Reconstruct the Fourth International !



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INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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This International Discussion Bulletin is intended to function as an open forum for discussion on the political and organisational steps required for the reconstruction of the Fourth International. As such it is open to a variety of political views and positions. Articles and resolutions reprinted here, therefore, represent only the views of the signatories, except where otherwise stated.

Contents

EDITORIAL STATEMENT: 'A much-needed forum' ..... Page 1
RESOLUTION: 'Towards an International Tendency' ..... Page 2
DOCUMENT:

The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle

The Transitional Programme, Valid Today! 3
The Economic Crisis 4
Political Crisis of Post-War Imperialism 6
The struggle for leadership in the imperialist countries 7
The fight in the trade unions 8
Democratic demands 9
The fight against war 10
The workers' government demand 10
The challenge to imperialist control 11
Permanent Revolution 12

The deformed and degenerated workers' states

1) The Post-war overturns 13
2) Splits in the 'Monolith' 14
3) Peaceful Coexistence 16
4) Resistance and Repression 17
5) Against 'State Capitalist' and Pabloite Revisionism 17
Turn to the Woman Worker 18
Forward with the Youth ! 19
Against Sectarianism and Revisionism 19
Reconstruct the Fourth International ! 21

DOCUMENT: ' **For a Proletarian International'** ..... Page 23

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Workers Socialist League introduction to the first issue of the International Discussion Bulletin

A much-needed forum for discussion on the way forward

The decision to launch this International Discussion Bulletin, taken at the Workers Socialist League's 1979 International Summer School, could scarcely have been more timely.

After years in which all of the major groupings claiming the title of 'Fourth International' have combined to block any serious discussion on the unresolved political problems of the post-war Trotskyist movement, the developing political crisis within their own ranks has now created important new openings.

The beginning of 1979 brought a major political split in the OCRFI, the international current based around Pierre Lambert's French OCI. The expulsion of the bulk of the OCRFI's forces in Latin America, (who have since regrouped with the Workers League of Palestine to form the Fourth Internationalist Tendency) has thrown open a discussion on fundamental issues of perspective and policy in Latin America, and forced the OCI to look more closely at the developments in the world Trotskyist movement.

But this important upheaval has been dwarfed by the split that has now occurred in the biggest international tendency regarding itself as Trotskyist—the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

The USFI's refusal to postpone its XIth World Congress in order to allow a full discussion of its policies on the Nicaraguan revolution, coupled with its public position of craven support for the popular frontist Sandinista regime (including support for the repression and deportation of USFI supporters from Nicaragua) has led to a traumatic split.

Bureaucratic moves by the USFI majority to expel the leadership of the opposition Leninist Trotskyist Tendency, and its declaration of intent to exclude the oppositional Bolshevik Faction from the Congress brought a split by around 400 LTT supporters from the LCR in France, a similar number in Spain, and splits and expulsions in other European sections.

The Bolshevik Faction, comprising the vast majority of USFI supporters in Latin America, under the leadership of Nahuel Moreno, then carried through a boycott of the "undemocratic" XIth Congress.

And, jointly with the LTT and the OCRFI, the BF has now issued a call for an open conference "with a view to reconstructing and recombining the International and its organisations in one reunified Fourth International."

There is of course a real danger that these three diverse political currents—thrown together by their own largely empirical responses to the prolonged and developing crisis of the USFI—will seek to use such a conference as a launch-pad for a new, hasty, and opportunist bloc, along the lines on which the USFI itself was founded in 1963.

But while the Workers Socialist League maintains serious political differences with each of these tendencies, it would be quite wrong to underestimate the importance of the split in the USFI, and of this new initiative for an open discussion on Trotskyist programme and policy.

The declaration of the joint LTT/BF/OCRFI parity commission points out that "the danger of the break-up of the forces of the FI is much greater than it was when Pabloism developed from 1951, since the attack on our principled positions is much more brutal than it was in those years".

Indeed the allusion to 1951 is appropriate. Not since the 1953 split has there been such a ferment of discussion and confusion within the world Trotskyist movement or such a favourable opportunity to clarify the political problems that have dogged the movement for the last 30 years.

In the midst of this situation we are now able, in collaboration with the comrades of the US Socialist League (Democratic Centralist), the Greek Communist Internationalist League and the Danish Trotskyist Workers League (TAF), to launch this bulletin as a forum to advance the discussion on the programmatic and historical questions that must be resolved if a principled basis is to be found for the reconstruction of the FI.

The pages of this bulletin (which will also appear shortly in Spanish, Danish, French and Greek) are open to all those organisations of the world Trotskyist movement that see the need to struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

In particular we wish to focus discussion on the historical, programmatic and methodological basis on which a principled international tendency can be formed to wage the struggle against any premature and opportunist "re-groupment" of forces in a farcical echo of the unprincipled 1963 reunification.

The formation of such a tendency will also be the main issue under discussion at the international preconference, to be held in London on December 29-January 1 (see resolution, page 2).

We invite organisations and individuals who regard themselves as Trotskyists to participate in this developing discussion and to submit articles for publication in future issues of this Bulletin.

Towards an International Tendency

On Sunday October 13, the Workers Socialist League adopted the following resolution mapping out positive steps towards the formation of a principled international Trotskyist tendency, pledged to the struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

1) Events since the Workers Socialist League 1979 Summer School have confirmed that the utmost priority must be attached to work designed to consolidate a new, principled, international Trotskyist tendency. Such a tendency is essential to develop and expand the nucleus of a reconstructed Fourth International capable of leading the world's working class and its potential allies to the revolutionary seizure of power and the world dictatorship of the proletariat.

2) It is clearly vital that such a tendency be based on principled programmatic agreement, both on major international issues, and on general perspectives and methods of work within the proletariat in the countries of member sections.

3) The WSL restates its commitment to the struggle for the organisational principles of *democratic centralism* both at a national and an international level. Only such a method of organisation allows all sections to participate in the internal life and struggles of other sections, with each section accepting mutual international discipline and control. But such an organisational form is unthinkable without firm programmatic agreement.

4) In order that the most rapid strides forward can be taken towards establishing such programmatic agreement, the WSL formally calls upon the comrades of the US SLDC, the Greek CIL, the Danish TAF, and those comrades in Turkey in agreement with the politics of the WSL, to jointly with us convene an international pre-conference in the winter 1979/80, the proposed agenda for which should include:

a) Discussion and adoption of our document 'The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle'.

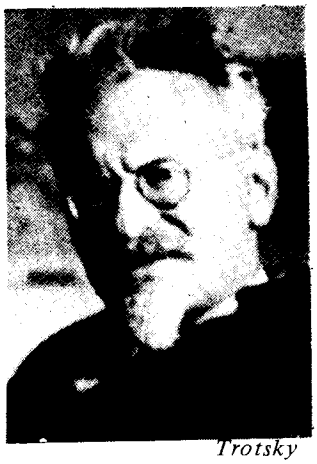
b) Agreement on a common declaration of intent mapping out the framework and timescale within which further discussions will take place on national and international perspectives, and on conditions of membership of the tendency. The tendency itself will only be formed after a principled agreement has been reached both on conditions of membership and on the national perspectives of member organisations.

c) Formation of an international liaison committee to act as the organising centre for political discussions prior to the founding conference of the tendency, and to publish an international discussion bulletin and draw up the document stating conditions of membership of the tendency.

d) The issuing of an appeal to those forces internationally now engaged in the revolutionary struggle for socialism to participate in this process of constructing a principled Tendency in opposition to all forms of opportunism and sectarianism.

5) The organisational details of this pre-conference, within the general format and the political line adopted by today's national aggregate, shall be in the hands of the WSL National Committee, in conjunction with the leaderships in the USA, Greece, Denmark and Turkey.

October 12, 1979



Trotsky

Submitted as the basis of discussion as the programmatic platform of a principled International Tendency by the Workers Socialist League (Britain).

The Transitional Programme in today's class struggle

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME: VALID TODAY!

"The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterised by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat."

This characterisation of the epoch which is central to the Trotskyist Transitional Programme, the founding document of the Fourth International in 1938, remains absolutely valid both in the light of the experience of the last 40 years and the reality of the class struggle today.

Its conclusion—the necessity for the building of independent Trotskyist parties to lead the struggles of the oppressed masses in every country—has also been vindicated though in a negative way, time and time again by the counter-revolutionary manoeuvres and open treachery of all the currents of reformism and Stalinism.

Within a year of the foundation of the Fourth International the reactionary policies of these mass currents had cleared the way for the imperialist bourgeoisie to plunge the world once more into the horrors of war. The new depths of class collaboration achieved during and after World War II reflected the conscious commitment of both reformist and Stalinist leaders to the preservation of capitalist rule.

The cynical post-war carve-up of the world into 'peacefully co-existing' spheres of influence and the consequent knifing by Stalin of revolutionary struggles in Greece, Iran and Vietnam and sabotage of possible revolutions in France and Italy reflected the mutual fear of the independent struggles of the working class shared by both the imperialist leaders and the Kremlin bureaucracy. As part of this counter-revolutionary post-war settlement Stalinism also actively connived at the restoration or maintenance of colonial rule in Indo-china, Algeria and elsewhere.

The Kremlin leaders' dread of the emergence of a mass movement that might sweep them from their parasitic positions of power and privilege has coloured every aspect of post-war policy, and in particular the savage repression of workers' uprisings in East Germany (1953) and Hungary (1956) as well as the military invasion of Czechoslovakia (1968).

Within the Western capitalist countries, leaders of the Communist Parties have also adopted policies reflecting their awareness that revolutionary upheavals would not only jeopardise the international balance of forces on which the Soviet bureaucracy rests, but also threaten the bureaucratic hold they exercise over their parties at home.

Thus, in France in May-June 1968, the mass CP directed the ten million-strong general strike along a course which led to it being bought off with wage concessions; in Italy we have seen the Stalinists in a long-term political 'compromise' with the main bourgeois party, the Christian Democrats; in Spain, the Communist Party has collaborated shamelessly with Franco's heirs in the Suarez government; and in the revolutionary upheavals in Portugal the Stalinists acted to block any attempt by workers to seek a line independent of the Armed Forces Movement.

The reformists, for their part, have also consistently maintained their role of servile footmen for their 'own' bourgeoisie, seeking above all to maintain the stability and profitability of capitalism. In this wretched role they have time and again found themselves in a more or less explicit alliance with the 'peaceful roaders' of the national Stalinist parties—with most devastating impact in the case of their joint support for and participation in Allende's 'Popular Unity' regime in Chile. There, a Popular Front alliance with the military and compromises with monopoly capitalism created the conditions for Pinochet's crushing military coup in 1973.

But the post-war upsurge of revolutionary struggles in the colonial and semi-colonial countries has also brought to the fore the inadequacy and the ultimate treachery of a further type of mass leader—the bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalist.

Such forces range from guerrilla leaders in Latin America, Africa and Asia to the petty-bourgeois nationalist leadership of liberation struggles in Palestine, Ireland, Euskadi and Kurdistan. But they also include 'left' talking national bourgeois governments ranging from Libya, Iraq, Angola and Tanzania to Michael Manley's regime in Jamaica.

But no matter how 'left' their rhetoric, these movements must, without the construction of a *conscious*, Trotskyist leadership, remain aloof from the task of mobilising the working class and find themselves sucked in to growing collaboration and ties with imperialism or—as in the case of Cuba—drawn into the scheming counter-revolutionary politics of Stalinism.

The immense scale of the uprisings which have ousted the Shah and dictator Somoza, and the central role played in these struggles by the working class, have given a new impulse to the world struggle against imperialism and placed the socialist revolution on the agenda.

The crisis of leadership in the semi-colonial countries is perhaps most vividly exposed in the evolution of the Iranian revolution. But the lack of a conscious Trotskyist leadership acting within that uprising has helped to create the conditions where the reactionary Khomeini-Bazargan

regime can attempt to stabilise capitalist property relations and cement relationships with imperialism.

Every attempt that has been made in the post-war period to find short-cuts around the building of mass Trotskyist parties by adapting politically to Stalinism, reformism and petty bourgeois nationalism has resulted in the political disorientation and disarming of the working class and a turn away from the vital struggle for its political independence.

In reaffirming the correctness of the Transitional Programme and its relevance to today's class struggle we insist that Trotskyists *reject on principle* any kind of political bloc or partnership with the bureaucratic leaders of existing mass formations in which the revolutionary programme and the strength of the working class is subordinated in any way to the interests of the peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, 'progressive' military juntas or sections of the labour bureaucracy.

The proletariat, the propertyless class exploited by the bourgeoisie as the living instrument of capitalist production and the source of surplus value, is the *only* consistently revolutionary class in society. And as the Transitional Programme stresses:

"Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e. chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership . . .

. . . the crisis of the proletarian leadership, having become the crisis in mankind's culture, *can be resolved only by the Fourth International.*"

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

Through the 19th century, capitalism, despite its vicious exploitation of the working class, played an overall progressive role in freeing the productive forces from the restrictions of feudalism and developing the division of labour on a world scale. But since the turn of the century, with the growth of monopoly and the complete division of the world between rival imperialist powers, the social contradictions of capitalism had intensified to the point where capitalist private property became an absolute fetter on the further development of production.

Lenin, analysing these developments in "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", showed how our epoch was one of "capitalism in decline or more precisely . . . moribund capitalism". He shows how the emergence of monopoly from capitalism, which reflected the incompatibility of the advanced means of production with individual private ownership and foreshadows the centralisation of planning and production that would take place under socialism, threw an even greater burden of oppression onto the working class.

This emerged clearly in the first imperialist World War. By 1914 the imperialist expansion of European capital had ceased to be sufficient to offset the general tendency of the rate of profit to fall. Capitalism could no longer exploit new sources of surplus value on a sufficient scale to preserve the value of European capital.

With the world already divided up between competing super-powers, new fields for imperialist expansion could only be found in a redivision of the spoils. Thus the closing years of the last century saw the intensification of the imperialist competition for markets and for sources of surplus value, which engendered the conflicts leading up to World War I.

Only war could undertake the redivision of markets and the destruction of excess capital on a sufficient scale to restore the rate of profit for the surviving capitalists. However, the war, combined with the unprecedented resurgence and strengthening of the working class movement before and after the hostilities, not only failed to resolve these problems, but objectively worsened the plight of imperialism.

Tsarist Russia was taken out of its sphere altogether, while revolutionary upsurges throughout Europe forced the post-war bourgeoisie on to the defensive. In many states, sops and reforms were conceded to contain this upsurge, while a more comprehensive political counter-offensive and attack on living standards was prepared, using to the full the treachery of the social-chauvinists in the reformist parties.

At the same time, although the world hegemony of British imperialism and of sterling as the major world currency had been shattered once and for all, the US dollar was not yet able to replace it. The political and economic crisis remained unresolved throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

Capitalism survived its prolonged crisis during this period only because of the betrayals of the leaders of the working class. The degeneration of the Comintern under Stalin on the one hand and the continuing treachery of social democracy on the other combined to lead workers time and time again to defeat at the hands of imperialism.

Twenty five years of economic stagnation and decay, followed by the immense destruction of World War II, finally provided the conditions for the re-establishment of an equilibrium of world capitalist accumulation. The wholesale destruction of human and capital resources during the war, the emergence of American imperialism as the overwhelming economic and military power, together with the defeats inflicted on the working class worldwide through the direct treachery of the Stalinist and reformist leaders, combined to temporarily overcome the contradictions that had wracked world imperialism.

From this position of economic dominance–holding two-thirds of the world's productive capacity and 75% of its capital–the USA was able to take on the role of defender of imperialism and political arbiter of the relations between nation states on a world cale. In the Bretton Woods Agreement and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) the USA forced the other imperialist powers to accept a world monetary system based on the dollar as an international reserve currency and a general reduction of preferential tariffs on world trade.

The agreement for the dollar to act as international reserve currency, formally tied to gold, rested on the strength of the USA and the world-wide demand for US commodities. With the dollar acting as an internationally accepted means of payment and the foundation of a stable monetary system, the basis was laid for thc restoration and expansion of world trade and for the development of the credit system.

Of course, simply the provision of a universally acceptable world currency, was not in itself a guarantee of stable capitalist accumulation–certainly not to the extent of opening up over twenty years of the most sustained growth of the productive forces in its history. For this a massive restructuring of capital and increase in exploitation and the productivity of labour had to be forced through, while at the same time eliminating excess capital.

Key to this was the collaboration of the Stalinist and reformist leaders during and after the war. These parties, continuing to hold the confidence of the masses (partly as a result of the huge objective difficulties confronted before and during the war by the small and still inexperienced forces of the Fourth International) played a crucial role in strangling revolutionary movements in France, Italy and Greece.

Even so, despite all the efforts of the bourgeoisie and their allies throughout Europe, whole sections of capitalist industry could no longer realise an adequate profit. The

need for state-takeover of these industries highlights the inability of capitalist production to take forward the development of the productive forces in a stable manner.

Thus it was on the basis of the systematic betrayal of the working class over three decades, the renewal and rationalisation of capital on a massive scale during and after the war, and the stabilisation and expansion of the world market disrupted by years of depression and war under the domination of US imperialism, that the post-war expansion of capitalism got underway.

Although after two world wars and years of depression and decay, capitalism was able finally to break through the barriers it had itself created and enter into a new period of equilibrium, the fundamental contradictions of capitalism in the imperialist epoch could in no way be abolished. As the 'boom' went on, these self-same barriers were inevitably re-created.

The vast accumulation of capital during the boom turned inevitably into over-accumulation—the overproduction of goods, not insofar as they serve social needs, but insofar as they serve as capital.

The overproduction of capital (which Marx regarded as 'the essential phenomenon in all crises') is an expression of the fact that capital in its search for profit is driven to expand accumulation *without limit* but must do so on a base which is necessarily *limited*—exploitable living labour.

As only living labour produces surplus value, the amount of surplus value relative to the value of capital tends to decline and so the rate of profit tends to fall.

This tendency for the rate of profit to fall, re-emerging with renewed accumulation, is a fundamental historical contradiction of capitalist production. While capitalism constantly revolutionises the productive forces, driven on by the need to accumulate, in doing so the productive forces inevitably come into conflict with the restrictive social relations of capitalist production.

The inevitable result is a tendency to crisis, with the maintenance and development of the productive forces being threatened by the demand of capitalism for an ever greater expansion of profit. The existence of capital itself becomes the barrier to any further development of production.

In contrast to the form taken by previous capitalist crises, the decline in the rate of profit as the boom got underway did not at first lead to any restriction in production. The expansion of credit, together with the steady increase in state spending, for a whole period allowed a continued growth of production, but at the expense of a further undermining of the basis for capitalist production.

