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# On the Orientation of the Fourth International in Latin America

## Draft Counterresolution to the IEC Majority Resolution on Armed Struggle in Latin America

Submitted by the Compass Tendency

### I. On Latin America—Analysis

#### A) Prerevolutionary situation on a continental scale

In its analysis the Ninth World Congress Resolution on Latin America correctly notes the factors that objectively determine the relevance of permanent revolution to Latin America at the present time: the general social, economic, and political instability on the continent, the changes in trade relations with the imperialist countries that heighten exploitation, the impossibility of thoroughly overcoming or even substantially lessening this general instability, the resulting deep crisis of leadership for the bourgeoisie in Latin America, and following from this the extension of military regimes on the continent as the likely variant of bourgeois rule.

From this the resolution draws the conclusion: "Thus not only in a historical sense but in a more direct and immediate one, Latin America has entered a period of revolutionary explosions and conflicts, of armed struggle on different levels against the native ruling classes and imperialism, and of prolonged civil war on a continental scale." (International Internal Discussion Bulletin reprints, *Discussion on Latin America* [1969-1972], p. 5) And: "These conditions and tendencies as a whole, which in the last analysis reflect the economic and social tendencies mentioned above, create not only a continentwide structural instability but more precisely a prerevolutionary situation. . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 4)

The thesis of a present-day prerevolutionary situation on a continental scale is supported in the resolution by a series of prognoses and hypotheses on the fate of the bourgeois regimes in Latin America. (*Ibid.*, p. 4, point 9)

a) the "democratic-reformist" regimes have either collapsed or are about to because they are in a hopeless situation.

b) the countries that up till now have been relatively stable (Uruguay and Mexico) face "the collapse of [their] political equilibrium;" (*Ibid.*, p. 4)

c) even the military regimes are in or are approaching a decisive crisis.

The resolution further predicts that the ruling class will not be in a position to form any government or even coalitions or blocs "on any even relatively stable base" because none of its strata can find any real support among the people. (*Ibid.*, p. 4, point 10)

The conclusion drawn from this analysis was that development in the individual countries would soon be synchronized in a prerevolutionary stage on a continental

scale, the presumable resolution of this being a continental civil war as a result of the necessarily rapid onset of a head-on confrontation between the classes. (above citation)

From this the conclusion drawn for the orientation of the Ninth World Congress was that

(a) a continental *strategy* on the basis of unified conditions could and must be determined. This strategy should be oriented toward continental civil war, and the only question that needed verification was whether *exceptions* need be made for certain countries.

(b) the *central axis* of this continental strategy must be the answer to the question: through what form of armed struggle can this continental civil war be brought about by initiatives on the part of revolutionaries, and how, once the war has broken out, can it be fought with some prospect for success? The *strategic* answer of the Ninth World Congress to this question was rural guerrilla warfare as the central axis of this battle. (*Ibid.*, p. 6, point 14; p. 7, point 17)

Taking as its point of departure a generally correct characterization of the continuing instability on the Latin American continent, the Ninth World Conference resolution did not sufficiently avoid two dangers:

1) By setting analysis and hypothesis on an equal footing as the basis for determining the orientation, the resolution made overly broad and false *generalizations*. These generalizations were then treated as confirmed facts.

Thus, there was no dovetailing of crises, let alone collapse of the different variants of bourgeois rule in Latin America. (*Ibid.*, p. 4, point 9a-d)

Similarly there was no precipitous end to "pilot models" of "reformist" regimes on account of their bankruptcy. The Belaunde regime in Peru, whose fall was introduced as evidence, was followed by a basically more stable "reformist pilot model," which has already endured for years without a new serious crisis. The bankrupt Frei regime in Chile was replaced by a far more resolute reformist regime under Allende, thereby setting in motion a revolutionary dynamic directed toward a transitional society. Moreover this was a regime that committed itself—with mass support—to that very "democratic and peaceful road" that the resolution tells us is not even debated any more in Latin America and is a variant that is defended only by a few "naive utopians" and "ossified bureaucrats." (*Ibid.*, p. 6, point 15)

The predicted imminent collapse of political equilibrium in those countries that up till now have been relatively stable did not occur except in Uruguay. Thus the "list" of these relatively stable countries must now be extended, at least to include Peru, Ecuador, and Venezuela (for

which a false prognosis was made as well).

The prediction of a crisis in the military dictatorships was also completely wrong for Brazil, the decisive country in this respect, and wrong as well for the smaller countries like Paraguay. It holds for Bolivia; however there at present we are dealing with a completely different military dictatorship than the one in power at the time of the Ninth World Congress, for in the meantime a real "near-revolution" took place in Bolivia, one which moreover proceeded on an entirely different course than that predicted by the resolution.

The generalization that "the bourgeoisie is . . . absolutely incapable of achieving a program of even the most modest democratic reforms" (*Ibid.*, p. 5, point 12) was, as the above examples show, just as sweeping and thus false for the present time, (although it is correct as a historical tendency), as was the generalization that there is no stratum in the bourgeoisie that can find any real support among the people. Here on the one hand, the general is taken for the concrete: (Peru is a counterexample of a reformist military achieving a temporary popular base.) On the other hand, bourgeois strata are equated with bourgeois political currents: thus Peronism, which cannot be identified as a "stratum of the bourgeoisie," as a bourgeois force doubtlessly has "real support among the people."

A further generalization that has hampered our organization in taking advantage of revolutionary opportunities was that in the "actual international framework and particularly in Latin America" the possibility of the "classical variant" of the revolution, i.e., "a progressive rise and broadening of the mass movement and its structuring and reenforcement through traditional organizational forms before it reaches the armed struggle," is the least likely variant and therefore cannot be "revalidated" by revolutionary Marxists. (*Ibid.*, p. 7, point 16) The examples of Bolivia, Argentina, and Chile contradict this prognosis. At this point in an impermissible fashion the resolution draws a conclusion about the possibility that the revolution will develop in accordance with this classical variant based on the difficulty of achieving success in this way given the conditions of imperialist intervention. From this the resolution incorrectly negates this possibility to a large extent.

2) The second danger that the Ninth World Congress resolution does not sufficiently avoid is that of taking an *objectivistic view* of the revolutionary process in Latin America, resulting in neglect of the *subjective factor*, compensated for by gross overestimations of subjective factors.

This excessive reliance on the dynamic of the objective process itself also contributed toward the global evaluation of the situation in Latin America at the present time as prerevolutionary, because all the countries of Latin America are in fact within a framework of common objective factors, factors which are correctly set forth in the first part of the resolution.

From this error the conclusion follows that the possibility of "a reversal of this tendency" (prerevolutionary situation) is envisaged only if changes in the objective factors come about (considerable increase in agricultural production, industrialization that would do away with unemployment, favorable development of raw material prices on the world market, the creation of a common market in Latin America). The resolution then states—quite correctly—that "these are clearly unrealizable conditions in the present context." The importance of the subjective factor for the onset of a real prerevolutionary situation

was underestimated; the strong unevenness of its development in the individual countries on the continent, its immaturity in important countries, was ignored. (*Ibid.*, p. 4, point 10)

Underestimation of the importance of the subjective factor is also expressed in the resolution's treatment of the question of the revolutionary party. It starts with the assumption that the continent is entering into a prerevolutionary situation—with the probable result of a continental civil war—although the existence of a party "completely structured with a mass influence [is] a very unrealistic perspective in almost all of the Latin American countries." (*Ibid.*, p. 8, point 19b) Thus the resolution does not discuss whether the lack of just such a party in practically all the countries of Latin America could hinder the coming about of synchronized continental prerevolutionary situation. By rejecting "the paralyzing conception according to which everything hinges on the preliminary existence of a genuine party with all its traditional structures," the resolution equates the surface characteristics of traditional workers' parties modelled on the classical social democracy with the indispensable function and manner of functioning of the Leninist party as revolutionary class leadership. (*Ibid.*, p. 8, point 19) The resolution considers it sufficient that when armed struggle begins, there already (!) be in existence the nuclei of political organizations coordinated on a national level in order to be able to lead the struggle in a favorable variant. (*Ibid.*)

The weaknesses of the resolution on this point are increased by gross overestimation of subjective factors, statements that correspond to the optimistic prognosis of the resolution but not to reality.

Thus the consciousness of the peasantry is grossly overestimated and insufficiently differentiated when it is characterized by saying that the peasants "have assimilated the lesson of the Cuban revolution whose fortunes they continually follow; have learned a great deal from the guerrilla experience and are not cut off from the student revolutionary movement." (*Ibid.*, p. 2, point 5)

The same thing is true for the grossly overoptimistic estimation of the consciousness and combative spirit of the petty-bourgeois and plebeian layers.

In this same category belongs the overoptimistic assumption about the position of Cuba. The "international context" which heightens the tendency "toward the outbreak of revolutionary situations" is "primarily" based on "the Cuban revolution's continuing to play its historic role [for the Latin American revolution]. (*Ibid.*, p.4, point 10) Although the continuing importance of Cuba in this respect should not be belittled or underestimated, it must be noted that contrary to the prognosis of the Ninth World Congress, Cuba has not continued on the course it initiated with OLAS and has not developed and practiced any alternative revolutionary concept following the failure of the guerrilla attempts it inspired, but rather has disengaged itself from these struggles more and more. The statement that in Latin America "the broadest masses are constantly impelled . . . to struggle against the capitalist system" by Cuba (*Ibid.* p.5, point 11) expressed an exaggerated trust in a leadership that does not share the basic positions of revolutionary Marxists and that has long since ceased to approach them empirically. This is a trust not borne out by developments.

The conclusion drawn from the analysis of the Ninth World Congress resolution—that Latin America was in an immediate prerevolutionary situation on a continental scale—was wrong, fundamentally because of the weak-

nesses mentioned here. Instead of a general prerevolutionary situation there were merely prerevolutionary situations *in a few countries* and at *different points in time*. And with the exception of Argentina, where the situation is still open, all of these led to defeats. There was no relevant tendency toward synchronization of prerevolutionary and revolutionary developments.

### B) Class analysis

The analysis from which the Ninth World Congress resolution drew its conclusions suffered from a certain lack of differentiation in its class analysis, which favored false generalizations.

The social differentiation among the *peasantry* is not taken up. The experience of every revolutionary war (e.g., China or Vietnam) shows how important this question is. The middle and large peasants provide strong support for the bourgeoisie in the countryside. In a few countries the bourgeoisie is attempting to build up this support with its own version of "land reform" (Peru, Bolivia).

Of course, there are numerous local and regional spontaneous explosions among the peasants, which are a proof of their revolutionary potential. The successes of Comrade Hugo Blanco in Peru, the peasant leagues in Brazil, and the peasant movement in Chile have shown how the peasants can intervene in the class struggle in an organized fashion. But they must be organized and have a program if the movement is not to collapse. On a spontaneous basis the great mass of peasants remains passive and in political and spatial isolation from all political movements.

But even the outlines of such a program are not perceptible. It cannot first arise with armed struggle or in the isolation of the first rural guerrilla actions. Rather it is a precondition for establishing firm roots in the countryside. Without a program the peasantry cannot be won over, and thus the objective conditions for the development of a guerrilla war cannot be established.

In the Ninth World Congress resolution the *plebeian masses* are viewed without reservation as a revolutionary force. Of course, they do offer an explosive potential that can be organized as, for example, the UP and the MIR in Chile have shown. But rooting revolutionaries in this sector is very difficult and requires program and organization. If these are lacking, the mobilization will fail. These extremely radical and spontaneous forces can then be transformed through corruption and social demagoguery into an available force for reaction (the "Harkis," the support troops for the colonial army in Algeria, came predominantly from the Bidonvilles [urban slums]).

The role of the "new" *petty bourgeoisie* was correctly noted in the resolution; at the same time, however, it was said that "in the last analysis, it is no social cement for the system." (*Ibid.*, p. 2, point 4) This statement is historically correct, but wrong in the short run. The insecurity of their existence has in fact led to the predicted radicalization, but in decisive phases, under *counterrevolutionary* slogans. At least in Chile, where for a time the reactionary forces were even able to win over the majority of the *students*, the beginnings of a fascist movement became evident. In Brazil another alternative method of corrupting the petty bourgeoisie was put into play and was successful. It contributed decisively to the momentary stabilization of the military regime and the isolation of the urban guerrillas. Here is a case where the petty bourgeoisie profit directly from the pauperization of the workers and peasants. In the years 1964-70, the production of durable consumer goods

rose an average of 27.4 percent a year, while production of food increased only 0.1 percent—with a rapidly increasing population. Even in the *working class* there has been a process of differentiation. A pampered worker aristocracy is being created, which although numerically small nevertheless occupies a key role in production and can thereby even play the role of agents in industry and the trade unions (*viz.* the El Teniente copper workers in Chile under Christian Democratic leadership). In Brazil these professional workers receive a minimum wage seven times the maximum that is still beyond reach of the masses of other workers.

### C) Subimperialism

Unquestionably there has been a counterrevolutionary stabilization in Latin America in the last few years.

In addition Brazil has been strengthened as a subimperialist power (credits, military aid) that understands its role as a counterrevolutionary gendarme in Latin America. It can at least play this role against weak and badly organized movements. Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay are already in its direct sphere of influence. Brazilian troops were involved in the overthrow of Torres. An invasion of Uruguay has been considered on a number of occasions. This relieves U. S. imperialism (within certain limits) of the necessity of future direct interventions at times of revolutionary crisis.

## II. The Strategic Orientation of the Ninth World Congress

### A) The conclusion drawn by the Ninth World Congress: Guerrilla war

The assessment of the Ninth World Congress resolution was that an immediate prerevolutionary situation existed on a continental scale, which contained the potential of a continental civil war of long duration as a probable variant.

On the basis of the expectations resulting from this assessment—that there would be a precipitous head-on confrontation including direct imperialist intervention from abroad—the possibility of democratic or reformist interludes or openings was ruled out to such a degree that these were not allowed to form part of the strategic analysis, and too strong an emphasis on this latter aspect was seen as a mere diversion from the principal task facing revolutionaries in this configuration.

The essential task of the world congress on this point was, therefore, to determine an adequate strategy for the continent on the basis of this analysis. The answer that was given in accordance with this perspective, was rural guerrilla warfare as the central axis of the struggle and a continental synchronization of the revolutionary process in the struggle leading to a Cuba on a continental scale. The resolution also accepted the special condition of the Cuban example—the absence of a revolutionary party and the possibility of creating a "quasiparty" or "armyparty" in the course of several years of armed struggle with rural guerrillas as the central axis.

The Ninth World Congress resolution is as unequivocal on this orientation as the positions of important leaders of the International who contributed to the elaboration of the orientation:

"The fundamental perspective, the only realistic perspective for Latin America is that of an armed struggle which may last for years. This is why the technical preparation

cannot be conceived merely as one of the aspects of the revolutionary work, but as the fundamental aspect on a continental scale, and one of the fundamental aspects in countries where the minimum conditions have not yet been met." (*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7, point 15)

"Even in the case of countries where large mobilizations and class conflicts in the cities may occur first, civil war will take manifold forms of armed struggle, in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare. . . ."

"In this sense, armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare." (*Ibid.*, p. 7, point 17)

"Hence it is necessary to: Take advantage of every opportunity . . . to increase the number of rural guerrilla nuclei. . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 8, point 18)

At least the Argentinian section understood this unequivocally as the strategy for a continental guerrilla war. It went a step further: "For true revolutionaries building the party and building a military force are tasks inseparably bound together." And "in our time politics and the rifle cannot be separated." ("The Only Road to Workers Power and Socialism," *Discussion on Latin America*, [1968-72], pp. 225-26)

Comrade Gonzales, leader of the Bolivian section made a similar statement as early as 1968:

"In the prevailing conditions in Latin America, the results achieved by the guerrillas in Cuba can be realized in any country. Therefore, I say that guerrilla warfare is incontrovertibly the road revolutionaries must take to liberate their peoples from capitalist and imperialist exploitation." ("The Cuban Revolution and its Lessons," in *Fifty Years of World Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, p. 193)

### B) *The Implementation of the line*

The conception of the Argentinian and Bolivian sections, which oriented toward carrying out this line, was unequivocal—but so were the theses of the Ninth World Congress.

To be sure, the world congress made this guerrilla orientation dependent on objective conditions. These were, of course, not more closely defined since it was assumed that these conditions were basically contained in the situation itself, which was characterized as immediately pre-revolutionary on a continental scale.

The resolution says: "without the active sympathy, the protection, and the solidarity of certain sections of the masses, the chances for consolidating and strengthening the guerrilla nuclei diminish to the extreme and the political repercussions which the armed action is striving to provoke dwindle." (*IIDB, Ibid.*, p. 8, point 18) And: "when armed struggle begins . . . there [should be] at least solid nuclei of a political organization, coordinated on a national scale." (*Ibid.*, p. 8, point 19b)

From these stipulations and from the assumption of a continental civil war, it follows unequivocally that the orientation of the Ninth World Congress was not a matter of adopting the foco concept. Beyond this the provisions were so vague and inexactly specified that no concrete determination of when the guerrilla war would begin could be derived from them. This is in keeping with the conclusion drawn by the resolution, that generally speaking the time had arrived in Latin America.

In answering his critics, Comrade Livio Maitan gives a more precise definition of these provisions: "a growing movement in the countryside," "real ties [with] this movement," "active solidarity on the part of the . . . urban lay-

ers," "and a political crisis so acute as to impel very wide segments of the population into struggle. . . ." ("Once again on the Revolutionary Perspectives in Latin America," *IIDB Discussion on Latin America*, [1968-1972].

This list of conditions is not complete, but it is sufficient to confirm that no section could undertake guerrilla warfare in the time period since the 1969 world congress.

In practice, however, even the conditions they themselves set were not observed. Otherwise the guerrilla struggle initiatives in Argentina and Bolivia could not have been approved. Yet Comrade Germain in his platform "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" expressly emphasizes that it was right to undertake these guerrilla initiatives in Argentina and Bolivia. The attempts of the POR and the actions of the PRT/ERP are expressly approved to a great extent and even characterized as an enrichment of the Ninth World Congress orientation.

The POR (Combate) in Bolivia was so absorbed in the military preparations for opening a guerrilla front that it was incapable of carrying out any effective political work. After the state quickly destroyed these preparations, for a time it was practically nonexistent. From 1966 on, there were no congresses or central committee meetings. Even in the period of legality under Torres, the paper seldom appeared. A mass mobilization was therefore excluded and active sympathy was, perhaps, supposed to spring up spontaneously. Work in the trade unions and among the students was first resumed in the late phase of the Ovando regime, when in general semilegal work was already possible. Because of this extremely unfavorable starting position, the section could not effectively take advantage of the tremendous possibilities or meet the exigencies of the following revolutionary period, even if it did its best to intervene in a positive manner with propaganda and mobilizations in the final phase of the Torres regime. Nevertheless they continued to propagandize for guerrilla war in their press and entertained the illusion that after the Banzer coup they could take up guerrilla activity. Thus the guerrilla orientation led away from the real political tasks. If all political work ceased, if the minimal forces and resources of the POR were nevertheless sufficient "prerequisites for guerrilla war," then in reality no other prerequisites than the technical preparation were demanded.

The vagueness of the 1969 resolution led to the POR (Combate) taking the wrong road right from the beginning, and what is still more important—it was not corrected. The section concentrated on guerrilla war in a purely military fashion without any effective ties to a mass movement. Had it been more successful in this, it still could not have operated in a manner any different from that of the ELN. The results too could not have been any different.

