but also in the actual administration of various levels cannot be reduced to a workerist concept of considering only workers "at the point of production" or in the factories as such. Lenin said that in a workers state, the vast majority of the population would participate directly in the exercise of "state functions." This means that the soviets on which the dictatorship of the proletariat will be based are not only factory councils, but bodies of self-organization of the masses in many spheres of social life, including factories, commercial units, hos-

pitals, schools, transport and telecommunication centers, and neighborhoods (territorial units). This is indispensable in order to integrate into the proletariat organized as the ruling class its most dispersed and often poorest and most oppressed layers; such as women, oppressed nationalities, youth, workers in small shops, old-age

### 3. Class Struggle Under Capitalism, the Struggle for Democratic Rights, and the Emergence of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The ruling class utilizes all the ideological means at its disposal to identify bourgeois parliamentary institutions with the consolidation of democratic rights of the toilers. In Western Europe, North America, Japan, and Australia, for instance, the capitalist rulers seek to appear as champions of "democracy" in the eyes of the workers and plebeian masses, an outlook which has been powerfully strengthened by the negative experiences of fascism and Stalinism.

One of the key components of the struggle for winning the masses to socialist revolution, to the dictatorship of the proletariat, consists of properly understanding the scope of their democratic aspirations and actions, of expressing them adequately, and thus counteracting the strenuous efforts of the reformists to coopt the struggle for democratic demands and divert it into the blind alley of bourgeois parliamentary institutions.

Whatever democratic rights the masses enjoy under capitalism—from the right to free speech, to the right to organize labor unions and workers parties, to the right to universal franchise and free abortion—have been won by them through struggle. Revolutionary Marxists fight for the broadest possible democratic rights under capitalism. The greater the degree of democratic rights, the greater the possibilities for the workers and their allies to struggle for their interests and to improve the relationship of class forces for the proletariat, in preparation for the showdown struggles with the capitalists for power.

It is in the class interests of the workers to fight to defend every conquest of the masses, including democratic rights, against capitalist reaction. History has shown that the working class is the only class that can consistently do so, and that the workers united front is the best instrument for successfully organizing such a fight against the threat of fascist or military dictatorships. Likewise, in the fight against capitalist reaction, we place no confidence in the capitalist state or any of its institutions. Every restriction by the capitalist state on democratic rights will inevitably be used tenfold against the working class and especially its revolutionary wing. Fascism can only be stopped by independent mass mobilizations of a united working class and its allies, in consciously led united-front mass struggles.

pensioners, etc. It is also indispensable to cementing the alliance between the working class and the lower petty bourgeoisie like the working farmers or peasants. This alliance is decisive in winning and holding state power and in reducing the social costs both of a victorious revolution and of the building of socialism.

Capitalism in its decay breeds reaction. The extent of democratic rights and freedoms enjoyed by the masses at any particular time in a given country are determined by the relationship of class forces. Although there are oscillations within this historic trend, the long-term tendency for capitalism in the imperialist epoch is to restrict democratic rights in face of deepening class polarization. This is especially true the more a given capitalist class finds itself in economic and social crisis, and the smaller are its material bases and reserves. Today this can be seen most clearly in the many brutal dictatorships in semicolonial countries.

The task of wresting leadership from the reformists as "representatives" of the democratic aspirations of the masses is thus crucial for revolutionary Marxists. Obviously, programmatic clarification and propaganda, especially the struggle against reformist and parliamentary illusions, important as they are, are insufficient to achieve this objective. The masses learn through their practical daily experience; hence the importance of going through this daily experience with them and drawing the correct lessons from it.

### 4. One-Party and Multi-Party System

Without full freedom to organize political groups, tendencies, and parties, no full flowering of democratic rights and freedoms for the toiling masses is possible under the dictatorship of the proletariat. By their free vote, the workers and poor peasants indicate themselves what parties they want to be part of the soviet system. In that sense, the freedom of organization of different groups, tendencies, and parties recognized by the workers themselves as soviet parties through the election of their members to the soviets is a precondition for the exercise of political power by the working class. "The democratization of the soviets is impossible without legalization of soviet parties." (*Transitional Program of the Fourth International*.) Without such freedom, unrestrained by ideological restrictions, there can be no genuine, democratically elected workers councils, nor the exercise of real power by such workers councils.

Thus restrictions of that freedom are not restrictions of the political rights of the class enemy but restrictions of the political

As the class struggle sharpens, the reformist leaders, who trumpet the alleged benefits of the bourgeois parliamentary system, will sound less and less convincing, and the workers will increasingly challenge the authority and prerogatives of the ruling class on all levels. The workers themselves, through their own organizations—from union and factory committees and organs for workers control, to workers councils (soviets)—will begin to assert more and more economic and political decision-making authority, and thereby they will gain confidence in their power to overthrow the bourgeois state. In this same process, in order to carry out their struggles more effectively, with the broadest mass involvement, the workers will see the need for the most democratic forms of organization. Through this experience of struggle and participation in their own democratically run organizations, the masses will experience more freedom of action and more liberty in the broadest sense of the word than they ever exercised under bourgeois parliamentary democracy. They will thus learn the irreplaceable value of proletarian democracy. This is an indispensable link in the chain of events leading from capitalist rule to the conquest of power by the proletariat. It will also be a vital experience to draw upon in establishing the democratic norms of the workers state. Self-organization of the proletariat in the course of the class struggle—from democratic strikers assemblies and democratically elected strike committees to a generalized system of dual power—therefore is the best school of proletarian democracy under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

rights of the proletariat. That freedom is likewise a precondition for the working class *collectively as a class* arriving at a common or at least a majority viewpoint on the innumerable problems of tactics, strategy, and even theory (program) that are involved in the titanic task of building a classless society under the leadership of the traditionally oppressed, exploited, and downtrodden masses. Unless there is freedom to organize political groups, tendencies, and parties, there can be no real socialist democracy.

Revolutionary Marxists reject the substitutionist, paternalistic, elitist, and bureaucratic deviation from Marxism that sees the socialist revolution, the conquest of state power, and the wielding of state power under the dictatorship of the proletariat, as a task of the revolutionary party acting "in the name" of the class or, in the best of cases, "with the support of" the class.

If the dictatorship of the proletariat is to mean what the very words say, and what the theoretical tradition of both Marx and

Lenin explicitly contain, i.e., *the rule of the working class as a class* (of the “associated producers”); if the emancipation of the proletariat can be achieved only through the activity of the proletariat itself and not through a passive proletariat being “educated” for emancipation by benevolent and enlightened revolutionary administrators, then it is obvious that the leading role of the revolutionary party both in the conquest of power and in the building of a classless society can only consist of leading the mass activity of the class politically, of winning political hegemony in a class that is increasingly engaged in self-activity, of struggling within the class for majority support for its proposals, through political and not administrative or repressive means. Party and state remain separate and distinct entities.

But genuinely representative, democratically elected workers councils can exist only if the masses have the right to elect whomever they want without distinction, and without restrictive preconditions as to the ideological or political convictions of the elected delegates (this does not apply, of course, to parties engaged in armed struggle against the workers state, i.e., to conditions of civil war, or to conditions of the revolutionary crisis and armed insurrection itself, to which this resolution refers in a later point). Likewise, workers councils can function democratically only if all the elected delegates enjoy the right to form groups, tendencies, and parties, to have access to the mass media, to present their different platforms before the masses, and to have them debated and tested by experience. Any restriction of party affiliation restricts the freedom of the proletariat to exercise political power, i.e., restricts workers democracy, which would be contrary to our program, to the historical interests of the working class, to the need to consolidate workers power, to the interests of world revolution and of building socialism.

In no way does the Marxist theory of the state entail the concept that a one-party system is a necessary precondition or feature of workers power, a workers state, or the dictatorship of the proletariat. In no theoretical document of Marx, Engels, Lenin, or Trotsky, and in no programmatic document of the Third International under Lenin, did such a proposal of a one-party system ever appear. The theories developed later on, such as the crude Stalinist theory that throughout history social classes have always been represented by a single party, are historically wrong and serve only as apologies for the monopoly of political power usurped by the Soviet bureaucracy and its ideological heirs in other bureaucratized workers states, a monopoly based upon the political expropriation of the working class.

History—including the latest events in the People’s Republic of China—has on the contrary confirmed the correctness of

Trotsky’s position that “classes are heterogeneous; they are torn by inner antagonisms, and arrive at the solution of common problems no otherwise than through an inner struggle of tendencies, groups and parties. . . . An example of only one party corresponding to one class is not to be found in the whole course of political history—provided, of course, you do not take the police appearance for the reality.” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 267.) This was true for the bourgeoisie under feudalism. It is true for the working class under capitalism. It will remain true for the working class under the dictatorship of the proletariat and in the process of building socialism.

If one says that only parties and organizations that have no bourgeois (or petty-bourgeois?) program or ideology, or are not “engaged in antisocialist or antisoviet propaganda and/or agitation” are to be legalized, how is one to determine the dividing line? Will parties with a majority of working-class members but with a bourgeois ideology be forbidden? How can such a position be reconciled with free elections for workers councils? What is the dividing line between “bourgeois program” and “reformist ideology”? Must reformist parties then be forbidden as well? Will the Social Democracy be suppressed?

It is unavoidable that on the basis of historical traditions, reformist influence will continue to survive in the working class of many countries for a long period. That survival will not be shortened by administrative repression; on the contrary, such repression will tend to strengthen it. The best way to fight against reformist illusions and ideas is through the combination of ideological struggle and the creation of the material conditions for the disappearance of these illusions. Such a struggle would lose much of its efficacy under conditions of administrative repression and lack of free debate and exchange of ideas.

If the revolutionary party agitates for the suppression of Social Democratic or other reformist formations, it will be a thousand times more difficult to maintain freedom of tendencies and toleration of factions within its own ranks. The political heterogeneity of the working class would then inevitably tend to reflect itself within the single party.

Thus, the real alternative is not: either

## 5. What Do Political Parties Represent?

Revolutionary Marxists reject all spontaneist illusions according to which the proletariat is capable of solving the tactical and strategic problems posed by the need to overthrow capitalism and the bourgeois state and to conquer state power and build socialism by spontaneous mass actions without a conscious vanguard and an organized revolutionary vanguard workers party, based upon a revolutionary

freedom for those with a genuine socialist program (who ideologically and programmatically support the soviet system) or freedom for all political parties. The real choice is: either genuine workers democracy with the right of the toiling masses to elect whomever they want to the soviets, and freedom of political organization of all those elected (including those who do not ideologically support the soviet system), or a decisive restriction of the political rights of the working class itself, with all the consequences flowing therefrom. Systematic restriction of political parties leads to systematic restriction of freedom within the revolutionary vanguard party itself.

When we say that we are in favor of a legalization of all soviet parties, i.e., all parties of which members are elected into the soviets by the workers and peasants themselves, this does not imply that we in any case underestimate the political confusion, errors, and even partial defeats which the propagation of wrong programs and alien class influences upon the toiling masses by such parties could and will provoke under conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Even more obviously do we not *call* upon the workers to build parties upon the basis of what we consider wrong programs, platforms, or policies, nor do we advocate the creation of such parties. We only state that the artificial administrative suppression of such parties—artificial inasmuch as they continue to reflect currents among the masses even if they are legally suppressed—far from reducing these dangers, increases them. The political, ideological, and cultural homogenization of the working class, bringing the great majority of its members up to the point where they are capable of substituting a free community of self-administered citizens to the survival of a state machine (i.e., able to achieve the building of socialism and the withering away of the state) is a gigantic historical task. It is not only linked to obvious material preconditions. It involves also a specific political training. Historical experience confirms that outside of conditions of genuine workers democracy, this process can only be retarded or even stopped and reversed, as it obviously has been in the USSR. And historical experience has also confirmed that no genuine workers democracy is possible without freedom to form a multiple party system.

program confirmed by history, with cadres educated on the basis of that program and tested through long experience in the living class struggle.

The argument of anarchist origin, also taken up by ultraleft “councilists” currents, according to which political parties by their very nature are “liberal-bourgeois” formations alien to the proletariat and have no place in workers coun-

cils because they tend to usurp political power from the working class, is theoretically incorrect and politically harmful and dangerous. It is not true that political groupings, tendencies, and parties come into existence only with the rise of the modern bourgeoisie. In the fundamental (not the formal) sense of the word, they are much older. They came into being with the emergence of forms of government in which relatively large numbers of people (as opposed to small village community or tribal assemblies) participated in the exercise of political power to some extent, while social and especially (but not only) class antagonisms had already arisen (e.g., under the urban democracies of antiquity and of the Middle Ages), i.e., they coincide with the existence of social conflicts based upon conflicting material interests. These are not necessarily limited to conflicting interests *between* antagonistic social classes. They can also express conflicting material interests *within* a given social class.

Political parties in *that* real (and not formal) sense of the word are a historical phenomenon the contents of which have obviously changed in different epochs, as occurred in the great bourgeois-democratic revolutions of the past (especially, but not only, in the great French revolution). The proletarian revolution will have a similar effect. They will survive as long as social conflicts based upon conflicting material interests survive, i.e., until the final building of a fully developed classless socialist society. It can be predicted confidently that under genuine workers democracy parties will receive a much richer and much broader content and will conduct mass political struggles of a much broader scope and with much greater mass participation than anything that has occurred up to now under the most advanced forms of bourgeois democracy. Many of these parties will be new, i.e., not simple continuations or remnants of parties existing under bourgeois democracy.

In fact, as soon as political decisions go beyond a small number of routine questions that can be taken up and solved by a restricted number of people, any form of democracy implies the need for *structured and coherent options of a great number of related questions*, in other words a choice between alternative political lines, platforms, and programs expressing in the last analysis conflicting interests of different social classes and layers. That's what parties represent.

The absence of such structured alternatives, far from giving large numbers of people greater freedom of expression and choice, makes government by assemblies and workers councils practically impossible. Ten thousand people cannot vote on 500 alternatives. If power is not to be transferred to demagogues or secret pressure groups and cliques, there is need for free confrontation among a limited

number of structured and coherent options, i.e., political programs and parties, without monopolies or prohibitions. This is what will make workers democracy meaningful and operative.

Furthermore, the anarchist and "councilist" opposition to the formation of political parties under the dictatorship of the proletariat in the process of building socialism either: (a) represents wishful thinking (i.e., the hope that the mass of the toilers will abstain from the formation or support of groups, tendencies, and parties with different political lines and programs), in which case it is simply utopian, for that will not happen; or (b) it represents an attempt to prevent and suppress the attempts by all those toilers who wish to engage in political action on a pluralistic basis to do so. In that case it can objectively favor only a process of bureaucratic monopolization of power, i.e., the very opposite of what the libertarians want.

In many centrist and ultraleft groupings a similar argument is advanced, according to which the dispossession of the Soviet proletariat from the direct exercise of political power was rooted in the Leninist concept of a democratic centralist organization itself. They hold that the Bolsheviks' efforts to build a workers party to lead the working class in a revolution inevitably led to a paternalistic, manipulative, bureaucratic relationship between the party and the toiling masses, which in turn led to a one-party monopoly of the exercise of power after the victorious socialist revolution.

This argument is unhistoric and based on an idealist concept of history. It is also factually wrong. From a Marxist, i.e., historical-materialist point of view, the basic causes of the political expropriation of the Soviet proletariat were material and socioeconomic, not ideological or programmatic. The general poverty and backwardness of Russia and the relative numerical and cultural weakness of the proletariat made the long-term exercise of power by the proletariat impossible if the Russian revolution remained isolated. That was the consensus not only among the Bolsheviks in 1917-18 but among all tendencies claiming to be Marxist. The catastrophic decline of the productive forces in Russia as a result of the civil war, foreign imperialist military intervention, sabotage by the generally probourgeois technicians, etc., led to conditions of extreme scarcity that fostered a growth of special privileges. The same factors led to a qualitative weakening of the already small proletariat. In

addition, large portions of the political vanguard of the class, those best qualified to fight the capitalist class and the bureaucracy, died in the civil war or left the factories to be incorporated massively into the Red Army and the state apparatus.

After the beginning of the New Economic Policy an economic upturn began, but massive unemployment and continuous disappointment caused by the retreats and defeats of the world revolution nurtured political passivity and a general decline of mass political activity of the toilers, extending to the soviets. The working class was thus unable to stem the growth of a materially privileged layer, which, in order to maintain its rule, increasingly restricted democratic rights and destroyed the soviets and the Bolshevik Party itself (while using its name for its own purposes). These are the main causes of the usurpation by a bureaucracy of the exercise of direct power and of the gradual merger of the party apparatus, the state apparatus, and the apparatus of economic managers into a privileged bureaucratic caste.

Lenin, Trotsky, other Bolsheviks, and later the Left Opposition, far from favoring it, tried to fight the rise of the bureaucracy. The weakening of the proletarian vanguard and not the "Leninist theory of the party" made that fight unsuccessful. Even if one would argue that some measures taken by the Bolsheviks before Lenin's death—like the temporary banning of factions at the Tenth Party Congress—might have contributed to that weakening, this does not in any way constitute the root of the problem.

The causes of the bureaucratization process were objective, material, economic, and social. They must be sought in the infrastructure of Soviet society at that time, not in its political superstructure and certainly not in a particular concept of the party. Far from being a product of Bolshevism, the Stalinist bureaucracy had to physically destroy the Bolshevik Party in order to establish its totalitarian rule. The Bolshevik Party was an instrument of the working class and an enemy of the bureaucracy. The political strangling of the party was a precondition for the political expropriation of the working class.

On the other hand, historical experience has confirmed that where a leading or even highly influential revolutionary party is absent, workers councils last shorter and not longer than they did in Russia: Germany in 1918-19 and Spain in 1936-37 are the most conspicuous examples.

## 6. The Need for a Revolutionary Vanguard Party

The lack of homogeneity of the working class, the unevenness of consciousness of its different layers, the discontinuous character of political and social activity of many of its components, make the separate organization of the most conscious

and permanently active elements of the working class in a revolutionary vanguard party indispensable. This applies to the needs of the class struggle under capitalism as well as to the needs of the conquest of state power and of leading the working



class forward on the road toward socialism. The irreplaceable role of this revolutionary vanguard workers party, with proletarian cadres educated in the Marxist program and tested in class battles, becomes even more important with the conquest of power by the working class.

A strengthened mass Leninist party must lead the workers in running a state and building a new society, until capitalism has been uprooted on a world scale and a classless society has been fully achieved. The problems of options between various rhythms of economic growth, various allocations of scarce economic resources, various priorities to more rapid or slower increases of different forms of individual and social consumption; the problems of rhythms of reduction of social inequality; the problems of defense of the workers state against bourgeois powers; of building a mass revolutionary international to extend the socialist world revolution; the problems of combating prejudices, reactionary ideas and inequalities between sexes, age groups, nationalities, and races, etc., inherited from the past—all these problems essential to the transition period between capitalism and socialism cannot be solved spontaneously. They require the leadership of the party to implement the revolutionary Marxist program.