Credit itself is a normal means of financing capital outlay; the expansion of credit is viable in so far as it leads to an expansion of surplus value and of profitable production. In the 1950s and 1960s however, with the rate of profit declining, the expansion of credit, though it enabled production to continue at a high level, meant also that sectors of industry with a low or non-existent rate of profit were maintained.

This extension of credit beyond the base of profitable production fuelled a steadily growing rate of inflation. This inflation is itself part of the attempt by capital to struggle against the effects of the falling rate of profit through cutting real wages.

As long as the working class was able to offset this inflation through wage increases then inflation was ineffective in restoring the rate of profit.

In fact the mounting inflation itself has become one of the factors threatening the stability of capitalism. It wipes out profits in the very act of trying to preserve them and an uncontrollable spiral is threatened.

As the number of workers in manufacturing industry fell, as productivity increased without a corresponding expansion in the overall market, successive capitalist governments were forced by the strength of the working class to maintain relatively full employment by an expansion of the state sector.

A considerable part of this expenditure neither enters into the process of capitalist accumulation nor forms part of the value of labour power; it must be financed out of a deduction from surplus value and so exacerbates the fall in the rate of profit.

The increasing proportion of state spending which has taken the form of handouts to sections of capital facing imminent collapse represents merely a redistribution of surplus value. In relieving the immediate problems of the least profitable sections of capital, this kind of expenditure worsens the problems of the rest.

In the aftermath of the war capitalist industry in Europe and Japan was re-established with the aid of massive loans and grants from the USA under the Marshall Plan. The US imperialists' decision to restore their competitors' economies as an outlet for their exports, rather than maintain their domination of 'poor relations' perpetually threatened by their own working class, was to lead to an undermining of American dominance and of the stable monetary system.

Gradually in the post-war period, the pattern of world trade shifted away from Britain and the USA towards Europe and Japan. (The share of Britain and the USA in world exports declined from 35% in 1948 to only 25% in 1968 and continued to fall).

With sharpening competition on world markets as the imperialist nations fought to maintain their share of a declining mass of profits, this shifted pattern of trade came into conflict with the monetary system established post-war. The Bretton Woods agreement had established the dollar as an international means of payment, and with other currencies tied to a fixed dollar exchange rate.

The link between the dollar and gold was not of immediate importance in this period as the overwhelming strength of the US economy meant that what foreign capitalists wanted with their dollars was not gold, but US commodities. However, as Germany and Japan began to contest America's position on the world market, and the USA's growth rate slowed and its balance of payments went into deficit, increasingly large dollar holders demanded they be converted into gold by the US treasury and the dollar's position was challenged.

This led by August 1971 to the complete suspension of gold convertibility by the US government and the devaluation of the dollar. With the exchange rates of currencies severed from any connection with gold as an objective standard of value, the existence of any stable means of payment on the world market is increasingly endangered, threatening a collapse of world trade itself.

This severance of the link between the dollar and gold was the result of the decline in the relative strength of the United States in relation to the other imperialist economies. It has opened up a period of extreme currency instability and the renewed use of competitive devaluations as a nationalist response to the crisis. Like inflation, to which it is closely related, this currency instability has itself become a threat to the stability of the entire capitalist system of world trade.

The immediate consequence of the suspension of dollar convertibility was to relax the external constraints on the monetary and credit policies of each domestic government. To aid the efforts of their own industries to expand production and exports, each national government moved to expand credit, assisting the development of the 'mini-boom' of 1972-3, while at the same time giving a massive boost to inflation.

No monetary policy, however, could alter the fact of the steady decline in the rate of profit. With the collapse of the 'mini-boom' all the major imperialist countries were faced with a crisis of historic proportions, the grounds for

which had been laid in the preceding two decades.

In each country, production slumped, bringing record unemployment and a string of bankruptcies in major industrial and commercial companies, while inflation climbed to record levels. All the measures (expansion of credit, state spending, government subsidies) which had served to disguise the falling rate of profit and stave off the crisis were immediately identified by the bourgeoisie as their opposite –as the *cause* of the crisis itself. But the roots of the crisis do not lie in any particular measure taken by the bourgeoisie; what the crisis signifies is the complete historical impasse reached by capitalist production.

Having developed the productive forces and the productivity of labour beyond the limits of the existing capitalist social relations, capitalism turns now to devour and destroy the wealth it has created. While capitalist society produces too little relative to human needs, it produces too much relative to the surplus value available for the further accumulation of capital.

This social crisis can only be resolved in the interest of the whole of mankind by the working class under revolutionary leadership establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and replacing the stagnation, chaos and destruction of capitalism's death agony by conscious planning of production under socialism on an international scale.

POLITICAL CRISIS OF POST-WAR IMPERIALISM

Despite its outward appearance of strength and stability during the period of the post-war 'boom', imperialism in fact emerged from the war profoundly weakened. Amid mounting struggles on a world scale it has found the balance of forces increasingly unfavourable for the measures necessary if the inexorable slide in the rate of profit is to be halted.

The fact that the imperialist powers, from a position of weakness, were forced to a formal carve-up of the post-war world into agreed 'spheres of influence' with the Soviet Union is significant in this respect. The imperialists recognised that the total collapse of pre-war and wartime fascist and totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe left them without dependable allies in any efforts they may make to recapture control of these areas.

They therefore conceded them to the Kremlin, in exchange for moves by the Stalinists to head off mass struggles that could have overthrown capitalism in Italy, France and Greece.

Since that point, the imperialists have been forced to watch impotently as capitalist property relations were bureaucratically overturned by Stalinist leaders not only throughout the Eastern Europe 'buffer' countries, but also in Yugoslavia (agreed as a 50-50 division between the imperialists and the Kremlin) and in China.

The outright military defeat of the imperialists in the North of Vietnam in 1954 was followed up by the humiliation of US imperialism as its embargo on Castro's petty bourgeois nationalist regime in Cuba led to the gathering of Castro into the embrace of Kremlin foreign policy, the expropriation of US and other capitalist holdings in Cuba, and the emergence of a deformed workers' state only a few miles from the Florida coastline.

The Cuban revolution, in fact, was a high point of the rising post-war tide of liberation struggles in the colonial and semi-colonial countries which also led to the effective dismemberment of much of the Western European empires in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

The efforts by US imperialism to head off such struggles led to the establishment during the 1950s and 1960s of a series of CIA-backed coups installing vicious bonapartist and military dictatorships–the first of which was the Shah of Iran and the most recent the Chilean Pinochet dictatorship. But the break-up of the 'boom' bringing an intensification of misery, exploitation and anti-imperialist struggles in these countries has thrown these puppet regimes–which include Zaire, Indonesia, and Brazil –into growing profound crisis.

The mounting economic crisis within the advanced capitalist countries has brought since the late 1960s a simultaneous rise in colonial liberation struggles and militant struggles by the working class within the imperialist countries themselves.

The French General Strike of 1968 in particular marked the onset of the present phase of mass workers' resistance to the attacks of capitalism. This resistance flowed on through the strikes which stopped Labour's anti-union laws in Britain in 1969, to the class actions that heralded the fall of the British Tory government in 1974– the same year that brought the historic fall of Portuguese fascism and the defeat of the Greek military junta. The death of Franco was preceded and followed by growing struggles of Spanish workers fighting for an end to fascist dictatorship; and the last few years have seen even the most 'stable' European countries and the USA itself rocked by massive strikes as workers take up the fight to defend jobs and living standards.

The same period has seen the defeat of US imperialism and its puppets in Vietnam, Cambodia and Angola; these defeats have been accompanied by other tenacious liberation struggles and working class resistance in black Africa, the Sahara, Eritrea, the Middle East and Ireland as well as Central and Latin America.

In Iran the Shah's regime, armed to the teeth and seemingly an impregnable bastion of imperialist interests in the Middle East and Persian Gulf, has been swept aside by a mass movement at the head of which were the courageous strikes by workers in the oilfields, industry and government.

Such a period of political instability and weakness for the imperialists should however by no means give rise to the illusion that there is any automatic process whereby imperialism will gradually or peacefully concede power to the working class.

Every setback suffered by the imperialists increases their desperation, and drives them to consider the most extreme solutions. It is significant that the post-war period in which the political weakness of imperialism has been most manifest has brought herculean efforts by US and other capitalists to develop forms of nuclear weaponry and other military technology that offer a hope of compensating for the growing unreliability of armies (Iran!) and popular hostility to imperialist war (anti-Vietnam war movement).

This 'arms race' by the imperialists has forced the Soviet Union to undertake similar military programmes– and has itself contributed massively to the capitalist world economic crisis.

It is impossible to rule out a situation in which a desperate capitalist class seeks a 'solution' to its problems in the shape of a war for the reconquest of the lost markets and labour force in the deformed and degenerated workers' states.

At the same time, though the working class on a world scale remains strong, and though there have been profound setbacks inflicted on fascist regimes in the last few years, there remains the real threat that as the devastation flowing from the economic crisis drives unemployment and poverty to new levels, the big bourgeoisie will seek the answer in the financing and mobilisation of fascist parties.

Drawing forces from the most deprived and backward elements in the working class and ruined sections of the petty bourgeoisie, such lumpen gangs can be used in the absence of a revolutionary proletarian leadership as a battering ram to smash the organised strength of the working class. This is a real danger in today's situation in Turkey. But in Spain, too, in Italy and Portugal, where strong remainders of previous fascist parties continue to organise, there are similar dangers.

In combatting the organised street violence of the fascists–the hired thugs of finance capital–the working

class need not cross-class alliances and pacifist propaganda but the kind of class struggle methods used to combat the economic violence of the capitalists. This means the struggle for a United Front of workers' organisations, a central part of which takes the form of *workers defence squads* to protect minorities and the labour movement against attack, combined with a relentless political struggle against those reformist and Stalinist leaders whose treachery and class collaboration helps create the conditions for the growth of fascism.

The political weakness of imperialism in the present epoch can be turned to the advantage of the working class only by the construction of Trotskyist parties capable of resolving the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

THE STRUGGLE FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES

Imperialism is politically and economically weaker than ever before, and the working class stronger: but the advantage remains in the hands of imperialism so long as the question of working class leadership remains unresolved. Forty years of experience of the working class in struggle have confirmed Trotsky's 1938 analysis that:

"The economy, the state, the politics of the bourgeoisie and its international relations are completely blighted by a social crisis, characteristic of a pre-revolutionary state of society.

"The chief obstacle in the path of transforming the pre-revolutionary into a revolutionary state is the opportunistic character of proletarian leadership: its petty bourgeois cowardice before the big bourgeoisie and its perfidious connection with it even in its death agony."

The economic crisis that now drives every section of capitalists onto the offensive against the working class, throwing millions into unemployment and poverty, highlights precisely this bankruptcy of the existing reformist and Stalinist leaders.

In the 1930s these traitors adopted the class collaborationist strategy of the Popular Front under the guise of a broad front against fascism, after Stalinist 'Third Period' sectarianism had helped create the German catastrophe. In thus subordinating the working class and its interests to the programme of 'liberal' capitalism the Popular Front rejected any pretence of a socialist perspective, headed off the mass struggles then underway in France and paved the way for the defeat of the Spanish revolution. Such is the bitter price of Stalinist 'peaceful coexistence' and reformist dreams of a gradual transition to socialism.

Now in the 1970s as workers' mass struggles again offer the possibility of overthrowing capitalist rule, the reactionary politics of the Popular Front are once more being dragged out by reformists and Stalinists desperate to forestall moves towards working class political independence. They do so *consciously*, even in the aftermath of the Chilean events of 1973, and with the harsh lessons of the 1930s Popular Front before them.

Indeed the weaker capitalism becomes, the more it has turned for support to the labour bureaucracy: and the more that revolutionary struggles threaten to overturn the existing balance of class forces, the more the counter-revolutionary efforts of reformists and Stalinists alike are devoted towards preserving the status quo.

Whether it be in the Spanish Moncloa Pact, the defeated British Social Contract, the scandalous deal by Italy's Stalinists with the Christian Democrats or in tacit support for Portuguese military President Eanes, the reformist and Stalinist parties of Europe have time and again showed their willingness to collaborate with the employers in imposing 'austerity' plans designed to drive up profits at workers' expense.

While developing the politics of the Popular Front, several of the mass CPs of Western Europe have adopted the explicitly reformist theories of "Eurocommunism", in which even the pretence of seeking to establish the Leninist dictatorship of the proletariat has been publicly abandoned.

The essence of Eurocommunism is a nationalistic defence of longterm and brazen collaboration with the Stalinists' 'own' ruling class—to the extent of full scale support for wage-cutting 'austerity' plans carried out by bourgeois governments in Italy and in Spain, support for the strengthening of the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state in Italy and Spain, explicit support for the reactionary NATO imperialist alliance from the Italian CP leaders.

Such a line-up, unlike the lethal Popular Front policies of the 1930s, takes place no longer on the direct instructions of the Kremlin—indeed the Comintern was formally liquidated by Stalin in the midst of the second imperialist war as a step to ingratiate himself with his imperialist "allies". The Eurocommunists have themselves emphasised their rejection of any international perspective, and the necessity for each CP to chart its own national course.

The pressures that have forced the Eurocommunist leaders into new levels of class collaboration have their origin in their fear and hostility towards the forward movement of the working class, which—in a period of acute capitalist crisis—threatens to disrupt the balance of class forces on which the bureaucratic CP structures have come to depend.

Faced with the choice of unleashing massive working class struggles or standing alongside their 'own' capitalist classes in stemming such struggles the "Eurocommunist" leaders have clearly and predictably chosen the second course—despite the conflict this creates within the rank and file of their own parties.

Yet though they can no longer be relied upon to act on the instructions of the Kremlin, the counter-revolutionary political line carried out by these Stalinist leaders still matches the requirements of the Soviet bureaucracy for a preservation of 'peaceful coexistence' with capitalism.

Thus the Kremlin leaders have an interest in upholding the Eurocommunists, while they in turn require the international and historic links to the Russian revolution as an essential 'left' cover for their collaborationist policies.

The apparent "openness" of Eurocommunist parties to criticism and discussion, far from being a concession to the mass movements of the working class, is an adaptation to the individualism and liberalism of the petty bourgeoisie, and part of the attempt by the Stalinist leaders to prove themselves respectable and "responsible" enough to play a role in Popular-Front style bourgeois governments.

It is important to note the way in which Eurocommunist criticism of the political regimes of Eastern Europe and the USSR is also connected to its attempts to appease anti-communist petty bourgeois layers in their own countries.

There is little doubt that this now openly righward shift by such veteran Stalinist leaders as Santiago Carrillo and Enrico Berlinguer will intensify the contradiction between the militant membership of the Euro CPs and their reactionary leadership. But the only way this contradiction can be developed is through a relentless struggle by the Trotskyist movement to expose the utter bankruptcy of *both* wings of Stalinism, and to spell out the necessary programme for independent working class action on jobs and wages.

We are neither 'for' the Eurocommunists nor 'for' Moscow: neither of them does or can represent the independent interests of the working class.

But we must intervene among the sections of the rank and file workers up to now dominated by the Stalinists as a part of our fight for the construction of Trotskyist parties on a revolutionary perspective *against* Stalinism and reformism.

It is from this standpoint also that we must approach

centrist groupings that have partially broken from reformism or Stalinism. Only a thoroughgoing principled struggle to win them to the programme and perspective of Trotskyism can transform such groupings into revolutionary organisations. Without such a struggle, centrist groupings can create only confusion and eventual demoralisation.

Our main focus however is on the practical fight to mobilise working class action against the attacks being waged by the capitalist class. In this period of crisis even existing jobs, wages and conditions can only be defended by a leadership that is prepared to wage a root and branch attack on the supposed 'right' of the capitalist to safeguard his profits at the expense of the working class.

The reformists and Stalinists are of course incapable of offering any such fight, while the centrists who are not drawn into consistently revolutionary politics wind up tailing the bureaucratic misleaders. The left talkers seek to head off the most militant workers into ineffective and demoralising token protests, while the open right wing bureaucrats collaborate brazenly with management's rationalisation plans through forms of 'workers participation', or simply arguments about 'viability' and 'the national interest'.

Centrist currents will often protest at this and seek to counterpose 'militant' alternatives. Only the Tr Transitional Programme offers a system of demands that not only connect with today's objective problems and today's consciousness within the working class but also lead workers in such a way as to point to the necessity for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. And only the Transitional Programme connects these demands with the necessity for revolutionary parties to lead that overthrow.

THE FIGHT IN THE TRADE UNIONS

The demands of the Programme have been widely misunderstood, ignored, or opportunistically distorted in the 40 years since they were formulated. But in today's class struggle, with the growing contradiction between the readiness of the working class to fight and the determination of their official leaders to betray, the struggle for these demands and for the kind of independent working class organisation to which they lead, offers the most effective way of challenging and exposing the labour bureaucrats.

Future cadres of the revolutionary party will be found among the fresh layers of workers thrown into conflict with their misleaders in the course of the class struglle. But forces drawn from a middle class milieu will become a drag on the building of the movement if they do not acquaint themselves at first hand with day-to-day struggles and problems of the workers' movement.

Day-to-day struggle alone however does not create communists, and a fight against middle-class dilettantism must go along with opposition to any tendency towards syndicalism and nationalism among worker comrades. It is in this process of struggle, as our experience has shown, that the selection of communists takes place.

A readiness to fight for the demands and methods of the Transitonal Programme, and to give leadership in all struggles—no matter how partial—must be the general orientation of the Trotskyist movement.

Interventions of a qualitative character must flow from an understanding, given the deep crisis of leadership, of the political significance of even some apparently minor class battles. In the course of the fight our understanding of the programme must be deepened and developed—particularly the knowledge that its correct application is not a formal question, but derives essentially from a correct understanding of the period through which the workers' struggle is passing.

Whatever the struggle—whether it be for transitional demands or simply on basic trade union rights, Trotskyists must be able to attract forces by finding the *point of conflict* with the trade union bureaucracies from which the fight could develop.

We must continue the fight to train cadres in the struggle who can themselves arrive at the next steps needed for the development of political independence and working class revolutionary leadership.

Such an intervention must be based firmly on our appraisal of the counter-revolutionary role of the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies and draw on the lessons of the fight in the 1960s to turn the Trotskyist movement into the working class.

Revolutionary work in the unions must begin from a number of assumptions. The first of these is that in this period there is *no* battle in the workers movement, however small, which can be won without the mobilisation of the working class and confronting the bankrupt and counter-revolutionary bureaucrats.

