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# International Internal Discussion Bulletin

volume XI number 2

January 1974

## DRAFT POLITICAL RESOLUTION

Submitted by the Leninist Trotskyist Faction

### I.

#### Chief Features of the World Political Situation

- 1. The Ripeness of Objective Conditions 3
- 2. Stage of Sudden Breakdowns 4

### II.

#### The World Revolution Resumes Its Main Course

- 1. Exemplary Action of the Bolsheviks 6
- 2. The Long Detour 6
- 3. The Turn in the Pattern of Revolution and the New Upsurge of Workers' Struggles 8

### III.

#### The Broadening Radicalization

- 1. Growing Importance of National Liberation Struggles 10
- 2. International Radicalization of the Youth 12
- 3. New Rise of Women's Struggles 13

### IV.

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

- 1. Blockade of Cuba and the 'Caribbean Confrontation' 15
- 2. The U. S. Imperialist Intervention in Vietnam 16
- 3. Violent Repression and Class Collaborationism 18
- 4. 'Peaceful Coexistence' and the Detente 20

### V.

#### Maturing of the Subjective Conditions for Revolution

- 1. Interplay of Victories and Defeats in the Three Sectors of the World Revolution 23
- 2. Tasks of the Fourth International for the Period Immediately Ahead 24

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Page 2 :

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original bulletin

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# Draft Political Resolution

Submitted by the Leninist Trotskyist Faction

## I.

### Chief Features of the World Political Situation

"The world political situation as a whole," Trotsky wrote in 1938, "is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat." (*The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International.*) Despite the immense developments since then, Trotsky's judgment still remains valid. In fact the historical crisis of proletarian leadership has grown in acuteness over the years. Today the fate of humanity hinges on resolving that crisis in relatively short order.

#### 1. The Ripeness of Objective Conditions

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

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

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

The barbarous potentialities of capitalism were given another test run in a second world war, which far ex-

ceeded the first in destructiveness and bloodshed. The igniting of plutonium bombs over two teeming population centers in Japan served as a harbinger of what is in store if capitalism is permitted to continue until it reaches the stage of a third world war. The hydrogen bomb today stands like a specter over world affairs, the latest reminder being the nuclear alert called by Nixon during the October 1973 conflict in the Mideast.

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

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

The productive capacities of the world capitalist economy have undeniably grown in absolute figures compared with selected dates such as 1913 or 1939. The statistics are misleading, however, because of what is left out of account. The growth has been highly uneven. In some countries, particularly in the colonial and semicolonial sphere, economic growth has not even kept abreast of expansion in the population. So far as per capita figures are concerned, this means an absolute decline. Moreover, in some countries, particularly those whose relation to the world market has fostered a monoculture, the economies are subject to abrupt and highly dislocating turns. Still more significantly, all such comparisons leave out of account the immense losses and setbacks suffered because of depressions, wars, and preparations for new wars, not to mention the artificial level of scarcity brought about by chaining production to profit requirements and to the limitations of national boundaries.

A more realistic appreciation of how much capitalist productive relations stand in the way of optimum development of the capacities of modern industry can be gained by studying the swift rise of the Soviet Union and that of poorer countries, particularly China, where capitalist property relations have been superseded by planned pro-

duction. Even though the parasitism of a bureaucratic caste has constituted a heavy and unnecessary burden, the experience of these countries testifies to the vast inherent powers of a nationalized and planned economy. It can no longer be honestly denied that economic planning on a world scale could provide abundance for all in a relatively short period.

## 2. Stage of Sudden Breakdowns

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

This has been shown with remarkable clarity in the "energy crisis." The developing shortage was noted some years ago. A direct consequence of monopolistic policies followed by the oil cartels, it reflected on a deeper level the chaos of capitalism as a whole. A relatively small withdrawal of oil from the world market in October 1973 was sufficient to precipitate an acute crisis.

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

In Japanese government circles, the imposition of economic controls like those in force before and during World War II were under consideration. This would mean rationing oil and all products affected by the oil shortage, the setting of production quotas, the enforcement of import and export restrictions, the imposition of foreign-exchange controls; and, of course, wage "controls."

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

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

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

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

The Common Market administration warned of a possible decline of 2 to 3 percent in gross output of goods and services in the Common Market countries in 1974

that could plunge Europe into its deepest recession since the late forties.