The role of the revolutionary vanguard party during the dictatorship of the proletariat will be essential, moreover, in the struggle against the rise of material privileges and of bureaucratic layers inside the dictatorship of the proletariat. To implement a radical and revolutionary program of socialist workers democracy such as the present one—which is identical to the program of political revolution in the bureaucratized workers state—a revolutionary vanguard party of the working class is especially indispensable. It must exercise its authority by free vote and political confidence gained among the masses and not by administrative means.

The dialectical combination of the free and democratic self-organization of the toiling masses and of the political and programmatic clarification and leadership by a revolutionary vanguard party offers the best chance for the conquest and the continuous exercise of power by the working class itself.

In order to prevent any abuse of power by a vanguard party leading the working class under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the following principles are adhered to by the Fourth International:

a. Fullest internal democracy of the party itself, with full rights of organizing tendencies and factions and possibilities of public debates between them before party congresses.

b. Broadest possible links and interpenetration between the party and the working class itself. A revolutionary workers van-

guard party can only efficiently lead the working class under the dictatorship of the proletariat if it simultaneously enjoys the political confidence of the majority of the workers and organizes in its ranks the great majority of the vanguard workers.

c. Strict suppression of any material privileges for party cadres or leaders. No party member elected in any leading position of the workers state, its economy or its other social institutions, should receive a higher wage than the average wage of a skilled worker.

## 7. A Clear Stand on Socialist Democracy is Necessary to Win the Proletariat for the Socialist Revolution

The defense of a clear and unequivocal program of workers democracy is today an indispensable part of the struggle against the reformist leaderships that seek to inculcate bourgeois-democratic myths and illusions in the working class in the imperialist countries. It is likewise indispensable in the struggle against procapitalist illusions and antisoviet prejudices among various layers of rebels and oppositionists in the bureaucratized workers states in the unfolding process of the struggle for political revolution in these countries.

The disastrous historical experiences of both fascism and other types of reactionary bourgeois dictatorships in the capitalist countries, and the Stalin and Mao regimes and their successors in the workers states, have aroused in the proletariat of both the capitalist countries and the bureaucratized workers states a deep distrust of any form of one-party system and of any justification, however sophisticated, for restricting democratic rights after the overthrow of capitalism.

If the revolutionary Marxists leave the slightest impression, either through their propaganda or through their practice, that under the dictatorship of the proletariat the political freedoms of the workers will be narrower than under bourgeois democracy—including the freedom to criticize the government, to have opposition parties and an opposition press—then the struggle to overcome the panderers of parliamentary illusions will be incomensurably more difficult, if not condemned to defeat. Any hesitation or equivocation in this field by the revolutionary vanguard will only help the reformist lackeys of the liberal bourgeoisie to divide the proletariat and divert an important sector of the class into the defense of bourgeois parliamentary state institutions, under the guise of assuring democratic rights.

It has been argued that all the above arguments apply only to those countries in which the wage-earning class already represents a clear majority of the active population, i.e., where they are not faced with a great majority of petty independent producers. It is undeniable that such a social relationship of forces puts objective obstacles on the road of a full flowering of

d. No political or ideological monopoly of the vanguard party in or control over political or cultural activities. Adherence to the multiparty principle.

e. Strict separation of the party apparatus from the state apparatus.

f. Real integration of the party in a revolutionary international and acceptance of international comradely criticism by revolutionary organizations of other countries. No control of the international by any party or parties in power in given workers state(s).

socialist democracy and has objectively contributed to the phenomenon of extreme bureaucratization in most of the workers states. But it is necessary first to underline the exceptional character of these experiences, which will not be repeated even in most semicolonial countries.

It is necessary, secondly, to stress that these extreme forms of bureaucratization of workers states, even in backward countries, were not simply automatic results of unfavorable objective circumstances, but also products of specific ideological and political deformations of the CPs which had led the process of building these states, deformations which themselves correspond to the material interests of a given social layer: the bureaucracy.

Inasmuch as a growing number of semicolonial countries are at present undergoing processes of partial industrialization, their proletariat today is often already of much greater weight relative to the active population than was the Russian proletariat in 1917 or the Chinese proletariat in 1949. This proletariat, through its own experience of struggle, will speedily rise toward levels of consciousness and self-organization that will place the organization of soviet-type organs on the agenda from the beginning of a revolutionary crisis (Chile was an illustration of this). In that sense, and inasmuch as it is particularly applicable to the political revolution in the bureaucratized workers states, the Fourth International's program of workers-council democracy as a basis for the dictatorship of the proletariat is a *universal program for world revolution*, which corresponds fundamentally to the social nature, historical needs, and way of thinking and mass activity of the working class itself. It is in no way a "luxury" reserved for the workers of the "richest countries," while its concrete application might suffer certain limitations because of the excessively reduced weight of the working class in some countries.

In the same way it is necessary to make a clear conceptual and theoretical distinction between institutions of bourgeois democracy—which flourish essentially in imperialist countries, as a result of the imperialist superexploitation of hundreds

of millions of peasants and workers in colonial and semicolonial countries and the vicious repression of their most elementary democratic rights—and institutions of proletarian democracy, including their nuclei within bourgeois society, which are the results of centuries-old struggles, sacrifices and successes in self-organization

## 8. Why Has This Program of Socialist Democracy Not Been Widely Realized Up Till Now?

The objection has been raised: the revolutionary Marxists' program largely identifying dictatorship of the proletariat and workers-council democracy is normative, ahistorical, unrealistic, and therefore utopian. Real historical experiences of victorious socialist revolutions have up till now always led to political systems in which power is wielded by minorities, a single party, or even the leading apparatus of that party, and not by the toiling masses in their totality.

We cannot accept the definition of our ideas about the dictatorship of the proletariat as "normative." They are not "normative" but programmatic. In that sense, as all programmatic positions of Marxism, they are but the conscious expression of an objective historical tendency, of an instinctive thrust of the working class under conditions of revolutionary crisis. History strikingly confirms that from the Paris Commune to the revolutionary explosions of the recent years, through the experiences of the Russian and Finnish revolution of 1905, of the Russian revolution of 1917, of the German revolution of 1918-19, of the Austrian revolution of 1918-19, of the Hungarian revolution of 1919, of the Italian revolutionary upheaval of 1919-20, of the Spanish revolution of 1936, of the Chinese revolution of 1925-27, of numerous general strikes in innumerable countries of practically all continents including many colonial and semicolonial countries, the working class *did* manifest its tendency to generalized self-organization, to the setting up of workers councils or similar bodies. We are firmly convinced that this historical tendency—clearly understood and programmatically expressed by Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky—will unfold itself in revolutions of today and tomorrow even more than it did in revolutions of yesterday.

Nor do we accept the argument that workers-council power would be in any way "impractical" as long as imperialism survives, i.e., as long as the problems of self-defense of the victorious proletarian revolution and of its international extension remain central under the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the contrary, we believe that workers-council democracy strengthens the capacity of self-defense of the workers state, and strengthens its

and the conquest of various levels of class consciousness by the working class itself. The former are condemned by history and will disappear. The latter will grow and develop as never before during and after the struggle for socialist world revolution, and during the whole historical period of the building of world socialism.

power of attraction to the workers of the capitalist countries, i.e., favors the struggle against imperialism and for an international extension of the revolution.

We reject likewise any concept that the delay in firmly and durably establishing workers-council power—which *did* exist in Soviet Russia for several years, latter-day historical falsifications by both the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy notwithstanding—would be due in any way to a congenital incapacity of the proletariat to exercise political or (and) economic power as a class, to its inherent weakness or fatal trend to delegate the exercise of power to a privileged minority. The least one can say is that such a conclusion is historically premature at this stage—as it would have been premature to conclude, after the first experiences of bourgeois revolutions, that bourgeois rule was incompatible with universal franchise.

On the contrary, the basic reason why workers-council power has been up to now the exception and not the rule in the existing workers states is closely linked *with the very limited weight which the proletariat has had in the establishment of these states*—and the weakness and even more extreme successive weakening of the proletariat in Soviet Russia between 1917 and 1923. The interaction of a whole series of historical factors—the backwardness of Russia, the isolation of the Russian revolution, the rise to absolute power of the Soviet bureaucracy, the victory of the Stalinist faction inside the Communist International, and the subsequent corruption of the CPs by Stalinist practices and ideologies, the cumulative effects of a long period of defeats of world revolution on working-class consciousness, the possibility of the traditional bureaucratic apparatuses to keep control over the working class at the end of World War II and thereby assist in a reconstruction of capitalism in the West and in Japan, the resulting concentration of revolutionary upheavals mainly in the colonies and semicolonies for two decades, where revolutionary victories were won under objective conditions even more backward than those of Russia and with forms of struggle (prolonged guerrilla warfare) not condu-

cive to proletarian forms of organization—led to a period in which new workers states arose with a very reduced weight of the proletariat at their birth.

In other words: world revolution witnessed a historical *detour* in which the qualitatively lower weight of the proletariat combined with the determining influence of Stalinist ideologies decisively limited the immediate scope of workers councils.

In addition, the low specific weight of the working class in countries like China and Vietnam, and the special nature of the problems with which the dictatorship of the proletariat was confronted in these countries—problems of *initial* industrialization and *initial* increase of the agricultural productivity of labor, of even greater scarcity and backwardness than in Russia—created additional objective obstacles on the road of socialist democracy.

As a result of the interaction of all these factors, the dictatorship of the proletariat was extremely bureaucratized from its inception in these countries. At no time did the working class directly exercise political power there.

But this historical *detour* of world revolution by and large ended in the late sixties. Three processes contributed to this historic turn: the new rise of the revolutionary struggles in the imperialist countries, symbolized by May 1968 in France and by the Portuguese revolution of 1974-75; the qualitative strengthening of the proletariat in a series of key semicolonial countries; and the new rise of the political revolution in the bureaucratized workers states, symbolized by the Prague spring of 1968-69.

Under these circumstances, the weight of the proletariat in the concrete process of world revolution is much larger today than it was in the period 1949-1968. And this is strikingly confirmed by the reemergence of general strikes, urban mass insurrections, and soviet-type organs of self-organization, in the main revolutionary upheavals of the recent years, not only in Chile and Portugal but also in Iran and Nicaragua. Simultaneously, after the inevitable delay of mass consciousness upon reality, large sectors of the world proletariat have now assimilated the real nature of Stalinism (which they didn't either in 1936 or 1945), and firmly reject "patterns" of "dictatorship of the proletariat" similar to those of the USSR. They do this not only in the West but also in countries like Eastern Europe, China, India, Brazil, etc. Again, what our program of dictatorship of the proletariat based upon workers-council democracy expresses is neither "abstract norms" nor utopian wishful thinking but a real basic historical trend, which, having been held down by the objective and subjective results of two decades of defeats of world revolution, now reasserts itself more and more powerfully and more and more universally.

## 9. In Response to the Stalinists

Among those who claim to stand for the dictatorship of the proletariat, only the Stalinist apologists for the rule of the privileged bureaucratic castes in the USSR, China, and other similarly bureaucratized workers states advance an alternative to our program of socialist democracy based upon workers councils and a multiparty system within which the revolutionary vanguard workers party fights for political leadership by winning the majority of the toilers to its views. While official Stalinist state ideology—both in the USSR and in the People's Republic of China—is by essence pragmatic and serves only to cover the twists and turns of the bureaucracy's current policies, underlying that ideology there are a certain number of assumptions and dogmas which have an inner consistency distinct from revolutionary Marxist theory. The Stalinist alternative is based on the exercise of state power under the "dictatorship of the proletariat" by a single party *in the name of the working class*. It implies the following dogmas, even if they are not always clearly stated or even consciously understood by all the Stalinist ideologues:

a. That the "leading party" or even its "leading nucleus" (the "Leninist Central Committee") has a monopoly of political consciousness at the highest level, if not a monopoly of knowledge at least at the level of the social sciences, and is therefore guaranteed political infallibility ("the party is always right"). This often leads to the theological and scholastic conclusion that the same rights to spread ideas cannot be given to those who are right, who defend truths, and to those who propagate falsehoods.

b. That the working class, and even more the toiling masses in general, are too backward politically, too much under the influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology and "imperialist propaganda," too much inclined to prefer immediate material advantages as against long-term historical interests, for any direct exercise of state power by democratically elected workers councils to be tolerable from the point of view of "the interests of socialism." Genuine workers democracy would entail the risk of an increasing series of harmful, "objectively counterrevolutionary" decisions, which would open the road to the restoration of capitalism or at the very least gravely damage and retard the process of building socialism.

c. That therefore the dictatorship of the proletariat can be exercised only by the "leading party of the proletariat," i.e., that the dictatorship of the proletariat *is* the dictatorship of the party, either representing an essentially passive working class, or actively basing itself on the "class struggle of the masses," who are nevertheless considered unworthy, unwilling, or

incapable of directly exercising state power through institutionalized organs of power.

d. That since the party, and that party alone, represents the interests of the working class, which are considered homogeneous in all situations and on all issues, the "leading party" itself must be essentially monolithic. Any opposition tendency necessarily reflects alien class pressures and alien class interests in one form or another (the struggle between "two lines" is always a "struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie inside the party," the Maoists conclude). Monolithic control of all spheres of social life by the single party is the logical outcome of these concepts. Direct party control must be established over all sectors of "civil society."

e. A further underlying assumption is that of an intensification of the class struggle in the period of building socialism (although this assumption alone does not necessarily lead to the same conclusion, if it is not combined with the previous ones). From that assumption is deduced the increasing danger of restoration of bourgeois power even long after private property in the means of production has been abolished, and irrespective of the level of development of the productive forces. The threat of bourgeois restoration is often portrayed as a mechanical outcome of the victory of bourgeois ideology in this or that social, political, cultural, or even scientific field. In view of the extreme power thereby attributed to bourgeois ideas, the use of repression against those who are said to objectively represent these ideas becomes a corollary of the argument.

All these assumption and dogmas are unscientific from a general Marxist point of view and are untenable in the light of real historical experience of the class struggle during and after the overthrow of capitalist rule in the USSR and other countries. Again and again, they have shown themselves to be harmful to the defense of the proletariat's class interests and an obstacle to a successful struggle against the remnants of the bourgeoisie and of bourgeois ideology.

But inasmuch as they had become nearly universally accepted dogmas by the CPs in Stalin's time and undoubtedly have an inner consistency—reflecting the material interests of the bureaucracy as a social layer and an apology for its dictatorial rule—they have never been explicitly and thoroughly criticized and rejected by any CP since then. These concepts continue to linger on, at least partially, in the ideology of many leaders and cadres of the CPs and SPs, i.e., of the bureaucracies of the labor movement. They continue to constitute a conceptual source for justification of various forms of curtailment of democratic

rights of the toiling masses in the bureaucratized workers states, as well as in those sectors of the labor movement in the capitalist countries which are dominated by the CPs. A clear and coherent refutation of these concepts is indispensable in defending our program of socialist democracy.

First: the idea of a homogeneous working class exclusively represented by a single party is contradicted by all historical experience and by any Marxist analysis of the concrete growth and development of the contemporary proletariat, both under capitalism and after the overthrow of capitalism. At most, one could defend the thesis that the revolutionary vanguard party alone *programmatically* defends the *long-term historical interests* of the proletariat, and its immediate *overall class* interests as opposed to sectoral interests of national, regional, local, special sectors or skill, over-privileged, etc., interests. But even in that case, a dialectical-materialist approach, as opposed to a mechanical-idealist one, would immediately add that only insofar as the party actually conquers political leadership over the majority of the workers can one speak of a *real*, as opposed to a simply *ideal* (literary) integration of immediate and long-term, of sectoral and class interests having been achieved in practice, with the possibilities for errors much reduced. Furthermore, this in no way excludes that on particular questions this party can be wrong.

In fact, there is a definite, objectively determined *stratification* of the working class and of the development of working-class consciousness. There is likewise at the very least a tension between the struggle for immediate interests and the historical goals of the labor movement (for example the contradiction between immediate consumption and long-term investment in a workers state). Precisely these contradictions, rooted in the legacy of uneven development of bourgeois society, are among the main theoretical justifications for the need of a revolutionary vanguard workers party, as opposed to a simple "all-inclusive" union of all wage-earners in a single organization. But this again implies that one cannot deny that different parties, with different orientations and different ways of approaching the class struggle between capital and labor and the relations between immediate demands and historical goals, can arise and have arisen *within* the working class and do genuinely represent sectors of the working class (be it purely sectoral interests, privileged sectors, results of ideological pressures of alien class forces, etc.).

Second: a revolutionary party with a democratic internal life does have a tremendous advantage in the field of correct analysis of socioeconomic and political developments and of correct elaboration of tactical and strategic answers to such developments, for it can base itself on the

body of scientific socialism, Marxism, which synthesizes and generalizes all past experiences of the class struggle as a whole. This programmatic framework for its current political elaboration makes it much less likely than any other tendency of the labor movement, or any unorganized sector of the working class, to reach wrong conclusions, premature generalizations, and one-sided and impressionistic reactions to unforeseen developments, to make concessions to ideological and political pressures of alien class forces, to engage in unprincipled political compromises, etc. These undeniable facts, confirmed again and again by every turn of events in the more than three quarters of a century since Bolshevism was founded, are the most powerful arguments in favor of a revolutionary vanguard workers party.

But they do not guarantee that errors by that party will automatically be avoided. There are no infallible parties. There are no infallible party leaderships, or individual party leaders, party majorities, "Leninist central committees," etc. The Marxist program is never a definitively achieved one. No new situation can be comprehensively analyzed in reference to historical precedents. Social reality is constantly undergoing changes. New and unforeseen developments regularly occur at historical turning points. The phenomenon of imperialism after Engels's death was not analyzed by Marx and Engels. The delay of the proletarian revolution in the advanced imperialist countries was not foreseen by the Bolsheviks. The bureaucratic degeneration of the first workers state was not incorporated in Lenin's theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The emergence after World War II of many workers states (albeit with bureaucratic deformations from the start) following revolutionary mass struggles not led by revolutionary Marxist leaderships (Yugoslavia, China, Cuba, Vietnam) was not foreseen by Trotsky, etc. No complete, ready-made answer for new phenomena can be found in the works of the classics or in the existing program.

Furthermore, new problems will arise in the course of the building of socialism, problems for which the revolutionary Marxist program provides only a general framework of reference but no automatic source of correct answers. The struggle for correct answers to such new problems implies a constant interaction between theoretical-political analysis and discussions and revolutionary *class practice*, the final word being spoken by practical experience. Under such circumstances, any restriction of free political and theoretical debate spilling over to a restriction of free political mass activity of the proletariat, i.e., any restriction of socialist democracy, will constitute an obstacle to the revolutionary *party itself arriving at correct policies*. It is therefore not only theoretic-

cally wrong but practically ineffective and harmful from the point of view of successfully advancing on the road of building socialism.

One of the gravest consequences of a monolithic one-party system, of the absence of a plurality of political groups, tendencies, and parties, and of administrative restrictions being imposed on free political and ideological debate, is the impediments such a system erects on the road to rapidly correcting mistakes committed by the government of a workers state. Mistakes committed by such a government, like mistakes committed by the majority of the working class, its various layers, and different political groupings, are by and large unavoidable in the process of building a classless, socialist society. A rapid correction of these mistakes, however, is possible in a climate of free political debate, free access of opposition groupings to mass media, large-scale political awareness and involvement in political life by the masses, and control by the masses over government and state activity at all levels.