In Argentina the minimal conditions consisted of a minimum of fighters. According to the PRT's judgment, 200 to 300 men were sufficient forces to unleash a revolutionary war. The PRT had no political roots at all in the countryside, and only scattered roots in the cities. Not a single factory, no university departments, and no local peasants' unions were under the PRT's leadership. Under these circumstances it was demonstrated in an exemplary manner that militancy and the courage for "independent initiatives" are not enough. The actions made the ERP well-known and in some cases popular. Taking up armed struggle is supposed to lead to organizing and mobilizing the masses. In practice it appeared that they could only raise abstract slogans and here and there get a hearing for them at gun point. Without organizational ties to the masses, it was impossible to go a single step further. Thus

the masses remained enthusiastic observers (sometimes not even this. Who likes to discuss while looking down the barrel of a gun?), showed their approval with applause, and even voted Peronists into parliament and the trade union boards. The opportunities provided by the mass revolutionary upsurge were not taken advantage of. This orientation not only obstructed an approach to the masses, it led to disorientation in their own ranks, numerous splits, and finally to leaving the Fourth International.

The PRT began the struggle as urban guerrillas. This was supposed to be the preparation for rural guerrilla warfare. This failed for the simple reason that lacking roots even among the urban masses, one cannot hide in the countryside. So the ERP remained a purely urban guerrilla group without defining the function of its struggle. The PRT was unable to develop any concept of mass work. It carried out a few populist-type actions and some armed propaganda, protected one or another class struggle action, supplied itself logistically, and "executed" a few representatives of the system. In the last analysis this is substitutionism, which cannot lead to the unfolding of a revolutionary war.

### *C. A False Orientation*

The assumption of the Ninth World Congress resolution—that a prerevolutionary situation on a continental scale exists at the present time—has proven false. This error is no longer denied by any side in the present dispute in the International. In the present situation no one still speaks for the prognosis of lengthy civil war in Latin America on a continental scale. Thus, according to the line of argumentation followed in the resolution, this removes the basis for the guerrilla orientation as a strategy on a continental scale and the central axis of our work. With the guerrilla orientation fall the other conclusions in the resolution that are derived from it.

As a prerequisite for its orientation, the international majority gave an analysis that has not been confirmed, and conditions for initiating guerrilla war that none of our sections can fulfill or has fulfilled since 1969.

The international minority, on the other hand, is not against guerrilla warfare in principle, as the example of Hugo Blanco and many citations from the comrades of the minority demonstrate. It criticizes the erroneous analysis and the erroneous method by which a continental strategy is derived from this analysis, a strategy that has proven itself false and impossible to carry out.

The fact that no synchronization of the revolutionary process took place in Latin America, but that, on the contrary, development in the individual states proceeded and continues to proceed in an extremely uneven fashion also settles the controversy about determining strategy on a continental basis. It is clear that different tasks must be set and different strategies determined for the individual countries. It is just as clear that this task does not automatically fall to the sections involved alone. Rather, the question of our orientation in these countries, in a sector that has decisive importance for the immediate development of the world revolution, is the common concern of the whole International.

Likewise experience has clearly contradicted the assumption of the Ninth World Congress resolution that in the present conjuncture in Latin America democratic interludes and reformist openings are of marginal, almost

negligible size, and without substantial importance for the strategic orientation of our sections. Every individual opening and interlude of this sort (Bolivia under Ovando and Torres, Chile under Allende, Uruguay until the coup, Argentina still) has entailed a greater revolutionary dynamic, more explosions of the class struggle, more objective possibilities not just for the work of revolutionaries, but for a revolutionary victory as well, than all the guerrilla and similar activities since the Ninth World Congress put together. There is no one in the International who underestimates these lessons and experiences.

Actually the 1969 decision was nowhere carried out in the sense of the world congress resolution. There were only two attempts, one of which did not go beyond the phase of the most elementary preparation, the other only leading to urban guerrilla activity and the departure of the group in question from our movement. The remaining eight of our ten organizations in Latin America took no steps to carry out this line.

If the basic orientation was not carried out anywhere in the course of four years, this cannot be due to the failure of individual sections, but rather because it was not applicable. In this case the analysis and the strategy must have been wrong. It goes without saying then, that this analysis and strategy should be reviewed by the new world congress, revised and replaced by a new orientation. This is a normal process. In fact, with this step the discussion about the guerrilla orientation of the Ninth World Congress could be concluded with agreement on all sides.

However, despite this fact, in the meantime the international debate has reached a totally different plane of controversy for which the concrete Latin America orientation of the Ninth World Congress only sets the background.

## **III. Armed Struggle and Class Struggle**

### *A) Partisan Warfare*

For a long time guerrilla struggle has played a role of only secondary importance in the framework of revolutionary warfare. In the last three decades there have, however, been many-sided practical experiences and theoretical evaluations on the basis of which the function of guerrilla war must be outlined precisely in order to avoid confusion and false generalizations.

All successful partisan movements based themselves on broad support and a firm base in the masses. Of course it is not necessary in every case to lead all the potentially revolutionary classes and layers as in Vietnam, but such a movement must control substantial parts, or on a regional basis rather large areas. In China the war began where the CP could already take leadership among the peasants. In Cuba, of course, the guerrillas began with strong outside support (continuous airlift of supplies from abroad, no necessity for expropriations as a result of extensive material support from Cuban oppositionists, support from portions of the native bourgeoisie). But it is true that the guerrilla war was launched at first without the existence of an organized mass base and its own political structure. However, there is now agreement that the Cuban revolution was able to succeed in this way only under extremely exceptional circumstances whose repetition is generally regarded as unlikely.

Roots in the masses has military and political importance. If this is lacking, small commando actions are still possible, but a struggle that leads to a war of the masses is not. The partisans are not cared for, hidden, and warned (expropriations are usually an indication of lack of mass support). The guerrillas do not move like "a fish in water," but like an albino rabbit in the fields. They can only recruit one by one and at great risk, and can hardly carry out political work. They cannot mobilize let alone lead the masses. Their energies are absorbed almost entirely by military preparations and activity.

Partisan warfare more than any other kind is political warfare. Roots among the masses must not only be present from the beginning, but because of the long duration and great sacrifices of the struggle, such roots must also be maintained and given organizational form. Especially for rural guerrilla warfare it is a requirement that systematic work with a program of struggle be done among the peasantry beforehand, which can then form the basis for the struggle. Hugo Blanco's work among the peasants and armed struggle are a good example of this. At the time of the Ninth World Congress and after, however, there was no section that had done work and established a base among the peasants that fulfilled these prerequisites.

Above all, however, the masses must take part in the armed struggle. The task of the rural guerrilla force is not primarily to fight the enemy army—in the first stage this comes about only in self-defense—but rather to break the control of the state over the population of the area and to organize portions of the masses on a military footing, train them, and lead them.

The Ninth World Congress resolution is very vague on the question of urban guerrillas. It assigns them specific tasks without specifying the conditions under which these tasks can be carried out.

Basically urban guerrillas can only play a supportive role. They operate under unfavorable conditions in the place where the enemy power is concentrated. The state apparatus, its information network, and its repressive system can be hit, but not put out of commission, let alone destroyed. Finally, only commando actions by small groups are possible. If they are not part of a fighting mass movement or the front line of a strong partisan movement in the countryside, the state can deploy all of its might against these necessarily isolated urban guerrillas, and then it is only a matter of time before these commandos are wiped out. Up till now they have never been able to maintain themselves for any long period of time.

In Latin America all the partisan movements since the Cuban experience have failed. In Guatemala, Colombia, and Venezuela the conditions set forth in the resolution and later in Comrade Maitan's contribution did indeed exist, and the movements that had these prerequisites were fundamentally stronger than our sections in Argentina and Bolivia and led important parts of the masses. In addition, in many cases they enjoyed the support of parts of the army and even parts of the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless they failed just like the urban guerrillas in Brazil, who at first even had the support of huge mass demonstrations. In Uruguay the Tupamaros kept the whole country in a state of expectation for years. To a certain extent they had infiltrated the repressive apparatus and had followers in many key points in the economy. They en-

joyed a unique form of sympathy. But they had no program and no organized base in the mass movement. In 1972 their whole network was destroyed by a wave of ruthless repression. Neither the military experience nor the effect of the exemplary actions remained. In the summer of 1973 when there was a mass mobilization, when armed struggle against the establishment of a military dictatorship was on the agenda, there were no Tupamaros, and despite the "example" they had set for many years, no armed struggle.

### B) *Armed Struggle Orientation?*

If the analysis of an immediate prerevolutionary situation in Latin America on a continental scale is withdrawn, and the orientation toward rural guerrilla warfare as the central axis of a continental civil war lasting for years is terminated, the controversy within the International will be raised to a more general and less conjunctural level. The specific demand for recognition of an orientation toward rural guerrilla warfare for the present situation has been replaced by a general demand for the recognition of an "orientation toward armed struggle" for the general epoch in Latin America.

This formulation "orientation toward armed struggle" originates from "the great ideological debate in Latin America" between the Cuban position and the position of the Moscow-oriented Communist parties of Latin America, which defend the "peaceful road." Just as surely as revolutionary Marxists decisively and as a matter of course hold the former position in this debate, this is certainly not the way revolutionary Marxists pose the alternatives in order to determine their strategy. The view that there is no peaceful road to socialism and that armed struggle must inevitably play its historical role in the revolutionary process is a foregone conclusion for them, one which separates them from reformists of all stripes. Recognizing and employing "an armed struggle orientation" as a *particular* strategic formulation means subordinating oneself to the oblique logic of this "great ideological debate" and pushing aside the real problem of determining strategy.

For revolutionary Marxists the necessity of armed struggle flows from the regular laws of the class struggle, and thus armed struggle flows from the process of class struggle itself. In this sense there is no place for a separate "orientation toward armed struggle" aside from the fundamental orientation of revolutionary Marxists. The debate on this question would be superfluous were it not for the fact that in keeping with the logic of this separate "orientation toward armed struggle" proposals for a separate praxis of armed struggle are derived that go beyond the integration of armed struggle into the development of the class struggle itself. This "orientation" leads to the conclusion that in the *general* context of the Latin American situation it is *concretely* correct and necessary for revolutionary Marxists themselves—above and beyond their role in the process of class struggle—to carry out armed actions, independent armed initiatives, in order to prepare the masses for the inevitable stage of armed struggle and to put the revolutionary organization in a position to play its historical role in the armed struggle.

Thus the distinction between a "guerrilla orientation" and an "armed struggle orientation," which has played such a large role in the present discussion, apart from



the manner in which the terms are derived, becomes largely a semantic distinction. Since it is assumed that these "independent armed initiatives" by revolutionary Marxists will be carried out in a situation where the latter stand neither at the head of a conventional army or armed mass struggles, only two possibilities arise in practice—building rural guerrilla nuclei or undertaking commando actions (urban guerrilla warfare). Even driving off the guards at a factory with armed detachments of a party (that does not yet lead the workers in that factory) and the like are commando actions of the type carried out by urban guerrillas.

By replacing political strategy with an "orientation toward armed struggle" the relationship between military and political work is stood on its head. Military work becomes the leading aspect and ceases to be an aspect subordinated to and derived from political work. This mistake stands within the context of the Ninth World Congress resolution which says: "This is why the technical preparations [for armed struggle] cannot be conceived merely as one of the aspects of revolutionary work, but as the fundamental aspect. . ." (Ibid. pp. 6-7, point 15) now divorced, to be sure, from the analysis of a "pre-revolutionary crisis . . . on a continental scale." (Ibid. p. 7, point 18) and therefore in a very general sense. The fundamental political elements of revolutionary strategy, the program of struggle for the working class and the oppressed masses, the mobilization of the masses according to a transitional strategy, and the construction of a revolutionary class leadership around this program are *co-ordinated with* the armed struggle in this "orientation" rather than the other way around. Basically these elements are assigned a supportive function for the armed struggle and for this reason the lack of these political elements is seen merely as a drawback, not as a decisive barrier to taking up armed struggle immediately. In accordance with this the Ninth World Congress resolution made taking up armed struggle, with rural guerrilla detachments as the principal axis, the task of the day, and stated at the same time that working out a program was an unsolved problem that we faced in Latin America (a problem we have not come noticeably closer to solving since the world congress). The generalization of the "orientation toward armed struggle for Latin America" means the hope of fulfilling the function of the transitional strategy with a strategy of "propaganda of the deed." This attempt not only runs contrary to the historical lessons of the workers' movement, but also to the concrete present-day experience in Latin America that we have mentioned, including the balance sheet on our own Argentinian experience with the PRT/ERP.

There is a danger that the triggering effect, the catalyzing action often exercised by specific independent initiatives in history, armed initiatives included, (examples of which have often been cited in the present debate) initiatives brought about by special historical circumstances that cannot be "produced" by revolutionaries themselves, will be mistaken for a mechanism that can be triggered by an orientation intended specifically for that purpose.

### C) *The parallel military apparatus*

For "the orientation toward armed struggle" in Latin America the *preparation* and the *carrying out* of armed

struggle are two sides of the same coin. The revolutionary organization prepares itself for armed struggle by creating its own armed detachments, and when the military and organizational preparations are sufficiently ready, undertakes an independent armed initiative in the manner of an "exemplary action" as soon as the first opportunity presents itself, which in Latin America is usually quite soon. The goals of such actions are: "striking the nerve centers (key points in the economy and transport, etc.)," "punishing the hangmen of the regime," "achieving propagandistic and psychological success." (Ibid. p. 8, point 18)

Armed actions in accordance with this strategic orientation for revolutionaries in Latin America are an expression of the class struggle in a very "objective" sense, namely insofar as the present epoch is analyzed as being generally ripe for armed struggle on this continent. However, they do not flow from the concrete class struggle insofar as they do not grow out of the mobilizations, struggles, experiences, of the workers themselves, but rather—like the program according to Lenin's conception—are brought to the workers "from outside." For this reason it seems correct to categorize these initiatives as "propaganda of the deed." As a tactical measure in following a concrete class struggle strategy and as an expression of a concrete class struggle situation, every action of this type can be completely correct. As a special strategic "orientation toward armed struggle" they are, however, substitutionist.

Within the class struggle orientation of the revolutionary organization, which includes the question of armed struggle but allows no separate "orientation toward armed struggle," preparation for armed struggle and carrying it out are placed on two different planes. The *preparation* for armed struggle is an irrevocable duty and necessity for every revolutionary organization, one all the more decisive as the possibility or the certainty of an armed confrontation increases. Under Latin American conditions, this means that no organization, misled by an optimistic prognosis of the duration of a legal or semilegal phase, should neglect or "postpone" this aspect. That is, the preparation is based solely on the strength, ability, and readiness of the organization to carry it out. The *carrying out* of armed struggle, in contrast, is not dependent on the organization itself, whether it has completed its preparations, etc., but rather on the concrete state of the class struggle. In principle this is the same as when, for example, an organization systematically prepares for a strike. The strike is begun by winning over the workers for it (if tactically correct it can be begun by an independent initiative) and not by the revolutionaries setting an example for the workers, by starting the strike and not coming to work, or by themselves refusing to begin work.

From this follow two different conceptions of the military apparatus or "parallel apparatus." In the "orientation toward armed struggle" this means fundamentally building independent armed units of the party, and when preparations are completed and a favorable opportunity presents itself—undertaking independent armed initiatives.

The correct conception of the military apparatus is, however, putting the party in a position to lead the workers militarily just as it leads them politically (through real party work). Its concrete form: barracks units, or militia, or a parallel structure of supporters, etc., is dependent on the concrete conditions and the party's available re-

sources. Its primary task is to provide an "officers corps" for the arming of the workers, to form a backbone for the construction of the organs of workers' self-defense, and to tend to military training and preparation. In addition it has responsibility for tactical operations in each particular situation, defense for party and class struggle actions, etc. No specific form of action can be excluded, neither commando actions, nor rural guerrilla warfare, nor revolutionary terrorism, insofar as they are the *concrete* expression of the movement of the class, i.e., of class consciousness and class struggle and not just in the persistent and generally correct "objective" sense. The decisive consideration is that the work of the military apparatus is completely subordinated to the political work of the party and derived from the role of the party in the concrete class struggle. In practice this can mean that a completely prepared and trained military apparatus will operate for years without once taking military action.

The military apparatus faces its highest level of responsibility in a revolutionary situation with the armed insurrection. Beyond its role in organizing and leading workers detachments, it is responsible for securing the best conditions for victory through quick, energetic operations.

In this sense, the military apparatus, even with the best preparation, can only be as effective as the party is *politically* effective. This conception excludes a priority let alone exclusive involvement of the party with *its own* military preparations.

#### D) Party building

The experiences of the Latin American revolution since the Ninth World Congress in 1969, the tragic results in Bolivia, Uruguay, and Chile (and in Argentina as well, where we face the immediate danger of a serious defeat) have proven once again that the Cuban example of a revolutionary victory without the existence of a Leninist party as revolutionary class leadership does not tend to repeat itself, and that the historical role played by the revolutionary party is the key to victory or defeat. In all three cases there was no lack of mass mobilizations, or of objective possibilities for arming the workers, there was no lack of organizations with an "orientation toward armed struggle," and certainly no lack of "exemplary actions" "revolutionary pedigree" and "psychological propagandistic successes" in armed struggle (the ELN in Bolivia, Tupamaros in Uruguay, MIR among others in Chile, and similar armed groups which played and continue to play a role in Argentina). Experience has shown that these prerequisites are insufficient, that without Leninist revolutionary class leadership defeat is almost unavoidable. Experience has also shown that small groups independently taking up armed struggle is not a means for advancing party building, but rather cuts off the party from the possibility of rooting the communist program in the working class. Even the formula "mass mobilizations plus armed groups," which favors this supposition has not been realized, not even in the form of a regroupment within the left itself in favor of the organizations that have taken up armed struggle.

With respect to the bourgeois army in particular, the role of the Leninist party has proven indispensable. Independent armed groups that do not belong to a party

that in practice already leads the working class and the movements of the oppressed masses cannot attain the military strength to defy successfully the bourgeois army over a long period of time because of the strengthening of the repressive apparatus, imperialist intervention, and Brazilian subimperialism. And when a revolutionary opportunity opens up in the midst of a deep crisis of bourgeois leadership where a division or a tendency toward a division appears in the army, these armed groups, whose only lines to the army are battle lines, are least suited for taking advantage of the division in order to bring the wavering lower ranks of the army over to the side of the revolution.

The unalterable precondition for the construction of the Leninist party and its ability to sink roots in the worker and peasant masses is a revolutionary strategy that corresponds to conditions on the continent, and a program of struggle around which the workers and peasants in the individual countries of South America can group themselves. The first priority of the Latin American sections and the whole International is to work out such a program and strategy.

We must take three things as our point of departure for party building in Latin America.

1. The building of the Leninist combat party on this continent will be accomplished fundamentally under conditions of illegality. Even if the repression in Latin America today is sharper and more efficient than was the case in the historical examples which show that every successful communist party was constructed under conditions of illegality, party building is not rendered impossible by the quantity of repression alone. Moreover the experience since '69 has shown that independently taking up armed struggle can in no way fulfill the function of protecting revolutionary cadres from the repression. On the contrary, these armed groups have suffered the greatest number of casualties even to the point of total extermination of their cadres.

2. Development in Latin America is not characterized by a straight line to more and more brutal military dictatorships. Rather it is often accompanied by frequent and often surprising democratic and reformist openings, legal and semilegal possibilities. If our sections energetically seize these opportunities and do not let them pass in favor of vague hopes for independent military successes, they can offer rich possibilities for "qualitative leaps" in party building while establishing our sections as a political factor on a national scale. These possibilities will be turned into their opposite if our sections entertain illusions about the sporadic character of such openings and do not arrange all their work so that it can be continued from one day to the next under conditions of illegality.

3. With every broad upswing in the mobilization there arises the immediate possibility of an armed confrontation. The preparation of the workers for armed struggle presupposes above all our being rooted in the class, in its mobilizations and struggles, but making the organizational turn requires, of necessity, the preparation of the party itself for armed struggle and the existence of a well-prepared and effective parallel military apparatus.

October 17, 1973

# Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation

Draft resolution submitted by United Secretariat members Abel, Adair, Hans,  
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## I. THE CHARACTER OF WOMEN'S OPPRESSION

### The New Rise of Women's Struggles

1. The last five years have witnessed the emergence of a growing revolt by women against their oppression as a sex. Throughout the world, millions of women, primarily young women—students, working women, housewives—are beginning to challenge some of the most fundamental features of their centuries-old oppression.