Secondly, as long as the present bureaucracy remains at the head of the working class, workers will have to be ceaselessly brought into conflict with it in order to enable them to make the necessary political break from reformism. There is *no* easy way round this central task, such as by setting up some pure 'rank and file movement' undadulterated by the problems of leading the working class under their present leaders.

Thirdly, we are convinced that the method of the Transitional Programme consists *not* in the mere repetition of the words on its printed pages, but on the *actual mobilisation* of the working class independently of the class enemy, and in conflict with the bureaucrats who aim always to tie them to the employers and the capitalist order.

For these three reasons we cannot make it a condition of our participation in any struggle in the workers' movement that it should begin with a rounded programme, including correct positions on governmental questions. To say that only movements with a worked-out programme can be successful would be to miss the meaning of the programme which has the central role of mobilising the independent strength of the working class and raising it from its existing level of consciousness to a grasp of the need for socialist revolution in confrontation with its bureaucratic leaders and their various centrist and Stalinist hangers-on.

It is for these reasons that Trotskyist work in the unions, while grounded on the programmatic principle of working class independence, must be flexible in its form and organisation.

Trotskyists must spearhead all struggles against attempts to shackle the unions to the state—through repressive legislation, court interference, compulsory "arbitration", etc.—or to the employers, through forms of "workers' participation", and similar class collaborationist systems designed to suck leading trade union representatives into acting as an arm of management in the imposition of speed-up, sackings and wage controls.

For similar reasons Trotskyists resolutely oppose capitalist *import controls*, which effectively tie workers in any country to nationalist efforts to protect their "own" bourgeoisie against "foreign" competitors at the expense of workers in other countries.

All forms of outside interference in the machinery of the workers' movement—including the imposition of secret or postal balloting designed to split the mass strength of the working class and pressurise trade unionists as "individuals" —must be combatted.

At the same time the struggle against the reformist and Stalinist union bureaucracy must include specific demands for the regular *election* of all full time labour movement officials, for them to be subject to recall at any time, and for them to be paid no more than the average wage of the members they represent.

In some countries where the existing trade union organisations are tied more or less openly and directly to

the political parties or state machinery of the bourgeoisie, the struggle for the independence of the unions is obviously linked to the fight to *break* such reactionary links and, where appropriate, to fight for the unions to construct independent, Labour parties to represent the class interests of the proletariat.

Marxists, following on the method spelled out by Trotksy in his discussions with SWP leaders on the Transitional Programme, fight for such Labour parties to be established not on a reformist platform but on a full and adequate programme of transitional and democratic demands, while recognising that in the very break by trade unions from bourgeois parties an important opening could be created for the struggle for independent working class politics. It is important that every avenue for propaganda and agitation on the class divide between the labour movement and the organisations of the bourgeoisie is exploited by Marxists and the necessity for class political independence retained in the forefront of political work in these countries.

In many more countries a fight is also necessary against the system of stringent 'no strike' clauses inserted by employers into 3-year legally binding contracts. Such contracts leave workers exposed not only to inflation but also to frontal attacks from employers who fully exploit the fact that plant-level strike action is illegal and subject to vigorous repression by national union officials.

Wages and conditions must be fully protected by a sliding scale of wages based on a cost of living index compiled by elected committees and must be negotiated at least every year: and workers must assert the right to strike on any issue without fear of legal penalties and bureaucratic victimisation.

Whether the struggle at hand be on wages or jobs, or to force nationalisation of a particular firm, the programme of the revolutionary party must bring right to the forefront at key stages the call for the building by workers in struggle of factory, occupation and strike committees, and the extension of these where possible to local councils of action (Soviets).

Such bodies offer an arena for the struggle for the revolutionary programme, and focus the attention of the workers' movement on its own strength and its own leadership.

As Bolsheviks, we see these organs as representing the unity and independence of the working class, and its historic role in leading behind it the other oppressed masses. But this does not mean that workers' councils are sufficient in and of themselves to advance the spontaneous struggles of the working class. The crucial role in the development of such councils must be played by the intervention of the revolutionary party itself. We argue that all representative organisations of the oppressed masses must be allowed to participate in these soviet-type bodies, and to fight within them for the adoption of their programme. Representatives of the bourgeoisie must be excluded.

Given such political leadership from a developing Trotskyist party we see such bodies as the future organs of workers' power. At some stage in the struggle it will be the task of revolutionaries to call for all power to devolve to these bodies. At the present stage, however, it is crucial not to outpace the developing mass movement. Workers have first to be shown in practice that the soviet-type bodies can play a role in furthering their struggles. They must at the outset therefore be firmly linked to all the economic and political—which can at the present stage of development of the mass struggle arouse sections of the working class to take action.

Thus the future instruments of workers' power can begin life as bodies to unite and organise strikes for specific demands or, in repressive regimes, to fight for the implementation of democratic demands such as the release of political prisoners or free elections to a Constituent Assembly.

The growing economic crisis in the post-war period, forcing the state to play an increasing role in industry through 'nationalised' industries and the concessions won by the workers' movement in the form of state social security, health and education provision, mean that certain additional demands not contained in the Transitional Programme must also be taken up by Trotskyists in the struggles to come.

In an area of production so closely related to the machinery of the capitalist state, the demand for the opening of the books of the 'nationalised' industries and the public services acquires a particular importance.

On the one hand this will expose those sections of the banks and those privately owned suppliers and contractors that profit from the exploitation of workers in the public sector: on the other, in making clear the case for nationalisation of these sections without compensation, and in revealing the ways in which the public sector is run in the interests of capitalism, workers can use the figures uncovered to spell out the necessity for workers' management of these sectors as part of a planned, socialist economy.

In advancing this challenge to control and property rights assumed by the capitalist state, the struggle against austerity cutbacks and closures in the public sector must centre on the fight for *occupation* of threatened facilities, backed up by supporting strikes, both in the public sector and private industry.

In opposition to public spending cuts designed to make private industry more profitable at the expense of the working class, we counterpose the demand for a sliding scale of public service spending to fully protect these services against the effects of inflation, as assessed by elected trade union committees.

Such a demand builds on the method and principles of the Transitional Programme in providing an independent proletarian answer to a problem that has emerged since 1938.

The practical fight for such demands as the crucial 'bridge' between the present consciousness of the working class and the consciousness required to accomplish the socialist revolution is the task confronting every Trotskyist in each sector of the workers' movement.

Democratic demands

The renewed crisis of capitalism, added to its long-term economic failures, have meant that its survival depends more and more on the erosion of hard-won democratic freedoms in the imperialist countries.

These facts mean that revolutionaries are obliged to give democratic demands (freedom of expression and organisation, representative elections, release of political prisoners, etc.) substantial prominence in their programme. Such demands respond to the objective needs of the mass movement and are therefore often capable of strongly mobilising the masses.

To prevent these demands becoming 'a democratic noose fastened round the neck of the working class by the agents of the bourgeoisie', revolutionaries must fight for these demands by linking them at all times with a programme of democratic and transitional demands. At the same time of course revolutionaries fight for even democratic demands by *revolutionary* methods—through mobilisations of the working class, the construction of independent organisations committed to fight for these demands. Neither the programme nor the method of fighting for it must in any way be subordinated in the interest of forming alliances with sections of the bourgeoisie and its agents.

The Fight against War

At the same time the wars and revolutionary struggle that characterise the epoch of imperialism place a special responsibility on the working class in the imperialist nations.

Theirs is the task of spearheading the struggle against the war plans and military aggression of their 'own' bourgeoisie, and mobilising concrete solidarity action with anti-imperialist fighters in every country.

Particular attention must also be given to spelling out a policy of *unconditional defence* of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers' states against imperialist military aggression.

Trotskyists however have an obligation to conduct such solidarity work in such a way as to fight at each point for an independent class line for the working class—a line which avoids political compromises with either the various elements of the labour bureaucracy in the imperialist countries, or the petty bourgeois or bourgeois nationalist leaderships of colonial liberation struggles. This means fighting for workers to show solidarity through the methods of the international class struggle: blacking, strikes etc., where appropriate; exceptional steps to ensure supplies in certain other cases.

As the Transitional Programme spells out:

> "In supporting the colonial country or the USSR in a war, the proletariat does not in the slightest degree solidarise either with the bourgeois government of the colonial country or with the Thermidorean bureaucracy of the USSR.
>
> "*On the contrary,* it maintains full political independence from the one as from the other. Giving aid in a just and progressive war, the revolutionary proletariat wins the sympathy of the workers in the colonies and in the USSR, strengthens there the authority and influence of the Fourth International, and increases its ability to help overthrow the bourgeois government in the colonial country, the reactionary bureaucracy in the USSR."

Such a policy runs diametrically counter to the adaptions to the Stalinist bureaucracy represented in the "War-Revolution" theories of the post-war Fourth International. It is the correct method of the Transitional Programme on these questions that must be defended and applied by Trotskyists in the struggles to come.

But the struggle for the political independence and leading role of the working class in international solidarity action in no way detracts from the obligation of Trotskyists to participate in and build mass anti-war mobilisations that weaken imperialism's ability to conduct colonial wars, and which draw together broad layers of society opposing particular instances of military aggression.

In such circumstances, far from dropping or soft-pedalling the fight for their central demands, Trotskyists must utilise every opportunity through propaganda and agitation to oppose pacifism and chauvinism and win sections of the mass anti-war movement to a Marxist programme.

The Workers' Government demand

At each step in the struggle for transitional and democratic demands, Trotskyists must weigh and consider the best tactical means of conducting the fight in such a way as to expose and discredit the existing treacherous mass leaders of the working class.

Such tactics will generally include fighting for workers to place specific *demands* on those trade union and political leaders that retain mass support for them to break from their present policies of class collaboration and act in the independent class interests of their members.

As the Transitional Programme shows, the culmination of this approach is the formulation of demands on the reformists and Stalinist leaders that they break with the bourgeoisie and form a *workers' government.*

The slogan can, as the Transitional Programme shows, be used flexibly as an agitational slogan in particular situations. As such its value is that it focusses the attention of the masses on the class collaboration of their leaders and the necessity for a government that will represent their independent interests. In every instance it is vital to couple the workers' government with the necessary programme of *transitional demands* and with the struggle to mobilise the working class in independent organisations through which it will fight for such demands.

Such an approach is in explicit contrast to the various parliamentary formations passed off by reformist, centrist and Stalinist currents as "workers" or "workers and peasants" governments.

Indeed while the call for a workers' government can be used as an agitational slogan to advance the political consciousness of the working class from the level of spontaneity to the comprehension of the necessity of the revolutionary seizure of power, the culmination of the struggle for this demand must in the final instance—as in Russia in October 1917—be the definitive break with and destruction of the political forms, institutions and state machinery of the bourgeoisie, and the establishment of the *dictatorship of the proletariat.*

The workers' government slogan thus contains within it the dynamic of the class struggle in which the working class, gaining in strength and self confidence, demands increasingly more of its bureaucratic mass leaders to the point where they insist that these leaders break from the bourgeoisie, take power in their own hands, and implement measures in the interests of the proletariat.

As the Transitional Programme stresses, it was:

> "the obstinate unwillingness of the Mensheviks and SRs to take power, so dramatically exposed during the July Days, which definitely doomed them before mass opinion and prepared the victory of the Bolsheviks."

Now, just as much as in 1938, it is time to insist that:

> "The central task of the Fourth International consists in freeing the proletariat from its old leadership whose conservatism is in complete contradiction to the catastrophic eruptions of disintegrating capitalism and represents the chief obstacle to historical progress.
>
> "The chief accusation which the Fourth International advances against the traditional organisations of the proletariat is the fact that they do not wish to tear themselves away from the political semi-corpse of the bourgeoisie.
>
> "Under these conditions the demand, systematically addressed to the old leadership: 'Break with the bourgeoisie, take the power' is an extremely important weapon for exposing the treacherous character of the parties and organisations of the Second, Third and Amsterdam Internationals."

While promising such leaders revolutionary support against capitalist reaction should they undertake the struggle for power, Trotskyists must maintain their political independence of such leaderships and persist with their own critical propaganda spelling out at each stage the role of the old leaders and the necessary programme of demands to be fought for by the working class.

It is on the construction of such a Trotskyist revolutionary leadership, and *not* on any ability of the reformists and Stalinists to transform themselves into a revolutionary force that the fate of the struggle for a workers' government and the dictatorship of the proletariat must depend.

THE CHALLENGE TO IMPERIALIST CONTROL

At a time when imperialism is facing the challenge of rising working class struggles in the advanced capitalist countries, workers and peasants in colonial and semi-colonial countries are being driven into sharper and politically developing levels of opposition.

Time and again, imperialist powers have shown their willingness to resort to any form of barbarism to secure the conditions for capitalist exploitation through the world.

In so doing, they have not always had to resort to direct military intervention themselves, but have also sponsored armed, trained reactionary forces to act as local gendarmes of imperialist interests.

The armed might of the Israeli state, constituted by imperialism at the expense of the Palestinian masses, has long been developed to fit it for such a role.

South African troops are crucial, not only in suppressing workers inside the country but as a regional imperialist police force, operating throughout Southern Africa to suppress and control any challenge to capitalist interests.

Behind its public condemnation and pretence of sanctions, the British state was quite prepared to rely on the repressive strength of its local agents in Zimbabwe before the escalating level of mass struggle forced a greater orientation towards a neo-colonial solution to head it off.

The level of mass struggle has on more than one occasion forced imperialism to sacrifice its reactionary puppet of yesterday–as in Nicaragua and the Central African Republic–in a frantic effort to promote the conditions for the development of a *stable* reactionary agent of tomorrow.

In some situations–as in Angola in the wake of the 1974 events–imperialism has been forced to yield its direct political control, relying temporarily on the collaborationist politics of Stalinism, petty bourgeois nationalism and reformism, as a way of securing indirect political control.

As imperialism moves towards neo-colonial methods of stemming the Palestinian and Southern African struggles, however, any attempt to simply jettison a reactionary gendarmes of imperialism brings with it its own problems.

Having fostered reactionary racism and nationalism and racially orientated systems of privilege to secure reliable agents historically, the imperilaist powers are now coming up against strong opposition in both Zimbabwe and Israel to any efforts to modify the system of imperialist control.

At the same time, the imperialist powers are being forced by their quest for profits to take measures which have the consequences of weakening the economic stability of puppet regimes and agents, and generating increasing levels of opposition from the oppressed masses.

The depression of world trade has brought the colonial and semi-colonial countries even more acute crisis. The demand for raw materials–with the exception of oil–has fallen as production on a world scale has stagnated. Nor have the imperialist states been willing or able to increase their "aid" or investment programmes to counteract the decline. Driven on by the fall in domestic rates of profit, the imperialists have instead been looking to the ex-colonial countries as a source of further increased exploitation. They have stepped up the pressure for the payment of outstanding loans, and increased their interest rates. This has attacked the economic foundation even of crucial reactionary regimes such as that of Suharto in Indonesia and Mobutu in Zaire. And the underdeveloped countries have become more and more directly indebted to private banks in the imperialist nations. Such loans have less leeway for renegotiation and rescheduling than government loans, and so they sharpen the political consequences of the ever-greater polarisation of the world into creditor and debtor nations.

The puppet governments set up or sponsored by imperialism in Latin America, Africa and Asia have thus been strong-armed into all-out assaults on the working class through "austerity" programmes implemented under the watchful eye of the IMF and the major capitalist banks. This, in turn, has driven the workers' movement and the peasantry into new and more profound struggles in which grievances over national oppression have combined with resistance to economic attacks by imperialism and its agents.

While the level of struggle forces the imperialist powers to look to the collaboration of Stalinists and reformists in the efforts to maintain imperialist political control through neo-colonialism, imperialism shows as clearly as ever its readiness to employ and support the most brutal forms of repression to maintain its decaying system of exploitation and oppression.

Even as the Shah of Iran was being sacrificed, imperialist aid was being rushed in to prop up the equally murderous Bokassa in black Africa–since sacrificed in favour of his no less murderous predecessor as dictator.

And even as imperialism manoeuvres to secure a pro-capitalist compromise in Nicaragua at the expense of the dictator Somoza, Mobutu relies on imperialist aid to prop up his tottering dictatorship in Zaire.

In Southern Africa, the crises facing imperialism have meant that even as it connives with the Stalinists and nationalists to secure neo-colonial solutions which head off mass struggles, it is forced to rely increasingly heavily on the repressive strength of the most powerful promoter of imperialist interests in the region–the South African state.

The relative economic strength and firm social base on which the South African government can draw make it an indispensible ally of imperialist powers.

They are thus forced to support the system of racial privilege and repressive labour control through which the South African ruling class has built its economic strength, secured its social base and provided the conditions for the extraction of profits for the local and overseas capitalists.

The current development of struggle by black workers in South Africa coupled with a crisis of profitability has forced sections of the ruling class (with the approval of imperialism) to promote a programme of limited reforms aimed at developing a layer of skilled black workers, co-opted with sections of the black petty-bourgeoisie to serve the interests of the ruling class. Such a programme however, goes together with continual repression of the mass of the working class.

Behind the publicly declared arms embargo of South Africa, the imperialist powers continue to provide the technology for and equipment of the South Africa repressive machine, to add to the massive stockpiles of imperialist supplies accrued from continuing secret deals.

As in South Africa, the reality of imperialist sponsored brutal repression daily confronts workers in struggle through vast regions of the colonial and semi-colonial world.

And as the level of struggle increases as workers and peasants confront the inability of imperialist dominated economies and governments to meet their material needs. The level and extent of that repression must be expected to increase.

While seeking to exploit legal and semi-legal openings revolutionaries in such countries, where even the demands for minimal bourgeois democratic rights are met with immediate repression, must be prepared to base themselves on almost exclusively illegal, clandestine work.

In conditions where the denial of bourgeois democratic rights is coupled with massive state repression, acts of armed self-defence and resistance are inevitably put on the agenda as necessary forms of working class opposition.

While accepting the need for an underground existence and a programme which incorporates the armed struggle, it

is important to oppose any form of militarism, ultra-left armed adventurism or guerillaism (urban or rural). Revolutionaries must link armed struggle to the mobilisation of the mass of the working class in pursuit of its own class interests. Underground work, including preparations for armed struggle, cannot be counterposed to mass work; rather, it must be seen as a recognition of the way in which that work must be carried out. Similarly, a commitment to armed struggle is not an alternative to the mobilisation of the class around a programme. It is a recognition of one of the tactics through which the mobilisation will be directed against the state. Armed struggle is not a strategic goal in itself–it is a tactic in the struggle for the real goal–the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The armed struggle up to the point of insurrection must unfold in close harmony with the development of mass mobilisation of the working class. This political task can only be undertaken by a Trotskyist party armed with a programme combining democratic and transitional demands.

