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A Contribution to the Debate on Castroism and the Fourth International

by Jerome and Matti

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The present contribution was written after Segur's (a member of the USec — United Secretariat of the Fourth International) report on the situation of the International to the CC (Central Committee) of the LCR (Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International) was published (1), and after the May 1981 IEC (International Executive Committee of the Fourth International) adopted a resolution on "The Cuban Revolution, the Castroist Current and the Fourth International"(2).

The last world congress of the International was abruptly faced with the problem of *adopting a position on the analysis and influence of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions*. At the time, a rapprochement between the USec and the OCRFI (Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International) was underway, and the OCRFI had been officially invited to the world congress; but the criminal split organized by the BF (Bolshevik Faction), the LTT (Leninist Trotskyist Tendency) and the OCRFI led to a new dispersal of Trotskyist forces. The splitters used the revolution in Nicaragua as a "pretext." *Two different conceptions on how to build the Fourth International (FI) today were counterposed.*

1. The response of the BF, LTT, and OCRFI was sectarianism toward an ongoing revolution. The three currents came together on the basis of common hostility to the USec and the SWP which they characterized as "neo-Castroist" and a "forward detachment of revisionism."

2. At first, the response of our SWP comrades was a militant and activist response whose dynamism was a model for the whole International. Nevertheless, while this response was mainly positive and supportive of the possibility of creating a second workers state in America, it was not entirely free of opportunism toward the revolutionary leadership of petty-bourgeois origin that is leading the struggle; this was obvious in the proposal that we turn to Castro and the FSLN to build a mass Fourth International (3).

While responsibility for the split must be placed squarely on the shoulders of the BF, LTT, and OCRFI, it should be stated that the positions of the American comrades could be used by Moreno, Lambert and Nemo to start a blaze while crying "Fire."

As for the USec majority, it gambled on ambiguity. The "unanimous" agreement on Nicaragua which prevailed at

the October 1979 USec, fell apart at the world congress. The USec's invention of the category of "coalition governments without a class characterization," and its refusal to clearly specify how the FI was to be built in Nicaragua only served to promote confusion and to miseducate the membership.

If the position put forward by the TM4 and its world congress delegates had been adopted by the USec and the LCR CC, we would obviously have been in a much stronger position to resist the split, especially in France.

Since then, the situation has cleared up. The course of events in Nicaragua has led all components of the International to characterize the National Reconstruction Government as a workers and farmers government, although they arrived at that position through different paths (and methodological disagreements remain, especially on how to determine the *moment* when the confrontation with the bourgeoisie inside the government led to a workers and farmers government) (4).

But this does not end the discussion initiated in November 1979. It is now more urgent than ever to reassert our traditional conception on how to build the Fourth International both against the sectarian conception of an International/faction of the OCI and Argentine PST (5) and against the illusions developed by the SWP leadership that it is possible to build a mass International with the Castroists and Sandinistas.

Our fundamental task remains to assemble and educate cadres inside a democratically centralized Fourth International that we seek to build in every country of the world. We believe many comrades share this view which flows from a fact noted by Segur in his report, namely that "while the historical framework for our party-building work has considerably improved in the last twenty years, it remains fundamentally the same as that which existed when the Fourth International was founded"(1).

This is the starting point for our criticisms of the IEC resolution on "The Cuban revolution, the Castroist current and the Fourth International." We are aware that the Cuba question is particularly important since it is the first socialist revolution since 1917 which was not led by a leadership that was Stalinist when it started. This revolution left its mark on the whole recent history of the Trotskyist movement. It was at the heart of the 1963 reunification and the focus of the debate on strategy for Latin America between the majority and minority of the

FI from 1969 to 1977.

The IEC resolution is a high quality analytical and critical document. It vividly demonstrates, as did the resolution on Latin America adopted at the world congress, that the fight waged by the minority of the 9th and 10th world congresses against adaptations to Castroism has borne fruit.

The American comrades, and especially Comrade Hansen (6), taught us how Trotskyists could be in the vanguard of support for an advancing revolution without adapting to the conceptions — and limitations — of its Castroist leadership. These lessons are still beneficial for the entire International. They constitute *a conquest and the method* which must continue to guide us in both the Cuban and Nicaraguan cases. We used that method when we spoke at the world congress. And we used it again when we wrote the document "Nicaragua: why we went slowly"(4). And we intend to use that same method in this document.

Cuba: A product of exceptional circumstances

The IEC document doesn't spend much time on the initial phase of the Cuban revolution and only gives a rapid sketch of it. But the victory of a socialist revolution without a revolutionary Marxist party raises a theoretical problem which remains at the heart of our discussions.

It would have been useful to show how the Cuban revolution is both the culmination of a series of revolutionary struggles in Latin America during the 1950s (Bolivia 1952, Guatemala 1954 . . .) and the product of an exceptional combination of circumstances among which must be cited: the weakness of the national bourgeoisie and the discredit of the traditional petty-bourgeois leaderships; the discredit of the Stalinist party, due to its collaboration with Batista; the "Castro phenomenon," i.e., the existence of a revolutionary leadership of petty-bourgeois origin with an exceptional will to fight; and finally "the surprise effect" on American imperialism. The main characteristics of the history of the Cuban revolution are included in this brief listing.

It is therefore difficult to brush aside, as some comrades do, the fact that we are dealing with the verification of a theoretical hypothesis raised by Trotsky in a document of some weight, namely the founding program of the Fourth International:

"However, one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crush, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.), the petty-bourgeois parties, including the Stalinists, may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie. In any case, one thing is not to be doubted: even if this highly improbable variant somewhere, at some time, becomes a reality and the workers' and farmers' government in the above-mentioned sense is established in fact, it would represent merely a short episode on the road to dictatorship of the proletariat." (Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, New York, Pathfinder Press, 1977 (third edition), p. 135)

This hypothesis which the "Transitional Program" considered "a quite unlikely variant" is in fact the theoretical framework which allows us to understand the detours taken by the post-World War Two revolutionary upsurge and the creation of new workers states, in some cases

under the control of Stalin himself (the Eastern countries).

In his report on the "Significance of the IMT Self-Criticism on Latin America," Comrade Barnes used this framework to summarize the theory of the Cuban revolution as it was understood at the time of the 1963 reunification:

"This is why the question of our theory on the Cuban revolution is important. Until yesterday I thought there was agreement in the Fourth International on at least two questions, Cuba and Algeria. We had arrived at common positions that verified the correctness of the analysis we had come to regarding the overturns of capitalism after World War II. We saw once again how a petty-bourgeois party — this time it was not of Stalinist origin — can establish a workers and farmers government and use it to overturn capitalist property relations. And in the case of Algeria we noted the limits of this process and its contrary results.

"We had agreed that in January 1959 a capitalist coalition government was formed in Cuba, even though the Batista army had already been chased out of Havana. We had agreed that a workers and farmers government came into being in the summer of that year, when Castro named a replacement for Urrutia as president and when Che Guevara became head of the national bank. We had agreed it became a workers state in the summer and fall of 1960, when the broad expropriations were carried out through massive mobilizations of the workers. [For Cuba, see the Education for Socialists publication *The Nature of the Cuban Revolution* by Joseph Hansen, and for Algeria, the Education for Socialists publication *The Workers and Farmers Government*.]

"To my knowledge, at the time of the 1963 reunification of the Fourth International, there was total agreement on this analysis of Cuba. The resolutions of the International Secretariat and the Socialist Workers Party took virtually identical positions on these stages and on the class character of the Castro leadership that initiated the process. . . .

"We insist on treating this theory seriously not only because we think what we said then was correct and crucial in reunifying the Fourth International and in understanding a living revolution. It is also important because our analysis of Cuba enabled us to look back and confirm our position on the events of the post-World War II period — to confirm our criteria in judging how and when workers states can come into being, and to confirm Trotsky's prediction of what a petty-bourgeois leadership is capable of doing under exceptional circumstances as well as the limitations of such leaderships"(7).

In our opinion, this short passage from an SWP leader's speech brings together the *main methodological elements* which allow one to understand the path followed by the revolutionary victories of the post-World War Two period, a period which has lasted until today.

Thus, *under our very eyes* and beginning in 1979, a revolutionary leadership of petty-bourgeois origin, the FSLN, first put together a capitalist coalition government in Nicaragua. Then, under the pressure of the *real class struggle*, it had to go further than its original intentions which were to go through a whole period of collaboration with the national bourgeoisie within the "Government of National Reconstruction." It was the bourgeoisie itself which provoked the break, first with the departure of

Alfonso Robelo and Violetta Chamorro in April 1980, and then with the departure of its representatives in the Council of State in November 1980.

This process of breaking with the bourgeoisie, which flows from the laws of permanent revolution, has led for the time being to the establishment of a workers and farmers government within the framework of a state that remains a bourgeois state since the bourgeoisie still owns the bulk of the means of production.

However, some leaders of the International do not consider this general method to have been established. Hence their refusal at the world congress to characterize the coalition government which then existed in Nicaragua, as "bourgeois," a position that from the point of view of Marxist theory was nothing less than absurd.

A government without a precise class characterization does not exist, but this need not stop us from analyzing the hybrid character of some of them, from understanding the contradictions that affect them, and from judging the probable direction which differentiations within them will take.

Reviewing the analysis of Stalinism

The little "theoretical snag" on the characterization of the coalition government in Nicaragua at the 11th World Congress did not arise by chance but as a result of a more general methodological error in the analysis of the post-World War Two revolutionary processes.

In his report (1), Comrade Segur writes: "Since World War Two, some revolutions have been victorious without revolutionary Marxist leaderships. Each one of these victories constituted a sort of challenge to the existence of the Fourth International and calls for a serious response on our part."

But instead of looking for a serious response, Comrade Segur begins by casting anathema on the views of his opponents by writing: "When we say serious, we thereby exclude the revisionist response of sectarians who claim that these revolutions were victorious under the pressure of the masses not only against the resistance of the ruling classes and imperialism, but also against the will of the parties which were leading them."

How can one be so cavalier as to brush aside what constitutes the main paradox of world revolution in the last forty years? Comrade Mandel, in the part of his article in the revue *Quatrieme Internationale* No. 2 (3), which is dedicated to analyzing Stalinism, delves deeper into the matter. He refutes the explanation based on "exceptional circumstances" with the following argument:

"What are these famous 'exceptional circumstances' which allowed the victory of these four revolutions without a revolutionary Marxist leadership? The circumstances that, according to the *Transitional Program*, explain that petty-bourgeoisified workers parties can go further than usual in a break with the bourgeoisie? 'War, defeat, financial crash, revolutionary offensive of the masses'?"

"But these 'exceptional circumstances' have been those that characterized *all* revolutionary situations and crises across the world since the bureaucratic degeneration of the USSR and the CP!"

Why then, asks Comrade Mandel, do we have *victories* in some cases and *defeats* in others? To answer that question, we must of course undertake a detailed analysis of each of these revolutions which is what our SWP

comrades have carefully done in the case of the Yugoslav, Chinese, Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions (9).

But it is important to stress what Comrade Mandel himself admits, namely that "*exceptional circumstances*" have been the rule not only in each of the revolutions at hand but also as a *general characteristic of the whole post-war period*.

Indeed, what is the "exceptional circumstance" which characterizes the whole period since 1945? It is the *survival of Stalinism*. It is the absence of a revolutionary leadership of the world proletariat.

Comrade Mandel has produced a relevant analysis of how the post-World War Two revolutionary upsurge foreseen by Trotsky actually did take place but how, due to the victory (and increased prestige) of the USSR and to the isolation of the revolutionary vanguard from the masses, it was partly controlled by the Stalinists.

In some cases they succeeded in confining the revolutionary struggles within the limits of bourgeois order (France, Italy, . . .). In other cases, they had to choose between suicide and controlling the masses within a bureaucratized workers state, and opted for the latter alternative although not without hesitating and despite the policy advocated by Stalin (Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam . . .).

These revolutions that were victorious despite the Stalinist bureaucracy confirm the *Transitional Program's* dictum that "the laws of history are more powerful than the bureaucratic apparatus."

Some time went by before the Trotskyists understood what had happened. They had prepared for a situation where the revolutionary upsurge born of the imperialist war would enable the cadres of the Fourth International "to rapidly establish important mass parties leading tens and hundreds of millions to the final struggle" (11).

The gap between this expectation based on Trotsky's forecast for the post-war period and the living reality that Stalinist parties had come to power in new workers states both through revolutionary struggle (Yugoslavia, China, . . .) and through basically military-bureaucratic operations directed by Stalin himself (Eastern European countries), severely disoriented the Trotskyists. Combined with their isolation, this factor was the fundamental reason for the crisis of the Fourth International that culminated in the 1951-53 split.

Both Pablo's "revisionism" which began weaving theories on the "centuries of transition" to socialism and finding revolutionary virtues in Stalinist parties, and Lambert's sectarianism which denied the existence of the workers state in Cuba for twenty years, were rooted in that crisis.

The Fourth International which had split in 1953, reunited in 1963 when its two main components (the International Committee majority and the International Secretariat) merged on the basis of their common analysis of the Cuban revolution which enabled them to avoid the symmetrical pitfalls of adaptationism (Pablo) and sectarianism (Healy, Lambert).

However, the necessary clarification was not fully achieved. Comrade Segur's report is a case in point; he writes:

"The Chinese, Yugoslav and Vietnamese revolutions were all led by communist parties. An explanation that claimed the Stalinization of the Communist International

(C.I.) in the 1930s spread to all the CPs of the world at the same time and to the same extent, would be a piece of abstract thinking. The subordination of each one of its parties was a process and involved battles. Without going into a detailed history of the three parties at hand, we can say that they did suffer from Stalinist deformations in their education and functioning. But they did not become instruments of the Kremlin policy. In so far as they fought for the conquest of power in their country, they remained revolutionary parties" (1).

Ta Thu Tau and the Vietnamese Trotskyists who were massacred in 1945 when Ho Chi Minh was trying to prove his reliability to French imperialism, would undoubtedly turn over in their shabby graves if they could hear such a statement.

Its logic is to say that Trotsky was *wrong* when he stated that the Third International *and its parties* had definitively gone over to the bourgeois camp.

The point is not to deny the specific history of each one of these parties or of the particular conditions of struggle in the different countries; they should be taken into account when we explain why Stalin's instructions were not followed in a given situation.

But we mustn't go over to the opposite extreme. For us, these parties that Segur calls "revolutionary parties" that "suffered from Stalinist deformations in their education and functioning" (sic), are *Stalinist parties*.

As far as we're concerned, we still agree fully with Comrade Barnes' statement in the passage we quoted that when *Stalin armed himself* to establish new workers states, he didn't thereby cease to be . . . a Stalinist. There is therefore nothing strange in the observation that "under special circumstances, Mao, Tito, or Ho Chi Minh could do likewise and remain Stalinists" (7).

J. Barnes added:

"The establishment of new workers states meant the establishment of separate new national bases for the bureaucratic castes. It was no longer possible to define as Stalinist only those Communist parties that slavishly followed the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. As soon as other deformed workers states appeared, the bureaucratic castes that came to power in those countries began drawing their privileges, their living standards, from what they could rake off the workers in their own countries, not in the Soviet Union. "Socialism in one country" — this is what they will fight tooth and nail to defend.

"Let me give you an example on which I don't think we would disagree. Is the Albanian Communist Party Stalinist? I've never heard anyone in the international maintain that the Albanian Communist Party is no longer a Stalinist party. Does the Albanian party follow Moscow? No. It thumbs its nose at Moscow. It signs military pacts with other countries against Moscow. Does it cease being Stalinist because of this? No.

"Thus, breaks with Moscow are not necessarily breaks with Stalinism, whatever verbiage may accompany the break. Mao Tsetung, for example, broke with Moscow quoting Lenin's *State and Revolution*, but this didn't mean he broke with Stalinism. There has been confusion about this in the Fourth International, especially concerning the case of the Maoists.

"But if we are not clear on this, we are bound to develop illusions in, and adapt to, the Stalinist movement and get suckered into Stalinist projects, as some comrades did

partially in Portugal" (7).

In this January 7, 1977, report to the SWP Political Committee, Comrade Barnes felt it was necessary to hold a new discussion on Stalinism in the International to clarify all these points. If we examine the problems which the International has faced since then — including wars between workers states and so-called "Eurocommunism" — it is obvious that such a general discussion is needed now more than ever to arrive at an overall view of the crisis of Stalinism.

Such a discussion would be all the more useful in that it would enable us to replace the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions into the international context where they belong and to gain a better understanding of the Stalinist pressures to which they are subjected.

Cuba: A workers state with bureaucratic deformations

Before going into our own position, we should state that we agree entirely with Comrade Segur when he explains that "the case of the Cuban leadership is specific insofar as it is, along with the Sandinista leadership, the only victorious leadership of *non-Stalinist origin*." This is why we make a radical distinction between Cuba's case and that of China or Vietnam for example; we consider analyses which mechanically lump together workers states and leaderships of completely different origins, to be misleading.

The resolution on Latin America adopted at the world congress asked two questions about Cuba. The first read as follows:

"(a) To what degree do parasitic economic privileges exist for the leading strata and to what degree have such privileges become entrenched? To change the previous position it would have to be proved that a crystallized bureaucratic caste exists, whose interests are antagonistic to those of the toilers in Cuba and throughout the world. It would have to be shown how this qualitative change took place. If this were shown, it would then follow that this caste could only be removed by the process of political revolution" ("Resolution on Latin America," *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, New York, January 1980).

We agree with this way of putting the question. We also agree with the conclusion of the USec document, namely that even if the domestic bureaucratic tendencies have gotten worse and we must consider Cuba "a workers state with bureaucratic deformations," the trend has not reached a qualitative point which would necessitate our calling for the overthrow of a crystallized bureaucratic caste by means of a political revolution.

On the methodological level, we believe that being cautious on this sort of question is a *principle*. We disagree with the position of David Keil and other comrades (12). As for the OCI, after believing for twenty years that no social revolution had occurred in Cuba, it suddenly discovered not only that a workers state had been formed . . . but also that it was urgent to call for political revolution!

Bureaucratic degeneration is neither fateful nor a "historic necessity." The "break-off point" which determines when it becomes necessary to call for political revolution is all the more difficult to pinpoint in that the bureaucracy is *not a class, but a parasitic layer* inserted in the mechanisms of the workers state.

Trotsky used the image of a "Thermidor." But even he

went astray in applying it to the Soviet Union; it was only *after the fact* that he realized Thermidor had actually occurred, i.e., after a whole period during which he used to say Thermidor was still in the future.

This shows the notion of a "Thermidor" should be used with caution. In the case of the USSR, it corresponded to the *political and physical liquidation* of the Bolshevik revolutionaries who led the revolution.

But it would be absurd to go looking for a "Thermidor" in the case of the East European countries, of Yugoslavia, Albania, China, North Korea and Vietnam. Struggles between bureaucratic factions should not be confused with "Thermidor." It is much more important to judge these states by *their domestic policy* (bureaucratic privileges, relations with the masses) and their *foreign policy* (socialism in one country).

From this vantage point, all these workers states can unfortunately be lumped together, with only slight nuances. *These workers states were bureaucratized from birth*, under the watchful eyes of their Stalinist parties. The masses' attempts at self-organization were crushed wherever they took place. These states' foreign policy, even when it runs counter to that of the Soviet Union, is patterned after the Soviet bureaucracy's doctrine: socialism in one country, defense of the status quo on a world scale.

The example of China is particularly illustrative of this point. But the same applies to Vietnam, which instead of trying to spread the Indochinese revolution in Southeast Asia, has committed itself to a policy of "zones of influence" with the well-known consequences in Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand.

We should note that the current position of the International (majority resolution on the world situation of the 11th World Congress) is to call for political revolution in China as well as the USSR. This contrasts with the majority's past position at the 9th and 10th world congresses. But no one has yet explained, especially not Comrade Segur who considered the Chinese CP as a "revolutionary party," when the qualitative leap that justified his change of position occurred. It is still time to do so. Of course, it might be difficult because it would involve producing new arguments to refuse to characterize the Chinese CP as *Stalinist*. In truth, neither a "qualitative leap" nor an "explanation" can be found because the Chinese workers state patterned on the USSR — to the point of caricaturing it, and the economic errors of the Maoist leadership are well-known — was bureaucratized *from its inception*.

We don't raise this question here for historical purposes but because it is a *political question* which has implications, for example in Indochina, where the Fourth International still does not call for political revolution.

Conversely, comparing the various bureaucratized workers states that were controlled from beginning to end by Stalinist leaderships with the Cuban workers state, reveals important differences.

Twenty-two years after its victory, the Cuban revolution still doesn't have deformations that render it completely unrecognizable. This was not the case for the Russian revolution after twenty-two years.

This is not enough to make a consistent comparison between the Castroist leadership and the Bolshevik party leadership, as the SWP comrades are now doing, but it is

important to recognize that Fidel Castro's relations with the masses, while they are by no means a model of workers democracy, are radically different from those of the bureaucrats in power in the other workers states with the masses of their country.

To quote a phrase of the minority resolution the American comrades submitted to the 10th World Congress in 1974 (13), Fidel Castro eventually followed "a policy of peaceful coexistence with Cuban bureaucratism."

At any rate, no qualitative change has yet taken place even if some indications provide real ground for concern.

The same resolution which the SWP comrades would do well to review, emphasized that:

"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" (13).

This corresponds to the conclusion of the IEC resolution on the need to defend our program for socialist democracy in Cuba.

The second question asked concerned the nature and evolution of the Cuban leadership.

Nature of the Castro leadership

We think that it is incorrect to characterize the Castroist leadership (or the Sandinista leadership) as "revolutionary," without any further qualification. We think that the leading SWP comrades are wrong to equate the Castroist leadership with that of Lenin and Trotsky.

While we seek *unity in action* (whenever possible) with the Castro leadership, we must not mix up our banners. This is an elementary rule that Trotsky taught us.

Undeniably, we have something to learn from the Castroist leadership in power, or from that of the FSLN, because these leaderships are faced with extremely complex problems that are more like those the Bolshevik leadership dealt with than those Trotskyist activists encounter in their day-to-day work.

But this in no way justifies *adapting* to these leaderships. This was the lesson taught to us by Hansen and the international minority at the 9th and 10th world congresses. In this regard, the SWP leaders are breaking with the policy they followed before dissolving the LTF — a break for which we only have an incomplete explanation at this time. We uphold some of the positions advocated by the American comrades in the past, above all because we were convinced of their correctness in the earlier international discussions. But also because we think it useful to refer to certain old resolutions which still provide a useful framework to understand the present situation. The point is not to counterpose Hansen to Barnes, or Barnes 1977

vintage to Barnes 1979 vintage; this would be a sterile game. The important thing is to understand where a change took place and why, if it was justified.

On the question of the *characterization* of the Castroist leadership and the Trotskyist policy toward it, the charges made by the SWP seem unjustified to us.

In his article on "Cuba: Twenty Years of Revolution," Comrade Barnes gives the following argument:

"The Cuban leaders were revolutionists of action. In one of Trotsky's discussions with members of our party at the end of the 1930s, he predicted that the next great revolutionary leaders would not be great theoreticians like Marx, writing things like *Capital*. We are in an epoch now where we will see great revolutionists of action come forward, and we must come forward and meet them (14)."

Comrade Barnes adds:

"On the other hand, we also learned the great value, irreplaceability, and strategic importance of our norms. It is only by having the right strategy and the right norms, only by absorbing theory *politically*, that we can successfully defend and extend the revolution" (14).

We defend that line and those norms even against the "revolutionaries of action" Barnes talks about. This was necessary when the Latin American Castroist currents thought they could duplicate the Cuban experience by adopting a rural guerrilla strategy.

And it is still necessary today, one of the reasons being that Castro and the FSLN have far weightier responsibilities in the class struggle. As "revolutionaries of action," they often had a tendency because of their particular experience to reduce the revolutionary struggle to the *action* of a small group of determined men. This often went with a tendency to ridicule theory. The practical results in Latin America were a catastrophe for the Castroist current and Che Guevara paid for the political inadequacies of his own current with his life.

In the building of a workers state, these inadequacies are even more serious. The commandism that affects Cuban society and is centered on the personality of Fidel Castro is but the continuation of the central role he occupied in the Sierra Maestra. The absence of structures of socialist democracy in Cuba is rooted not only in the country's under-development but also in the theorization of a certain type of leadership experience (15).

This is why simply calling Castro and the FSLN revolutionaries is insufficient — even if it is merely meant as "a formulation for the masses." The analysis and characterization must go further.

The initial draft resolution submitted by the USec to the IEC made the following analysis:

"The Castroist leadership is revolutionary insofar as it led the revolutionary process in Cuba and supported its extension in certain countries as it does in Central America today. But from the standpoint of the development of the world revolution as a whole, its fundamental orientation is centrist."

In our opinion, it is correct to characterize as *centrist* leaderships of petty-bourgeois origin which after a series of vacillations found their way to the proletarian revolution, partly under the pressure of the masses and of events, and partly by moving to lead them.

This Marxist characterization of the Castroist and Sandinista leaderships must be rounded out by an evaluation of the direction they are moving in. "We must place an

arrow on every centrist current," Trotsky said, "indicating whether it is moving from right to left or from left to right."

The IEC resolution refused to put that arrow on the Cuban leadership. By the same token, it backed off from its earlier characterization and the final version merely notes that the Cuban leadership "is not revolutionary Marxist."

In terms of the FSLN, the direction of motion seems clear: it is leftward, even though the break with the capitalists in the GNR was initiated by the latter.

Nonetheless there is no "guarantee" that it will move to establish a workers state — how could there be! The outcome of the struggle will depend in large part on the orientation adopted by the Cubans.

Here, we support the position of Comrade Gabriel in his article on the foreign policy of the Cuban workers state:

"The Cuban leadership is a centrist leadership. The definition of centrism as merely a vacillation between reform and revolution is not sufficient. It leads one to believe that when a leadership has led a revolution, it is "revolutionary," a generic term which doesn't give a political characterization of this leadership. Centrism can be expressed in vacillation between internationalism and socialism in one country, between workers democracy and bureaucratism. The Castroist leadership remained a centrist leadership after the formation of the Cuban workers state. But the contradictions of its centrism have been evolving ever since. Its content isn't fixed.

"Over the years, we noted a dangerous evolution of the Cuban leadership (Czechoslovakia, May 68, Peru, etc.). Today, Cuban foreign policy displays the same vacillation. But we would have to be blind not to notice that the Cuban leadership's scattered moves between the two poles of the magnet since the beginning of the 1970s are getting closer and closer to the negative pole of *bureaucratic centrism*.

"But the decisive test, the ultimate test, is not over. It is going on under our very eyes in Nicaragua and Latin America. Major events could cause a crisis in the Cuban leadership that might cut across the old dividing line between July 26 veterans and PSP veterans. Internal struggles could arise. But Cuba's bureaucratic course could only be rejected after a deep differentiation in the whole party and most importantly through a mobilization of the working masses unprecedented since the revolution" (16).

The test is indeed going on under our very eyes in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Up until now, while it provided some material support to these revolutions, the Cuban leadership has been leaning toward an alliance with the "democratic" bourgeoisie of these countries and of the neighboring countries.

The line of the Jones amendments (17), which we supported at the world congress, shows how we can intervene in this "test": while standing firmly on the side of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions against the imperialist attacks, we publicly argue that the only choice is "socialist revolution or caricature of revolution." The way forward for Nicaragua is not the "Anti-Interventionist Democratic Front" advocated by Castro, but the path followed by the Cuban people itself when it overthrew capitalism and created the first state genuinely free of imperialism in Latin America.

Build the Fourth International in all countries

The IEC resolution on the Cuban revolution and Castroism concludes (point 19) with the need to seek united action with this current for a common struggle against imperialist oppression. It puts forward a series of political proposals like the necessity for class independence against the bourgeoisie or the advocacy of our program for socialist democracy.

But we know that no program can exist without the backing of an organization. The two go together like web and woof.