The first country in which this radicalization of women appeared in a significant way was the United States. It was announced by the blossoming of thousands of women's liberation groups and in the mobilization of tens of thousands of women in the August 26, 1970, demonstrations commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the victorious conclusion of the women's suffrage struggle in the U. S.

But the new wave of struggles by women in North America was not an exceptional and isolated development, as the rapid spread of the women's liberation movement through the advanced capitalist countries soon demonstrated. In 1973 the large-scale struggles against reactionary abortion laws in France and Belgium further confirmed that the struggle for women's liberation must be regarded as a fundamental component of the new rise of the world revolution.

2. This radicalization of women is still in its early stages. Yet it is already clear that it is unprecedented in the depth of the economic, social and political ferment it expresses and in its implications for the anticapitalist struggle.

Growing numbers of women are beginning to raise demands that challenge the specific forms that the centuries-old oppression of women takes under capitalism today. They are demanding the right to be able to participate with complete equality in all forms of economic and cultural activity—for example, equal education, equal access to jobs, equal pay for equal work.

In order to make this equality possible, women are searching for ways to end their domestic servitude. They are demanding that women's household chores be socialized. The most conscious see that society, not the individual family unit, must take responsibility for the young, the old, and the sick.

Millions are demanding the right to control their own bodies, to choose whether or not to bear children.

Such demands go to the very heart of the specific oppression of women exercised through the family and strike

at fundamental pillars of class society.

3. The rise of women's liberation struggles on an international scale is one of the clearest symptoms of the depth of the social crisis of the bourgeois order today.

These struggles illustrate the degree to which the outmoded capitalist relations and institutions generate deepening contradictions in every sector of society and breed new expressions of the class struggle. The death agony of capitalism brings new layers into direct conflict with the fundamental needs and prerogatives of the bourgeoisie, and brings forth new allies for the working class in its struggle to overthrow the capitalist system.

4. Women's oppression has been an essential feature of class society throughout the ages. But the practical tasks of uprooting its causes, as well as combatting its effects, could not be posed on a mass scale before the era of the transition from capitalism to socialism. The fight for women's liberation is inseparable from the workers struggle to abolish capitalism. It constitutes an integral part of the socialist revolution and the communist perspective of a classless society.

The replacement of the patriarchal family system rooted in private property by a superior organization of human relations is a prime objective of the socialist revolution. This process will accelerate and deepen as the material and ideological foundations of the new communist order are brought into being.

The development of the women's liberation movement today advances the class struggle, strengthens its forces, and enhances the prospects for the socialist revolution.

5. Only the Fourth International, which advances the program and traditions of revolutionary Marxism, offers a scientific analysis of women's oppression and its interrelationship with the class struggle. Only the Fourth International can offer a perspective of anticapitalist action capable of achieving women's liberation through the mobilization of the working class and its allies, under the leadership of a mass revolutionary Marxist party which will conquer power and proceed to the socialist reconstruction of society. Only the Fourth International has a program that can lead in practice to the liberation of women by destroying the material foundations of women's oppression—the division of society into antagonistic classes based on the private ownership of the means of production.

Women can achieve their liberation only through the

victory of the world socialist revolution. This goal can be realized only by mobilizing masses of women as a powerful component of the class struggle. Therein lies the objective revolutionary dynamic of the struggle for women's liberation and the fundamental reason why the Fourth International must concern itself with, and help to provide revolutionary leadership for women struggling to achieve their liberation.

## Origin and Nature of Women's Oppression

1. The oppression of women does not originate in their biology, as many contend. It is historical, economic and social in character. Throughout the evolution of pre-class and class society, women's reproductive function has always been the same. But her social status has not always been that of a degraded domestic servant, subject to man's control and command.

2. In pre-class society, where social production was organized communally and its product shared equally, there was no basis for institutionalized exploitation or oppression of one social group or sex by another. Women participated on equal terms with men in the labor necessary to assure the sustenance and survival of all. The social status of both women and men reflected the roles each of the sexes performed in social production and the activities of everyday life.

3. The origin of women's oppression is intertwined with the growing productivity of human labor based on agriculture and stock raising; with the rise of new divisions of labor, craftsmanship and commerce; with the private appropriation of an increasing social surplus; with the development of the possibility for some humans to prosper from the exploitation of the labor of others; that is, with the passage from pre-class to class society.

Along with the private accumulation of wealth, the patriarchal family developed as the institution by which responsibility for the unproductive members of society—especially the young—was transferred from society as a whole to an identifiable individual or small group of individuals. It was the primary institution for perpetuating from one generation to the next the class divisions of society—divisions between those who possessed property and lived off the wealth produced by the labor of others, and those who, owning no property, had to work for others to live. The destruction of the egalitarian and communal traditions and structures of pre-class society was essential in order to assure the rise of an exploiting class and its accelerated private accumulation of wealth.

The women of the new possessing classes were forced into a position of economic dependence in order to assure their subordinate status on which the cohesiveness of the family unit depends. Progressively deprived of any productive role in society, their social status was increasingly defined by their reproductive capacities. Like land, livestock, and slaves (both male and female), women of the possessing classes also became the private property of the men who owned them.

The patriarchal family thus came into existence along with the other institutions of class society in order to buttress class divisions and perpetuate the private accumulation of wealth. The state with its police and armies, laws and courts, enforced this. Ruling-class ideology, including religion, arose on this basis and played a vital

role in justifying the denigration of the female sex.

An indispensable element of the dominant ideology of the rulers became the myth of the social, biological, physical, intellectual inferiority of all women relative to men. Over time this was projected on the women of the non-possessing as well as the possessing classes. Throughout recorded history this has meant a double oppression for the masses of women.

4. The family is the institution of class society which determines and maintains the specific character of the oppression of women as a sex.

5. Through the history of class society, the family has proved its value as a flexible institution of class rule. The role of the family has varied from class to class. The form of the family has adapted to the changing needs of the ruling classes as the modes of production and forms of private property have gone through different stages of development.

6. To some extent, and in a very distorted way, the patriarchal family meets various individual human needs, such as love and companionship. But this does not define the basic nature of the family system. The family is fundamentally an economic and social institution. Its important social functions have remained constant throughout history:

a. The family is a basic economic unit of class society. It is the mechanism through which the ruling class abrogates social responsibility for the well-being of the direct producers—the masses of humanity. The ruling class tries, to the degree possible, to force each family to be responsible for its own.

b. The family provides the means for passing on property ownership from one generation to the next. It is the basic social mechanism for perpetuating the division of society into classes.

c. For the ruling classes, the family system provides the most inexpensive and ideologically acceptable mechanism for reproducing human labor. It enforces a social division of labor in which women are fundamentally reduced to a reproductive role and assigned limited tasks immediately associated with this reproductive function: care of the other family members. Thus the family institution rests on and reinforces a sexual division of labor involving the domestic subjugation and economic dependence of women.

d. The family institution is a repressive and conservatizing structure that reproduces within itself the hierarchical, authoritarian relationships necessary to the maintenance of class society as a whole. It fosters the possessive, competitive and aggressive attitudes necessary to the perpetuation of class divisions.

It molds the behavior and character structure of children from infancy through adolescence. It trains, disciplines and polices them, teaching submission to established authority. It then curbs rebellious non-conformist impulses. It represses sexuality, forcing it into socially acceptable channels of male and female sexual activity for reproductive purposes and socio-economic roles. It inculcates all the social values that individuals must acquire in order to survive in class society and submit to its domination. It distorts all human relationships by imposing on them the framework of economic compulsion, social dependence, and sexual repression.

7. Under capitalism, the family also provides the

mechanism for the super-exploitation of women as wage workers.

a. It provides capitalism with an exceptionally flexible reservoir of labor which can be drawn into the labor force or sent back into the home with fewer social consequences than any other component of the reserve army of labor.

Because the entire ideological superstructure reinforces the myth that women's place is in the home, high unemployment rates for women cause relatively little social unrest. After all, it is said, women work only to supplement an already existing source of income for the family. When they are unemployed, they are occupied with their household chores, and are not so obviously "out of work." The anger and resentment they feel is often dissipated as a serious social threat by the isolation and atomization of women in separate, individual households.

b. Because women's "natural" place is supposed to be in the home, capitalism has a built-in mechanism for perpetuating:

1) the employment of women in low-paying unskilled jobs. "They aren't worth training because they'll only get pregnant or married and quit."

2) unequal pay rates and low pay. "They're only working for pin-money anyway."

3) deep divisions within the working class itself along sex lines. "She's taking a job a man should have."

This exploitation of women as a reserve work force contributes to driving down men's wages as well.

c. Capitalism's inexorable drive to incorporate more women into the productive process, in order to increase surplus value, has a limit and built-in contradiction.

1) The process of drawing women into production brings them a degree of economic independence which begins to undermine the acceptance by women of their domestic subjugation, on which the family rests.

2) But the family system is an indispensable pillar of class society. It must be preserved if capitalism is to survive.

This contradiction leads to periodic attempts to push women out of production and back into the home whenever the process of integration into the work force has gone too far, forcing the ruling class to assume too large a portion of the social costs normally borne by the family (such as widespread child-care facilities, public cafeterias, etc.).

A cyclical process of drawing women into production, then forcing them back into the home, also results from the fact that women, as a component of the reserve army of labor, are drawn into production in increasing numbers only when capitalism is in an accelerated period of expansion.

d. The special subjugation of women within the family system provides the economic, social and ideological foundations that make their super-exploitation possible. Women workers are exploited not only as wage labor but also as a pariah labor pool defined by sex. Thus the oppression of women workers is doubled.

8. Because the oppression of women is historically intertwined with the division of society into classes and with the role of the family as a basic economic unit of class society, this oppression can only be eradicated with the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and the transfer to society as a whole of the social and economic functions borne under capitalism by the individual, pa-

triarchal family.

9. The materialist analysis of the historical origin and economic roots of women's oppression is essential to developing a program and perspective capable of winning women's liberation. To reject this scientific explanation inevitably leads to one of two errors:

a. One error, made by many who claim to follow the Marxist method, is to deny, or at least downplay, the oppression of women as a sex throughout the entire history of class society. They see the oppression of women purely and simply as an aspect of the exploitation of the working class. This view gives weight and importance to struggles by women only in their capacity as workers, on the job. It says women will be liberated in passing by the socialist revolution, so there is no special need for them to organize as a distinct force in struggle.

b. A symmetrical error is made by many anti-Marxists (as well as by some revolutionists). They deny that the struggle for women's liberation is an aspect of the class struggle. They hold that the oppression of women by men is unrelated to class divisions.

The anti-Marxists who support this view reject the socialist revolution as the road to women's liberation because they deny that women's oppression is rooted in private ownership of the means of production. While they favor women organizing themselves in struggle, they see no need for a revolutionary party of the working class to lead the struggle for power.

Both of these one-sided approaches deny the revolutionary dynamic of the struggle for women's liberation. Both fail to recognize that the struggle for women's liberation, to be successful, must go beyond the bounds of capitalist property relations. Both reject the implications this fact has for the working class and its revolutionary-Marxist leadership.

## Roots of the New Radicalization of Women

1. The women's liberation movement of today stands on the shoulders of the earlier struggles by women that accompanied the second industrial revolution.

The essential goal of the first wave of women's struggles was the fight for legal equality with men. Revolutionary Marxists played a significant role in these struggles by women to win many of the democratic rights associated with the rise of the bourgeois revolution. In Western Europe and North America, large numbers of working-class as well as upper-class and petty-bourgeois women were involved.

Through struggle the women of the most advanced capitalist countries won, to varying degrees, several important democratic rights: the right to higher education, the right to engage in trades and professions, the right to receive and dispose of their own wages (which had been considered the right of the husband or father), the right to own property, the right to divorce, the right to form and participate in political organizations. In several countries this first upsurge culminated in mass struggles that won the vote for women.

2. Women's suffrage, following or sometimes accompanying universal male suffrage, was an important gain for the working class. Not because significant social changes can be brought about through bourgeois elections, as the reformists contend, but because of the change

this victory implied for the social position of women. For the first time, women were considered citizens fit to participate in public affairs, with the right to a voice on major political questions, not just household matters.

The underlying cause of the oppression and subordinate status of women lies in the very foundations of class society itself and women's special role within the family, not in the formal denial of equality under the law. Nevertheless, the extension of democratic rights to women helped the masses of women to struggle more effectively against all forms of their oppression.

3. It is not surprising that the resurgence of struggles by women today first came about in the most advanced capitalist countries, where the greatest number of democratic rights have been won and where a tradition of militant struggle by women survives—such as the United States and Britain. The radicalization spread rapidly to other advanced capitalist countries.

It has generally been the young, college-educated women, those who enjoy some freedom of choice, and those most affected by the deepening youth radicalization who first articulated the grievances of women in an organized and outspoken way. This has led many pseudo-Marxists to conclude that women's liberation is basically a middle-class or bourgeois protest movement which has no serious interest for revolutionists or the masses of working-class women. They are wrong.

The development of the women's liberation movement serves only to emphasize the depth and scope of women's oppression. Even those with many apparent advantages are being propelled into action by that deep-rooted oppression. The most oppressed and exploited are not necessarily the first to articulate their discontent.

4. The roots of the new radicalization of women lie in the objective economic and social changes of the post-World War II years, which have brought about deepening contradictions in the capitalist economy, in the status of women and in the patriarchal family system.

a. Advances in medical science and technology in the field of birth control and abortion have created the means by which masses of women can control their reproductive functions with relative safety and ease. Control by women over their own bodies is a precondition for women's liberation.

While such medical techniques are more widely available, reactionary laws, reinforced by bourgeois customs, religious bigotry and the entire ideological superstructure of class society, often prevent women from exercising control over their own reproductive functions.

It is this contradiction, affecting the life of every woman, that has given rise to the powerful abortion struggles on an international scale.

b. The prolonged boom conditions of the sixties significantly increased the percentage of women in the labor force.

Consider the example of the United States. In 1950, 33.9 percent of all women of working age were in the labor force. By 1972 this had risen to 43.8 percent. Between 1960 and 1970, two thirds of all new jobs created were taken by women. Working women accounted for 28.8 percent of the total labor force in 1950; 37.4 percent by 1972. A rapidly growing proportion of these women were married, many with young children.

Similar statistics can be cited for other advanced capitalist countries. For example, in Britain between 1881

and 1951 the proportion of women in employment was fairly stable, remaining at about 25-27 percent. By 1965, 34 percent of all women between 16 and 64 were in full-time employment, 17.9 percent were in part-time employment, and a total of 54.3 percent came within the category of "economically active." Nearly two thirds of the working women were married.

This contrasts with the situation in Ireland where women compose about one third of the total labor force, but 81 percent of all working women are single.

As this influx of women into the labor force has taken place, there has been no substantial change in the degree of wage discrimination against women. In some cases the differential between the sexes has actually widened.

The increased employment of women has not been spread evenly over all job categories. On the contrary, the proportion of women holding low-paying jobs has increased. Thus the growing number of women entering the labor force has resulted in accentuating the discrimination against them relative to male workers.

c. The rise in the average educational level of women has further heightened these contradictions. Capitalism's need for more highly skilled labor has resulted in the acceptance of women into institutions of higher education on a qualitatively larger scale than ever before.

Yet, as the employment statistics indicate, the percentage of women holding jobs commensurate with their educational level has not kept pace. In all areas of the job market from industry to the professions women with higher educational qualifications are usually bypassed by men with less education.

As they receive more education and their individual expectations are raised, the stifling and mind-deadening drudgery of household chores and the constrictions of family life become increasingly unbearable to women. Thus the heightened educational level of women has deepened the contradiction between women's demonstrated abilities and broadened aspirations and their actual social and economic status.

d. The functions of the family unit have contracted further. It has become less and less a unit of petty production—either agricultural or domestic (canning, weaving, sewing, baking, etc.). The nuclear family of today is a long way from the productive farm family of previous centuries.

Given the sharp decline in the average number of children per family, the increasingly widespread use of industrially prepared foods, the application of modern technology to many housekeeping chores, there is less and less objective basis for confining women to the home. Yet the needs of the ruling class dictate that the family system must be preserved. Bourgeois ideology and social conditioning continue to reenforce the reactionary myth that a woman's identity and fulfillment come from her role as wife-mother-housekeeper. The contradiction between reality and myth becomes increasingly obvious and intolerable to growing numbers of women.

5. The economic and social changes that have heightened these contradictions and laid the groundwork for the radicalization of women have dictated the radical thrust of the demands they are raising.

Greater democratic rights and broader social opportunities have not "satisfied" women, or inclined them to a permanent passive acceptance of their inferior social status

and economic dependence. On the contrary, they have stimulated new struggles and more radical demands.

6. The new upsurge of women's struggles has been strongly affected by the international youth radicalization. The increased questioning of all traditional bourgeois values has had a sharp impact on attitudes toward the family and sexual oppression.

The radicalization of women has also been fueled by the colonial revolution and the liberation struggles of oppressed nationalities such as the Black struggle in the United States. This has been important in bringing about a widespread awareness and rejection of racist stereotypes. The obvious similarities with sexist stereotypes of women as inferior, emotional, dependent, dumb-but-happy creatures produced an increasing awareness and rejection of such caricatures.

The post-May 1968 rise of working class militancy in many of the advanced capitalist countries of Europe has been another factor in the radicalization of women. It has led many to examine the relationship between class exploitation and the oppression of women and search for perspectives that could lead to an eradication of both.

## **Women's Liberation in the Colonial and Semi-Colonial World**

1. Women's liberation is not a matter of interest only to privileged women of the advanced capitalist countries, as some opponents of women's liberation have contended. On the contrary, it is of vital concern and importance to the masses of women throughout the world.

2. In many colonial and semi-colonial countries women have not yet won some of the most elementary legal rights. Even where formal legal equality does exist, the masses of women suffer crushing oppression. They are subject to the most reactionary, stifling prejudices, and are often considered scarcely human. In some countries women are still sold into marriage and denied the right to divorce. From cradle to grave they are ruled over first by parent and brother, then by husband, or in-law. Many see no escape except through suicide. Their life is one of hard domestic labor. They are totally dependent economically, denied access to education, unacquainted with modern contraceptive methods, and often bear child after child as the only hope for economic security in old age.

3. The struggle for women's liberation is interrelated with the struggle against national oppression. The active participation of women in national liberation struggles is a break from their normal exclusion from political activity and inevitably stimulates their revolt against their oppression as a sex as well.

In Vietnam, Algeria, Cuba, Palestine and elsewhere, struggles by women to end the most brutal forms of their oppression have been closely intertwined with unfolding revolutions. Attitudes and policies concerning the demands and needs of women are inevitably one of the acid tests of the revolutionary caliber, perspective and program of any leadership.

4. The crushing weight of women's oppression in the colonial and semi-colonial countries gives struggles by women a particularly explosive character. Struggles beginning around elementary democratic rights can rapidly evolve to encompass additional demands relating to the broad range of urgent social needs of the masses of

proletarian and peasant women. This process was clearly evident in China, for example, where the struggle for liberation of women from both feudal traditions and the effects of imperialist domination became an important component of the revolution. Even the demand for freedom to cut their hair provided a starting point for the radicalization of women, leading to struggles of increasing social weight and political impact.

5. The struggle for women's liberation in the colonial world has long been part of the program of revolutionary Marxism. This was stressed in the resolutions of the third and fourth congresses of the Comintern, which drew special attention to the exemplary work of the Chinese communists in organizing and leading the mobilizations of women that were part of the second Chinese revolution.

6. Under the pressure from the world market, changes in the colonial and semi-colonial countries are affecting the situation of more privileged layers of women. The demand for more skilled labor has meant an increase in the number of young women who gain access to education and jobs. The student radicalization, as well as the women's liberation movement in other parts of the world, has encouraged those women to begin to challenge their oppression as women. The spread of birth control methods, even where prompted by reactionary goals, has brought a measure of relief from unwanted pregnancy to a section of women able to take advantage of the advanced medical technology.