PERMANENT REVOLUTION

The diversity and complexity of many of the struggles in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, ranging from the struggles of Indian workers and peasants, through the historic struggle of the Palestinian people for the liberation of their occupied homeland, to the guerrilla war in Zimbabwe and the struggle against imperialist puppet regimes–defy attempts to put forward a general catch-all programme of demands or a unified pattern of tactics. But certain political questions and questions of method re-emerge again and again, and require a clear answer by the Trotskyist movement.

Firstly, the Transitional Programme correctly lays stress on the crucial leading role that must be played in the struggle of the colonial and semi-colonial countries by the proletariat. Trotsky sums this up in the formula of the *permanent revolution*. But in the light of opportunist interpretations of this theory in the post-war period we must emphasise that the term permanent revolution is not in any way a passive *description* of an automatic, objective process: rather it is a *strategy* to be applied and fought for in practice by the building of Trotskyist parties in each case.

The leading role of the working class and its ability to mobilise the support of the peasantry on a programme of democratic and transitional demands rests on the ability of Trotskyists to combat the programme spelled out in various cross-class 'fronts' and 'alliances' and to expose the counter-revolutionary politics of Stalinist, reformist and nationalist currents.

As the Transitional Programme stresses:

"As a primary step, the workers must be armed with this democratic programme. Only they will be able to summon and unite the farmers.

"On the basis of the revolutionary democratic programme, *it is necessary to oppose the workers to the 'national' bourgeoisie.*" (emphasis added).

This does not of course rule out the fullest practical solidarity of colonial peoples in repelling military attacks of imperialism, its puppets and agents. For specific and limited tasks under certain conditions the proletariat and poor peasants can–without making any concessions in their own demands–wage a struggle jointly with sections of the 'national' bourgeoisie against the imperialist enemy.

But it is wrong to seek to extend such temporary alliances to the level of a long-term political bloc, in which the independent programme and struggles of the working class and poor peasants are subordinated to the political demands of the 'democratic' bourgeoisie in the name of an "anti-imperialist front".

This is effectively to abandon the strategy of permanent revolution, and adopt instead Stalin's Menshevik *stageist conception of 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry'. Every attempt to lead the working* class down the road of seeking *only* democratic rights must be challenged and opposed.

All recent events have shown that the national bourgeoisie can only lead the struggle against imperialism to a certain point. They are incapable of even defending democratic rights that are sometimes momentarily gained. Iran has particularly clearly demonstrated the validity of Trotsky's insistence that *only a socialist revolution under the leadership of the working class* can carry through even the struggle for democratic rights.

The alliance, as the Programme points out must be *not* with 'the middle classes in general' but with 'the exploited layers of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie'.

The culminating point in such an alliance must be the struggle for the building of soviets and the demand for a workers' and farmers' government independent of the parties of the bourgeoisie.

The task of the Trotskyists is through building revolutionary parties to carry out the patient propaganda work, agitation and organisation of the workers' movement and poor peasants around a programme of democratic and transitional demands which start from today's crushing material problems and lead workers and peasants to grasp the necessity for the socialist revolution.

The case is similar in those Middle East and black African countries where "progressive" bourgeois regimes hold sway on the basis of 'nationalised' industry, while denying the most elementary democratic rights to the working class, women or national minorities. The task of Trotskyists in those countries is to elaborate a specific and concrete programme of demands showing the path of struggle for workers' management of industry, an end to sexual and national oppression, and the need for a genuinely internationalist foreign policy that can definitively break these countries from the grip of imperialism.

And in rendering unconditional support for national liberation struggles such as those in Kurdistan, Ireland, and Palestine, it is vital that Trotskyists also spell out clearly to the international workers' movement the programmatic bankruptcy of the existing petty bourgeois leaderships of these struggles.

A revolutionary, Trotskyist leadership must be constructed in each case which is capable of preserving the independence of these struggles from compromises with imperialism or the counter-revolutionary pressures of Stalinism, and which recognises the necessity of rallying the support of the international workers' movement.

The Transitional Programme clearly spells out the general principles from which the question of a programme to mobilise the small farmers must be approached–stressing the necessity at each stage for the construction of independent organs of control by workers jointly with the poor peasants.

The colonial revolution in the current period can move rapidly forward against a weakened imperialism. But these revolutionary struggles will only achieve the possibility of leading to the overthrow of capitalism if Trotskyist parties fight to take the lead in drawing from the outset a clear class line and elaborate a concrete programme that in each case orientates to the leading role of the proletariat.

In the struggle against imperialism in the colonial countries it is therefore crucial for revolutionaries to base themselves firmly on Trotsky's watchword for the united front in the advanced capitalist countries–march separately; strike together! Such a policy offers the only clear perspective to the struggles of the toiling masses, and also the best means of exposing the treachery and inconsistency of the 'democratic' national bourgeoisie.

It is at all times necessary for the working masses to pursue an independent way forward in the struggle for the independent class interests of the proletariat.

THE DEFORMED AND DEGENERATED WORKERS STATES

1.) The Post-War Overturns

It is scarcely surprising that it has been the developments of Stalinism that have most confused and disorientated the Trotskyist movement in the post-war period. The outcome of World War 2 was one which nobody within the Fourth International had predicted, and events from 1944 onwards moved in a complex, contradictory and uneven fashion that test the Marxist method of analysis to the limit.

Trotsky assumed that the World War would hasten the political process within the Soviet Union, bring to a head the internal contradictions that had developed during the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy–between the progressive, nationalised property relations on the one side, and the thoroughly reactionary nationalist bureaucratic ruling caste on the other.

Accordingly he foresaw that the end of the War would find either on the one hand that the inability of the Kremlin bureaucracy to defend the USSR would open the way to an imperialist reconquest or the restoration of capitalism; or, on the other hand, that a political revolution would oust Stalin's clique of gangsters from their positions of power and privilege.

Neither proved to be the case. Far from being destroyed by its internal contradictions, Stalinism emerged from the war in a much *stronger* position in relation to imperialism than at the beginning.

Despite horrific human and material losses, worsened in the extreme by the incompetence of the Stalinist bureaucracy, its liquidation of the experienced Bolshevik general staff of the armed forces, and its perfidious attempt to defend the Soviet Union through the notorious 1939 Pact with Hitler, the Red Army not only repulsed the attacks by imperialism, but actually took control of a circle of Eastern European 'buffer' countries, while Stalinist-led partisans defeated pro-fascist regimes in Yugoslavia and Albania.

Stalin at first intended to do no more than install pliable bourgeois coalition governments in these buffer countries, in order to use them as a bargaining counter in his 'peace' talks with the imperialists. But the onset of the imperialist Cold War offensive and the inherent economic and political instability of these regimes (in which the hated bourgeois state machinery had crumbled almost beyond repair bringing the frightening prospect of revolutionary struggles on the very borders of the USSR itself) led to the Kremlin decision to press forward with the definitive bureaucratic overturn of capitalist property relations.

This was accompanied by the purging of the Communist Parties and the consolidation of monolithic Stalinist state machinery.

Such moves were carried through only *after* the post-war upsurge of militancy in the working class of the Buffer states had subsided. And they were carried out *from above* in totally bureaucratic fashion, under the watchful eye of the Red Army and the GPU. The masses were excluded at all times from any expression of political independence or real control over industry and the economy.

As such the overturns fitted into the framework anticipated as a possibility by Trotsky in *In Defence of Marxism*:

"It is more likely, however, that in the territories scheduled to become a part of the USSR, the Moscow government will carry through the expropriation of the large landowners and statification of the means of production. This variant is most probable not because the bureaucracy remains true to the socialist programme, but because it is neither desirous nor capable of sharing the power, and the privileges which the latter entails, with the old ruling classes in the occupied territories.

Here an analogy literally offers itself. The first Bonaparte halted the revolution by means of a military dictatorship. However, when the French troops invaded Poland, Napoleon signed a decree: "serfdom is abolished". This measure was dictated not by Napoleon's sympathies for the peasants, nor by democratic principles, but rather by the fact that the Bonapartist dictatorship based itself not on feudal, but on bourgeois property relations. Inasmuch as Stalin's Bonapartist dictatorship bases itself not on private but on state property, the invasion of Poland by the Red Army should, in the nature of the case, result in the abolition of private capitalist property, so as thus to bring the regime of the occupied territories into accord with the regime of the USSR."

Trotsky stresses the profound contradiction embodied in such a development–a contradiction that must not be 'ironed out' or brushed aside but grasped by revolutionaries as crucial in the analysis and struggle against Stalinism:

"This measure, revolutionary in character–'the expropriation of the expropriators'–is in this case achieved in a *military-bureaucratic fashion*" (In Defence of Marxism, Pathfinder ed, p 18)

And a few sentences later Trotsky warns against any tendency to generalise from this or that aspect of developments and attribute to Stalinism a new, historically progressive role:

"The primary political criterion for us is not the transformation of property relations in this or another area, however important these may be in themselves, but rather the change in the consciousness and organisation of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones. From this one, and the only decisive standpoint, the politics of Moscow, taken as a whole, completely retains its reactionary character and remains the chief obstacle on the road to the world revolution." (ibid, p 19)

The post-war consolidation of Stalinist control over the buffer states as a bureaucratic method of defending the borders of the USSR itself did indeed run alongside the conscious betrayal of revolutionary possibilities in Greece, Italy, France, Iran and Vietnam as part of Stalin's counter-revolutionary post-war 'spheres of influence' deal with the imperialist chiefs.

As such it formed part of a *consistent counter-revolutionary stance*. The transformation of property relations in Eastern Europe gave no impetus whatever to the class consciousness of the workers, who were almost entirely excluded from involvement, and whose independent organised strength remained ruthlessly repressed. And any stimulus such changes might have given to workers' struggles in Western Europe were more than compensated by the betrayals of mass Communist Parties in Greece, Italy and France which were crucial to the temporary stabilisation of capitalism over two thirds of the globe.

But the contradictions and nationalistic tensions beneath the apparently increased strength of Stalinism quickly began to surface. Facing particularly acute problems in preserving his bureaucratic control within Yugoslavia, and with political confidence flowing from his long partisan struggle against the fascists (in which the CP had effectively controlled large areas of the country for several years) Tito in 1948 broke publicly from the dictates of the Kremlin.

And in China, the Chinese Communist Party under Mao Tse Tung, finding itself threatened with extinction by the nationalist forces of Chiang Kai Shek, ignored Stalin's advice and began its drive to power which culminated in a triumphant victory in 1949.

In neither Yugoslavia nor China did the Stalinist leadership offer the slightest independence or political initiative to the working class. Mao's military offensive rested almost exclusively on the peasantry, and was followed by immediate attempts to form a bourgeois coalition; Tito's

"break with Stalin" used simply the forms and trappings of a working class mobilisation to strengthen his base against possible Stalinist attack.

The danger these two developments posed for the Kremlin was *not* the possibility that either or both of these veteran Stalinist leaders had broken from their Stalinist politics to move leftwards, but that they demonstrated the fragile nature of Kremlin control over Stalinist bureaucracies which themselves, for the first time, held the reins of state power and a base of support in their own countries.

The search for bureaucratic/military means of defending the USSR as the imperialists threw enormous material resources into the arms race led to the hasty moves by the Kremlin to move to the aid of Castro's petty bourgeois nationalist revolution that–with substantial popular support–overthrew the Batista dictatorship in 1959.

Having failed in its initial moves to consolidate a coalition government with sections of the 'liberal' bourgeoisie, the Castro leadership found itself increasingly dependent on the economic and military support of the Soviet Union.

Under pressure of the US trade embargo the Castro regime rallied support through a controlled mobilisation of the masses while carrying through the expropriation of US and other imperialist capital in Cuba and replacing the old Batista state machinery with Castroite loyalists.

Conspicuously absent however–for all the barrage of anti-imperialist and 'Marxist' rhetoric–was any independent form of organisation by the Cuban workers and peasants, whether these be workers' councils or genuine factory committees and workers' militia. As the petty bourgeois Castroites despite initial anti-communism, became assimilated politically into the orbit of Stalinism, one overriding common factor that united the two sides was their mutual opposition to the independent movement of the working class and its exercise of political power and management over the economy.

This same political line was reflected in the tentative moves by the Castroites to gather around international supporters elsewhere in Latin America based on their own petty bourgeois guerrilla methods and with no concept whatever of politically mobilising the working class.

By 1968, Castro had been far enough absorbed into Stalinist routinism to publicly support the Kremlin invasion of Czechoslovakia. And by 1973 he was lending the still prestigious backing of the Cuban revolution to Allende's doomed Popular Front regime.

Further proof that Stalinist manoeuvres were still aimed at securing a stable balance of class forces with imperialism on a world scale was offered by the development of the war of liberation in South Vietnam. For years this conflict was cynically used by the Kremlin and to a lesser extent by Peking as a bargaining counter in dealings with US imperialism. But the most desperate efforts by the imperialists to shore up a corrupt and tottering puppet regime in Saigon came up against the forward movement of the world colonial revolution, the growth of demoralisation among the US conscript army, and mass anti-war sentiment in the USA itself. The most ruthless and sophisticated military methods–saturation bombing, defoliation, napalm attacks, helicopter gunships, anti-personnel weaponry–all proved to be no match for a tenacious liberation struggle with massive popular support.

But as the Saigon regime crumbled after the withdrawal of US forces, the Hanoi regime took care to ensure that it was not independent mass struggles or the NLF forces that carried through the final assault, but Stalinist regular troops from the North. These troops immediately imposed authoritarian control over the liberated South and ensured that no moves towards workers' councils or factory committees got under way.

And not until 1978, three years after the conquest of power in the South, were controlled moves made to carry through the decisive expropriation of capitalist holdings–a process which triggered the first flow of emigration by dispossessed bourgeois and petty bourgeois elements.

The victory of the Khmer Rouge Stalinist forces over the Lon Nol puppet regime in Cambodia also avoided any independent mobilisations of the small working class or of the peasantry.

One lesson Trotskyists must draw from each of these post-war Stalinist-led overturns of capitalist property relations is that the struggle for the organised political independence of the working class, through organs of workers' control and workers defence, is essential if the stranglehold of the Stalinist bureaucracy is to be broken. Only through such a fight can the defeat of imperialism be taken forward to the establishment of a revolutionary proletarian dictatorship and a socialist planned economy under the control of the working class.

There could scarcely be a clearer example than the savage Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia to demonstrate vividly in practice the contradictory but harsh reality of a *counter revolutionary workers' state*, in which the expropriation of capitalist property and the smashing of the capitalist state is carried through in such barbarously bureaucratic military fashion as to exclude any political development by the toiling masses.

2.) Splits in the 'Monolith'

The emergence of national-based antagonisms between sections of Stalinist bureaucrats began with the 1948 Stalin-Tito 'break'. But the process has continued and gathered pace following the death of Stalin in 1953 and the growing tensions created by bureaucratic mismanagement of diverse national economies.

Pressures which centre on how to control the working class and defend their *own* privileges have acted on the national Stalinist bureaucracies. This led in East Germany, Poland and Hungary in 1953 and 1956 to splits which created the possibility of political revolution. The lack of any conscious political break from Stalinism however, together with a combination of political manoeuvre and outright military repression by the Kremlin enabled the revolts to be contained.

But further cracks and sharper conflicts have emerged since 1960, with the complex and increasingly open rivalry between the Moscow and Peking Stalinists, each seeking to buttress the basis of their own bureaucratic privileges through diplomatic/military blocs and manoeuvres on a world scale.

Because of the particular way that the Chinese revolution took place, and the less lengthy period over which its bureaucracy has exercised its Stalinist international policy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism, forces, particularly amongst colonial liberation struggles and amongst youth in certain industrialised countries and during revolutionary upheavals, have been attracted to Maoism.

The various shifts in the Maoist bureaucracy's positions have however thrown up numerous warring factions on a world scale, each claiming to "orthodoxy", and calling themselves revolutionary.

The reality of course is that *none* of them is capable of breaking from the reactionary politics of "socialism in one country" developed by Stalin in the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union. Maoism is indeed simply a particular *variety* of Stalinism, reflecting the particular national requirements of the Peking bureaucrats. This accounts for the curious combination of ultra-left phraseology with right wing opportunist positions, and for Maoism's "third period" sectarian denunciations of social democrats and Communist Parties as "social fascists" (Portugal!)

These various groupings can only be fought in the context of a consistent struggle to develop Trotskyist parties within the working class, capable of understanding and demonstrating the counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism in action.

In this way we can offer the colonial masses and youth a genuinely revolutionary alternative.

More recently these developing splits between rival Stalinist bureaucrats have been driven on by the impact on the deformed and degenerated workers' states of the

capitalist economic crisis.

In the workers' states the heavy weight of the bureaucracy combines with the effects of the capitalist crisis to produce new economic problems which threaten the very continuation of socialist property and the planned economy. Decades of bureaucratic planning and the suppression of the creative economic power of the working class has meant that the economies of the workers' states have become less able to meet the demands placed upon them.

As the 1976 events in Poland showed, the bureaucracies find it increasingly difficult to resolve these problems by imposing further austerity on the working class. As a short-term solution, therefore, they have imported increasing amounts of goods from the capitalist countries and have encouraged the participation of imperialist corporations in the "socialist" economies.

As a result, large balance of trade deficits with the imperialist countries have grown up, and these have been bridged by bank and government loans to the bureaucracies. Not only does this astonishing growth of indebtedness produce immediate problems of repayment for some of the workers' states, but it also leads to and reflects greater dependence of these states on the imperialist economies.

This is expanding the avenues through which the capitalist economic crisis penetrates into the planned economies. And it greatly increases the amount of political leverage which the imperialist bourgeoisie is gaining within the workers' states.

These pressures are reflected in important shifts in economic policy in many of the workers' states: the market mechanism is being fortified, plans are unfulfilled and abandoned (USSR) and in one case (Bulgaria) the bureaucracy is abandoning long-term planning altogether; imperialist capital is being given greater freedom of operation Hungary, Poland, China); and there are even moves to restore private property (Poland, China).

The consequences of the bureaucracies' policies in attempting to balance between imperialism and the working class are particularly clear in the case of China. Under Mao, the Great Leap Forward of the Fifties was an attempt at rapid industrialisation that would avoid the growth of the urban proletariat.