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

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

In the colonial and semicolonial world, the inflationary consequences of the oil crisis promise to be particularly severe. While those countries possessing extensive oil fields stand to gain temporarily from the price increases, others heavily dependent on oil imports (India, Brazil, etc.) are placed under heavy strain. Countries not so reliant on oil because of lack of industrial development can be hard hit indirectly.

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

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

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

The energy crisis is but a single example of what is happening to the world capitalist system. The beef shortages in the United States and Argentina should be recalled, as should the sudden power brownouts and blackouts, the disruption of telephone services, and deterioration of postal

systems in various countries. Other shortages or malfunctions are impending that can lead to acute crises. In the United States, for instance, a metals shortage may be next on the list. The colonial world can be hit by a shortage in chemical fertilizers. In Tokyo and other industrial centers pollution levels are dangerously high.

The sudden breakdowns now characteristic of capitalism testify to the deepening anarchy of the system and the need for restructuring the world's economy on rational lines.

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

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

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

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

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

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

capitalist parties, the capitalist government, and the capitalist state.

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

The energy crisis, it should be stressed, is but a single striking current example of what is happening within the capitalist system—its growing susceptibility to sudden shocks and breakdowns—and of the new openings that are appearing for initiatives in action to be urged for adoption by the labor movement.

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

The "options" chosen by the capitalists in situations like the energy crisis invariably amount in the final analysis to merely tightening their rule and compelling the masses—sometimes with a few passing sopps—to carry additional burdens. The capitalist class is adamant on retaining power and maintaining the status quo even if the end result is a new dark age or nuclear annihilation.

The masses, however, are growing increasingly dissatisfied. They are no longer inclined to passively accept the dismal perspectives offered by capitalism. Their fears have been heightened by the course followed by the capitalist rulers in the past half century; while their expectations have been aroused by what is manifestly possible through transcending capitalism and establishing an economic order based on modern science, technology, and industry. Moreover, they have seen that it is possible to break out of the capitalist system and go forward. Highly convincing demonstrations of this have taken place in Russia, China, Eastern Europe, North Korea, North Vietnam, and Cuba.

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

## II.

# The World Revolution Resumes Its Main Course

### 1. Exemplary Action of the Bolsheviks

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

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

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

Lenin and Trotsky sought to teach the international proletariat that the main secret to the victory of the Russian revolution — certainly the most significant event in twentieth-century history — was *political* in nature; it was the construction in time of a revolutionary proletarian party. They launched the Third International in 1919 to promote this task on a world scale.

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

All of these chances were missed or fumbled by failure to absorb the chief lesson of the victory of the Russian revolution and to apply it in time — construction of a revolutionary party. The principal reason for this default, after the collapse of the Social Democracy, was the rise of a reactionary bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union, owing to the isolation of the Russian revolution, the wearing away of the generation that had made the revolution, and the general poverty and cultural back-

wardness of peasant Russia. Stalin emerged as the chief political representative of the ruling bureaucracy. With the death of Lenin, the Leninists soon found themselves in a minority in the Bolshevik party they had created. Those who did not capitulate were eventually eliminated, losing their lives, along with countless others, in the great purges of the thirties.

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

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

### 2. The Long Detour

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

The United States gained preeminence among the imperialist powers. As a consequence of the destructive means taken to achieve this, however, world capitalism itself became so weakened, particularly in the German and Japanese sectors, as to permit the Soviet Union — thanks to the fundamental achievements of the October revolution — to emerge victorious, if badly damaged, despite the counterrevolutionary policies of Stalinism that had paved the way for the German imperialist invasion of the first work-

ers state.

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

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

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

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

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

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

A breathing space was granted to the Soviet Union which was turned to good account. To the astonishment and chagrin of the Pentagon, Soviet scientists broke the American monopoly of nuclear weapons, exploding an atomic bomb in 1949 and a hydrogen bomb in 1953.

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

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

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

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

It is, of course, true that in countries having a large peasant population the appearance of guerrilla contingents is often a sign of a rising revolutionary ferment. Lenin noted the spontaneous development of guerrilla warfare in Czarist Russia at the time of the 1905 revolution and sought to take advantage of it—rather unsuccessfully as Trotsky observed in summing up the experience.

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

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

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

achieved in the mid-thirties.

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

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

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

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

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

Of all the many ventures in guerrilla warfare throughout Latin America following the Cuban revolution, not a single one has led to success. The roster of those who tried it includes top-rated experts: Uceda de la Puente in Peru, Carlos Marighela in Brazil, Yon Sosa in Guatemala, and Che Guevara himself in Bolivia, not to mention dozens of less publicized figures who devoted intensive study and practice to the strategy.