In 1972 the Indian section of the Fourth International, the Communist League, pointed to a number of factors which have brought changes in prevailing attitudes toward women on the Indian subcontinent and a rise in the self-confidence of educated and employed women in particular. These factors included the expansion of women's education since 1947, the expansion of opportunities for the employment of women, the rising cost of living which forces men to send their wives to take employment, the possibility of family planning, and the existence of a political framework which permits women to hold elected public offices.

The resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist League of India noted that:

"The struggle against the social oppression of women will develop around the demands of free education for women, free hostels for women students, hostel facilities for employed women, child-care centers and cheap hotels for married women, reservation of jobs and the end of discrimination in employment and promotion, a lighter workload, fewer working hours, liberal conditions of work, including transfer only on demand. As the struggle develops, more basic and fundamental questions will be taken up, including the abrogation of Hindu and Muslim personal laws on marriage, inheritance, and divorce; the right to free marriage and divorce, especially in cases of physical and mental torture and restrictions on personal freedom; the right to free legal abortions and women's control over their own bodies."

To help lead women's struggles to their logical anti-capitalist conclusion, the resolution called for the formation of independent, mass-based, and democratically controlled women's groups, organized as united fronts on a concrete action program.

The initiatives taken by the Indian section, as well as

the analytical work done by the Iranian comrades, provide a starting point and useful guide for developing our women's liberation work in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

## Women in the Workers States: Liberation Betrayed

1. The October 1917 revolution and each subsequent socialist victory has brought significant gains for women, including legal rights and integration into the productive life of society. The measures enacted by the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky demonstratively showed that the proletarian revolution meant immediate steps toward the liberation of women.

Between 1917 and 1927 the Soviet government passed a series of laws giving women formal legal equality with men for the first time. Marriage became a simple registration process which had to be based on mutual consent. The concept of illegitimacy was abolished. Free, legal abortion was made every woman's right. By 1927 marriages did not have to be registered, and divorce was granted on the request of either partner.

Free, compulsory education to the age of 16 was established for all children of both sexes. Legislation gave women workers special maternity benefits.

The 1919 program of the Communist Party stated: "The party's task at the present moment is primarily work in the realm of ideas and education so as to destroy utterly all traces of the former inequality or prejudices, particularly among backward strata of the proletariat and peasantry. Not confining itself to formal equality of women, the party strives to liberate them from the material burdens of obsolete household work by replacing it by communal houses, public eating places, central laundries, nurseries, etc." This program was implemented to the extent possible given the economic backwardness and poverty of the new Soviet Republic, and the devastation caused by almost a decade of war and civil war.

2. The triumph of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the 1920s brought about a counterrevolution in the policies affecting women, as in all other spheres. This consisted primarily of a revival and fortification of the family institution.

Trotsky described this process as follows: "Genuine emancipation of women is inconceivable without a general rise of economy and culture, without the destruction of the petty-bourgeois economic family unit, without the introduction of socialized food preparation, and education. Meanwhile, guided by its conservative instinct, the bureaucracy has taken alarm at the 'disintegration' of the family. It began singing panegyrics to the family supper and the family laundry, that is, the household slavery of woman. To cap it all, the bureaucracy has restored criminal punishment for abortions, officially returning women to the status of pack animals. In complete contradiction with the ABC of Communism, the ruling caste has thus restored the most reactionary and benighted nucleus of the class system, i.e., the petty-bourgeois family" (*Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1937-38, p. 170*).

3. The most important factor facilitating this retrogression was the cultural and material backwardness of Russian society, which did not have the resources necessary to construct adequate child-care centers, sufficient housing, public laundries, housekeeping and dining facilities to elim-

inate the material basis for women's oppression.

But beyond these objective limitations the reactionary Stalinist bureaucracy consciously gave up the perspective of moving in a systematic way to socialize the burdens carried by women, and instead began to glorify the family unit, attempting to bind families together through legal restrictions and economic compulsion.

As Trotsky pointed out in the *Revolution Betrayed*, "The retreat not only assumes forms of disgusting hypocrisy, but also is going infinitely farther than the iron economic necessity demands."

The bureaucracy reinforced the family system for some of the same reasons it is maintained by capitalist society—as a means of inculcating attitudes of submission to authority and for perpetuating the privileges of a social stratum. Trotsky explained that "The most compelling motive of the present cult of the family is undoubtedly the need of the bureaucracy for a stable hierarchy of relations, and for the disciplining of youth by means of forty million points of support for authority and power."

The conditions created by the proletarian revolution and Stalinist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union have not been mechanically reproduced in every workers state formed since 1917. Important differences exist, reflecting historical, cultural, economic and social variations from one country to another, even one region to another. But maintenance of the economic and social inferiority of women, and bolstering of the family institution as the norm of social relationships is official policy in all the deformed workers states.

4. The promotion and glorification of the family system has resulted in burdening women with a double day's work, inside and outside the home. According to the official 1970 Soviet Union census, 90 percent of all urban women between the ages of 16 and 54 hold jobs outside the home. Yet the average Soviet woman spends four to seven hours a day on housework in addition to eight hours on an outside job.

The perpetuation of the responsibility of women for the domestic chores associated with child raising, cooking, cleaning, laundry, and caring for the personal needs of other members of the family unit is the economic and social basis for the disadvantages and prejudices faced by women and the resulting discrimination in jobs and wages. This deeply affects the way women view themselves, their role in society, and the goals they seek to attain.

While fifty percent of the wage earners in the Soviet Union are women, they are concentrated disproportionately in lower-paying and less-responsible jobs. For example, according to official statistics for 1959, women were 32 percent of all engineers, but only 12 percent of plant directors. Forty-two percent of the scientists were women, but only 2 of the 204 members of the Soviet Academy of Scientists were women. In the national political arena, only three of the 195 members of the Communist Party Central Committee were women.

In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, as in the advanced capitalist countries, sufficient material wealth and technology today exist to significantly alleviate the double burdens of women. Yet the distortions introduced in economic planning and the productive process due to the interests of the privileged bureaucratic caste, and the backwardness of consumer-goods industry, are a source of resentments. Women feel the dead weight of the bureaucracy



in this respect even more than men because they are forced to compensate for the distortions in the economy through the double day's labor they perform.

These potentially explosive resentments have forced the bureaucracy to plan expanded production in consumer goods and increased social services in the last decade. But the supply of consumer goods continues to lag behind the needs and growing expectations of the masses of Soviet women, similarly, for social services. For example, while child-care facilities are far more wide-spread than in the advanced capitalist countries, such facilities, even according to official 1970 statistics, are still able to accommodate only two-thirds of the children in urban areas who need care—to say nothing of the quality of care provided, the hours available, etc.

The Stalinist bureaucracies have also repudiated the view of Lenin and other leaders of the Russian revolution that unrestricted access to abortion is a woman's elementary democratic right. While legal abortion is generally available in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (except Rumania), the Stalinist bureaucracies have repeatedly curtailed this right, frequently placing humiliating conditions as well as economic penalties on women seeking abortions (such as denial of paid sick-leave time to obtain an abortion or refusal to cover abortions as a free medical procedure). The more reliable birth control methods are generally unavailable. The Stalinist bureaucracies subordinate women's right to abortion to the twists and turns of their bureaucratically conceived economic plans and social politics.

6. Women in the deformed and degenerated workers states will not win their full liberation short of the political revolution. Although there are as yet few signs of any rising consciousness concerning the oppression of women, there is no iron curtain between the advanced capitalist countries and the workers states, especially between East-

ern and Western Europe. Women in the workers states will inevitably be affected by the radicalization of women elsewhere.

The struggle of women for their liberation will be a significant component of the process of challenging and overturning the privileged bureaucratic regimes and establishing socialist democracy. Demands dealing with the continued oppression of women and the socialization of domestic labor in particular should be incorporated into the transitional program for the coming political revolution.

7. In some respects, the economic independence and status of women in the workers states provide a positive example. But Soviet history also strikingly confirms the fact that the family institution is the cornerstone of the specific oppression of women. As long as it is sustained and nurtured as official policy, as long as its functions are not fully taken over by superior social institutions, the truly equal integration of women in productive life and all social affairs is impossible.

The Stalinist counterrevolution on women and the family, and the continued inequality of women in the workers states, is today one of the obstacles to winning radicalized women elsewhere to revolutionary Marxism. As with all other questions, the policies of Stalinism are often equated with Leninism rather than recognized for what they are—the negation of Leninism. Women fighting for their liberation elsewhere often look to the workers states and say, "If this is what socialism does for women, we don't need it." Many anti-Marxists point to the situation of women in the workers states as "proof" that the road to women's liberation is not through class struggle. Thus the fight to win the leadership of the radicalized women in other sectors of the world revolution is interrelated with the development of the political revolution in the deformed and degenerated workers states.

## II. THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION

### Our Perspective

1. The Fourth International welcomes and supports the emergence of a new wave of struggles by women to end their centuries-old oppression. By fighting in the front lines of these struggles, we demonstrate that the world party of socialist revolution can provide a leadership capable of carrying the struggle for women's liberation through to its conclusion. Our goal is to win the confidence and leadership of the struggling masses of women by showing that our program and our class-struggle policies will lead to the elimination of women's oppression along the path of successful proletarian revolution and the socialist reconstruction of society.

2. This perspective of the Fourth International stands in the long tradition of revolutionary Marxism. It is based on the following considerations:

a) We recognize that the oppression of women is indispensable to class society in general and capitalism in particular. The struggle by masses of women against this oppression therefore has an anticapitalist thrust.

b. We recognize that the struggle by women for their liberation is a powerful ally of the working class as a

whole in the struggle to overthrow capitalism. Without the socialist revolution women cannot achieve their liberation. Without the mobilization of masses of women in struggle for their own liberation the working class cannot accomplish its historic tasks.

c. We recognize that the struggle for women's liberation speaks to some of the most basic needs of women, especially the most exploited and oppressed layers. It is an avenue to reach and mobilize them.

d. We recognize that reaching the masses of workers through propaganda, agitation and action around the needs of women is an essential part of the struggle to break the stranglehold of reactionary bourgeois ideology within the working class. It is an indispensable part of the politicization and revolutionary education of the workers vanguard and the construction of a mass revolutionary party of the working class.

e. We recognize that it is only by consistently fighting for the demands and needs of the most oppressed and exploited layers of the class—the women, the oppressed nationalities, the immigrant workers, the youth, the unorganized—that the full power and united strength of the workers can be brought to bear. Convincing the organized

workers movement to fight for the demands of women will likewise be part of the process of transforming the trade unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle in the interests of the entire class.

In other words, our goal is not only to lead the women's liberation movement in a revolutionary direction but also to convince the working class as a whole and its organizations to recognize and embrace the struggles by women as their own.

f. We recognize that if the masses of women are not led in a revolutionary direction, the ruling class may succeed in winning them to the side of reaction. From the "kinder-kirche-kueche" propaganda of the Nazi movement to the march of the empty pots in Chile, this lesson has been spelled out many times. Over and over, the history of the workers movement has proven that the reactionary mystique of motherhood-and-family is one of the most powerful conservatizing weapons wielded by the ruling class. Even in the immediate, day-to-day battles of the class, the attitude of the wives of striking male workers can be a decisive element in the outcome of confrontations with the bosses.

As on all other questions, the reformist and Stalinist misleaders of the workers movement are incapable of showing the masses of women how to escape the reactionary trap and mobilize them on the side of revolution.

The struggle against the oppression of women is not a secondary or peripheral issue. Eventually it becomes intertwined with the life and death battles of the revolutionary movement.

g. We recognize that the struggle for women's liberation is a form of the class struggle. Yet it extends beyond the working class, touching women of all classes to one degree or another, because all women are oppressed as a sex. Struggles around specific aspects of women's oppression necessarily cut across class lines in the sense of potentially involving women from different classes and social layers.

Whatever concessions the rulers may be forced to grant, the bourgeoisie as a class must oppose the struggle for women's liberation because it challenges basic institutions of class rule. But even bourgeois women are oppressed as a sex. Some, revolting against their oppression as women, will break with their class and be won to the side of the workers.

As Lenin pointed out in his discussions with Clara Zetkin, action around aspects of women's oppression has the potential to reach into the heart of the enemy class, to "foment and increase unrest, uncertainty and contradictions and conflicts in the camp of the bourgeoisie and its reformist friends. . . . Every weakening of the enemy is tantamount to a strengthening of our forces."

Far more important from the point of view of the revolutionary Marxist party, however, is the fact that resentment against their oppression as women can often be the starting point in the radicalization of decisive layers of petty-bourgeois women, whose support the working class must win.

By definition, a mass women's liberation movement is one that has the support and participation of large sections of working class women (both those who are employed outside the home and those who are not), peasant women, and petty-bourgeois women.

3. Our class struggle strategy for the fight against women's oppression, our answer to the question of *how* to

mobilize the masses of women on the side of the working class has three facets: our program, our methods of struggle, and our class independence.

## Our Program

Through the totality of the system of demands we put forward—which can deal with every issue from freedom of political association, to unemployment and inflation, to abortion and child care, to workers control and the arming of the proletariat for the seizure of power—we seek to build a bridge from the current struggles and level of consciousness to the culminating point of socialist revolution. As part of our transitional program we put forward a number of demands which speak to the specific oppression of women.

Our program points to the issues around which the masses of women can begin to struggle to loosen the bonds of their oppression and challenge the prerogatives of the ruling class. It recognizes and provides answers for all aspects of women's oppression—economic, social, sexual.

Our interlocking system of demands includes immediate, democratic and transitional demands. Some can and will be wrested from the ruling class in the course of the struggle leading toward the socialist revolution. Such victories bring inspiration, increasing confidence and self-reliance. Other demands will be partially met. The most fundamental will be resisted to the end and can be won only in the course of the socialist reconstruction of society.

It is through struggle for these demands—both those providing solutions to the specific oppression of women and those answering other needs of the class as a whole—that the masses of women will come to understand the interrelationship of their oppression as a sex and class rule.

Our demands directed toward eliminating the specific oppression of women are centered around the following points:

1. Full legal, political and social equality for women. No discrimination on the basis of sex. Equal rights for women to vote, engage in public activity, form or join political associations, live and travel where they want. An end to all laws and regulations with special penalties for women. The extension to women of all democratic rights won by men.

2. The right of women to control their own reproductive functions. This means the sole right to choose whether or not to prevent or terminate pregnancy. This means the rejection of those population control schemes which are tools of racism or class prejudice and attempt to blame the evils of class society on the masses of working people and peasants.

- a. An end to all government restrictions on abortion or contraception.

- b. Free abortion on demand; no forced sterilization or any other government interference with the right of women to choose whether or when to bear children.

- c. Free, widely disseminated birth-control information and devices. Education on sex and birth control in the schools and clinics.

3. An end to the hypocrisy, debasement and coercion of bourgeois and feudal family laws.

- a. Separation of church and state. Marriage to be a voluntary process of civil registration. An end to all forced

marriages and the buying and selling of wives. An end to all laws sanctioning the physical abuse or even murder of women for reasons of so-called male "honor."

b. The right to automatic divorce on request of either partner. State provision for economic welfare and job training for the divorced woman.

c. Abolition of the concept of "illegitimacy." An end to all discrimination against unwed mothers or their children.

d. The rearing, social welfare, and education of children to be the responsibility of society, rather than the individual parents. Abolition of all laws granting parents property rights over children. Enactment and strict enforcement of laws against child abuse.

e. An end to all laws victimizing prostitutes. An end to all laws reinforcing the double standard for men and women in sexual matters. An end to all legislation victimizing homosexuals. An end to all laws and regulations victimizing youth for sexual activities.

4. Full economic independence for women.

a. Right to receive and dispose of their own wages and property.

b. Equal pay for equal work.

c. No discrimination against women in any trade, profession, job category, apprenticeship or training program.

d. Guaranteed jobs at union wages for all women who want to work, coupled with a sliding scale of hours and wages to combat inflation and unemployment among men and women.

e. Preferential hiring, training and job upgrading of women and other super-exploited layers of the labor force in order to overcome the effects of decades of systematic discrimination against them.

f. Paid maternity leaves with no loss of job or seniority.

g. Paid work leaves to care for sick children to be given to men and women alike.

h. The extension of beneficial protective legislation (providing special working conditions to women) to cover men, in order to provide better working conditions for both men and women and prevent the use of protective legislation to discriminate against women.

i. Compensation at union rates throughout periods of unemployment for all women and men, including youth who cannot find a place in the work force, regardless of marital status. Unemployment compensation to be protected against inflation by automatic increases.

5. Equal educational opportunities to combat education and conditioning that reduces women to an inferior, second-sex status.

a. Free, open admissions for women to all institutions of education. Special programs to encourage women to enter traditionally male-dominated fields.

b. An end to all pressures on women to prepare themselves for so-called "women's work," such as homemaking, secretarial work, nursing and teaching.

c. An end to portrayal in textbooks and mass media of women as sex objects and stupid, weak, emotionally dependent creatures. Courses designed to teach the true history of women's struggles against their oppression. Physical education courses to teach women to develop their strength and be proud of their athletic abilities.

d. No expulsion of pregnant students or unwed mothers, or segregation into special facilities.

6. Freedom from domestic slavery.

a. Free, government financed, 24-hour child-care centers

and schools, open to all children from infancy to early adolescence regardless of parents' income or marital status; child-care policies to be decided by those who use the centers.

b. Systematic development of low-cost or free, high-quality social services such as cafeteria and take-out food services available to all; collective laundry facilities; house-cleaning services organized on an industrial basis.

c. A crash, government-financed development program to provide healthful, uncrowded housing for all; no rent to exceed 10 percent of income; no discrimination against single women or women with children.

We counterpose such demands to agitation for the "abolition" of the family. The family as an economic unit cannot be "abolished" by fiat. It can only be replaced over time. The goal of the socialist revolution is to create economic and social alternatives that are superior to the present family institution and better able to provide for the needs currently met, however poorly, by the family, so that personal relationships will be a matter of free choice and not economic compulsion.

These demands indicate the issues around which women will fight for their liberation, and show how this fight is interrelated with the demands raised by other oppressed sectors of society and the needs of the working class as a whole.

The women's liberation movement raises many issues. The development of the movement has already demonstrated that not all will come to the fore with equal force at the same time. Which demands to raise at any particular time in any particular struggle, the best way to formulate specific demands so that they are understandable to the masses and able to mobilize them in action, when to advance new demands to move the struggle forward—the answer to those tactical problems is the function of the revolutionary party, the art of politics itself.

## **Our Methods of Struggle**

1. We utilize proletarian methods of mass mobilization and action in order to achieve these demands. Everything we do is geared to bring the masses themselves into motion, into struggle, whatever their current level of consciousness. The masses do not learn simply by being exposed to ideas or by the exemplary action of others. Only through their own direct involvement in struggle will the level of consciousness of the masses develop, grow and be transformed. Only through their own experience will masses of women be won as allies in the revolutionary struggle and come to understand the need to get rid of capitalism.

Our goal is to teach the masses to rely on their own united power. We counterpose extraparliamentary mass action—demonstrations, meetings, strikes—to reliance on elections, parliaments, legislatures and the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians who haunt them.

Our class struggle methods are geared to awakening the initiatives of the masses of women, to bring them together, to destroy their domestic isolation, their lack of confidence in their own abilities, intelligence, independence and strength. Struggling together with them, we aim to show that class exploitation is the root of women's oppression and its elimination the only road to emancipation.

2. Given the relative weakness of the sections of the Fourth International and the relative strength of the liberals and our reformist and class-collaborationist opponents, our perspective of trying to mobilize masses of women in action can often best be done in the present period through united-front-type action campaigns around concrete demands. The united-front-type abortion campaigns in France and the United States provide an example of this type of action. It is through such united-front-type actions that we can bring the greatest power to bear against the ruling class, educate the workers concerning their own strength, and expose not only the "liberal friends" of women but the Stalinists, social democrats, and trade union bureaucrats who refuse to fight for women's needs.