The absence of all these correctives under a system of monolithic one-party government makes the rectification of grave mistakes all the more difficult. The very dogma of party infallibility on which the Stalinist system rests puts a heavy premium both on the denial of mistakes in party policies (search for self-justification and for scapegoats) and on the attempt to postpone even implicit corrections as long as possible. The objective costs of such a system in terms of economic losses, of unnecessary, i.e., objectively avoidable sacrifices imposed upon the toiling masses, of political defeats in relation to class enemies, and of political disorientation and demoralization of the proletariat, are indeed staggering, as is shown by the history of the Soviet Union since 1928. To give just one example: the obstinate clinging to erroneous agricultural policies even on detailed questions such as purchasing prices for certain agricultural products by Stalin and his henchmen after the catastrophe caused by the forced collectivization of agriculture—which can of course be explained in terms of the specific social interests of the Soviet bureaucracy at that time—has wreaked havoc with the food supply of the Soviet people for more than a generation. Its negative consequences have not been eliminated to this day, nearly fifty years later. Such a catastrophe would have been impossible had there been free political debate over alternative economic and agricultural policies in the USSR.

Third: the idea that *restricting* the democratic rights of the proletariat is in any way conducive to a gradual "education" of an allegedly "backward" mass of toilers is blatantly absurd. One cannot learn to swim except by going into the water. There is no way masses can learn to raise the

level of their political awareness other than by engaging in political activity and learning from the experience of such activity. There is no way they can learn from mistakes other than by having the right to commit them. Paternalistic prejudices about the alleged "backwardness" of the masses generally hide a conservative petty-bourgeois fear of mass activity, which has nothing in common with revolutionary Marxism. The bureaucracy is in deadly fear of socialist democracy not for "programmatic" reasons but because that form of government is incompatible with its material privileges, not to say its power. Marxists favor the fullest possible flowering of socialist democracy because they are convinced that any restriction of political mass activity, on the pretext that the masses would make too many mistakes, can only lead to increasing political apathy among the workers, i.e., to paradoxically reinforcing the very situation which is said to be the problem.

Fourth: under conditions of full-scale socialization of the means of production and the social surplus product, any long-term monopoly of the exercise of political power in the hands of a minority—even if it is a revolutionary party beginning with the purest of revolutionary motivations—runs a strong risk of stimulating objective tendencies toward bureaucratization. Under such socioeconomic conditions, whoever controls the state administration thereby controls the social surplus product and its distribution. Given the fact that economic inequalities will still exist at the outset, particularly but not only in the economically backward workers states, this can become a source of corruption and of the growth of material privileges and social differentiation. "The conquest of power changes not only the relations of the proletariat to other classes, but also its own inner structure. The wielding of power becomes the specialty of a definite social group, which is the more impatient to solve its own 'social problem' the higher its opinion of its own mission." (Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 102.)

Thus, there is an objective need for real control over decision-making to rest in the hands of the proletariat as a class, with unlimited possibilities to denounce pilferage, waste, and illegal appropriation and misuse of resources at all levels, including the highest ones. No such democratic mass control is possible without opposition tendencies, groups, and parties having full freedom of action, propaganda, and agitation, as well as full access to the mass media, as long as they are not engaged in armed struggle to overthrow workers power.

Likewise, during the transition period between capitalism and socialism, and even in the first phase of communism, it is unavoidable that forms of social division of labor will survive, as well as forms of labor organization and labor processes

totally or partially inherited from capitalism, that do not enable a full development of all the creative talents of the producers. These handicaps cannot be neutralized by indoctrination, moral exhortation, or periodic "mass criticism campaigns" as the Maoists contend, and still less by mystifying expedients like having cadres or leaders work a few days a month or a week as manual laborers. These objective obstacles on the road to the *gradual emergence of truly socialist relations of production* can be prevented from becoming powerful sources of material privileges only if *the mass of the producers* (in the first place those likely to be the most exploited, the manual workers) *are placed in conditions such that they can exercise real political and social power over any "functionally" privileged layer.* The radical reduction of the work day, the fullest soviet democracy, and full educational opportunities for rapidly raising the cultural level of *all* workers are the key conditions for attaining this goal.

The present conditions in the bureaucratized workers states, which make the problem of advancing proletarian democracy difficult, would of course be altered qualitatively if (or when) either of the two following developments occur, or even more if they occur together: (1.) A socialist revolution in one or more industrially advanced capitalist countries. Such a revolution would itself give enormous impulsion to the struggle for democratic rights throughout the world and would immediately open the possibility of increasing productivity on an immense scale, eliminating the scarcities that are the root cause of the entrenchment of a parasitic bureaucracy, as explained above. (2.) A political revolution in the bureaucratically deformed or degenerated workers states, particularly in the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China. This would likewise signify an upsurge of proletarian democracy with colossal repercussions internationally, besides putting an end to the bureaucratic caste and its concept of building "socialism in one country."

Following a political revolution, common economic planning among all the workers states would become realizable, thus assuring a leap forward in productivity that would help remove the economic basis of parasitic bureaucratism.

Finally, it is true that there is no automatic correlation or simultaneity between the abolition of capitalist state power and private property in the means of production and the disappearance of privileges in the field of personal wealth, cultural heritage, and ideological influence, not to speak of the disappearance of all elements of commodity production. Long after bourgeois state power has been overthrown and capitalist property abolished, remnants of petty commodity production and the survival of elements of a money economy will continue to create a framework in which primitive accumulation of capital can still

reappear, especially if the level of development of the productive forces is still insufficient to guarantee the automatic appearance and consolidation of genuine socialist relations of production. Likewise, elements of social and economic inequality survive under such circumstances long after the bourgeoisie has lost its positions as a ruling class politically and economically; the influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies, customs, habits, cultural values, etc., will linger on in relatively large spheres of social life and broad layers of society.

But it is completely wrong to draw from this undeniable fact (which is, incidentally, one of the main reasons why *state power* of the working class is indispensable in order to prevent these "islands of bourgeois influence" from becoming bases for the restoration of capitalism) the conclusion that administrative repression of bourgeois ideology is a necessary condition for the building of a socialist society. On the contrary, historical experience confirms the *total ineffectiveness* of administrative struggles against reactionary and petty-bourgeois ideologies. In fact, in the long run, such methods even strengthen the hold of these ideologies and place the great mass of the proletariat in the position of being ideologically disarmed before them, because of lack of experience with genuine political struggles and ideological debates and the lack of credibility of official "state doctrines."

The only effective way to eliminate the influence of these ideologies upon the mass of the toilers lies in:

a. The creation of objective conditions under which these ideologies lose the material roots of their reproduction.

b. The waging of a relentless struggle against these ideologies *in the field of ideology and politics itself*, which can however attain its full success only under

conditions of open debate and open confrontation, i.e., freedom for the defenders of reactionary ideologies to defend their ideas, freedom of ideological and cultural pluralism, as long as they don't go over to acts of violence against workers power.

Only those who have neither confidence in the superiority of Marxist and materialist ideas nor confidence in the proletariat and the toiling masses, can shrink from open ideological confrontation with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Once the capitalist class is disarmed and expropriated, once their members have access to the mass media only in relation to their numbers, there is no reason to fear a constant, free, and frank exchange of ideas. This confrontation is the only means through which the working class can educate itself ideologically and successfully free itself from the influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas. The validity of Marxism will fully assert itself.

Any monopoly position accorded to Marxism (not to speak of a particular interpretation of Marxism) in the ideological-cultural field through administrative and repressive measures by the state can lead only to debasing Marxism itself from a critical and revolutionary science, as weapon for the emancipation of the proletariat and the building of a classless society, into a sterile and repulsive state doctrine or state religion, with a constantly declining attractive power among the toiling masses and especially the youth. This is apparent today in the USSR, where the monopoly position accorded "official Marxism" masks a real poverty of creative Marxist thought in all areas. Marxism, which is critical thought *par excellence*, can flourish only in an atmosphere of full freedom of discussion and constant confrontation with other currents of thought, i.e., in an atmosphere of full ideological and cultural pluralism.

## 10. The Self-Defense of the Workers State

Obviously, any workers state must defend itself against attempts at being overthrown and open violation of its basic laws. *In a workers democracy of a stable workers state, emerging after the successful disarming of the bourgeoisie and the end of civil war*, the constitution and the penal code will forbid private appropriation of the means of production or private hiring of labor, just as constitutions and penal codes under bourgeois rule forbid individual infringements on the rights of private property. Likewise, as long as we are not yet in a classless society, as long as the proletarian class rule survives and the restoration of capitalism remains possible, the constitution and the penal code of the dictatorship of the proletariat will forbid and punish acts of armed insurrection, attempts at overthrowing working-class

power through violence, terrorist attacks on individual representatives of workers power, sabotage, espionage in the service of foreign capitalist states, etc. But only *proven acts* of that kind or direct preparation of them should be punishable, not general propaganda explicitly or implicitly favorable to a restoration of capitalism. *This means that freedom of political organization should be granted to all those, including probourgeois elements, who in actual practice respect the constitution of the workers states and operate within the legal framework of its institutions, the soviets, i.e., are not engaged in direct action to overthrow workers power and collective property.* The workers have no need to fear as a mortal danger propaganda that "incites" them to give the factories and banks back to private



owners. There is little chance that a majority of them will be "persuaded" by propaganda of that type. The working class in the imperialist countries, the bureaucratized workers states, and an increasing number of semicolonial countries, is strong enough not to have to introduce the concept of "crimes of opinion" or "anti-soviet agitation" either in its penal codes or in the daily practice of the workers state.

What is important is to strictly distinguish between activities instigating violence against workers power and political activities, ideologies, positions, or programmatic statements that can be interpreted as favoring a restoration of capitalism. Against terror, the workers state defends itself by repression. Against reactionary policies and ideas, it defends itself by political and ideological struggles. This is not a question of "morality" or "softness." It is essentially a question of *practical long-term efficiency*.

The disastrous experience of Stalinism, which has systematically misused slanderous accusations of "collusion with imperialism," "espionage for foreign powers," "objectively acting in favor of imperialism," "anti-soviet" or "anti-socialist agitation," "sabotage and diversionist activities," to condemn and suppress any form of political criticism, opposition or nonconformism in the countries under the rule of parasitic bureaucratic castes, and which has organized barbaric repression on a mass scale under these pretexts, has created a profound (and essentially healthy) distrust of the abuse of penal, juridical, police, or psychiatric institutions for purposes of political repression. It is therefore necessary to stress that the use of repressive self-defense by the proletariat and its state against attempts to overthrow workers power by violence should be circumscribed to *proven acts and crimes*, strictly separated from the realm of ideological, political, and cultural activities. This means furthermore that the Fourth International stands for the defense and extension of the most progressive conquests of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions in the field of penal codes and justice and fights for their incorporation into the socialist constitutions and penal codes. These include such rights as:

a. The necessity of written law and the avoidance of retroactive delinquency. The burden of proof to be on the accuser, the assumption of innocence until proof of guilt.

b. The full right of all individuals to freely determine the nature of their defense; full immunity for legal defenders from prosecution for any statements or lines of defense used in such trials.

c. Rejection of any concept of collective responsibility of social groups, families, etc., for individual crimes.

d. Strict prohibition of any form of torture or forceful extortion of confessions.

e. Suppression of the death penalty outside of civil war and war situations.

f. Extension and generalization of public trial by juries of peers.

g. Democratic election of all judges, and the right for the mass of the toilers to recall elected judges.

Obviously, the last word in all these matters, as well regarding the final draft of the penal code and functioning of the penal system of the proletarian dictatorship after armed resistance by the bourgeoisie has ceased will rest with the workers councils themselves, to which we submit our programmatic proposals and in which framework we fight for them by political means. The fundamental guarantee against all abuses of state repression lies in the fullest participation in political activity of the toiling masses, the broadest possible socialist democracy, and the abolition of any monopoly of access to weapons for privileged minorities, i.e., the general armament of the proletariat. We are confident that the working class will neither abuse its power nor lack the necessary vigilance to defend its own dictatorship against any attempt to restore the exploitative and oppressive rule of the propertied classes.

The workers state can gradually eliminate a professional judiciary by drawing the masses more and more into the judicial functions beginning at the local level and for less serious crimes.

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This is our programmatic and principled position: unfettered political freedom for all those who in practice respect collective property and the workers state's constitution. This does not mean that these norms can be fully implemented irrespective of concrete circumstances. In the process of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, a revolutionary crisis culminating in an insurrection is unavoidable. During the period leading to that insurrection and the insurrection itself, when power passes from one social class to another, violent convulsions and the absence of the rule of law which accompany them occur. They will bring victory to the proletariat only if insurrection enjoys the support of the majority of the population—the large majority of the wage-earners—at least in all those countries where the wage-earners are already the largest social class. The broader the mass mobilization of millions accompanying this insurrection, the lesser will be the unavoidable violence and arbitrariness accompanying that giant social transformation.

Likewise, the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat can be preceded by civil war or foreign military intervention, i.e., attempts by the former ruling classes and their international allies to overthrow workers power by force. Under such conditions, the rules of war apply. Restrictions on the political activities of

the bourgeoisie may well be called for. No social class, no state, has ever granted full rights to those actively engaged in violence to overthrow them. The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot act otherwise in that respect.

More concretely, all individuals, organizations, and parties that participate in, or can be proven to *actively* support or prepare counterrevolutionary violence, will be repressed and submitted to conditions in which they cannot pursue these activities. The extent and concrete forms of that repression will depend upon the circumstances and relationship of forces existing at the moment in a given country or group of countries. No serious revolutionary can in advance establish what these limits will be. During the first phase of establishing a victorious workers state against armed resistance of the bourgeoisie or attempts by that bourgeoisie to overthrow it, the existence of written penal law—socialist legality—can lag in comparison with the need for the revolution to solve crisis situations, which cannot wait until that legality is finally established. Historical experience has confirmed again and again that the swifter and more radically armed resistance of the bourgeoisie is broken, the shorter will be the period of actual civil war, the lesser will be the costs in human life of the social transformation.

The criteria which determine the general framework of *revolutionary long-term efficiency* are those which relate measures of immediate expediency with the question of social and political consolidation of the new socialist order on the basis of the largest possible mass adhesion and mass participation. Only those measures of expediency against the class enemy are really efficient, even under conditions of civil war, which raise and do not lower the class consciousness and self-confidence of the working class, its faith in its capacity to build a workers state and a classless society, its active support of and participation in the administration of its own state, its capacity for mobilization and self-organization. Even under conditions of civil war, that basic criterion should never be forgotten, especially under circumstances where the overall relationship of social and military forces are ten times more favorable to the revolution than they were in 1917 or 1920-21.

In that respect, Trotsky expressed himself most clearly in 1940. What he said then applied even more to present conditions: "By anticipation it is possible to establish the following law: The more countries in which the capitalist system is broken, the weaker will be the resistance offered by the ruling classes in other countries, the less sharp a character the socialist revolution will assume, the less violent forms the proletarian dictatorship will have, the shorter it will be, the sooner the society will be reborn on the basis of a new, more full, more perfect and humane

democracy. . . . Socialism would have no value if it should not bring with it, not only the juridical inviolability but also the full safeguarding of all the interests of the human personality." (Leon Trotsky, "The World Situation and Perspectives," February 14, 1940, *Writings of Leon Trotsky* 1939-40, pp. 155-156.)

Especially in the United States, however, the ruling class will attempt to unleash violence and civil war on a massive scale against the insurgent workers. Until and unless the U.S. rulers are defeated and disarmed of their massive arsenal, including nuclear weapons, the American toilers will face a bitter struggle and the toilers of the world a perpetual threat.

Furthermore, if civil war conditions make *certain* restrictions of democratic rights unavoidable, the basic nature and limitations of such restrictions should be understood by the workers. It is necessary to clearly and frankly explain before the

## 11. International Revolution and International Counterrevolution

As long as imperialism survives at least in major countries—and certainly in the United States of America—it will never give up its attempts to stop any further extension of the socialist revolution by economic pressure and military force. Nor will it give up its attempts to reconquer, first part and then all, of the territories lost for direct exploitation by capital. Such a restoration is not possible in a gradual and peaceful way, any more than the overthrow of capitalism can occur in a peaceful and gradual way.

Hence the conclusion that any workers state arising out of a victorious socialist revolution, and any group of workers states, whatever the degree of bureaucratization or socialist democracy which characterizes it, will find itself in conditions of armed truce with international capital, which could, under certain circumstances, lead to open war. Therefore, one of the central responsibilities of the dictatorship of the proletariat is to maintain and advance permanent military preparedness (from a material as well as from a human point of view) to meet such a challenge when it arises.

While we reject the idea that nuclear war is inevitable, we likewise reject the idea that propaganda, agitation, and class organization of the toilers in the capitalist countries alone is sufficient to prevent wars of aggression by imperialism against new and old revolutions. As long as the working class of the main capitalist countries has not actually overthrown bourgeois class rule at home, the danger of counterrevolutionary wars remains. The proletariat in power must prepare against that danger, as it has to be ready to help the insurgent masses of other countries facing armed intervention of national and international counterrevolution.

whole working class that such restrictions are deviations from the program that corresponds to the historical interests of the proletariat, i.e., that they are exceptions and not the rule. That means that they should be limited to the utmost, both in scope and time, and revoked as soon as possible. This means also that the workers should be especially alert to the need to prevent them from becoming institutionalized and elevated into the realm of principle.

It is likewise necessary to stress the direct political and material responsibility of bourgeois counterrevolution and international imperialism for any restriction of socialist democracy under civil war or war conditions. This means to indicate clearly to society in its totality, and to the remnants of the former ruling classes themselves, that the way they will be dealt with depends in the last analysis on themselves, i.e., on their practical behavior.

To maintain military preparedness against wars of aggression by imperialism means to deviate resources toward arms production which otherwise would speed up the evolution towards socialism. It is a reason the more to reject the reactionary utopia of finally achieving the building of socialism in one or in a few countries.

It also implies the need for building a regular highly trained army in addition to the militia (the "people in arms"). The workers army itself will be an army of a new type, reflecting its class basis. Like the Red Army initially created by the Soviet Republic, it will abolish the officer caste system and establish a balanced relationship with the militia. In general "the correlation between regular troops and militia can serve as a fair indication of the actual movement toward socialism." (Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 218.)

But it by no means implies the inevitability of bureaucratic degeneration, or of serious restrictions of socialist democracy because of the outside pressure of imperialism upon the workers states.

In the first place, the rise and victory of the Stalinist bureaucracy was not a direct and automatic result of the capitalist encirclement of the USSR. It came about as the result of a unique *combination* of factors: relative backwardness of Russia; relative weakness of the Russian proletariat; first defeats of world revolution, capitalist encirclement; political unpreparedness by the proletarian vanguard toward the problem of bureaucracy; repercussions of the gradual rise of bureaucratic power upon the outcome of successive waves of revolutionary struggles throughout the world; the absence of an alternative revolutionary leadership of the proletariat outside the Moscow controlled CPs; factors which were all exacerbated by the cumulative

failure of the revolution to extend internationally. It is extremely unlikely that that combination will ever repeat itself again, especially in the case of new victorious socialist revolutions in countries industrially much more advanced than were Russia in 1917 or China in 1949.