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

Another element was misjudgment of the political situation. In China a mighty revolution poured human resources on an immense scale into the peasant armies and their guerrilla adjuncts. In Latin America the theoreticians and practitioners of guerrilla warfare put things upside down. It was their conviction that the mere appearance of de-

termined guerrillas could prove sufficient to set a human tide rolling like the one that finally toppled capitalism in China, or if not a movement on that scale then at least one comparable to that of the Cuban revolution. Consequently miniscule groups, completely isolated from the masses, engaged in operations that were put down with relative ease by the bourgeois armed forces and their imperialist backers, a conspicuous example being the guerrilla front opened by Guevara in Bolivia.

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

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

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

The Santo Domingo uprising signaled what was happening on a broad scale in the colonial and semicolonial countries having a large peasant population—the city was reasserting its political hegemony over the countryside, the proletariat was again coming into position to press its claim to leadership. The long detour away from the main road of the world revolution in the aftermath of World War II was coming to an end.

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

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

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



standard of living, moved into action against the local bureaucracy.

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

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

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

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

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

As the upsurge of workers combativity in France and Italy continued, marked by numerous strike actions, the Spanish proletariat in 1970 also began to move. Mass mobilizations, nationally coordinated by the clandestine Comisiones Obreras, protested the Burgos trial of the Basque nationalists and the victimization of other political prisoners. The years 1971-73 saw a series of militant strikes—Madrid construction workers, SEAT, El Ferrol, Bessos, Pamplona—actions that tended to grow over into even broader mobilizations against the Francoist dictatorship, challenging the Spanish rulers on a level not seen since the crushing defeat of the Spanish proletariat in the 1930s.

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

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

In North America, the deepening struggle in Québec expressed itself through giant nationalist demonstrations during the period of 1968-71.

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

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

Like the practitioners of rural guerrilla warfare, the urban guerrilla groups have displayed a fatal inability to grasp the role of a Bolshevik-type party implanted in the masses. Consequently they see no need to build one. Some of them openly reject it, although it is dubious that they know what they are rejecting, being unable to distinguish between Stalinism and Leninism. They substitute their own action for that of the toiling masses and therefore stand apart from the struggle of the masses, which remains terra incognita to them. They reduce armed struggle to the caricature of small groups engaging in "expropriations," kidnappings, and other terroristic actions that may win them applause but not leadership of the masses.

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

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

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

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

### III.

## The Broadening Radicalization

### 1. Growing Importance of National Liberation Struggles

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

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

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

This correct policy on the national question was one of the keys to the victory of the Russian revolution. The main lessons were incorporated in the program of the newly formed Third International, and a promising beginning was made toward the construction of Communist parties in the colonial world. This process was furthered by the worldwide upsurge of national liberation struggles inspired by the example of the Russian revolution.

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

Thus the rise of Stalinism helped block the development

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Canada, within a few years, independentist sentiment became a strongly growing trend within the Québécois working class, helping to fuel the radicalization of labor and affecting all aspects of the class struggle. The most important working-class battle in North America in many years, the April-May 1972 upsurge in Québec, initiated by a general strike of public-service employees, also reflected the positive impact of independentist sentiment in the workers movement.

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

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

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

In general, from the Euskara (Basques) in Spain and France to the Koreans in Japan, there has been a growing upsurge of national liberation struggles in the advanced capitalist countries. Even where their numbers are extremely small either relatively or absolutely, as in the case of the Same people (Lapps) in Norway and Sweden, the Native Americans in North America, the Aborigines

in Australia, and the Maoris in New Zealand, the struggles of such historically oppressed peoples can have an effect far beyond their size. Growing consciousness of the oppression of such peoples, and support for their struggles against that oppression helps advance the radicalization of the working class as a whole.

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

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

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

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

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

The correctness of this stand was shown in major anti-bureaucratic struggles that broke out following World War II such as the workers upsurge in East Germany in 1953, the Hungarian political revolution in 1956, the Polish upsurge of the same year, and the Czechoslovak explosion in 1968. Each of these upsurges had to confront not only the indigenous Stalinist bureaucracies but above all the Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow, which attempted to over-

turn the will of the masses in each of these other countries. Not only does national oppression manifest itself in the Kremlin's military intervention, but also in other ways such as the forcible imposition of the Russian language in the schools and the subordination of the economic plans of the East European workers states to Soviet needs. Thus, the struggle against national oppression is a key feature of the unfolding political revolution in Eastern Europe.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 2. International Radicalization of the Youth

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

In recent decades the school population has greatly expanded as one of the consequences of the need of the capitalist system to provide pools of skilled workers and technicians for industry. Thus the campuses have grown in social weight out of sheer numbers and have been exercising more and more influence in the intellectual and cultural life of most countries. Economic, social, and political crises tend to find sharp and prompt expression

among students and their responses easily pass beyond the campus, affecting layers of working-class youth in the factories.