After its failure, the bureaucracy split over how the exploitation of the Chinese workers and peasants could best be increased to finance industrialisation. The faction around Teng Hsiao-ping pushed for an increase of material incentives and management authority in the factories, and the encouragement of private peasant production. The faction around Mao tried to turn the anti-bureaucratic pressure of the masses into a movement for self-sacrifice and self-discipline. Although Mao's policy contained great dangers to the bureaucracy because of the forces it unleashed, it must be seen as part of the overall struggle of the bureaucracy to maintain its control of the masses.

With Mao's death, many of the bureaucratic elements that were defeated or demoted during the Cultural Revolution have regained controlling positions. But industrialisation, ever more necessary for being postponed, is not being pursued by releasing the energies and organisational capacities of the working class, but by massive direct imports of imperialist capital, and on capitalist terms.

This policy carries a double threat to the bureaucracy. The effect of such large amounts of capital operating on the basis of profit must inevitably distort the planned economy, threatening the wholesale restoration of capitalist production relations. While certain sections of the bureaucracy may see a future role for themselves in this, it cannot be in the interests of the bureaucracy as a whole. Both for the Chinese working class and the oppressed masses of the world it would be a disaster.

The second linked threat to the bureaucracy affords a way forward. Rapid urban industrialisation, by whatever means, must serve to strengthen the position of the working class in China. The response of the urban masses to the depradations of capital will take forms, as during the Cultural Revolution, that go beyond the control of the bureaucracy, and increasingly put the political revolution on the agenda.

The forward movement of the working class that has characterised the period in the capitalist states is also a material factor within the deformed workers' states of Eastern Europe, Asia and Cuba. The growing demands of the working class are the ever-present factor underlying the splits and divisions between the different national Stalinist bureaucracies.

Romania provides the clearest example of this contradiction and of the reactionary manner in which the Stalinist bureaucracies seek to resolve it. Romanian leader Ceaucescu, fearing a repetition or extension of the recent mass strike by Romanian miners, has allocated an increased portion of the state budget to increase working class living standards—hoping in this way to buy off the working class with concessions while retaining the political power in the hands of the bureaucracy. But this course has driven him into conflict with the Kremlin's demands for an immediate increase in defence spending from all the Warsaw Pact countries.

Fear of repetition of the Hungarian and Czechoslovak events has therefore also persuaded Ceaucescu to refuse to place Romanian troops at the complete disposal of the Warsaw Pact whose chiefs of staff are Soviet Officers.

Meanwhile, unable within the confines of the bureaucratically deformed Romanian economy to find the resources for the expansion required to placate the working class, Ceaucescu has set out to further his opportunist links with the capitalist nations. "Socialism in one country" and the failure of Comecon to attempt any overall planning of the economies of the workers' states save in the interests of the Kremlin leaders, have thus drawn the Romanian leaders onto the path of increasing reliance on capitalist loans and technology. In doing so it renders the Romanian economy increasingly liable to disruption as a result of the capitalist economic crisis. Similar pressures can be seen at work in the Yugoslav economy. Tito's flirtation with 'Eurocommunism' is little more than a reflection of the Yugoslav bureaucracy's increasing dependence upon investment from the capitalist states, and its search for a measure of independence from the demands of the Kremlin.

Given the interdependence of the Stalinist bureaucracy and imperialism in the face of the forward movement of the world working class the penetration of imperialist investment into the non-capitalist economies is the major form which imperialist aggression against the gains of 1917 takes at present.

The emergence of differences between Romania and the Kremlin over military spending will intensify the pressures on other national based Stalinist bureaucracies to place as a priority the placating of their own working class, and to resist efforts by the Kremlin leaders to buttress the Soviet economy at their expense.

The emergence of *territorial* rivalries and actual wars between deformed workers' states (Vietnam and Cambodia; Vietnam and China) also demonstrates the utterly reactionary, nationalist basis on which each Stalinist leadership attempts to resolve its problems. Such splits and conflicts offer imperialism a real chance of making inroads into the gains represented by the nationalised property relations in those countries. In these struggles it is completely wrong for Trotskyists to take 'sides' between rival Stalinist bureaucrats. We oppose the invasion of Kampuchea by Vietnam and the Chinese invasion of Vietnam, and focus on the need for political revolution in every deformed workers' state.

The developing antagonisms between the bureaucracy and the working class which lie at the root of these upheavals offer the prospect of developing in the direction

of political revolution for the overthrow of the parasitic Stalinist ruling caste and the establishment of a government based on workers' councils.

Ten years after the 'Prague Spring', the crisis of Chinese Stalinism is producing a 'thaw' in this much vaster nation. The Central Committee has already made desperate attempts to close ranks. But there can be no Soviet tanks coming to the rescue of Chinese Stalinism.

For this reason all factions of the bureaucracy will tend to be drawn towards the protection of the army chiefs. If the masses are to find a way forward, the struggle for the building of workers' councils as the focus of organised power independent of the bureaucracy is crucial.

In each of the workers' states, therefore, the reflection of the capitalist crisis and the movement of the masses raises the necessity for the construction of Trotskyist parties to lead the political overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The vitriolic attacks on 'Trotskyism' carried recently by the Cuban press, and the anxious efforts of the Stalinist regimes to repress intellectual opponents who might turn in the direction of Trotsky's anlaysis and programme for the political revolution, all indicate that this point is not lost on the bureaucracy itself.

3.) Peaceful Coexistence

The growing internal instability and unease of the Stalinist bureaucracies, and particularly the Kremlin bureaucracy, is reinforced by the movements of the working class internationally.

The Transitional Programme correctly stressed that because of the extent of Stalinist police repression within the USSR:

"As in fascist countries, the impetus to the Soviet workers' revolutionary upsurge will probably be given by events outside the country".

The efforts of Stalinist parties to head off such revolutionary events have included the extreme class collaboration of the 'Eurocommunists'. While this counter-revolutionary political strategy does everything to hold back the working class and stabilise the international balance of forces, it has raised a major question mark over the mass Communist Parties' readiness to mobilise in support of the Soviet Union in the case of a war with imperialism.

At the same time, the puppet regimes of imperialism in Africa are crumbling, as the oppressed masses move forward. In this situation, the Kremlin Stalinists have been forced to move dramatically beyond their everyday methods of counter-revolution.

They continue to supply arms on a restricted basis to the liberation movements, so as to exercise political control over their development. On this basis, the Stalinists can bring maximum pressure to bear to force the African nationalist movements to make compromise deals with imperialism. But this well-worn method of preserving the balance of world forces in relation to imperialism has come against new problems. After the defeat of the US imperialists in Vietnam, the weakness of imperialism—evident to all—has placed the Kremlin leaders in an embarrassing dilemma, since imperialist forces were clearly in no position to withstand the advancing struggles in Angola, Mozambique and elsewhere for any prolonged period.

But this period for Stalinism coincided with a new turn in its own internal crisis. As the split between the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies grew deeper and more bitter, the Kremlin leaders were also faced with the increasingly open willingness of the leaders of the mass European CPs to collaborate with NATO and their own bourgeoisies even in the event of war with the USSR, and with a growing confrontation within the Warsaw Pact with Romania and other sections of the Stalinist national bureaucracies.

These divisions dangerously weakened the ability of the Kremlin bureaucracy to defend itself against any offensive by imperialism on the nationalised property relations of the Soviet Union. To restore the balance, the Brezhnev clique was forced to look for new allies and bases of support.

It is a combination of all these factors that accounts for the entirely new level of Soviet involvement in Africa. The tool for these operations has been the armed forces of puppet Stalinist Fidel Castro (now completely absorbed into the Stalinist economic and military orbit). Cuban troops, combined with Soviet and East German advisors and judicious supplies of arms and material aid, have been used to secure Stalinist bridgeheads in the wake of imperialist defeats in Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia.

This intervention has had a contradictory character. In order to preserve their own bureaucratic interests, the Kremlin Stalinists have actually assisted in the victory of anti-imperialist struggles. But at the same time, the Cuban troops sent to Angola and Ethiopia have given all-important backing to the reactionary policies of the Neto and Mengista regimes against their internal opponents. In this way the Soviet bureaucrats sought both to forestall any deeper radicalisation of the masses that might result from a more prolonged struggle, and also to exercise immediate control over the leadership of the newly-independent states or new regimes.

In each instance Stalinist *opposition* to the independent struggles of the masses has been demonstrated vividly—most blatantly of all in the assistance given by both Cuban and Soviet troops to Mengistu's genocidal attack on the Eritrean people in their fight for national self-determination and the crucial role of the Cuban troops in the suppression of the uprising against Neto in Angola in 1977.

The position of Trotskyists on such military involvement must underline these dangers, while seeking to strengthen the fight of those forces now in struggle against imperialism. We focus on the question of revolutionary leadership and independent struggle, and do not ourselves raise the demand for the sending of Soviet or Cuban troops —though we do demand that a maximum of arms, finance and material aid is provided to every anti-imperialist struggle by the workers' states. On the other hand where those actually involved in liberation struggles themselves issue an appeal for Cuban or Soviet troops to assist them against imperialism, we should support such a demand, while at the same time spelling out the necessity for every possible link-up between the liberation forces and the troops concerned, to ensure the expropriation of landlords and capitalists in the liberated areas and the creation of soviets and committees of workers and peasants, which must strive for the involvement of rank and file soldiers.

Only such an approach offers any independent road for the masses in the struggle against their own petty bourgeois leadership and against the bureaucratic hold of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Indeed the various moves by Stalinism in Africa and elsewhere must be viewed in the context of the consistent global counter-revolutionary policy of 'peaceful co-existence' on which basis the Kremlin clique still retain parasitic power over the socialised property relations that flow from the 1917 October Revolution.

Certainly in Angola the imperialists have scented the willingness of the Stalinists to honour an unwritten 'spheres of influence' arrangement. They have therefore pulled back from the kind of economic and political measures that forced Castro's Cuba completely into the willing embrace of the Kremlin bureaucracy. They have instead agreed with Neto on terms under which they will continue the multi-million dollar oil operation in Cabinda and the Benguela railway. And Neto—himself reluctant to see any extension of the Angolan struggles into Southern Africa—has willingly collaborated in the moves to block guerrilla struggles in Zaire, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

4.) Resistance and Repression

The inherent *instability* of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which runs completely counter to its superficial, cultivated, appearance of impregnable strength, has been demonstrated again and again in the post-war period by its need to preserve the most rigorous repression of the working class, its political and trade union organisations, and its freedom to discuss. Wherever the mounting tensions and conflict of interest between the working class and the bureaucracy have reached the level of open struggle, the Stalinist leaders have responded by a varying combination of tactical economic concessions and vigorous police-military repression designed to safeguard the bureaucracy's political hegemony over the production process which remains the sole basis of its power and privilege.

Major flashpoints have included the military crackdown against the East Berlin workers' uprising of 1953, the revolt by prisoners in the Vorkhuta labour camps in the USSR in the same year; the brutal suppression of the Hungarian uprising which in 1956 had reached the stage of the formation of workers' councils outside the control and in opposition to the bureaucracy; the suppression of a less developed movement in Poland the same year; the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968; and the subsequent repression of massive riots and strikes against proposed price rises in Poland in 1970 and 1976.

The Soviet bureaucracy itself, as shown by the recent spate of show trials and punitive sentences handed out to intellectual "dissidents", isolated supporters of imperialism, and other opponents, feels the kind of unease which suggests that they are concerned not so much to punish the individuals involved as to intimidate more substantial forces likely to move into opposition to the bureaucracy–the working class. Such nervousness must also underly the vicious sentences meted out to Polish strikers in the aftermath of the 1976 events, as well as the police crackdown in East Germany against intellectual "dissident" Rudoph Bahro and in Czechoslovakia against the "Charter 77" grouping which has the audacity to demand that the bureaucracy implement the rights written into the Czech constitution.

But more than this is involved in the struggle for democratic rights in the degenerated and deformed workers' states. The bureaucracy knows that one crack in the armour formed by its repressive apparatus will be enough to unleash mass struggles. We fight, therefore, *alongside* the "dissidents" for democratic rights, without in any way extending that support for the generally confused and even right wing views many of them advocate. We aim to develop the struggle for democratic rights *away* from any notion of a united front with 'democrat' Carter and the imperialists, and *towards* the resurgence of a genuine dictatorship of the class organs of the proletariat.

The guarded 'human rights' crusade by US imperialism does not extend to serious support for dissidents within the Stalinist states. The imperialists, themselves posed with the problem of tackling militant mass struggles know full well the effects of a genuine struggle for democratic rights against the bureaucracy. They are not ready as yet to organise open parties fighting for capitalist restoration.

The Trotskyist programme for political revolution must take into account the rich lessons and experiences of the post-war period, and develop on the foundations laid down by the 1938 Transitional Programme. In particular the experience of the workers' councils thrown up in the Hungarian uprising makes it quite clear that it is no longer adequate to call simply for "driving the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the Soviets". The soviets, insofar as they exist in the Soviet Union or the deformed workers' states, have been transformed under Stalinist domination into absolutely reactionary bodies, which stand fundamentally *opposed* to the political independence of the working class.

The struggle for political revolution poses before the workers the task of constructing *new* organs of workers' power, whose independent class content must be protected by ensuring that they are bodies based firmly on delegates from workplaces, farms, and the ranks of the Red Army.

In elaborating a programme of demands which can lead in ths direction, first and foremost will come demands for the eradication of material privileges and the parasitism of the bureaucracy, and for workers' management of production and distribution. Such demands lead on to the struggle for the restoration of democratic rights for workers' organisations–political parties, trade unions, etc–the abolition of the political police, and the formation of a popular militia and courts.

Demands challenging the oppression of women and gays by the bureaucracy must also be brought forward–remembering Trotsky's analysis of the reasons why the conservative Stalinist clique had moved to restore the family unit which the hard-pressed Bolsheviks had fought so hard to transcend in the period following the October Revolution.

And the scandalous international diplomacy and class collaboration of the Kremlin bureaucracy must be exposed and play a role in the mobilisation of the working class for the political revolution. Similarly, demands for the rights of national minorities are particularly important after the repressive reactions of the bureaucracy, both in Stalin's time and since. These demands can be connected with the struggle to overthrow the bureaucracy and thus give a lead to oppressed nationalities within capitalist states–directing them towards the rights embodied in the genuine dictatorship of the proletariat.

5.) Against 'State Capitalist' and Pabloite Revisionism

Such a programme for political revolution of course starts from a rejection of the various motley impressionist theories that have multiplied in the post-war period, and which argue that the USSR and the deformed workers' states are in fact "state capitalist" or "bureaucratic collectivist" regimes in which the Stalinist bureaucracy represents a new type of ruling *class*.

Whether this view is interpreted from the "left"–with calls to defend these "state capitalist" or "bureaucratic collectivist" regimes against imperialism since they represent a more progressive form of capitalism–or from the "right"–effectively dismissing the gains of the October Revolution and equating Stalinist dictatorship with capitalist dictatorship–the outcome must in either case challenge Lenin's theory of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism. And it must also disorientate the workers' movement, both in the deformed and degenerated workers' states (where the task is wrongly posed as *social*, not political revolution and the bureaucracy's power and stability is overestimated) and in the capitalist countries (where the continued power and influence of mass Communist Parties becomes inexplicable).

But, equally, Trotskyists must repudiate the view spelled out in the post-war years by Michel Pablo and wrongly adopted by the Fourth International at its Third World Congress: that sections of the Stalinist bureaucracy can be pressured by mass revolutionary movements into breaking from the counter-revolutionary politics of Stalinism into the camp of *centrism*, or even to "project a revolutionary orientation". Such an analysis leads only to the most illusory hopes of a possible progressive evolution of Stalinist formations, when the task of Trotskyists is to offer an *independent* lead and programme to any revolutionary movement that develops.

The Stalinist bureaucracy, though now extending its power over one-third of the globe, remains a *crisis-ridden* and *unstable* bonapartist bureaucracy, feeding off nationalised property relations and balancing cynically and precariously between the power of the workers' movement in their own countries and the power of imperialism internationally.

Trotskyists *defend* the progressive economic base of the workers' states—the nationalised property relations—against *all* forms of attack by imperialism. But at *no* point do we relent in the struggle for the political programme and practical actions that can enable the workers within these deformed states to consolidate their independent strength and mount the necessary armed overthrow of their bureaucratic gangster rulers.

For this reason we spell out the necessity for the construction of independent Trotskyist parties to give conscious leadership to such struggles in *every one* of the deformed workers' states—the USSR, the Eastern European regimes, including Yugoslavia, China, Korea, Vietnam, Kampuchea and Cuba.

Though at first the work of such parties will be restricted to the most elementary and covert propaganda, the unfolding class battles on the world arena will undoubtedly present fresh opportunities in the coming period for revolutionary work based on the method and principles of the Transitional Programme. The working class must be politically armed to settle accounts with the usurpers of the October Revolution.

TURN TO THE WOMAN WORKER !

"The decay of capitalism deals its heaviest blows to the woman as a wage earner and as a housewife."

These words in the 1938 Transitional Programme have been amply confirmed by events, and have particular relevance in explaining the mounting resistance from women to the attacks which flow from the break-up of the post-war capitalist 'boom'.

The "austerity plans" of capitalist governments throughout the world have thrown countless thousands of women out of employment altogether; wage controls have slashed the value of already depressed rates of pay for working women; and the world-wide capitalist offensive against social services, education and health has forced a massive additional burden onto women, who, within the oppressive confines of the individual bourgeois family unit traditionally carry the full weight of domestic labour in the home.

The anti-abortion and anti-contraception propaganda of reactionary bourgeois politicians and religious bigots remains a barrier to these fundamental rights for women in countless semi-colonial and even advanced capitalist countries. Elsewhere the ability to exercise these rights in practice is threatened by cuts in health service provision and even attempts to reverse existing laws permitting abortion.

And hand-in-hand with the state preparations for major class battles which go under the heading of "law and order", reformist and capitalist politicians unite in stressing the reactionary bourgeois values of the individual family unit, whose limitations impose daily oppression on women, on youth and on the male workforce.

Trotsky's explanation of the deliberate revival of the cult of the family by Stalin in the USSR in the 1930s applies with equal correctness to those forces—from James Callaghan to Anita Bryant—now attempting to buttress these values in crisis-ridden capitalist society:

"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 40,000,000 points of support for authority and power."

The economic crisis of capitalism now forces the ruling class to attack even existing reforms and rights. This means that the material gains that would be necessary to liberate women from the drudgery of domestic labour and free them to play a full active role in the labour force—full and free child care facilities; communal catering and laundry facilities; equality of opportunity in full employment—are *unachievable* outside of the struggle for the socialist overthrow of capitalism.

It is from this political understanding that Trotskyists must approach the substantial radicalised women's movement that has emerged in the recent period, as well as the hundreds of thousands of women workers that now stand in the front ranks of trade union struggles on jobs, wages and conditions in wide areas of industry.