Even today, the degree of backwardness of Russia compared to international capitalism is much more limited and the objective strength of the Russian proletariat incommensurably bigger than they were in 1923 or 1927. If to the relative power of the present workers states would be *added that* of victorious socialist revolutions in Western Europe, in Japan, or in the biggest Latin American countries—not to speak of the USA—the relationship of forces with international capital would witness a new dramatic deterioration for capitalism of such a depth that it would be absurd to seek in the pressure of the capitalist environment and the necessity to keep up military preparedness, a basic objective source for serious restrictions of socialist democracy.

In the second place, if the survival for the time being of powerful imperialist states and rich bourgeois classes in the world imposes a situation of more or less permanent *potential* armed confrontation and *potential* international war upon existing workers states for a whole period, the obvious need for the workers states to protect themselves against the *threat* of foreign imperialist intervention does not at all imply the identification of conditions of *potential* war with those of *actual* war, an argument that Stalinists and pro-bureaucratic elements of all shades have continually used to justify the strangling of workers democracy in the countries under the rule of parasitic bureaucracies.

It should also be stressed that the main problem today in the Soviet Union, the Eastern European workers states, and China is not the danger of immediate capitalist restoration under conditions of war or civil war. The main problem facing the working class in these countries is the dictatorial control over the economic, political, and social life by a privileged bureaucratic caste. The tremendous abuses that control has led to have deeply undermined the identification of the masses of these countries with the existing states—thereby, in the long run, weakening their capacity to victoriously withstand a possible future onslaught by imperialist armies.

Therefore, it is all the more important under the present conditions to place central stress on the defense of democratic rights of all against the restrictions imposed by the bureaucracy, as well as on the actual rise of political revolution against the bureaucracy. These processes will strengthen and not weaken the workers states' capacity to withstand any imperialist aggression, including their capacity to actively assist the process of world revolution.

In the third place, the whole argument should be turned the other way around. We deny that restrictions of socialist democracy—not to speak about a bureaucratic dictatorship—are a necessary price to be paid in order to defend successfully victorious revolutions and extend them internationally against the military power of imperialism. On the contrary, we contend that such restrictions *weaken* the dictatorship of the proletariat politically and militarily against imperialism.

A high level of political consciousness and socialist conviction on the part of the toiling masses; a high level of political activity, mobilization and alertness; an internationalist education and activity of the proletariat, all help to strengthen the capacity of self-defense and the armed strength of a workers state in general.

History has proven that in the last analysis the superior capacity of self-defense of any state depends upon two key factors: a higher degree of social cohesion and political identification of the mass of the people with the given state; and a higher level of average productivity of labor and of productive capacity. The broader and less restricted socialist democracy is, the higher the identification of the overwhelming majority of the people with the workers state and the quicker will be the growth of productivity of labor, including the greater the chance of achieving decisive technological advances compared with imperialism. From that point of view, far from being a "luxury" in a world situation characterized by potential wars of aggression of imperialism against the workers states or against ongoing socialist revolutions, socialist democracy is a major weapon in the hands of the workers state even in the purely military field.

## 12. The Bureaucratized Workers States, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and the Rise of Political Antibureaucratic Revolution

From a theoretical point of view, the USSR and the other bureaucratized workers states are extremely distorted and degenerated forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat, inasmuch as the economic foundations created by the socialist October revolution have not been destroyed by the bureaucracy. In that sense, the necessity of the defense of the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, etc., against any attempt to restore capitalism—which would represent a giant historical step backward—flows from the fact that these are still degenerated or deformed workers states, i.e., degenerated forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But it does not flow from this that there are various historical forms of dictatorship of the proletariat which we consider all more or less equivalent, socialist workers democracy as described by our program being only the "ideal norm," from which reality has deviated and will still strongly deviate in the future. Such an approach to

This is true from a defensive point of view, as already indicated. It is also true from an offensive point of view. Inasmuch as imperialism cannot embark upon military adventures against past and current revolutions without provoking massive opposition at home and inasmuch as it would have to try to weaken such opposition by increasingly having recourse to repression and restrictions of democratic freedoms of the masses, a high level of socialist democracy existing in the workers states would at the same time exercise an increasing power of attraction upon the restive and oppressed masses of the capitalist countries, thereby undermining the military strength of imperialism and favoring international expansion of the revolution.

Military preparedness of the workers states against threats of imperialist aggression must include special measures against espionage, saboteurs sent in from abroad, and other forms of anti-working-class military action that could persist during years if not decades. Spies and saboteurs should, however, be condemned for real acts of spying and sabotage. Nobody should be identified as a spy or a saboteur just because of his or her "subversive ideas." Thus, special technical measures for self-defense by the workers state should in no way restrict workers democracy. In fact, the higher the political activity, awareness, and social cohesion of the broad masses—which can be realized only through a full flowering of socialist democracy—the more difficult does it become for real spies and saboteurs to operate in a resolutely hostile milieu and the stronger becomes the capacity of self-defense of the workers state.

the problem implies simultaneously a deep theoretical and political error.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is not a goal in and of itself. It is only a means to realize the goal, which is the emancipation of labor, of all exploited and oppressed, by the creation of a worldwide classless society, the only way to solve all burning problems facing humanity, the only way to avoid its relapse into barbarism. But under its extremely degenerated form of the dictatorship of the bureaucracy, the "bureaucratic" dictatorship of the proletariat not only does not allow to advance toward that goal. It blocks society halfway between capitalism and socialism. It becomes a major obstacle on the road toward socialism, an obstacle which has to be removed by the proletariat through a political revolution. So it follows that far from being only one among different variants of the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialist democracy, the rule by the toiling masses through democratically elected workers

and people's councils, is the *only* form of the dictatorship of the proletariat compatible with our socialist goal, the only form which will make it an efficient weapon for advancing toward world revolution and world socialism. *We fight for that form of the dictatorship of the proletariat and for that form alone*, not for reasons of morality, humanitarianism, or historical idealism (the attempt to "impose" certain "ideal" patterns upon the historical process), but for reasons of political efficiency and realism, for reasons of programmatic principles, for reasons of immediate and historical necessity from the point of view of the interests of the world proletariat and of world socialism.

Furthermore, the "bureaucratic" dictatorship of the proletariat can only arise—as it did in the Soviet Union—as the result of a disastrous and lasting *political defeat* of the working class at the hands of the bureaucracy. It is not accidental that Trotsky uses in that context the formula "political expropriation of the proletariat by the bureaucracy." As proletarian revolutionists we are not neutral or indifferent in front of the question of political victory or defeat of *our* class. We try to assure its victory. We try to avoid its defeat by all means possible. Again it follows that we can only fight for that form of the dictatorship of the proletariat which enables such a victory and avoids such a defeat. Only the form of dictatorship of the proletariat exercised through political power in the hands of democratically elected workers councils assures that.

Politically, the question is by no means purely academic. It is a burning issue in all those countries—not only the imperialist ones—where the working class has by and large assimilated the crimes and the real nature of Stalinism and of labor bureaucracies in general. Any identification of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" with nationalized property only, irrespective of concrete conditions of exercise of power by the working class in the state and the economy, becomes in all these countries a formidable obstacle on the road toward a victorious socialist revolution and the realization of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It objectively helps the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, the Social Democrats, and the CPs to maintain the working class in the straitjacket of the bourgeois-democratic state.

It is an even more burning question in all the bureaucratized workers states themselves, where the political revolution is on the agenda. In these countries, any attempt to present variants other than workers democracy as the dictatorship of the proletariat, as goals for that revolution, would condemn those who make such attempts to extreme isolation from the rising masses. Indeed it would risk involving them in the same hatred with which the proletariat views the bureaucracy, "the new masters."

From that political point of view, the program of socialist democracy which we defend is the only program that corresponds to the needs and the aspirations of the masses in the bureaucratized workers states, the only acceptable alternative to the bureaucratic dictatorship. Again: any hesitation or tergiversation as to the energy and resolution with which revolutionary Marxists and proletarian revolutionists should defend that platform of socialist democracy throughout the preparation, the rise, the victory, and the aftermath of the political antibureaucratic revolution would objectively assist only restorationist forces, i.e., those who would try to regress from the bureaucratic dictatorship toward bourgeois democracy instead of progressing from it toward socialist democracy.

This is no longer a matter of speculation. We can base ourselves in that respect on the concrete experiences of the Hungarian revolution of October-November 1956, which came the closest to a full-scale political antibureaucratic revolution, and on the experience of the "Prague Spring" of spring 1968-spring 1969 which, while not so fully developed as the Hungarian revolution, had the benefit of occurring under the socioeconomically and politically more favorable conditions of a country in which the proletariat represents the overwhelming majority of the active population and has an old tradition of socialist, communist, and trade-union mass organization.

Both these experiences—as well as the more limited one of Poland—confirm that the contents of socialist democracy as set forth in our program and further explained in these theses are but the conscious expression of what literally millions of workers and toilers fight for when they rise against the totalitarian rule of the bureaucracy. The struggle against the secret police, for the liberation of political prisoners, against repression of political and trade-union activities outside the power monopoly of the ruling bureaucracy, against press censorship, against juridical arbitrariness (i.e., for written law and the right of defendants to a fair trial and a fair defense), against the one-party system, against the bureaucracy's control over the social surplus product and over the economic system, against the exorbitant material privileges of the bureaucracy and in favor of a new leap forward of socioeconomic equality—all these planks were the key motives which brought the Hungarian and the Czechoslovak masses onto the streets against the bureaucracy. They will bring them onto the streets tomorrow in the USSR and the People's Republic of China too.

They have nothing to do with the restoration of private property, or the restoration of capitalism, as the Stalinist slanderers falsely alleged in order to justify the counterrevolutionary suppression of these

antibureaucratic mass uprisings with the use of the Soviet army. In that sense, they have nothing to do with the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat either.

In Hungary in 1965, the workers councils and the Central Workers Council of Budapest expressed themselves, after long and passionate debates, simultaneously in favor of a defense of nationalized property and of the freedom for all political parties except the fascists. In Czechoslovakia, during the Prague Spring, the demands for unrestricted freedom of political organization, of political clubs, tendencies, and parties, first raised by the most radical protagonists of the movement, was taken up by large tendencies inside the Communist Party itself and supported by the great majority of the trade unions and workers councils that sprang up in the final part of the movement. Especially energetic were the working class expressions in favor of a free press—while, significantly, the Stalinist spokesmen of the bureaucracy, those who prepared, facilitated, and collaborated with the Soviet bureaucracy's counterrevolutionary military intervention, concentrated their fire on the so-called "irresponsible" "probourgeois" publicists whose freedom to express themselves they wanted to crush at all costs—with the working class, in its overwhelming majority, supporting the freedom of the publicists. It is most likely that similar confrontations will occur during every future political revolution, especially in the USSR and the People's Republic of China. Revolutionary Marxists cannot hesitate or sit on the fence in determining the positions they will occupy on that question. Neither can they present them as purely tactical choices. They must align with the overwhelming majority of the toiling masses in defense of unrestricted democratic freedoms, against the censorship and repression of the bureaucracy.

In the preparation and in the beginning of the actual political revolution, the toiling masses make the distinction between those sectors of the bureaucracy which strenuously, including by the use of violence, try to oppose mass mobilizations and organization, and those sectors which, for whatever motivation, yield to and seem

to go along with the rising mass movement. The former they will pitilessly exclude from all renascent genuine organs of workers and popular power. The latter they will tolerate and even conclude tactical alliances with, especially when they are under attack by the most hated representatives of the bureaucratic dictatorship.

In the final institutionalization of workers-council power, the toiling masses will most probably, however, take all appropriate measures to ensure their numerical, social, and political preponderance inside the reborn soviets, in order to prevent them from falling under the sway of technocrats and "liberal" bureaucrats. This is perfectly possible by specific electoral rules, and does not require any banning of specific parties or ideological tendencies considered representative of sectors of the bureaucracy having temporarily allied themselves with the revolutionary masses.

Throughout the rise and the struggle for victory of the political antibureaucratic revolution, a tremendous handicap which revolutionary Marxists and proletarian revolutionists will have to overcome is the discredit which Stalin, Stalinism, and its epigones have thrown upon Marxism, socialism, communism, and Leninism, by identifying their hated oppressive rule with these great emancipatory ideas. The Fourth International can successfully overcome this handicap by basing itself on the record of the relentless and uncompromising struggle by its founders and militants against that oppressive rule for more than half a century. But to this record must be added an audacious program of concrete demands which embody, in the eyes of the masses, the overthrow of the rule of the bureaucracy, its replacement by the rule of the workers themselves, and the necessary guarantees requested by them that we shall never see workers political and economic power expropriated again by a privileged layer of society. Our program of socialist democracy synthesizes all these demands which will restore the socialist goal as a worthy one in the eyes of two hundred million proletarians in the bureaucratized workers states.

### 13. A Fundamental Aspect of the Program for Socialist Revolution

The balance sheet of fifty years of bureaucratic power, beginning with the rise of the Stalin regime in the Soviet Union, and of twenty-five years of crisis of world Stalinism can be summarized as follows:

a. In spite of all specific differences between the various European and Asian workers states and in spite of all the changes that have occurred there, *all* remain characterized by *the absence of institutionalized and constitutionally guaranteed direct workers power* (i.e., democratically elected workers councils, or

councils of workers and toiling peasants exercising direct state power). Everywhere *de facto* one-party systems exist as expressions of the complete monopoly of real power in all spheres of social life by the privileged bureaucracies. The absence of the right to form tendencies within the single party, the negation of real democratic centralism in the Leninist sense of the word, reinforces that monopoly in the exercise of state power. The parasitic nature of the materially privileged bureaucracies furthermore implies that to various

degrees momentous additional obstacles are placed on the road to advancing the world socialist revolution and building a socialist society; the transition from capitalism to socialism becomes bogged down creativity is stifled, and tremendous amounts of social wealth are misused and wasted.

b. In spite of many partial criticisms of the existing political and economic system in the USSR and the other bureaucratized workers states by various ideological currents that have developed since the post-war crisis of Stalinism (Titoism, Maoism, *Castroism*, "Eurocommunism," and left centrism of the Italian, Spanish, and West German types, etc.) none of these currents has put forward a fundamental alternative to the Stalinist model in the USSR. Against that bureaucratic power structure none offer a coherent alternative of *democratic working-class power*. No real understanding of the problem of Stalinism is possible without a Marxist analysis of the bureaucracy as a specific social phenomenon. No real alternative to rule by the bureaucracy (or restoration of capitalism) is possible without institutionalizing direct workers power through democratically elected workers councils (workers and toiling peasants councils) with a multiparty system and full democratic rights for all toilers, within a system of planned and democratically centralized self-

management of the economy by the associated producers.

The so-called Eurocommunist current, while accentuating its criticism of the dogmas and practices of the Soviet and East European bureaucracies, and while broadening its polemics with the Kremlin, proposes at the most a reform of the worst excesses of Stalinist rule rather than a revolutionary change. The "Eurocommunist" parties have not cut their umbilical cord with the Soviet bureaucracy and continue to offer "objectivist" justifications and apologies for the past crimes of the bureaucracy and many aspects of the present forms of bureaucratic rule. Furthermore, in the imperialist countries their general policy of class collaboration and upholding the bourgeois order even in face of big explosions of mass struggle of necessity limits their claims to respect democracy inside the labor movement, particularly within the mass organizations that they control and within their own parties. In their critiques they have systematically obscured the differences between bourgeois and workers democracy and, under the guise of combatting the one-party system in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and China. In reality, they defend the concept that only alternative to the rule of the bureaucracy through a single party is acceptance of parliamentary institutions built on the bourgeois model, plus refusal to question the existence of the

bourgeois state. In this way they reintroduce into the labor movement today the general theses of classical Social Democracy with regard to the "peaceful" and "gradual" transition to socialism.

In the light of all these failures, the program of the Fourth International on the dictatorship of the proletariat, direct working-class rule through elected workers councils, and plurality of soviet parties emerges as the only coherent and serious alternative to the twin revisions of Marxism advanced by Social Democratic reformism and Stalinist codification of monopoly rule by a usurping bureaucratic caste. This program, which represents in its main lines the continuity of the tradition from the writings of Marx and Engels on the Paris Commune through Lenin's *State and Revolution*, through the documents of the first congresses of the Communist International on the dictatorship of the proletariat, has been further enriched in the light of the successive analyses of proletarian revolutions and bureaucratic degeneration or deformation of workers states, first by Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed* and in the founding programmatic documents of the Fourth International, and later by the successive international gatherings of the Fourth International after World War II. The present document summarizes the present thinking of the revolutionary Marxists on this key aspect of the program for socialist revolution.



# Socialism and Democracy

## I. Introduction

The past decade has seen the reemergence of major class battles in a series of imperialist countries: France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. There have been sharp class confrontations in Britain and elsewhere. The process of working-class radicalization has begun in the United States, Canada, Oceania, Japan, and Germany.

There has been a tendency for the urban proletariat and semiproletarian masses to come to the fore in the upsurges in the semicolonial countries as well. The most striking recent examples were the sustained mobilizations, revolutionary general strike, and mass insurrection that overthrew the shah of Iran; and the decisive role played by the urban masses of Nicaragua in the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship and the establishment of a government that advances the interests of the workers and peasants.

At the same time that the class struggle has sharpened in the centers of world capitalism, the crisis of Stalinism has also deepened. The "Prague Spring" of 1968 and the struggles of the Polish workers in the 1970s have been the high points of the fight of the workers in Eastern Europe against the Stalinist bureaucracy in this period. Although as yet narrowly based, the dissident movement appeared in the Soviet Union itself.

In the last year major demonstrations in Poland and even China were notable for their urban and proletarian features.

In the context of upsurge in the class struggle many Western European Communist parties are no longer able to unconditionally and uncritically defend the policies of the Soviet bureaucratic caste to their working class followers. They have been forced to take some distance from the worst crimes of their fellow Stalinists in

the USSR and Eastern Europe.

The internal conflicts in the bureaucratic caste in China are indications of massive discontent and have provided certain openings for its public expression. These conflicts, as well as the crass class collaborationism Peking is practicing with Washington, have undermined the false notion, prevalent a decade ago, that Maoist policy is fundamentally different from and more progressive than the Kremlin's class collaborationism. The specter of Moscow and Peking vying with each other in their efforts to reach a counterrevolutionary "détente" with imperialism has further exposed Stalinism.

Contributing to the crisis of Stalinism has been the emergence of leaderships with a mass following who bypass Stalinism from the left and have mighty revolutionary accomplishments to their credit. The Castro leadership is the prime example. The leadership of the Nicaraguan FSLN is the newest.