This is, of course, not a one-way process. Working-class struggles can meet with responses of broad scope on the campus. In the final analysis, the political mood of students and teachers is determined by the status of the conflict between wage labor and capital. However, the relationship between the two is not usually direct and immediate. Their development proceeds in an uneven way, each having a logic of its own.

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

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

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

Some of the antiwar demonstrations in cities like New York, San Francisco, and Washington were of a size never before seen, reaching up to one million persons on a single day. When Nixon announced on April 30, 1970, that he had ordered an invasion of Cambodia, the American students gave his surprise move a surprise reply—the biggest spontaneous explosion of campus protest seen in history. It was during this wave that the National Guard fired on protesting students at Kent University, and the police slayed Black students at Jackson, Mississippi, murderous acts that intensified the spontaneous reaction. Millions of students went on strike. In many areas students took over their campuses, turning them into "antiwar universities," that is, organizing centers to expand the protests throughout the country.

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

With this victory, the student movement subsided in the United States. However, it would be a mistake to think that the curtain has now been drawn on American students serving as a source of ferment, and concluding that what they did is now ancient history, never to be repeated. The students that participated in the great demonstrations are now being absorbed into jobs where their experience as active opponents of the war in Vietnam will inevitably

find expression in the great working-class struggles that lie ahead.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In 1973 the international student movement was again in the headlines. In South Korea demonstrating students gave the Park regime reason for renewed concern over its capacity to retain its grip. In Thailand huge demonstrations, spearheaded by students and backed by workers, shook the government, causing the ruling generals to flee the country. In Greece similar demonstrations, involving a large percentage of workers, caused the officer caste to replace Papadopoulos, hoping by that concession to stave off worse injury to the capitalist government and the system it serves.

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

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

The mounting economic and social crisis of world

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

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

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

Throughout the past decade and a half, this has required consistent battling against New Leftism, Maoism, anarchism, and various other currents of opportunist, adventurist, or sectarian bent. Battles have also had to be fought against the Social Democracy and the Moscow variety of Stalinism, although their rank class-collaborationism has prevented them from making great headway among revolutionary-minded youth in face of such situations as the imperialist aggression in Indochina.

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

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

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

women and in the patriarchal family system.

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

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

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

From the beginning, revolutionary Marxists hailed the new upsurge of women's struggles and plunged into the thick of the movement. In doing so they stood in a long tradition of Marxism, which understands the revolutionary significance and importance of women's battles for their liberation in distinction from the centrists and reformists within the workers movement.

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

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

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

The struggle for women's liberation will, in its normal

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

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

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

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

Through their own battles women will have to learn who are their class allies and who are their enemies. They will come to understand the interrelationship between their oppression as a sex and class exploitation, and the need for proletarian methods of struggle which reject all forms of class collaboration.

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

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

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

## IV.

# Mobilization of the Counterrevolution and the Struggle Against It

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

expense of the Guevarists.

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

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

The failure of the Castro team to advance toward the establishment in Cuba of proletarian forms of democracy such as the soviets of the early years of the Russian revolution, in which various organized political tendencies and factions that supported the revolution were able to openly criticize defects and mobilize rank-and-file support in behalf of remedial measures, constitutes one of the gravest weaknesses in the Cuban governmental system. It nourishes subterranean currents, particularly those of a rightist bureaucratic character. These degenerative developments can break into the open with stunning abruptness, perhaps catching even a Fidel Castro by surprise. To forestall such an eventuality and to ensure full mobilization of the masses in defense of the revolution, institutions of workers democracy should be formed in Cuba along the lines of those that functioned in the Soviet Union in the early days under Lenin.