While recognising that many of the issues at stake in the fight for women's liberation involve democratic rights, and affect *all* women, regardless of class, it is nevertheless essential that Trotskyists recognise that as in any struggle for democratic rights, only *under the leadership of the proletariat* and through the mobilisation of its class strength can these demands be fully achieved. This means fighting for the maximum unionisation of women, and directing them to the essential struggle against the existing reformist and Stalinist leaders of the labour movement.

In contrast to those bourgeois feminists and their reformist and Stalinist hangers-on who seek to build a cross-class 'sisterhood' alliance modelled on the Popular Front, we fight above all for the mobilisation of working class women behind a programme combining democratic and transitional demands. These demands must be raised and fought for in such a way as to lead women workers to the recognition of the need to construct a party capable of leading the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

Only the establishment of socialist property relations can create the necessary material conditions in which sexual inequality and oppression can be finally ended.

Within specific campaigns and under certain defined conditions the broadest possible unity of women in action can be fought for: but revolutionaries must in no way adapt or subordinate their own programme in the face of the confused and often reactionary ideas peddled by the various currents of bourgeois feminism. There must be no blurring of the class issues involved. Rather the task of Trotskyists is to struggle within such 'broad' movements to *win* the most advanced petty bourgeois forces to an understanding of the necessity for a turn to the *working class* and a revolutionary programme.

Only in this way can revolutionaries develop the potential strength of working class women, and train the most advanced elements for leading positions within the class struggle and the revolutionary party itself.

At the same time revolutionaries must declare themselves, and show themselves in practice to be fundamentally opposed to *all* forms of sexual discrimination and oppression—including the state repression of homosexual men and women. Their sexuality is seen as a challenge to the "norms" of the bourgeois family unit and to the reactionary attempts by the Stalinist bureaucracies to preserve and strengthen these "norms".

In taking up this basic democratic issue, we stress the link between sexual oppression and the desperate measures by crisis ridden capitalism to divide the working class along racial and sexual lines, and to reassert its crumbling, reactionary imperialist moral values. Marxists must challenge and expose all of the pseudo-"scientific" rationalisations devised by bourgeois ideologists to reinforce racist and sexist notions.

The championship of the struggle for gay rights, as for democratic rights in general must be taken up boldly by the only consistently revolutionary class in society—the proletariat. For this to take place, revolutionaries must expose, discredit and remove the reactionary labour bureaucracy whose backwardness is the major barrier to the advance of

the working class. This is the task of the Fourth International.

FORWARD WITH THE YOUTH !

It is no accident that every one of the major post-war struggles has seen the leading role of youth. Whether they be the young workers of East Berlin and Hungary who in 1953 and 1956 came onto the streets and fought the reactionary might of the Stalinist bureaucracy; the young freedom fighters in the vanguard of colonial revolutions, the Cuban revolution and the military defeat of imperialism in Vietnam; the students and young workers who emerged at the forefront of the massive General Strike movement in France in 1968; the heroic black school youth and students of Soweto who in 1976 shook the savage apartheid regime of South Africa and showed unmistakeably the revolutionary explosion welling up beneath the superficial calm and stability of police-military repression; or the countless thousands of students and young workers that time and again defied the bullets and clubs of the Shah's massive armed forces in the street demonstrations and strikes that preceded and led into the armed overthrow of that 25-year CIA-backed tyranny; and in the foremost ranks of the Sandinista guerrillas that ousted Nicaraguan dictator Somoza; youth have been in the front rank of struggle.

The militancy and volatility of the youth will undoubtedly be increased in the coming period as the weight of the capitalist crisis bears down upon them, depriving them of education, culture, hope of employment, leisure facilities and the most basic democratic rights.

But their militancy and volatility which offer such potential in the struggle against oppression and exploitation, can, in the absence of principled revolutionary leadership also be exploited by reactionary and even fascist forces.

The building of revolutionary youth movements and a revolutionary youth international is therefore an urgent priority facing the Trotskyist movement. In each country such movements must map out an appropriate programme of transitional and democratic demands. Only such a programme can combat any tendency among the youth to passivity or pacifism, and direct youth to the essential political struggle against the reactionary old routinist bureaucrats who currently lead the labour movement.

AGAINST SECTARIANISM AND REVISIONISM

The 1938 Transitional Programme spelled out the fundamental orientation of the Fourth International towards winning the leadership of the organised working class. In sections entitled 'Against Opportunism and Unprincipled Revisionism' and 'Against Sectarianism' the Programme pointed to the fight to mobilise workers in practical struggles in *conflict* with their reformist, Stalinist and centrist leaders on the basis of the transitional demands.

Only such conflict with the labour bureaucracy can create the conditions for the establishment of Trotskyists in the political leadership of mass struggles. Yet the acute objective problems confronted by the post-war Fourth International and the inadequacies of the leadership thrust forward in the aftermath of the murder of Trotsky and the wartime loss of cadres have meant that leaders and whole sections of the Trotskyist movement have fallen prey to the very same political errors attacked in the Programme, and its method has been effectively abandoned.

Isolated from the class, and confronted with a wholly new situation internationally resulting from the development of the Buffer Zone in Eastern Europe and the consequent change in the balance of forces between imperialism and the Soviet Union on a global scale, the International leadership began in the post war period to lose its political bearings. Some leading members began to respond in empirical fashion to the surface appearances of the post-war period. One example of this was Cannon's *Theses on the American Revolution*, 1946, which based its conclusions on the assumed impossibility of a new organic era of capitalist stabilisation, and a continuation of the immediate post-war upsurge of militancy in the American working class. The contradictory developments which followed 1946 served to change both of these factors, leaving Cannon's *Theses* as a classic statement of revolutionary conviction, but an inadequate preparation for future developments.

A different type of empirical assessment were the 'imminent Third World War' prospect and 'left-centrist' concepts of Stalinism which developed to a high pitch among the European Secretariat of the International, and which became a revision of the Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism, attributing to it a new historical role, and anticipating that the "pressure" of events would transform the mass Stalinist parties into centrist parties.

Each of these empirical formulations represented a tendency to adapt to the surface appearance of events rather than a struggle to grasp the real, complex movement of material forces on a global scale which these events reflected. Similarly, in terms of political content, but not in its form, there was also the tendency—later to be more and more marked in the development of the International Committee—to hold idealistically to "norms" and schemas drawn from pre-war analysis, completely inadequate to understand the new situation. Unable to comprehend post-war developments, some leading members satisfied themselves with repeating truisms and generalisations from the past, or simply turning their backs on new political problems.

Neither of these methods—on the one hand empirical adaptation and on the other dogmatic orthodoxy—could develop a consistent analysis of the new situation confronting the Trotskyist movement. Incapable of understanding the movement of class forces underlying the events unfolding before them, they represented, in practice, the contradictory sides of the same non-Marxist coin. This political failure must, however, be understood in the context of the concrete tasks and problems facing the Fourth International immediately following the war.

The difficulties faced by the FI were made almost insuperable in the post-war years by the generally small forces available, and the *isolation* of the European Secretariat (which took over the main direction of the FI after the war) from the life of parties with any real roots in the working class itself. The resulting inability of these leaders to test and enrich theory in the struggle for revolutionary practice within the party, combined with the intricacies of post-war developments to disorientate both the FI sections and the Secretariat itself.

In these conditions the International leadership that arose was unable to apply in practice Trotsky's description of dialectical materialism as a science which "always takes experience as its point of departure and always returns to it". Instead, the leadership showed a readiness sharply to alter and even lightly to abandon established orthodox positions in response to simply the appearance of new developments.

From this standpoint the FI leadership was unable to establish a consistent line when confronted with the contradictory and long-drawn-out post-war processes which had resulted by the early 1950s in the establishment of deformed workers' states in Eastern Europe and China.

Trotskyists today, with the experience of another 25 years of the counter-revolutionary politics of Stalinism, and the vital experience of having witnessed the working out in practice of the political method embraced by the FI leadership against the background of deepening world economic crisis, are much better placed to analyse the main features of that period. But this demands, at the same time, that we should remain constantly vigilant against precisely the same dangers of the empirical method, which, under the FI Secretary Michel Pablo, led the Trotskyist movement into a revision of basic principles and an abandonment of Marxist analysis.

Pablo took as his starting point merely the superficial *appearance* at a particular point of time, and not the social and historical *process* that must provide the key to understanding the essence–which lies *behind* surface appearance. Thus when Tito in Yugoslavia "broke" with Stalin in 1948, and used 'left' rhetoric to consolidate the position of his own Stalinist bureaucratic caste in relation to the opposed plans of the Kremlin, Pablo could only see the cosmetic appearance of the public 'left' face. He drew from this false impression a whole series of conclusions which challenge the fundamentals of Trotskyism, and which were, initially, virtually unchallenged within the world Trotskyist movement.

Theoretical inconsistency and disrespect for established positions have since characterised all such tendencies. Thus, the Healy leadership of the IC, whilst maintaining a dogmatic orthodoxy against the European Secretariat's capitulation to Stalinism in 1953, embraced opportunism just as spectacularly when they concluded that since the Stalinist leadership in Vietnam had succeeded in ousting imperialism (April 1975) they were, consequently, revolutionary and . . . "therefore" . . . not Stalinist!

Similarly, the SWP, the other main protagonist of "orthodoxy" in 1953, demonstrated over Cuba, and again over the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, their capacity to adopt precisely those formulations which they so tenaciously opposed at an earlier period. Inherent in this is the problem of political method, and central to an understanding of this the Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism as counter-revolutionary.

Analysis of the post-war processes which have involved the overturn of capitalism in Eastern Europe and Asia shows that it is *not* necessary to revise (as Pablo and his followers did) the Trotskyist analysis that Stalinism and Stalinist parties are *counter-revolutionary*, acting to *hold back* the international struggle of the working class lest it dislodge the bureaucracy itself. Rather it is essential that this analysis is defended, and extended as the basis for the struggle for the building of *Trotskyist* parties for political revolution in the degenerated and deformed workers' states. Each of the East European overturns (for example) was so conducted as to *prevent* the development of revolutionary consciousness in the masses, keep the power at all stages out of the hands of the masses, and to ensure that the end result was in line with the post war settlement with imperialism.

It is entirely wrong also on the basis of later events to attempt to falsify the process of transformation which brought them about, as did the FI leadership when they *retrospectively* gave the Stalinist Yugoslav CP bogus credentials as a "centrist" party in 1951 at the Third World Congress of the FI. Even worse, the wrong conclusion Pablo drew from Yugoslavia was *generalised*, to suggest that "mass pressure" could force the Stalinist parties elsewhere to become centrist parties; that centrist parties can lead successful revolutions; and that the task of Trotskyists was merely to "fuse" with this "process". From the crucial significance attached by Lenin and Trotsky to the development of the *subjective factor*–conscious revolutionary leadership for the working class–Pablo and the FI leaders who supported him turned all their attention to the workings of an imagined "objective process" towards revolution.

It was then an extension of this wrong position to see the perspective of Trotskyists undertaking "deep entry" ('sui generis') into the ranks of the mass Stalinist parties, particularly in France. This remained the line of Pablo's followers for nearly two decades.

In this context Pablo's concept (widely accepted by FI leaders) of an impending "Third World War", which was envisaged as a 'war-revolution' because of the role anticipated for the Soviet Union, played an important part in covering over the contradiction between the obviously reactionary, counter-revolutionary politics of the Stalinist leaders of the mass CPs and the prospect Pablo saw of a revolutionary tendency arising within these parties–"this movement will develop revolutionary tendencies, not through the conscious will of its leadership, but through the pressure of the situation evolving towards war." (*For a Decisive Turn in France*, 1952)

The analysis which anticipated the Third World War was in fact based on a drastically wrong estimate of the balance of class forces and a revisionist conception of the role of the Stalinist bureaucracy–a false picture which reflected the pressure of bourgeois ideology upon the post-war Trotskyist movement.

Such a disastrous course opened up the danger of a complete political liquidation of the Trotskyist cadre into Stalinism.

In 1953 the full significance of Pablo's line came home to the American SWP and the British when factions within their national organisations, fostered by Pablo, began to agitate for a parallel liquidationist course to that enforced upon the French. At the same time the first wave of political revolution made itself felt in East Germany. It found the International–formed to give conscious leadership in the struggle against Stalinism–without any independent policy or programme for the East German workers. And, in the same year, mass strikes broke out in France–exposing the acute dangers of holding the slightest conciliatory line towards Stalinism, or illusions that it would swing to the left under "mass pressure".

Reacting to these developments the SWP leaders moved in belated defence of Trotskyist orthodoxy and, through the Open Letter of November 1953, declared an 'open faction' against the line of the Pabloite Secretariat. In this stand they were supported by the British and by the expelled French majority. The Pabloites' reply was to act in such a way as to drive these forces from the International, declaring the Pabloite minority factions in Britain and the USA to be the 'official sections'. This left the expelled sections with no option but to organise themselves as an international body–the International Committee.

While the IC held "orthodox" positions, (particularly on the nature of Stalinism, the vital role of the subjective factor in the form of the struggle to construct Trotskyist parties, and the analysis of the period against the empirical waverings and opportunism of the Pabloites during the 1953-63 period) it never adopted any kind of democratic centralist structure which of course is essential for a Trotskyist international centre. And the inadequate political grasp within the IC of the differences in method and programme posed by the 1953 split left *all* FI sections disorientated. This was exposed sharply in the Cuban revolution.

While there was and is nothing unprincipled in seeking to reunify the world Trotskyist movement via a thorough discussion of differences, the SWP moved instead to embrace in 1963 the method and logic of the Pabloites.

Proceeding *backwards* from their characterisation of Cuba as a "workers' state" (as Pablo had done with Yugoslavia) the SWP went on to draw the same formal conclusions: that if Cuba is a workers' state, capitalism must have

been overthrown by revolutionary means; that a revolution must be consciously led; and *"therefore"* the Castro leadership–despite their petty bourgeois origins and bureaucratic control, and despite their obvious separation from Marxism –must have been moved towards Marxism by some "objective process", becoming "unconscious Trotskyists".

As did Pablo with Yugoslavia, the SWP proceeded to draw from this mistaken analysis a *reactionary* conclusion: that it is *not* in fact necessary in every country to build Trotskyist parties to lead a successful struggle for proletarian revolution and ensure the political independence of the working class in the fight against bureaucracy. And this in the case of Cuba is linked to an effective abandonment of the fight for political revolution in a deformed workers' state.

But from the fact that the course of the SWP leadership in 1961-3 was an unprincipled one, it does not of course follow that the opposition to them was necessarily principled. The SLL-led remainder of the IC adopted–opportunistically–a position on Cuba which was, formally speaking, the polar opposite of the SWP's: that Cuba remained a *capitalist* state. While the SWP leadership denied the social transformation of Cuba had been carried out bureaucratically, the SLL defended "orthodoxy" by *denying it had taken place at all!* Either way lay the road to political bankruptcy.

Not surprisingly, given the avoidance of principled discussion beforehand the newly "reunified" Secretariat rapidly began to encounter sharp divergencies, at the centre of which remained the role of the subjective factor–the need for revolutionary leadership and the building of revolutionary parties–upheld in a partial and inadequate fashion by the SWP. This emerged clearly over the issue of the USec majority's moves towards uncritical support for guerrilla war as a strategy for Trotskyists in Latin America. This policy confused and disorientated USFI militants for many years, and led to untold losses and setbacks, before being empirically abandoned by the Mandelite majority in the run-up to the USFI XIth World Congress.

But the confusion of approach and abandonment of a strategy of independent proletarian mobilisation was not restricted to the opportunist adaptation to petty bourgeois guerrilla forces in Latin America. It was extended by the Ceylonese section of the USFI in 1964 to justify the treachery of their entry into a reactionary nationalist Popular Front government with Mrs. Bandaranaike's bourgeois Sri Lanka Freedom Party. It was only *after* they had decided to do this that they were expelled from the USFI. And in Europe the guerrillaist line took the form of adaptation to ultra-left petty bourgeois radical currents misnamed as the 'new mass vanguard'.

Similar adaptation led some USFI forces in Portugal in 1975 to sign a joint pact with Stalinists and centrists pledging to defend the bourgeois Fifth Provisional Government of the Armed Forces Movement, while the Hansenite minority instead tail-ended the anti-communist demagogy of Mario Soares' Socialist Party.

But the USFI has not had any monopoly on such opportunism. The OCRFI, too, despite its denunciations of 'Pabloism' advocates a cross-class "anti-imperialist front" in Latin America. And total political confusion has led the "orthodox" International Committee into its utterly reactionary subservience to Vietnamese and anti-communist bourgeois nationalists in the Middle East–to the extent of supporting the post war murder of Vietnamese Trotskyists, the execution of CP members in Iraq, and the jailing of Iranian socialists.

But while opportunism has been a consistent danger to the post-war International, so too has sectarian abandonment of the fight for Transitional demands. Whether these have been jettisoned in favour of minimal, reformist demands (35 hour week in place of sliding scale of working hours, etc) or supplanted by reiteration of the *maximum* programme of socialist revolution ('nationalisation, without compensation, under workers' control of all major industry, etc), the end result is in each case a combination of sectarian ultimatism and opportunist flip-flops. The only gainers from such revisions of the Programme are the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies, who continue their betrayals undisturbed by principled opposition.

It is essential that the role of the transitional demands –which is spelled out in the Transitional Programme–is understood. They form the vital *bridge* between today's problems and today's existing consciousness of the working class, and the tasks of the socialist revolution. Without being offered this bridge by revolutionaries, workers are effectively abandoned to their existing levels of consciousness and their existing leaders. And in taking such a sectarian stance, would-be revolutionaries inevitably wind up either as isolated, ranting groups of ultimatists, or, in a desperate search for "mass" support, liquidating the programme in an adaptation to spontaneous struggles and 'progressive' currents of reformism, Stalinism, or bourgeois nationalism.

It is with these points in view that we must analyse the lessons of the experiences of the post-war Trotskyist movement. We critically defend those forces–initially in the International Committee–that took, however partially and inadequately, a stand in defence of the primacy of the task of constructing *independent Trotskyist parties* as the sole guarantor of the political independence of the working class.

At the same time we stress the refusal of *any* of the main currents of post-war Trotskyism objectively to examine the roots of the crises that have split and confused the world movement and reduced it to its present anarchic state. This refusal to discuss the experiences of the fight for the programme means that *none* of the existing international tendencies is equipped to lay claim to represent the political continuity of the Fourth International or to lead the fight for its reconstruction.