3. Struggles by women against their oppression as a sex are interrelated with, but not totally dependent on or identical with, struggles by workers as a class. It is true that women cannot win their liberation without the aid of the organized power of the working class. But this historical necessity in no way means that women should postpone any of their struggles until the current labor officialdom is replaced by a revolutionary leadership that picks up the banner of women's liberation. Nor should women wait until the socialist revolution has created the material basis for ending their oppression. On the contrary, women fighting for their liberation must not wait for anyone to show them the way. They should take the lead in opening the fight and carrying it forward. Their struggles advance the process of politicalization and radicalization. They help educate the male workers and convince them that it is in their class interests to fight alongside the women's liberation movement.

4. The oppression of women as a sex also constitutes the objective basis for the mobilization of women in struggle through their own organizations. The trend of radicalizing women to form all-female organizations—women's liberation groups, women's action coalitions, women's caucuses in the trade unions, etc.—is progressive. It reflects the desire of women to take the leadership of their own struggles. They want to have their own organizations in which they can learn and develop and lead without fear of being put down or dictated to by men or having to compete with them from the start. All-female organizations help many women to take the first steps toward discarding their own slave mentality, gaining confidence, pride, and courage to act as political beings.

The small "consciousness-raising" groups that have emerged as one of the most prevalent early forms of the new radicalization help many women to realize that their problems do not arise from personal shortcomings, but are socially created and common to other women. They often lay the groundwork for women to break out of their isolation, to gain confidence and move into action. Such groups can become an obstacle when they remain self-centered and limit themselves to discussion circles as a substitute for joining with others to act.

The desire of women to organize themselves in all-female groups is the opposite of the practice followed by many mass Stalinist parties that organize separate male and female youth organizations for the purpose of repressing sexual activity and reinforcing sex-stereotyped behavior—i.e., the inferiority of women.

The independent all-female forms thrown up by the new women's liberation struggles express the distrust many

radicalizing women feel for the mass reformist organizations of the working class which have failed so miserably to fight for their needs. The most militant women realize that those who will fight most energetically and persistently for the new are those who suffer most from the old.

5. There is no contradiction between supporting and building all-female organizations to fight for women's liberations, or for specific demands relating to women's oppression, and simultaneously building mass action coalitions involving both men and women to fight for the same demands. Campaigns around the right to abortion have provided a good example of this. Women will be the backbone of such campaigns, but the fight is in the interests of the working masses as a whole and our perspective is to win support for the movement from all working class and peasant and other progressive organizations.

6. Likewise, there is no contradiction between supporting and building all-female organizations and at the same time building a revolutionary Marxist party of women and men.

The struggle for socialism requires both a mass women's liberation movement and a mass revolutionary Marxist party. The two serve different functions. The former is designed to mobilize the masses of women in struggle through their own organizations. The latter provides leadership, through program and action, for the working class and its allies, including women, and leads all aspects of the working class struggle for power. Our goal is to win the best fighters for women's liberation to the revolutionary party. There is no objective basis for a separate revolutionary Marxist women's organization.

There are no exclusively "women's issues." Every question of concern to the female half of humanity is also a broader social question of vital interest to the working class as a whole. While we raise demands that deal with the specific oppression of women we have no separate program for women's liberation. Our demands are an integral part of our transitional program for the socialist revolution.

While the party will need special internal fractions or commissions through which to organize our women's liberation work, it is the party as a whole that democratically decides the political line and direction of our work, not just the women comrades. In the revolutionary Marxist party there are no women's pressure groups. There is only one class of membership with complete equality in rights and responsibilities for every comrade.

7. The forms through which we work can vary greatly depending on the concrete circumstances in which our organizations find themselves. Factors that must be taken into account include the strength of our own forces; the size, character and political level of the women's liberation forces; the size of our reformist and ultraleft opponents, and our liberal enemies; and the general political context in which we are working. Whether we should form women's liberation groups on a broad socialist program, work through existing organizations of the women's liberation movement, build broad action coalitions around specific issues, work through trade union caucuses, combine several of these forms, or work through some other are tactical questions. Our tactics are dictated by our strategic aim which is to educate and lead in action forces much broader than ourselves and recruit the best cadre to the revolutionary party.

No matter what organizational form we adopt, the fundamental question to be decided is the same: what specific issues and demands should be raised under the given circumstances in order to most effectively mobilize women and their allies in struggle?

8. We aim to reach women wherever they are in motion—in the high schools, trade schools and universities; on the job; in the trade unions; in their neighborhoods and villages.

We reject the workerist notion that women's struggles are important only in so far as they stem directly from the super-exploitation of women workers. At the same time, we recognize that struggles by women in the unions and on the job have a special importance. Here as elsewhere in capitalist society women are subject to male domination, to discrimination as an inferior sex that is out of its "natural place." Struggles by women to unionize, organize, win equal rights in the unions, fight for better conditions on the job, equal pay, preferential hiring and job upgrading, childcare facilities—these are all important aspects of the struggle for women's liberation as well as the class struggle as a whole.

Unlike housewives, many working women are already semi-organized by the labor market itself. In addition, many are fighting from a vantage point within the unions and within the factories, where they are well-placed to speed the process of revitalizing and transforming the labor movement, educating layers and sectors of the working class with whom they are in contact. Sometimes they are able to draw the power of the organized workers movement in support of their struggles.

There are also special difficulties in organizing women workers. Precisely because of their oppression as women they are less likely to be unionized or have a strong class consciousness. Their participation in the labor force is frequently more sporadic. Their double burden of responsibilities and chores at home are fatiguing and time consuming, leaving them less energy for political and trade union activity. The prevalent assumption that "women's place is in the home" is an additional obstacle and pressure.

Changes brought about by the spread of the women's liberation movement will be instrumental in speeding the alteration of attitudes of working women, strengthening their inclination to organize, unionize and fight for their rights.

Conversely, as the example of the women strikers at the Lip factory in France has again confirmed, women workers entering into struggle around trade union or specific labor issues begin to confront and deal with many of the key questions raised by the women's liberation movement: the willingness of women to speak up aggressively at meetings, to assume leadership responsibilities, to take on difficult technical and administrative tasks, to defend themselves physically, etc. As the women engaged in such struggles begin to prove their capacities to themselves, to gain confidence and play an independent role, this brings them into increasing conflict with family responsibilities and undermines the myth of women's inferiority. This can only help develop a consciousness of the need for women's liberation. Thus, struggles by women as workers and by women challenging specific aspects of their oppression as a sex reinforce each other.

9. Our class struggle methods of mass action are the

antithesis of the orientation of many petty-bourgeois radicals who propose individual acts of moral witness or seek to find some immediate, personal solution to their problems as women by creating new "life-styles." They often concentrate on reforming men as individuals, trying to make them less "chauvinistic," rather than organizing to destroy the institutions of class society responsible for male supremacy and women's oppression. They attempt to build "counter-institutions" in the midst of class society. This individual escapism is ineffective utopianism that can only end in disillusionment.

## Our Class Independence

1. Political independence is the third facet of our class struggle strategy for the fight against women's oppression. We do not defer or subordinate any demand, action or struggle of women to the political needs and concerns of either the bourgeois or reformist political forces with their parliamentary shadow boxing and electoral maneuvers.

If a bourgeois or middle-class figure or politician voices support for any of our demands, that is their contradiction, not ours. It strengthens our side in the class struggle, not theirs.

2. We reject the reformist perspectives of the Stalinist and social-democratic parties, regardless of any lip-service they may pay to the struggles of women against their oppression. The policies and conduct of both these petty-bourgeois currents within the working class movement are based on defending privileges and preserving the capitalist system.

The Stalinists have a special stake in defending the family institution and reinforcing the reactionary grip of bourgeois ideology on the working class: the family unit is extolled in the "socialist" countries as the ideal framework of human relationships.

Both the Stalinists and social democrats have generally abstained from and been hostile to the new rise of women's struggles. But they will undoubtedly attempt to recapture its leadership at a later stage, in order to divert these struggles into reformist channels by using workerist demagogy and playing on electoralist illusions. The Stalinists never tire of telling women that the road to happiness is through "advanced democracy" or the "anti-monopoly coalition." The reactionary positions adopted by the Stalinists in countries like Italy and France on issues like divorce and abortion are such blatant betrayals of the needs of women that their stance opens up possibilities for us to make headway amongst their members and the layers they influence.

3. We fight to keep women's liberation organizations and struggles independent of all bourgeois forces and parties. We oppose attempts to divert women's struggles toward the construction of women's caucuses inside of or oriented to capitalist parties or bourgeois politics, as has occurred in the United States, Canada and Australia. We oppose the formation of women's political parties which have arisen in Belgium and elsewhere. The election of more women to public office on a liberal bourgeois or radical petty-bourgeois program can do nothing to further the struggle for women's liberation.

4. It is only through an uncompromising programmatic and organizational break from the bourgeoisie and all forms of class collaborationism that the working class and

its allies including women struggling for their liberation, can be mobilized as a powerful and self-confident force capable of overturning the capitalist state. The task of the revolutionary-Marxist party is to provide the leadership to educate the working masses through action and propaganda in this class struggle perspective.

## Tasks of the Fourth International Today

1. Concepts and demands relating to women's liberation have had varying degrees of impact throughout the world. The speed with which revolutionary ideas and lessons of struggle are transmitted from one country to another, and from one sector of the world revolution to another ensures the further spread of women's liberation struggles. Widespread questioning of the traditional role of women creates an atmosphere conducive to Marxist education, propaganda and action in support of the liberation of women. Through our press, and propaganda activities we can explain the source and nature of women's oppression and the revolutionary dynamic of women's struggle for liberation.

2. In addition to intervening in organizations and groups of radicalized women where they exist, women's liberation propaganda and activity should be integrated into all our areas of work from the trade unions to the student milieu. It is especially among the youth — students, young workers, young housewives — that we will find the greatest receptivity to our ideas and program.

3. Our experience thus far in the advanced capitalist countries has shown that considerable potential exists for helping to organize and lead action campaigns around issues raised in the struggle against women's oppression. The Fourth International encourages international solidarity in the women's movement, and where possible, international coordination of action campaigns around common issues.

4. To organize and carry out systematic women's liberation work, sections of the Fourth International should establish commissions or fractions in which both women and men comrades may participate.

5. Systematic education about the history of women's oppression and struggles, and the theoretical and political questions involved, should be organized within the sections of the Fourth International.

We have no illusions that our sections can be islands

of the future socialist society floating in a capitalist morass, or that individual comrades can fully escape the education and conditioning absorbed from the very struggle to survive in class society. But we do expect that the conduct of our comrades and sections will reflect the principles on which we stand. We fight to educate the members of the Fourth International to a full understanding of the character of women's oppression and the pernicious ways in which it is expressed. We strive to create an organization in which language, jokes and other acts expressing chauvinist bigotry towards women are not tolerated, any more than acts and expressions of racist bigotry would be allowed to pass unchallenged. We strive to build a party in which the full and rounded political development of women comrades is promoted and maximized.

The internal process of education will take place along with and be facilitated by the growing involvement of our sections in the struggle for women's liberation. The impact of this struggle on the consciousness and attitudes of comrades has been profound. The transformation of the women cadre of our international, reflecting our involvement in the struggle for women's liberation, is a development of great significance. The new self-confidence, political maturity and leadership capacities of the women comrades of the Fourth International constitutes a qualitative expansion of the effective forces of revolutionary leadership on a world scale.

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The new rise of women's struggles internationally and the emergence of a strong, women's liberation movement prior to revolutionary struggles for power is a development of prime importance to the world party of socialist revolution. It increases the political power of the working class and the likelihood that the revolution will be successful in carrying through to the end its task of socialist reconstruction. The rise of the women's liberation movement is an additional guarantee against the bureaucratic degeneration of future revolutions.

The struggle to liberate women from the bondage in which class society has placed them is a struggle to free all human relationships from the shackles of economic compulsion and to propel humanity along the road to a higher social order.

July 5, 1973

# The Differences in Interpretation of the 'Cultural Revolution' at the Last World Congress and Their Theoretical Implications

Submitted by the IEC Majority Tendency

## I. What Was the Extent of the Differences on the 'Cultural Revolution' at the Ninth World Congress, and What Has Been the Verdict of History Regarding Them?

Every comrade can read the two versions of the resolution on the "Cultural Revolution" in China: the original draft presented by a minority of the United Secretariat on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the amendments presented by the majority of the United Secretariat and adopted by the Ninth World Congress. (*International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. X, No. 13, July 1973) One can examine these amendments one by one to decide whether the course of events has proved the majority or the minority correct. One can also read the assessment of these differences that was provided in two later documents by Comrade Joseph Hansen: "The Differences Between the Two Documents on the 'Cultural Revolution'" and "The Origins of the Differences on China" (*International Information Bulletin* reprints, *Discussion on China: 1968-1971*). This assessment concurs, on the whole, with ours insofar as the content of the differences is concerned.

But neither a critical reading of the amendments nor a close study of the two articles by Comrade Hansen mentioned above permit the conclusions that the comrades of the minority of the international leadership are now trying to put forward in their new document "Two Assessments of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Balance Sheet" (*International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 10, No. 13, July 1973): first, the idea that there were "two lines," "two analyses," and "two perspectives" on the "Cultural Revolution"; and second, the idea that the main difference consisted in the fact "that while the Cultural Revolution had begun as an intrabureaucratic struggle, it had developed into something else. Mao and his followers, they [the comrades of the majority] contended, were sensitive to mass pressure for reforms. They said that significant concessions to the masses would be forthcoming as a result of the Cultural Revolution despite the bureaucratic character of the Mao faction." (p. 6.)

We contend in the most categorical fashion that this is not the content of the differences on the "Cultural Revolution" that appeared at the Ninth World Congress. We consider that this way of presenting the matter constitutes

a maneuver on the part of the minority to artificially exacerbate the differences, which concerned neither the general line of an assessment of the "Cultural Revolution" nor, above all, its perspectives. Rather than launch ourselves into a sterile polemic in this regard, we shall take one by one the principal amendments that the majority of the United Secretariat proposed and the world congress adopted, and see whether the information we have at our disposal today, as well as the course of events, confirms or invalidates them.

1. *The real weight of the mass movement (of the youth and workers) in the course of the "Cultural Revolution"* (amendment to point 6 as well as several minor amendments).

The minority stressed the strictly controlled, even fundamentally reactionary, character of the "excursions of roaming bands of youth." The majority thought, on the contrary, that while the Red Guard movement had in fact been launched by Mao, i.e., from above, that it had quickly escaped tight control from above; that it had become more and more differentiated; that within it a series of currents largely independent from and critical of the bureaucracy as a whole had appeared; that this differentiation and this mass movement had greatly increased and not reduced the political activity of the masses, as compared to what existed before the "Cultural Revolution"; that even nuclei approaching Trotskyism had appeared; and that the bureaucracy, including the Maoist faction, had become alarmed by the developments and closed ranks *against this mass of young rebels*.

The information we now have at our disposal completely confirms the majority's assessment in this regard, and not the minority's. To speak of a "conformist" movement, of a "strictly controlled movement," while Comrade Chen Pi-lan is at the same time explaining to us that there was even the beginning of a "local civil war" (*Discussion on China* [1968-1971], "The New Developments in the Chinese Situation," p. 48), is truly absurd. A great many facts attest to the uncontrolled and uncontrollable character of the Red Guard movement at its height, of the profound mass political activity and differentiation that it produced, of the panic it created within the ranks of the bureaucracy, including within the Maoist faction. Events have clearly proved the majority correct on this point.

## 2. *The way the "Cultural Revolution" was ended* (amendments to points 7 and 9)

The majority was of the opinion that given the seriousness of the political crisis set in motion by the mass movement, a crisis that threatened to deal a blow to the bureaucracy as a whole, the "Cultural Revolution" was essentially terminated by a compromise between the principal factions. The minority contested this point. The Tenth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, and the composition of the new Central Committee that was elected there, confirms the majority's version. Four of the principal leaders of the Liu Shao-chi "faction" (if once can speak of such a "faction"), four former members of the pre-"Cultural Revolution" Political Bureau, under the leadership of Teng Hsiao-ping, former secretary-general of the CP, reentered the Central Committee. The assertion in the minority document "Two Assessments," according to which "virtually all the old leaders of the CCP have been eliminated" (p. 7), turns out to be false and contradicted by events.

We repeat once again: the majority never contended that "under the pressure of the masses," Mao would be carried over to positions "more and more to the left." On the contrary: the majority contended that, under the fear of a more and more controllable mass movement, the main factions of the bureaucracy had concluded a compromise. One can add, at the very most, that the main victims of this compromise, apart from the nonconformist Red Guards, who were repressed, were the members of the faction furthest to the "left," the Lin Piao—Chen Po-ta faction, who were eliminated in turn, probably because they didn't accept the sharp turn to the right in 1970.

## 3. *The extent of the army's weight in the Chinese leadership after the "Cultural Revolution"* (amendments to point 5)

The minority was of the opinion that the army had become "the ultimate authority," that China found itself practically under a military dictatorship. The majority said, on the contrary, that "Mao tends to reduce again this great weight gained by the army during the previous period, by putting the emphasis on the reconstruction of the party as the mainstay of the regime. . . ." [IIDB Vol. 10, No. 13, p. 24] An analysis of the decisions of the CCP Tenth Congress confirms the opinion of the majority on this question. The weight of the leaders of the army within the Political Bureau was radically reduced; it was also perceptibly reduced within the Central Committee. The party apparatus has reestablished its preeminence over the military apparatus.

## 4. *The extent of the damage the "Cultural Revolution" did to culture, to the national defense, and to other social spheres in the People's Republic of China* (amendments to point 7)

While it is necessary to maintain a certain caution in regard to this question, given the contradictory character of the information available, one can nevertheless state in general that the opinion of the minority on the immense damage done to Chinese culture and education by the "Cultural Revolution" is not confirmed by the facts.

One cannot perceive damage of such a scope in either the sphere of agricultural production or in industrial production, nor in the field of scientific research or of national defense. One has, on the contrary, the impression that the moderate but constant growth of the standard of living and culture of the Chinese people, registered ever since the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution, interrupted only during the final phase of the "Great Leap Forward," then regained since the beginning of the 1960s, has continued all through these last years. On this point as well, the minority has not furnished evidence for its conclusions, evidence based on new facts that have appeared since 1969.

## 5. *The cause of the "Cultural Revolution"* (amendments to points 2, 3, and 4)

All the supplementary information that we have been able to obtain since the Ninth World Congress confirms that the roots of the "Cultural Revolution" do not lie in the fact that Mao, thirsty for power, wished to reestablish his Bonapartist dictatorship with the help of a "coup d'etat," but that they lie instead in the deep socioeconomic, political, and cultural contradictions within Chinese society.

Comrade Hansen states in his article "The Differences Between the Two Documents on the 'Cultural Revolution'" that it would be necessary to add other contradictions to those that the amendments of the majority enumerate. We agree with most of those that Comrade Hansen mentions. But we believe all the more that it is incorrect for a resolution of a revolutionary Marxist organization that embodies the continuity of the scientific method of Marxism to draw a balance sheet of an event as broad and disruptive as the "Cultural Revolution" by reducing the whole affair, in the last analysis, to a question of a power struggle within the apparatus.

This was not the method followed by Comrade Trotsky when he analyzed the rise of the Stalinist faction to power in the USSR. He always sought to show the relationship between the political crises that marked the stages of this rise, and the socioeconomic contradictions. It is by this method that the documents of the Fourth International on the "Cultural Revolution" must be inspired. This is why the amendments to the points mentioned above were absolutely indispensable, even if they were incomplete.

Let us add that the minority's refusal to accept the amendment to point 4 (at the end of this point), concerning the hostility of the masses toward the old bureaucrats in office, represents an unprincipled concession to Comrade Peng, who favored critical support to the Liu Shao-chi faction. This refusal is inconsistent with the totality of the minority's analysis of the People's Republic of China.