The unfolding world crisis of capitalism points to deepening radicalization of the working class and the toilers in all three sectors of the world revolution. There will be major class showdowns that will pose the question: which class shall rule. In contrast to the situation in Russia in 1917, however, what is lacking is a large tested nucleus of worker-Bolsheviks that can grow into a mass party in a revolutionary situation leading the majority of the toilers toward political power. Yet never before has the program of Bolshevism, of the first four congresses of the Communist International, of the Transitional Program of the Fourth International, been more timely or urgent than it is today. The period we have entered is favorable to the construction of proletarian parties around this program—

the program of world socialist revolution—which is today defended by the Fourth International and its sections and sympathizing organizations throughout the world. Never, since the Stalinization of the Communist International, has the situation been more propitious for the regroupments and fusions that can lead toward building a mass world party of socialist revolution.

An essential part of that program is the Marxist and Leninist position on the relationship of socialism and democracy. This question has become more prominent in the context of rising class-struggle moods

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*This resolution was submitted by a minority of the United Secretariat. The indicative vote of delegates and fraternal observers was: 39.5 for, 40 against, 16 abstentions, 17.5 not voting.*

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among the workers, the deepening crisis of Stalinism, and the growing predominance of urban struggles and proletarian forms of organization.

Among the questions involved are the relation between the fight for democratic rights under capitalism and the struggle of the workers to conquer and hold state power; the role of democracy in the dictatorship of the proletariat; how to restore workers democracy in the degenerated workers state of the USSR and how to win it in the deformed workers states of East Europe and Asia. The purpose of this resolution is to reaffirm the programmatic position of the Fourth International on these questions, and to apply and amplify

it in light of the concrete experiences of the class struggle over the past decades.

The question of the forms through which workers power is exercised in Cuba today has been deliberately left aside and will be taken up later.

#### Reform vs. Revolution

a. The fundamental difference between reformists and centrists of all varieties, and revolutionary Marxists, regarding the need for a socialist revolution, the conquest of state power by the workers, the nature of the proletarian state, and the meaning of the dictatorship of the proletariat consists of:

1. The recognition by revolutionary Marxists of the *class* nature of all states and of the state apparatus as an instrument to maintain class rule.

2. The illusion propagated by the reformists and many centrists that "democracy" or "democratic state institutions" stand above classes and the class struggle.

3. The recognition by revolutionary Marxists that the state apparatus and state institutions of even the most democratic bourgeois state serve to uphold the power and rule of the capitalist class, i.e., represent a social dictatorship of the capitalist class, and therefore cannot be instruments with which to overthrow that rule and transfer power from the capitalist class to the working class.

4. The recognition by revolutionary Marxists that the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus, in the first place of the repressive apparatus, is a necessary prerequisite for the conquest of state power by the working class.

5. The recognition by revolutionary Marxists of the necessity for the development of the consciousness and mass organization of the workers in order to consolidate a workers government and carry through the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in the transition from a capitalist state to a workers state.

6. The recognition by revolutionary Marxists of the necessity for the proletarian state to be based on organs of workers democracy of the soviet or council type in order to carry through the transformation to a classless society on a world scale.

Despite the tragic Chilean experience, which reconfirmed so many previous lessons of history, Stalinists, Social Democrats, and many centrists alike still proclaim that the labor movement can fully attain its socialist goals within the framework of bourgeois parliamentary institutions, through reliance on parliamentary elections and the gradual conquest of "positions of power" within these institutions. This reformist concept must be energetically opposed and denounced for what it is. It is a cover-up for abandonment of the struggle for state power by the proletariat; a cover-up for abandonment of the struggle for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie; a substitution of ever more systematic class collaboration with the bour-

geoisie for the policy of consistent class struggle; a disarming of the proletariat in the face of the violence unleashed by the capitalist class; and, therefore, capitulation to the class interests of the bourgeoisie at moments of decisive economic, political, and social crisis.

Far from reducing the costs of "social transformation" or ensuring a slower but peaceful transition to socialism, this policy, if it should determine the political attitude of the toilers in a period of unavoidable class confrontation, can only lead to bloody defeats and mass slaughters of the Spanish, Indonesian, and Chilean type. Adherence to such a policy by the German Social Democracy was also a major factor in the triumph of fascism in Germany.

The German CP, following Stalin's ultra-left "Third Period" line, labelled the Social

## II. The Fight for Democratic Rights Under Capitalism and the Fight for Workers Power

a. Whatever democratic rights the masses enjoy under capitalism—from the right to free speech, to the right to organize labor unions and workers parties, to the right of abortion—have been won by them through struggle.

b. Revolutionary Marxists fight for the broadest possible democratic rights under capitalism. The greater the degree of democratic rights, the greater the possibilities for the workers and their allies to struggle for their interests; to organize themselves on the union and political levels; to raise their standard of living, level of culture and education; and to win other gains that improve the relationship of class forces for the proletariat in preparation for the show-down struggles with the capitalists for power.

c. It is in the class interests of the workers to fight to defend every conquest of the masses, including democratic rights, against capitalist reaction. History shows that the working class is the only class that can consistently do so.

We will fight any attempt by rightist or fascist forces to overthrow the institutions of bourgeois democracy and install outright military or fascist dictatorships, which first and foremost are aimed at restricting or crushing the workers and toilers and their organizations. In this struggle, the workers, under the leadership of a Leninist party, will fight to impose their own solution to capitalist reaction by eliminating its cause through a socialist revolution.

While we are ready to make a bloc with all forces, including bourgeois forces, who will fight against fascist or military coup attempts, we give no political confidence to any bourgeois forces. By their class nature, they are incapable of consistently opposing fascism or a military takeover. The working class needs political independence

Democrats "social fascists" and refused to call for a united front to fight the fascists. Under the slogan "after Hitler, our turn," it failed to organize any effective struggle against the Nazis. The CP thus failed to provide a class struggle alternative to the policy of the SPD leadership which could have prevented the fascist victory.

b. Just as the reformists deny that the state in all capitalist countries, no matter how "democratic," is a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, they deny the necessity for the working class to have its own state, a dictatorship of the proletariat, in order to carry through the transition to socialism.

c. Finally, flowing from their class collaborationism, the reformists fail to effectively mobilize the toiling masses for the defense and development of democratic rights under capitalism. Some ultralefts and centrists downplay the importance of this struggle.

in this struggle as in all others, to put forward its own solution of socialist revolution, as the only guarantee against fascism or military dictatorship.

Likewise, in the fight against capitalist reaction we place no confidence in the capitalist state or any of its institutions. Every restriction by a bourgeois government on democratic rights, even those ostensibly aimed at fascists or other reactionaries, will inevitably be utilized tenfold against the working class and especially its most revolutionary wing. Fascism can only be stopped by the workers and their allies in consciously led united front mass struggle.

d. Capitalism in its decay breeds reaction. The extent of democratic rights and freedoms enjoyed by the masses at any particular time in any given country are determined by the relationship of class forces. Although there are oscillations within this historic trend, the long-term tendency for capitalism in the imperialist epoch is to more and more restrict democratic rights in face of the deepening class polarization. Today this can be seen most clearly in the many brutal dictatorships in the semicolonial countries, dictatorships propped up and in many cases directly installed by imperialism. For example, torture is state practice in a majority of the semicolonial countries today.

The example of Italian and German fascism demonstrates that this trend assumes its most virulent form in the fascist movements of imperialist countries and the totalitarian dictatorships they impose to maintain capitalism. We have seen how the ruling class sometimes utilizes military dictatorships or Bonapartist regimes which can pave the way for the seizure of power by mass fascist movements.

e. History shows that before fascist movements have their chance to install a

totalitarian form of capitalist dictatorship, the workers and their allies will have *their* chance to defeat the fascists and impose their own solution to the capitalist crisis. The fascists can win only when the workers movement has lost its opportunity, remains demoralized and divided in face of the fascist threat, and has lost its attractive power to mobilize its allies. When thus disoriented, labor's potential allies divide and can furnish support to "radical" rightist solutions.

f. Fights for democratic demands are part of the struggles of the allies of the proletariat—including oppressed nationalities, women, working farmers or peasants, and small independent producers. Large numbers of these *allies* of the working class often form *part* of the working class, as well. In order to unify the working class and cement the alliance with its allies, especially the working farmers or poor peasants, the workers movement must support the progressive demands of these allies, including their democratic demands.

g. In the semicolonial countries the basic tasks historically brought to the fore by the bourgeois-democratic revolutions have by and large not been completed, including land reform, actual independence from imperialism even if formal independence has been won, and the development of an industrialized economy free of imperialist-imposed distortions and backwardness. Political democracy is precarious or nonexistent. Democratic tasks in these countries therefore assume special importance. These tasks cannot be carried through by the national bourgeoisie, however, and it falls on the working class in alliance with the poor peasantry to achieve them. The democratic tasks become intertwined with transitional demands and the socialist revolution, along the lines of the dynamic of the permanent revolution.

h. It is in the immediate class interests of the workers and toilers of the imperialist countries—as well as their long-term interests—to support the struggles of the workers and toilers of the colonies and semicolonies. This includes fighting for the democratic right of self-determination for the peoples of the colonies or semicolonies. The importance of such a struggle by the workers of the imperialist countries was illustrated by the anti-Vietnam War movement, especially in the United States. It gave vital aid to the Vietnamese revolution, had long-term effects on the antiwar and anti-imperialist consciousness of the American worker and heightened their opposition to Washington's utilization of American troops abroad. It strengthened the American working class and made it more able to resist the employers' offensives. It helped shift the relationship of forces on a world scale to the detriment of imperialism.

Support for the right of the colonies and semicolonies to self-determination is part of the fight against imperialist wars. Such

wars are not only against the interests of the workers of the world including the workers in the imperialist countries, but threaten to engulf humanity in a nuclear holocaust.

Another aspect of this fight is the struggle for the democratic rights of citizen-soldiers impressed into the imperialist armies. They are of key importance to every movement against imperialist wars.

i. Within the workers organizations, first of all the trade unions, and the organizations of the allies of the proletariat, we fight for the broadest possible rank-and-file democracy and independence from the capitalist government.

Rank-and-file democracy and control over the fundamental policies and leadership of the trade unions is necessary to mobilize the power of the unions behind class-struggle policies against the bosses. It is necessary to unleash the power of the unions to act in solidarity with their fellow workers and their allies and break from political subordination to the ruling class. The labor bureaucracy stifles union democracy in order to protect its privileges and defend its fundamental policy of class collaboration. This petty-bourgeois layer draws its special tribute from the trough of union funds and acts as a transmission belt for the interests of capital into the labor movement. Even when it is forced to defend the union against the bosses in order to defend the base of its privileges, it does so with its own ultimately self-defeating class collaborationist methods. Rank-and-file democracy in the unions is an essential plank in the program of any class-struggle left wing. The fight for it is an essential part of the struggle to transform the unions into revolutionary instruments, a struggle that must come up against the policies of the labor bureaucracy and will lead to its removal and replacement by a class-struggle leadership.

j. As the class struggle intensifies, the fight to transform the unions into revolutionary instruments deepens. Progressively broader organizational forms of the workers struggle appear, including strike committees, factory committees, and finally, in a revolutionary upsurge, soviets or councils.

This process reflects deepening class consciousness. At the same time, such organizations of the toilers become advanced schools for political education. In the crucible of class combat, the workers test the various programs and proposals of the different workers parties. Revolutionary Marxists will be in the forefront of helping to build such organs as the broadening class struggle convinces the workers they are necessary. We will fight inside them for the revolutionary perspective.

As Trotsky explained in the document drafted for the founding conference of the Fourth International:

“. . . the deepening of the social crisis will increase not only the sufferings of the

masses but also their impatience, persistence, and pressure. Ever new layers of the oppressed will raise their heads and come forward with their demands. Millions of toilworn 'little men,' to whom the reformist leaders never gave a thought, will begin to pound insistently on the doors of the workers' organizations. The unemployed will join the movement. The agricultural workers, the ruined and semiruinied farmers, the oppressed of the cities, the women workers, housewives, proletarianized layers of the intelligentsia—all of these will seek unity and leadership.

"How are the different *demands* and forms of struggle to be harmonized, even if only within the limits of one city? History has already answered this question: through soviets. These will unite the representatives of all the fighting groups. For this purpose, no one has yet proposed a different form of organization; indeed, it would hardly be possible to think up a better one. Soviets are not limited to an a priori party program. They throw open their doors to all the exploited. Through these doors pass representatives of all strata drawn into the general current of the struggle. The organization, broadening out together with the movement, is renewed again and again in its womb. All political currents of the proletariat can struggle for leadership of the soviets on the basis of the widest democracy. The slogan of *soviets*, therefore, crowns the program of transitional demands.

"Soviets can arise only at the time when the mass movement enters into an openly revolutionary stage. From the first moment of their appearance the soviets, acting as a pivot around which millions of toilers are united in their struggle against the exploiters, become competitors and opponents of local authorities and then of the central government. If the factory committee creates a dual power in the factory, then the soviets initiate a period of dual power in the country.

"Dual power in its turn is the culminating point of the transitional period. Two regimes, the bourgeois and the proletarian, are irreconcilably opposed to each other. Conflict between them is inevitable. The fate of society depends upon the outcome. Should the revolution be defeated, the fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie will follow. In case of victory, the power of the soviets, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist reconstruction of society, will arise." ("The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International" in *Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, pp. 136-137.)

Exactly how such councils will arise, of course, depends upon concrete circumstances. Forms such as factory committees may begin to play the role of soviets, or they may even be initiated by revolutionary unions. In any case, revolutionary Marxists will fight for their development, coordination, and centralization. To fulfill

their role as revolutionary organizations of class combat, they have to have the broadest internal democracy and seek to include all struggle organizations as well as tendencies and groupings in the working class. In this sense, they are the highest form of the united front.

k. The soviets have to be won to the revolutionary perspective, which requires a struggle by a revolutionary Marxist party to win a majority inside the soviets. The First Congress of the Communist International held in 1919 put the tasks of Marxists this way:

"1) to explain to the broad mass of the workers the historic significance and the political and historical necessity of the new, proletarian democracy which must replace bourgeois democracy and the parliamentary system;

"2) to extend the organization of soviets among the workers in all branches of industry, among the soldiers in the Army and sailors in the Navy and also among farm laborers and poor peasants;

"3) to build a stable Communist majority inside the Soviets." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 475.)

Moreover, "The rise of soviets as the historical basic form of the dictatorship of the proletariat does not in any way diminish the leading role of the communist party in the proletarian revolution. When the German 'left' communists say . . . that

### III. Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

a. Based on the experience of the revolutionary upsurge of the French working class in 1871, Marx and Engels concluded that the form the dictatorship of the proletariat would take would be that of a *workers democracy* of the Paris Commune type. This was confirmed by the experience of the October revolution in Russia.

Following Marx and Engels and the Bolsheviks, revolutionary Marxists reaffirm that the workers democracy they fight for will be a state power of a new type. Under all previous forms of class society, the state represented the forcible suppression of the immense majority by a minority ruling class. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, the state represents the interests of the great majority and forcibly suppresses the special prerogatives of the former minority ruling class, the bourgeoisie. Further, the workers state is the instrument of a propertyless class, the working class, whose interests lie in the construction of a classless society. Its form, therefore, will fit its function. The workers state is transitional; it will *wither away* as the classless society comes into being on a world scale.

In order to best defend the working class against the dispossessed capitalists and advance toward socialism, the state institutions of a workers democracy are radically different from those of the capitalist state, or any previous state. The soviets or

'the party too is *more and more adapting itself to the Soviet idea* and assuming a proletarian character' . . . that is a confused expression of the idea that the communist party must *merge* in the soviets, as though the soviets could *replace* the communist party." ("Theses on the Role of the Communist Party in the Proletarian Revolution Adopted by the Second Comintern Congress." *The Communist International 1919-1943, Documents*, Jane Degras, editor, Vol. I, p. 132.)

A revolutionary Marxist party of the Bolshevik type is necessary at all times to fight for the line of class struggle and class independence, in order to help propel the working class and its allies forward. Only by participating in such struggles will the revolutionary party be built. As it becomes steeled in the class struggle, the revolutionary party will be able to win the vanguard of the working class and the support of the decisive proletarian layers. It will be able to lead the mobilization of the working class and its allies in a struggle for power. In the process, the workers must counter the violence that the capitalist class will unleash against the toilers, break up the old capitalist state, build soviets, establish a workers and farmers government, expropriate the bourgeoisie, and thereby establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and begin the construction of socialism.

councils—through which the proletariat organizes its revolutionary struggle against the capitalist state—become the basic institutions of the workers state after the revolution. Lenin outlined some of the fundamental norms of such a workers democracy in *State and Revolution*: the election of all functionaries, judges, leaders of the workers or workers and peasants militias, and all delegates representing the toilers in the state institutions; regular rotation of elected officials; restriction of their income to that of skilled workers; the right of the toilers to recall them at any time; exercise of both legislative and executive functions by the workers councils; radical reduction of the number of permanent functionaries and greater and greater transfer of administrative functions to bodies run by the toilers themselves. "Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfill all these functions, and the more the functions of state power are performed by the people as a whole, the less need there is for the existence of this power." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 419-420.) In this sense, a workers state in any given country *begins* to "wither away" as it develops these norms and institutions, although it must build up its armed power as long as the imperialist threat remains.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is established through the proletariat's forcible breaking up of the capitalist state machine and expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It is a social force to prevent the reestablishment of capitalist state power or of private property in the means of production. It thereby prevents any reintroduction of the exploitation of wage earners, and moves to radically eradicate the oppression of national minorities and of women. It is the opposite of dictatorial rule by a minority over the vast majority of people.

The founding congress of the Communist International stated: "Proletarian dictatorship is similar to the dictatorship of other classes in that it arises out of the need, as every other [class] dictatorship does, to forcibly suppress the resistance of the class that is losing its political sway. The fundamental distinction between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of other classes—landlord dictatorship in the Middle Ages and bourgeois dictatorship in all the civilized capitalist countries—consists in the fact that the dictatorship of the landowners and bourgeoisie was the forcible suppression of the resistance offered by the vast majority of the population, namely, the working people. In contrast, proletarian dictatorship is the forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, i.e., an insignificant minority of the population, the landowners and capitalists.

"It follows that proletarian dictatorship must inevitably entail not only a change in democratic forms and institutions, generally speaking, but precisely such a change as provides an unparalleled extension of the actual enjoyment of democracy by those oppressed by capitalism—the toiling classes. . . .

". . . all this implies and presents to the toiling classes, i.e., the vast majority of the population, greater practical opportunities for enjoying democratic rights and liberties than ever existed before, even approximately, in the best and the most democratic bourgeois republics." ("Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 464-465.)

Against the reformist and revisionist conceptions of the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties as well as centrist formations, the Fourth International defends these fundamental programmatic contributions of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and the revolutionary workers movement. A socialist society cannot be constructed except through the collective ownership and control of the means of production and the social surplus product by the working class based on economic planning and administration through democratically centralized workers councils—in other words, planned management by the toilers. No such socialization can come into being unless the capitalists are economi-

cally and politically expropriated and state power is wielded by the working class through a system of workers democracy.