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

Consequently, it must be acknowledged that the Cuban revolution has not realized its initial potentialities in helping to resolve the crisis of proletarian leadership internationally. In serious respects the Cuban leaders have fallen back, while dangerous bureaucratic tendencies continue to gather headway.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Domestic social tensions were greatly heightened as evidenced by the deepening radicalization. On the campuses, students staged militant demonstrations, often taking the offensive in advancing their own interests as students against the school administration and their governmental



backers. Opposition was especially sharp to conscription into the armed forces and to military recruiting efforts on the campus. The movement for Black liberation built up to new heights, scorning all appeals to give up the struggle temporarily in behalf of the war. The workers refused to believe in the war propaganda, and rejected making any economic sacrifices to help the intervention in Vietnam. In face of the appeals to their patriotism, they continued to defend their standard of living through union bargaining and strike struggles. The armed forces were seriously affected by the widespread mood of resistance to authority.

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

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

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

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

Moreover, the North Vietnamese leaders remained true to their training in the school of Stalinism. While they offered a stubborn battle on the military level, they did not match it with a Leninist political course. Instead of advancing a program for socialism in South Vietnam, which would have aroused the masses there as nothing else could, they called for a bourgeois coalition government. They did not even raise independent demands for the working class. This stance was reflected in their attitude toward U. S. imperialism. They did not engage in socialist propaganda in the exemplary Bolshevik way to hasten disintegration of the invading armies and turn discontented U. S. troops into emissaries of socialism in America itself. They relied strictly on slogans related to the right of national self-determination. It was completely correct to stand on this right and to defend it to the death; but a revolutionary-socialist program would have added a qualitatively superior political force to the defense of the Vietnamese revolution. Hanoi's course was patterned

on Stalin's attitude during the "patriotic war" against German imperialism but without emulating Stalin in his excesses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As the Vietnam war unfolded, the antiwar movement also began to have a noticeable effect on the morale of the U. S. troops. The broadening domestic disaffection over

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

As it mounted, the American antiwar movement also succeeded in involving more and more workers. Towards the end, sectors of organized labor that became disturbed over the continued support to the war offered by the top AFL-CIO officialdom began to take action, a development that chilled ruling circles, sharpening the divisions among them over what tactic to follow.

To meet this deepening protest movement, Nixon resorted among other things to police-state methods, sending provocateurs into the antiwar movement, the Black liberation movement, and radical groupings, engaging in tapping of telephones, intimidation, harassment, police attacks, shootings of demonstrators, and frame-up trials. As happened during the McCarthyite period, in which Nixon shaped his political career, these antidemocratic methods were eventually turned against the liberal wing of the Democratic party, becoming epitomized in the burglaries that made "Watergate" a household word around the globe.

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

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

### 3. Violent Repression and Class Collaborationism

With their various forms of fascism between the first and second world wars, Mussolini, Pilsudski, Hitler, and Franco signaled the new barbarism implicit in the evolution of capitalism. The trend has not been reversed since Hitler's gas ovens. The murder of as many as one million suspected "Communists" by the genocidal Suharto regime in Indonesia in 1965 proved that. The reigns of terror that have existed for a decade in Brazil and still longer in Iran, Paraguay, and South Africa speak in the same sense. In 1973 Chile's "nonpolitical" generals added their bit to the evidence by cold-bloodedly deciding on

"a new Jakarta." The readiness of the capitalist class to resort to naked violence and ferocious terror if its rule is seriously challenged has clearly become more and more marked in the period of the death agony of the capitalist system.

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

In view of this potentiality, the capitalist rulers are prepared in advance to resort to the most extreme violence. However, they are never certain of the outcome of such measures, and prefer other means to keep the masses in check—and also to help provide more favorable conditions for the counterrevolution. Thus they utilize political stratagems of the most deceptive nature to divert the masses from taking the road of revolution.

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

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

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

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

Political representatives of the national bourgeoisie are capable of taking on a most deceptive revolutionary coloration, posing as strongly pro-Moscow or pro-Peking or both, and making out to be protagonists of "socialist" economic planning. Chiang Kai-shek—with Stalin's aid—wrapped himself in the Soviet flag before the 1925-27

Chinese revolution. Sukarno sought and obtained the endorsement of Mao Tsetung. Nasser leaned heavily on Moscow in shaping his image of "socialist" innovation in Egypt. Nkrumah in Ghana and Ne Win in Burma followed similar courses. In his final years, Cárdenas posed as an admirer of Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution.