There is little change from the world congress resolution on Nicaragua: "In Nicaragua, revolutionary Marxists must be part and parcel of any FSLN project to build the revolutionary party; this is the framework in which they will put forward their proposals to develop and consolidate the revolution. . . . They will apply this conception as loyal revolutionary militants: while they respect the organizational framework within which they work, they will struggle for the program of the Fourth International and regroup its supporters."

The last sentence is an important addition which goes in the direction of our proposals at the last world congress. However, according to the information we received at the CC of the LCR, this "regroupment of supporters of the Fourth International" does not appear to have any concrete expression.

In fact, the way Segur explained this point in his report is cause for concern:

"In countries where the revolution is victorious and where a bureaucratic degeneration that would justify a call for political revolution to overthrow the leadership in power has not yet occurred, *the need to build the International does not necessarily take the form of a call to create a new party. Nevertheless, it does require an appropriate form of regroupment of the militants who are ready to defend our whole program.* So the question is not to build or not to build the International. The question is *how to build it* on the basis of the selection of militants and cadres which came about in the mighty test of a revolution. On this point, comrades can refer to the debate we had about Nicaragua" (1).

Precisely because we do refer to that debate, a series of questions arise in our mind. After hearing Comrade Segur's peroration on the countries where a political revolution might not be necessary, we would like to see the list of those countries where we are not trying to build a section of the Fourth International, i.e., a new party. Is Vietnam part of it?

We are also entitled to wonder about the meaning of this "appropriate form of regroupment" which seems to hold both for Cuba and Nicaragua. Is there somewhere where it means more than a grouplet existence? And if this were possible under the circumstances, what would be the concrete forms of political activity of these hypothetical "regroupments"?

Segur turns a *tactical* question into a *principled* one. We are no longer in March 1933 when Trotsky hesitated for several months before considering the need for a new party *for Germany alone*, and before proclaiming the need for a Fourth International (July 1933).

We are now building the Fourth International as *the world party of socialist revolution* and we want to build it

in every country. The question of whether, in Nicaragua, we should be inside the FSLN, outside it, or both at the same time, is a tactical question which depends on concrete possibilities. The same is true for the Cuban Communist Party (Comrade Beauvais noted in a recent *Inprecor* article that "nothing allows for the suggestion that the Cuban Communist Party has a democratic internal life or that its congress was democratically prepared" (18).

Just because we don't call for political revolution in Cuba doesn't mean we shouldn't defend our political proposals; and this includes defending them *in Cuba itself* and defending the "norms" of socialist democracy as we understand them. This means *our objective is to build a section of the Fourth International* in spite of problems and even of repression.

Politics is concrete. What Segur proposes is not. The real alternative to our proposal is to try to influence the leaders and cadres of the revolution by our "good behavior" or by "osmosis." Past experience, in Algeria and even in Cuba, shows this policy is an illusion.

Comrade Hansen made an involuntary balance sheet of this in a document published in 1977. (His intention was to show that the Posadistas were not the only Trotskyists who were active during the Cuban revolution.)

"Genuine Trotskyists existed in Cuba. In Havana a small group gave support to the July 26 Movement beginning about the time the guerrilla training camp was set up in Mexico. One of them, whom we saw from time to time, did work in the Cuban community in New York collecting funds.

With the victory in 1959, these Trotskyists were among the most active in facing the mountainous practical tasks that fell on the small revolutionary forces suddenly thrust into governmental power. Eventually they were absorbed by the July 26 Movement.

Following the victory, other Trotskyist cadres developed within the July 26 Movement. Under the ban on factions and tendencies it was not easy for them to spread their views, and some became discouraged. It is difficult to ascertain the present status of these loyal defenders of the Cuban revolution" (19).

The lesson is clear: "dissolving" ourselves in the broader framework of the militants of a revolution instead of winning them to our ideas, means that *we* will disappear.

In November 1979, the LCR congress passed a motion (moved by Segur) in favor of building sections of the FI in Vietnam and Cuba. The motion was sent to the files and Comrade Segur apparently changed his position. But we did not. We still defend the orientation adopted by majority vote (and even unanimously) at the LCR congress.

Building a mass international and the reunification of Trotskyist forces

We must be in the forefront of the defense of the revolution in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Grenada and of the defense of the Cuban workers state. But, while struggling side by side against imperialism, we must continue to delineate our differences with the Castroist current which will undoubtedly experience new credibility in Latin America.

The political positions of this current are still confused and insufficient, particularly on the alliance with bourgeois forces, not to mention its lack of understanding of Stalinism and other fundamental questions.

In an article quoted by Joe Hansen, Peter Camejo explained entirely correctly that:

"The 'general outline' of the Cuban revolution can be repeated; it is possible once again for a mass mobilization to begin in one of the Latin American countries with democratic demands and continue until it passes over into a socialist revolution. But what cannot be repeated is the conquest of governmental power without the mobilization of far more powerful social forces than were required in Cuba. . . . Thus, the strategic approach of the July 26 Movement is insufficient to achieve the necessary mass mobilization and participation prior to achieving governmental power. This will require political and organizational strategies better than those employed in the Cuban revolution" (20).

Hansen noted that "tactical exceptions entered into this general framework." This was precisely the case of the revolution in Nicaragua, but even there the strategy applied by the FSLN was far more elaborate than that of the July 26 Movement. The general strike and mass mobilization played a decisive role in the downfall of Somoza. In El Salvador, the political maturity of the revolutionary organizations that joined hands in the Farabundo Martí Front and their support among the masses rightly deserve to be emphasized. But the conquest of power is a hundred times more difficult than it was in Cuba at the end of 1958.

As far as the decisive countries of the Latin American continent are concerned, such as Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia and Argentina, a revolutionary Marxist strategy and a party as they are described in the world congress resolution are absolutely indispensable; as much so as in the most developed capitalist countries.

Bearing all this in mind, we reproach the SWP leadership comrades with abandoning in practice the fight to reunite the Trotskyist movement in the Fourth International, a fight which they waged alone and against the stream for years, in favor of the wild goose chase of advancing toward the "mass revolutionary International" by reorienting to the Castroists. Politics cannot be based on forecasts, nor can an International be built on gambles, especially when one is led to hide certain aspects of the Cubans' politics and to prettify their position by presenting them as the ultimate in "internationalism," a claim which is belied both by African and Latin American examples (support to bourgeois governments in Ethiopia and Mexico).

We state once again that we agree on the question of the "mass International" with Ernest Mandel's analysis in the revue *Quatrieme Internationale*, number 2:

"We are compelled to note that outside the Fourth International, no current which evolved pragmatically in a revolutionary direction — and there are many such currents — has accepted to put into practice these essential programmatic and political requirements. Therefore, the time to build a common international organization with them has not yet arrived: moreover, they reject even the need to do so (which is part of the program). When this changes, we will open our doors wide to let them in, even if it means becoming a minority within a mass International. But as long as there is no agreement on the program as a whole — i.e., as long as there is this refusal to take responsibility for all the tasks of the *world revolution* — building an International together with such

forces will remain a will o' the wisp. And it is counterproductive to postpone or stop building an international organization jointly with those who agree on these historical tasks. . . .

"*Material and social pressures are far mightier. As of now their impact still works in an unfavorable direction and it will continue to do so as long as the revolution is not victorious in some industrially advanced countries. But our own very relative strength (or weakness!) becomes a relatively autonomous factor in this process of broader regroupment. The stronger we are, the faster this project will advance in the right direction*" (8).

The fight to reunite Trotskyist forces is obviously linked to this perspective of strengthening the Fourth International which is necessary if it is to assume its historic tasks. In the pre-revolutionary situation which is about to arise in France, this is a decisive question.

A temptation to reject this fight for the necessary reunification of Trotskyist forces exists in the International, particularly in the leadership of the French section.

Since 1976, the International has lacked the desirable aggressiveness in approaching the forces of the "International Committee." In France, the LCR's policy toward the OCI was not satisfactory. It is true that the sectarianism of these forces could lead one to believe that the ball was in their court and that we should be content to "exchange information on our positions" until something happened.

The break-up of the International Committee in November 1981 revealed that the two-year absence of a public fight for reunification has now given way to a new orientation.

The "Open Letter to the Organizations and Members of the International Committee" sent by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International on November 12, 1981, tends to theorize the existence of deeper and deeper differences that are more and more difficult to overcome. It reads:

"What divides us is neither ill will nor historical accidents.

"We are often in disagreement with one or other of your organisations, not on questions of day-to-day tactics but on decisive tests of the class struggle: on revolutions and the attitude to adopt toward their leaderships. Yesterday it was the Cuban or Vietnamese revolutions, today it is the Nicaraguan revolution. This shows how thirty years of separate existence (if we are talking about the ex-OCRFI organisations) have deepened differences which perhaps did not exist at the time of the 1952 split but which have later gradually become crystallised.

"You must publicly draw all the lessons of the recent past to root out these errors. Without that any unification proposal, any idea of 'working in common for the building of the revolutionary party,' such as you propose in your last letter to the Political Bureau of the French LCR, can only be interpreted as a new factional maneuver and a new expression of double talk."

The conclusion of this text is that reunification is not on the agenda and that the only foreseeable perspective is a "prolonged period of common activity."

These statements are counterposed to our previous position (which is actually restated in the letter) that "we have not resigned ourselves to a lasting dispersal of forces claiming to be Trotskyist." They are reminiscent, almost as echo, of Lambert's statement: "We invite the USec to a

discussion aimed at reuniting the Fourth International from which we will uproot revisionism."

The logic of these statements is to consider the 1979 split to have been justified by the different responses to an on-going revolution. Indeed, why should one unite with people who are "on the verge of counterrevolutionary positions on a country or a revolution?" *This was the logic of Lambert and Moreno. It is destructive. It is not our logic.* We recognize that despite their sectarian features, the organizations coming from the International Committee are revolutionary organizations, Trotskyist organizations.

The International wronged these currents in the past. (For example at the 1969 world congress it refused to recognize the PST as the Argentine section in favor of a guerrillaist group.)

In many respects, the current divisions of the Trotskyist group seem to be the product of the International's forty years of isolation and struggling against the stream. The factional errors and splits have left cruel scars which have imparted sectarian deformations to the organizations that were members of the "Parity Committee."

But these deformations should be understood as the price of isolation, errors, factional tensions, and not as a congenital problem. We fight these sectarian errors. But we don't consider that they have pushed these organizations into the camp of counterrevolution. Both the OCI and Moreno's faction recognized the existence of an advancing proletarian revolution in Nicaragua. They advocate the establishment of a workers and farmers government just as we did before we recognized, using a variety of methods, that such a government had emerged. They argue for an unavoidable and necessary break with the bourgeoisie and imperialism, as does the Fourth International.

For the OCI, the recognition that Cuba was a workers state, however belated and however wrong-headed the slogan associated with it (the call for political revolution), represents an advance and not a "widening difference."

If we try to deepen this gap, we might end up digging unbridgeable trenches inside the International. The Trotskyist position is unconditional support for all on-going revolutions. But it is not to line up automatically behind the leadership of the mass movement, whether it be of Stalinist origin (as in Vietnam) or of petty-bourgeois centrist origin (as in Cuba and Nicaragua). This is a complex discussion which had already begun (including as part of the ex-IMT/LTF debate) and to which this document is intended as a contribution. It cannot be settled by appeals to authority.

We believe the orientation toward reunification outlined at the world congress *should be maintained*. The final statement on the split organized by the BF, LTT and OCRFI said:

"Their split was not politically justified and was therefore unprincipled.

"What this reversal by the OCRFI amounts to is a shortsighted policy of seeking supposed temporary factional advantage. To do this, they turned their backs on the objective need of pursuing a course of exploring the possibilities of a principled unification with the Fourth International, which would represent a major contribution toward solving the crisis of revolutionary leadership in the

coming class battles in a number of key countries.

"The Fourth International calls on the OCRFI, the Bolshevik Faction, and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency to reverse their course. The World Congress affirms that the Argentine Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores, the largest grouping supporting the Bolshevik Faction, should become the Argentine section of the Fourth International.

"Under the impact of the present split, we will not reverse our course of seeking the reunification of Trotskyist forces, begun in 1963" (21).

If we now were to theorize the current deepening and crystallization of differences, *we would be reversing our course under the impact of the sectarian policy of these forces*. By the same token, we would become unable to influence their evolution.

In 1979 the USec explained the OCRFI's overture to the FI as the result of the series of failures of its international projects and of the pressure of the class struggle on its organizations. The 1979 split was a means to escape these problems.

For Moreno, it was a means to avoid the discipline of the International by relying on an outside pole.

The break-up of the International Committee raises the same problem with even greater force. Its failure and the development of a pre-revolutionary situation in France will influence and compel the OCI to reexamine the question of reunification. As for Moreno, the isolation of his faction has led him to a dead-end. Since 1968, the world has been going through a new period of revolutionary rise. Trotskyists are no longer isolated in the class struggle. Membership in the organizations they built no longer number in the hundreds, but the thousands. Nowhere have they built a mass revolutionary party, but they *have* gone through a qualitative change. In France, there is a possibility of building a mass Trotskyist workers party.

All this means circumstances are far more favorable than after the split of 1953. But the long history of the 1963 reunification process teaches us that *the will to reunite* requires a prolonged struggle as well as necessary convergence in the class struggle.

As Comrade Mandel emphasized in the article cited above (8), we don't have the right to stand the risk that thousands of cadres who consider themselves Trotskyist undergo a sectarian degeneration. It would mean falling years behind in the building of a mass revolutionary International.

The USec must take the initiative on the basis of the orientation adopted in 1979 and publicly propose the perspective of a reunification congress whose function would be similar to that of the 1963 congress.

Conditions for such a reunification are far from being ripe, but the present state of dispersal of the Trotskyist forces, after the break-up of the IC, means we must outline this responsible perspective and open discussions with all currents on this basis. This does not mean dissolving organizational frontiers, but adding to the USec's authority as a real leadership of the world party of socialist revolution, by taking the lead in reuniting Trotskyists in a single democratically centralized Fourth International.

We should add that in order to address revolutionary and centrist currents that are emerging outside Trotsky-

ism and may even be leading victorious revolutions, such as the Castroists and Sandinistas, it is necessary to achieve the unification of all living Trotskyist currents (which excludes the degenerated sects, of course) in a single democratically centralized Fourth International.

For, like it or not, without a strong Fourth International recognized as the leadership of the Trotskyist movement, the actions and errors of others can still tarnish the banner of Trotskyism. Remember the Simón Bolívar Brigade episode! . . . and learn from it.

Footnotes

1. *B.I. de compte-rendu de CC de la LCR (janvier 81)*, (LCR Central Committee reports - Internal Bulletin - January 1981).

2. "The Cuban revolution, the Castroist current and the Fourth International", resolution adopted by the IEC of May 1981, in *IMG Internal Bulletin, Documents of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International*, May 1981, and *Intercontinental Press*, Vol. 19, No. 38, p. 1022, October 19, 1981.

3. See *Proletarian Leaderships in Power: What We Can Learn from Lenin, Castro, and the FSLN*, reports by Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters to the Oberlin Conference, in *Education for Socialists*, August 1980.

4. "Nicaragua: Pourquoi nous sommes allés lentement" (Nicaragua: why we went slowly) by Aurore, Matti, Titus, Legolfe, Mathieu, Hervé, Malika, Submitted to the CC of the LCR January 18, 1981.

5. See "Parti ou fraction/secte?", by John Ross, in *Quatrième Internationale*, Number 1. First drafts of this article appeared in *Red Weekly* in 1976-77.

6. See *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*, New York: Pathfinder Press, 1978, and the contributions of J. Hansen to the debate on Latin America.

7. Jack Barnes, "The Meaning of the IMT Steering Committee's Self-Criticism on Latin America," *IIDB*, Vol. XIV, Number 5, May 1977, pp. 14-15.

8. Ernest Mandel, "Nos Divergences avec le 'Comité Paritaire' et sa 'Conférence Ouverte'" (Our differences with the Parity Committee and its Open Conference), *Quatrième Internationale*, Number 2, December 1980.

9. See the brochure on *The Workers and Farmers Government*.

10. See in particular the interview of Ernest Mandel in *Critique Communiste*, special issue for the hundredth anniversary of Trotsky's birth.

11. "Déclaration du CEI-12 juin 1943" (Statement of the IEC, June 12, 1943), *Congrès de la Quatrième Internationale*, tome 2, p. 86.

12. See David Keil, "For a change of our position on Cuba", in the *IIDB* of 1976, and his more recent articles in the *SWP Discussion Bulletins*.

13. See "Draft Political Resolution, submitted by the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction", *IIDB*, Vol. XI, Number 2, January 1974, p. 16.

14. Jack Barnes, "Cuba: Twenty Years of Revolution", *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, Vol. 17, Number 6, February 19, 1979, p. 158.

15. In K.S. Karol, *Les Guérilleros au Pouvoir — L'itinéraire Politique de la Révolution Cubaine*, Paris: Laffont, 1970, (Guerillas in Power, the political itinerary of the Cuban revolution), one finds interesting information on this: "The facts cannot be denied; the July 26 Movement never held a national convention, a conference of cadres, or any important debating gathering at any level. . . The July 26 symbol was painted on walls and headed the front page of *Revolución*; but this newspaper was the official organ of a movement that although it was in power, no longer had any real organizational existence. Of course, the veteran leaders of the Sierra and the Llano were known; because of their recent past they represented Castroism and spoke in its name; but no one knew where or how their decisions had been taken" (p. 173).

"We tried to discover the mechanisms that governed its functioning during the 'glorious' period, and this search allowed us to better understand Armando Hart's remark: 'You people in Europe have a tendency to underestimate the role of a great individual in history.' For the only organ of the M.26.7 that functioned perfectly from beginning to end was Fidel Castro himself."

16. Claude Gabriel, "Politique étrangère castriste et défense de l'état ouvrier cubain" (Castroist Foreign Policy and the Defense of the Cuban Workers State), *Critique Communiste*, Number 30, December 1979, page 77.

17. *World Congress of the Fourth International 1979, Special issue of Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, "Amendments on Nicaragua".

18. "La société cubaine à la lumière du 2ème congrès du PCC" (Cuban Society in Light of the Second CCP Congress), Jean-Pierre Beauvais, *Inprecor*, Number 98, March 31, 1981, p. 77.

19. Joseph Hansen, "Two Interpretations of the Cuban Revolution", *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 35, No. 16, July 1977. Also available in *Revolutionary Cuba Today*, New York: Education for Socialists, July 1980.

20. Peter Camejo, "Why Guevara's Guerilla Strategy Has No Future", *International Socialist Review*, November 1972. Cited in Joseph Hansen, "The Underlying Differences in Method", *IIDB*, Vol. X, No. 12, July 1973, p. 14.

21. "The Split by Leninist Trotskyist Tendency and Bolshevik Faction — Statement adopted by the World Congress November 17, 1981", *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, Vol. 17, No. 47, December 24, 1979, p. 1275.

Debate on the Origins of the Indochinese Crisis

by Pierre Rousset

By the profusion of problems which it raises, the debate on the Indochinese crisis is one of the most important confronting our movement today. It is complex, touching a broad range of questions, which often differ in nature. In their article¹ Comrades Clark, Feldman, Horowitz and Waters try to enlighten this debate by approaching it primarily from the perspective of the political orientations in question, rather than from the perspective of the theoretical frame of reference. Without ignoring the last point, I want to do likewise in the following contribution. But it is surprising that the comrades of the American SWP, having thus defined the purpose of their contribution, polemicize only with an article by Mandel which, as a matter of fact, was essentially a critical analysis of the theoretical frame of reference used by the SWP comrades (notably concerning the process of formation of workers states).

Comrades Clark, Feldman, Horowitz and Waters succeed in the feat of never mentioning, in a remarkably long contribution, the resolution of the United Secretariat adopted in April, 1979. Nevertheless, it is this collective and official document which aims to analyze in a synthetic manner the facts of the Sino-Indochinese crisis and to define our general orientation toward it. This resolution responded in advance to many of the questions posed by the SWP comrades, as through nothing of the kind existed, in their July article.

As for me, I will endeavor to compare the political method of the two resolutions which were presented to the Secretariat in April 1979, and to compare them with what we know about the origins and evolution of the current Indochinese crisis. That seems to me to be the best way to advance the debate.

The conjunction of different factors in the crisis

When trying to understand the crisis which is now rocking the Indochinese countries, one is struck first by the rapidity with which it burst out after the historic victories of 1975, its depth and its breadth. Thus, it is quickly apparent that it is illusory to try to reduce this crisis, as the minority resolution of the April United Secretariat tends to do, to a new process (dating from 1978) of extension and radicalization of the Indochinese revolution on the one hand, and of the intensification of imperialist pressure on the other. Factors such as the Sino-Soviet conflict, the Sino-Vietnamese conflict, the Vietnamese-Khmer conflict during the Pol Pot period, the internal difficulties of each of these Indochinese revolu-

tions, to cite only these, assert themselves much too forcefully to separate them from the analysis or to make of them secondary and subordinate factors.

If one wants to explain the brutality and gravity of the Indochinese crisis and if one refuses to set aside *a priori* a whole series of very important questions, we must begin with *the conjunction of a set of factors in the crisis* of a different order. One could enumerate the principal ones among them thus:

1. The magnitude of the social, economic, and demographic damage due to decades of war — and of the particularly devastating nature of the American military escalation beginning in 1965. The regimes which resulted from the victories of 1975 have found themselves, because of this, subject to extreme social and political tensions, and have found their room for maneuver — in light of international pressures, extremely reduced.

2. The continuation after the defeat of its armies, of a strong imperialist pressure which takes multiple forms and which aims at strangling, isolating, weakening the Indochinese revolutions and at exacerbating their internal difficulties.

3. The new weight which the Sino-Soviet conflict is acquiring in the region, as an interbureaucratic conflict. Recently, China has been trying to play an active role as a "power" in east Asia. With the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, Moscow can, for the first time, count on the existence of a "friendly" regime in the region. In no other part of the world do the two bureaucracies of the "giants" of the "socialist world" face each other in this manner. The imperialist war in Vietnam prevented the interbureaucratic conflict, between Peking and Moscow, from asserting itself openly in Southeast Asia. However, the victory of the Indochinese revolutions and the defeat of the imperialist armies precipitated the expression of this conflict, and that is one of the major facts of the period after 1975.

4. The depth of the Sino-Vietnamese conflict. We shall see that there is much more involved than the mere reflection in Indochina of the Sino-Soviet conflict (not to speak of a reflection of the conflict between imperialism and the Indochinese revolutions!). Again, this time, the Sino-Vietnamese conflict existed prior to 1975, but was suddenly made more acute by the victory of the Indochinese revolutions, when the American debacle once again encouraged its open and public expression.

5. The new acuteness, after the establishment of the regime resulting from the revolutionary victories of 1975, of contradictions nourished by the importance of the national question in Indochina and by the political conflicts among the Vietnamese, Khmer and Chinese leaderships. It was first and foremost the Vietnam-Cambodia conflict which brought to light these contradictions.

It is important to understand that what is involved here is not just an accumulation of factors whose negative effects are piled one on top of another. There is a whole set

1. "War and Revolution in Indochina — What Policy for Revolutionists?" by Steve Clark, Fred Feldman, Gus Horowitz and Mary-Alice Waters, *Intercontinental Press*, July 16, 1979, pp. 701-728

of factors which *combine* with each other under different forms. We will find this phenomenon again throughout the analysis. And that is what makes it possible to explain the gravity of the crisis with which the Indochinese revolutions are confronted.

Indochina remains largely a place where the regional or international class contradictions are refracted, where they combine with the tensions peculiar to the Indochinese revolutions. That was certainly already the case during the imperialist war. One could even say that all the elements just cited were already in the works, at least since the early 1970s (when Washington began to renounce its most ambitious objectives and consequently modify its Chinese policy; and when the Chinese bureaucracy began to play a systematic counterrevolutionary role in the region). But the general context had changed; the year 1975 represented a major turning point in the regional and international situation. The different factors in the crisis are no longer arrayed in the same way. That's what enables us to understand the *sequence* of events. How the current crisis began at the same time that imperialist pressure was largely reduced *relative* to what it had been before; because after all, one must not forget to what extent American imperialism saw its regional strategy shaken by its defeat in Indochina, to the point that serious concern was shown over the short term future of the Thai kingdom. It was just at that moment that the Sino-Soviet and Soviet-Vietnamese conflicts broke out, heavily weighing on the contradictions and difficulties which appeared between the different countries of Indochina and within each of them, forcing the newly-victorious revolutions to enter into a period of great tension.

And it wasn't until the elements of this new crisis were in place that, profiting from the respite and the windfall, imperialism began to take the offensive again, faced with a situation which it had, to be sure, paved the way for (by its policy of systematic and thoroughgoing destruction of the Indochinese countries) and which it must have hoped for, but which it had not initiated.

This is to say that the Sino-Indochinese conflict *cannot be reduced* to the pursuit of the confrontation between international revolution and counterrevolution. Without assigning, for example, a *specific* role to the dynamics of the interbureaucratic conflicts in the region, and without taking into account the acuteness of the national problem in Indochina, one cannot even understand the *genesis* of the current crisis: how such a violent crisis could take shape at the precise moment that imperialism had lost the strategic initiative and turned out to be notably incapable of intervening in an effective manner against the rise of the liberation struggles in southern Africa. As for understanding all of the key facts of the present situation in Southeast Asia . . . !

Understanding the nature of the crisis to better define our tasks

The majority resolution takes into account this set of questions. It shows the interconnection of the different factors at work in the development of the Indochinese crisis. And it draws from them the political conclusions as to what the attitude of revolutionary Marxists should be. The minority resolution does nothing of the kind. Its title summarizes the *single* axis of the resolution: "*The Responses of Imperialism to the New Advances of the*

Indochinese Revolution." But — and this is what I want to emphasize — any *reductive* approach to the Indochinese crisis has grave political (and theoretical) consequences.

That was, for example, the case with the position expressed in the declaration of the United Secretariat bureau adopted in January 1979 following the entry of Vietnamese forces into Cambodia, as the last paragraph of the April United Secretariat resolution points out. In not clearly indicating the active role played *after* 1975 by imperialism, it tended to reduce the Sino-Indochinese crisis essentially to the product of "interbureaucratic conflicts," all more or less situated on the same level. This had at least two negative consequences: on the one hand, an important delay in the analysis of the new situation created in Cambodia by the entry of Vietnamese forces and in the abandonment of the slogan for immediate withdrawal of regular Vietnamese troops; and on the other hand, a lack of preparation of our movement for the tasks of defending the Indochinese revolutions against imperialism.

I emphasize this point precisely because the resolution adopted in April by the United Secretariat corrects the errors or inadequacies of analysis and orientation contained in the preceding declarations, and it does so explicitly. Comrades Clark, Feldman, Horowitz and Waters do not take this into account in their polemical article of July, which is very regrettable.

I emphasize it also because the evolution of the situation in Southeast Asia makes ever more immediate the task of defending the Indochinese revolutions. I do not want to return to this question which I analyzed at length in my article of Nov. 4 (see *Inprecor* No. 64, Nov. 20 1979). Unfortunately, we are compelled to notice that apart from declarations of principles and adoption of political positions, our movement is not too active around this question, Japan, it seems, being the only exception.

The last world congress confirmed the necessity of a campaign to defend the Indochinese revolutions, a necessity recognized virtually unanimously by our movement. It also confirmed the possibility of conducting a common defense campaign, regardless of the differences among us on the question.

Let us simply remember — since the SWP comrades seem to have forgotten, if one is to judge by the questions they asked us in the course of the current debate — that *all* of the axes of the defense campaign defined by the World Congress had long been explicitly and precisely contained in the resolution adopted by the United Secretariat in April. As a matter of fact, the defense campaign is discussed in point 30 of the resolution which concludes an analysis developed in the body of the resolution on the policy of imperialism and that of the Chinese bureaucracy toward the Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian revolutions in terms of the tasks of the international working class movement.