According to this analysis, a bureaucratic caste would already have been in power in China, not since the 1960s, but since the beginning of the 1950s. If one shares this opinion, it would be all the more necessary to conclude that the local, regional, and national heads of the apparatus, the petty and the big tyrants, with their privileges and their arbitrary power, were fairly well detested by the masses. We never said that Mao was better than them. We simply emphasized the fact that Mao was able to use this hatred to mobilize the masses against them. In reality, to deny that means to deny that there were serious bureau-



cratic abuses and privileges in China before the "Cultural Revolution," and thus *a fortiori* to deny the existence of a bureaucratic caste in this country since the beginning of the 1950s.

#### 6. *The assessment of the Maoist faction's foreign policy up to 1969* (amendments to point 10)

For the minority, the question is simple: Look at Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Bangladesh, Nixon's visit to Peking. Isn't this proof that we were correct when we said that Mao has always followed a line of peaceful coexistence? The comrades of the majority let themselves be taken in by Mao's ultraleft verbiage. At bottom, nothing changed after 1970.

We do not agree with this way of presenting things. We think that the minority confuses the petty-bourgeois nationalist base of the concept of "socialism in one country," which reflects the existence of a bureaucratic layer in the process of arising and developing, with the counterrevolutionary practice of liquidating revolutionary struggles around the world in order to facilitate a collaboration with imperialism, which reflects the existence of a hardened and ossified bureaucratic layer, one that has become aware of its own particular interests and defends them with consistency.

The first phenomena corresponds, in the Soviet Union, to the years from 1924 on; the second only revealed itself definitively in 1935, with the conclusion of the Stalin-Laval Pact and the openly counterrevolutionary orientation of the CPs of France, Spain, and many colonial countries. To state that Stalin's foreign policy was counterrevolutionary since 1924 is to do violence to the facts.

It is equally inadvisable from the pedagogical point of view. To hurl an accusation based exclusively on *secret motives*, which have not yet had the occasion to be shown openly in action, is to risk the loss of credibility. Trotsky did not mince words when it was a question of indicting Stalin and his foreign policy; but he never used formulations like "passing into the camp of counterrevolution" to characterize the foreign policy of the Kremlin before 1935. It is only after the Stalin-Laval Pact that one finds him writing such formulations as "abandoned the independent action of the proletariat," "the Communist International has become the diplomatic agent of the Kremlin," "Stalin betrays the world revolution," etc. (*Writings of Leon Trotsky: 1934-35*, pp. 286, 291, 305, 309.) It is only from this time that he speaks of "the decisive betrayal of Stalin and his Comintern crew." (p. 315.)

Even after the German catastrophe of 1933, when he had already called for the constitution of new revolutionary parties and a new International, Trotsky continued to characterize the foreign policy of the Comintern as one that "vacillates between defeatism and social patriotism" (*Writings of Leon Trotsky: 1933-34*, "War and the Fourth International," p. 317), that is, as being essentially centrist. It is only after events visible to all—the adoption of the military budget by the French CP members of parliament, the CPs going over as a bloc to positions of support to "democratic" imperialist powers—that Trotsky accused Stalin and Stalinism of having made their peace, on an international scale, with the reign of Capital.

We continue to believe that it was necessary to follow an analogous method in the analysis and the condemna-

tion of Maoist foreign policy. To accuse it, before 1970, of having a line of collaboration with imperialism would have seemed to be no more than a gratuitous accusation. This method is not concerned with Mao's *intentions*, which one could discourse on from now until doomsday. It is concerned with the facts of the matter: the refusal of imperialism to collaborate with Mao. Since before the Ninth World Congress, moreover, comrades of the majority have specifically stated that if imperialism was to change its orientation toward Peking, a fundamental turn to the right in Maoist foreign policy was perfectly possible. The differences do not concern this; they concern the facts.

In order to be able to defend their thesis, according to which there was no fundamental turn to the right in Chinese foreign policy in 1970—which gave rise, moreover, to a new and serious political crisis within the Chinese CP—the comrades of the minority must first seek to present this foreign policy as having been more to the left *in words only* before 1970; they must then show the continuity of the Chinese leadership's international actions since the beginning of the 1960s. But the minority presents no evidence to back up these astonishing contentions.

Was the more militant line of the Chinese CP in the 1960s purely verbal? Let us recall a few facts. The mobilization of millions of youth and workers in the big Chinese cities in support of May 1968 in France and the Vietnamese revolution, was this purely verbal? The fact that at the time of the rightist coup d'etat in Indonesia, Peking had stopped all aid to the executioners, while Moscow continued to aid them commercially and even to give them military training, was this purely verbal? The fact that at the time of the fascist coup d'etat in Cambodia, Peking offered asylum to the regime of Norodom Sihanouk, while Moscow continued to recognize the Lon Nol clique, was this purely verbal? Peking's virulent opposition to the invasion of Czechoslovakia, was this purely verbal? The aid given to the guerrillas in various Southeast Asian countries, was this purely verbal?

The minority doesn't want to recognize these facts because they fear that one would deduce from them "revolutionary intentions" on the part of Mao. That's not what is involved. What is involved is recognizing these facts as being fundamentally different from what is going on now. To grasp this fundamental change it is sufficient to compare the behavior of Peking toward the executioners of the Indonesian Communists with its behavior towards the executioners of the Sudanese Communists. In Burma, in the 1960s, Peking supported and armed the guerrillas against the military regime. Today it supports the military regime against the guerrillas. Is this really "fundamentally" the same line?

It is possible that the motivation was identical each time, narrowly nationalist, petty-bourgeois, etc. This was undoubtedly the case with Stalin's motivation from 1924 to 1935. The fact remains, however, that Trotsky clearly spoke of a fundamental turn to the right when the Communist International went over from the policy of the "Third Period" to open support for the "democratic" imperialists. In the same way, Mao's fundamental turn to the right in 1970-71 is visible to the naked eye and serves as a convincing weapon in our polemic with the Maoists.

The idea underlying the minority's entire train of argument is that there has been basically a *static* situation of

bureaucratic degeneration in the People's Republic of China since Mao came to power. In our opinion, the Chinese revolution was too powerful; it mobilized too many people, it had too profound an impact on tens of millions of workers and poor peasants, to be able to give birth right away to a climate of apathy and total lack of political perspectives among the masses, the indispensable foundation for a Bonapartist dictatorship like Stalin's. The bureaucratization of the People's Republic of China is a *process* that stretches over years, with ups and downs, with advances and retreats, and not a stable fact given once and for all.

The mobilization of millions of youth and workers in the course of the "Cultural Revolution," regardless of Mao's motives, pushed back the process of bureaucratic degeneration; in particular, it reduced bureaucratic privileges and the inequality of wages. The liquidation of the "Cultural Revolution," and above all the right-turn of 1970-71 (which took place in all domains, and not just in foreign policy), in turn significantly stepped up this process of degeneration: material privileges were once again expanded; social inequality was increased. Foreign policy was a continuation of domestic policy in both phases.

#### 7. *The assessment of Maoism's attractiveness to the revolutionary youth of the world* (amendment to point 1)

The minority's contention that "in most cases" Maoism has lost its influence on the radicalized youth has, alas, turned out to be erroneous, not only in Europe but even in North America and Latin America. The underestimation of this factor explains the use, in the minority's document, of peremptory, apodictic, and scarcely convincing arguments in regard to Maoism. We were and we remain of the opinion that the struggle against Maoism requires powerful and precise analyses, and that its success will depend on the seriousness of these analyses. Experience in the countries where the international minority leads Trotskyist organizations demonstrates, in any event, that its seemingly more "trenchant" (in reality, more simplistic) style of polemicizing against the Maoists has in no way reduced the extent of their influence among the youth.

## II. The Theoretical Questions Underlying the Differences of 1969

The theoretical questions underlying the differences on the interpretation of the Chinese "Cultural Revolution" are much more important and have much weightier consequences than these differences themselves. In fact, they concern fundamental aspects of Trotskyist theory. The greatest clarity and rigor is needed in this regard. It is necessary to discard all temptation to adopt eclectic positions, chosen for political convenience, even if they are covered with the mantle of dogmatic fidelity to *certain* principles (and not to others).

The important theoretical questions are essentially the following:

- the explanation of the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution;
- the assessment of the nature of the Chinese CP;
- the definition of Stalinism in general.

### 1. *The explanation of the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution*

The victory of the Third Chinese Revolution is the most important historical event since the victory of the socialist revolution of October. It overthrew capitalism in the most populous country in the world, it withdrew one-quarter of humanity from the system of imperialist exploitation, it broke the capitalist encirclement of the Soviet Union, and it gave a powerful and lasting thrust to the colonial revolution.

From the historical and social point of view, the explanation of this victory does not pose exceptionally difficult problems. The Third Chinese Revolution arose from an armed mass resistance against Japanese imperialist aggression, a resistance that, through guerrilla warfare, became transformed into a peasant war generalized over an important part of Chinese territory. Centralized by the Chinese Communist Party, a highly bureaucratized workers party of Stalinist origin, this peasant war became transformed, beginning in 1946 and in large part under the impulse of the spontaneous uprising of the poor peasants, into an agrarian revolution and a generalized civil war against the reigning alliance of the Chinese bourgeoisie, landlords, and moneylenders. It resulted in the overthrow of the class power and state power of this alliance of the possessing classes, and in the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat, of a workers state, highly bureaucratized from their inception. After completing the agrarian revolution and the other not-yet-accomplished tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, this bureaucratically deformed workers state began going over toward the solution of socialist tasks, without a break of continuity.

What is involved, therefore, is a classical process of permanent revolution, but with a specific variant: the independent intervention of the proletariat in this process was strictly limited and channeled by the highly bureaucratized nature of the CP leading it. The reasons why this party *succeeded* in strictly limiting and controlling the intervention of the proletariat stem from specific historical conditions: the weakening and atomization of the proletariat during the occupation of the Japanese imperialists (who controlled nearly all the great industrial centers); the absence of a spontaneous movement powerful enough to give birth to organs of self-organization of the soviet type in the cities, and the absence of an arming of the proletariat; the predominance of masses of the poor peasantry during the decisive phases of the revolutionary process; the enormous prestige of the CP as principal organizer of the armed mass resistance against Japanese imperialism and of the civil war against Chiang Kai-shek; the absence of a revolutionary organization implanted in the working masses and strong enough to be considered by them as a leadership capable of replacing the CP; etc.

The real difficulty of explanation lies in the political domain. The Fourth International, the Chinese Trotskyists, and Leon Trotsky had made the prognosis that during the course of the Third Chinese Revolution, the Chinese CP was essentially going to follow a political line analogous to that of 1925-27, subordinating the interests of the workers and the poor peasants to collabora-

tion with the "national bourgeoisie," accepting, in point of fact, the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang over the country. Such a line would have inevitably led to the defeat of the Third Chinese Revolution, as it had led to the defeat of the Second Revolution. Events did not confirm this prognosis. It is thus necessary to explain the divergence between the facts and the prior analysis. After more than twenty years of study, reflection, and discussion within the world Trotskyist movement, we remain firmly convinced that the sole explanation for the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution that is consistent with both the theory of permanent revolution and the theory of the global counterrevolutionary nature of Stalinism, is the following.

In China, we have a classical process of the growing over of a bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution, under the leadership of a bureaucratized workers party; to insure this process of development, the Chinese CP had to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat that was deformed from its inception. It was only able to accomplish these tasks by breaking with Stalinism on two basic planes. It had to cease in practice subordinating the interests of the Chinese revolution to the diplomatic maneuvers and the specific caste interests of the Soviet bureaucracy. It had to cease in practice following the Stalin-Bukharin line of the "bloc of four classes" and of the "revolution by stages." *Only the dictatorship of the proletariat (highly bureaucratized from the beginning) permitted the completion of the agrarian revolution as well as the solution of all the other unresolved tasks of bourgeois-democratic revolution in China.* Only a non-Stalinist workers party, even if it was of Stalinist origin and training, and was profoundly bureaucratized and profoundly hostile to workers democracy, could lead such a revolution to success, mobilizing tens of millions of poor peasants and workers. The victory of this revolution, far from strengthening Stalinism in the USSR or on an international scale, dealt it tremendous blows, as, moreover, any progress in the world revolution does.

What solution does the IEC minority offer in place of this to explain the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution? It is presented in the most consistent way in Comrade Hansen's article entitled "The Origin of the Differences on China (*Discussion on China: [1968-1971]*), as well as in Comrade Les Evans's article "The Social Roots of Chinese Stalinism and the Dispute in the Fourth International" (*International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 10, No. 13, July 1973). It can be summarized as follows. The Chinese peasantry has shown itself capable, throughout the entire history of China, of creating centralized armies that conquer power and struggle for a revolutionary political objective. In 1949 they once again took powers (U. S. imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy). world context within which this took place was profoundly different from that of previous victorious peasant wars. In 1949 the Chinese peasants conquered power in a world marked by industrial technology, dominated by two superpowers (U. S. imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy). "The tasks faced by the new regime, particularly when they were compounded by the aggression of American imperialism in Korea, were of such an order that they could be met only through economic forms that are socialist in principle." (J. Hansen, op. cit., p. 96.)

This interpretation of the victory of the Third Chinese

Revolution involves and implies a series of fundamental revisions of the theory of permanent revolution, of the Trotskyist theory of Stalinism, of the Leninist theory of the state, and of historical materialism in general.

a. One of the basic foundations of the theory of permanent revolution is the *incapacity of the peasantry*, with its own forces and under its own leadership, to lead a revolution to success, its incapacity to play a historically independent role in relation to the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. We say that this is one of the foundations of the theory of permanent revolution. In fact, a great number of colonial and semicolonial countries have an absolute majority of peasants in their population. The solution of the agrarian question is the most burning social question. If the peasantry is capable of solving this task by itself, independent of a proletarian leadership, then one does not see very clearly how and why the proletariat could seize the leadership of the revolutionary process, nor how and why it could establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, in basing itself on a minority (at times even a very small minority) of the nation. Inversely, it is because the peasantry is incapable of completing the agrarian revolution in a victorious way, it is because the conquest of power by the proletariat is the *precondition* for the victory of the agrarian revolution, that the alliance of workers and peasants assures a solid basis for the dictatorship of the proletariat in the backward countries.

There can be no doubt that this was the position of Trotsky since 1906, and that this position was *explicitly* adopted by Lenin after 1917. In his book *The Permanent Revolution*, Trotsky wrote:

". . . the victory of the democratic revolution is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat which bases itself upon the alliance with the peasantry and solves first of all the tasks of the democratic revolution.

". . . no matter how great the revolutionary role of the peasantry may be, it nevertheless cannot be an independent role and even less a leading one. The peasant follows either the worker or the bourgeois. This means that the 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' is only conceivable as a *dictatorship of the proletariat that leads the peasant masses behind it.*

"A democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry as a regime that is distinguished from the dictatorship of the proletariat by its class content, might be realized only in a case where an *independent* revolutionary party could be constituted, expressing the interests of the peasants and in general of petty-bourgeois democracy — a party capable of conquering power with this or that degree of aid from the proletariat, and of determining its revolutionary programme. As all modern history attests — especially the Russian experience of the last twenty-five years — an insurmountable obstacle on the road to the creation of a peasants' party is the petty-bourgeoisie's lack of economic and political independence and its deep internal differentiation. By reason of this the upper sections of the petty-bourgeoisie (of the peasantry) go along with the big bourgeoisie in all decisive cases, especially in war and revolution; the lower sections go along with the proletariat; the intermediate section being thus compelled to choose between two extreme poles. Between Kerenskyism and the Bolshevik power, between the Kuo-

mintang and the dictatorship of the proletariat, there is not and cannot be any intermediate stages, that is, no democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants." (*Permanent Revolution*, Pathfinder edition, pp. 277-78. Emphasis in original.)

Ten years after writing these lines, Trotsky returned to the same subject in his article "Three Concepts of the Russian Revolution," which was published as an appendix to his uncompleted biography of Stalin. There we read the following passage, which confirms in every way what Trotsky wrote ten years earlier, and which furthermore *explicitly* rejects the parallel between the ancient peasant insurrections of China and the possibility of an independent role for the modern peasantry, the parallel established by Comrade Hansen.

"The peasantry was dispersed over the surface of an immense country, with cities as points of contact. By itself the peasantry was incapable even of formulating its own interests, for in each region they were differently conceived. Economic contact between provinces was established by the market and by the railroads; but both the market and the railroads were in the city's hands. In trying to break through the confines of the village and pool their interests, the peasantry necessarily succumbed to political dependence on the city. Neither was the peasantry homogeneous in its social relations: its *kulak* stratum naturally strove to entice it to unite with the city bourgeoisie, while the lower strata of the village pulled in the direction of the city workers. Under these circumstances, the peasantry as a whole was utterly incapable of assuming the reins of government.

"True, in ancient China revolutions brought the peasantry to power, or rather, the military leaders of peasant insurrections. That led each time to a redivision of the land and the establishment of a new 'peasant' dynasty, after which history began all over again: new concentration of lands, a new aristocracy, new usury, new uprisings. So long as the revolution maintained its purely peasant character, society did not emerge from these hopeless rotations. Such was the basis of ancient Asiatic, including ancient Russian, history. In Europe, beginning with the emergence of the Middle Ages, each victorious peasant uprising did not place a peasant government in power but a Leftist burgher party. More precisely, a peasant uprising proved victorious only to the extent that it managed to establish the position of the city population's revolutionary sector. Seizure of power by a revolutionary peasantry was out of the question in twentieth-century bourgeois Russia." (*Stalin*, Panther Books edition, London, Vol. 2, pp. 262-63.)

As for Lenin, having revised his pre-1917 erroneous positions on this matter, he wrote the following in 1921:

"We know from our own experience—and revolutions all over the world confirm it if we take the modern epoch of, say, a hundred and fifty years—that the result has always been the same everywhere: the petty bourgeoisie in general, and the peasants in particular, have failed in all their attempts to realise their strength, and to direct economics and politics their own way. They have had to follow the leadership either of the proletariat, or the capitalists—there is no middle way open to them. Anyone who thinks of a middle way is an empty dreamer. . . .

"Whenever the proletariat was unable to lead the revolution, this force always followed the leadership of the

bourgeoisie. That was the case in all revolutions." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 277-78, "Speech Delivered at the All-Russia Congress of Transport Workers, March 27, 1921.")

All these fundamental principles of revolutionary Marxism are now thrown overboard by the minority, which calmly states that in the epoch of imperialism, of modern industry, of railroads and airplanes, the peasantry of the most populous country in the world is perfectly capable of becoming conscious of its interests, all by itself, on a national scale, that it is fully capable of conducting a war and a victorious peasant revolution against imperialism and against the native bourgeoisie, all this without proletarian leadership and without establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. Trotsky stated that "the peasantry can either support the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, or serve as a prop to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Intermediate forms are only disguises for a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, which has begun to totter or which has not yet recovered its feet after disturbances (Kerenskyism, Fascism, Pilsudski's regime)." (*The Permanent Revolution*, p. 251.) But the minority replies: no, the peasantry can overthrow the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, resolve the agrarian question, and establish precisely this intermediary regime between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat that Trotsky excluded!

b. According to Comrade Hansen's theory, a peasant party ended up establishing a workers state in China. The peasantry is based on small private property. One of the foundations of historical materialism would have to be revised if a social class whose immediate and historical interests are identified with private property were to establish a regime based on collective property.

But there is more. Marxism has always asserted that the proletariat is the *only* class in modern society whose movement and historic interests lead to the suppression of private property and to the collective appropriation of the means of production. The Soviet bureaucracy is a faction of the *working class* that has acquired aspirations of a petty-bourgeois nature, i.e., it is a *workers bureaucracy*, as opposed to semifeudal or bourgeois bureaucracies, which were and are attached to private property. The Soviet bureaucracy's link to collective property flows from this. It could only break this link, in whole or in part, by transforming itself from a workers bureaucracy into the embryo of a bourgeois class of private owners (a section of the Soviet bureaucracy has a tendency toward carrying out this transformation, at least partially).