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

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

In no case can revolutionary Marxists give *political support* to regimes of the national bourgeoisie, no matter how progressive they may appear to be. Innumerable experiences prove that the opposition of the national bourgeoisie to imperialism is highly unstable. The national bourgeoisies will not conduct a consistent struggle against imperialism. Trotsky long ago explained the reasons. First of all, if the working class and peasantry are mobilized, they tend, in following their own class interests, to break through the framework of capitalism. This tendency has become an increasingly paramount feature of the political scene. Secondly, the main class interests of the national bourgeoisie are the same as those of the imperialists, and they serve as their agents. Often their major objective in seizing foreign holdings is to improve their bargaining position as agencies of imperialism.

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

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

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

In Great Britain the trade-union bureaucracy operates through the Labour party, which has formally been committed to socialist objectives in the past, but which has practiced the rankest class collaborationism, actually con-

ducting the affairs of state for the bourgeoisie in times of stress. So long as they themselves are too weak to offer an effective opposition in the electoral arena, revolutionary Marxists call for casting a vote for Labour party candidates. Such a vote is not cast for the *platform* of the reformist leadership of the Labour party but to help increase the weight of the Labour party as a massive political force which was originally formed in opposition to the bourgeoisie and in which the working-class base, in conflict with the leadership, tends to move further in the direction of class struggle.

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

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

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

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

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

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

base.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Two lessons stand out with glaring clarity in the Chilean debacle—the need for a revolutionary party and the need to puncture the delusion that a "peaceful road to socialism" can be found through class collaborationism and the election of a coalition government.

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

Democracy in the years before 1914.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For this cooperation, Nixon was willing to pay a price. Moscow received some concessions in the form of a lowering of trade barriers and removal of the ban on shipment of most "strategic goods." Peking received similar concessions plus membership in the United Nations, the opening of diplomatic relations, and ending of the game of picturing Chiang Kai-shek's regime as the legitimate government of China.

America's imperialist rulers had additional concerns in mind. Inside the imperialist bloc itself, the mood of the

masses, as evidenced by the growth and actions of the antiwar movement in North America and the rise in workers struggles in Western Europe and elsewhere, endangered further militaristic advances abroad, calling in fact for a relaxation of tensions if not the granting of concessions to bring the situation under better control.

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

A detente with Moscow and Peking, permitting a withdrawal from Vietnam under the best possible circumstances, including retention of the Saigon beachhead, would facilitate opening a counteroffensive at home against the labor movement, which was pressing more and more heavily for wage increases to make up for the losses caused by inflation. A detente would likewise facilitate putting America's imperialist rivals back in their places. It would, for instance, help cut into trade with the Soviet bloc which had virtually been monopolized by the West European countries and Japan.

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

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

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

Department to root out the hidden "Commies" who caused the U. S. to "lose China."

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

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

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

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

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

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

To this should be added the bait of economic concessions held out by Nixon. The Soviet economy is under great strain because of bureaucratic mismanagement and the cost of trading in a world market dominated by capitalist cartels. It is now known that at the time of the secret negotiations for the detente, food was in short supply in the Soviet Union, not to mention many other shortages productive of unrest among the masses. Under the detente,

Brezhnev-Kosygin were able to make huge grain purchases in the United States at a favorable price. It likewise became possible to secure other greatly needed items available in the United States. These purchases enabled the bureaucracy to ease immediate social pressures and to gain precious time, the better to handle domestic political opposition and to silence critical voices.

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

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

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

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

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

plete conformity with the schema of "peaceful coexistence."

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

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

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

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

Four convincing examples of this were the popular demonstrations that shook Thailand, Greece, and South Korea at the end of 1973, and the 24-hour general strike of three million industrial workers in Bombay and the state of Maharashtra in January 1974. The October war that broke out in the Arab East only nine months after the Vietnam cease-fire was signed served as another example of the difficulty of maintaining "peaceful coexistence."

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

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

## V.

# Maturing of the Subjective Conditions for Revolution

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

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

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

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

A current example of this interplay came in the closing months of 1973. Through giant rallies and marches involving crowds of more than 100,000 persons, the Bangkok students, backed by the workers, brought down a hated military regime in Thailand October 14. Within four weeks, on the opposite side of the globe in Athens, student demonstrations backed by workers scored a partial victory by bringing down Papadopoulos, the leading figure of the military dictatorship in Greece. Among the slogans shouted by the Athenian students, a favorite one was "Thailand!"