The difficulties which our movement encounters in the practical implementation of this defense campaign do not flow from the orientation adopted by the leadership of the International. Moreover, they are just as apparent in the USA as in Europe. They are also only very partially related to the confusion that marked the beginning of our international debate after the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia, a confusion that affected *all* of our movement. They flow primarily from the difficulty of mobilizing a significant section of the mass movement around such a

campaign (in the current political climate); from our inability today to conduct several solidarity campaigns at the same time (inasmuch as our forces are currently engaged in defense of the Nicaraguan revolution as a priority); and from more general problems that restrict our ability to conduct sustained anti-imperialist campaigns.

It is true that a portion of the left and far-left milieus, especially, but not only in the Western countries, is so disoriented by the Indochinese crisis that it has lost the militant and anti-imperialist point of view in the mass movement. For we could not be "neutral" or even simply passive; we could not remain in anticipation when analysis of the situation in Southeast Asia reveals a twofold confrontation: between the Indochinese revolutions and imperialism on the one hand, between those revolutions and the Chinese bureaucracy on the other. Hence the *necessity* of a twofold campaign in defense of the revolutions and the Indochinese workers states.

But is it *sufficient* to stress the defense of those revolutions and workers states when we are speaking of the *political tasks* — and I emphasize these words — of our movement in regard to the Indochinese crisis? No, and for a very simple reason: at the heart of the current situation in Indochina there is not only the continuation in new forms of the confrontation between revolution and counter-revolution. There are also the worldwide consequences of the crisis of Stalinism and the tensions peculiar to the Indochinese revolutions. What gives this crisis its specific nature, as we have seen — and what largely explains the confusion it has caused within the workers movement and the national liberation movement — is the particularly sharp manner in which these three different planes have come together.

As a result, if our movement wants to be in a position to *intervene* in an effective manner — and not only to correctly analyze the situation — it has to give *political and militant responses* to the questions posed in these three areas: the confrontation between revolution and counterrevolution, the sharpening of interbureaucratic conflicts as a result of the international crisis of Stalinism, the contradictions particular to the Indochinese revolutions. This is precisely what the majority resolution tries to do. It is exactly what the minority resolution refuses to do.

Now we shall see how the very one-sided approach taken by the minority resolution to the Indochinese crisis has important consequences: exacerbation of an erroneous theoretical frame of reference, a description of the situation often far removed from reality, systematic ignorance of a certain number of key political questions whose immediacy is nevertheless great and to which it is very important that our movement give its own answers. The problem is not a minor one, because unless we give these programmatic and political answers, we will be incapable of intervening as we should in the debates opened by the Indochinese crisis within the world workers movement and national liberation movement, and it will be even more difficult for us to mobilize a section of the mass movement in defense of the Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian revolutions.

THE SYSTEMATIZATION OF AN ERRONEOUS THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A lot of ink has already flowed on these questions and I do not wish to repeat here things which have been

developed in other discussion articles (notably, on the analysis of the workers states and their formation, Mandel's last article).² Nevertheless we must come back to some of these problems to compare them with the historical processes that characterized the Indochinese revolutions.

A. On the process of formation of the workers states

The SWP comrades seem to be in the process of giving a *new and much more systematic coherence* to several elements of their previous analysis of the process of formation of the workers states. It is, for example, only recently that they began to date the establishment of the Soviet workers state in 1918 and not 1917, as we all did previously. One could try to summarize as follows their analysis of the phases of establishment of a workers state during a revolutionary process: victory of the revolutionary insurrection and destruction of the old bourgeois state apparatus but maintenance of the general framework of a bourgeois state in the country; formation of a workers and peasants government which (more or less consciously depending on the case) takes a growing number of progressive and anticapitalist economic and social measures (thanks to the support for these measures by the masses); constitution of a new workers state when the totality of these measures has permitted the destruction of the essence of the economic power of the bourgeoisie and the abolition of capitalist property relations.

We should note immediately that this analysis transforms the use of two concepts — that of the state and that of the government — by "stretching" their content in a remarkable way. The state thus becomes nearly synonymous with "socioeconomic structure," at least in the "broad" sense: for Clark, Feldman, Horowitz and Waters, "the Marxist concept of the state," used in its "broad" sense, signifies "the general socioeconomic system that the coercive apparatus upholds" (the state in the "narrow" sense). As for the government, it becomes the equivalent of the entire governmental structure — that is to say, nearly synonymous with the state (in the classic sense).

Let us note now that this double "stretching" of the concepts of the state and the government cannot avoid having dangerous general implications. We emphasize three here:

- Such an analysis tends to blur the key importance of the notions of dual power, the revolutionary crisis and the seizure of state power, by shifting emphasis away from the importance of the qualitative leap represented by the destruction of the bourgeois state power and the establishment of a state (in what the SWP comrades call the "narrow" sense) having a different class character, that is, capable of making an assault on the economic power of the bourgeoisie and the laws of the capitalist economy.

- In so doing, it greatly facilitates the task of the "theoreticians" of reformism, because after all, while the analysis made by the SWP comrades obviously recognizes the necessity for the *destruction* of the old bourgeois state apparatus, it also makes a (new) bourgeois state into the instrument that the working class takes hold of in order to decisively destroy the power of the bourgeoisie. It also

2. "Behind Differences on Military Conflicts in Southeast Asia — The Theoretical and Political Issues," by Ernest Mandel, *Intercontinental Press*, April 9, 1979, pp. 335-349

represents the setting up of a workers state as the product of a gradual transformation of a bourgeois state; a transformation so gradual that it sometimes becomes difficult to determine the *exact year* of birth of a new workers state (for example, when was a workers state established in North Vietnam after the 1954 victory?).

- Finally, the analysis by the SWP comrades also blurs a key element of the Marxist theory of proletarian revolution: the fact that in contrast to the bourgeois revolution, the socialist revolution must first successfully establish the political power of the working class (the dictatorship of the proletariat) before being able to reduce the economic power of the bourgeoisie and lay the basis for an economy of transition to socialism.

Now let us compare the analysis made by the SWP comrades with the process followed after 1975 by the revolution in South Vietnam. By the very fact of the prior existence of the workers state in North Vietnam, this borderline case illustrates well the insoluble contradictions that the SWP comrades are forced into when they try to impose their blueprint analysis on such a revolutionary process.

According to the minority resolution, a bourgeois state continued to exist in South Vietnam after the victory of April 1975. In August 1975, a workers and farmers government was formed in the South and began to take a series of progressive measures. Finally, in March-April 1978, the "last" stronghold of capitalism was abolished in South Vietnam with the destruction of large private commerce and the destruction of the power of the Sino-Vietnamese big commercial bourgeoisie. A workers state was "consolidated." Note that all through this resolution, the word "consolidated" is indeed the one that is used to describe the process that occurred in 1978, and it is never specified when this workers state that was in the process of being consolidated had been established in the first place. But the discussion article by Clark, Feldman, Horowitz and Waters does designate 1978 (after the measures of March-April) as the time "from which we can speak of the existence of a workers state throughout Vietnam."

These comrades mock the "mechanical" method of those who are uneasy with their definition of a state — formally reunified since 1976 — as a workers state in North Vietnam and a bourgeois state in South Vietnam. Nevertheless, let us look at some of the features of the situation in Vietnam between 1975 and 1978:

- The socio-economic structure of North and of South Vietnam obviously differed enormously (they still differ, by the way). But, on the morrow of the victory and the liberation of Saigon, all the political and state institutions of the bourgeoisie were dissolved in the South; the revolutionary army was unified, as was the administration and civil service; the political leadership of the country was unified (under the political bureau of the VCP); new administrative structures were set up under the leadership of a single party (the VCP). Initial socio-economic anticapitalist measures were taken in practice, affecting very important sectors (industry, control of foreign trade, etc.), while a common economic plan for both areas of the country was placed under study.

- As for a "government" of South Vietnam alone, no such thing existed. The PRG was stripped of power, then formally dissolved. Even by giving the concept of "government" its broadest possible meaning, one cannot discern a

governmental structure for South Vietnam alone which could have set itself up in 1978 as a "workers and peasants government."

- In 1976, the political structures of the country were officially unified with the announcement of the formal reunification of the country and the holding of legislative elections nationwide. A single National Assembly and a single government existed, with full power both in the South and the North. The administrative provinces were redrawn and, symbolically, one of them henceforth straddles the 17th parallel! Is the northern half of this province part of a workers state for the SWP comrades and the southern half part of a bourgeois state?

- It is true that big errors were committed in regard to the destruction of the economic power of the bourgeoisie, the biggest of which was the delay in putting the Sino-Vietnamese commercial capitalists out of commission. Many elements must be accounted for in order to explain this delay, which had very costly consequences. But the confrontation between the political and state power and this commercial bourgeoisie began very early in South Vietnam (by September 1975). There was a class struggle in South Vietnam after the 1975 victory. But this class struggle was between not only the remaining economic "bastions" of the bourgeoisie and the masses, but also between the bourgeoisie (which obviously used the weapon of corruption, among others) and the Vietnamese state, the administration of South Vietnam, and the VCP. There was not a single capitalist in Vietnam who believed, during all the years between 1975 and 1978, that the state was in any way his own (a bourgeois state)! Finally, if we make an objective overall balance sheet, we must perceive that, despite the delay in decisively breaking the power of the commercial bourgeoisie, the reunification process in Vietnam was very rapid (especially if one takes into account the very real obstacles which it had to surmount).

The analysis by the SWP comrades claims to be objective. It does not depend upon the prognosis they make as to the future policies of one or another leadership. Moreover, the minority resolution notes that as of August 1975 (when "the stage of the workers and farmers government was reached"), the Vietnamese Communist Party was "forced to change its orientation and to stop acting as the guarantor of capitalist relations of production." For the moment let us set aside this odd analysis which contends that before this date, the VCP acted as the "guarantor of capitalist relations of production" in South Vietnam and note that we are still only four months from the victory of April 1975. And still two and a half years away from the establishment of a workers state at least, if one is to believe the comrades who defend the minority position.

But what about the class nature of the state during this period? Or at least, to use the vocabulary of our SWP comrades, what about the state in the *narrow sense of the term*, that is the army, the police and militia, the administration, the state and constitutional structures, etc. This "state in the narrow sense" certainly forms a single body, in the north and in the south of the country. Does it have a class nature or not? Can it serve the Vietnamese working class and peasantry on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie and imperialism on the other without prejudice to either side? Is it a workers state in the North and a bourgeois state in the South? We will search in vain for a clear answer to this question in the documents of the SWP

comrades and in the minority resolution. A quotation from the document by Clark, Feldman, Horowitz and Waters will show the balancing act and the ambiguity that allows them to conceal the stretching of the notions of the government and the state. There is discussion of the "transition period" which Vietnam is going through, characterized by a "contradictory internal situation": "A workers state already existing in the North, capitalist relations of production not yet overturned in the South" (my emphasis). One can discuss the actual weight of the capitalist relations of production in South Vietnam prior to March-April 1978. But again, what about the state (in the classic Marxist sense)? Which relations of production does it fundamentally defend (that is, apart from one or another error in orientation — many of which were admitted by the VCP leadership — and apart from one or another incorrect, bureaucratic line)? It certainly does not defend capitalist relations of production!

The state (quickly unified in practice, then by law) was one of the instruments in South Vietnam by which an economy in transition to socialism was established. And there was no mass mobilization outside the framework of this state which forced major anticapitalist measures to be taken against the will of the VCP leadership (even if, of course, the reactions of the popular masses of Vietnam were one of the factors that were weighed in deciding what orientation to adopt at that time).

To understand this revolutionary process, is it not preferable to clearly distinguish between the state (in the classic Marxist sense) and the socio-economic structure — especially in the wake of the seizure of power, when a dichotomy necessarily appears between the nature of the new state born of the revolutionary struggle and the socioeconomic structure which still belongs to the past? It is by making such a distinction that we can understand how the state becomes an instrument for the transformation of the socioeconomic structure.

The SWP comrades make a very poor case when they state that such a conception "presupposes the inevitability of the overturn of capitalist relations of production and eliminates the necessary role of the working class in the establishment of new relations of production. Instead it should show its political confidence in the ability of a given leadership to carry out the socioeconomic transformations. . . ." We would like to know what permits them to make such a statement! What we say is that with the victory of a revolutionary struggle, such as that of April 1975 in Vietnam, with the destruction of the old bourgeois state apparatus, with the establishment of a new state apparatus on this dual basis, a workers state came into being in South Vietnam; which alone makes it possible to understand, moreover, that its fusion with the workers state in the North was a process largely begun *at its birth*. But there is a long way between the *establishment* of a workers state and its *consolidation*. The latter is not preordained and inevitable. It depends largely on the anticapitalist socioeconomic measures that follow the victory. If these measures are not taken, or if they are taken too late, one may certainly witness the collapse of a young workers state and the victory of the counterrevolution even before the revolution has been able to consolidate its initial victory. This does not stand in the way of prognoses: in Vietnam, it weighed heavily in favor of the consolidation of the workers state, despite the magnitude of the difficulties. Such was not the case in Cambodia!

B. On Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge

The point that stands out the most, in reading the sections of the minority resolution that deal with Cambodia, is the strangely incomplete picture it paints of the politics of the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1978. We certainly learn therein about the policy of mass terror carried out by the Pol Pot regime. But it is only by reading between the lines that we can guess the breadth of the measures taken against the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, the capitalist relations of production, and the imperialist presence.

Now, any analysis which claims to be serious must start from this observation: the Cambodian revolution, following the 1975 victory, is distinguished by the *extreme combination* of mass repressive measures and anticapitalist measures. We have no other examples of a regime which, immediately following a victory won through a revolutionary struggle and a fight for national liberation, took such rapid and brutal measures of forced collectivization, removal of the population, in many cases dispersal of families, etc.

But there are also no other examples of regimes that so rapidly and brutally not only smashed the existing bourgeois state, but also physically decimated the bourgeois and urban petty-bourgeois social layers, suppressed the right of private property, nationalized such broad sectors of the economy, smashed the mechanisms of monetary or commercial exchange, replacing them with administrative distribution or barter, broke ties with imperialism so completely, and did so both in the agrarian and the industrial realm. We may, of course, note here and there the existence of frontier bartering with the Thais, the export of several hundred thousand tons of rice to the world market, and say that therefore the break with the capitalist world was not *absolute*. But after all, any honest analyst is compelled to admit that the dislocation of economic mechanisms and of capitalist power, on the one hand, and the breaking of ties with the world market and imperialism, on the other hand, were *more* rapid, *more* radical, and *more* brutal in Cambodia after the 1975 victory than in the case of any other revolution. That is also where the analysis must start from, and not only from the extension of mass repressive measures.

Because after all, it is difficult to claim, under these conditions, that the evidence shows that the Cambodian state under Pol Pot was the guarantor of capitalist relations of production, that it was an instrument for a capitalist form of accumulation, that it served as a framework for the power of a regenerated bourgeoisie.

Trotskyists are often expert at historical analogies. The debate on Cambodia has given rise to several. I am rather suspicious of them. But after all, if we look for precedents for this type of policy which closely combines a wave of severe repression against the popular masses with broad anticapitalist measures, we think first of all of the period of forced collectivization in the USSR, and of aspects of the cultural revolution in China (and when one takes into account the ideology promulgated by the Khmer Rouge leadership during these years — egalitarianism, the call for a "leap into full communism" — the example of the Chinese Great Leap Forward asserts itself in turn).

But, to verify the validity of such analogies, and to try to move the debate on Cambodia forward, it would perhaps be best to try to *explain* what was the orientation imple-

mented by the Khmer Rouge after the April 1975 victory. For that, I think that the following elements must first be taken into account:

- *The nature of the ideological training of the team which took the lead of the Khmer Communist Party in 1960*

It was constituted in the early 1950s in France, where it formed a foreign-language cell of the Communist Party. The FCP was at the time one of the most Stalinist parties, and it is very probable that the Stalinist period, during which the USSR became an industrial "power," made a deep impression on the Khmer nucleus. Paris was also one of the international meeting-places where many leaders and activists in national liberation struggles gathered. But the dominant influence in this milieu was probably that of the liberation movements of the Arab and African world (with a nationalist character) rather than that of the Asiatic movements (led by Communist parties). The fact remains that already in France, the Khmer team seems to have viewed the notion of independence not only as a decisive task to accomplish, but as the key to any development policy after the victory. They seem to have been affected by the same debates, for example, as Samir Amin.

In the mid-1950s the members of this team returned one by one (with one exception) to Cambodia and came into direct contact with the Asian revolution, particularly the Chinese revolution which was at the height of its prestige and was going through precisely the "ultraleft" period of the Great Leap Forward at the end of the 1950s. Moreover, the returnees from France were confronted with the debates in the Cambodian Communist movement after the signing of the Geneva Accords which saw the triumph of the Sihanouk solution in Cambodia. They seem from the outset to have taken part in this debate on a nationalist line opposed to the Vietnamese influence and to the Indochinese tradition of Cambodian Communism, which they hold responsible for the failure.

A deep Stalinist influence, making a fetish of the notion of independence, the Maoist ultraleft radicalism of the Great Leap Forward, de facto nationalism with regard to the Vietnamese — these seem to be the principal ideological elements of that KCP leadership that emerged in the early 1960s in opposition to the old leadership of Indochinese composition, weakened by the numerous departures of Communist cadres to Hanoi after the Geneva Accords, and by the Sihanouk repression. Finally, when the KCP relaunched the armed struggle in Cambodia, it was during the period of the Cultural Revolution in China.

- *The illusory possibility of an "independent" development for Cambodia*

To understand the degree to which the KCP cadre made a fetish out of the role of independence in postrevolutionary economic and social development, it is necessary to be aware of what Cambodia is. An agricultural country, potentially very rich but where rice-growing productivity is particularly weak, and where immense progress in agricultural production seems possible to the extent that the social obstructions are broken. The relationship of arable land to the population is very favorable. The big central lake, Tonle Sap, plays an irreplaceable role as an immense natural reservoir. It holds back the water in periods of heavy rains (thus avoiding floods) and releases it in dry periods (thus allowing the irrigation of crops to continue).

What would be unthinkable in Laos and Vietnam is conceivable in Cambodia (although only in an illusory way): a largely autarchic development, whereby an agrarian revolution enables the country to take a leap forward and carry out industrialization based on the rice surplus obtained as a result (and largely exported). This is more or less what seems to have been the line of the Pol Pot team from its formation in Paris, a line which it has maintained since then.

- *The Khmer national feeling and Vietnam*

It is necessary to take the Khmer national feeling largely into account in order to understand how the Khmer Rouge leadership was able to assert itself in the KCP, and then to retain the leadership of that party and of the national liberation struggle, after 1970 and the return of at least 1500 Cambodian Communist cadres, and finally, how it could unite (partially) the ranks of an army regularly engaged in bloody battles against the Vietnamese.

The frontier of civilization runs across Indochina: it is the Annamese mountain chain which separates the world of Chinese influence (Vietnam) from the world of Indian influence (Laos and Cambodia). At the time of the French colonization, the slow expansion of Vietnam was taking place precisely in the southwest, to the detriment of the old Khmer empire, which had long been in decline. Cambodia was twice placed under supervision — by the Vietnamese and by the Thais. As for the French, they obviously played up these divisions, for instance by systematically using Vietnamese in the administration in Cambodia.

Is this to say that the reawakening of old nationalisms was inevitable in Indochina, despite the experience of joint liberation struggles? Obviously not. But it means that the *danger* existed, that the *national problem* is in any case one of the key questions to which the Indochinese revolutions must respond (we will return to this question). The Khmer Rouge leadership could and did build upon this national feeling and turn it against Vietnam. And it did so all the more easily since the framework of the combat before April 1975 was that of a national liberation movement, and since on many occasions since the mid-1960s the orientation of the KCP had clashed with that of the VCP with respect to the struggle in Cambodia.

- *The 1975 choice*

From 1970 to 1975, the combat in Cambodia made the same class polarization appear as in Vietnam and Laos, reflecting the same dynamic of permanent revolution, but in a country where the social forces of such a process of permanent revolution (an agricultural and urban proletariat, a pauperized peasantry) were much less developed than in Vietnam. Modern class contradictions had begun to be manifested in Cambodia, notably with the crisis of the Sihanouk regime. But the fact that the country was immersed in a region-wide process of wars and revolution, the backbone of which was Vietnam, greatly accelerated the pace of social struggles.

Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are very different from one another — on the cultural and socioeconomic levels — especially for adjacent countries. But the three Indochinese revolutions were more closely linked to each other than any other. Under these conditions, the KCP leadership found itself facing a critical choice in 1975.

It could preserve the alliance with Vietnam, thereby strengthening the bases of the process of permanent

revolution in Cambodia. It could then implement a gradual policy of revolutionary transformations. But it would then have to also abdicate a part of what it considered its independence and national sovereignty and combat the anti-Vietnamese feelings it had helped to nourish.

Or, in the name of that independence and sovereignty, it could break the longstanding ties between the Cambodian and Vietnamese revolutions, close off the country, and break up the Indochinese unit created not only by colonization but also by the liberation struggle. It could turn only toward China. But then it would have to compensate for the weakness of its social base — aggravated by these backward steps — by a drastic plunge taken on two levels. Internally, it would have to destroy and disperse *all* potential poles of opposition, be they bourgeois (liquidation of the “elites”), of the masses (forced collectivization and displacement of the population, brutal disruption of the religious and familial framework of society), or political (purges within the party and the army). Externally, the increase of tension on the Vietnamese border became both inevitable (because numerous refugees fled to Vietnam and because any internal opposition might look to Hanoi for support) and desirable from the point of view of the Khmer Rouge leadership (in order to use anti-Vietnamese sentiment as the ideological cement of the army, to denounce potential opposition forces as traitors and justify the purges, to restrain the population despite the efforts which were demanded of it).

The situation in Cambodia in April 1975 — taking into account, among other things, the extent of war damage, the danger of the spread of famine, etc. — was such that probably no intermediate policy was possible: either strengthening of the alliance with Vietnam within the framework of Indochina, or the nationalist solution and the drastic plunge both internally and externally.

• *Dependence on China*

The total independence to which the Khmer Rouge leadership aspired was obviously illusory. Chinese aid rapidly became decisive in all sectors: military, financial, diplomatic, foreign trade, etc. Made partially ineffective by the destruction of skilled labor power, it was nonetheless decisive in stabilizing the regime and assuring the reinforcement of its army, which was the real backbone of the regime throughout the country and which formed the bulk of its social base. Chinese support was obviously also decisive in paralyzing Vietnam in the face of Khmer Rouge attacks.

“Democratic Kampuchea” found itself in an objective situation of dependence on China. Furthermore, the regime was all the more easily integrated . . . into Peking’s Indochina policy in that they had the same “principal enemy”: Vietnam. (Which, however, did not make the Pol Pot leadership into puppets of the CCP: the Chinese leadership would have gladly wished for changes in the internal policy carried out in Cambodia and more rapid alterations of its foreign policy. It did not really get its wish until 1978.)

Taking this set of factors into account — along with several others — it is easier to understand the process which took place in Cambodia from 1975 to 1978: the formation of a workers state (in the classic sense of the word “state”) thanks to the joint victory of the three

Indochinese revolutions; the breaking of relations with Vietnam and the breakup of the Indochinese framework; the initiation by the regime of a drastic plunge on two levels — the forced collectivization of economic and social life, and growing border tensions; the deepgoing and abrupt overturn of the relations of production (it takes some nerve, after all, to claim as the minority documents do that this overturn did not take place), accompanied by a disintegration of the political, social and economic bases of the bourgeoisie and by a gradual wearing out of the masses; the shredding of the old social fabric, and its replacement by the largely artificial structure growing out of the forced collectivization, removal of the population, abolition of money, and the “remolding” of religious and social life in the name of a “direct leap into communism”; and the collapse of this far too artificial structure after the entry of the Vietnamese armies into Cambodia, the fall of the Pol Pot regime and the retreat of the bulk of the Khmer Rouge army.

Obviously, all this does not take the place of a real study of the history of the Cambodian revolution from 1975 to 1978. I am only outlining here a framework of analysis that can make it possible to interpret this history. To go further, it would be necessary to take many other elements into account: the existence in 1975 of several political currents within the KCP, the implementation of very different policies from one region to another, the existence of mass peasant support for the regime in several provinces until the end of 1976, the importance of the turn executed in late 1976 and early 1977. The Pol Pot leadership seems to have taken control at that time of the whole of the state apparatus and the country; brutal measures spread from one area to another, combining political purges with social atomization of the “rank-and-file population” of the former liberated zones; the sometimes incredible propaganda and political and social “excesses,” the growing tension with Vietnam.

I do not say that there was a *stable* workers state in Cambodia. I think exactly the opposite. In my opinion, the Pol Pot regime momentarily profited from the social wearing out of the potential opposition forces and from the success of the political purges. But it nonetheless led the Cambodian revolution to its ruin. One day or another (but not too far off), in one form or another, the processes of regional conflicts and internal social disintegration had to combine to lead the regime into open and general crisis. At that moment, the alternative of either relaunching the revolutionary process on a different basis or the victory of the counterrevolution would be posed again in practice. It is on this basis, moreover, that the USec majority resolution stated well before December 1978, that it was the duty of all to assist in the formation and aid the combat of a Cambodian opposition that declared its readiness both to preserve the anticapitalist gains of the revolution and to put an end to the policy of forced collectivization. But if the Pol Pot leadership led the Cambodian revolution to defeat, it was to *others* that it threatened to offer the opportunity of reestablishing a bourgeois state in Cambodia — namely, forces coming from Thailand. The Cambodian crisis was that of a workers state which was incapable of being consolidated in a lasting way because of the policy of its leadership.

C. What makes the Chinese bureaucrats run?

The minority documents are not always very clear with respect to the nature of the international policy of the ruling bureaucracies in the workers states. But the basic idea which emerges from a reading of their documents is that "the bureaucratic castes of Moscow and Peking are not independent agents." They are obliged "to make arrangements with imperialism" (except when they have to defend themselves from a direct attack) and "act basically as a transmission belt of imperialist pressure against the working class." More precisely, the Chinese invasion of Vietnam was only "a service rendered to imperialism" which had only "a limited military goal: to force Vietnam to pull out of Cambodia."

The two remarks seem to me to be dangerously wrong. Clark, Feldman, Horowitz and Waters recognize that the "bureaucratic castes act in terms of their own material interest and their self-preservation." Good, but then one must draw the consequences as to their international policy.

What is, after all, the guarantor of the material interests and self-preservation of a bureaucratic caste in a workers state? Its social and political control of state power — the political expropriation of the proletariat — that is the source of their material privileges. That is to say that the framework for the existence of a bureaucracy that has been set up as a ruling caste is that of the "national state." It will preserve its interests by insuring the maintenance of its monopoly of political power and by reinforcing that state. But the conditions of stability and reinforcement of such a state are not only internal, they are also international. That is precisely what explains that the policy of the bureaucracy is that of "peaceful coexistence." The bureaucracy has no "independent historical role" to play? To be sure, but that is true on the national as well as the international level. And it is hard to see what could prevent it from defending its own interests in the world arena by utilizing its control over the national state, as far as the situation permits. Obviously it is necessary to define which interests it is defending, and in what forms it does so.

Let us take the example of the policy of the Chinese bureaucracy toward Vietnam. It is frankly astonishing to see the SWP comrades explain that there are *no other* reasons for the February 1979 Chinese intervention in Vietnam than the desire to render a service to imperialism (by doing what imperialism cannot do) in exchange for peaceful coexistence agreements with Washington. It is obvious that the very existence of bureaucratic castes such as the Soviet and Chinese cannot be understood outside the context of a world still dominated by imperialism. Consequently, the search for a policy of peaceful coexistence is a *constant feature* of the policy of the bureaucracies. But what does this policy signify in the case at hand, and is it the only factor involved?

First of all, it is possible to respond that the Chinese intervention in Vietnam cannot be explained (only) by a conjunctural factor — the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia. First of all, the *preparation* for the Chinese intervention dates from well before the Vietnamese forces entered Phnom Penh in January 1979. It is sufficient to recall that China intervened in February of that year, to note the size of the forces committed by Peking, to take the measure of the preparations necessary for such an inter-

vention, in order to be convinced.