It is for this reason that the signatories of this document agree to undertake the task of fighting on a world scale for the necessary principled discussion of the programme and historical experiences of the Fourth International which alone can lay the basis for it to be reconstructed as a disciplined, democratic centralist, united, world party adequate to the task of leading the world's proletariat in the fight for its emancipation.

RECONSTRUCT THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Since the death of Trotsky, the Fourth International has faced major objective difficulties and a continuing crisis of leadership. Under massive pressure from imperialism and from Stalinism, with the isolation of revolutionary forces that prevailed throughout the 'boom' period, theprinciples and method of the Transitional Programme have been questioned and even thrown aside by leaders who laid claim to carry forward the struggle for Trotskyism.

But despite these open and covert attacks, and despite the new and complex developments in the post-war period that posed Trotskyists with the task of extending and deepening its main lines of approach, the Transitional Programme *retains* its validity as a line of march for the reconstruction of Marxist parties in every country independent of the Stalinist and reformist bureaucracies and of petty bourgeois nationalism. Those who in the post war movement have set out to adapt opportunistically to those forces have first had to set their faces *against* the principles and the method of the Transitional Programme, which stands as the political continuity from the revolutionary heritage of Lenin's Bolshevik Party, the Russian Revolution, the first four Congresses of the Communist Inter-

national, and the struggle of the Left Opposition against Stalinist degeneration in the USSR and in the Comintern.

In the last 40 years–a period of acute difficulty for revolutionists and internationalists–it has been *only* forces adhering to the Fourth International that have consciously attempted–however inadequately–to combat the counter-revolutionary strategy of Stalinism and reformism. Only these forces have held out the necessity for the construction of the FI as the only world party of socialist revolution.

We are convinced that this tradition, though jeopardised by opportunism, sectarianism and mounting confusion of the various currents pretending to the title of "Fourth International", is *not* dead. The positive and negative experiences of the post-war period, if re-examined objectively from the standpoint of building revolutionary parties in every country today, offer the theoretical and practical lessons necessary for the enrichment and development of the Transitional Programme.

Such development can only take place under conditions where theory is consciously and consistently submitted to the test of practice and objective assessment within the context of a democratic centralist world party.

Every attempt to short-cut the fight for genuine programmatic agreement through opportunist "moratoria" and "fusions"–which effectively outlaw serious discussion of differences and merely pave the way for future splits–has proved disastrous for the clarification of the world movement, and has contributed to the profound crisis and confusion that now dominate the main tendencies that regard themselves as Trotskyist.

Only a fundamental political *break* from the opportunist organisational and political compromises of the past can open the door to real unity in action. This is why the signatories to this programme insist that in the ideological arming of the working class and the intervention of Marxists into the labour movement there must be agreement on the need for parties and a reconstructed International constructed on the Bolshevik pattern, based on the political and organisational principle of *democratic centralism*. This means complete democracy within the movement in arriving at decisions, combined with strict adherence by all members to centralised discipline in carrying out the decisions of the majority.

The fight for this internal regime brings to a high point the fight against the petty bourgeois tendencies to individualism, propagandism, opportunism and careerism which beset the bankrupt ranks and leading echelon of the reformist, Stalinist and centrist movements. At the same time it challenges syndicalist positions brought into the movement by trade union comrades.

And by bringing the practice of the movement into open discussion, enabling the theoretically established perspectives and the daily developing practice of the party to be brought into sharp conflict, democratic centralism plays a crucial role in the fight against schematism and dogmatism, together with all forms of idealist retreat from the Marxist method of dialectical materialism.

Similarly, on an international level, democratic centralism must be upheld as the essential organisational principle of the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

We are fundamentally opposed to the concept of an "International" in which the discipline is so loose and the programmatic agreement so weak that public warfare can take place between its factions in different countries around the world. We insist on the fullest international discussion and examination of the practice of the sections, combined with a strict adherence by *all* sections to the line of the majority.

Above all, it is clearly impossible to resolve the historical problems of the International and the prevailing programmatic confusion simply by voting on or by signing correct programmatic statements.

Our Tendency insists that the test of the political line of a national of international movement must rest not solely on its more or less orthodox theoretical positions on paper, but on the assessment of the strategy and tactics through which that movement fights to draw out the conclusion from these positions in its *practical* struggle for leadership within the workers' movement.

The construction and development of the Fourth International must be the conscious expression of the larger process of which it is a part–that of the international working class redigesting its own experiences, and facing up to the tasks posed by the greatest social crisis in the history of imperialism.

Adopted by a National Aggregate meeting of the Workers Socialist League, October 14, 1979.

For a Proletarian International

This document was submitted to the International Discussion Bulletin by the Greek Communist Internationalist League. It first appeared in their Greek-language magazine Nea Poreia.

FOR A PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONAL

1) The breakup of the 4th International in 1953 created two basic international organisations; the International Committee and the International Secretariat. Today, both are absolutely disoriented away from the principles of the revolutionary proletarian movement. The International Secretariat (which changed its name to the United Secretariat in 1963) has degenerated to the degree that it aligns itself with so-called "Eurocommunism" on fundamental matters, supporting the idea of legality of bourgeois parties within socialism. In other words, it essentially denies the proletarian dictatorship and the revolutionary road to socialism.

The International Committee, which for several years claimed the role of the defender of Trotskyist orthodoxy has ended through a different path in the same opportunist degeneration and its national sections have now turned into Apostles of Gaddafi and other Middle East nationalist leaders Simultaneously, in a whole series of other matters, the IC supports completely sectarian positions.

These two international organisations have definitively degenerated and are unable to construct a new revolutionary leadership for the working class, a successor of the bankrupt Stalinist and social democratic currents. This task falls upon the shoulders of the small forces which have broken from the International Committee and have hardened in the battle against rightist opportunism and against sectarianism.

Theoretical Mistakes

2) The degeneration of the I.C. and the USFI starts from a series of theoretical mistakes in the immediate postwar period. The most important cadres of the 4th International, such as Cannon, Hansen, Pablo, Mandel, Lambert and Healey, proved unable to explain from a principled stand such postwar phenomena as the Stalinist expansion of Eastern Europe and Asia or the stabilisation and economic "boom" of postwar capitalism.

Those cadres accepted the fundamental analysis made by Trotsky on the Stalinist bureaucracy; that it is a temporary cancer on the bodies of the workers' state and it has no historic task to fulfill.

Trotsky believed the bureaucracy to be the product of an unfavourable relation of forces between classes on a world scale. Once the balance shifted against imperialism, the bureaucracy would lose the material conditions for its own survival and would be violently overthrown by the proletariat. Consequently, its interest lies not in the expansion but in the limitation of anticapitalist revolution. Trotsky defended these concepts against several pettybourgeois currents and above all against Burnham and Shachtman, members of the SWP of the USA. The latter considered the bureaucracy to be a new historical *class*, thus arriving at the conclusion that it would fight to establish its regime over the whole world. It was in this way assigned a historically revolutionary task in which the future belonged to it (to the technocrats) and not to the proletariat and socialism.

After the war, Trotsky's supporters had to face the phenomena of the "sovietisation" of Eastern Europe by the Red Army, and the Chinese Revolution.

But they were unable to explain them from the starting point of Marxist principles. They thought that the recognition of the Eastern European countries, as workers' states, implied necessarily the recognition of a historical role of the bureaucracy and, thus, a justification of Burnham and Shachtman's theories.

Mandel was one of the leaders who attempted to refute the social overthrow in Eastern Europe for quite a long time. Pablo on the other hand immediately defined the Eastern European regimes as workers' states, and held that the future of mankind belonged to the bureaucracy. The perspective thus opened before mankind was "centuries of degenerated workers' states".

It was not long before Mandel and the whole leadership of the 4th International were obliged to accept the social overthrow in Eastern Europe—which had now become manifest. A lot accepted the political conclusions of Pablo as well.

For Pablo, the working class was not a revolutionary historical force any more; nor were Trotskyists the nucleus of its necessary revolutionary leadership. Their task was rather to assist the Stalinist parties, which possessed a massive rank and file membership, to conquer power. To this goal, he believed, the Trotskyists should dissolve themselves through a "sui generis entrism" into the Communist Parties.

The International Committee

Pablo's positions and those of his supporters were liquidationist as of their very essence because they rejected the necessity of the revolutionary parties and the Fourth International. A series of cadres including Pierre Lambert of the French section and James Cannon of the American SWP opposed Pabloist theories and faced organisational measures. The result was to provoke a series of break-ups which led to the formation of the International Committee in 1953. Initially, its leading sections were the OCI of France and the SWP of the USA. British Trotskyists joined the IC in 1956 under Healy's leadership.

Although the IC rejected Pablo's liquidationist concepts, it could not propose an alternative theory in place of his. It recognised the social overthrow in Eastern Europe and China without explaining the fact that the overthrow had been effected under Stalinist leadership. It insisted that Stalinism represents a counter-revolutionary force. In other words, it defended Trotskyist principles in a dead and dogmatic way, without embodying a new analysis of post-war revolutionary phenomena into Marxist theory.

The final consequence of that inadequacy was the way

the IC rolled back to Pabloite confusion. This was first provoked by the victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959-61. Capitalism there was overthrown by a rebel movement based on landless peasants under a leadership that was not even Stalinist, but petty bourgeois nationalist, with strong anti-communist nuances.

After the Cuban revolution, Joe Hansen, a famous SWP leader, argued that the leaders of the Cuban rebel movement had been obliged to proceed beyond their initial bourgeois-democratic goals and establish a workers' regime pushed forward by permanent revolution. He called Castro an 'unconscious Marxist' (i.e. unconsciously conscious!)

That way, the existence was recognised of other revolutionary forces outside the working class and its Marxist revolutionary party, able to successfully effect the socialist transformation of society.

Furthermore, after the imprisonment of Hannibal Escalante, secretary general of the Cuban CP, and other measures taken against Cuban Stalinists, Castro's regime was considered not simply a workers' one but a healthy anti-bureaucratic workers' state. In other words, the Cuban leadership was considered as something similar to Trotskyism, although it was not long before it attacked the Fourth International, using precisely the same dictionary as used by Stalinism.

After the emergence of these theories, every difference between the SWP and the International Secretariat of Pablo and Mandel was reduced to nothing. In 1963, the so-called re-unification congress was called and there the SWP politically joined the Pabloites once more without even discussing the fundamental issues which had provoked the 1953 break-up.

The International Committee under Healy.

The IC continued its route, with the British and French Trotskyists as its basic sections. The General Secretary of the SLL, Gerry Healy, was appointed the main leader of the International organisation, following the defection of Cannon and the SWP. In order not to accept the self-denying formula of 'unconscious Marxism', Healy refused to recognise the social overthrow in Cuba altogether. He still insists that Castro's regime is a capitalist dictatorship!

These leaders seem to have never understood Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism. The founder of the FI had the chance to analyse the phenomenon of the Stalinist pre-war expansion, when the Red Army invaded Poland and Finland. Considering that expansion, Trotsky never arrived at the conclusion that bureaucracy was any kind of revolutionary force or endowed with any historic tasks whatever. He insisted upon basic Marxist principles and the transitional nature of the Stalinist cancer.

Capitalism was unable to be overthrown anywhere without revolutionary proletarian action led by a Marxist party. Yet the bureaucracy was able to extend its territory not because it was a revolutionary force itself but for motives of self defence and survival. Commenting on the Red Army invasions into Poland and Finland, Trotsky wrote against Burnham and Schachtman:

". . . the overturn of property relations effected there could only have been realised by the state rooted in the October Revolution."

"That overturn was imposed on the Kremlin's oligarchy in the process of its struggle for survival under special circumstances . . ." (*In Defence of Marxism*).

We can use the analogy to explain the behaviour of the traditional reformist leadership within the capitalist countries. Reformism, be it classical or Stalinist, represents a brake on the development of the workers' movement in general.

In certain circumstances, it may take the lead of workers' struggles in order to defend its own privileges and interests.

The extension of the Russian regime in a series of countries with common borders with the USSR was imposed by the defence needs of bureaucracy. Moscow tried to create a buffer against imperialism. The defensive nature of its actions was clearly demonstrated in its utopian attempt to establish hermaphrodite, half-capitalist and half-socialist, regimes in Eastern Europe. It was forced to necessarily proceed to their Sovietisation, when it was threatened with war by the western Allies.

In China, which flanks the Asian borders of the Soviet Union, the developments were analagous to the Eastern European ones. From the point where Mao's regime was founded, it avoided socialist measures and was forced to proceed with them only when the imperialists intervened in Korea in 1951 and threatened China with an invasion.

Consideration of the defensive needs of the Soviet bureaucracy and its interest to survive in general also explains the "Sovietisation" of Cuba and the creation of other buffers: economic, political and military ones, at other places of the globe useful for the Kremlin's negotiations with imperialism. By propping up Castro's regime economically and militarily, by making it dependent on itself (i.e. on the Soviet bureaucracy) and by assimilating it, the Stalinist bureaucracy succeeded in blackmailing the American imperialists and obliged them to abandon their Cold War strategy. Following the "missiles crisis", new relations were established between East and West and opened the so-called period of "detente".

Bureaucratic power depends on the maintenance of a world balance with imperialism, and the struggle for this balance determines Moscow's foreign policies. Castro's power could not have survived without leaning on the bureaucracy and in the last analysis on the conquests of the October Revolution. It was neither supported by the working class nor did it have a revolutionary internationalist policy. Therefore, the re-establishment, under a new form, of dependence upon North American imperialism was inevitable—unless the sale of Cuban sugar cane and tobacco was ensured by the USSR and other Eastern European countries.

After all, all post-war social overturns are, in one way or another, extensions of the Russian Revolution. None of the progressive historic steps effected there would have been possible without the previous conquests of October. This confirms the decisive importance of the revolutionary action of the proletariat and the role of the Marxist revolutionary leadership.

6) Under Healy's leadership, the IC was obliged to walk along the path formerly walked initially by Pablo and Mandel and, later, by Cannon and Hansen, precisely because it had been unable to understand the international role of the Stalinist bureaucracy, in its desperate struggle for survival which even, sometimes, dictates activities which in the last analysis undermine its own power.

Despite its "anti-Pabloism", the IC was characterised by the same method, because it held that recognition of post-war social overturns implied necessarily that a revolutionary role was assigned to Stalinism.

After defaming Trotskyism with its sectarian blindness toward the Cuban revolution, it was forced, following the victory of the Vietnamese revolution to adopt bankrupt Pabloite theories arguing that the Vietnamese Stalinists were not Stalinists but "sui generis" revolutionists.

Since forces other than the FI were able to establish a workers' state in Vietnam and were subsequently nominated "revolutionary", why would leaderships such as Arafat's in Palestine and Gaddafi's in Libya not do so? It was along this road that Healy and his supporters came to endorse theories identical to those presented by Pablo decades before—theories which the IC had been precisely formed to fight against.

Petty-bourgeois degeneration.

7) Thanks to the "theories" concering the post-war phenomena, Trotsky's successors succeeded in making the boundaries distinguishing the Trotskyist revolutionary movement from Stalinism, centrism and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships fade away. Trotskyism was for them

nothing but a single member of the great revolutionary "family". In this way the FI was reconciled with hostile political currents and, in the process, was transformed into a degenerated petty bourgeois organisation both in composition and policy. The starting point for that development had been the theoretical mistakes made by Trotsky's successors. But, while mistaken positions transformed the political and social substance of both IC and US so that, today, they have both become petty bourgeois organisations, that process of petty bourgeoisification became in turn the starting point leading to the production of new theoretical and political monstrosities.

The theoretical mistakes were not made regardless of the circumstances within which the FI acted. It might have corrected its orientation in time if it had gained roots in the working class movement in Europe and the other vital areas in the world. But the fact remains that it consisted of small and isolated groups, mainly formed of intellectuals.

Today, several fresh comrades arrogantly imagining that Day No. 1 for the Trotskyist movement really starts with their very participation in it, argue that the FI owes its isolation to the underestimation by its leaders of the struggle for everyday demands of the working people! In reality, such arguments constitute a frivolous distortion of our own history. The older generations of Trotskyists fought tooth and nail against Stalinism and social democracy in order to win over the leadership of the working class within the class struggle. But they were obliged to do it while swimming against the current. The rapid, wholesale degeneration of the Third International faced the generations of workers who had just broken from the Second International with the task of a new political break and another new beginning. This was terribly difficult and raised enormous obstacles to the struggle for the construction of mass Trotskyist parties. This was the most general cause for the isolation of the FI without, of course, neglecting subjective insufficiencies and mistakes.

At the last stage of the Second World War, the victorious advance of the Red Army into Eastern Europe raised immense hopes within oppressed masses the world over, and, therefore, necessarily drew them around the Stalinist leadership. Yet the Stalinists betrayed the working class and helped capitalism rise on its feet once more.

During that same period, great changes took place in economic and political relations between the metropolitan capitalist countries; changes which had been prepared by the developments that occured during the decades previous to World War II: US imperialism came to dominate Europe and the Orient, a fact that created the possibility for the restabilisation of the world capitalist economy and the opening of a long period of economic equilibrium and development on the basis of the US dollar.

Thanks to those facts—the extension of Stalinism and the economic stabilisation of capitalism—as far as the Trotskyists' struggle for the construction of a proletarian International was concerned, the negative elements of the past were retained. Under those circumstances and under the strong ideological pressure of hostile class currents, some mistakes which might in different circumstances have been corrected, finally consolidated in the form of theories of adaptation to Stalinism and other petty bourgeois movements.

On the grounds of Pablo's theories of "centuries of degenerated workers states", a new role for the peasantry and the 'jacobin' nature of nationalist leaderships in colonial and semi-colonial countries, the border wall of principles distinguishing Trotskyism from opposing political currents was torn down. Thus, not only were the small forces of the FI liquidated, but also the petty bourgeois elements which had been and were mainly recruited in its ranks were not educated in the spirit of Marxism. Instead they corrupted their organisations and oriented them permanently toward the petty bourgeoisie.

The concrete form taken by the petty bourgeois orientation of the FI at every stage was determined by the national peculiarities of the development of the capitalist crisis.

In the immediate post-war period this orientation was toward Stalinist and social democratic parties. When extensive national liberation struggles broke out in the so-called 'Third World' at a later stage, Pablo and his supporters presented the theory of "three centres" of revolution of which the colonial "centre" was the most important. The whole FI was engaged in an unprincipled support of nationalist movements in the colonies. The latter would allegedly go as far as overthrowing capitalism, pushed forward by the objective laws of Permanent Revolution.

The mistakes on Cuba and Latin American guerrillas.