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

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

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

The current rise of workers struggles in Western Europe is bound to encourage similar trends elsewhere. One of

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The interplay of victories and defeats among the three sectors shows how important it is to watch for the possible effect of events in one sector upon happenings in the other two. Besides paying close attention to this aspect, revolutionists must do their utmost to see that accurate information about events is gathered and passed from one sector to another. The importance of the revolutionary press appears in a new light when viewed from this angle.

Even more, everything said and done by revolutionists must be weighed not only for the possible consequences in a given country but also for their possible repercussions in other areas. Revolutionists bear an *international responsibility* for their course in the national arena.

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

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

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

This party, which the components of the Fourth International have sought to build for thirty-five years, follows and seeks to influence the interplay of trends in all three sectors. The analyses, proposals, and actions of the Fourth International register the advancing level of political consciousness achieved by the international proletarian vanguard. In this respect they constitute essential contributions to resolving the crisis of proletarian leadership on a world scale.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In 1938, in projecting the strategic task facing the Fourth International, Leon Trotsky characterized the "next period" as "prerevolutionary," that is, a period of "agitation, propaganda and organization." In this period the sharpening contradictions of capitalism as a world system press the proletariat again and again toward revolutionary political action; the petty-bourgeois layers are repeatedly thrown into turmoil; the ruling classes are racked by periodic crises. Taking the world as a whole, these main features of a prerevolutionary situation will be seen again and again. Organization of a mass revolutionary party can turn these prerequisites into a "revolutionary" situation. Within this general framework, Trotsky outlined in an abstract and normative way the tasks that revolutionists should work out concretely in individual countries, which is where specific prerevolutionary situations



with their particular characteristics occur.

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

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

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

Propagandistic actions have a single overall purpose—to help ripen the subjective conditions. On the most elementary level such actions include the educational work of discussions on the job, producing and circulating printed or duplicated material, conducting classes, forums, public meetings, engaging in electoral activities, etc. As the revolutionary Marxist forces grow and become rooted in the masses, the field of propagandistic actions broadens. In the process of winning leadership in a union or other mass organization, for instance, revolutionists participate in mobilizations of workers in strikes, demonstrations, defensive actions, etc., where they gain opportunities to demonstrate in practice the correctness of the program of revolutionary socialism and their capacities as proletarian leaders. The key objective at this stage, however, still remains that of accumulating cadres.

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

It is vital to understand that characterizing the present stage as one of "agitation, propaganda and organiza-

tion," that is, of revolutionary propaganda and assembling cadres, in no way implies that our activities are limited to commenting on events. It does not arise from any lack of desire or will to move forward to the stage in which a mass revolutionary party has been built, a majority of the working class has been won, and the question of taking power is an immediate task. Nor does it arise from any lack of interest in the objective course of the class struggle, its ups and downs, and sudden or novel turns. The broad upsurges are of vital importance because they determine the appearance of prerevolutionary situations—sometimes in social explosions of the most unexpected nature as in Santo Domingo—which open the way for the swift expansion of the vanguard party and its being thrust forward into leadership of the working class, if it handles itself correctly as the Bolsheviks did.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Still another variant is to look ahead to future pos-

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

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

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

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

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

A snare of opposite nature in the last few years has been "minority violence." Under the misnomer "armed struggle," it has taken various forms such as guerrilla war, hijacking of planes, kidnappings, assassinations, and other "spectacular" actions carried out by small isolated groups. To engage in a premature armed confrontation with the capitalist state undoubtedly requires courage. However, it amounts to taking cadres required for political struggle and converting them into mere units on a military level where they are subject to quick liquidation by the vastly superior military forces of the capitalist state.

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

mary task facing a small group of revolutionists of becoming rooted in the masses.

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

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

The main task facing a small group of revolutionists, let it be repeated, is to recruit and train cadres. This holds true for all such groups whether they are in the imperialist sector, the colonial and semicolonial countries, or bureaucratized workers states.

If cadres can be won directly in the key industries or in the most powerful organizations of the working class, this of course coincides directly with the main line of march, which is to mobilize the proletariat for the conquest of power. However, if recruiting possibilities are, for the moment, difficult in these sectors, but better in others, no principle of Bolshevism bars a temporary shift of attention. In such circumstances, the focus of work should be moved to peripheral industries or to peripheral unions. The key is to *link up with those social sectors that are in movement* and that offer the best opportunities for recruitment. A small group should not hesitate at following promising leads among oppressed nationalities, among radicalizing youth, male or female, on jobs, unemployed, or on the campus. An opponent political organization where a current happens to be developing in a revolutionary direction may offer promise of fresh forces. Dissident intellectuals (particularly in the bureaucratized workers states) may be a source of valuable cadres. The field of temporary concentration is a tactical matter—the aim is to *recruit, educate, assimilate*.