No socialist society can emerge within the narrow boundaries of the nation-state. It needs the framework of at least the major economically advanced countries of the world and cannot be completely established except on a world scale.

b. All historical experience demonstrates that no exploiting class ever gives up its power and privileges peacefully. And all experience of revolution and counterrevolution in this century—including the horrors of the Nazi dictatorship, the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki designed to terrorize the masses of the world, and the genocidal firepower unleashed by Washington against the Vietnamese and Kampuchean people—demonstrates that the capitalist class is the most ruthless and bloody ruling class in history. The only limits on its willingness to use barbaric violence and brutality, the only limits to the depths of its inhumanity, are those imposed on it by the relationship of class forces.

The capitalist class will unleash civil war against the workers to defend or reestablish its rule. As long as imperialism exists, it will attempt to intervene whenever and wherever it can to prevent popular revolutions and to roll them back where they have occurred before they can lead to socialist victories. Because of this, elements of civil war exist before, during, and after the workers' conquest of power. Exceptions to this law of the class struggle would only be possible following successful revolutions in the major imperialist powers, above all in the United States.

In addition, as Lenin pointed out, there is another "truth: there can be no real, actual equality until all possibility of the exploitation of one class by another has been totally destroyed.

"The exploiters can be defeated at one stroke in the event of a successful uprising at the centre, or of a revolt in the army. But except in very rare and special cases, the exploiters cannot be destroyed at one stroke. It is impossible to expropriate all the landowners and capitalists of any big country at one stroke. Furthermore, expropriation alone, as a legal or political act, does not settle the matter by a long chalk, because it is necessary to *depose* the landowners and capitalists in actual fact, to *replace* their management of the factories and estates by a different management, workers' management, in actual fact. There can be no equality between the exploiters—who for many generations have been better off because of their education, conditions of wealthy life, and habits—and the exploited, the majority of whom even in the most advanced and most democratic bourgeois republics are downtrodden, backward, ignorant, intimidated and disunited. For a long time after the revolution the exploiters inevitably

continue to retain a number of great practical advantages: they still have money (since it is impossible to abolish money all at once); some movable property—often fairly considerable; they still have various connections, habits of organisation and management; knowledge of all the 'secrets' (customs, methods, means and possibilities) of management; superior education; close connections with the higher technical personnel (who live and think like the bourgeoisie); . . . and so on and so forth.

"If the exploiters are defeated in one country only—and this, of course, is typical, since a simultaneous revolution in a number of countries is a rare exception—they *still* remain *stronger* than the exploited, for the international connections of the exploiters are enormous. That a section of the exploited from the least advanced middle-peasant, artisan, and similar groups of the population may, and indeed does, follow the exploiters has been proved by *all* revolutions, including the Commune (for there were also proletarians among the Versailles troops. . .).

"The transition from capitalism to communism takes an entire historical epoch. Until this epoch is over, the exploiters inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this *hope* turns into *attempts* at restoration. . . ." (Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky," op. cit., pp. 253-254.)

While the size and cultural level of the working class has risen in the imperialist countries since this was written, and more than one country has thrown off capitalism, Lenin's general points remain valid. The exploiters still retain the relative advantages Lenin mentions. Until the power of world imperialism has been broken, the danger of capitalist restoration remains real and pressing.

c. The workers state will take whatever steps are necessary against the violence of the bourgeoisie to preserve the democratic rule of the working class. In this sense, the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is maintained against the bourgeoisie through rule "unrestricted by any laws." (Ibid., p. 236.) Depending upon specific circumstances, the measures any particular workers state will have to take to defend the toiling majority will vary greatly.

The early Soviet republic, for example, found it necessary to disperse the Constituent Assembly, which counterposed itself to the democratic rule of the workers councils.

Likewise, the early Soviet constitution barred the right to vote to the bourgeoisie and rich farmers who exploited labor. Such a step was "a nationally specific and not a general question of the dictatorship [of the proletariat]. . . . It would be a mistake, however, to guarantee in advance that the impending proletarian revolutions in Europe will all, or the majority of them, be necessarily accompanied by restriction of

the franchise for the bourgeoisie. It may be so. . . .

"This aspect of the dictatorship [of the proletariat] did not make its appearance 'according to the plan' of any particular party; it *emerged* of itself in the course of the struggle." (Ibid., p. 256 and p. 272.)

In early 1921, as the civil war was coming to an end, the Bolsheviks were faced with the "tragic necessity" (as Trotsky was later to describe it) of suppressing the notorious rebellion of the sailors at Kronstadt. The situation internally was such that the country was in a state of near-total disorganization. Industry was on the point of collapse; agriculture had been neglected for years, a fact that, several months after Kronstadt, was to cause immense famine throughout much of the land. From later 1920 to early 1921, looting by armed gangs occurred nearly everywhere. These gangs received support from what remained of the Social Revolutionaries, who used this particular method to pursue their struggle against the Soviet state.

In this situation the Bolsheviks correctly saw that if the Kronstadt rebellion were not swiftly put down, White Army forces—supported by the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries and backed up by foreign (especially French) imperialism—would utilize it to relaunch the civil war.

The Bolsheviks were the only party ready to defend the socialist revolution and the Soviet system; all other parties were arrayed against them in struggle to overturn that system in favor of capitalism. This would have meant a huge bloodbath and the reduction of Russia to a semicolon of imperialism under a fascist-type dictatorship. In order to defend the Soviet state, the Bolsheviks were compelled to suppress not only the bourgeois parties but the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries too, who were directly conspiring with imperialism and domestic reaction.

d. Unless imperialism overthrows the existing workers states, future socialist revolutions will not be confronted with the same extreme isolation faced by the Bolsheviks. "By anticipation it is possible to establish the following law: The more countries in which the capitalist system is broken, the weaker will be the resistance offered by the ruling classes in other countries, the less sharp a character the socialist revolution will assume, the less violent forms the proletarian dictatorship will have, the shorter it will be, the sooner the society will be reborn on the basis of a new, more full, more perfect and humane democracy. . . . Socialism would have no value if it should not bring with it, not only the juridical inviolability but also the full safeguarding of all the interests of the human personality." (Trotsky, "The World Situation and Perspectives," *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1939-40)*, pp. 155-156.)

Especially in the United States, how-



ever, the ruling class will attempt to unleash violence and civil war on a massive scale against the insurgent workers. Until and unless the U.S. rulers are defeated and disarmed of their massive arsenal including nuclear weapons, the American toilers will face a bitter struggle and the toilers of the world a perpetual threat.

Obviously, every workers state must defend itself by any means necessary against attempts to overthrow it and violation of its laws that uphold its property relations—just as constitutional and penal codes under bourgeois rule forbid individual infringements on the rights of private property. In a workers democracy of a stable workers state emerging after the victorious disarming of the bourgeoisie and the end of civil war, the constitution and penal code will forbid private appropriation of the means of production or private hiring of labor. Likewise, prior to the emergence of a classless society, as long as proletarian class rule survives and the restoration of capitalism remains possible, the constitution and penal code of the workers state will forbid and punish acts of armed insurrection, attempts at overthrowing working-class power through violence, terrorist attacks on individual representatives of the workers, sabotage, espionage in the service of foreign capitalist states, etc.

Against terror, the workers state defends itself by repression of the terrorists. Against reactionary ideas, the workers state should defend itself by political and ideological struggle, education, and the general raising of the cultural level of the masses. The workers have no need to fear those who express the opinion that the factories and banks should be given back to private owners. There is no chance that the toilers will be persuaded by such propaganda. The working class in the imperialist countries, the deformed and degenerated workers states, and in an increasing number of semicolonial countries is strong enough not to have to reintroduce the concept of “crimes of opinion” either in its penal codes or in the daily practice of the workers states.

The abolition of capitalist state power and private property in the means of production does not immediately lead to the disappearance of privileges in the field of personal wealth or cultural heritage, not to speak of the disappearance of all elements of commodity production. Long after bourgeois state power has been overthrown and capitalist property abolished, remnants of petty commodity production and survival of elements of a money economy will continue to create a framework in which primitive accumulation of capital can still reappear. This is especially true if the level of development of the productive forces is still insufficient to guarantee the automatic appearance and consolidation of genuine *socialist* relations of production. State power of the working class is indis-

pensable in order to prevent these “islands of bourgeois influence” from becoming bases for the restoration of capitalism. Long after the bourgeoisie has lost its positions as a ruling class politically and economically, the influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies, customs, habits, and cultural values will linger on in relatively large spheres of social life and in broad layers of society. But it is completely wrong to draw the conclusion that administrative repression of bourgeois concepts or values is a necessary condition for the building of a socialist society. On the contrary, historical experience confirms the counterproductive character of administrative measures against reactionary bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies. Suppression merely drives those who hold such views underground and prevents the revolutionary party from keeping its finger on the pulse of the masses. In fact, in the long run such methods even strengthen the hold of reactionary ideas and place the great mass of the proletariat in the position of being ideologically disarmed before them, because of lack of experience with genuine political struggles and ideological debates and the consequent lack of credibility of official “state doctrines.”

The only effective way to eliminate the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the mass of toilers lies in: (1) The creation of objective conditions under which these ideas lose the material roots of their attraction and the basis upon which they reproduce themselves; (2) The waging of a relentless struggle against these false conceptions *in the field of ideology and politics itself*, which can be fully successful only under conditions of open debate and confrontation; (3) The utilization of education. The educational policy of a workers state should be based on teaching the new generation in a scientific, materialist spirit.

At the same time, freedom for religious observance creates the best circumstances to gradually defeat obscurantist ideas in the course of free and open confrontation with scientific ideas.

Only those who have confidence in neither materialism nor the proletariat and the toiling masses can shrink from open ideological conflict with those who defend the interests of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois layers. Once the capitalist class is disarmed and expropriated, once its members no longer have access to the mass media as determined by their wealth, the validity of Marxism will rapidly assert itself. There is no reason to fear a constant, free, and frank exchange of ideas. Through this confrontation the working class can educate and successfully free itself from the influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas.

As the *Communist Manifesto* says, Marxism is “in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented or

discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer.

“[It] merely express[es], in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes. . . .”

Or, as Engels put it, communism is not “a certain *doctrine* which proceeds from a definite theoretical principle as its *core* and draws further conclusions from that. . . . Communism is not a doctrine but a *movement*; it proceeds not from principles but from *facts*. The Communists do not base themselves on this or that philosophy as their point of departure but on the whole course of previous history and specifically its actual results in the civilized countries at the present time. Communism has followed from large-scale industry and its consequences, from the establishment of the world market, of the concomitant uninhibited competition, from the ever more violent and more universal trade crises, which have already become full-fledged crises of the world market, from the creation of the proletariat and the concentration of capital, from the ensuing class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie. Communism, insofar as it is a theory, is the theoretical expression of the position of the proletariat in this struggle and the theoretical summation of the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat.” (“The Communists and Karl Heinezen,” Engels, *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 6, pp. 303-304.)

In the deformed and degenerated workers states, “Marxism,” has been corrupted and transformed from a critical and revolutionary science, a weapon in the hands of the class-conscious proletariat fighting for its emancipation—into a doctrine tailored to justify the counterrevolutionary policies of the privileged bureaucratic castes. The result has been a real impoverishment of Marxist thought in the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states. Marxism survived as an opposition and underground tendency. But it can flourish only in an atmosphere of full freedom of discussion and confrontation with other currents of thought.

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The democratic norms toward which we aspire cannot be fully implemented under every concrete circumstance. For example, under conditions of civil war, or foreign military intervention—that is, military attempts by the former ruling class and its international allies to overthrow workers power—the rules of war apply. Restrictions on the rights to political organization and, in some extreme cases, even on expression of opinions may well be necessary. No social class, no state, has ever granted full rights to those who actively engage in acts of *war* to overthrow it, and the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot do otherwise. No political party ever has unlimited debate

when it is leading class combat. This is most sharply posed in times of war.

In all cases, however, the workers state will strive to maximize the real democracy enjoyed by the toilers, including under conditions of civil war. This is the best way to mobilize the power of the workers and their allies; heighten their social responsibility, discipline and fighting spirit; raise their self-confidence, consciousness, creativity, and their faith in their capacity to build a workers state and a classless society; and increase their active support of and participation in the administration of their own state.

e. Stalinism has systematically used the pretext of imperialist threat to level slanderous accusations of "collusion with imperialism," "objectively acting in the interests of imperialism," and "anti-soviet" or "anti-socialist" agitation to condemn and suppress any form of political criticism, opposition, or nonconformism. It has organized barbaric repression on a mass scale under these false charges. This has created a profound and healthy distrust among the world working class of the abuse of penal, juridical, and police institutions of a workers state to outlaw certain ideas or thoughts. It is therefore necessary to stress that in a workers state, charges brought against individuals should be strictly circumscribed to criminal acts.

The Fourth International stands for the defense and the extension of the most progressive conquests of the bourgeois democratic revolutions in the field of penal codes and justice. We fight for their incorporation into the constitutions and penal codes of the workers states. These include such rights as:

1. The necessity of written law. The avoidance of retroactive delinquency. The burden of proof to be on the accuser; the assumption of innocence until proof of guilt.

2. The full right of all individuals to freely determine the character of their defense; full immunity for legal defenders from prosecution for any statements or lines of defense used in such trials.

3. Rejection of collective responsibility of social groups, families, etc., for individual crimes.

4. Strict prohibition of any form of torture or forceful extortion of confessions.

5. Suppression of the death penalty except under extreme conditions, such as war.

6. Extension and generalization of public trial by juries of peers.

The last word in all these matters, as well as on the constitution and penal code of a workers state, rests with the workers themselves. The fundamental guarantee against all abuses of state power lies in the fullest participation in political activity by the toiling masses, the broadest possible workers democracy, and the arming of the proletariat.

The workers state can gradually elimi-

nate a professional judiciary by drawing the masses more and more into the judicial functions beginning at the local level and for less serious crimes.

If extreme conditions such as civil war or massive economic dislocation make certain restrictions of democratic rights unavoidable, the basic nature and limitation of such restrictions should be clearly understood by the workers. It is necessary to clearly and frankly explain before the whole working class that such restrictions are inescapable and temporary measures, not part of the social and political norms of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Historically they are the last vestiges of the struggle to eradicate class society; not the harbinger of a new social order. Insofar as restrictions are necessitated by the class struggle, they should be limited, both in scope and time, and revoked as soon as possible. This means also that the workers should be especially alert to the need to prevent such exceptional measures from becoming institutionalized and falsely elevated into the realm of principle.

The direct political and material responsibility for any restrictions of socialist democracy lies with bourgeois counterrevolution and international imperialism. The remnants of the former ruling classes must be on notice from the proletariat that the way they will be dealt with depends upon their behavior.

#### Military Preparedness

f. As long as imperialism survives in major countries—and certainly in the United States—it will never give up its attempts by economic pressure and military force to stop any further extension of the socialist revolution. Nor will it halt its attempts to reconquer the territories lost for direct exploitation by capital. Such a restoration is not possible in a gradual and peaceful way, any more than the overthrow of capitalism can occur in a peaceful and gradual way. Any workers state or group of workers states will find itself in a permanent condition of armed truce with international capital that could, under certain conditions, lead to open war. Therefore, one of the central responsibilities of the dictatorship of the proletariat is to maintain permanent military preparedness.

While we reject the idea that nuclear world war is inevitable, we likewise reject the idea that antiwar propaganda, agitation, and class organization of the working masses in the capitalist countries is sufficient to permanently prevent wars of aggression by imperialism against workers states and new revolutions. While its *political* lines of defense and extension of the revolution are what will ultimately be decisive for any workers state, as long as the working class of the main imperialist countries has not actually overthrown capitalist rule at home and disarmed the exploiters, the danger of counterrevolution-

ary wars remains. The proletariat in power must prepare against that danger, as it has to be ready to help the insurgent masses of other countries facing armed intervention by imperialism.

In the course of the socialist revolution, the proletariat must arm itself against the violence organized by the capitalist class. The program of the Fourth International points out how strike pickets can be the starting point for the organization of workers self-defense groups, which, as the class struggle deepens, will have to unite to form a *workers militia*.

Following a victorious seizure of power by the proletariat, any workers state will need to build a professional and highly trained army in addition to the militia, as long as the power of imperialism has not been broken. The militia, the "people in arms," serves an important function as a direct expression of the proletarian dictatorship, in addition to providing a backup and reserve for the army. An intermediate formation, for example the regular reserves in Cuba, consisting of trained workers and peasants ready to rapidly leave their jobs and take their place as soldiers, not only broadens the base of the regular army but helps keep it organically linked to the workers.

The workers army itself is an army of a new type, reflecting its class base. In creating the Red Army, the early Soviet Republic abolished the old officer caste system. The officer caste in bourgeois armies is necessary to maintain capitalist authority over the workers and peasants impressed into service because they are used to carry out ruling-class objectives that run counter to their own interests. It wasn't until 1935 that the Soviet bureaucracy reintroduced the old officer caste system, itself one sign of the Stalinist Thermidor.

The balanced interrelationship of the two systems, of the professional army and the militia, will depend on the concrete international situation any workers state faces, as well as the general level of development of the country. This is because the ability to utilize a militia in any conflict depends upon factors such as how quickly it can be mobilized and transported and how many workers can be spared from production as well as on the nature of any external threat. In general, the "correlation between regular troops and militia can serve as a fair indication of the actual movement toward socialism." (Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 218.) Only as we approach a socialist society will the militia system become the sole form of defense. "The army of the proletarian dictatorship ought to have, according to the program [of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union drawn up by Lenin in 1919], 'an overtly class character—that is, to be composed exclusively of the proletariat and the semiproletarian layers of the peasantry close to it. Only in connection

with the abolition of classes will such a class army convert itself into a national socialist militia.” (Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 216.)

To maintain military preparedness against wars of aggression by imperialism means that resources otherwise needed to speed up the evolution toward socialism must be diverted to arms production, the maintenance of an army, etc. This is one more reason to reject the reactionary utopia of “building socialism in one country.”

The exigencies of military preparedness by no means imply or justify bureaucratic restrictions on workers democracy, however.

The capacity for self-defense and the armed strength of the workers state are increased by a high level of political understanding and conviction on the part of the masses; a high level of political activity, mobilization and alertness; and internationalist education and activity.

Two key factors in the capacity of any workers state to defend itself are: the degree of social cohesion and political identification by the working masses with the given state and its government; and the average productivity of labor. The broader and less restricted is workers democracy, the greater will be the social cohesion and identification with the workers state and its leadership by the broad masses, and the quicker the growth in labor productivity. Far from being a “luxury” in a world situation characterized by potential wars of aggression by imperialism, workers democracy is a major asset in the hands of the workers state, even from a purely military point of view.

Inasmuch as imperialism cannot embark on military adventures without provoking massive working class opposition at home, it tries to weaken such opposition by increasing repression and restrictions of the democratic rights of the toilers. Workers democracy in the workers states would exercise an increasing power of attraction on the restive and exploited masses of the capitalist countries, undermining the military strength of imperialism.

Against the class collaborationist policy of “socialism in one country” practiced by the bureaucratic castes in the deformed and degenerated workers states today, a regime of workers democracy would represent and express the interests of the workers in the spread of the world revolution. Within the limits of the relationship of forces in world politics, the armed forces of such a revolutionary regime would be placed at the disposal of the world proletariat.

g. Military preparedness of the workers states against threats of imperialist aggression must include special measures against espionage, saboteurs sent in from abroad, and other forms of anti-working class military action that could persist for

years, if not decades. Spies and saboteurs should be condemned for spying and sabotage, not for “subversive ideas.” Thus, such special technical measures of self-defense by the workers state should strengthen, not restrict, workers democracy.