8) The social transformation of Cuba was explained by being labelled an "exception". It was not long though, before the Pabloites began discovering "exceptional" cases everywhere. The orientation toward guerrilla warfare in Latin America (resolved at the 9th Congress of the USec in 1969) was the inevitable extension of the theories developed about Cuba by Pabloism.

From the very moment that the social overturn there is given the explanation that it has occured irrespective of the foreign policy of Moscow, it is presented as the pure deed of the Cuban peasantry under Castro's nationalist leadership.

If Cuba were a suitable place for miracles why would Bolivia, Argentina or whatever other Latin American country not be so? Here lies the root of the guerrillaist orientation of the Ninth Congress. And no-one has attacked that "root" – not Mandel with his "self criticism" nor the SWP leaders nor Moreno's so-called "Bolshevik Tendency".

Latin American Trotskyists were dissolved into the petty bourgeois guerrilla groups of Castroites and Maoists, consistent in implementing the "lessons" made by the USec (through all its three factions) out of the Cuban Revolution.

Cuba and the "new vanguard".

9) If Castroism were able to thrive in America, why should Castro's and Guevara's supporters not challenge power in western Europe? The orientation toward the so-called "new mass vanguard" was the next link in the same chain of mistakes.

The essence of the Transitional Programme, the founding document of the FI, is the method of Permanent Revolution, which links the immediate interests of the masses, economic and democratic, to the struggle for socialism. But, through its Pabloite orientation towards the petty bourgeoisie, the Transitional Programme has been abandoned by the USec. A striking example in Europe is its policy in Portugal. Instead of linking democratic demands to the socialist perspective by putting forth transitional demands, a transitional programme for action, the USec counterposed the struggle for a Constituent Assembly, freedom of the press etc., to the struggle for Soviets!

That sectarian confrontation was the price for the implementation of the "new mass vanguard" orientation, resolved by the 10th Congress of the USec. While the 9th Congress anticipated the solution of the revolutionary leadership problem through fusion with the adventurist guerrilla groups, the 10th Congress pledged a similar promise for Europe, where the revolutionary party would be constructed through the "grouping together" of Trotskyists with the diverse centrist and ultra-leftist groups. The essence of this orientation is exposed by Mandel, the leading figure of the Majority Tendency and author of the European document in an interview to the Spanish magazine "Old Mole":

". . . According to my opinion the future of the revolutionary movement lies with a sort of groupings, larger than the self-proclaimed Trotskyist ones, groupings which, nonetheless, unite with sections of the FI. What interests us is *one programme* (classical communist), *one strategy* (permanent revolution and *transitional programme*) and a democratic organisational structure (freedom of tendencies and

discussion, acceptance of factions, rejection of bureaucratic centralism, no limitation of internal discussions and even some public ones). *If there is agreement on all this, I do not see why the comrades who share these fundamental concepts with us would not be able to build a national party and an International along with us.*" (November 1976, our emphasis).

In the above statement, Mandel first frees his hands with the distinction between the transitional programme (strategy) and the "classical communist" programme–and then proposes the fusion of Trotskyists with groups "larger than the self-proclaimed Trotskyist ones" (Greek examples: OSE, Machitis, darling cooperators with the Greek section of the USec, OKDE) and, thus, the creation of *new* sections of a *new* International, which is, of course, formed singing the Requiem to the FI.

Thanks to that orientation, the Transitional Programme in Portugal was abandoned in exchange for the adaptation of the "classical communist" programme of the Maoists, who were holding the rump of the Portuguese CP, and through the latter the rump of the MFA, the Portuguese bourgeoisie and the imperialists.

The Stalinists, always and everywhere firmly concentrating on their popular frontist and class collaborationist policy, discovered that their counter-revolutionary role in Portugal would be best served by resurrecting from the dead of the adventurist policies of "social fascism" and "red frontism" and replacing the revolution through stages with a strategy promising socialism in a single jump, over all sorts of intermediate stops, and above all, over the masses themselves. The Stalinists followed the MFA which launched demagogic and reactionary attacks on bourgeois democratic rights, the Constituent Assembly and the freedom of the press, claiming that the revolution must be based on Soviets, the creation of which the MFA promised to support. The MFA junta, unable to impose the bourgeois interests in any other way, tried to revoke the democratic rights of the masses conquered with the collapse of Caetano's fascist dictatorship by launching an attack against these rights in the name of the Soviets and proletarian dictatorship! Behind the MFA junta, the Stalinists, faithful servatns of the bourgeoisie as they had always been, lent to that enormous political fraud prestige and strength. The Maoists and the other groups of the so-called "new mass vanguard" in turn tail-ended the PCP, which welcomed them precisely because it meant to use them. In the name of the orientation to the "new mass vanguard", the Portuguese section of the USec, the LCI, adapted to the centrists and through the latter to the Stalinists within the frontist potpourri, the FUR. The LCI in anticipation of a "grouping" and a fusion with forces larger than "the ones that proclaim themselves as Trotskyist", was dragged into the campaign led by the MFA and the Stalinists in order to split up the working class. For Mandel, the Stalinists and for the MFA, Soares, leader of the Socialist Party was "public enemy no. 1". Thus, the supporters of the USec followed the Maoists and Stalinists in all those sectarian operations such as the thugs' attack on the offices of *Republica* which made it possible for Soares to appear as the sole defender of democratic rights and, along with the Portuguese bourgeoisie, portray the counter-revolutionary MFA attack as a communist attempt to impose a "horrible dictatorship". To conclude their adventurist and liquidationist activity, the Stalinists, Maoists, (always followed by the LCI), proceeded to the provocatory "leftist" coup of November 25, 1976, which gave the reactionaries the necessary pretexts to take oppressive measures and stabilise its regime.

Another consequence of the USFI adaptation to the Stalinists and the petty bourgeoisie in the form of the orientation to the "new mass vanguard" was the shameful support to Otello de Carvalho for the Presidency.

When one cannot correct an erroneous policy in the midst of revolutionary circumstances, the mistake becomes a betrayal and marks one's activity ever after. Portugal proved the total bankruptcy of the USec.

The reformist viewpoint of the SWP.

10) Several sides of the disastrous mistakes committed by Mandel and his supporters on Portugal and Latin America have received a correct criticism in a series of documents and articles by the American SWP and the so-called Bolshevik Tendency of Moreno.

The SWP leaders, while correctly denouncing the adaptation of Mandel's IMT to centrists and Portuguese Stalinists, opposed the sectarian policy of the LCI with a popular frontist strategy of defence of bourgeois democracy. Copying Stalinism and social democracy, they declared in *Intercontinental Press* that "against fascism, revolutionists have the task–independently, using their own methods–to defend bourgeois democracy with all their might".

But the revolutionists never defend bourgeois democracy. While being the vanguard fighters in the struggle for the conquest and extension of democratic rights for the working masses, they always distinguish their position from bourgeois democracy–a "democracy" establishing the right of an infinitesimal minority to "milk" and oppress the vast national majority. Only opportunists equal to Kautsky, the Stalinists and social democracy identify the struggle for democratic rights with defence of bourgeois "democracy", a policy which, in practice, leads to grabbing the tail of bourgeois democratic governments and parties.

The SWP reference to the "independence" of revolutionists, to the use of "their own methods", is only a figleaf covering a cynical reformist policy. The revolutionists' independence lies first of all with their political independence; they do not oppose one form of bourgeois power to another form of bourgeois power, but defend democratic rights while fighting in the struggle for their own independent programme, i.e. for solutions advancing socialism and for steps leading to the dictatorship of the working class.

In Portugal, the SWP proposed a workers-peasants government. This is a central demand of the Transitional Programme. But to this demand and to the whole Transitional Programme these opportunists attribute a totally petty bourgeois content. A government formed by the CP and the SP can serve as a mere helmet to the capitalist state, as, for example, do the Labourites in Britain. Without certain other preconditions, the struggle for such a government may very well be a "revolutionary" camouflage of the struggle for bourgeois democracy. What distinguishes revolutionary policy from reformism on the critical question of political power, is that revolutionists propose: firstly, a transitional programme of nationalisations and workers' control, including the unsolved democratic demands of the masses. Second, but not less important, they struggle for the independent self-organisation of the masses, for the latter to take in their own hands the defence of their own democratic rights. They declare their total lack of confidence not only in the bourgeois state, but in its reformist lackeys as well. Only under these preconditions can the workers-peasants government acquire a revolutionary content, because only in this way is it connected to the construction of organs of power and consistently leads to the final revolutionary conflict.

The SWP puts forth the demand for democratic rights through formulations to be found nowhere except in the theories supporting the peaceful road to socialism. Its leaders declare in *Intercontinental Press*:

". . . In speaking of bourgeois democracy as a conquest of the previous revolutions, the Marxist programme calls for its *extension* to a proletarian dictatorship, its widening from today's limited implementation under the bourgeoisie in the best days of the latter to its total extension to the economic and social field as far as the factories" (our emphasis).

In contrast to the SWP leaders' argument, the proletarian democracy does not constitute an "extension" of the bourgeois one in its best days, but its dialectical *negation*.

Despite our disagreement with Frank, Maitan and Mandel, we cannot but accept completely their totally correct criticism of the SWP on this subject, without neglecting, of course, simultaneously the factional and opportunist motivation behind this criticism:

". . . A proletarian revolution is not merely an extension and generalisation of the democratic rights; along with *continuity*, there is a strong element of discontinuation, an interruption—a break with *all the institutions of the bourgeois state,* a destruction of the bourgeois state machine and *its replacement* by *new* organs of power".

The opportunist degeneration of the SWP leaders is so advanced, that to this criticism they unblushingly give the following stunning reply: "All institutions? Including the Rights of Man contained in the American Constitution?"

The model "socialism" promised by SWP leaders in the USA seems to ensure the rights of all humans, as is declared by the American Constitution, the rights of the American Congress, CIA agents, Rockefeller, the Mafia, the Ku Klux Klan, and so on . . .

The criticisms of the SWP and the so-called Leninist Trotskyist Faction of Mandel's International Majority Tendency, although formally correct as regards certain of its aspects on Latin America and the new vanguard in Europe, is not based on Marxist principles but reflects the pressure of the pacifist ideology of petty bourgeois social strata in the USA. In essence, it is really hard to tell which of the two policies, the IMT's or the LTF's, is the worst.

Moreno and the crisis of Pabloism.

11) Moreno's so-called Bolshevik Tendency, one of the main factions within the USec today, wishes to appear along with its Founding Declaration as a revolutionary alternative to the policy of the IMT and the LTF. Moreno claims that the SWP, with which he coexisted for many years in a common faction within the USec, has now declined and the result of this decline is the SWP position that the revolution in Portugal "must take place in a straight line through an essentially bourgeois democratic programme where the term "democracy" retains the Kautskyist meaning".

Nevertheless, Moreno does not bother to analyse the objective and subjective reasons of this decline which he has suddenly discovered, and he does not in any sense present the history which has led the SWP to such a point. His factional motivation is all too evident. Moreno uses Marxist criticism in an opportunist way in order to rid himself of his brethren of yesterday and free his own hands from any international control in Argentina.

The SWP leaders' views are not new. Hansen, Foley and Novack remind us that they supported the same positions in an article of the *Intercontinental Press* on August 4, 1969, on the occasion when they criticised Castro's support to the Kremlin invasion of Czechoslovakia. At that time, all USFI leaders, Mandel and Moreno included, had remained silent.

We could usefully go farther back, to 1963. Where was Moreno then? After Kennedy's murder, Farrell Dobbs, SWP National Secretary and party candidate for the presidency, was given the chance to declare that:

"The only way for the political and basic social problems of the human race to be solved in a civilised manner, is for the human community to be led by the decision of its majority taken after a free and full public discussion where all views will be exposed." (*Marxist Bulletin*, November 1963).

The statement does not require a comment from us.

At that time Dobbs was already crystal clear: the "only way" for the problems to be solved in a "civilised" American manner is "free public discussion" and the "decision taken by the majority", presumably expressed through universal suffrage, such as the elections for the Presidency in which he stood as a candidate. Why was Moreno so late, at least 15 years, in wording his denunciations of what he calls the 'Kautskyist' SWP concept of the bourgeois democracy?

Only willful blindness can ignore the fact that that delay has common roots with the LTF—and IMT policies criticised by Moreno. The Declaration of the Bolshevik Tendency correctly argues that the orientation to the "new revolutionary vanguard" has been "the expansion of the 9th Congress guerrillaist ultraleftism into Europe".

Here we could observe that the accusation of "ultraleftism" is out of place. In fact, the 9th Congress resolutions did not constitute a "leftist" deviation but a crudely rightist liquidationist policy which led the Trotskyist organisations to disappear into the petty bourgeois guerrilla groups. It is as easy for Moreno as it is for the SWP leaders to explain the resolutions taken at the 10th Congress as an extension of the guerrillaist orientation in Latin America. But as far as the roots of the guerrillaist orientation itself are concerned they are silent as the grave. Even more than that: Moreno defends those roots. In the Declaration of his Tendency he writes that, in the re-unification congress of 1963, Trotskyists were equipped with "the correct definition of the recently born Cuban state and the adoption of the correct policy towards it . . . leaving outside the FI and each time still further back the incurable sectarians (Healy, Lambert) and those opportunists (Pablo, Posadas) etc".

The 1963 re-unification was even more cloudy than the 1953 break-up. Moreno defends the political foundation of that re-unification. We have already quoted Farrell Dobbs' statements of that same era. They are a doubtless proof that the re-unification did not equip but further disarmed the Trotskyist movement. It was unprincipled and took place without drawing out any lessons whatsoever from the former crisis within the FI.

Where did Moreno see the correct definition of the Cuban state? Where did he see the "correct policy" towards it? Is Cuba, then, a "genuine workers state" and Castro a "spontaneous Marxist"? Why, then, does he attack Mandel and his International Majority Tendency? What else has Mandel done other than consistently implement in practice these "lessons" drawn by the whole U.Sec from the Cuban Revolution?

Moreno cannot have his cake and eat it. He must either recognise the IMT policy both in Europe and Latin America as correct or he must accept that the definition of Cuba and the political foundations of the 1963 reunification were rotten, and that they constituted a continuation of Pablo's revisionist and liquidationist wanderings.

By denying both, he proves the opportunist and factional character of his criticism. He proves that despite their resounding titles, the three main factions within the U.Sec do not defend Trotskyism. Their petty quarrel is merely the expression of the death agony of Pabloite opportunism in today's actual period of capitalist crisis.

Turn to Eurocommunism

12) The postwar imperialist attempt to export its crisis to the so-called Third World accelerated the national revolution in these areas. Then, the economic measures taken within the metropolitan countries in order to prevent the monetary system from collapsing provoked the uprising and radicalisation of the petty bourgeoisie and specially of students . These measures concerned large cuts in the so-called non-productive sectors; education, health, public services etc. The Pabloites successively adapted to those petty bourgeois movements.

Today, the situation is radically altered. The national struggles in the colonies have been essentially completed. The petty bourgeois protest movement in the metropolitan countries which because of its own class nature could offer no way forward, has collapsed. The developing capitalist crisis brings us closer and closer to the historical dilemma of our era: either fascism or communism. The petty bourgeois social strata are now moving towards defending endangered bourgeois democracy. In the first stage, and as long as a

strong proletarian revolutionary movement has not developed, they are attracted by the Stalinists who promise to rescue democracy by themselves imposing on the working class the fetters which fascism seeks to impose. The Pabloites, following the petty bourgeoisie in all of its dead-end wanderings, were inevitably, in the present stage, attracted by so-called "Eurocommunism".

Mandel launches his thunderbolts upon "Eurocommunists" for being a rightist deviation and a "social democratisation"—and then, without even stopping to take his breath, he recognises 'positive elements' in Eurocommunist criticism of Moscow. According to this opportunist opinion the task of Trotskyists is to struggle for the Stalinists to bring their criticism to its ultimate conclusion.

Healy, the I.C. "philosopher" also recognises a progressive role to Eurocommunism when he anticipates Trotsky's rehabilitation by these incurable Stalinists and demands such a rehabilitation from them, as if Trotskyism were in need of the blessing of these Stalinist traitors in order to win the confidence of the working class.

In order to align itself with the petty bourgeois intellectual strata now in Eurocommunist circles, the U.Sec has gone so far as to renounce to the "proletarian dictatorship". Although formally retaining the term, it connects it with a completely social democratic content, and supports the legality of bourgeois parties within the proletarian dictatorship! (Read the "Draft Resolution for the 11th Congress under the title "Socialist Democracy and Proletarian Dictatorship").

After the nationalist guerillas and the "new vanguard", the Pabloites are once more out, seeking in Eurocommunism fresh substitutes for the construction of revolutionary parties. Yet, Eurocommunism is an extremely shortlived, transitional phenomenon, as has already been shown by the evolution of CP Interior in Greece. In a period in which communism and fascism confront each other in a mortal confrontation, every possible margin for the development of "pure democracy" disappears. The petty bourgeois can not for long be held quietly within Eurocommunist ranks when they see the so-called democratic bourgeoisie crush them economically and strangle their democratic rights.

Eurocommunism is a new stage in the development of the Stalinist crisis. The Pabloites are basing their hopes on a corpse already in disintegration. Fresh disappointments await them.

13) It is a fact that today all the objective and subjective preconditions exist to overcome the theoretical problems which disoriented and broke up the FI in the previous period. Pabloism has been blown up by the facts themselves. Today, the Trotskyist movement can indeed be constructed on principles. But this does not mean that the old international organisation, i.e. the I.C.F.I. the U.Sec, F.I. or the O.C.R.F.I. can be corrected. They are definitively bankrupt. The crisis of Stalinism and of petty bourgeois radicalism produces respective crises in their ranks and creates the possibilities for their complete dissolution. It does not create the possibilities of their Marxist re-orientation. Pabloite opportunism is not a shirt one can easily toss away if only this can be demonstrated by well-founded arguments.

These petty bourgeois organisations, like the Stalinist parties, certainly contain in their ranks several fighters who can and must be won to Trotskyism. But this can only occur through clashes and break-ups, against the theoretical and practical defenders of bourgeois 'pluralism', those opponents of the proletarian dictatorship.

Those fighters who today stand decisively by the Transitional Programme must co-operate wherever they are and struggle in co-ordination to win strength within the working class in their respective countries. Only a great opening toward the masses in one or several countries is able to offer the revolutionists the necessary strength (along with relentless theoretical polemics against all sorts of renegades of Trotskyism) in order to provoke ruptures in all centrist, Pabloite and Healyite organisations. Only by destroying the opponents of the Transitional Programme can its defenders reconstruct the Fourth International.

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