And most importantly, the Sino-Vietnamese conflict goes back much too far to be explained by the mutual favors that American imperialism and the Chinese bureaucracy granted each other since the April 1975 victory: it appeared sporadically at a very early date (in any case, by 1954) and crystallized definitively in the early 1970s with Kissinger's and Nixon's trips to China. The Chinese intervention in Vietnam represents a new stage in a conflict which has been growing worse for years and not only a response to the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia. Finally, it is part of a very vast regional policy of counterrevolution — which extends from Korea to Southeast Asia — and of an international policy whose touchstone has lately been the call for defense against the Soviet Union.

More concretely, one could define the reasons for Peking's Vietnamese policy as follows:

- It does indeed involve a consequence of Peking's policy of peaceful coexistence with Washington. To benefit from this policy, Peking has to be able to show that it can play an active role in the stabilization of the neocolonial order in east Asia. It is above all in this capacity that the Chinese bureaucracy now interests the imperialist governments after the defeat of the American armies in Indochina.

- There are also the effects of the Sino-Soviet conflict. After all, it is difficult to believe that this question does not carry a specific weight in the determination of Peking's policy, since a third of the Soviet army is encamped on China's northern border. We know that one of the stakes in the Chinese leadership's Vietnam policy in the 1960s was precisely to induce the VCP to break with Moscow. In the current state of the Sino-Soviet conflict, it is not at all a matter of indifference from the viewpoint of the Chinese leadership whether the USSR may for the first time be able to rely on a "friendly" regime in Southeast Asia, an immediate security area, and also a privileged area from the standpoint of Peking's regional influence.

- Finally, Indochina unified under the political leadership of Hanoi, having dressed its war wounds, would be, from the point of view of the Chinese bureaucracy, an important obstacle to the application of its *own* regional policy in Southeast Asia. Because the Chinese bureaucracy, besieged by important economic, social and political difficulties, needs regional stability itself. It knows the depth of the crisis rattling the ASEAN countries, which the Indochinese revolutions have largely helped to initiate. It fears new revolutionary developments. It needs stable relations with the regimes of the region. It knows that it does not politically control the leadership of the VCP. It also knows that a united and stabilized Indochina would form a screen between it and Southeast Asia which could threaten its ability to apply a consistent policy toward this region.

In many ways, the Sino-Vietnamese conflict today recalls the Sino-Soviet conflict of the 1950s and 1960s. In both cases, the fact that Moscow yesterday and Peking today saw a new "socialist power" come into being whose leadership it could not politically control was a very important factor in the breakup. Because the maintenance of "monolithism," so disparaged by the SWP comrades, is seen by the bureaucracy as an indispensable element in applying a regional or international policy of peaceful coexistence, to maintain control of the regional or interna-

tional Communist and national liberation movements, so as not to risk seeing the differences within the international workers movement combine with the internal tensions in its country.

The fact that the bureaucracies exist within the framework of the national state explains in part how they can oppose one another and why they use the traditional methods of "big power" diplomacy. And it is now an undeniable fact that the conflicts between bureaucratized workers states have reached the level of military confrontations.

The SWP comrades explain that in saying that, we would confirm the argument of imperialist propaganda which presents the workers states as the new warmakers in the world. One could say the reverse. By analyzing the real reasons why the bureaucracies resort to military action in a conflict with a regime of another workers state (as was undeniably the case between China and Vietnam, even from the point of view of the minority comrades), we simultaneously define the *limitations* of such recourse to military action. By explaining that the bureaucracy in a workers state can become the direct agent, the transmission belt for imperialist policy, the minority comrades at the same time remove all those limits: imperialist policy may be one of extended wars, world wars.

First conclusions

So what is the link between these developments and the debate introduced in the first part of this article?

It is that if we recognize that the revolutionary process in South Vietnam was deeper than the SWP comrades believe (and the role of the VCP much more active), we understand that the measures taken in March-April 1978 (despite their importance, which was very great) prolonged the previous developments. If we agree that the Cambodian state under Pol Pot was not a bourgeois state, and that the Chinese bureaucracy has other reasons for its Vietnam policy than to do Washington's dirty work in its stead, we cannot make Phnom Penh and Peking into mere agents of imperialism.

We must then frankly state that the Sino-Indochinese crisis poses other problems besides those related to the pursuit of the confrontation between world revolution and imperialism. And we must set the task for our movement, as a vanguard movement, of also answering the questions related to the worsening of conflicts between the bureaucratized workers states, and the tensions and contradictions particular to the Indochinese revolutions.

On the other hand, if we say that 1978 was "the" qualitative turning-point in Vietnam, we can avoid analyzing the development of the conflicts *before* that date, and reduce them more easily to mere "reactions" to the emergence of a new workers state. If we say that Cambodia was a bourgeois state and that the Chinese bureaucracy intervened only as an occasional agent of Washington's policy, we can then reduce the essence of the Sino-Indochinese crisis to the pursuit of the confrontation between revolution and imperialism. Obviously, we are then forced to make many conceptual flipflops and frequently move very far from factual reality.

THE POLITICAL TASKS

Finally, and this is of course the most serious thing, we may remain silent on questions which nevertheless ur-

gently demand political, programmatic, and active responses on our part.

A. The dynamics of the interbureaucratic conflicts

Here is a first example.

Conflicts between bureaucratized workers states exist — that is a fact. Since the Soviet-Yugoslav conflict, they have taken more and more serious forms — that is a fact. In general, the development of this type of conflict has seriously hurt the cause of socialism in the world — that is a fact. They may get even worse. That is at least a possibility, whatever the deeper causes of these conflicts.

So? Is it or is it not an important task of the international workers movement to oppose the extension of these conflicts between bureaucratized workers states? The majority resolution says yes, and that it is the responsibility of our movement to raise a cry of alarm on this subject. The minority resolution denies the very existence of the problem, or at least is largely silent on the subject.

Comrades Clark, Feldman, Horowitz and Waters insist on the necessity of making a concrete analysis of each conflict between bureaucratized workers states and of determining a specific political position *as a function of that analysis*. They warn against the temptation of simply putting an equal-sign between all the regimes involved in this type of conflict. They are right. The majority resolution concretely analyzes the Sino-Indochinese conflicts and defines a specific position accordingly. It does not put a simple equal-sign between all the regimes in question. Moreover, it does not take a "neutralist" position. It sides in a determined way with defense of the Indochinese revolutions.

But let us raise two questions, one very concrete, the other general. The Japanese comrades demonstrated in front of the Chinese embassy at the time of the intervention in Vietnam. We can discuss the advisability of such a decision, of the confusion that may or may not exist with anticommunist activities. But, it seems that irrespective of this problem, the SWP comrades thought that it was necessary to demonstrate in front of the U.S. embassy to demand the withdrawal of *Chinese* troops from Vietnam! Doesn't that make the Chinese leadership the mere purveyor of imperialist interests? That, anyway, is what a resolution adopted by the Australian SWP, which defends the minority position, concluded, explaining that China played the same role for Washington as Brazil in Latin America and Iran in the Persian Gulf.

Next, can the problem of interbureaucratic conflicts be reduced to a succession of individual conflicts? Is it not necessary, for example, to pose the problem of the Sino-Soviet conflict in more general terms, given its importance and evolution? And is it not particularly important to define a general position toward that conflict, taking into account the weight that great power "realpolitik" and the "theory of blocs" can carry in the workers movement and the national liberation movements in the world?

Many are the activists who, faced with these conflicts, look for the "progressive" bureaucracy to side with. And some of those who yesterday were in Peking's camp *against* Moscow (because of the aid given by the Chinese leadership to liberation movements) now tend to be in Moscow's camp *against* Peking (because of the extraordinary cynicism of Chinese policy and the Soviet aid given to the movements in Africa). For such people, there is the

“reactionary camp” on the one side, putting China next to the U.S., Japan and Europe, and the “progressive” camp on the other, with Cuba, Vietnam, the people’s democracies and the USSR.

This idea is making headway. It is deadly in that it leads revolutionists, blinded by a conjunctural point of view, to bend politically to Stalinism. It falls on us to counterpose the perspective of the political independence of the revolutionary movement and of the political revolution to this two-camp conception. But we must reaffirm this double perspective all the more clearly in the current Indochinese crisis since the USSR appears to be “on one side” and China “on the other”, and since for many militants in the workers movement and national liberation movements, it would reflect above all the extension of the Sino-Soviet conflict to Indochina.

We must fight against the loss of the anti-imperialist point of view, particularly dangerous in the Western countries. But we must also fight against the temptation of great power “realpolitik” and against the “two camp theory,” particularly dangerous in the “third world.” This twofold political and programmatic battle must be carried on simultaneously. That is what the majority resolution does. As for the minority resolution, it obviously does not embrace the “two camp theory,” but does not fight against it either, and it is silent on the questions raised here.

B. The slogan of the Federation of the United Socialist States of Indochina

Here is a second example.

We have seen (very briefly) the importance of the national question in Khmer-Vietnamese relations before 1979. We could add that the national question is also of great importance in Lao-Vietnamese relations and within each country proper. This question is in fact one of the principal problems facing the Indochinese revolution.

The majority resolution seizes this problem by the horns and gives it a political and programmatic response: the perspective of the Federation of the United Socialist States of Indochina. Today this is a key slogan. First of all it is an anti-imperialist slogan: it emphasizes the importance of the solidarity of the three Indochinese revolutions faced with imperialism. Next, it is a central slogan for the establishment of economies of transition to socialism in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia; in this respect also it highlights the objective solidarity linking the three Indochinese revolutions. Finally, it is a democratic, anti-bureaucratic slogan: it stresses the importance of the national question, the means of respecting national rights in practice, the necessity of a voluntary adoption by the various nationalities of the perspective of the federation.

Today this slogan is not accepted by any of the leaderships in question. All the more reason that we raise it, and raise it now, given its objective importance.

What does the minority resolution say on this subject? It thinks that nationalism *is not* a serious problem which the Indochinese revolutions have to face. It presents the goal of the Indochinese Federation as an “abstract substitute” to the real questions of the hour. Actually, it opposes this perspective to the present tasks of the Cambodian masses. But it is *now* that the unification of Indochina is being achieved — but in bureaucratic forms. However much the minority comrades may consider that this question cannot be an immediate one — because for them Laos and

Cambodia are not workers states — facts are more stubborn than their analytic schemas: unification is under way (whether or not it will succeed is another thing). It is our responsibility to say *now* what we think of the principle of Indochinese unity and the forms in which it is being achieved concretely.

The majority resolution does so. The minority resolution is silent.

C. On the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia

Here is a third example.

The minority resolution pulled off a new trick: never to say what its authors thought about the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia. The article by Clark, Feldman, Horowitz and Waters gives it critical support. But in any case, the basic political problem to which we must give *our own response* is badly posed. The minority comrades, in effect, pose roughly the following question: was it possible to do otherwise in December 1978, given the situation which then prevailed in Cambodia and the Chinese military pressure? Any one of us who answers such a question is clever indeed, given the real state of our knowledge. Was it “inevitable” to take Phnom Penh by “blitzkrieg,” as was done, once the test of strength had begun?

To pose the question in these terms is to cut ourselves off, in the name of so-called realism, from grappling with the real problems of *orientation* raised by the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia. It is to force ourselves either into agnostic silence, abstractly principled condemnation, or critical support for the political line as well as the act itself.

Therefore, let us try to respond to the problem systematically.

• *The reasons for Vietnamese intervention*

For the minority comrades, the Vietnamese intervention is essentially a mere reaction of self-defense on the part of a workers state increasingly menaced by imperialism. To read Ernest Mandel’s first discussion article, we might conclude that practically the only reason for this intervention was to ensure Indochinese unity by force under the bureaucratic leadership of Hanoi. I think that both these ways of posing the problem are false.

It is certain, to my mind, that the Vietnamese leadership never abandoned the goal of establishing a unified Indochinese entity, despite the actual abandonment of the bygone federation slogan. Indeed, it is sufficient to look at a map to realize the geopolitical stakes of this problem: Vietnam faced with a hostile China, Laos and Cambodia would literally have its back to the sea. It would also suffice to take into account the economic problems of this area, and the role of the Mekong River, to convince ourselves of the objective importance of this union.

But it is also certain that the *orientation* of the VCP has long been opposed to a “military solution” of the conflict with the Pol Pot leadership. Because after all, in 1970 the Vietnamese army was militarily the major force in the country. In essence it withdrew in 1972-1973 at the request of the KCP despite the tensions which then characterized relations between the two leaderships. In 1975, it was very probably possible for Hanoi to intervene abruptly, to “liberate” Phnom Penh first. It appears that this hypothesis was rejected after having been discussed (it was then

already several years since Cambodian cadres "returning from Hanoi" had begun to be brutally purged). In the situation which prevailed in 1975, it is probable that imperialist or Chinese reactions could only have been very weak, faced with a discreet Vietnamese offensive in Cambodia.

In fact, it seems that it was only in the course of 1978 that the orientation of the VCP changed and the decision was first made to get rid of the Pol Pot regime at all costs, then to send to this end the Vietnamese regular troops to invade the country. Why? Because the situation of regional crisis worsened in an irreversible manner. The break with China became public and its pressure was felt more strongly. The same goes, since December 1977, for Democratic Kampuchea: all hope of conciliation was abandoned. The opposition forces in Cambodia were decimated and proved to be powerless. The military problems which the strengthening of the Khmer Rouge army, through Chinese help, created for Vietnam were all the greater since the northern border was no longer secure. Imperialist pressure also increased, in multiple forms, obviously profiting from the divisions tearing Indochina apart. In Vietnam itself, the regime was exposed to multiple difficulties, exacerbated to the limit of their means both by the U.S. (which organized the blockade and made appeal after appeal to the refugees) and China (which officially cut off the aid which had already ceased in practice, and profited from the growing tension with the Hoa community in Vietnam).

The *modification* of the orientation of the VCP, which led it to adopt the "military solution" it had previously rejected, was therefore made, to my mind, in *reaction* to the sharp deterioration of the regional situation in Indochina and nationally. In general, I think that the historic initiative for the Sino-Vietnamese split was taken by the Chinese bureaucracy, just as the historic initiative for the Sino-Soviet split was taken by the Soviet bureaucracy. I also think that 1978 was the year when all the factors of the crisis that had been at work since 1975 finally crystallized. But the problems which the Vietnamese leadership tried to "solve" by opting for military intervention are of several types: imperialist pressure, certainly, which profited from the Vietnam-Khmer and Vietnam-Chinese conflicts, but also and above all the pressure exerted by the Chinese bureaucracy, as well as the prospect of disintegration of the Indochinese entity. And it is in that perspective that the orientation followed since 1975 by the Vietnamese leadership must be judged.

- *A problem of political orientation*

It is not necessary to emphasize again here the major responsibilities of imperialism (American above all), of the Chinese bureaucracy and of the Khmer Rouge leadership. But this should not prevent us from judging the orientation followed by the Vietnamese leadership, its results and its consequences.

We could begin by posing the question thus: why is it that the new Cambodian regime is *so weak, so bloodless that it has to call on "cadres"* whose political past is sometimes connected with Sihanouk or Lon Nol? One must remember that the big political purges did not begin until 1977, in the party and army apparatus, and that they developed especially in 1978. To such a point that Hanoi seems to have long hoped for (and tried to stir up) a change in orientation on the part of the Phnom Penh government.

Thus it was not inevitable that the Communist opposition to the Pol Pot line should be so weak — if at least the opposition was politically organized before being mercilessly purged. But to do so, it probably vitally needed effective and political help from Hanoi.

The SWP comrades write that "the Vietnamese leaders did support and encourage an internal fight against Pol Pot." I have exactly the opposite impression. Hanoi tried to resolve its differences with the Pol Pot regime *strictly from the point of view of the interests of the Vietnamese workers state*, and did so with bureaucratic conceptions. The Vietnamese leadership intervened in a "diplomatic" way (and perhaps by discreetly supporting one or another faction of the leading circles) by refraining from making public the political problems posed by the situation in Cambodia itself.

But, it was not possible to assist in the *rapid* formation (while there was still time) of a mass political and organized opposition, without making public the situation which prevailed in Cambodia, and thus without calling on the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Chinese masses. That was the only chance to aid the formation of an alternative leadership to Pol Pot which could have won on the basis of its own fight (even if with substantial Vietnamese help). But to do so, the Vietnamese leadership would have had to break with certain fundamental aspects of its general orientation (such as the policy of silence covering up differences between "sister parties," its complete news monopoly, etc.) and would have had to base its policy on the masses' interests and those of the Cambodian revolution (and thus of the Indochinese revolutions as a whole) and not on a bureaucratic conception of the interests of the Vietnamese state.

It was only when those interests, in the eyes of the Vietnamese leadership, were directly menaced that it intervened in a decisive way, resigning itself at that point to the "military solution." One can say that *on two occasions* the Vietnamese leadership subordinated the Cambodian revolution to Hanoi's interests by not giving sufficiently early and sufficiently political aid to the formation of a significant opposition to the Pol Pot leadership, and then by deciding on the "military solution." The second occasion flows largely from the first, and it is this connection that must be highlighted in order to judge the whole of the leadership's orientation during those years.

- *The consequences of the orientation of the Vietnamese leadership*

This problem of the choice of orientation made by the Vietnamese leadership on the Cambodian and Chinese questions is not secondary. It can be judged by the consequences of the choice followed by Hanoi.

- The political initiative on the international level was left first to the Khmer Rouge leadership (the split of December 1977), next to the Chinese leadership, and finally to imperialism. Today, Vietnam's political and diplomatic isolation is very deep, deeper than it probably would have been with a different orientation. Above all, the silence of the Vietnamese leadership, followed by its intervention in Cambodia counts for a lot in the disarray of the international workers movement which also contributed to isolating Vietnam.

- The weakening of the Cambodian opposition forces was such that even today, nearly a year after the over-

throw of the Pol Pot regime, one can say that the Cambodian state is being propped up by the Vietnamese. Hanoi would probably have preferred it otherwise. But the absence of public political support for a change of orientation in Phnom Penh (between 1976 and 1979) and the "military solution" resulted in the extreme weakness of the Cambodian administration and its placement under Vietnamese tutelage. It is now very difficult to overcome this situation. But if it goes on, it is explosive. Already today, many reports indicate the concern which manifests itself in Phnom Penh, even among cadres of the Heng Samrin administration as to the future of the Vietnamese presence in Kampuchea. If the state continues for long to be propped up in practice by the Vietnamese, it is to be feared that the Khmer national question may become a very touchy issue, offering favorable ground to pro-Western figures such as Sihanouk.

- The form of the Vietnamese intervention favored the formation of a vast anti-Vietnamese front on the level of governments (giving an excellent pretext for the Chinese intervention) as well as the Khmer forces: the (difficult) attempts at rapprochement among the Khmer Rouge, Khmer Serei, Khmer Serika and the pro-Sihanouk Khmers would have been much harder to predict in another context. Let us recall that up to its overthrow in January 1979, while it officially supported the right-wing resistance in Vietnam, the Khmer Rouge regime violently opposed the Khmer Serei, had flattened the Sihanouk forces within the old kingdom, and supported the Communist Party in Thailand (although with greater or less energy depending on the moment).

- The Vietnamese intervention also created great confusion in the Communist guerilla movements in Southeast Asia. These movements are of Maoist allegiance, but at least some of them are concretely engaged in revolutionary struggles. New generations of activists had joined the Thai Communist Party since the mid-1970s. A slow political evolution was emerging with the objective strengthening of currents engaged in mass struggles and in guerrilla warfare, linked to the TCP, and hoping that a national and international political line more independent of Maoist ideology and the policies of Peking would develop for the Thai resistance. The revolutionary and people's movements as a whole had made important progress since 1973. They benefited from the aftermath of the American defeat in Indochina and could count on a vast network of aid from China and Indochina (even if this aid was often stingily doled out).

The Thai resistance is extremely isolated today. It is subject to very strong pressure from the regimes engaged in the Sino-Indochinese conflicts. For many militants, who are nonetheless very critical of the Chinese orientation, the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia made the TCP leadership's theories regarding the existence of a "social-imperialist" danger in the region credible. Others broke definitively with Peking on that occasion. But they often found themselves without clear alternative perspectives. On the whole, the political situation within the TCP and the Thai resistance remains very confused, although combat is continuing between the guerrillas and the governmental forces and although it seems that the TCP has not accepted the policy of a united front with the Thai government which Peking asked it to adopt (and although the TCP leadership supported the Chinese arguments

concerning the Sino-Indochinese conflict).

The majority resolution analyzed the new difficulties which the Thai resistance would have to face. The minority resolution explained that "the advance of the Indochinese revolution" would give a new impetus to the mass struggles in Thailand and the rest of Southeast Asia. The least we can say is that this prognosis has proved false! Certainly the struggles are continuing, but in a distinctly more difficult context. The article by Clark, Feldman, Horowitz and Waters is more careful. It is essentially limited to noting that the debate which has begun in the ranks of the resistance — which is confirmed by the splits — could lead to beneficial political clarifications. That is possible and one must hope that it will be so. But again, the violence of the Sino-Indochinese conflict and the very strong pressures which come into play as a result of the diverse components of the resistance make the conduct of this clarifying discussion, this process of political reconstitution of the resistance, these polemics and political struggles more difficult, more costly.

- By the forms it takes (massive military intervention, lack of political preparedness on the part of the masses) the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodia tends to reinforce the whole process of bureaucratization that is taking place in Indochina, particularly in Vietnam. Likewise, it tends to reinforce the direct weight of the Vietnamese bureaucracy in Laos and Kampuchea, making an independent initiative by the masses in these countries and a correct solution to the national problem more difficult.

- Finally, also as a consequence of the years-long policy of silence on these questions, the tension with China has resulted today in the rise of a nationalist sentiment in Vietnam and a climate of systematic suspicion toward anyone of ethnic Chinese origin, which has already had extremely serious consequences, especially in the North.

- *The attitude of revolutionary Marxists*

Obviously I am not claiming here that the orientation of the VCP leadership is the sole factor explaining the phenomena which I have just enumerated, nor saying that this is the principal cause of the misfortunes endured by the Indochinese masses! But the line followed since 1975 by the VCP leadership on the Cambodian and Chinese questions has ended in serious failure. It raises a whole series of key political problems which are being widely discussed in the international revolutionary movement, as well as in the workers movement generally. The fact that our movement must take a position of unconditional defense of the Indochinese revolutions in face of the pressures and threats of imperialism and the Chinese bureaucracy should not lead us to duck these burning questions, on the contrary.

It is in this context that we must understand the condemnation of the Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea: it is a *political* condemnation of a wrong *orientation*, an orientation of an extremely bureaucratic character which consists of having chosen to be silent at a time when the situation demanded absolutely the opposite, only to lead to the "military solution"; an orientation whose consequences in Vietnam, Kampuchea (and Laos), as well as in the rest of Southeast Asia and in the world workers movement, are very serious.

It is a question of taking a *basic political position* which makes it possible to explain that a different orientation

was possible as of 1976-1977, and enables us to make our own political and programmatic responses to the questions posed by the Indochinese situation after the 1975 victory.

Taking this position in no way prevents our movement from determining concrete slogans which take the present situation into account. If the majority resolution does not raise the slogan of immediate withdrawal of the Vietnamese regular troops from Kampuchea, it is because we know what the objective consequences would be, in the current state of affairs, of that withdrawal. But it is just as necessary to take the long-term problems into account. And we also know that if the Cambodian state continues for too long to be propped up by the Vietnamese forces, the national question will explode and the independent action of the masses will be stifled.

The analysis of the present situation and the underlying problems lead us to put forward the *political perspectives* which seem to correspond objectively to the interests of the Vietnamese and Cambodian masses: a policy that prepares for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops by accelerating the self-organization and arming of the Cambodian masses. Let us discard a false debate right away: the problem is not one of stationing Vietnamese troops near the Thai border whose job is to contribute to the common defense against imperialist threats! But if the conditions do not exist for a withdrawal of the bulk of Vietnamese forces now present throughout Kampuchea, there will be no Cambodian regime which is not totally dependent on Hanoi, as is now the case. The control by the Vietnamese bureaucracy will increase and the national question will sharpen.

It is to these questions that the majority resolution responds. The minority resolution is silent on the subject. Yet is it not in the tradition of our movement — and is it not one of our responsibilities — to analyze the problems that a revolution may confront and try to define the policies that make it possible, from a revolutionary Marxist point of view, to best meet the objective needs of the masses?

Responses

• In the debates which have taken place, comrades have accused the majority resolution of being “idealist”; of putting the problems of the future construction of socialism in Vietnam and Cambodia into a narrow national framework; of reflecting a European “Realpolitik”-type point of view, that is, of the reformism that dominates the workers movement; of being “abstentionist.” So let us look briefly at this.

• An “idealist” position?

Is it idealist to recognize that a *general line* followed by the Vietnamese leadership with regard to the Chinese and Cambodian questions has failed (for we are not discussing *tactical options* here, of which we would be quite incapable of forming an opinion, but the general orientation of the VCP in this area, an orientation that reflects certain fundamental aspects of its program)? Is it idealist to spell out our programmatic political responses overall to complex but fundamental questions raised by the current situation in Indochina? If these responses are wrong, then

one must discuss them and put forward others. But silence on these key questions, in documents offered for a vote by our movement, is very serious: it prevents us from drawing the lessons and absorbing the political and programmatic teachings of the evolution of the Indochinese situation. Are there no lessons of that nature to be drawn? What are they? Is it idealist to pose this question?

• A narrow national framework?

This criticism seems to me difficult to understand. Because after all, one of the stated goals of the majority resolution is precisely to disentangle the dialectical relationships among the various components of the Indochinese revolution, linking that revolution to revolutionary developments in Southeast Asia; linking Indochina, the regional and international framework, and the world workers movement. It is precisely *from that point of view* that questions of orientation are discussed and that of the VCP leadership is criticized.

• A reflection of the weight of reformism in Europe?

Again, a strange remark. Actually the majority resolution deals centrally with questions that are more deeply felt today by a revolutionist in Southeast Asia than by a European worker: how to pose the national question? How to approach the question of Indochinese unity? How to link current developments in Indochina with the tasks of the revolution in the region? How to deal with the worsening of the Sino-Soviet conflict in eastern Asia and its consequences in the revolutionary movement? How to take a concrete position on the ongoing conflicts without finding ourselves in a political bloc with the Soviet bureaucracy against the Chinese bureaucracy, or vice versa? These questions are much more immediately vital for the revolutionary movement in Southeast Asia than for the reformist movement in Europe! In fact, this brings us back to the first point: if you judge our political and programmatic responses to be wrong, then give us yours! But we *must* treat these problems seriously — bearing in mind, above all, the difficulties now facing the revolutionists in Southeast Asia.

• An “absenteeist” position?

How? The majority resolution clearly indicates the importance of defending the Indochinese revolutions. And we cannot counterpose these tasks to the task of taking a political stand on the underlying problems of the Indochinese situation, including the problem of the Vietnamese leadership’s line. On the contrary, these two complementary tasks must be linked: the more able we are to intervene in the fundamental debates raised within the workers movement and national liberation movement by the Indochinese crisis, the better armed we will be to mobilize in defense of the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian revolutions. The defense is unconditional; but it does not exclude the right to critical analysis. It was true yesterday, during the wars of liberation. It is all the more so today, given the fundamental problems posed by the current Indochinese crisis. It is to this twofold task that the majority resolution responds.

December 1979

A Reply to Steve Clark

by Segur, Clelia, and Frej

The resolution adopted by the August 1981 SWP Congress and Steve Clark's report define the opening of a new period for the resolution of the crisis of the revolutionary leadership of the workers movement on an international scale.

Indeed, in the resolution we find the following judgement:

"The *Transitional Program* also noted that by 1938, aside from the cadres of the Fourth International, 'there does not exist a single revolutionary current on this planet really meriting the name.' The evolution of the international class struggle is ushering in a new period in this regard. The Cuban leadership, and more recently those in Grenada and Nicaragua, constitute other currents 'meriting the name' revolutionary. Their role in the class struggle internationally marks a historic step forward in the task of rebuilding the kind of leadership that the world proletariat must have to emerge victorious" (*Party Organizer*, Vol. 5, No. 5, Sept. 1981, p. 5).