Publication of a journal should be undertaken as soon as possible. Assuming that the political line is correct and that articles are carefully written so that the particular audience where activity is being concentrated is drawn toward the journal, the main requisite is *regularity* of publication. Even if the journal is only mimeographed or handwritten (samizdat in the degenerated or deformed workers states; underground circulars in countries governed by military or fascist dictatorships), its regularity can be decisive in establishing its influence. Failure to produce a regular journal means stagnation. The Fourth International can cite dismal instances of this, in some cases involving sections in crucial situations—and not in the distant past (Bolivia, Chile).

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. *Active support of the women's liberation movement.* The close attention paid by activists in the women's liberation movement to experiences in other countries plus their general willingness to consider revolutionary views with an open mind have opened unusual opportunities for the participation of Trotskyists in this field and for international coordination of their activities. We should not

wait for the women's liberation movement to develop by itself in countries where it is just beginning but should actively support it in the initial, formative stages when the considerable experience of the Trotskyist movement in organizing effective protests is most welcome, and when our opponents tend to be absent.

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

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

Comparable campaigns in the coming period should be waged in behalf of the Irish freedom struggle, the efforts of the Portuguese colonies to achieve national independence, and similar anti-imperialist struggles elsewhere.

The struggles of national minorities in the bureaucratized workers states should be handled in the same way.

Such work enhances the possibility for recruiting and developing Trotskyist cadres from among the many students and workers of these oppressed nations who are temporarily resident in Europe and North America where established Trotskyist organizations already exist. The nuclei of new sections can be built in part through this work, as experience has shown.

2. *In defense of political prisoners in all lands.* Specific campaigns like the one for political prisoners in Argentina in the past period can be waged for other areas, the ones most prominent at the moment being Chile, Brazil, the Soviet Union, Ireland, Spain, Iran, South Vietnam, Uruguay, and China.

3. *In defense of sections and leaders of the Fourth International hit by repressive measures.* The outstanding model for such campaigns was the one conducted to save the life of Hugo Blanco. The case of Luis Vitale is on the current agenda. The fight against the decree dissolving the Ligue Communiste remains urgent. Another important case is the ban on Ernest Mandel entering various countries. In the United States this struggle gained wide support in university circles, making it possible to carry it up to the Supreme Court, where it came close to winning. In Germany the case drew even wider support, making it a national sensation. Support has also been won in other countries. The campaign on this should be continued internationally because of its importance in fighting against similar bans against other leaders of the world Trotskyist movement, including Tariq Ali, Joseph Hansen, Alain Krivine, Livio Maitan, and Gisela Mandel.

4. *In defense of key strike struggles.* This is especially important when it involves such issues as workers control or workers management as exemplified in the past year in the LIP struggle in France.

5. *In defense of the struggles of immigrant workers.* In Europe this is a major issue, but it also extends to immigrant workers in other areas, for instance the Mexican workers in the United States.

6. *In opposition to new flagrant betrayals of revolutionary struggles by Moscow and Peking.* (Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Vietnam, etc.)

Besides campaigns around such issues, the world Trotskyist movement should collaborate as a whole on various projects, among them:

1. *Publishing the works of Leon Trotsky and other revolutionary figures.* Work is being done on this by the Trotskyist movement in Argentina, France, Japan, and the United States, and by independent publishing houses in various other countries. Publication of Trotsky's works in many languages is increasing. Of particular note is the fact that *The Revolution Betrayed* and the complete *Bulletin of the Opposition* have been reproduced in the original Russian.

2. *Expansion of the circulation of the international press of the Fourth International.* This includes *Cuarta Internacional* in Spanish, *Quatrieme Internationale* in French, *Imprekorr* in German, and *Intercontinental Press* in Eng-

lish. *Intercontinental Press* has proved especially valuable because of its size, weekly schedule, and its thoroughness in reproducing the documents of the Fourth International and documentary materials from other sources. Publication of organs like *Intercontinental Press* in other languages should be a priority goal.

3. *Strengthening the international center.* An improvement in the flow of information, analyses, political declarations, and closer collaboration with the leadership of sections, sympathizing groups, and fraternal organizations is needed. Specifically, this requires a larger staff and more funds. A joint comradely effort should make possible this benefit to the movement as a whole.

January 18, 1974