In stating that the peasantry, or the petty bourgeoisie in general, can successfully abolish the regime of private property for one-quarter of humanity, one necessarily revises the Marxist thesis concerning the unique ties that link the proletariat and collective property in modern society.

c. The minority explains the capacity of a peasant insurrection, led by a petty-bourgeois party, to become transformed into a victorious socialist revolution by changes in the "world context." An epoch of very advanced industrial technique; victory of the USSR at the end of the second world war; general weakening of imperialism; "the impossibility of resolving the tasks" with which the regime of the "victorious petty bourgeoisie" were confronted,

except on the basis of "economic forms that are socialist in principle," etc.

This explanation explains nothing at all. At most it establishes the *general framework of the world situation* following the second world war (and this again in a very incomplete manner, forgetting a few details such as the strengthening and temporary hegemony of American imperialism, at the exact moment when the civil war became generalized in China; the economic weakening of the USSR, whose troops had disappeared from China at the moment of this outbreak of generalized civil war; the counterrevolutionary role of the Soviet bureaucracy, etc.). But it does not at all explain why *the same* general conditions on a world scale led to the *victory* of the revolution in *some* countries (Yugoslavia, China, North Vietnam, Cuba), and to defeats of the revolution in a greater number of cases (Greece, Italy, France, Brazil, Indonesia, Iraq, Bolivia, Algeria, Sudan, etc.).

The "problems with which the regime had been confronted"—were they "solvable" on the basis of private property in Indonesia, in Algeria, in Sri Lanka, in Bangladesh, which would explain why there is still a bourgeois state in these countries while there is a workers state in China? The "victory of the Soviet Union"—did it have a greater effect on Cuba than on Brazil, and, if so, for what mysterious reasons? "The weakening of the imperialist system"—did this occur to a lesser extent in Indonesia (where the revolution had to confront the very powerful Dutch imperialism) than in North Vietnam (where the revolution first had only to fight the weak French imperialism and then the even-weaker American imperialism), which would explain the defeat in Indonesia and the victory in North Vietnam?

This whole concept, which makes the victory or defeat of socialist revolutions following the second world war depend above all on the relationship of forces between the big powers, if not on the extent of Moscow's military successes, is nothing but a scarcely amended variant of the "semiofficial" theory used by the Kremlin and the Stalinist parties to explain the course of world events for more than thirty years. We believe, on the contrary, that if there is still a bourgeois state in Indonesia, Algeria, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere while there is none in China, North Vietnam, and Cuba, it is because in the first category of countries the Stalinist and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships (and in Sri Lanka it is necessary to add the reformist, ex-Trotskyist LSSP) of the mass movement followed a line of class collaboration with the "national bourgeoisie," of respect for the bourgeois state and the bourgeois army; while in the second category of countries the parties that led the revolutionary process decided, even in an empirical fashion, to break with the bourgeoisie, to conduct a struggle to overthrow the bourgeois state, i.e., to lead a socialist revolution to victory.

To explain the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution as basically resulting from the "pressure of objective conditions" revises the Leninist theory of the key role of the subjective factor in the revolutionary process, just as it revises the Trotskyist theory of the global counterrevolutionary role of Stalinism.

d. The minority tries to extricate itself from these difficulties by using the term "workers and peasants govern-

ment." It seems that this is the decisive factor that would have permitted the growing over of the revolutionary process in China from the "purely peasant" phase toward "the adoption of economic forms that are socialist in principle." But in doing this they sink even deeper into revisionism.

First of all, it would have taken a miracle for a "workers and peasants government" to emerge from a *purely peasant* insurrection. Where would the "workers" aspect of this government come from? Not from the nature of the CP, Comrade Hansen states categorically. The mystery thus remains more dense than ever. Can "objective conditions" give rise to "working-class elements" in a government that emerges from a "purely peasant" war, led by a "purely peasant" party? The socialist character of the "new economic forms" would be explained by the "worker and peasant" nature of the government. But the sole evidence for any "worker" element in this government is precisely the fact that it . . . gives rise to "economic forms that are socialist in principle." We are clearly in the midst of circular reasoning.

The peasants, having taken power and being immediately transformed into "workers and peasants," correspond to the "workers and peasants government" foreseen by the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, Comrade Hansen tells us. It is necessary to point out in passing that the Comintern spoke of "workers governments, or workers and peasants governments" in relation to the role of opportunist *workers* parties. But in the resolution on tactics of the Fourth Congress of the Comintern it comes across with particular clarity that in the eyes of the authors of this resolution, a workers government (or a workers and peasants government) implies the survival of the bourgeois state and the bourgeois army. *It transforms itself into the dictatorship of the proletariat to the extent that it disarms the bourgeoisie and destroys the bourgeois state apparatus.* ("Theses on Tactics," point 11, pp. 425-427, *The Communist International 1919-1943: Documents*, vol. I, ed. by Jane Degras, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., London, 1971.)

This clarification, however, confronts the minority with an additional theoretical difficulty. The People's Republic of China was proclaimed October 1, 1949. The bourgeois army of Chiang Kai-shek had, for all intents and purposes, been defeated by that time; the bourgeoisie had been disarmed. Can there have been a "workers and peasants government" *after* the crushing of the bourgeoisie in a civil war? How does this mysterious "workers and peasants government" then differ from the dictatorship of the proletariat?

Because it refuses to admit that the Chinese CP established a bureaucratically deformed workers state in 1949, when it crushed Chiang Kai-shek, the minority defends the fiction that as late as 1953, "in the extent and importance of capitalist property relations, China remained a capitalist state under the political administration of a Stalinist party." (Les Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 40.) A series of new revisions of Marxism are implied in this unlikely thesis:

● While Trotsky stated that only the dictatorship of the proletariat can complete the agrarian revolution, in China this would have been completed, for all intents and purposes, under a bourgeois state and before the birth of the workers state. One wonders why the peasants,

supposed "masters" of the country, would not have then revolted as one man against a state (their state?) that sought immediately to suppress individual property, acquired with such difficulty.

● Since no "new" revolution had taken place in China in 1953-54, the transition from the bourgeois state to the bureaucratically deformed workers state would have taken place gradually, peacefully, and imperceptibly. It is true that a colossal revolution, following a very bloody civil war, succeeded in 1949 in overthrowing Chiang Kai-shek's state. But the minority calmly states that this was only the semblance of a revolution, which in no way changed the social nature of the state. The "true" revolution is the "unknown revolution" of 1953-54, not the real revolution of 1946-49 . . .

● The Korean war is thus transformed—since it broke out in 1950—from a war between a workers state and the worldwide imperialist alliance into a war between two bourgeois camps. Perhaps the support extended to the People's Republic of China by every Trotskyist is justified because it was a matter of a semicolonial bourgeois state? The comrades of the minority will have a difficult time in uncovering the powerful strongholds that the imperialists held in China in 1950, strongholds that would justify this definition of the Chinese state.

● A peasant party would be able to transform a bourgeois state into a workers state.

● A bourgeois state would be able to survive even after the disarmament of the bourgeoisie and the destruction of the bourgeois army (unless the minority uncovers for us some mysterious "bourgeois armies" that somehow exercised their power in China between 1949 and 1954; unless they discover some "bourgeois aspects" of the People's Liberation Army . . .).

Utilizing the criterion of the "capitalist property relations that continued to exist between 1949 and 1954," one would just as well be able to define Soviet Russia between November 1917 and September 1918 as a "bourgeois state." Furthermore, it seems that certain comrades of the minority are already marching blithely along this path. The conquest of power by the soviets; the whole nature of a social revolution as signifying the passage of *state power from one class to another*—which does not mechanically coincide with the total destruction of all economic power of the old ruling class—i.e., the entire Marxist theory of the state and of social revolutions is called into question. And all this just to keep from succumbing to the temptation to "adapt to Maoism" by recognizing the obvious fact that in 1949 Mao led a bureaucratically deformed socialist revolution to victory.

In advancing their theory of the bourgeois state that would have existed in China from 1949-54, despite the completion of the agrarian revolution, despite a mortal conflict with imperialism, despite the disarmament of the bourgeoisie and the total destruction of its state power, *the comrades of the minority are beginning to adopt the Maoist theory of "New Democracy,"* which Krushchev adopted in the program of the CPSU in the form of "National Democracy." For Trotsky, there is no intermediate regime between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Since one can scarcely admit that there was a "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie" in 1953; since one does not wish to admit that there was

already a dictatorship of the proletariat, what then pops out of the overheated imagination of Comrades Hansen and Evans but this celebrated "intermediate regime," half bourgeois, half proletarian, in a word, "petty bourgeois." And since Comrade Evans describes for us, in all seriousness, the powerful pockets of bourgeois power that supposedly continued to exist in China between 1949 and 1954, including on the governmental level, wouldn't this intermediate regime be the notorious "bloc of the four classes," the alliance of the workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, and the "national" and "progressive" bourgeoisie, which Trotskyists had always considered an impossible phantasmagoria, if not a masquerade for the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*, but which the minority suddenly discovers as corresponding to the reality of power in China over a four-to-five-year period? And following the great theoretician Mao Tsetung all the way to the end—since he is unwilling to accept that the leader of the revolution was superior to the theoretician—Comrade Evans is thus obliged to implicitly conclude that this "bloc of the four classes" transforms itself peacefully, gradually, and without a new revolution, into the dictatorship of the proletariat. Starting from the theory of permanent revolution, he has ended taking a return route toward the "uninterrupted revolution by stages" the Maoists are so fond of. The "Trotskyist orthodoxy" that must come forth with such monstrosities because it refuses to admit obvious facts has indeed to bear a heavy cross. It is clearly in a state of full retreat.

The obvious facts are that the class power of the Chinese bourgeoisie was not broken in 1954 but in 1949. A bourgeois state without a bourgeois class in power is an absurdity from the Marxist point of view. The bureaucratically deformed workers state thus arose beginning in 1949. It was this workers state that, after completing the agrarian revolution, the confrontation with imperialism, the national unification, then began to accomplish the socialist tasks, exactly as the theory of permanent revolution states. To this day, the Maoists are unwilling to admit that the (bureaucratically deformed) dictatorship of the proletariat has existed in China since 1949, because to acknowledge this fact is to denounce Mao Tsetung's "New Democracy" as a serious deviation from Marxism. "Trotskyists" who join the Maoists in this rear-guard theoretical combat—this is what the comrades of the minority have now become.

Let us therefore pose this question: by what means would the "workers and peasants government" Comrades Hansen and Evans are so fond of have "abolished capitalism" in 1953-54? By mass mobilizations? In part, without doubt. But essentially, nevertheless, by the intervention of the state, the army, and legislation. What was the social nature of the state in this period, according to the comrades of the minority? It was a bourgeois state. So here's what it really boils down to: a "workers and peasants government" that abolishes capitalism, not by destroying the bourgeois state (this task had already been accomplished by the peasantry!), but with the help of this bourgeois state!

As one can see, the solution the minority offers to replace our explanation for the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution leads to monumental contradictions, obvious theoretical absurdities, and revisions of fundamental ele-

ments of revolutionary Marxism. It is preferable to stay with our explanation, which is consistent, easily capable of integration into the whole of Marxist-Leninist theory, and which moreover has the secondary advantage of corresponding to the empirical facts, of not representing a systematic violation of the facts.

## 2. *The nature of the Chinese CP*

To define the Chinese CP, the comrades of the minority use pell-mell the formulations "Stalinist party," "petty-bourgeois party," and "peasant party." Here again the theoretical contradictions are evident.

First, the definition of a Stalinist party as a petty-bourgeois party is incomplete and therefore false. It would be just as incomplete and false to call a Social-Democratic party or a labor party a "bourgeois party" or a "petty-bourgeois party." Both are petty bourgeois by virtue of their practice of class collaboration, their desire to reconcile, at least on a global scale, the interests of Capital and Labor. But they are not *only* that. They are also part of the *organized workers movement*. In reality, the Stalinist parties are *petty-bourgeois workers parties*, the Social-Democratic parties *bourgeois* (or petty-bourgeois) *workers parties*.

If one does not use this full formulation, then calling for a united front between the CP and the SP (or worse, between the CP, the SP, and the revolutionary party) would be to call for a popular front; to call for a vote for the CP or the SP would be the same thing as calling for a vote for the Democratic Party in the United States. Up until now, only the Bordigists have defended this outlandishly ultraleft thesis. We assume that the minority has not been won over to this thesis, and that therefore it really sees the Stalinist parties as petty-bourgeois *workers parties*.

But once we return to this classical definition, all of Comrade Hansen's contortions to avoid recognizing "anything proletarian whatsoever" in the Chinese CP "precisely because it is Stalinist" are revealed to be perfectly inoperative. By all the evidence, there is not "a" proletarian element, but *many* proletarian elements in each Stalinist party, even abstracting from its majority social composition (obviously alongside many petty-bourgeois bureaucratic elements). Let's cite a few: the fact that they are part of the organized workers movement, where they were born and with which they have never cut the umbilical cord; the fact that they all have in their ranks a certain number of workers who joined them because they were conscious of the need for a workers organization that is independent of the bourgeoisie and openly anticapitalist; the fact that a not-unimportant section of the working class identifies with them, even if they do not belong, and identifies with them out of anticapitalist motives; the fact that the bourgeoisie in its near-totality considers them part of the proletariat; the fact that they retain in their program not-insignificant elements of workers' socialist class consciousness (the Chinese CP never struck the dictatorship of the proletariat from its program), etc., etc.

In fact, to designate the French SFIO [Socialist Party] of 1969 as a "workers (even if a bourgeois workers) organization" while withholding this designation from the Chinese CP of 1949, which counted in its ranks a much greater number of workers, without even mentioning the

objective role of these two parties in their respective societies, is to carry unscientific subjectivism to an extreme rarely equalled in the revolutionary movement.

Is the Chinese CP perhaps an exceptional case among the Stalinist parties, which would all be "petty-bourgeois workers parties" with the sole exception of the Chinese CP, which would be a "petty-bourgeois peasant party," or a "purely peasant party"? Trotsky in fact had in 1932 expressed the idea that that the Chinese CP, submerged for a number of years within the Red Armies, with their majority-peasant composition, could become a peasant party, with the risk that it would crush the workers' uprisings when these would occur. Comrade Les Evans cites this passage with great satisfaction: Hansen could still base himself on Trotsky.

Unfortunately for Comrades Hansen and Evans, the Trotsky of 1932 was no more ready than the Trotsky of 1928 or of 1939-40 to revise the theory of permanent revolution. Thus when he spoke of the possibility of the Chinese CP being transformed into a peasant party, he clearly had in mind a *bourgeois peasant party*, one that would be incapable of completing the agrarian revolution not to mention driving the bourgeoisie from power. In the same 1932 article entitled "Peasant War in China and the Proletariat," which Comrade Evans cites, Trotsky states clearly, replying in advance to Comrades Hansen and Evans:

"In old China, every victorious peasant revolution was concluded by the creation of a new dynasty, and subsequently also by a new group of large proprietors; the movement was caught in a vicious circle. *Under present conditions the peasant war by itself, without the direct leadership of the proletarian vanguard, can only pass on the power to a new bourgeois clique*, some 'Left' Kuomintang or other, a 'third party,' etc., etc., which in practice will differ very little from the Kuomintang of Chiang Kai-shek." (*Writings of Leon Trotsky: 1932*; pp. 197-98. *Emphasis added.*)

When Trotsky set forth the hypothesis that the Chinese Communist Party had become a *bourgeois peasant party*, the conclusion that it would oppose the workers obviously implied that it would oppose them *in order to defend capitalist private property*. To define his thoughts more precisely, moreover, Trotsky drew the parallel with the right-wing Social Revolutionaries of Russia, who in fact played this role in the course of the Russian Revolution of 1917. But nowhere in his 1932 article does Trotsky accept the hypothesis of a "peasant party," neither worker nor bourgeois, that is capable of leading the agrarian revolution to victory in China independent of the two big urban classes of Chinese society, that is capable of overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie without establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Once events were to establish beyond all doubt that the Chinese CP, far from protecting private property was instead in the process of abolishing it, far from repeating the experience of a Kuomintang regime was instead in the process of crushing it, it is certain that Trotsky, in keeping with the logic of permanent revolution, would have concluded: after all, it is, in spite of everything, a workers party (extremely bureaucratized) that has led the peasant movement, and not a *bourgeois peasant party*. Furthermore, one can recall that Trotsky, more cautious than Comrade Hansen, added a postscript to his 1932

article, in which he said, referring once again to a possible conflict between the CP-led peasant armies and the working class:

". . . is such a perspective inevitable? No, I don't think so at all. Within the Stalinist faction (the official Chinese Communist Party) there are not only peasant, i.e., petty-bourgeois tendencies, but also proletarian tendencies." (Ibid., p. 200.)

Isn't it obvious that the "tendencies" that directed the peasant struggle toward the destruction of private property can in no way be characterized as (bourgeois) peasants, but only as bureaucratized proletarian tendencies? And isn't it absurd to take what was a working hypothesis, hedged in advance with cautious reservations, and transform it forty years later, after the event, into a rigid dogma, especially when events have clearly proved it false?

To explain the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution in a coherent way, it is a thousand times preferable to abandon Trotsky's temporary working hypothesis on the specific nature of the Chinese CP of 1932 than to manipulate concepts like "independent peasant party—a party that cannot be characterized as either bourgeois or workers—that is compelled, under the pressure of the tasks, to carry out the establishment of a workers state," i.e., to revise the theory of permanent revolution.

If the Chinese CP was therefore a *petty-bourgeois workers* party, and not a purely "peasant" party, can one by the same token characterize it as a Stalinist party? Before 1945, without doubt. Certainly not in the period that opened with the rise of the Third Chinese Revolution in 1946.

For Trotsky and for the Fourth International, the dual nature of the Soviet bureaucracy comes into play in a different way inside and outside the Soviet Union. Inside the Soviet Union, the bureaucracy fundamentally defends, in its own way, the regime of collective ownership of the means of production and the planned economy. Certainly, it objectively undermines and disorganizes this regime by its abuses, its deceit, its thefts, its wastefulness, the absence of soviet democracy (which would be intolerable from the point of view of defense of its privileges), by a thousand results of its dictatorship. But when this regime is directly threatened, the bureaucracy defends it. It did this in 1928-29 against the kulaks. It did it in 1941 against German imperialism.

Outside the Soviet Union, the bureaucracy fundamentally defends the status quo, that is, the maintenance of capitalism and private property; not because it likes private property, but because the regime of private property can normally be overthrown only by proletarian revolutions (or proletarian revolutions supported by the poor peasantry) on a colossal scale, and because it fears, rightly so, the effects of these popular revolutions on the Soviet masses, i.e., on the direct political bases of its power: the proletariat's apathy and lack of socialist perspectives in the USSR.

From this flows the conclusion Trotsky drew in 1938, in the Transitional Program, on the *global*, i.e., the worldwide, counterrevolutionary nature of Stalinism, when he spoke of "the definite passing over of the Comintern to the side of the bourgeois order." (*The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, Pathfinder edition, p. 74.)

The events that unfolded during and after the second world war, first in eastern Poland and the Baltic countries and then in the so-called People's Democracies, in no way contradicted this analysis. On the one hand, as we have already said, Stalinism did not pass over to the side of the bourgeois order out of a passion for private property but rather out of fear of the international revolution. Wherever private property can be abolished—and thus the power and privileges of the Soviet bureaucracy enhanced—without popular revolution, without a large mobilization of the masses, by the bureaucratic-military action of the Kremlin and its agents, who at most manipulate strictly controlled mass actions, the bureaucracy has no reason to restrain itself and maintain the reign of capital. It is these conditions that explain "the structural assimilation" of the above-mentioned territories into the social structure of the USSR, basically by the Soviet army itself.