The present documents of the SWP are coherent with the logic of this fundamental analysis. We feel several remarks and criticisms are called for.

For the American comrades the factor which qualitatively modifies the conditions for building an international revolutionary leadership is the evolution and extension of what one can call — leaving on one side the nuances for the moment — the Castroist current.

For them it is the axis around which one can re-organise the revolutionary vanguard on an international scale.

We insist, on the contrary, on the fact that the Castroist current forms an element, certainly a fundamental one, but only one element of a global and complex process of recomposition of the vanguard of the workers movement on a world scale.

a) The combined crises of imperialism and stalinism produce new differentiations inside the workers movement. The Castroist current is an expression of this. But we must also be aware of the importance of the following: the differentiations in the big reformist parties and trade unions of the developed capitalist countries; the political positions which we saw emerging in Solidarnosc; the crisis of populism in a country like Brazil and the emergence of the Workers Party; without leaving out the medium-term effects of the Vietnamese revolution, of the Sino-Soviet conflict and the Cambodian crisis in the Asiatic communist movement.

b) Furthermore the Castroist current is not at all monolithic. The Cuban leadership enjoys incontestable prestige for having led the first revolution on the continent, for resisting imperialism's pressures for twenty years and for giving its support to the revolution in Central America. But the development of the revolution in Central America is a fertile ground for organisations, which have their own

history and experience — their own political personality. The Nicaraguan or Salvadoran experiences enrich the lessons of the Cuban revolution. This is shown in discussions and occasionally conflicts over military strategy, the conceptions of alliances or even on questions of international policy. The extension of the revolution will in turn have effects on the Cuban leadership — posing it new problems and requiring it to take new positions.

The evolution of this current is not finished. It will continue, not only in function of the revolution in Latin America but also in relation to the big tests of the international class struggle in Europe, the Arab world or the East European countries.

That is why our approach and policy for building the Fourth International starts from this process as a whole — without isolating any one element. This was already the general line of the resolution on the world situation and building the Fourth International adopted by the International Executive Committee in May 1981.

The second problem posed by the SWP leadership's analysis is the relationship between this radicalisation and the programme. Analysing the emergence of various revolutionary forces, Comrade Steve Clark states:

"The aim of this report is to assess what these trends mean for the development of proletarian leadership; for advancing the strategic line of march of the working class on a world scale; for the resolution of the historic crisis of working-class leadership; for building an alternative to the Stalinist, Social Democratic, and other petty-bourgeois and bourgeois misleaders that have dominated the workers movement for a half century to the detriment of the world revolution; and for moving closer to our historic goal of a mass world party of socialist revolution.

"With the world revolution on the rise and the balance of forces in the world shifting toward the working class, new leaderships are rising. They are being tested and are challenged to deepen their Marxist understanding along with their revolutionary activity" (ibid, p. 11).

The emergence of these forces and currents is certainly a necessary condition for resolving the crisis of international revolutionary leadership. We have never thought that a solution could be found only by patiently publicising the *Transitional Programme*. Furthermore this is why, as opposed to the incurable sectarians who, faced with the Nicaraguan revolution, repeated the same error they made during the Cuban revolution, we are attentive to all these radicalising forces and understand their importance, over and beyond their conjunctural expression.

But the emergence of these currents is not on its own a sufficient condition for resolving the crisis of leadership.

Steve Clark insists in a unilateral way on one aspect of the development of the class struggle (radicalisation) to the detriment of another aspect — the necessity of the programmatic battle.

In fact that is where the contradiction lies. The different fronts and sectors of the world revolution are increasingly interlinked. The bureaucratic crackdown in Poland is an immediate problem for the Cuban leadership and the revolutionaries of Central America, because it reinforces the risks of direct military intervention by imperialism. The advance of the revolution in Central America is an immediate problem for European imperialism which is developing a policy and carrying out intense diplomatic activity in relation to Latin America.

Thus at the same time as the class struggle throws up new forces it essentially confirms and verifies the present-day relevance of our programme. On condition of course that we know ourselves how to enrich it in terms of today's reality.

The revolution in Central America confirms the strategic perspective of the permanent revolution. The Polish experience illustrates the nature of the bureaucracy and the present-day reality of the programme of political revolution. The class struggle in the imperialist countries since 1968 underlines the day-to-day importance of transitional demands and the tactic of the workers united front. The crisis of the Social Democratic and Stalinist organisations brings out sharply the necessity of the party and the defence of Leninism.

All these ideas are part of the very logic of the class struggle. But, just as in Lenin's time, they do not develop in a spontaneous way without subjective intervention, without a fierce battle for a new International and for a programme of the world revolution.

The function of the Fourth International cannot be limited to playing the go-between between Castro, Walesa and Lula. They are not the scattered pieces of a puzzle which just have to be put together to find the international revolutionary leadership that is lacking.

There is an uneven development and contradiction inside the vanguard itself. It does not develop on virgin ground, but under the formidable combined pressures of imperialism, the international Stalinist apparatus and the local bourgeoisies.

We do not place *a priori* limits on the evolution of a leadership like the Sandinistas which has led a revolution, or even the leadership nucleus of the Brazilian PT (Workers Party) which up to now has led the struggle for the conquest of class independence.

But we do not under-estimate the problem to be resolved, the inevitable conflicts and differentiations.

The struggle to rebuild a revolutionary mass International is certainly a relentless battle. It cannot be limited to a pedagogic operation directed toward currents coming out of unfolding revolutionary experiences.

In fact it is on this so-called question of pedagogy that we get an indication of the concrete consequences of Comrade Clark's analyses. He starts off with some sensible comments.

He states that it would be wrong to take a formalistic attitude when the Sandinistas talk about a 'mixed economy'. If by 'mixed economy' the Sandinistas mean the maintenance of a private sector under workers control in the framework of a planned economy and the monopoly of foreign trade, the question of extending the state sector and the rhythm of nationalisations could indeed be a purely tactical question. On condition that a real mass democracy exists which reserves the workers and peasants

the final decision.

Comrade Clark also says that Stalin gave the word 'people' a class collaborationist, popular frontist meaning but Marx and Lenin did not hesitate to use it and we must not be scandalised to see it re-appear in Castroist or Sandinista writings. Very good. We are not like those people who see popular fronts around each corner and we are not afraid of the word 'people' on condition that it does not cover over the necessity of building political and trade union organisations independent of the bourgeoisie and the state.

In brief, and as a general rule, our vocabulary has not gone through a century of history unblemished. The very words socialism, dictatorship of the proletariat or internationalism, which were limpid and clear in Marx's writings, today demand more explanation and precision after being part of the official language of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

But imperceptibly Comrade Clark passes from pedagogy to fundamentals. The attitude he recommends we adopt towards Solidarnosc or the Cuban leadership is no longer a question of tone or approach. It expresses a political judgement according to which we do not have any fundamental differences with these currents and our tasks are reduced to helping them to perfect themselves.

a) Thus on Solidarnosc:

"We do not help advance along this road by prematurely picking sides in Solidarity's rich political life; writing off leaders; confusing tactical judgements, or even mistakes, with conciliation towards the bureaucracy; or by assuming that there are limits to the evolution of the class-struggle Solidarity leadership. Our job is not to seek out oppositionists or critics of Solidarity in Poland.

"Instead, our challenge is to follow these events, learn from them, and seek to explain their lessons to American workers and others whom we can influence" (ibid, p. 12).

We have certainly learnt a lot from the Polish events. We begin by defending Solidarnosc, not by denouncing its leadership.

But like any mass organisation of ten million members it was natural and inevitable that Solidarnosc became the terrain for the confrontation of contradictory interests. Pressures from the Church, the bureaucracy and the profound aspirations of the working class would be expressed inside it. It was natural and inevitable that with the approach of decisive events there would be differentiations.

We did not place *a priori* limits on the possible evolution of such or such a group of leaders. Furthermore in function of the uneven development of their experience positions often evolved and yesterday's moderates occasionally later became radicals. Such phenomena arise in any mass proletarian organisation in the process of being built.

However, basing ourselves on the experiences and reality of the process, we must defend and put forward our political positions at every stage. Between the strategy of self-limitation and institutionalising of dual power advised by a sector of the KOR and a strategy preparing for a showdown defended by the radical elements from Lublin or Lodz, there is not just a difference of pedagogy but a difference of political line towards the bureaucracy.

To refuse to intervene in this battle is to ask the International to give up its very role. It is to hold back not

artificial differentiations but differences which express different responses to the key questions of the day. It means delaying clarification instead of favouring it. If this clarification implies being opposed to Walesa at the Solidarnosc Congress it has to be done — at the same time defending the unity of the trade union and the internal democracy which is its guarantee.

b) In the same way in relation to the Cuban leadership:

“Our axis is not to pinpoint our differences with the Cuban revolutionists, and then build our approach around these. That’s a static and sterile approach. That’s never how we approach revolutionary currents in the mass movement.

“Our axis is the same fundamental one as that of the Castro leadership — leading forward Cuba’s revolutionary course, both on the international arena and at home” (ibid, p.17).

Comrade Clark says that we approach the Castroist leadership like any revolutionary current of the mass movement. This is confused. In the mass movement, in a trade union for example, we can be involved with radicalising currents which evolve in function of their experience and with whom we can struggle in common around limited questions.

But the Cuban leadership is something different. It is a political party, an organisation with a programme. Furthermore it is a political party at the head of a workers state for more than twenty years, which is the object of considerable diplomatic and economic pressures from the USSR and which has old Stalinist currents in its ranks.

We underline the overall non-Stalinist origins and specificity of this leadership, the fact that it has evolved in the direction of a permanent revolution strategy for Latin America and that it supports the extension of the revolution in certain countries. Its evolution has not been linear. After the failure of the struggle in Bolivia and the economic setback of failing to achieve the 10 million tons ‘zafra’ (sugar harvest) in 1970, it adopted a more conciliatory course and there was a development of phenomena of accentuated bureaucratisation. Since the victory of the Vietnamese revolution and the intervention in Angola in 1975 new elements emerged and in particular the commitment to solidarity with the revolution in Central America.

The future remains open. Besides, for us that is why we do not call for a political revolution. But that does not mean that there are only two colours on our palette — the Cuban leadership being either blood-red or black Stalinist reaction. Short of a qualitative leap which would imply calling for a political revolution, it can go through advances and retreats with debates in its own ranks. Our task is not apologetic support but to defend positions we consider the best able to defend the Cuban workers state and the international extension of the revolution.

Thus with regard to Poland, we can say with great clarity where the convergences and the divergences lie. These differences must be dealt with and fundamentally explained. It is no use just seeing them as the reflection of insufficient experience of the mass movement which can supposedly be resolved by simple pedagogical effort.

All these criticisms of Comrade Clark’s approach boil down essentially to a basic simplification on his part — which is summarized by the passage from the SWP

resolution that we quoted at the beginning of our contribution.

Picking up on a sentence from the Transitional Programme of 1938 the American comrades see the existence of revolutionaries outside our ranks as the big new phenomenon of the period we are going into.

In 1938 Trotsky was writing in the context of a particular situation of defeats of the revolution, of Stalinist reaction in the USSR and the approaching Second World War. Under the pressure of these events intermediary currents like the POUM or the SAP had failed. When it was ‘midnight in the century’ it was necessary to close up the ranks of those who would not capitulate neither to Stalinism nor chauvinism during the war.

Today, on the contrary, we are in a period of development of the revolution and volatility of the vanguard. For our orientation and inspiration it would be better to turn to Trotsky’s method as it was demonstrated throughout the thirties. Between 1933 and 1938 a large number of his writings were given over to the question of centrism.

He dealt then with what he called ‘modern centrism’. This centrism was already different from the centrism analysed by Lenin in the Second International or the mass centrist currents which emerged under the impact of the Russian revolution and which vacillated between reform and revolution.

Centrism in the thirties did not only vacillate between reform or revolution but between three poles: revolutionary marxism, Social Democratic reformism and Stalinism. Trotsky, who had a sharp eye in politics, said that it ‘gleams with all the colours of the rainbow.’

It is even more true today when the crisis of Stalinism and formation of the workers states have further multiplied political currents, intermediary nuances and various tendencies.

In relation to this variegated reality the definition ‘revolutionary’ is not very functional for characterizing an organisation.

Straightaway it is necessary to be more precise — revolutionary to what extent? Up to what point?

There are a significant number of organisations outside the Fourth International which sincerely struggle for the revolution, which are for the destruction of the bourgeois state, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this sense, they are different from classic centrism and can be considered revolutionary.

Indeed we cannot only recognise this quality in those organisations which have made the revolution, thus proving the authenticity of their intentions in practice. Real-life organisations can commit errors or can be defeated without ceasing for all that to be revolutionary organisations. The Sandinistas did not become revolutionaries on the day they overthrew Somoza. They were before.

One would have to be blind if, after half a century of the crisis of international leadership of the proletariat, one did not see its consequences: the extreme dispersal and heterogeneity of the vanguard forces. In this framework, to claim that we are the only revolutionaries would result in the worst disorientation each time there is a revolution we have not led.

Then there would be a dual temptation — to close our eyes on these revolutions and to deny reality (as Lambert and Moreno did in Nicaragua), or to purely and simply

conclude that the International no longer has any *raison d'être* since there are revolutionaries outside its ranks.

The specificity of the International — what makes it necessary — is not that it is the only revolutionary organisation. Rather it is because we start from the point of view of the interests of all the proletariat on a world scale, the need to defend a programme that flows from that and to draw the organisational conclusions: the necessity of the revolutionary International itself.

Thus we recognise, without the slightest reticence, that the Castroists or Sandinists play a revolutionary role to a certain extent and up to a certain point. To this extent we support them and up to this point we can build with them common organisations. But when they vacillate faced with Stalinism we maintain all our freedom of criticism. If these leaderships cannot accept the free expression of these disagreements it is the sign of a limit on their part on a programmatic question which is no less important than any other and which figures among the eleven points of the International Left Opposition of 1933 as a lesson drawn from the Stalinisation of the Bolshevik party: the respect for workers democracy inside the party itself.

We all want to build a mass revolutionary International. We would be ready, just as Trotsky himself envisaged in the thirties, to build it with other authentically revolutionary currents which do not share the whole of our programme.

In the same way, at the level of national sections, we can envisage building together a common revolutionary organ-

isation with other currents which have broken with reformism, without making affiliation to the Fourth International an absolute precondition. In this case one of the indispensable conditions is the respect of internal democracy inside this organisation. It is a guarantee that discussion can continue, in function of the development of a common experience, on the differences which remain.

The refusal to commit oneself to building the International is never simply reticence. It always reveals a political disagreement on an important programmatic question.

On the other hand, to build a common organisation on an international scale with other currents it is necessary to be agreed at least on one point — which is rather obvious — the very need for an International.

It is an entirely programmatic question. The building of the International is opposed in practice both to the theory of building socialism in one country and to any attempt to substitute the struggle of 'camps' or blocs of states, for the international class struggle. It therefore pre-supposes a conscious break and a test of strength — not only with imperialism but also with the bureaucracies in power in the degenerated or deformed workers states.

That is why the struggle for a mass revolutionary international begins today with the patient building of the Fourth International as it is while looking for practical collaboration and fraternal discussion with all revolutionary currents — stamping out, with the same vigilance, both sectarianism and any search for short-cuts.

HVK Theses on the Iranian Revolution

[The following theses were drafted in September 1980 and adopted at the January 22-24, 1981, convention of the Workers Unity Party (HVK). The HVK is one of three organizations in Iran affiliated with the Fourth International.]

* * *

1. The overthrow of the shah's regime by means of a mass insurrection, the fleeing of a major sector of the capitalist class, the weakening of the imperialist hold over Iran as a result of huge mass mobilizations, and the decisive participation of the working class in the revolutionary struggle along with the formation of workers *shoras* [committees]—these have all resulted in the opening of the prospects for socialist revolution in the entire Middle East region. The intensification of the class struggle and the increasing imperialist pressures lead to more and more revolutionary crises. Countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and other neighboring states have entered into a period of revolutionary convulsions. The effects of the Iranian revolution upon the oppressed Asiatic nationalities in the Soviet Union tends to accelerate the dynamics of the political revolution there.

The Iranian working class is now placed in

the midst of an expanding and deepening process of permanent revolution. This revolution is taking place in the context of the rising struggles of the world working class and the changing relations of class forces against imperialism—a phenomenon one of whose major causes has been the Iranian revolution itself. The ongoing revolution is also taking place in the context of a crisis faced by world Stalinism, particularly in the absence of a counter-revolutionary mass Stalinist party in Iran. Thus, on a world scale, the objective conditions for the victory of the revolution are favorable.

Our objective is moving forward despite all the obstacles placed in its path by its official leadership and the capitalist government. By building a multinational Leninist party, the working class must become armed with a program to organize itself, unite all the oppressed, especially the poor peasants, and be able to re-

place the capitalist government with a government of workers and peasants.

2. The occupation of the Den of Spies by the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line, and the consequent mass mobilizations, led the revolution into a new deeper stage and made the confrontation between semicolonial Iran and imperialism clear. The revelations on the activities of the capitalist politicians damaged the political position of these politicians in the eyes of the masses, betrayed their vacillating attitude in confronting the imperialists, and propelled the working class in the direction of reliance upon its own power, organizing its ranks in the struggle for the country's independence. Arming the population for defense against the imperialist attacks became a mass demand.

The countrywide, anti-Zionist mobilizations on Jerusalem Day—in defense of Palestine—exhibited another aspect of the anti-impe-

rialist struggle, i.e., the struggle to overthrow the Israeli colonial-settler state, the central pillar of imperialism in the Middle East, thus extending the revolution beyond the borders of Iran as an act of self-defense. The mobilizations of millions indicate that the dynamic political movement of the masses is continuing, that the masses hope to gain control over their destiny, and that they see the realization of their demands in the continuation of *this* revolution. That is why the imperialist plots and coup attempts have so far been without success.

The *central danger* threatening the Iranian revolution is world imperialism, headed by the U.S. The economic blockade, the political attacks, the extensive military buildups, the coup plans—these are all attempts by imperialism to smash our revolution and block its extension, to quash the workers organizations and to re-establish complete imperialist domination over Iran. The imperialists are attempting, by direct or indirect ways, to overthrow the regime of the Islamic Republic. And in this attempt, their hopeful eyes are focused on the native capitalists and big landowners, their politicians, and officials of the splintering state apparatus inherited from the past, especially the military brass.

The imperialists are trying to cause more and more economic, social, and political difficulties in order to exhaust the masses and turn heightened but unsatisfied expectations into despair. They hope to be able to turn the masses away from the political scene and make them disillusioned spectators in face of the imperialist counterrevolution. The fundamental conflict in this revolution is between the Iranian working class and U.S. imperialism acting either directly or through its social bases within the country. The main goal of imperialism is to behead the Iranian working class.

To be able to defeat imperialism and gain the country's real independence requires arming the workers and all the oppressed, and taking decisive measures against the coup plotters, the capitalists, and the big landowners who are sabotaging the economy. It requires the nationalization of their capital and land and the complete monopoly of foreign trade. This means that fundamental steps must be taken to solve the economic crises, improve the living condition of the people, and eliminate inflation and unemployment.

Other fundamental steps must include those toward an agrarian revolution, giving land to the poor peasants and working for the welfare of the village; for the liberation of the oppressed nationalities; for the liberation of women and their equality with men; for protection and extension of the democratic rights of the masses; and for meeting the needs of the youths. The struggle of the masses for winning these fundamental measures is a struggle for the continuation of the revolution and breaking the yoke of imperialism. It is precisely the uninterrupted continuation of the revolution that would guarantee the unity, enthusiasm, and mobilization of the masses, and make possible the defeat of imperialism.

It is a fact that the capitalist Islamic Republic government has not taken these fundamental steps; neither does it want to take them, nor can it. Whatever gains the masses have won for themselves have been achieved only because of their own struggles. Through their own experiences and struggles the workers and toilers are finding out that the capitalist government is a road-block in their struggle against imperialism and for achievement of their fundamental goals. In the course of experience with the revolution the workers will more and more realize the need for a government of their own, a workers and peasants government.

But in order to achieve this historic goal, the working class must prepare itself politically. The proletariat must struggle unwaveringly to unite its own ranks, and armed with a revolutionary democratic program fight to win over its historic allies—the poor peasants, the oppressed nationalities, the women, the city semi-proletarians, and the youths and soldiers. The proletariat must become the champion of the liberation of these allies, conducting a struggle which would also serve to unite the ranks of the proletariat itself.

The struggle for the rights of the proletariat and its allies is not separate from the struggle against imperialism, and the government's violation of such rights could only aid the imperialists. While the proletariat supports every concrete anti-imperialist measure of the present government, at the same time it must expose any kind of retreat or conciliation by the regime in the anti-imperialist struggle and counterpose its own proletarian program of action.

3. The workers shoras, arising for the first time in the revolutionary history of Iran, constitute the heart of the revolution. Shoras pose the question of dual power on the factory level. By organizing and maintaining shoras, the Iranian working class displayed an extraordinary level of political understanding and combativity. The effective participation of the industrial working class in the mass upsurge through a general strike broke the back of the shah's regime. The subsequent fleeing of an important sector of the capitalist class after the February 1979 insurrection meant that the working class is now facing a weaker enemy. In the context of the anti-imperialist struggle and by participating in this struggle, Iranian workers have had an opportunity to strengthen their organizations, build their shoras and be able to extend and unite them. Thus, the working class has been able to increase its weight on the factory level against the bosses and on a national level against the capitalists and their government. With an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist consciousness, the working class has entered into the center of the political scene.

On the factory level, the workers have won important gains. The bosses cannot operate as autocratically and arrogantly as they did during the shah's reign. SAVAK, whose function was to imprison and torture militant workers, no longer exists. Some of the factories are run by workers, and since the insurrection wages have

gone up by 80 percent.

The pressure of the imperialist economic blockade, coupled with the government's policy of reconstructing the capitalist economy and maintaining the country's dependency on the world capitalist market has confronted Iranian society with critical economic conditions. The crisis is intensified by hoarding and sabotage on the part of the native capitalist class. Inflation, unemployment, and lack of adequate housing and health facilities are rampant. "The current rate of inflation in Iran is unprecedented in the world after the Second World War," admits the director of the Central Bank. On the question of unemployment, he says: "[this year] there will be 700,000 to 1,000,000 eighteen-year-olds entering the job market." And he adds: "no one is concerned about finding jobs for these youths and drawing up a plan to eliminate unemployment." Whatever workers earn in a factory is taken back from them by the capitalists through the mechanism of the capitalist economic system. Those who suffer the most under such economic pressures are the young workers, who have been carrying the heavy weight of the revolution on their shoulders.

The government's attack on workers' economic rights and its recent austerity program has met the workers' resistance. The take-backs in the area of workers' housing, food, and family benefits, reducing their vacation period and abolishing the special workers' profit-sharing system, have all led to workers protests in many factories. In many factories where workers had reduced, on their own initiative, the weekly working hours down to forty, they pay no attention to the new regulations regarding the forty-four-hour workweek. With the backing of their factory shora, these workers continue to work on the forty-hour weekly schedule.

Through their struggle around the profit-sharing law and many other economic rights, the workers have more and more realized the necessity to draw up the labor laws themselves. The struggle for workers' economic demands, which is the struggle for the survival and existence of the class, has a special political importance because it puts the workers face to face against the capitalist state. The revocation of the special profit-sharing law by the Revolutionary Council and the Labor Ministry and the broad reaction of the workers is the first sign of the future class battles that the capitalists and their government are imposing on the workers in order to solve the crisis of their own system—in this case to eliminate the budget deficit. The offensive on workers' rights is a worldwide capitalist phenomenon, and is a sign of the crisis of the capitalist system in its death agony which has become intensified in the past decade. This offensive and the defensive reaction of the workers to it constitutes the root of the radicalization and political actions of the working class on a world scale.

The government's antilabor measures as well as the policies that are implemented against the toilers stem not from a position of

ruling-class strength, but from a position of weakness. Sporadic attacks against the workers committees and the dissolution of some of them must be viewed in the light of this relationship of class forces, the absence of any nationwide organization of the workers committees, and mistakes of the leadership, which at times lead to premature confrontations of the shora with the government or the employers and gives the government an excuse to attack a particular shora. However, since the workers have more and more realized the need for their own organizations—due to the deepening of the revolution—the dissolution of some of these workers committees and the temporary setbacks will not be decisive in the rising tempo of the class struggle.

In order to prevent the spreading of poverty, the workers are forced to resist and stand up to the antilabor steps taken by the capitalist government. New leaders of the class struggle will rise from the heart of these battles and will be steeled. It is in this confrontation with the government that the question, which class shall rule, is put on the agenda. Workers will understand that solutions and struggles cannot be limited to the factory floors or against this or that employer and capitalist, but rather, that they need the political rule of their own class.

Most factories are managed by the government; therefore, the demand for an increase in wages along with the rise of inflation is not only posed on factory floors but at the government level. At the same time, the solution to unemployment, that is, the reduction of working hours without a reduction in pay, is also posed. As a result, the opening of the books at the factory, government, and ministry levels is a necessity. The workers will say: if the government is really losing and the Ministry of Labor is forced to compensate for the budget by reducing our wages, impoverishing the toilers, and exacerbating exploitation for the benefit of the capitalists, that government is not good for the people who made the revolution.

Demands such as "a worker from the oil industry should head up the Oil Ministry," and "the Ministry of Labor should be controlled by workers councils," have been raised on a broad scale by workers and youth. The replacement of the capitalist government by a workers and peasants government has become the main task and in the eyes of the toilers is becoming a practical idea. Establishment of a planned economy, independence from the world market, and an orientation towards the Soviet Union and other socialist perspectives, are being raised in different contexts and draw workers' attention. It is this tendency of the revolution which is causing the enmity of the ruling class to the shoras, and the powerlessness of the government in preventing this tendency of the revolution has caused the imperialists themselves to engage in counterrevolutionary activity.

Alongside the struggle for its rights and unity as a class, the proletariat must also consciously try to attract its historic allies. The confrontation of the proletariat with the national bourgeoisie around a revolutionary demo-

cratic program—the main points of which are breaking the imperialist yoke and achieving real independence, which includes the emancipation of the oppressed nationalities, and the agrarian revolution—is vital for the working class on its road of taking political power.

4. After the occupation of the Den of Spies, the workers shoras, while participating in anti-imperialist demonstrations, posed the peasant question and demanded land for the peasants and a solution to the land question. The peasants too, came to the Den of Spies with these demands. This at the same time showed the response of the workers and peasants to the lack of any serious steps by the government with regard to the land question. In some areas even, the Revolutionary Islamic Court issued decrees in defense of the big landowners and took away land from peasant control, returning it to the landowners. The continuation of peasant immigration to the cities is the sign of the continued agricultural crisis and the shortcomings of the countryside. Through the struggle for land, along with the struggles of the oppressed nationalities, especially the Kurds and Turkomans, peasant shoras were formed following the example of the workers shoras. Throughout this year the peasant shoras were formed in Khuzestan and other areas. Confrontations between poor peasants and landowners continue and the peasant movement is in the process of formation.

The industrialization of the country and the mobilization of technical and industrial forces, along with financial aid by the government, are among the immediate and central steps that could satisfy the peasants' demands. Nationwide public works and industrial projects for water, roads, electricity, fertilizer, seed, and tractors—along with ample budgets through long-term loans with easy conditions under the control of shoras—should be provided for the peasants. Immediate literacy projects with special programs for non-Persian nationalities under their own control, health projects for peasants, unconditional support by the central government of the demands of the poor and landless peasants against the big landowners, and assistance in mobilizing and organizing the peasants are all essential measures toward implementing the agrarian revolution.

In some areas, along with peasant struggles, the militant youth of the Jihad Sazandegi (Jihad for Reconstruction), and the Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards) side with the peasants. But in every step, they clash with the government and the central leadership of the Jihad. Even though the Jihad Sazandegi and Pasdaran are both organs of the Islamic Republic government, the reactions of the Pasdaran and Jihad youth, however, are a reflection of the deepening class struggle in the countryside and the dedication of the youth to the revolution. They will learn through their experience that the solution to the land question is not possible in the framework of the capitalist Islamic Republic. Shouldering this historic responsibility requires both the independent mobilization of the poor peasants and agricultural workers, and the economic resources of the central go-

vernment. And this can only be realized by a workers and peasants government.