#### Role of Political Parties

h. Revolutionary Marxists reject all spontaneist illusions that the proletariat is capable of solving the strategic and tactical problems of overthrowing capitalism and the bourgeois state, conquering state power, and building socialism without the leadership of the most advanced sections of the proletariat, organized into a combat party of the Leninist type, and without the revolutionary Marxist program. The irreplaceable role of this revolutionary vanguard workers party of proletarian cadres educated in the Marxist program and tested in class battles, becomes even more important with the conquest of power by the working class. A strengthened Leninist party must lead the workers in *running* a state, a much more difficult job than *overturning* a capitalist state, until capitalism has been uprooted on a world scale. The problems of defense of the workers state internally and internationally against the bourgeois powers; of organizing the economy on new foundations; of consolidating democratic organs of workers power; of building a mass revolutionary international to extend the socialist revolution; of combating prejudices, reactionary ideas, and inequalities inherited from the past—all these problems essential to the transition to socialism cannot be solved spontaneously. They require the leadership of the party to implement the revolutionary Marxist program.

“The working class needs the communist party not only up to the seizure of power, not only during the seizure of power, but also after the transfer of power to the working class. The history of the Communist Party of Russia, which has been in power nearly three years, shows that the importance of the communist party after the working class has seized power does not diminish but, on the contrary, grows enormously.” (“Theses on the Role of the Communist Party in the Proletarian Revolution Adopted by the Second Comintern Congress,” op. cit., p. 133.)

i. The workers will know how to take the necessary steps to block counterrevolutionary groups seeking to overthrow their power. Any attempt by a privileged stratum to tell the toilers which political parties they may recognize and vote for is a blow not to the class enemy but to the working class; it undermines the exercise of political power by the workers. The working masses themselves, through their free vote, will determine which political parties are part of the soviet system.

The workers must be free to organize

groups, tendencies, and parties without *a priori* ideological restrictions. The give-and-take of discussion and political struggle within the working class is the best way to decide the innumerable problems of tactics, strategy, and theory (program) involved in the titanic task of building a classless society under the leadership of the traditionally oppressed, exploited and downtrodden masses. Freedom for these masses to organize political groups, tendencies, and parties—subject to restrictions the toilers themselves find necessary in defense against the class enemy—is the only road to authentic workers democracy.

The emancipation of the proletariat can be achieved only by the activity of the proletariat itself, not by a self-proclaimed benevolent and enlightened elite. It follows that the role of the Leninist party both during and after the conquest of power is to lead the working class politically; to spur on and develop the mobilization and activity of the working class in defense of its interests; to help the workers engage in decisionmaking at wider and wider levels; and to struggle within the class for majority support for its proposals through political means, not administrative or repressive measures.

The party and the state apparatus remain separate and distinct entities.

j. In the early Soviet Republic under Lenin, all parties except the Bolsheviks ultimately arrayed themselves with the counterrevolution against Soviet power. The Bolsheviks had no choice but to rule alone, and they made the correct choice to do so. However, no theoretical document of Marx, Engels, Lenin, or Trotsky, and no programmatic document of the Third International under Lenin or of the Fourth International, contains the concept that a one-party system is necessary to maintain workers power. The Stalinist rationalization, developed after Lenin’s death, that social classes have always been represented by a single party, is historically wrong and serves only as an apology for the monopoly of political power usurped by the Soviet bureaucracy and by its ideological heirs and imitators in the deformed workers states.

To the contrary, history has confirmed the correctness of Trotsky’s position that Stalin turned the “Marxist teaching of the class nature of the party” into a caricature. “In reality classes are heterogeneous; they are torn by inner antagonisms, and arrive at the solution of common problems not otherwise than through an inner struggle of tendencies, groups, and parties. It is possible, with certain qualifications, to concede that ‘a party is part of a class.’ But since a class has many ‘parts’—some look forward and some back—one and the same class may create several parties. For the same reason one party may rest upon parts of different classes. An example of only one party corresponding to one class is not to be found in the whole course of

political history—provided, of course, you do not take the police appearance for the reality.” (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 267.) This was true for the bourgeoisie under feudalism and capitalism, and for the workers under capitalism. It will remain true for the working class under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Revolutionary Marxists reject the anarchist argument, later taken up by ultraleft “councilists” or “sovietists,” that political parties by their very nature are bourgeois formations alien to the proletariat and have no place in workers councils. We reject the argument that parties automatically tend to usurp political power from the working class. While political groupings, tendencies, and parties have proliferated and taken on more developed forms under capitalism, it is not true that they only came into existence with the rise of the modern bourgeoisie. Political groupings developed with the rise of the state, which itself arose with the emergence of class society. These groupings evolved into political parties with the rise of forms of government in which relatively large numbers of people participated to some extent in the exercise of political power (for example, under the urban democracies of Antiquity and of the Middle Ages).

Political parties are a reflection of the class struggle in the sphere of politics, that is, in questions relating to state and government policy. As long as class conflict continues, including under a workers state, political formations will continue to exist. They can disappear only with progress toward world socialism and the withering away of the state.

Anarchist and “councilist” opposition to political parties under the dictatorship of the proletariat leads in one of two equally wrong directions. It can reflect wishful thinking that the mass of toilers will abstain from the formation or support of groups, tendencies, or parties—in which case it is simply utopian. On the other hand, it can serve as a rationale for an attempt to suppress those workers who wish to express their views and engage in political action. This objectively favors the concentration of power in the hands of fewer individuals—the very opposite of what the anarchists and “councilists” claim to seek.

As political parties wither away with the disappearance of classes, other forms of organization reflecting differences in various spheres of social life will come into being and flourish.

As Trotsky explained: “Not for nothing did Engels speak of the Socialist Revolution as a leap from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom. The Revolution itself is not as yet the kingdom of freedom. On the contrary it is developing the features of ‘necessity’ to the greatest degree. Socialism will abolish class antagonisms, as well as classes, but the Revolution carries the class struggle to its highest

tension. . . . Under Socialism, solidarity will be the basis of society. . . .

“ . . . the powerful force of competition which, in bourgeois society, has the character of market competition, will not disappear in a Socialist society, but, to use the language of psychoanalysis, will be sublimated, that is, will assume a higher and more fertile form. There will be the struggle for one’s opinion, for one’s project, for one’s taste. In the measure in which political struggles will be eliminated—and in a society where there will be no classes, there will be no such struggles—the liberated passions will be channelized into technique, into construction which also includes art. . . .

“All forms of life, such as the cultivation of land, the planning of human habitations, the building of theatres, the methods of socially educating children, the solution of scientific problems, the creation of new styles, will vitally engross all and everybody. People will divide into ‘parties’ over the question of a new gigantic canal, or the distribution of oases in the Sahara (such a question will exist too), over the regulation of the weather and the climate, over a new theater, over chemical hypotheses, over two competing tendencies in music, and over a best system of sports. Such parties will not be poisoned by the greed of class or caste. . . . All will have a purely ideological character. It will have no running after profits, it will have nothing mean, no betrayals, no bribery, none of the things that form the soul of ‘competition’ in a society divided into classes. But this will in no way hinder the struggle from being absorbing, dramatic and passionate.” (Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, pp. 229-231.)

In the transition period leading toward socialism, political parties will gradually be displaced by the kind of “parties” Trotsky describes. With the creation of the classless socialist society, the state, political parties, and politics will all disappear. Instead, the kinds of disputes and formations Trotsky sketches will be the norm.

#### **Workers Councils and the Extension of Democratic Rights**

1. Even in the most democratic bourgeois regimes, the existence of private property in the means of production, class exploitation, and the consequent social and economic inequality result in the violent restriction of the practical application and enjoyment of democratic freedoms by the big majority. Law defends private property in the means of production; and the repressive apparatus of the state is aimed at controlling, and when necessary suppressing, the overwhelming majority.

This is the basis of Marx and Lenin’s critique of the limitations of bourgeois democracy. Their conclusion is that workers democracy must be superior to bourgeois democracy both in the economic

and social sphere—such as the right to work, security of existence, free education, and leisure time—and in the scope and extent of democratic rights enjoyed by the toilers.

To grant a single party a monopoly on access to printing presses, to radio, television, and other mass media, and to assembly halls restricts, not extends, the democratic rights of the proletariat. This applies equally to so-called mass organizations or “professional associations” (such as writers associations) controlled exclusively by a single party.

The rights of the toilers, including those with dissenting views, to have access to the material means of exercising democratic rights (freedom of the press, of assembly, of demonstration, the right to strike, etc.) is essential, as is the independence of the trade unions from the state.

m. Under capitalism and even precapitalist forms of commodity production, it is the law of value—an objective economic law, operating blindly and anarchically behind the backs of men and women—that regulates economic life, including the distribution of labor time and economic resources among basic sectors of the economy. The socialist revolution represents a giant leap toward a conscious regulation of humanity’s economic and social destiny. While this process comes to harmonious completion only with the emergence of a worldwide socialist society, it begins in the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat with conscious planning of the nationalized economy. While the influence of the law of value cannot be completely eliminated during the transition period between capitalism and socialism, its domination must be overcome or the economy cannot be planned.

Planning means allocation of economic resources according to socially established priorities instead of according to blind market forces and the rule of profit. *But who will establish these priorities*, which involve the well-being of tens and hundreds of millions of human beings?

Experience in the USSR and the deformed workers states has shown that planning imposed by a privileged bureaucracy without democratic participation by the working masses is extremely wasteful and inefficient. This is true not only because of the waste of material resources and productive capacities and great dislocations in the plan, but—most damaging of all—because of the systematic stifling of the creative and productive potential of the working class. Workers democracy greatly reduces these shortcomings.

n. Building a classless socialist society also involves gigantic remodeling of all aspects of social life. It involves constant revolutionary change in the relations of production, in the mode of distribution, in the work process, in the forms of administration of the economy and society, and in the customs, habits, and ways of thinking

of the great majority of people. It involves the fundamental reconstruction of all living conditions: reconstruction of cities, development of social services that will end the domestic slavery of women, complete revolution of the educational system, restoration and protection of the natural environment, technological innovations to conserve natural resources, and so on.

Previously, the highest acquisitions of culture have been the property of the ruling class, with special prerogatives and privileges accruing to the intelligentsia. Members of this special grouping function as guardians and developers of science, art, and the professions for the ruling class. The intelligentsia as a separate social layer will gradually disappear as the masses progressively appropriate for themselves the full cultural heritage of the past and begin to create a socialist culture. In this sense, the distinction between "manual" and "intellectual" labor will disappear, while at the same time each individual will be able to develop their own capacities and talents.

All these endeavors, for which humanity possesses no blueprints, will give rise to momentous ideological debates and conflicting proposals. Any restriction of these debates and groupings can only hinder the emergence of majority agreement around the most effective steps toward the construction of socialism.

Such debates will continue throughout the process of building socialism. They concern the eradication of social evils deeply rooted in class society that will not disappear immediately with the elimination of capitalist exploitation or even wage-labor—the results of the oppression and alienation of women, national minorities, and other oppressed social layers. The eradication of these crippling legacies of class society necessitates freedom of orga-

nization and action for independent organizations of women and national minorities—that is, organizations of segments of the population not identical to the working class. The revolutionary party will be greatly aided in the fight to win political leadership in these movements and ideologically defeat various reactionary currents by promoting the broadest possible democracy within their ranks and by uncompromisingly upholding the right of all tendencies to defend their opinions and platforms before society.

In moving toward a classless society, the masses will participate not only through their votes, but also through the actual administration and management of society at all levels. This direct participation cannot be confined only to workers "at the point of production"; Lenin said the vast majority of the population would participate directly in the administration of "state functions." This is an aspect of the withering away of the state that begins as soon as the proletariat becomes the ruling class. The soviets around which the dictatorship of the proletariat will be consolidated are not solely factory councils, but organs of the masses in all areas of economic and social life, including factories, commercial units, hospitals, schools, transport and communication centers. This is indispensable in order to integrate into the proletariat organized as the ruling class its most dispersed and often poorest and most oppressed layers, such as women, oppressed nationalities, rural workers, workers in small shops, and pensioners working only a few hours a week. It is also indispensable in cementing the alliance between the working class and the lower exploited petty-bourgeoisie, above all the working farmers or peasants. This alliance is decisive in winning and holding onto state power and in reducing the social costs of the building of socialism.

#### IV. The Political Revolution Against the Stalinist Bureaucracies

a. Stalinists of all varieties; Social Democrats; many centrists, anarchists, and ultralefts; as well as outright apologists for capitalism—each for their own reasons—identify Leninism with Stalinism. The Stalinists do it to try to cover up their flight from Leninism and to justify the bureaucracy's usurpation of power in the degenerated or deformed workers states. The others openly aim to discredit Leninism.

Many opponents of Leninism argue that the rise of Stalinism was rooted in the Leninist concept of the revolutionary centralist organization of the working-class vanguard. They claim that the Bolshevik's efforts to build such a combat party to lead the workers revolution inevitably resulted in a paternalistic, manipulative, and bureaucratic relationship between the party and the toiling masses. This in turn led to

a one-party monopoly of power and that, they argue, caused Stalinism.

This unhistoric and idealist argument is false.

Another false idea is the attempt to counterpose Trotsky's writings of the 1930s in his struggle against Stalinism, to Lenin and Trotsky's writings on the dictatorship of the proletariat in the early days of the Soviet Republic. This attempt not only falsifies Trotsky's real positions at the end of his life, it is another way of casting doubt on the record of the Bolsheviks.

The Russian revolution was one of the most profound and sustained mass mobilizations in history, marked particularly by its working-class mobilizations.

The causes of the political expropriation of the working class by the rising bureaucratic caste were material—a combination

of social and economic factors. Given the general poverty and backwardness of the country, the Bolsheviks understood that it was impossible for the Russian proletariat to directly hold power for a prolonged period if the revolution remained isolated. They looked to and worked for the extension of the revolution, most immediately to Europe. They knew the first workers state needed aid to break the capitalist encirclement. The catastrophic decline of the productive forces in Russia as a result of World War I, the civil war, imperialist military intervention, and sabotage by probourgeois technicians and other specialists led to conditions of extreme scarcity that fostered the growth of special privileges in the government apparatus, among the intelligentsia, and so on. The same factors led to a qualitative weakening of the already small proletariat, which was exhausted by war and deprivation. In addition, large portions of the political vanguard of the class died in the civil war or left the factories to be incorporated into the Red Army and the state apparatus.

After the beginning of the New Economic Policy, a certain economic revival began. But massive unemployment and continuous disappointments caused by the retreats and defeats of the world revolution nurtured political passivity and a general decline of mass political activity.

The rising bureaucratic caste turned away from the world revolution. This was the meaning of the theory of "socialism in one country." As Stalinism triumphed throughout the Communist International, its member parties were converted from revolutionary instruments into tools of the Kremlin's diplomacy, seeking class-collaborationist deals with imperialism at the expense of the world revolution. This in turn led to further defeats of the revolution, prolonged the isolation of the USSR, fostered conservative moods among the Soviet masses, and reinforced the conditions favoring bureaucratization.

Against the deepening Stalinist degeneration and in defense of the Marxist program of world revolution, the Bolshevik Left Opposition continued Lenin's struggle against the bureaucratic usurpers. The International Communist Left Opposition, which was to become the Fourth International, thus preserved the Leninist program for the future. But in the given conditions in the Soviet Union, the working class and its Bolshevik-Leninist vanguard were unable to stem the growth of a materially privileged layer. In order to maintain and expand its privileges, this bureaucratic layer increasingly restricted the democratic rights of the workers. Since its greater access to consumer goods and services depended on its monopoly over the state apparatus, the bureaucracy destroyed both the soviets and the Bolshevik Party itself (while using its name for its own purposes). These are the main causes of the bureaucracy's usurpation of the exer-



cise of direct political power by the workers. These material factors underlay the gradual merger of the party apparatus, the state apparatus, and the apparatus of economic management into a crystallized bureaucratic caste.

Attempts to explain the rise of Stalinism as the result of a "one party system" entirely miss the point. In destroying the Bolshevik party, the bureaucratic caste did not replace it with another political party, but with an apparatus designed to ensure its totalitarian rule, which is "Communist" and a "party" in name only.

Far from contributing to this degenerative process, Lenin's concept of the party and revolutionary centralism was at the heart of the program of those who led the workers in the fight against Stalinist bureaucratization. The Left Opposition recognized that Leninism had enabled the Bolsheviks to preserve the Marxist program in face of the massive capitulation to world imperialism by the parties of the Second International. It had created a disciplined proletarian force that could act on the basis of that program.

A Leninist party is the decisive weapon to lead the workers to take and hold power. The proof was in the Russian revolution itself. The Bolsheviks led the working class, and the working class led the nation, in the greatest revolution in history. The Bolsheviks led the proletariat in establishing for the first time the soviet system in power and holding that power against gigantic difficulties and ferocious assaults.

On the other hand, historical experience has confirmed that where such a party is absent or not steered and resolute enough, workers councils that form in revolutionary upsurges—for example in Germany in 1918-19, and Spain in 1936-37—do not succeed in conquering state power through overthrowing the bourgeois state. The facts confirm Marxist theory, demonstrating that the best chance for the conquest and exercise of power by the working class lies in the free and democratic organization of the toiling masses in soviet-type structures in which a Leninist party wins political leadership.

Although by 1921 the Bolsheviks found themselves the only party ready to defend soviet power, this did not mean an automatic rise of the Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorship. In the first period after the October revolution, the Bolsheviks actively sought and achieved a coalition with the Left Social Revolutionaries in the Soviet government. But these forces, too, deserted the proletarian revolution. With these realities of the class struggle imposed on them, should the Bolsheviks have given up power? That would have meant the restoration of capitalism, the conversion of Russia into a semicolon of imperialism, the brutal crushing and ruthless exploitation of the Russian toilers by the world bourgeoisie.

The Bolshevik party was an instrument

of the working class and an *enemy* of the bureaucracy. The Soviet leadership—Lenin and Trotsky to begin with—were staunch advocates of world socialist revolution, and they defended it to the full extent of their political and material resources. For them, there could be no question of "socialism in one country."

While the bureaucracy did not yet have political leadership and a formulated ideology, significant political symptoms and material abuses had already appeared by 1921 in the Soviet Republic. They were openly admitted by the Bolsheviks. The problem of bureaucracy was demonstratively raised by Lenin at the Tenth Congress of the Bolshevik party, in the very same speech where he explained the necessity of crushing the Kronstadt rebellion. Lenin devoted the last two years of his life to the search for a way not only to expose and check the growth of bureaucracy, but to root it out even in the top circles of the party. He proposed to Trotsky that they organize a faction to combat Stalin at the party's Twelfth Congress. In other words, at the time of the Kronstadt uprising, the Bolshevik leadership did not represent the bureaucracy, either ideologically or politically, but rather was its main political enemy.