On the other hand, as Trotsky had already written in 1939:

"In order to gain the possibility of occupying Poland through a military alliance with Hitler, the Kremlin for a long time deceived and continues to deceive the masses in the USSR and in the whole world, and has thereby brought about the complete disorganization of the ranks of its own Communist International. 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 organization 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 world revolution." (*In Defense of Marxism*, Pathfinder Press, "The USSR in War," p. 19.)

It is clear that this argument cannot be extended to the Chinese, Yugoslav, Vietnamese, and Cuban revolutions without becoming totally meaningless. In these countries, private property was not abolished by the Kremlin's military-bureaucratic action but instead by colossal mass mobilizations, by genuine popular revolutions in the fullest sense of the term, the way Trotsky used the term in *The Permanent Revolution*. To say that these revolutions not only did not alarm the Kremlin but gave it great comfort, simply because "Mao admired Stalin" or "had learned to imitate him," is to already put a question mark over the entire Trotskyist analysis of the *objective reasons* why the Kremlin must fear like the plague any international extension of the revolution.

Furthermore, to assume that a Stalinist party were capable of leading the overthrow of capitalism in a region encompassing one-quarter of humanity, but that it nevertheless remains counterrevolutionary and that its politics, "taken as a whole" retain their "reactionary" character, is to empty these words of all their objective, Marxist meaning. The victorious Chinese revolution is not "the transformation of property relations in this or another area" but rather the most important revolutionary event since October 1917. It was not won at the price of a military alliance with an imperialist camp—carried out under the smokescreen of a colossal deception with re-



spect to the world proletariat—but rather at the price of a fierce struggle against imperialism (first Japanese, then American). It did not lead to demoralization or disorganization of working people on a world scale but to a colossal rise of the colonial revolution, sweeping along two-thirds of humanity. Even if one wished to attribute to Mao exclusive responsibility for the defeat of the Indonesian revolution—which, in any event, would be excessive: the Kremlin's responsibility is at least equal to if not greater than Mao's in this tragedy—this event weighs less heavily on the scale of twentieth-century history than the victory of the Chinese revolution.

To state that the Chinese CP is a Stalinist party is to force oneself, however disagreeable it may seem, to acknowledge that Stalinism was capable of leading a socialist revolution to victory for one-quarter of humanity. It means throwing overboard the Trotskyist theory of the global counterrevolutionary character of Stalinism.

Caught up in the implacable dialectic of their revisionism, the unfortunate comrades of the minority are compelled to go even further. In line with an article written a few years ago by Comrade Tom Kerry, Comrade Evans himself now states that the whole thesis of Stalin's supposed opposition to the Chinese CP's taking power is a myth. Here we have a second occasion in which the minority joins the Maoists in their polemic against the Fourth International, this time to defend Comrade Stalin against the "Trotskyist slander" that he did everything he could to discourage and prevent Mao's taking power (just as he did with regard to Tito, and as his successors did in regard to Ho Chi Minh and Castro)! After the victory of these revolutions, Stalin was forced, up to a certain point, to reach an accommodation with them; before their victory he sought to prevent them. Such is the verdict of the facts, which also conforms to the verdict of Trotskyist theory. But the minority prefers to transform "the great organizer of defeats" into "the organizer of the greatest victory," rather than admit that the Chinese CP had ceased to be a Stalinist party in 1949.

Instead of pressing on along this revisionist path, it is preferable to acknowledge that under the pressure of a great number of objective and subjective factors—of which the precipitous rise of the masses of poor peasants of North China was the decisive one—the leadership of the Chinese CP decided in 1946-47, *against* the advice and the pressure of the Kremlin, to follow a course toward victory in the civil war, that is, toward overthrowing the bourgeois state and completing the agrarian revolution in China. In doing this, they set their course toward the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They could only do this by breaking with some fundamental features of Stalinism (which obviously does not mean that they abandoned the *entire* Stalinist heritage, far from it).

To designate the Chinese CP as a "centrist party" or a "left-centrist party" means something very precise: a bureaucratized, petty-bourgeois workers party, of Stalinist origin, that breaks with Stalinism on two key questions, that leads, independent of the Kremlin, of the Kremlin's armies, and its secret police, a precipitous revolutionary mobilization of the masses that goes so far as to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie and establish a bureaucratically deformed dictatorship of the proletariat. *This implied a conscious choice that was different from the one made by the great majority of Communist parties,*

although they often found themselves in "objective conditions" as pressing, if not more pressing, than those of China, Yugoslavia, and Vietnam. To place an equals-sign between parties that have defended the bourgeois order against the revolution (the CPs of France, Italy, Greece, Indonesia, Iraq, Brazil, etc., etc.) and parties that have overthrown bourgeois order by a popular revolution; to say that they are both "Stalinist" and nothing else, is to do as much violence to formal logic as to dialectics; it is to place an equals-sign between revolution and counter-revolution.

Can a "centrist" party of Stalinist origins that has come to power degenerate bureaucratically? Of course it can, even in conditions different from those in the USSR between 1923 and 1933. For the comrades of the minority, labeling the Chinese CP "Stalinist" seems to have the principle merit of making it possible to recognize each crime of the bureaucratic dictatorship that exists in China. But experience has shown that once these crimes show themselves and become demonstrable, we in no way hesitate to denounce them just as much as the minority, without deducing them from the label "Stalinist." We agree with you on the necessity for a political revolution in China, without calling the Chinese CP a "Stalinist" party. Nor have we had any difficulties in characterizing the tasks of this revolution in a manner identical to the minority's. Once Maoist diplomacy entered a counterrevolutionary path we denounced it just as much as the minority. In these circumstances, what purpose does it serve to call the Chinese CP "Stalinist," to attribute to Stalin the immense merit of having directed, through an intermediary, the most important revolution since the socialist October revolution, and to revise one of the fundamental aspects of our program concerning the global counterrevolutionary nature of Stalinism, when no particular political consequences arise from this qualification?

The minority makes a great case out of the fact that the refusal to call the Chinese CP "Stalinist," and the fact of characterizing it as "centrist," automatically leads to characterizing the Maoist foreign policy as "bureaucratic centrist." However, says the minority, Trotsky abandoned such a definition of the Kremlin's politics when he concluded that a political revolution was necessary in the USSR. It would therefore be a breach of logic in the majority's position to acknowledge the necessity of such a political revolution while continuing to characterize Mao's foreign policy as "bureaucratic centrist," as does the resolution adopted at the Ninth World Congress.

Unfortunately for them, the historical precedent cited by the minority does not conform to their explanation. In a programmatic document entitled "The Class Nature of the Soviet State," written in October 1933, *after* the time Trotsky formulated the necessity of a political revolution in the USSR, he continued to define the politics of the Stalinist bureaucracy as centrist: "No, even in the event of war, we will maintain a critical irreconcilability toward bureaucratic centrism, which will not be able to cover up its incapacity to lead a genuine revolutionary war." (*The Writings of Leon Trotsky: 1933-1934*, p. 122.) Almost a year later, in June 1934, in the theses "War and the Fourth International," Trotsky stated again that "having abandoned a principled line on the war question, the Third International vacillates *between defeatism and social patriotism*" (*The Writings of Leon Trotsky: 1933-*

34, p. 317. Emphasis in original.), as we have already stated above.

Where the comrades of the minority see a contradiction, there is in reality a painstaking analysis of a *process* of bureaucratic degeneration, which passes through *successive stages*, and which cannot be reduced to simplistic equations on the order of: theory of socialism in one country = peaceful coexistence = consolidated bureaucratic caste = necessity for a political revolution = counterrevolutionary Stalinism. We have tried to apply the same cautious method of scientific analysis to each stage of the evolution of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese CP, instead of *deducing* the foreign, domestic, economic, and cultural policy of the bureaucracy in power in China from the label "Stalinist" that has been stuck on it once and for all.

To state that a bureaucratized workers party—the Chinese CP—was capable of leading a victorious socialist revolution in a vast country like China, doesn't this revise the Leninist theory that only a fully conscious Marxist revolutionary party can lead a socialist revolution to victory? In the framework of historical materialism, there is a notable difference between the laws of social evolution, which concern *social forces* such as classes or the specific layers of a class, and predictions about the *political forms* under which these classes operate. The theory of permanent revolution contains an analysis and a prognosis concerning the behavior of social forces in the course of revolutions in backward countries in the epoch of imperialism. This theory has been confirmed by the entire history of the twentieth century, without a single exception.

On the other hand, the idea that the proletariat's conquest of power or exercise of power necessitates, in every case, without exception, the presence of a genuinely revolutionary party, does not have the same absolute validity. It has seen several historical exceptions of some significance. The Paris Commune was established by a coalition of groups among whom the Marxists were in a minority; one cannot really even say that they were organized in a party. The experience of degeneration in the Soviet Union has led to the exceptional situation in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is maintained insofar as its economic foundations go, despite the bureaucracy's total political expropriation of the proletariat, and the physical extermination of its revolutionary vanguard. The cases of Yugoslavia, China, and North Vietnam show that even centrist parties of Stalinist origin can, under exceptional conditions, lead victorious socialist revolutions despite their high degree of bureaucratization and their total lack of theoretical clarity, but that they can only do so on the condition that they break with several fundamental features of Stalinism. In this event, these victorious revolutions give birth to workers states that are bureaucratized from their inception. It is a painful exception to the political "norm" that remains the ideal, that remains the most probable variant in most cases, but has not been confirmed 100 percent by history. But it is certainly an exception that is less difficult to accept than the notion that the dictatorship of the proletariat continues to exist in the Soviet Union despite the absence of any direct political power whatsoever in the hands of the proletariat of this country.

At the time of the [1963] Reunification Congress, the comrades who today find themselves in the majority and the minority were in unanimous agreement that such revolutions under the leadership of non-revolutionary-Marxist parties (among which it is also necessary to classify the Cuban revolution) represent *the exception* and not the rule. The discussion focused above all on the exceptional conditions of the weakened state of the possessing classes, the power of the peasantry, the underdevelopment of these countries, etc. We remain in agreement with this analysis, which implies that the more the world revolution advances, the more the weight of the proletariat becomes dominant within it, the more the revolution's center of gravity shifts toward the most industrialized of the semicolonial countries and toward the imperialist countries, and the more the presence of a revolutionary Marxist party, as a fully conscious and not merely pragmatic leadership, becomes an absolute precondition for the victory of the revolution.

The difference between the majority and the minority on the question of China therefore does not at all consist in the fact that the majority would have the tendency to generalize these exceptional cases—"adapting to Stalinism"—whereas the minority would limit their validity. On the contrary; the differences consist in the fact that the majority *adds* to the exceptional conditions that explain a similar unforeseen turn of events, above and beyond the objective conditions mentioned above, a *supplementary subjective condition*: even under extremely favorable objective conditions, the revolution *will not triumph* unless, despite all the "pressure of circumstances," the parties that lead the revolution break with basic aspects of Stalinism—the subordination of the interests of the revolution to the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy; the practice of "revolution by stages," and of collaboration with the "national bourgeoisie."

History has already shown that the great majority of Communist parties will not make this break, and that for this reason, exceptionally favorable chances for revolutionary victory continue to be missed in the semicolonial and colonial countries. We shall continue to call these parties Stalinist. Only a few Communist parties have shown themselves to be exceptionally likely to take advantage of favorable objective circumstances to lead the revolutionary process to victory. They can only do it by going through fundamental political mutations. In order to take these mutations into account, we no longer call these parties Stalinist.

### 3. *The general definition of Stalinism*

The classical Trotskyist definition of Stalinism is that it represents the politics that express the particular national and international interests of the Soviet bureaucracy, to which the interests of world revolution (including the real interests of an effective defense of what remains of the conquests of October) are subordinated.

The comrades of the minority are now seeking to broaden this definition in two ways: on the one hand, Stalinism would be the political expression of the interests of every consolidated and ossified bureaucratic layer, in the USSR as well as in any other country where this phenomenon would reoccur; and on the other hand, Stalinism would be the totality of the phenomena of the bureaucratized superstructure in a workers state, or within a revolutionary pro-

cess: absence of workers democracy; totalitarian control of ideology; stifling of the independent action of the proletariat; absence of an equitable system of justice; etc. Comrade Hansen, in his article cited above, sketches a similar description in his brief examination of the conditions that prevailed in Yenan, where Mao had established the base of his peasant war in the latter half of the 1930s.

This broadening of the definition of Stalinism hardly contributes to theoretical clarification. It raises more theoretical contradictions and difficulties than it resolves.

By defining Stalinism as the political expression of *every* bureaucratic caste, and by stating at the same time that the Yugoslav CP and the Chinese CP were Stalinist at the time they took power, one finds oneself confronted with the prickly question of determining *which ossified bureaucratic layer* these parties represented at that time. Were they representatives of the Soviet bureaucracy? It will be difficult to demonstrate this, especially in the light of later events. Did they take power as the representatives of the Yugoslav or Chinese "bureaucratic caste"? But how can such a "caste" have existed before the taking of power? Isn't the notion of a "bureaucratic caste" linked to the notion of control over the social surplus product, of the accumulation of material privileges within the framework of a planned economy, based on collective ownership of the means of production? None of this existed in Yugoslavia in 1945 anymore than it did in China in 1949. Can there be a "bureaucratic caste" without a planned economy and without collective ownership? Caught once again in the net of their contradictions, the comrades of the minority are coming dangerously close to Shachtmanite and "state capitalist" theories, which see in every bureaucratized Communist Party, regardless of the society in which it functions, and regardless of the ups and downs of the world revolution, the embryo of a "new ruling class."

Nor is this the end of the theoretical difficulties that arise from the minority comrades' simplistic definition of Stalinism. Trotsky noted the existence of an ossified bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union in 1933-34. But Stalinism as a political current that expresses the interests of the bureaucracy is much older than that. The years 1924-33, that is, the ten crucial years in the history of the USSR, demonstrate that it is perfectly possible to have Stalinism without the existence of an "ossified bureaucratic caste."

To call the Titoist bureaucracy "Stalinist" is to be confronted with the need to explain the nature of international interbureaucratic conflicts, whose socioeconomic motivation has never been furnished. It is more rational—and more in conformity with the facts!—to say that the conflict was not a conflict between "two factions of the Stalinist bureaucracy," or "two Stalinist bureaucratic castes," but actually a conflict between *the* Stalinist Soviet bureaucracy and the Yugoslav revolution, led by a bureaucratized party that, in freeing itself from the Kremlin's tutelage, threatened the political foundations of the Stalinist dictatorship.

The comrades of the minority insist strongly, on the one hand, on the social bases of the bureaucratic dictatorship; but to justify the generalization of the term "Stalinist," they are compelled, on the other hand, to reduce the problem to political aspects (the absence of workers democracy), independent of the socioeconomic context. The return to the specific, Trotskyist definition of

Stalinism makes it possible to escape these contradictions.

The case of Cuba is particularly eloquent in this regard. Let us imagine that the Cuban revolution passes through a phase of the strengthening of the bureaucracy, which, in the context of a prolonged delay of the Latin American revolution, reaches an advanced stage of bureaucratic degeneration. This is not an entirely imaginary danger. Let us push the hypothesis to the point that the existence of a hardened and ossified bureaucratic layer can be discerned in Cuba. Would it then be necessary to ASSERT that the Cuban leadership had become "Stalinist," regardless of its origins; of the fact that it led the revolution against the line of the Cuban Stalinist party; of the particular nature of its links with the Kremlin; and even of its attitude toward Stalin and his particular "theories"? One does not see what advantages would flow from this sort of simplistic definitions, except those of sowing confusion as to the complexity of the historical process.

An analogy will permit still further clarification of the question. Social Democratic reformism was born in the imperialist countries within a specific historical context and under its own political and ideological forms. Socially, it expresses, in the last analysis, the specific interests of the workers bureaucracy (in the trade-unions, cooperative associations, mutual aid societies), the labor aristocracy, and the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, which penetrate the workers organizations and exploit their power to win patronage within bourgeois parliamentary democracy. It is therefore a complex and historically unique phenomena.

But if one isolates just one factor from this complex—the existence of a trade-union bureaucracy with the specific interests of this social layer—and if one concluded from this: the Social Democracy is the political expression of the trade-union bureaucracy, it would then be necessary to stick the label "Social Democratic" on the Mexican trade-union bureaucracy, on the Peronist bureaucracy, and on many other political formations in the semicolonial countries, formations for which such a political designation is obviously inappropriate and can only sow confusion.

We believe that it is preferable to continue designating the trade-union bureaucracy as such, and to state that there are several possible political expressions that this bureaucracy can have, expressions that all have certain common features, but that also have enormous differences, due to their different historical origins, the different social and political contexts in which they evolve, etc., etc.

In the same way, we remain of the opinion that it is better to reserve the term Stalinist for the political expression of the Soviet bureaucracy and of all the parties that remain subordinate to it, while stating, that the phenomena of bureaucratization have appeared in other victorious revolutions, that other bureaucratic layers are today in power, and that Maoism and Titoism are variants of the ideologies (or the political lines) of privileged bureaucracies established in workers states, without giving them the oversimplified label of Stalinist.

### III. What is it Necessary to Vote on at the Next World Congress?

In the draft theses on building revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe, there is a brief passage that recalls the reasons why the European Trotskyists had, in their

majority, decided to adopt long-term entryism at the beginning of the 1950s. It involved neither *a posteriori* approval for this decision, nor a statement that it was correct in light of later developments; it simply involved recording a motivation and weighing it in relation to later events. Comrades Jack Barnes and Joseph Hansen angrily protested the inclusion of this short passage in the draft theses, stating that it alone justified rejecting these theses. They considered it unacceptable to have a congress vote on a "historical question."

Once again these comrades lack consistency. The document they have submitted on the supposed "two lines on China" is full of historical considerations going as far back as the beginning of the 1950s, if not still farther into the past, and they now want to submit such a document for a vote at the next world congress.

It is impossible to have a congress vote on the question of what such and such comrade thought or didn't think in 1953 about the revolution in China, especially when the comrades in question vehemently deny having held the opinions attributed to them. It is impossible to have a congress vote on whether the comrades of the majority were right or wrong when they expected growing concessions to the masses from Mao, when the comrades of the majority deny having ever formulated such an opinion in 1969, and when not a trace of such an idea is found in the amendments proposed by them. It is even less appropriate to take a vote on the concept of "two lines on the question of China" when the comrades of the majority deny that there were two lines and say that they had presented amendments, and not a counterresolution, to the draft written by Comrades Hansen and Novack.

The next world congress cannot lend itself to a spectacle in which the comrades of the minority present the initial document they submitted to the United Secretariat in 1969, before the Ninth World Congress, because the only thing that would remain for the majority to do would be to propose its amendments from that period.

There remains the question of the final passage of the

minority document "Two Assessments of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Balance Sheet," which develops "the main points of a program to establish a proletarian democracy." To our knowledge, there is not a single member of the International who would not vote in favor of them.

At most, we think it would be necessary to make some additions or amendments, particularly regarding the management of enterprises and people's communes by the workers and peasant producers themselves. The formulation in point 5, which simply says that the workers and poor peasants must be enabled "to *participate* without fetters in the elaboration of the economic plan and to safeguard their living standards," puts too much of a restraint on socialist democracy in the domain of the economy and implies that the management of the economy remains in the hands of the Maoist bureaucracy. This formulation doesn't even go as far as those used by the Maoists during the "Cultural Revolution," and it would have to be amended.

We think that the minority would vote for these points, even if they were amended in this way. We thus find in the document submitted by the minority an amalgam of a *correct political program* for the political revolution in China with unacceptable *revisionist theoretical justifications* that run counter to our fundamental program.

When Trotsky opened the debate with the Burnham-Shachtman opposition, he told them, in substance: we do not break with comrades who formulate the same position toward the USSR as we do, but who have differences with us on theoretical questions relating to the USSR. We warn them, however, against the possible consequences of their theoretical errors. It is a somewhat similar problem that we are confronted with. Comrades of the minority, we have the same political program for China, so much the better for the International. But watch out for the consequences of the theoretical innovations you have become involved in.

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