The expectations raised by the poor peasants in the process of the revolution have remained unfulfilled and therefore their attention is drawn to the working class and working-class solutions.

The independent struggle of the working class and the presentation of a clear program for agrarian revolution makes it possible for the working class to win the poor peasants over on its path of taking political power. The combination of peasant struggles with that of the oppressed nationalities in Iran speeds up the dynamism of the permanent revolution.

5. Imperialist domination during fifty years of Pahlavi rule has turned Iran into a prison for oppressed nationalities. The cultural, political, and economic existence of these nationalities has been reduced to the lowest level possible, and divided the toilers along lines of national oppression. This division became one of the main tools of imperialist domination over Iran.

The Iranian revolution opened the way for the liberation of oppressed nationalities and created the conditions for the extension of this revolution across the borders to the neighboring countries. The oppressed nationalities saw the toppling of the monarchy as an end to their national oppression. Once monarchical bayonets were withdrawn from the throats of the oppressed nationalities, without delay they began speaking and publishing in their own languages and the suffocated national cultures began flowering. National movements came into existence in relation to the struggle of toilers, especially peasants, and the Kurds, Turkomans, Arabs, Baluchis, and Turks were set into motion on the way to achieving their national rights. The opposition and attacks of the central government plus the absence of revolutionary leaders prevented the development and victory of these movements.

The central government intervened to suffocate these movements. The right to self-determination of the oppressed nationalities in Iran was denied. The oppressed nationalities were banned from the country's political scene and their candidates were barred from entrance to the parliament. Their struggle for national rights and land was answered with bombs and bullets, and their national revolutionary militants were executed. Kurdish cities were constantly under economic blockade, attacks, murder, and plunder.

The working class did not engage in these battles and as a result the Islamic Republic government could not mobilize the masses against the movements of the nationalities, especially that of the Kurds. The Iranian people are not in favor of these fratricides and the legitimacy of national demands is becoming clearer. Among the soldiers in the army there is broad antiwar sentiment against the government's attacks on Kurdistan. The youth do not express a desire to be drafted, and there is resistance against this fratricide. The formation of special army courts in Kurdistan is a testimony to this reality.

The crisis of proletarian leadership portrays

itself clearly in the attacks on the rights of the oppressed nationalities. The working class did not mobilize in defense of the oppressed nationalities against the capitalist government. Slander and a poison campaign against Kurdish leaders were spread throughout Iran, and their position against imperialism and for unity with the Iranian people did not get a hearing among the toiling masses. The Stalinists of the Tudeh Party played an important role in this atmosphere of repression and character assassination of Kurdish leaders. At the same time, the feudal, bourgeois, and petty-bourgeois leaders of the oppressed nationalities became an obstacle in the way of the link between the national movements and the Iranian revolution. After the occupation of the Den of Spies, none of them participated in the anti-imperialist mobilizations in a serious way. The Kurdish leaders usually sufficed by merely issuing a few anti-imperialist leaflets. The mobilization and unity of the peasants on the basis of class demands did not take place. In this context, a political struggle for the organization of the shoras or for a national assembly did not take place.

Because of the government's policy of national oppression and its repeated military attacks against Kurdistan, the imperialists and their allies have been able to wage a campaign of slander against the revolution. They use democratic phrasemongering in order to attract the Kurdish population. The government's policy in relation to Kurdistan has also encouraged the Iraqi regime and the Palizban-Oveisi gang [former generals under the shah] to engage in counterrevolutionary activities and discredit the Iranian revolution in the eyes of the toilers of the world. Contrary to the claim of the Islamic Republic government, Kurdistan has not become the base for imperialist intervention against the Iranian revolution. However, from the imperialist viewpoint, the policies of the Islamic Republic in Kurdistan have created fertile soil for counterrevolutionary intervention.

These are dangers which should be taken seriously. The way to counter these dangers is not by more war and fratricide, not by attack and occupation of Kurdish towns, and not by more repression and internal war. The economic blockade of Kurdish towns, the closing of schools, the expulsion and exile of nationalist teachers, nonpayment of wages of public offices, and bombardments and executions are actions that are counter to the interests of the Iranian revolution. Such oppressive and brutal treatment of the economic, cultural, and national life of a people who were under the oppression of the central government for many years, who fought for their freedom, and who had hopes in the revolution to gain their freedom, must be condemned and rejected by the working class and all allies of the Iranian revolution. To put an end to these aggressions, mass mobilization in Iran is a revolutionary duty.

The antinationality policies of the Islamic Republic, which has created a fratricidal war, must end and the right to self-determination of

nationalities, specifically autonomy for Kurdistan—which is their demand—must be recognized by the government. The military forces and the Pasdaran in Kurdistan must bear responsibility for defending the revolution and the country against the attacks of the imperialists, Iraq, and their lackeys instead of engaging in war and fratricide against the Kurdish people. The policy of disarming the Kurdish people must end and instead, the masses of this region must be armed by the government against imperialism. Fratricide must cease immediately in Kurdistan.

Toward the reconstruction of the region and to compensate for the war damages imposed on the Kurdish people, immediate relief and economic aid should be sent to Kurdistan. Poor peasants should be given land and financial and technical aid. Shoras and peasant unions must have the right to organize and the right of the Kurdish people to form a shora or national assembly should be recognized. Such steps by the government will clear the way for a military unity between the Kurds and their revolutionary nationalist organizations, and the military and Pasdaran against attacks by the imperialists, Iraq, and other enemies of the revolution. This is an indispensable necessity of the revolution. It is such revolutionary policies that will bring peace to Kurdistan, defend the revolution against imperialism, and unify and combine the Kurdish revolution and the Iranian revolution along the anti-imperialist course.

The solution to the national question does not lie with the capitalist government. In order to bring about anti-imperialist unity and unity in the ranks of the proletariat, the workers shoras must understand this critical question of the revolution and struggle to end the fratricidal war in Kurdistan, and fight for the rights of the oppressed nationalities. The struggle of the working class for the achievement of national rights is a class struggle which is capable of uniting the masses of peasants and other toilers in the process of creating a workers and peasants government and will open the way for a perspective of socialist revolution in the entire region.

6. Iranian women have participated in the front ranks of the revolution that overthrew the shah's regime and have taken steps toward their liberation. The principle gain of the revolution for women was the legitimization of their participation in the political and social life of the country. This puts women in a more favorable position to struggle for their liberation and the achievement of equal rights. Now, women participate in mass anti-imperialist demonstrations, in the Jihad Sazandegi, and in the Army of 20 Million. The self-confidence women have gained in the course of the revolution and in recent mobilizations act as an obstacle against rounded efforts to push them back to the house and kitchen. Although the participation of young women workers has not been impressive in the shoras or in their leadership bodies, initial struggles are taking place and the workers are becoming more sensitive about this issue. In the process of the revolution,

with the presence and decisive participation of toiling women, the foundation for a women's liberation movement is being formed.

Continuous attacks against women's rights carried out by the government through the use of religion, are against the interests of the toiling women. These attacks also make an important sector of petty-bourgeois women turn away from the revolution. Forced veiling, the bill which prohibits employment of husband and wife, and family laws, are all used against women. As Mrs. Dastgheib puts it in the parliament, because of the laws governing marriage, divorce, and *sigheh* (temporary marriage), "a great number of our sisters are being destroyed." Lack of providing any educational possibilities for women is itself one of the reasons that equal rights are not implemented. Women's defensive struggle against intrusions on their rights will pose the need for an independent organization of women. The support of the shoras and workers for women's demands—from the right to work and equal pay for equal work, to child-care centers and against all discrimination—will unite the class. And the proletariat will win over a powerful ally—i.e., half of society—to its anti-imperialist struggles along its path of establishing a workers and peasants government.

7. The struggle of students was an important part of the antiautocratic movement. Schools and universities became centers of organization against the monarchy, and the role of youth was decisive in the February insurrection. In the period immediately before and after the insurrection, schools and universities became centers of assembly and activity for the oppressed nationalities, women, and political parties. Through these struggles, high-school and university students formed their own shoras in order to take the control of educational affairs out of the hands of the state bureaucracy and into their own hands. Schools and universities turned into centers of propaganda for political groups. Leaflets of different groups on the problems of the revolution, including the events in Kurdistan, were distributed from these centers.

After the insurrection, all throughout the country, students actively took part in the constructive campaigns of the revolution—in the Jihad Sazandegi, Jazb-e-Niru (centers set up by Islamic Unions in universities which recruit students and send them to help in the villages), the literacy campaign and the Army of 20 Million. In the toilers' section of the cities, especially in Tehran, the youth established neighborhood committees, or shoras, in order to bring about security, distribution of necessities, especially meat, and also, for a literacy campaign. The participation of young women in these activities is outstanding. In some villages, young activists of the Jihad Sazandegi helped in organizing the peasant shoras. The occupation of the Den of Spies by the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line, and their exposures and appeal to the masses for anti-imperialist mobilizations, are an indication of the important role students play in the revolution. The Islamic Associations of Students

(IAS) and Organizations of Muslim Students (OMS), in which the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line are a current, is an active tendency among the students that has formed a link with the toilers of the city and countryside.

Hundreds of thousands of students are faced with a lack of educational institutions to meet their demands and the needs of society. Unemployment and the limitations it imposes on their daily lives is a heavy burden on the youth. The government has not taken any steps to meet the needs of the young students. Whenever the youth have taken the initiative in active reconstruction, they are in general, faced with the government's resistance and sabotage by the state bureaucracy. The experience of the youth in the Jihad Sazandegi and the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line confirms this reality.

The government, on the other hand, has tried from the very beginning to prevent the extension of democracy and political activities in schools and universities. The capitalist government used the activity of IAS-OMS around the "Cultural Revolution" and their attempt to change the universities in the interest of education of the masses, against political groups. These were expelled from the campuses and a number of students were martyred. Since then, no steps towards extending and transforming the educational system in the interest of the masses, for a literacy campaign, or for attracting the forces of the youth who are left outside of the universities has taken place by the Islamic Republic government. On the contrary, the government attempts to use different excuses to "purge" the leftist teachers and professors. On the other hand, the IAS-OMS are acting towards their goals in the Jazb-e-Niru and the Jihad Sazandegi. Construction of more universities and making available more educational facilities to meet the needs of the country in agriculture, industry, health, and in a literacy campaign in the service of, and under the control of, workers and toilers and the oppressed nationalities on a national scale, are seriously on the agenda of the day.

The student movement faces a crisis of leadership. The Pishgam (supporters of the Fedayeen) and the Associations of Muslim Students (supporters of Mujahadeen) in high schools and universities have been incapable of presenting a program to fuse the student movement with the anti-imperialist struggles. The sectarian policies of these organizations have become an obstacle in the way of an organic unity between this movement and the anti-imperialist movement, and have politically disarmed them against the attacks of the regime.

The IAS-OMS have no program for the victory of the anti-imperialist movement. Their sectarianism, indicated through their Islamic ideology, is an obstacle in the way of unity of all youth and the different political currents in specific revolutionary actions. These organizations are politically heterogeneous. Their participation in the mass anti-imperialist mobilizations and their contact with the peasants has brought the youth in touch with the toilers, and

under the impact of the struggles and apart from the government's program, they initiate specific revolutionary actions such as the occupation of the Den of Spies, mass mobilizations, and distributions of land. At the same time, the government's politics and actions which come into conflict with the development of the revolution, affects the IAS-OMS and forces them to act.

Their action in breaking from the Bazargan government, and their confrontation with the Revolutionary Council on the issue of giving up the hostages, shows that these students can develop politically under the impact of a revolutionary crisis. It showed that they could break away from the politicians of the Islamic Republic. The intensification of the class struggle, and in particular, the inability of the parliament and government to solve the burning economic and political issues in the anti-imperialist struggle in face of the demands of the toilers, all work toward their disillusionment in the government and the leadership of the Islamic Republic. As independent working-class struggles and organization develop, these organizations become more and more polarized like all petty-bourgeois currents. Therefore it becomes possible to attract a section of them to proletarian struggles and solutions.

Against all current leaderships and in the direction of attracting youth, the Young Socialist Organization becomes tested and will grow in active struggles. It is only the revolutionary socialist program that provides the political basis for building the student movement. Revolutionary Socialists cannot take a sectarian attitude towards the Muslim youth or the followers of centrist organizations that have roots among the youth. Young Socialists take part in the Jihad Sazandegi, the literacy campaign, the building of the Army of 20 Million, neighborhood shoras, the anti-imperialist movement, and any other movement of the working-class youth and its allies. In this way they link up with the masses, providing the socialist action program for these movements and will have the opportunity to attract the young militants to the socialist perspective and train the primary cadres for the revolutionary youth movement.

8. In the last year and a half since the February insurrection, the Islamic Republic government has not been able to establish itself and rebuild a central capitalist state. This is a weak government facing a crisis of leadership. It is not a government which the imperialists have set up. Rather, it is based on the illusions of the masses. As the inability of this government to solve the problems of the revolution becomes clearer and the rising expectations of the masses remain unanswered, the trust and illusion of the masses in the government will decrease and they will move towards counterposing it. The middle classes, whose attraction is necessary for the revolution, are moving further away from it, and their political attention is focused towards personalities such as Shahpur Bakhtiar and Rear Admiral Ahmad Madani, and others.

On the other hand, the working class' atten-

tion has been centered more on the need for its own independent organization. It views the struggle for its just demands as continuing and safeguarding the revolution. The class struggle is deepening and becoming more concrete. This causes an intensification of internal confrontations within the ruling class—confrontations based on differences over how to rebuild the capitalist state and prevent independent organization of the workers and toilers.

The antidemocratic actions of the Islamic Republic government against freedom of the press, assembly, political parties, and elections is directly against the interests of the anti-imperialist movement and the revolution. These actions aid imperialism, and the Bakhtiariests and company who falsely pose themselves as "democrats." If the working class struggles consistently for democracy, it can attract important layers of society, among them large sectors of the petty-bourgeoisie.

Although the capitalist government and its leaderships at different levels are mobilizing the masses against the imperialist offensive and the imperialist's internal allies, they are neither willing nor able to take consistent and decisive actions against imperialism and its internal base, i.e., the capitalists and big landowners. This reality has been confirmed by the actions of the Islamic Republic government in relation to the working class, poor peasants, oppressed nationalities, women, youth, soldiers, and layers of the urban semi-proletariat through the limitation of democratic rights, parties, assembly, and press. This government is an obstacle facing the advancement of the revolution and is following the path of compromise with imperialism against the working class.

The Islamic Republic government is facing a crisis, one of the signs of which is its inability to reconstruct the armed forces. While the lower ranks of the army are more and more unwilling to carry out the decisions of the regime in Kurdistan, the upper circles are continuously trying to conspire with the imperialists against the new government and the revolution. The Pasdaran (which has been organized by the Islamic Republic government as a guarantee for implementing its decisions) has resisted the imperialist conspiracies and taken action against coup plotters.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic government is not a lackey of the imperialists. It draws its power through peoples' support and acts in the name of the revolution. Under this government, the working class is in a more favorable position to organize itself and its allies than under a regime which is an imperialist puppet. This government is a weak capitalist government which is under imperialist pressure on the one hand, and pressure from the revolution and the working class on the other. Overall, the imperialists' policies are based on the overthrow of the Islamic Republic government in order to stop the process of the revolution.

From a working-class viewpoint, the present bourgeois-democratic government is a "lesser evil" than a dictatorial government which is an

imperialist puppet. Until the working class is powerful enough to replace the capitalist government with a government of workers and peasants, it must defend this government, and especially its own position and existence under it, against conspiracies and attacks by the imperialists. The working class's material defense of the present government takes place through proletarian methods and independent mass actions. It does not in any way mean trusting or giving political support to this government. If, through combining these two struggles—material defense of the Islamic Republic government against imperialism and political preparation for replacing it with its own government—the working class is able to present its solutions to the people and prove its seriousness and militancy in this struggle, it will be able to obtain the support of the majority for the overthrow of the capitalist government and its replacement with a government of workers and peasants. The key to this victory lies in resolving the crisis of leadership of the working class, that is, building the combat party of the Iranian proletariat.

9. The existing revolutionary crisis in our society, which was explained in previous sections, shows that the greatest obstacle facing the growth and extension of the socialist revolution is the absence of a revolutionary working-class leadership, that is, a mass Leninist party. The victory of our revolution is dependent on the timely building of such a combat party, whose ranks are workers, especially industrial workers.

Our party is the only party that is armed with a political program, which shows the road to victory to the working class and all the oppressed. Our party is a small party, still isolated from our class. Understanding the decisive importance of the working class in this revolution, and the contradiction between the present class composition and the program of the party, the central task facing the party is the turn towards the industrial working class, consistent activity in the factories, full proletarianization, accumulation and training of working-class cadres, and establishing roots in the working class. The national composition of the working class in multinational Iran, necessitates the building of a nationwide multinational party. Building strong sections among the proletariat of the oppressed nationalities is a fundamental task of our party. A major task of the party leadership is to develop working-class cadres of the oppressed nationalities and women, and to try to accelerate their integration in all levels of leadership.

The intensification of class struggle in a revolutionary situation can create conditions for some currents to be attracted to the proletarian revolution, so that we could fuse with them in building the party. While we should not overlook these possibilities, we must know that in building a Leninist party through the method of the transitional program we cannot use short cuts and distort the program.

The accumulation of cadres and expansion of the party depends on our participation in the

workers and toilers struggles, consistent propaganda of revolutionary socialist ideas in opposition to all political currents, calculated agitation around immediate, democratic, and transitional demands, and effective organization. Our party must train professional cadres who are committed to the goals of the revolution and spend all their time and energy towards that. The quantitative growth of the party should rapidly be combined with the qualitative development of cadres on an ideological level, toughness in defending the program, immunity from alien class pressures and political influences, and experience in organizing teamwork, and political capacity. If it is not possible to publicly explain our whole program and positions as a legal party, they should be posed and discussed without any distortions inside the party. And the public activities of the party should be patiently explained to the party membership and be clear to everyone inside the party.

Building the proletarian party necessitates the building of an independent youth organization. The appearance of currents such as the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line and the Islamic Associations in anti-imperialist and mass struggles, and the crisis of organizations such as the Mujahadeen and Fedayeen, has opened great possibilities for activity and recruitment by the Young Socialists. The socialist perspective is becoming acceptable to broad layers of youth that are politically active and growing. And they can be attracted to the struggle of the working class, the revolutionary program and our party. One of the central tasks of the party is to help build the socialist youth organization.

Since Marx founded the First International, Marxists have put the international organization of workers at the center of their program, and have consistently fought for it. This principle stems from the international nature of capitalism and the working class. The struggle of classes has an international character and the victory of socialism is only possible on an international level. The building of a party at the national level is inseparably bound with building the international. The Fourth International (FI) is the only international revolutionary workers party that has continued the genuine traditions of Marxism, incorporated the experiences of Lenin's Bolshevik Party, and—with a Transitional Program and organizational norms based on the achievements of more than a century of proletarian struggles—builds revolutionary Marxist parties all over the world with a working class orientation—parties which can stand on their own feet, develop their own leadership, and lead the socialist revolution in their own country.

Iranian Trotskyism from its inception has fought for building the international with loyalty to the FI and the Transitional Program. Without the International, our party could not have been and will not be built. Not only is this vital from the viewpoint of political collaboration, but also from the viewpoint of organizational solidarity and the struggle for building

the international. The international defense of socialist prisoners would have been impossible without the international. Building the Fourth International is one of the central tasks of our party.

10. The main points of the immediate tasks of the proletariat, which stem from the objective situation, show the course of the revolution's progress, and are a guide for the party's propaganda, agitation, and organization, are as follows:

a. The unconditional, material defense of the Islamic Republic against military interventions by the imperialists and the conspiracies of their internal and external allies. Building the Army of 20 Million. Arming the workers and peasants shoras. The army to be under the control of Pasdaran and soldiers shoras. For democracy and shoras in the army and Pasdaran. For an immediate end to the imposed fratricidal war against the Kurdish people.

b. Confiscation of the property of the capitalists and landowners who collaborate with the coup plotters, and those who sabotage the economy by hoarding, profiteering, and cheating. Complete monopoly of foreign trade. Nationalization and amalgamation of banks and insurance companies under the control of workers and employees shoras. Production and distribution under supervision of workers, peasants, and community shoras. Immediate and extensive government development programs in education, health, and housing—with priority given to the regions of oppressed nationalities, especially Kurdistan. Development of higher education institutions at the service of and controlled by the youth, workers, and oppressed nationalities throughout the country.

c. For the extension and unification of factory shoras. Against the dissolution of shoras. For recognition of shoras by the government. For executive power of shoras. For independence and democracy of the shoras. Against expulsions of political groups. All purges should be done through the shoras. Abolition of Code No. 33 [that allows firings for no reason]. The labor law should be drafted by workers shoras. For a sliding scale of wages according to increases in inflation. For a forty-hour work-week. Reduction of working hours without reducing wages. Jobs for all. For unemployment insurance.

d. Land distribution under the control of peasant shoras. Long-term loans, seeds, fertilizer, and industrial machinery to the poor peasants on simple terms. Agricultural banks under the control of workers and peasants shoras. The Ministry of Agriculture under the control of the Jihad Sazandegi, and Jihad Sazandegi under the control of workers and peasants shoras.

e. The right of self-determination for the oppressed nationalities. Autonomy for Kurdistan. Military unity with the oppressed nationalities against imperialism. The right to national assembly for the oppressed nationalities.

f. Equal rights for women. Priority to women in educational programs. Against the expul-

sion of women from the workforce. Against compulsory veiling and any kind of discrimination and humiliation of women.

g. For freedom of all parties, press, assem-

bly, demonstrations. For freedom of all anti-imperialist and working-class political prisoners.

h. The Ministry of Labor under the control

of workers shoras. For the extension and unification of workers, peasants, soldiers and Pasdaran shoras. For a workers and peasants government.

War and the New Stage of the Iranian Revolution

[The following resolution was drafted in December 1980 and adopted at the January 22-24, 1981, convention of the Workers Unity Party (HVK). The HVK is one of three organizations in Iran affiliated with the Fourth International.]

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In collusion with U.S. imperialism, Iraq has made a military attack against Iran in order to overthrow the Islamic Republic. Imperialist attacks against the Iranian revolution have thus entered a new stage. Their aim is to prevent the further expansion of the revolution in the area, sever the anti-imperialist dynamism of the Iranian revolution, regain imperialism's lost positions, and reverse the trend of world revolution to which the Iranian revolution has infused new strength.

The mass resistance movement against these military attacks is shaping up.

1. Imperialism strives to reverse in its favor the relationship of forces that the Iranian revolution altered on an international level against imperialist interests. This is the attempt of a declining power and the attacks take place from a position of weakness.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein strives to prevent the expansion of the Iranian revolution, a revolution that has inspired the revolutionary spirit of the Iraqi toiling masses who are moving toward the overthrow of his regime. The mass mobilizations and anti-imperialist actions of the Iranian people has attracted the attention of the toiling Arab masses to the Iranian revolution—especially the mobilization of millions on Jerusalem Day (which since the revolution has taken place each year in solidarity with the Palestinian revolution and against Israel). This is reflected in the support given to Iran in the war with Iraq by the Libyan, Syrian, and Algerian governments (which are themselves under imperialist and Israeli pressures). On the other hand, reactionary Arab governments which have no base among their own masses take refuge in imperialism's arms, becoming more isolated from the people.

The hope of all counterrevolutionaries in the area is hinged on American imperialism. Imperialism has enhanced its military preparations for an attack against the revolution. From Turkey to Egypt, American military bases have been increased and American warships are heading toward the Persian Gulf. The confrontation between

the revolution and imperialism has reached the critical stage of war.

Two large workers states, the USSR and China, that could and should have given immediate and broad military, economic, and political aid in defense of the revolution against Iraqi attacks, have so far taken a "neutral" position. The Stalinist ruling bureaucracies in these countries thus cowardly endangered the position of the workers states versus imperialism.

2. Due to the war, the Iranian revolution has entered a new stage. The challenge of the Iraqi attack, contrary to the expectations of the leaders of the counterrevolution, was met by the Iranian army. The Islamic revolution was not overthrown. The people rose to defend the revolution.

City toilers and Arab masses of Khuzestan fought the invaders alongside the Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guards) and the soldiers. They see their liberation intertwined with independence from the imperialist yoke and in unity with the entire Iranian revolution.

Youth all across the country enlisted to be sent to the front. Groups of twenty-two formed by the Baseej-e Mustazafin (Mobilization of the Oppressed) received military training sessions with the aid of community mosques.

Currently, through the initiative of the masses, centers of armed resistance are being formed across the country—within the factories, communities, villages, and schools. The army of 20 million is forming from the grass-roots of society, and the masses are exerting increasing control over activities in the factories, communities, and villages.

All across the country people are collecting the necessary goods and sending them by truck to the front. To ensure fair distribution of goods, community shoras (committees) are increasing their activities. Through the organization of the masses, the revolution is preparing itself for a long and cold winter.

Along with the formation of independent organizations of the masses, mass mobilizations—both political and military—are tak-

ing place. The city streets are once again the site of millions marching in defense of the revolution and against imperialism. Workers, peasants, women, oppressed nationalities, and tribal people view this war as their own war and see that the safeguarding of their gains and freedom is dependent on victory in the war.

On November 4 [the anniversary of the occupation of the U.S. embassy] students all across the country took part in a demonstration called by the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line and showed the revolutionary spirit of the young generation in defense of the revolution. The participation of women in nationwide mobilizations and in mass organizations is outstanding. The vigilance of the masses and the determination of the workers and toilers in defense of the revolution has attracted segments of the wavering middle-class and has neutralized other layers that tended to move toward counterrevolution.

The mass demonstration of armed men and women on October 25 in Isfahan and the demonstrations in Tabriz during the October religious holiday—the Feast of Ghadis—are symbols to the world of the power and determination of the masses in defense of the revolution. The great fighting spirit of the masses is in accord with the vital duty of victory in this war. For the first time since the February 1979 insurrection, the masses are once again arming themselves and the preinsurrection committees, with the new title of community shoras, are being reinstated for the purpose of rationing food and other necessary goods.

Once again, mass mobilizations of millions are taking place—like those that took place after the occupation of the U.S. spy nest, which inscribed the main enemy of the revolution in the consciousness of the masses. The experiences of the past stages of the revolution are thus coming together. At this stage of the revolution, the workers' shoras are the only mass organizations from the past that have retained within them the continuity of the revolution.

3. The war has accelerated class polarization—a polarization between those who

want to carry the war against Iraq and imperialism through to the end and those who want to compromise. Workers consider this war their own and are prepared for death and sacrifices. Protection committees and centers of resistance have been formed in the factories. Workers are demanding mobilizations for military training and have declared their readiness to go to the front. Workers go to the front through a variety of channels, such as the groups of twenty-two organized by Baseej-e Mustazafin. In many factories workers have voluntarily donated one or several days' wages for aiding the war effort and the refugees from the war. The workers' shoras are being built and strengthened in this struggle. Thus the position of the working class in the revolution becomes strengthened.

Immediately following the outbreak of the war, the federation of Islamic shoras demanded that military mobilization and resistance centers be formed within the factories, villages, and communities. In addition, they demanded complete control over the capitalists, middlemen, and hoarders of vital goods and productive industrial commodities. They also demanded control over distribution and sales of productive goods through the workers' Islamic shoras in the factories, and pointed to the need for creating consumer cooperatives all over in order to prevent any sabotage in distribution by the counterrevolution.

The Islamic Shoras of Workers declared in a statement: "The Islamic Shoras of Workers of Productive and Industrial Units must, with full force, implement their control of the factories and strongly prevent any conspiracies or disruptions by agents of the previous regime, capitalists, and counterrevolution; maximize production and with awareness nip in the bud any form of conspiracy."