Another argument—shared by ultralefts and bourgeois apologists—is that some of the defensive measures the Bolsheviks were forced to take paved the way for Stalinism. The suppression of the Kronstadt rebellion and banning of parties organizing to overthrow the soviet power are two of the most oft-cited examples.

The opposite is true. These measures helped pave off the triumph of the "second wave of Menshevism" for a time—time in which the Bolsheviks did everything they could to extend the revolution. This argument leaves out the conflicting class content of Bolshevism and Stalinism. The Bolsheviks, of course, made mistakes, as Lenin and Trotsky were not afraid to admit. But the measures they took against the class enemy and its agents were *in defense* of the workers state and in the interests of the workers and the world revolution. The measures taken by Stalin were *against* the workers, in the interests of the rising bureaucratic caste, and against the interests of the world revolution.

This line of argument finally retreats to the assertion that the methods the Bolsheviks used to defend the workers state at least made it easier for the bureaucracy to resort to similar methods later against its opponents in the Bolshevik party and still later against members of Stalin's own faction. But this argument ignores the fact that in struggles between classes similar methods and weapons will inevitably be used by opposing sides. Should the working class therefore renounce the use of force against its class enemies because force might later be used against those

remaining faithful to the Marxist program?

b. The political counterrevolution headed by Stalin meant that a petty-bourgeois layer alien and hostile to the working class smashed workers democracy. Democracy is incompatible with the maintenance of the bureaucratic caste's privileges and power. Since it owns no means of production, the bureaucracy would lose its privileges if functionaries were elected by workers democracy and the state apparatus was under proletarian control.

The counterrevolution did not overcome the resistance of the working class to the point where private property was restored in the means of production. State ownership of the means of production and economic planning, necessary prerequisites to socialist development, have been the basis of a rapid growth of the productive forces. But the apparatus of the workers state underwent a complete degeneration; it was transformed from a weapon of the working class into a weapon of bureaucratic violence against the working class. The Stalinist totalitarian political regime most closely resembles that placed in power in capitalist countries by victorious fascist movements. In this respect, the level of political rights enjoyed by the toilers has fallen far below the level attained in struggle by the masses in bourgeois democracies. The USSR thus embodies intense contradictions, combining features leading in the direction of socialism with the most backward features of capitalist rule in imperialism's death agony. The Soviet Union remains a *degenerated workers state*. As Trotsky explained, the workers are both the ruling class and an oppressed class.

In Eastern Europe, Mongolia, North Korea, Yugoslavia, China, and Vietnam, workers states have come into existence that were deformed from birth due to the Stalinist nature of their leaderships. Privileged bureaucratic castes consolidated power in these countries, blocking the formation of a system of workers democracy.

In the case of Cuba, the Fourth International holds that a workers state was established there in August-October 1960 under a revolutionary leadership, and that while soviet forms have not been established, neither has a bureaucratic caste usurped power. Thus Cuba is unique among all the workers states. Whatever bureaucratic deformations exist, they are of a qualitatively different order than in the deformed workers states or the USSR.

The degenerated or deformed workers states—as well as Cuba—must be defended by the working people of the world against any attempt to restore capitalism, which would represent a giant historical step backward. At the same time, the bureaucratic castes in these countries represent the greatest internal obstacle to defense of

the workers' conquests and to the advance to socialism.

The bureaucratic caste is a deeply conservative layer. Content to keep its snout in the trough, it asks nothing more than to be left in peace to consume. That is why all the bureaucratic castes seek a deal with imperialism, even at the expense of each other. In exchange for an elusive and utopian "peace" with imperialism, the Stalinists are ready to put their influence in the international workers movement at the service of capitalism against the world revolution. That is why they all subscribe to Stalin's "theory" of "socialism in one country" ("their" own). This is just one way of stating the bureaucracy's willingness to stab the anti-imperialist and socialist revolution in any other country in the back.

The foreign policy of the bureaucratic castes increases the danger of capitalist restoration by strengthening the hand of a declining capitalism on a world scale. Internally, the rule of the bureaucratic castes distorts and sabotages planned economy and fosters all kinds of inequality. The oppression of the workers, women, and minority nationalities weakens the dictatorship of the proletariat. Both internally and internationally, these castes are enemies of the working class and of socialism. Defense of the deformed or degenerated workers state therefore requires the struggle to overthrow the bureaucratic castes, install regimes of workers democracy, and reestablish the Leninist policy of proletarian internationalism.

Timid before the capitalists, these castes will fight ferociously to defend their privileges. They are ready to unleash extreme violence and repression against the workers. In order for these workers states to advance toward socialism, the bureaucratic castes will have to be removed by the proletariat, using revolutionary means. Since the economic foundations and social conquests first established by the October revolution will be preserved by the insurgent toilers in each country, Marxists call the overthrow of the bureaucracy a political revolution.

c. The founding document of the Fourth International, the "Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," adopted in 1938, outlined the basic program of the political revolution for the USSR. It retains essential validity today and can be extended to the deformed workers states:

"A fresh upsurge of the revolution in the USSR will undoubtedly begin under the banner of the struggle against *social inequality* and *political oppression*. [From the experience of Eastern Europe and struggles by oppressed nationalities inside the Soviet Union, we can also add *national oppression* by the Kremlin.] Down with the privileges of the bureaucracy! Down with Stakhanovism! Down with the Soviet aristocracy and its ranks and orders! Greater

equality of wages for all forms of labor!

"The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly, and for freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of *Soviet democracy*.

"The bureaucracy replaced the soviets as class organs with the fiction of universal electoral rights—in the style of Hitler-Goebbels. It is necessary to return to the soviets not only their free democratic form but also their class content. As once the bourgeoisie and kulaks were not permitted to enter the soviets, so now it is necessary to drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the soviets. In the soviets there is room only for representatives of the workers, rank-and-file collective farmers, peasants, and Red Army personnel.

"Democratization of the soviets is impossible without the *legalization of soviet parties*. The workers and peasants themselves by their own free vote will indicate what parties they recognize as soviet parties.

"A revision of *planned economy* from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers! Factory committees should be returned the right to control production. A democratically organized consumers' cooperative should control the quality and price of products.

"Reorganization of the collective farms in accordance with the will and in the interests of those who work there!

"The reactionary *international policy* of the bureaucracy should be replaced by the policy of proletarian internationalism. The complete diplomatic correspondence of the Kremlin should be published. *Down with secret diplomacy!*

"All political trials staged by the Thermidorian bureaucracy should be reviewed in the light of complete publicity and controversial openness and integrity. Only the victorious revolutionary uprising of the oppressed masses can revive the Soviet regime and guarantee its further development toward socialism. There is but one party capable of leading the Soviet masses to insurrection—the party of the Fourth International!" (Op. cit. pp. 145-146)

Workers councils will arise in the course of the political revolution. "They will be created by those layers of the toilers who are drawn into the movement. The significance of the soviets consists precisely in the fact that their composition is determined not by formal criteria but by the dynamics of the class struggle. Certain layers of the Soviet 'aristocracy' will vacillate between the camp of revolutionary workers and the camp of the bureaucracy. Whether these layers enter the soviets, and at what period, will depend on the general development of the struggle and on the attitude which different groups of the Soviet aristocracy take in this struggle. Those elements of the bureaucracy and

aristocracy who in the course of the revolution go over to the side of the rebels will certainly find a place for themselves also in the soviets. But this time not as bureaucrats and 'aristocrats,' but as participants in the rebellion against the bureaucracy." (Trotsky, "It is Necessary to Drive the Bureaucracy and Aristocracy out of the Soviets," *ibid.*, pp. 184-185.)

d. Antibureaucratic struggles in the degenerated or deformed workers states since 1938 have confirmed the overall correctness of this program. The Hungarian revolution of 1956 came the closest to a full-scale political revolution. The "Prague Spring" of 1968-69, while not so fully developed as the Hungarian revolution, had the benefit of occurring under more favorable conditions in a country where the proletariat is the overwhelming majority of the active population, with a stronger tradition of socialist and trade-union organization.

Both these experiences, as well as the more limited workers struggles in Poland, confirm that the program of workers democracy defended by revolutionary Marxists is the conscious expression of what millions of workers and toilers fight for when they rise against the totalitarian rule of the bureaucracy. It reflects the strategic line of march of the proletariat in the degenerated and deformed workers states.

The struggle against Russian national oppression, against the secret police, for the liberation of political prisoners, against repression of trade-union activities outside the control of the bureaucracy, against press censorship, against judicial arbitrariness (i.e., for written law and the right of defendants to a fair trial and a fair defense), against the dictatorship expressed by the totalitarian control of all aspects of life by the Stalinist party and for freedom for other workers parties to organize, against the bureaucracy's control over the social surplus product and its economic mismanagement: all these demands were key motives that brought the Hungarian and Czechoslovak masses into the streets against the bureaucratic caste. They will bring them into the streets tomorrow or the day after in the USSR and the People's Republic of China, too.

While other layers initiated these upsurges, the workers quickly came forward as the backbone of the struggle. In Hungary, workers councils were formed and centralized; they became the main vehicle of the fight against the bureaucracy even some months after the Kremlin's occupation. In Czechoslovakia, factory committees appeared just before the Soviet invasion.

In order to justify their counterrevolutionary suppression of these mass uprisings with the Soviet army, the Moscow Stalinists level the false slanders that the aim of the rebels was the restoration of capitalism. Although rightist elements naturally tried to take advantage of the

political and social turmoil, the Hungarian and Czechoslovak workers, the most cohesive and powerful sector of the masses, viewed preservation of the nationalized and planned economy as a defense of their own most basic interests. And they were right. Their consciousness that the new property forms were *theirs*, and their willingness to defend them, demonstrates the working-class nature of these states in spite of the Stalinist deformations and misrule.

After a long and passionate debate, the Hungarian workers councils and the Central Workers Council of Budapest came out for both defense of the nationalized property and freedom for all political parties except fascists. In Czechoslovakia, demands for freedom of political organization, of political clubs, tendencies, and parties, were first taken up by sizable tendencies inside the Communist Party itself and supported by the great majority of the trade unions and factory committees. Demands for freedom of expression in the press and for general access to press, radio, and TV facilities for the masses were especially strong in the working class.

Significantly, the Stalinist spokesmen of the Czechoslovak bureaucracy, who prepared and collaborated with the Soviet invasion, concentrated their fire on demanding the silencing of the so-called irresponsible or probourgeois writers, while the workers supported their right to be heard. Similar confrontations will occur in the future political revolutions, including in the USSR and China. Revolutionary Marxists align themselves with the toiling masses in such cases. We are confident that the expansion of democracy will strengthen the working class and that the workers will know how to deal with any counterrevolutionaries trying to overthrow the workers state, as well as with Stalinists trying to crush the masses and reimpose bureaucratic totalitarian rule.

e. The Stalinists do not openly justify their rule in the same way as capitalists or previous ruling class. That is one reflection of the fact that these bureaucratic castes are not a new ruling class. They don't even admit their own existence! They cover up their rule and their privileges, claiming the mantle of Leninism, the working class, and socialism.

But the Stalinist parties long ago ceased to represent the interests of the workers, or to be revolutionary. They are counterrevolutionary, representing the interests of one or another of the conservative ruling bureaucratic castes. Class collaborationist to the core, they are transmission belts for bringing bourgeois interests, pressures, and ideas into the workers states and the working-class movement.

Genuine Leninist parties are characterized by their working-class composition, their political homogeneity around a revolutionary internationalist program, their

revolutionary centralism, and their internal democracy. Their iron discipline is the opposite of the fear and mindless toadying that characterizes Stalinist bureaucratic centralism. Leninist discipline ultimately depends on a proletarian composition as well as a revolutionary program, common class-struggle experience in fighting to implement the program, and party democracy. It reflects the loyalty the membership develops toward their party and their confidence in its democratic structure and democratically-elected leadership. It is grounded in consciousness of the need for discipline in order to carry out the party's revolutionary program in face of a ruthless class enemy. Party democracy is indispensable for hammering out correct policies and rectifying mistakes in the course of applying the revolutionary program to ever-changing reality. It is needed to preserve the revolutionary program and fiber of the party, and to keep its leadership in intimate contact with the ranks, through which it keeps its finger on the pulse of the masses.

Party democracy includes the right to form tendencies and factions within the party to fight to correct what members may view as serious mistakes. The further unfolding of the class struggle then registers whether or not the majority orientation is correct and what alterations should be made.

In their need to crush all democracy, including in their own parties, the Stalinists forbid tendencies or factions. In doing so, they refer to the decision by the Bolsheviks to temporarily ban them during the difficult situation facing the Soviet workers state in 1921. In making this false equation, the Stalinists have to ignore the fact that the whole history of the Bolshevik party was one of lively internal

debate, with the formation of tendencies and factions and free and open discussion. They must ignore the fact that the Bolsheviks continued to defend the right to form tendencies and factions in the other parties of the Communist International and in the International itself even in the most difficult days of the Russian revolution. They must ignore the fact that even this temporary ban on factions was neither intended to nor resulted in the suppression of differing viewpoints or the open expression of dissent in the party.

The Bolsheviks took this drastic and temporary emergency measure to better lead the working class under exceptional circumstances in face of the class enemy. The rising bureaucracy, however, prolonged it, transformed it into thought control, and then elevated it into a dogma to justify crushing democracy within the party and the oppression of the working class.

f. The fight for proletarian democracy is difficult under current conditions in the degenerated and deformed workers states. These conditions would be altered qualitatively by a proletarian revolution in one or more of the industrially advanced capitalist countries. Such a revolution would give an enormous impulse to the struggle for democratic rights throughout the world. It would also immediately open the possibility of increasing labor productivity on an immense scale, eliminating the scarcities that are the root cause of the entrenchment of a parasitic bureaucracy in a workers state.

A political revolution in the deformed or degenerated workers states, particularly in the Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China, would also signify an upsurge of proletarian democracy with colossal repercussions internationally.

## V. A Clear Stand Is Necessary to Win the Masses for the Socialist Revolution

a. The defense of a clear and unequivocal program of workers democracy is an indispensable part of the struggle against the reformist leaderships that seek to inculcate bourgeois-democratic myths and illusions in the working class in the imperialist countries. It is likewise indispensable in the struggle against procapitalist illusions and anti-Leninist prejudices among various layers of rebels and oppositionists in the degenerated and deformed workers states, thereby advancing the struggle for political revolution in these countries.

b. The world proletariat is justifiably repelled by the historical experiences of the rise of fascist movements and the establishment of various types of reactionary bourgeois dictatorships in the capitalist world and by the dictatorial rule of the Stalin and Mao regimes and their successors in the workers states. The workers of

both the imperialist countries and the degenerated or deformed workers states hold a deep distrust of any justification for restricting democratic rights of the workers after the overthrow of capitalism. This distrust objectively conforms to the basic course of all proletarian revolutions up to now. The direction of the masses has always been toward the broadest possible democratic rights.

c. The ruling class utilizes all the means at its disposal to identify bourgeois parliamentary institutions with the maintenance of democratic rights. In Western Europe, North America, and Japan, for instance, the capitalist rulers seek to appear as champions of the democratic aspirations of the workers and plebeian masses.

One of the key components of the struggle for leadership of the masses consists in properly understanding the importance of their democratic demands and leading the

fight to defend them. This not only creates the best conditions for anticapitalist struggle, but also counteracts the strenuous efforts of the reformists to co-opt the struggle for democratic demands and divert it down the blind alley of dependence on bourgeois parliamentary institutions.

The task of stripping from the reformists their pretenses to speak for the democratic aspirations of the masses is thus crucial for revolutionary Marxists. Programmatic clarification and propaganda—important as they are—are insufficient to achieve this objective. The masses learn through their practical daily experience; hence the importance of going through this daily experience with them and drawing the correct lessons from it.

As the class struggle sharpens, the reformist leaders who trumpet the alleged benefits of the bourgeois parliamentary system will sound less and less convincing. These labor lieutenants of capital will justify repressive measures taken by the employers against the insurgent masses. The workers will increasingly challenge the authority and prerogatives of the ruling class on all levels. The workers themselves through their own organizations—from trade unions and factory committees to workers councils—will begin to assert their authority, and they will gain confidence in their ability to run things better themselves.

In order to carry out their struggles more effectively with the broadest mass involvement, the workers will see the need for the most powerful and thus the most democratic form of organization to defeat their class enemy. Through this experience of struggle and participation in their own democratically run organizations, the masses will have more freedom of action and more liberty in the broadest sense of the word than they ever exercised under

bourgeois parliamentary democracy. They will learn the irreplaceable value of proletarian democracy.

d. It has been argued by some apologists for repressive bourgeois or Stalinist regimes in semicolonial countries that the above arguments apply only to those countries in which the wage-earning class already represents a clear majority of the active population and are not faced with a great majority of petty independent producers. It is undeniable that such a social relationship of forces puts objective obstacles on the road of a full flowering of workers democracy. It is also true that in some countries of that type—for example, in China and Vietnam—exceptional political conditions (the extreme weakness and decomposition of the native ruling classes, the possibility to gain wide support among the peasantry for the cause of national liberation, the explosive nature of the agrarian question, etc.) enabled deformed workers states to come into existence; workers democracy was crushed from the start.

But it is necessary to underline the exceptional character of these experiences, which will not be repeated in most semicolonial countries and cannot be repeated in imperialist countries. It is necessary, furthermore, to stress that even in these countries, the main responsibility for the absence of democratic organs of the toiling masses during and after the victorious revolution does not lie in objective circumstances but with the petty-bourgeois nature and Stalinist character of the Communist parties that controlled the mass movement.

Furthermore, inasmuch as a growing number of semicolonial countries are at present undergoing a process of distorted, partial industrialization, their proletariat today is often already of much greater

weight relative to the active population than was the Russian proletariat in 1917 or the Chinese proletariat in 1949. This proletariat, through its own experience of struggle, speedily rises toward levels of consciousness that will place the organization of broad united front proletarian organs of combat on the agenda from the beginning of a revolutionary crisis.

e. The measures that the workers will have to take to defend their rule will vary according to the conditions they face, as will the specific forms of workers democracy.

A semicolonial country where the proletariat is a small minority and which is surrounded by powerful imperialist states will obviously face more immediate threats of a capitalist counterrevolution than the victorious workers of the United States. But the best way to face and solve the problems confronted by any workers state is through the maximum possible amount of workers democracy.

Degenerated or deformed workers states have come into existence. We will see revolutions with other deviations from the norms of the Marxist program of a less severe nature. But the revolutionary Marxist program of workers democracy is not merely one "model" of workers states among others, nor is it a utopian scheme imposed on reality. It represents the interests of the working class and the necessary path to the victory of the world socialist revolution—in the degenerated and deformed workers states, in the imperialist countries, and in the semicolonies. In this sense, the program of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky for workers democracy as the norm in organizing the dictatorship of the proletariat, as it has been enriched in the light of experience since the Russian revolution, remains the program to unite the workers of the world, establish their rule, and construct socialism.

Cover photos, from left—  
German steel strike, 1979; sign demands 35-hour  
work week. Nicaraguans at a September 14, 1979, rally  
of 30,000 in Managua in solidarity with Vietnam.  
Demonstration in Tehran, November 1979.

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