The federation of Islamic shoras, by creating the Military-Ideological Mobilization staff, has also demanded resistance and preparedness centers be formed in the factories. The federation demanded that war news be broadcast in different languages by the Iranian news broadcasters, so that false propaganda by imperialist broadcasters be neutralized and news of the struggle of our oppressed reach the ears of oppressed people around the world.

In a message, the workers of the oil industry appealed to workers of the world to defend the Iranian revolution against the Iraqi military invasion. They asked Iraqi oil workers to apply the lessons of the struggle against the shah's regime by forming strike committees to protest against Saddam Hussein's regime.

The federation of Eastern Shoras, which had been declared illegal prior to the war, renewed its activity. Despite the fact that the local Komiteh had prevented them from being active, the federation has now renewed its activities with the same representatives in the mosques. In the factories it has distributed leaflets on the war and in de-

fense of the revolution. Resistance centers are being organized through the shoras and Islamic associations within the factories and are training to be sent to the front.

The revolutionary spirit of workers and toilers in the time of war is the opposite of the idleness, cowardliness, and sabotage of the capitalists and landowners. From the start of the war between Iran and Iraq the class polarization has deepened, and the camps of antagonistic classes are more obvious.

In contrast to the toiling Arab masses who are defending the revolution, the reactionary khans, tribesmen, and feudalists of Susangerd welcomed the Iraqi attack. Capitalists and big landowners began hoarding and sabotaging production and distribution, and from the very beginning they fled from the war zones. The Friday Imam of Tehran, in his first Friday prayer address after the war, warned the capitalists who had fled from the war zones that they should not expect to return to their homes and demand their wealth after the toilers have fought and defended their homes and wealth. This statement reflects the deep sentiment of the masses toward the capitalists.

The capitalists and factory managers have attacked the union rights of the workers, using the war as a pretext. In some factories, through the issuance of numerous directives, they have abolished the workers' yearly vacations and housing loans. Using the need for food and money for the front as an excuse, they have cancelled the noontime meal. The capitalists carry out these actions by misusing the workers' dedication. They continue their antagonisms to the workers' shoras to prevent their expansion and activities.

The workers' reaction to the economic austerity program of the capitalists and management has been one of patience and sacrifice due to the war conditions. At the same time, due to the disruptions by the capitalists and management on the one hand and the active participation of the workers in production and the mass resistance movement on the other, the balance of forces has shifted to the benefit of the working class against the capitalists.

The workers protest the fact that management and those in charge create obstacles to prevent mobilizations and military training. With the direct confrontation created by the war with imperialism, workers and toilers take these questions seriously. That is why they have shown patience concerning union rights, but show their disapproval when management refuses to allow mobilizations, creates obstacles to military training, or other questions related to the war and disruption in the economy. Therefore they have begun their own independent mobilizations. This serves to strengthen the workers' shoras in the direction of transforming them into independent executive units of the workers.

In wartime, the crises and chaos of the

capitalist economy weigh heavily on the workers' shoulders, the standard of living of the working class declines, and the capitalists try to solve the crisis of their system by imposing an austerity program on the workers and toilers. Under these conditions, the struggle for the demands of the transitional program continues—i.e. an increase in wages according to the rate of inflation, reduction in working hours and adding new work-shifts with no reduction in pay. The workers, without being accused of disrupting production, are using their economic weight in the struggle to defend their standard of living.

4. The allies of the working class—poor peasants, oppressed nationalities, women, and youth—have also risen against the attacks of the Iraqi regime. The quick reaction of the masses shows that the revolution is alive and the toilers are ready to defend the achievements of the insurrection.

An important sector of the participants in the October 25 armed demonstration in Isfahan were the peasants from the villages around Isfahan who participated with their tools. The peasants from around the city of Mashad also demonstrated against the Iraqi aggression. Arab masses from the city and villages fought so heroically alongside their Pasdar and soldier brothers that they prevented the immediate fall of the cities of Khorramshahr, Abadan, Dezful, and Ahwaz. Although the Iraqi forces took over sections of the cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr, it was the armed and heroic resistance of the people, especially the Arab population, that played a decisive role.

Despite Saddam Hussein's false propaganda claiming to recognize the right of self-determination for the Arabs—which is Hussein's bourgeois nationalism against the revolution—the oppressed Arab nationality in Khuzestan has shown that it ignores such propaganda and sees its freedom as inseparable from its liberation from the yoke of imperialism and in unity with the entire Iranian revolution. The struggle of the Arab masses has defused the effects of such propaganda even in the Arab countries of the area, such as Syria, Libya, and Palestine.

In Kurdistan, where the government has not halted the war of fratricide, the Kurdish people have rightly supported the Islamic Republic against the offensive by the Iraqi regime. Groups of Kurdish workers have donated one day's wages to the front and in some Kurdish cities street demonstrations in defense of Iran and against Saddam Hussein's regime have taken place. Iraqi Kurds, who for years suffered under the oppression of the Iraqi government, are decisively struggling against the military invasion by Iraq and are fighting against Hussein's regime.

In Tabriz, as a result of the casualties from the bombings of the oil refinery and other industrial centers, the workers and toilers of Azerbaijan have felt the need for mobilization and resistance against imperialism and the Iraqi regime. The 30,000

people at the funeral for the martyrs of the bombardments of the Tabriz industrial and civilian centers showed their hatred toward the Iraqi regime and U.S. imperialism. This was the first time in six months that the oppressed Azerbaijani nationality stood up seriously against imperialist attacks. This is an indication that despite the efforts of the bourgeoisie, the anti-imperialist movement in Azerbaijan has not been diverted. The street mobilizations of the Azerbaijani people during the holy days of Ghadir, Tasua, and Ashura, and the march by the armed forces of both the army and the Pasdaran, were even more extensive.

Also, the people of Sistan and Baluchistan, plus 6,000 tribesmen and border dwellers in Bushehr organized demonstrations in defense of the revolution. The oppressed nationalities in solidarity with one another and the Iranian revolution are struggling for their liberation from the imperialist yoke. Therefore, the perspective of their unity for further strengthening and advancing the anti-imperialist struggle has now become more of a reality.

The solidarity of women and their declared readiness to go to the front is widely raised. Women have participated in first aid groups and in the preparation of goods and money being sent to the front. Women have also announced their readiness to receive military training. In some factories women have actually participated both in military training and in other aid for the front. In the Isfahan demonstration on October 25, women participated armed with home utensils, such as forks and knives, and declared their readiness to go to the front. War has created the conditions for women to participate more in social activities and to see the perspectives of their liberation in the victory of the anti-imperialist movement.

The youth whose term in the army was ended in 1977—those trained by the shah to fight in Dhofar—and those ready to be drafted have widely declared their readiness to go to the front. In the first few days of the call for service of those youth whose service had ended in 1977, more than 24,000 young men registered for the front. The Khuzestan youth gathered round the army barracks, especially in Ahwaz, and demanded to be armed. The youth on the barricades began making Molotov cocktails and other ammunition, and in many border areas they have played a key role in the military battles. The community Komitehs and community shoras have once again been formed with broad participation by youth. And just as during the insurrection they are participating in guarding the communities and distributing necessary goods. The groups of twenty-two formed by the Baseej-e Mustazafin with the aid of the local mosques—which are formed to provide military training—are mostly composed of and organized by the youth.

5. The limited political-military policy of the government against the Iraqi invasion does not in the least measure up to the needs of safeguarding the revolution or to the de-

gree of dedication and sacrifice shown by the working masses.

The unprecedented determination and militancy shown by the people in defense of the Islamic Republic was not met with a positive reaction by the government and in some cases even brought about disagreement by the government. In one directive, the Ministry of State declared the local committees, which are built from the grass-roots of the revolution, illegal. The Ministry of Education and Welfare declared that classes were to be held on November 4 [the day demonstrations were called to mark the anniversary of the occupation of the U.S. "spy nest"].

The wide-spread slogan, "arm us" is not welcome by the government. Yet at the same time, Ayatollah Montazari in his Friday speech in Qum reflected the masses' anxiety by declaring, "The army commanders are not moving ahead and acting decisively." The capitalist government fears the image of the armed oppressed masses in war with imperialism.

The devious policies of the government of the Islamic Republic with regard to the national question has harmed unity on the anti-imperialist barricades. The approach of the oppressed nationalities to this war is a sign of the revolution's depth and the high consciousness of the toilers of the oppressed nationalities.

This takes place despite all the blows, constant attacks and divisive moves, especially the civil war in Kurdistan, which was imposed on the Kurds by the regime of the Islamic Republic. The national rights of the Kurdish people are still denied. And government leaders have insisted that the army and the Pasdaran remain in Kurdistan for the war on the internal front. Columns for purging activities are collecting arms and disarming the people. In a statement addressed to the peasants of Kurdistan, the army and the Pasdaran warned those who are cooperating with the political groups by providing foodstuffs that they will be severely punished.

In Kurdistan, like in other parts of Iran, the guns must be aimed at imperialism and its lackeys. The war of fratricide in Kurdistan should be ended and a military unity formed between the Kurds and the armed forces (the army and Pasdaran) so all arms would be pointed toward imperialism. It is only by arming the Kurdish people against imperialism and the Iraqi military offensive and their disarmament—along with granting self-determination to Kurdistan, that the real division between the forces of the revolution and counterrevolution will be clearly defined.

The government's inability to solve the problems of war and revolution have been revealed before the masses by the lack of dynamism on the part of the government in arming the people; its lack of economic planning against high prices, unemployment, and hoarding, which is accelerating due to

the government's hesitation to monopolize foreign trade; the lack of any improvement in conditions in the villages or land distribution to the poor peasants by the Committees of Seven [set up to implement the government's land reform law]; the steps toward limiting the activities of political parties and newspapers on the side of the revolution; and its imposition of censorship.

The people ask, why are the Pasdaran not being armed with heavy weapons? The Pasdaran in Kurdistan ask, what are we doing in Kurdistan when the revolution is being attacked by Iraq? The unclear points around the issue of freeing the hostages were posed in the same context. Due to the lack of open diplomacy on the part of the government and its secret negotiations with foreign officials, the people are questioning the government's actions. The toilers ask, when we are the ones who bear the heavy weight of war, why is it that scarcity and poverty are divided so inequitably and are imposed only on us, while the capitalists and big landowners continue to exploit and live in comfort?

At this new stage of the revolution, the masses look less and less to the leaders and more and more take the solution of problems into their own hands, carrying out their own mobilizations and building their own organizations. For a victory in the war, the masses are more open to listening to working-class and anti-imperialist solutions. There are tremendous possibilities for a revolutionary workers party.

In this war, the people regard the government of the Islamic Republic as being in the same front with them. As long as the working class is not prepared to take on the command of the war, it defends the revolution under the military command of this government.

Political preparations for creating a workers and farmers government are on the agenda today. These preparations include maintaining the political independence of the working class, presenting a proletarian program counterposed to the debilitating and divisive policies of the capitalist government, struggling for military and political mobilization of the masses, struggling for the unification and expansion of the workers shoras, struggling for the right to self-determination of the oppressed nationalities toward strengthening the anti-imperialist barricades, struggling for land and better conditions for poor peasants, plus struggling against poverty.

6. The military offensive of Iraq and imperialism for the purpose of beheading the Iranian revolution and the great mass resistance against this invasion have created immense possibilities for implementing the party's program, furthering our links with the working class, and expanding our ranks from the working-class and militant youth. Our political analysis of the new stage of the revolution emanating from the war, and the program that we as revolutionary socialists put forward for a victory in this war, would

be incomplete and ineffective without specifying the next step in party building.

At the present stage of the class struggle, war and revolution have intertwined and found a joint destiny. The working class participates in this war for the victory of its own revolution, for the realization of its demands, and for obtaining the leadership of the masses. The working class views this war as its own war and struggles for its victory. The political preparations of the working class for the creation of a workers and farmers government stem from this war and participation in such struggles.

The conclusion from this reality is that our party, too, should mobilize along with our class, and consciously and actively participate in the mass resistance movement and struggle toward achieving the political leadership of this life or death battle. As a result, it is imperative now, more than ever before, that the party cadres and the militants of the Young Socialist Organization participate in all mass activities and struggles—from political, economic, and military mobilization and organization at the front, to participation in the front lines of the battle. This would be a conscious decision by the party and the youth organization in light of what is possible. In this way, the most militant elements of our class will be attracted to the party and our program presented to the entire class.

Therefore, at this juncture, making and completing the turn toward the industrial centers and the working class communities, and participating in the resistance movement through the shoras and the workers organizations, is more than ever before a pressing and vital task for our party. Our comrades should be in the heart of the working class, in the factories and in the front line of their struggles. In this way our revolutionary link with the working class be-

comes a reality—a union, which, based on the program of the socialist revolution, creates the conditions for building a mass party. The party's success in the future period depends on the bold implementation of this next step.

The most important points concerning the tasks of the proletariat under the conditions of the war with Iraq and for a victory against imperialism are concretely as follows:

- The unconditional material defense of the Islamic Republic against the military intervention of the imperialists and the military offensive of the Iraqi regime and the conspiracies of its internal and foreign allies. The immediate military mobilization and combat training of all volunteers for the front through the Basej-e Mustazafin, with the government providing whatever is needed. Building the liberation army of 20 million. Arming the workers and peasants shoras and the community shoras. Creating and expanding the workers' centers of resistance. Providing industrial centers with defensive weapons. Arming the Pasdaran with heavy military equipment. For democracy and shoras in the army and Pasdaran.

- Confiscating the wealth of the capitalists and landowners, who in the critical conditions of war sabotage the economy through hoarding, charging high prices, and cheating. The immediate punishment and confiscation of the goods of the hoarders under the urgency of war conditions. The legislation and implementation of progressive taxation. A complete monopoly of foreign trade. Production should be subordinate to the needs of war. The nationalization of banks and insurance companies under the control of the shoras of workers and employees. Production, distribution, and price control under the supervision of workers and peasants shoras and the community shoras. The rationing of necessary goods, and oil and

gasoline, giving priority to the toilers, along with the control of distribution through the community shoras. Free housing and government financial aid to the refugees from the war, along with military training and arming of the refugees.

- For the further expansion and unity of the factory shoras. Against the dissolution of the shoras. For recognition of the shoras by the government. For the power of enactment by the shoras. For independence and democracy of the shoras. Increase production through adding new work-shifts and employing the unemployed. For a forty-hour workweek. Increase wages according to the rate of inflation. Against firing members of political groups; all purges should be done through the workers shoras. Abolish Article 33 of the Labor Law (that allows firings for no reason). Labor laws should be drawn up by the workers shoras.

- Increase agricultural production; implement Section C of the Land Reform Law (that calls for land of the big landlords to be divided among the peasants); land and ample resources for poor peasants.

- The right to self-determination for oppressed nationalities. Self-determination for Kurdistan. For an immediate end to the civil war imposed on the Kurdish people. For a military alliance with the oppressed nationalities against imperialism and the Iraqi military offensive.

- Equal rights for women; military training and arming of women.

- Freedom for anti-imperialist and working-class political prisoners.

- Mobilization and utilization of all resources toward victory in the war. For the expansion and unification of the shoras of workers, peasants, soldiers, and Pasdaran.

- For a workers and farmers government.

On the Present Political Situation in Iran

Statement by the Socialist Workers Party of Iran (HKS)

[The Socialist Workers Party (HKS) is one of three organizations in Iran affiliated with the Fourth International.]

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1.

What presently constitutes the fundamental political reality of our society is that there has been established a certain type of medieval, terrorist dictatorship, which under the name of "the Islamic Republic" and based on the *Velayate Faghih* ("the rule of the top mullah"), formed around Khomeini as the absolutist ruler of all levels of social life. Politically speaking, the specific quality of this type of dictatorship is simply in the depth and intensity of its blind despotism. In this regime, all the forces of the state, from the organs of repression to the ideological

institutions, are under the will of an individual who regards himself as free from any controls. This blind dictatorship is at the service of a thoroughly reactionary social order in which all kinds of repression and exploitation are allowed, as long as the ruling despots are paid their levies.

Following the planned, extensive and coup-type attack of the direct and indirect agents of the ruling Faghih against all kind of political freedoms and the severe suppressions of every opponent of the despotic order, the forces supporting this dictatorship have completely taken

over the control of the state apparatus and with an unseen savagery and uncontrollable repression are warning every opponent that, in order to protect this autocratic rule, they are prepared to hand over everybody to the executioners as "rebels against Iran," "corrupt," and "apostates."

In a short period, all publications opposing the regime were closed down by the use of clubs and guns, and the last vestiges of the direct and free intervention of the people in politics was suppressed by unbridled despotism.

In this way, two and one-half years after the glorious insurrection of the masses opposing dictatorship, once again a government has taken power in our country, which considers itself above any control by the people, and allows only those who are the followers of the doctrine of dumb servitude to Khomeini, to participate in politics.

In less than one month, the barbaric measures of this regime in safeguarding a system in which opposing the word of Khomeini leads to execution, has left more dead bodies of those seeking justice than the whole period of Mohammad Reza's rule. These measures prove not only that the new regime is in fact the same old military-police dictatorship in a new clothing, but also that in many respects it has surpassed the old regime in its savagery and brutality.

It is therefore clear that since the overthrow of dictatorship was one of the most basic, central and general demands of the revolution of the oppressed toiling masses of Iran, that with the establishment of the terrorist regime of Khomeini, in effect the forces of counter-revolution have taken over the state power and, having trampled on all democratic rights, are using the extensive instruments of repression to declare war against all layers and classes of the toilers.

The Iranian revolution has now entered a period in which the counter-revolution, armed with all the instruments of repression, has imposed the conditions of a civil war on the country. This fact is the determining characteristic of the present period.

2.

If the oppressed and toiling masses of Iran do not succeed in confronting the civil war imposed by counter-revolution and in overthrowing the ruling regime of terror through a determined struggle, all their revolutionary achievements would be trampled under the feet of a brutal and savage reaction which would not shy away from establishing the worst kind of tyranny and exploitation. The present civil war will decide the fate of Iran's revolution.

The Iranian revolution, more than anything else, marked the beginning of a period of direct intervention of millions of the oppressed and toiling masses in determining the fate of society. The formation and extension of the institutions of the self-organisation of the masses like workers, peasants, and soldiers *shoras* (councils), women and youth unions, cultural and political associations of oppressed nationalities, or the democratic neighbourhood committees, represented the most obvious manifestation of the revolutionary activity of the masses and their most fundamental revolutionary achievements. The ruling reaction not only has destroyed or deformed all these institutions but through the formation of made-to-order governmental instruments like its *Pasdaran* (guardians) army, *Basij* (militia) headquarters, *Imam* committees, *Hezbollahi*

bands (groups of reactionary armed thugs), ideological committees, Friday prayers, etc., it has strengthened and consolidated the repressive state apparatus and is actively preventing the formation of any independent mass organisations.

Under such conditions, any development and continuation of the Iranian revolution necessitates the overthrow of the ruling counter-revolution and the destruction of all the reactionary institutions resulting from it. Because of the establishment of Khomeini's terrorist dictatorship, all possibilities for a peaceful development of the revolutionary movement of the masses have been destroyed and the simplest guarantees for safeguarding even the most elementary achievements of the workers and peasants no longer exist. The experience of the masses has proven that, in our country, counter-revolution will not agree to the simplest of reforms and unless the masses are prepared to confront the armed counter-revolution, whatever they gain in one period would be wrested away by force in the next.

Hence, the most central and the most immediate problem of the revolution in Iran is now the problem of how to prepare the participation of the masses in confronting the imposed civil war and overthrowing the counter-revolutionary government. The only road for the continuing march of the revolution is the path of a revolutionary struggle for the defeat of the forces of reaction in the civil war and the complete overthrow of the ruling apparatus. Any kind of cooperation with this reactionary government and any kind of political support for the regime is a direct betrayal of the interests of the oppressed masses of Iran. Furthermore, any methods of struggle which do not take into account the present conditions of civil war are also doomed to failure.

3.

Under such conditions, when the reactionary forces supporting Khomeini's terrorist dictatorship have begun the bloody repression of all revolutionary forces using the methods of a civil war, talk about the centrality of the danger of the reactionary forces supporting the previous regime is pure demagogy. The savagery of Khomeini's reactionary rule has proven, once again, that the most immediate basic danger threatening the Iranian revolution is the state apparatus of the so-called Islamic Republic.

The supporters of this regime have shown that their aim in participating in the mass movement against the monarchy was completely reactionary and contrary to the demands of the wide layers of the oppressed. Hence, the present regime is on the one hand preparing the conditions for a new surge in popularity for the overthrown reaction (for the previous regime), and on the other hand, by its actions is strengthening a more thoroughly reactionary and inhuman order in our country.

World imperialism would be able to put its dominating claws on the throat of the Iranian people only when the revolutionary movement of the masses has been blocked by the repressive measures of the ruling reaction. The consolidation of the terrorist autocratic dictatorship which has entailed the suppression of all political freedom and the destruction of all organs of self-organisations of the masses, is preparing the ground for a bloody return of imperialism.

Capitalism would be able to reimpose its exploitative

and oppressive order in Iran, only when the Iranian working class has been forced out of the scene of struggle. Khomeini's regime, by suppressing workers *shoras* (councils) and establishing an atmosphere of terror and repression inside the factories is paving the path for the spread of the most parasitic type of capitalism.

It is not for nothing that the reactionary forces internationally are beginning to appreciate the value of the Khomeini dictatorship and its repressive methods. At present, besides the empty demagogic anti-imperialist verbiage of the regime, numerous economic and military deals with U.S.A., Britain, France, West Germany and their lackeys like Israel make up the reality of the international policy of the Iranian government.

World imperialism and its internal agents, as long as they can suppress the Iranian revolution through Khomeini's regime, have no reason for not secretly cooperating and even strengthening the Islamic Republic economically and militarily. By making the Iranian regime increasingly dependent on itself, imperialism prepares the conditions for its overthrow and the re-establishment of more direct control whenever the need may arise in the future. The reconstruction of the repressive apparatus of the state and the forcing out of the fighting masses from the scene of national politics is facilitating such a return.

The experience of Iranian regime's reaction to the Iraqi state's military aggression has shown that Khomeini's dictatorship fears the armed Iranian masses more than it fears other reactionary regimes and/or world imperialism. This regime is prepared to willingly accept any degradation and humiliation in its relations with imperialism but is actively preventing the Iranian masses from directly intervening in the political fate of the country as this would sound its own death knell.

With the establishment of a military-police dictatorship of the Mullahs, therefore, not only has the danger of imperialist aggression against the Iran revolution not disappeared but in fact this danger has now turned into a real threat which will not go away until the overthrow of the terrorist regime.

4.

The military aggression by the Baathist state of Iraq is a counter-revolutionary act whose only result has been a strengthening of counter-revolutionary forces in Iran and in the region as a whole. The interests of the downtrodden and oppressed people of the region call for the defeat of this aggression and an end to the war.

The counter-revolutionary regime of the Islamic Republic is not able to repel this military aggression. Khomeini's regime is discovering that the continuation of the status quo, at the expense of millions of homeless refugees and tens of thousands of deaths, is in the interest of its counter-revolutionary aims. This regime is abstaining from all measures which are vital for the success of repelling Saddam's aggression and ending the war.

The most fundamental task in confronting this counter-revolutionary military aggression is to deepen the Iranian revolution. But Khomeini's regime is suppressing the revolution. Without the military mobilisation of the Iranian masses, the effective forces necessary to defeat this aggression cannot be mobilised. But the reactionary regime of Khomeini prefers cooperation with the Zionists to arming the Iranian toilers. The Iranian army can become

an effective force of resistance against the aggression only when soldiers' *shoras* (councils) can control the affairs of the army. But Khomeini's regime has made U.S. trained generals the despots ruling the sons of the toilers and has reimposed the repressive monarchist order in the army. Khomeini's regime has prevented the participation of the revolutionary forces in the war and by imposing the conditions of a civil war, has divided the forces of resistance against the military aggression. Khomeini's regime, instead of supporting progressive forces in Iraq, is cooperating with the most reactionary tendencies in Iraq and in this way is also in fact practically helping Saddam's regime consolidate itself.

The military confrontation with the counter-revolutionary offensive of the Baathist regime must be accompanied by a political fight and a clear proposal for the conditions of an end to the war. But the so-called Islamic regime of Iran, in its antagonistic and chauvinistic policies as regards the land and sea borders of Iran, the islands which were handed over to the Shah by imperialism, and even the name of the Gulf, is surpassing even the Shah's regime.

It is therefore clear that not only a determined fight against the reactionary forces of the Khomeini dictatorship will not hamper the resistance against Baathist aggression, but that, in fact, without such a fight, it would prove impossible to defeat this aggression.

Khomeini's regime will put an end to this war only when it has completely suppressed the Iranian revolution.

5.

Despite the fact that the consolidation of the autocratic terrorist dictatorship has made difficulties for the future development of the Iranian revolution, the revolutionary forces have not been defeated and if the potential force of the masses, who have the experience of the February insurrection behind them, was to be mobilised, the Iranian revolution would march forward towards victory.

What is certain is the fact that the attack by the forces of reaction against democratic rights, the prevention of the masses from participation in politics and the seizure of complete state power by the counter-revolution was neither a result of a defeat, demoralisation or depoliticization of the masses, nor an outcome of a sudden increase in the power of reaction. On the contrary, these barbaric measures were carried out under circumstances in which it had become obvious that Khomeini's rule is being confronted by ever-increasing, widespread mass protests. In fact, the onslaught of reaction was itself a desperate measure to suppress the increasing mass protests and to impose an atmosphere of terror in order to block any further extension of these protests which could lead to the overthrow of the regime.

The recent barbaric measures have not, however, resulted in strengthening of the regime. On the contrary, the mass base of the regime has subsided to its minimum. Khomeini's dictatorship is now at the height of its unpopularity. The principal political indicator is the fact that, at present, if we leave aside the paid employees of reaction, the supporters of Khomeini's Islamic Republic amongst the population are fewer than the bankrupt monarchists. The majority of the people neither accept Khomeini as their religious leader nor have they become bemused by the demagoguery of his terrorist regime. The regime's re-

course to bloody terror and repression and its use of the methods of civil war to frighten off the opposition is itself the most clear indication of its deep political crisis.

The brutal use of force by the regime, by showing up its real nature, has, in fact, objectively changed the social relationship of forces against Khomeini's rule and has proved to the fighting layers that the only method of defending their gains is a decisive and determined struggle for its overthrow. The massacre of the opposition has not resulted in a depoliticisation or demoralisation of the masses. On the contrary, this has prepared them to build up forces for a decisive confrontation with the terrorist dictatorship. It is now becoming increasingly clear that the only instrument which can stop the onslaught is a general armed mobilisation. The vicious terrorist acts of the regime have proven that the ruling reaction would not leave the scene by the force of "law."

The present ebb in the isolated and scattered struggle of the different layers and classes is a result of the understanding that such methods of struggle are useless in the face of the terrorism of the state. The masses are now increasingly sensitive to the need for a united general struggle which can mobilise the forces necessary to resist reaction's brutality. With the increasing intensity of the social and economic crisis of capitalism in Iran such extensive struggles are on the agenda.

6.

Under the conditions in which the terrorist dictatorship has imposed a civil war, the masses are without a united extensive organisation capable of defending their gains. Without a united general mobilisation of the masses it would be impossible to overthrow the Khomeini dictatorship.

After the overthrow of the Shah's dictatorship, a number of combined factors, from the demagogy of the Khomeini leadership and the betrayals of the Tudeh Party and Fedayeen Organisation to the inexperience and mistakes of the advanced layers and even the revolutionary vanguard, blocked the spread and unity of the toilers *shoras* (councils). If a centralised and united mass organisation would have taken shape, the united forces of the toilers and the oppressed could have been mobilised to guarantee the development of the Iranian revolution.

The experience of the period of strikes by the workers and employees of factories and government departments against the Shah's regime and the experience of the struggles in the neighbourhoods, has shown that the greatest force for a confrontation with the dictatorship can be mobilised through general strikes. The broad layers of the masses have already gone through this experience. But, under the present conditions, due to a lack of a nationwide organisation which would lead such a strike, the possibility for mobilising this enormous social force is weak. Small mobilisations are easily defeated by the regime's terrorists.

It is thus clear that under the present circumstances, the role of political parties and organisations based on the toilers in mobilising and organising the masses is decisive. All the organisations claiming opposition to the rule of Khomeini and defending the interests of the toilers and the oppressed must prove this in their efforts for preparing the conditions for a general strike.

The unity of all the forces fighting for emancipation is

now the burning need of our revolution. This unity must, however, come about in action. Helping to reconstruct and build strike committees and neighbourhood committees, and helping to coordinate them for a general strike is a central task of the revolution around which all the fighting elements and organisations can unite.

If revolutionary forces prove incapable of unity even at such a level, the possibility that each individual organisation will do anything effective is weak.

The politically conscious and militant layers of the masses cannot take seriously those political forces who are not even prepared to unite on a concrete action programme, the unity in action of the revolutionary forces is not only a prerequisite of a successful struggle against the dictatorship but also the main guarantee for an extensive movement of the masses in their millions.

7.

The masses of the toilers and the oppressed who have experienced the great historical betrayal of the Khomeini leadership will not enter a consistent and determined struggle against the ruling reaction unless they have a clear picture of the aims of their struggle and the system which they must erect as a replacement to the present one. Today, more than ever, it is necessary that a clear and precise programme of the Iranian revolution be expressed by the various forces and tendencies and openly discussed and improved in front of the masses.

At the centre of such a programme must be the emphasis of the right of the people to political sovereignty. The lessons of a century of struggles in Iran have proven that no government imposed from above can bring freedom and democracy to Iran. The establishment of Khomeini's terrorist dictatorship has once again shown the value of this fundamental lesson to the oppressed and toiling masses of the population. The present regime, by gradually removing the political sovereignty of the people, succeeded in rolling back the gains of the revolution. It is, therefore, important that the central demand of the movement against the present dictatorship be the unattained central demand of the Iranian revolution, i.e., the convocation of a democratic and revolutionary constituent assembly. In such an assembly every political tendency must be able to have representatives in proportion to their support among the masses. This assembly must recognise no authority above itself.

This assembly must recognise and guarantee the full democratic rights of the masses. Freedom of ideas and religion, the freedom of expression and organisation, the emancipation of women from all kinds of discrimination and the emancipation of the oppressed nationalities from all national oppression, constitute the most elementary democratic rights of the Iranian people which have all been suppressed by Khomeini's regime of terror.

The next principal task of a revolutionary struggle must be the establishment of the rule of the toilers. Toilers constitute the vast majority of the population and the establishment of the political sovereignty of the people can only mean the transfer of political rule to the toilers, i.e., to the workers and peasants of Iran. Hence, unless the toiling millions are organised, there will be no guarantees that political sovereignty of the people of Iran is safeguarded. In every factory and in every governmental department democratic *shoras* (councils) must be formed and the

control of production and distribution must pass into the hands of these *shoras*. In the villages peasant *shoras* must take over the control of the agricultural lands and organise production and distribution. In the army too, control must pass into the hands of soldiers *shoras* who would decide on all appointments of officers and commanders.

The unity of the toilers *shoras* and the establishment of its central control on a nationwide basis is the only guarantee for the convocation and existence of a revolutionary democratic constituent assembly and the transfer of political rule into the hands of the broad layers of the population.

The forces supporting capitalism are hostile to these principal tasks of the revolution in Iran. They are unable to play any role, other than to betray, in the revolutionary movement against Khomeini's dictatorship.

8.

The National Council of Resistance, formed on the basis of a coalition between Mr. Bani-Sadr and his followers, and the People's Mujahedin Organisation is claiming the leadership of the progressive movement against Khomeini's dictatorship. This council has already formed "the legal" government of Iran and has declared that immediately after the overthrow of Khomeini's regime it would take over state power and establish "a truly Islamic Government."

Revolutionary workers organisations, whilst supporting any concrete steps by this council in the active struggles of the masses against the terrorist regime, cannot in any shape or form recognise the above claims of this council. These claims by themselves prove that this council has not got the ability or the competence to lead the revolutionary movement.

Although, members of this council have eventually announced their opposition to the reactionary constitution of the present regime, they are still insisting that Mr. Bani-Sadr is the "legal president" of Iran. He was elected to this post on the basis of the very same reactionary constitution, imposed on the Iranian people in a phony referendum, and in an even phonier election in which the most elementary democratic right of the people to put forward candidates was suppressed. He has still to settle the accounts for this past.

Even if these claims to legality were to be accepted, this council has no right to impose the type and the composi-

tion of the government from above and before the convocation of the constituent assembly. The revolutionary movement is demanding the establishment of political sovereignty of the people and not the formation of another government from above.

This council has, so far, refused to announce a clear programme of demands or a clear course of action and has instead limited itself to declaration of generalities which in the past constituted the essence of the demagoguery of the leaders of the present regime.

This council must clearly state its position on the full spectrum of the democratic rights of the people. It must announce whether or not it is prepared to fight for a revolutionary democratic constituent assembly based on the united *shoras* of the toilers. It must state if it recognises the right to self-determination for all oppressed nationalities, to be exercised through national constituent assemblies.

Most important of all, this council must show in action that it is prepared to break with the capitalist system. The lessons of revolutionary struggles in Iran, from the constitutional revolution to the present, show that political freedom and social welfare can be attained only when the decayed capitalist system which unavoidably results in dependence on imperialism, backwardness and dictatorship, is overturned. The National Resistance Council is, however, demanding the coalition of the revolutionary forces with capitalists. And for this reason it is against the interests of the majority of the Iranian people.

This council even, since its formation, has refused to work for the mobilisation of the masses and to prepare for a general strike. It has proposed a method of struggle which in fact simply substitutes the actions of the Mujahedin Organisation for the movement of the masses. It has put forward a programme titled "a covenant," in which there is neither a clear indication of a total break with all the reactionary aspects of the present "Islamic Republic," nor a break with the decaying capitalist system. This programme is in fact blocking the path of the unity in action of the revolutionary forces.

It must therefore, be clear that, despite the formation of their council, the task of fighting for the united *shoras* of the revolutionary forces must still be carried out and this must be taken as the central task demanded by the present period.

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The July 1979 Revolution of Nicaragua — Its Class Nature, the Specificities and the Major Problems

by Chan and Jaber

I.

1. A combination of the military actions by an independent politico-military organization of the FSLN and the broad mass-insurrections of workers and peasants achieved the great July 19 victory over the dictatorial Somoza regime and its army, the National Guard.

The old army of the Nicaraguan bourgeois state under Somoza was defeated and shattered by the combined

forces of the uprisen workers and peasants and the FSLN troops. The FSLN took state power under the broad and active support of the workers and peasants. The FSLN troops and the popular militias became the major armed forces in the country. The situation of dual power that had developed in the final weeks prior to Somoza's fall was overcome by the military victory of the FSLN and the uprisen workers and peasants. The anti-Somoza bourgeois

and landowning forces did not have their own armed forces, separate from the National Guard of the Somoza regime, before and through the July insurrections.

2. The immediate results of the July 19 victory are as follows:

(a) The central coercive force of the old Nicaraguan bourgeois state, the National Guard has been smashed totally, and it has been replaced by the new army, Sandinista People's Army (EPS) being built entirely around a cadre of FSLN troops and militias; that is, the central core of the old bourgeois state has been destroyed, and the old ruling social forces of the bourgeoisie and landowners have been disarmed definitely and remain to be hindered to arm at the very level of state power. Thus, the politico-military aspect of the Russian October 1917 victory has been definitely achieved through the July 19 victory in Nicaragua. The FSLN as the workers-peasants politico-military organization has come to the power with the massive support of the workers and peasants. The Somoza dictatorship of the bourgeoisie has come to the end and a new FSLN political rule, a dictatorship of the Nicaraguan proletariat, has begun.

(b) The worker and peasant masses have entered the stage of the whole Nicaraguan situation through the July 1979 uprising decisively, and the whole mass-movements of workers and peasants have definitely become a major active factor of the Nicaraguan situation, due to the role which the workers and peasants played in the July 19 victory and due to the victory itself of the FSLN and the masses over the Somoza regime and its National Guard.

It is the FSLN that seized the power through the July 19 victory. There was no other organized force of the working class which could have given an effective politico-military leadership to the masses in the insurrection and which could have taken the power through the successful insurrectionary situation in July 1979. The mass of workers as they are cannot take the power. Only through their political organizations can the workers become a class at the level of the state power. However, the insurrectionary participation of the masses was the key to paralyze the whole Somoza regime and its National Guard. The combination of the workers and peasants insurrections and the FSLN as a whole Nicaraguan-wide politico-military organization was fundamental for the victory. The masses are very aware of this vital fact, and the downfall of the Somoza regime and the FSLN's seizure of power are the political fruits of their struggle. Thus, the workers and peasants mass-movements are in themselves an independent active factor of the Nicaraguan situation since the July 19 victory.

Secondly, the fall of the Somoza regime and the FSLN's seizure of power themselves have liberated the masses of workers and peasants from the old repressive apparatus. The masses have got the broadest freedom for their movements, struggles and social and political efforts in the national framework of Nicaragua. That is, a doubled potential of the workers and peasants mass-movements in the Nicaraguan situation.

The FSLN's seizure of power and the full rise of the workers and peasants mass-movements combined, the whole dynamics of a proletarian permanent revolution have been unleashed; a full social revolution has begun.

(c) Having come to power with the massive support of the workers and peasants, the FSLN, through the GNR, a coalition government between the FSLN and the anti-

Somoza bourgeois forces, in which the former has the decisive political superiority over the latter, has introduced various radical economic and social measures in the interests of the workers and peasants under an extremely difficult social and economic situation.

The total assets of Somoza and the Somozaists were expropriated by July 20. The banks and saving institutions were nationalized, and the operations of the imperialist banks are tightly controlled; nationalization of the insurance companies at the end of October further increased state control over the financial sector. All the mines, which essentially belonged to imperialist companies, were nationalized, which reinforced the measures of control already taken over all of the country's natural resources. The agrarian reform was initiated with the state expropriation of the lands and estates belonging to the Somoza family, lands distributed by Somoza to his allies, and others. This already represents about 40% of the cultivable lands. These lands were confiscated and placed under the control of the Nicaraguan Institute for Agrarian Reform (INRA). The INRA is also providing incentives for the formation of production and marketing cooperatives by the small peasants. Plots of land were distributed when small peasants requested them. The government abolished the expropriation of small peasants for nonpayment of debts. State enterprises were set up to sell basic agricultural products on the domestic and foreign market. A state enterprise (ENABAS) was put in charge of marketing cereal staples. The same goes for agricultural products. The entire school system was restructured and free education was provided. A huge literacy campaign involving 700,000 persons is being prepared for the beginning of 1980. A unified health-care system was established to provide medical care throughout the country. Initial steps have been taken to ensure the distribution of drinking water to the poorest neighborhoods and to provide them with elementary social infrastructures (nurseries, clinics). A decree was adopted controlling prices on basic food commodities. The Sandinista Defense Committees (CDSs) can function as bodies to guarantee its implementation.

Those economic and social measures are fundamentally progressive in the interests of the toiling masses of Nicaragua. Having come to power, the FSLN served definitely for the workers and peasants to a great detriment of the bourgeoisie and landowners, and the Nicaraguan state under the FSLN has got its nationalized part of the economy and an important lever of the nationalized finance-banking system to direct the whole Nicaraguan economy.

(d) However, a general class-expropriation of all the major capitalists and landowners has not been carried out by the FSLN in power; the anti-Somoza bourgeois and landowning forces were exempted from the state expropriation immediately after the July 19 victory.

Somoza's holdings in industrial domain were limited. Fideicomiso — the organization in charge of administering all of the expropriated property except for the lands — manages only a fairly small portion of all the industrial enterprises; the share of industrial production classified as under state control does not exceed 20 to 25 percent, including the mixed sector. Agricultural production remains largely in the hands of the private sector. Out of an agriculturally active population of 325,000 persons, only about 30,000 work in the sector placed directly under the control of INRA. Capitalist ownership and control over

major sectors of industry, commerce and agriculture have not been broken.

Thus, the July 19 victory and the FSLN's coming to power have brought about a specific situation of "dual" or "mixed" economy under the political command of the FSLN and under a vigilance and heavy pressures of the working masses. The central social task of a proletarian revolution to expropriate all the major capitalists and landowners and to establish the foundation of a nationalized and planned economy with a state monopoly of foreign trade remains to be carried out in order for the FSLN political power of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants to get its own infrastructural socio-economic basis.

(e) As the economic and social power of the bourgeoisie and landowners have only been weakened, a full political dictatorship of the proletariat has not been established against the bourgeois and landowning forces through the July 19 victory and the FSLN's coming to power.

The representatives of big business are present in the Junta, the ministries — above all the economic ministries — in the civil administrative apparatus, and in the Central Bank. The Catholic church hierarchy supports the bourgeoisie. Some bourgeois parties are present in the government. The Somoza elements have been purged politically, but remnants of the old bourgeois state structure remain intact. The open political activities of the bourgeoisie as a class have not been suppressed.

The governmental coalition of the FSLN in power with the anti-Somoza bourgeois forces corresponds to the fact that those social forces have not been expropriated. There has been a social and political compromise between the FSLN in power and the anti-Somoza bourgeois and landowning forces, and this social and political compromise is the very condition under which imperialism and the whole international bourgeoisie have not forced a total politico-military and economic blockade against revolutionary Nicaragua.

(f) The anti-Somoza bourgeois forces had made desperate efforts to reach a compromise with the regime until the very end. But the National Guard was shattered totally, and the FSLN came to power as the representative of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants. The bourgeoisie and landowners were disarmed militarily, and the FSLN troops and the popular militias became the only armed forces in Nicaragua.

The initiative of the situation is definitely in the hands of the FSLN in power and the worker and peasant masses who have entered the greater mobilizations. A class expropriation of all the major capitalists and landowners has not been realized as an immediate result of the July 19 victory, but the remaining bourgeois and landowning forces have been kept disarmed and they have been put into a situation of siege in which they are surrounded politico-militarily by the bloc of the FSLN and the worker and peasant masses in the country. The FSLN and the worker and peasant masses are interdependent very closely; the evolution of their interrelation is decisive in their fundamentally proletarian class-struggle against the remaining bourgeois and landowning forces of Nicaragua and, especially, against the international bourgeoisie and imperialism.

This is the actual first phase of the dictatorship of the Nicaraguan proletariat in its very empirical and spontane-

ous form. The FSLN is the actual political power in Nicaragua since the July 19 victory; at the center of the state is the FSLN with its own armed forces. The FSLN political power is essentially a dictatorship of the Nicaraguan proletariat, due to the fundamental class-nature of the FSLN itself. Thus, the fundamental class-nature of the Nicaraguan state today is proletarian; it is not a bourgeois state. Our basic attitude toward the Nicaraguan state under the FSLN is the one toward any workers state; to defend the state fundamentally, not necessarily supporting its whole existing structure, its government and all its policies.

II.

3. In the case of the October Russian revolution, the leadership of the Bolshevik party was fully aware of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, and the Bolshevik party had already got the active, energetic majority of the working masses politically through the Soviets. The Bolshevik and the left SR government of October 1917 was established as a fully revolutionary, dictatorial government of the Russian proletariat from the very beginning. There was no ambiguity about the class-nature of the government and the Bolshevik-led regime.

But, as for the Nicaraguan revolution of July 1979, the FSLN-led regime and the government which have been brought about are not those of a full dictatorship of the Nicaraguan proletariat against all the major capitalist and landowning forces. It is a kind of compromising political rule of the Nicaraguan proletariat through the FSLN in power. The FSLN has become the actual power in Nicaragua, but the new government was not definitely proletarian nor definitely bourgeois; the general political and social policy of the FSLN is not fully proletarian/socialist, nor wholly bourgeois/capitalist. The situation which has been brought about through the July 1979 victory of the Nicaraguan revolution is complex and contradictory; there is definitely a certain ambiguity in the whole situation itself.

4. The Bolshevik party which seized the power through the October 1917 insurrection was a revolutionary *political party* of the Russian working class. The Bolshevik party organized the October insurrection and took the power, *having got the effective/energetic majority of the working masses and the soldiers under its direct influence through the consistent political fights and struggles against the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces and currents under the very much conscious program of the proletarian revolution, at least since the breakout of the February revolution.* The Bolshevik party had cleared the way for the insurrection and the direct seizure of power *politically*. The central arena of the political struggle was the Soviets.

In the case of the Nicaraguan revolution, the FSLN was *not a definitely crystalized revolutionary political party of the Nicaraguan working class.* The FSLN played a substitutional role of a revolutionary-working-class party. It was rather a kind of populist-type politico-military organization; a specific mixture of a political organization and a military organization whose central aim was a military overthrow of the dictatorial regime of Somoza. This character of the FSLN is very much different from that of the Bolshevik party, and, even in the case of the third Chinese revolution, the CCP commanded the People's

Liberation Army politically.

In Nicaragua, under the worsening political and social crisis of the Somoza regime and the intensification of the class contradictions, the political situation evolved toward a civil-war situation in 1978-79, partly due to the military initiatives of the FSLN. The worker and peasant masses themselves began to develop their own insurrectional uprisings, deepening the death agony of the Somoza regime. This very evolution of the Nicaraguan situation toward that of civil war deprived the anti-Somoza bourgeois forces of the room for their compromising political maneuvers; the civil-war situation with the massive insurrectional participation of the workers and peasants in itself paralyzed the compromising politics of the anti-Somoza bourgeois forces. This process was spontaneous politically. The FSLN capitalised this whole process politico-militarily very much. It gave the practical leadership to the masses in the insurrections; it became the politico-military center and the backbone of the uprisen workers and peasants against the Somoza regime; thus, the FSLN became the actual leadership of the Nicaraguan popular masses. The FSLN's coming to the overwhelming leadership-position of the workers and peasants was very specific, which is quite different from the way in which the Bolshevik party got the effective political majority among the active masses in 1917.

In the very process through which the FSLN established itself as a definite leadership of the workers and peasants, the FSLN did not conduct a conscious and consistent political struggle against the anti-Somoza bourgeois forces and the petty-bourgeois democratic illusions, a consistent and conscious political struggle for the program of a Nicaraguan proletarian permanent revolution. Here is a quite clear difference between the Bolshevik party and the FSLN. Very much contrary to the Bolshevik party, the FSLN reached the political agreement with the anti-Somoza bourgeois force on the very eve of the final battle with the Somoza regime and its National Guard; the July 9 agreement between the FSLN and the anti-Somoza bourgeois forces on the GNR and the Council of State. This agreement was not a simple tactical agreement, but a political agreement of class-collaboration after the overthrow of the Somoza regime. The FSLN itself was extremely contradictory; it was conscious and consistent to lead the mass-insurrections of the workers and peasants toward the final military victory, but it had no clear grasp of the dynamics of a proletarian permanent revolution.

5. The July 9 agreement between the FSLN and the anti-Somoza bourgeois forces was a bourgeois-democratic agreement for a class-collaboration. It presupposed a bourgeois dominance in the Council of State. And it is a fact that this agreement played a role to neutralize the international bourgeoisie at the moment of the final insurrection, thus having isolated the Somoza regime in its final death-agony.

In any case, this class-collaborationist agreement had had no objective basis in the actual evolution of the Nicaraguan situation in the civil war. The class struggle had already come to the level of a generalized military struggle, and those anti-Somoza bourgeois democratic forces did not have their own military force, just like the anti-Chiang Kai-shek/Kuomintang democratic "nationalist" bourgeois forces of China between 1945 and 1949 and the South-Vietnamese "third," "neutral," "peace" forces in the first half of the 1970s. Those "pacifist" bourgeois

forces were out-manuevered objectively by the communist parties after the latter came to power. On the very eve of the final battle to overthrow the Somoza regime, the Nicaraguan anti-Somoza bourgeois forces got a class-collaborationist agreement with the FSLN, the central politico-military force of the general military uprising, but they had no material means under their direct control to enforce the class-collaboration. In this context, they were entirely dependent on a "good will" of the FSLN leadership.

6. In fact, the actual victory of July 19 brought about a new situation in which the July 9 agreement of a class-collaboration could not be implemented as it had presupposed. The whole National Guard was shattered totally by the mass-insurrections and the FSLN troops; the FSLN came to power with its own troops and with the massive support from the workers and peasants; the capitalists and landowners were disarmed militarily at the level of state power, and the anti-Somoza bourgeois forces were put into a situation of siege surrounded by the FSLN in power and the workers and peasants in a great mobilization.

In this new context, the FSLN in power has implemented the July 9 agreement with the anti-Somoza bourgeois forces, necessarily in a very much "deformed" way. The anti-Somoza bourgeois forces have not been expropriated; the whole state structure has not been totally transformed through a full mobilization and organization of the workers and peasants; and the GNR of a coalition has been installed as the first government immediately after the July 19 victory. But the state power is in the hands of the FSLN. Thus, a political and social compromise situation has been created between the militarily disarmed bourgeois forces and the working class under the FSLN political rule of the Nicaraguan proletariat. This is the precise situation under which a definite and generalized politico-military and economic confrontation of the Nicaraguan revolution has been evaded with the international bourgeoisie and imperialism so far; the international bourgeoisie is trying to utilize the present intermediate situation of the FSLN political rule in order to block the further development of it toward a full dictatorship of the Nicaraguan proletariat.

Thus, we have the ambiguity in the situation of the Nicaraguan state and economy under the FSLN rule of the proletariat in its intermediate phase, and this intermediate nature of the situation has not been overcome definitely even after the April 1980 crisis. The Nicaraguan proletariat and its FSLN have not yet settled the final account with the remaining bourgeois and landowning forces. The FSLN power of the Nicaraguan proletariat is fundamentally irreconcilable politically and socially with the remaining bourgeois and landowning forces and the remnants of the old state structure. Without totally transforming the whole state structure through a full mobilization and organization of the workers and peasants, and without getting its definitely socialized infrastructural basis through expropriation of the capitalists and landowners, the FSLN political rule as a spontaneous and embryonic dictatorship of the Nicaraguan proletariat remains to be at an intermediate stage.

III.

7. The FSLN was not a vanguard *political party* of the Nicaraguan working class; it was a populist-type politico-military organization of the workers and peasants, with

the central, conscious aim of a military overthrow of the Somoza regime.

The FSLN as a political organization was not a bourgeois organization, but basically a spontaneous and uncrystallized workers organization comprising the elements of the urban petty-bourgeoisie and the peasants. Its tradition and origin go back to the military struggle of Augusto Cesar Sandino and the Nicaraguan communist party. "The FSLN is rooted in Nicaragua's long tradition of anti-imperialist struggle and plebeian radicalism. It takes its name from Augusto Cesar Sandino . . . who led a seven-year guerrilla war against the U.S. Marines from 1927 to 1934. When all the bourgeois-nationalist forces capitulated to the imperialists and their puppets, Sandino and his worker and peasant forces continued to fight" ("Workers and Peasants Fight for a New Nicaragua," Pedro Camejo, Sergio Rodriguez and Fred Murphy, *IP*, Sept. 3, 1979, p. 814). In 1961 the FSLN was founded "by Carlos Fonseca Amador and other young rebels who broke with the reformism of the Stalinist Nicaraguan Socialist Party" (*ibid.*), under the direct impact of the Cuban revolution. The direct origin of the FSLN was in a Stalinist workers party. The Cuban revolution was the model and the inspirer of the FSLN, and it had a close link with the Cuban workers state all through the struggle: "the FSLN fighters have enjoyed the active solidarity of the Cuban revolution — Cuba provided military training and material aid to the guerrilla struggle from the beginning" (*ibid.*). The tradition, the origin and the international force on which the FSLN relied are not bourgeois; those are the plebeian anti-imperialist tradition of the workers and peasants, a Stalinist workers party and the Cuban workers state.

A military overthrow of the Somoza regime had never been the line of the anti-Somoza bourgeois forces. With its Sandino tradition and its close link with the Cuban workers state and the Castro leadership, the FSLN sought its bases of support among the worker and peasant masses. In spite of the FSLN's, especially the biggest Terceristas' political orientation of a democratic alliance with parts of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, the workers and peasants in the struggle against the Somoza regime identified themselves strongly with the FSLN and its military fight against the regime; the political link between the FSLN and the workers and peasants was definite in 1978-79. The mass of urban youth joined the FSLN troops in 1978, and the troops were a popular army of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants at the time of the July 1979 victory over the Somoza regime and its National Guard. In this context, the major social basis of the FSLN was among the proletarian and semi-proletarian masses in the cities and rural areas.

8. Due to its close international link with the Cuban workers state and its major social basis, the dominant class-nature of the FSLN was proletarian objectively when it seized the power through the 1979 victory. But this proletarian class-nature was spontaneous and was not crystallized definitely. The FSLN had the elements of urban and rural petty-bourgeoisies at the same time.

The FSLN was not founded as a conscious vanguard political organization of the Nicaraguan proletariat, but as a populist-type politico-military organization of the workers and peasants. It sought its bases of support among the worker and peasant masses in an empirical manner, but it did not fight consciously for a proletarian program for

the Nicaraguan permanent revolution. Its conscious central aim was a military overthrow of the Somoza regime with the popular support of workers and peasants; it did not fight for its conscious and organized links with the workers and peasants under a proletarian program of the Nicaraguan permanent revolution. The nature of the FSLN's split into the three currents of Terceristas, Prolonged People's War Tendency and Proletarian Tendency reflected the specific character of the FSLN as a populist-type politico-military organization. Finally the urban proletariat was not strong socially and it was not well organized in Nicaragua.

Due to the spontaneousness and uncrystallizedness of its proletarian class-nature and, especially, due to its strong military character of the organization, the FSLN had a certain bonapartistic aspect in relation to the working class and the peasants.

Those specificities of the FSLN are the FSLN-side background of the intermediate nature of its political power as a dictatorship of the Nicaraguan proletariat since the July 1979 victory, and we must characterize the FSLN as a centrist revolutionary leadership of the Nicaraguan working class.

As for the situation of the working-class masses, first of all, the FSLN was and is the definite leadership of the masses during the 1978-79 struggle against the Somoza regime and since the July 1979 victory; the leadership prestige of the FSLN is tremendous especially after the victory. The working-class masses themselves did not have their own distinctive, strong political class-tradition, and they were not organized as a political class under a conscious proletarian program of the Nicaraguan permanent revolution by anybody. In spite of the strong political and social mobilization as a result of the July 1979 victory, the working-class masses themselves are naturally very much spontaneous in relation to the proletarian tasks of the Nicaraguan permanent revolution.

9. Thus, there is a specific empirical inter-relation between the FSLN in power and the working-class masses in their greater mobilization, and the intermediate situation of the Nicaraguan state today reflects this subjective inter-relation.

"The political mechanism of revolution consists of the transfer of power from one class to another. The forcible overturn is usually accomplished in a brief time. But no historic class lifts itself from a subject position to a position of rulership suddenly in one night, even though a night of revolution." "The masses go into a revolution not with a prepared plan of social reconstruction, but with a sharp feeling that they cannot endure the old regime. Only the guiding layers of a class have a political program, and even this still requires the test of events, and the approval of the masses. The fundamental process of the revolution thus consists in the gradual comprehension by a class of the problems arising from the social crisis — the active orientation of the masses by a method of successive approximations" (Leon Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*).

The Nicaraguan working class took the power through the FSLN as the Russian working class did through the Bolshevik party in October 1917, but the subjective situation of the Nicaraguan working class with its FSLN leadership is somehow similar to the post-February situation of the Russian working class. Here is a specific

combined and uneven process of the Nicaraguan revolution. The FSLN political power is a political rule of the Nicaraguan proletariat over the country; as such it is a dictatorship of the proletariat, embryonic, spontaneous, empirical and intermediate.

10. There is another important, international aspect of the background in relation to the present intermediate nature of the FSLN political rule.

The social and economic situation of Nicaragua is extremely difficult due to the devastation done by the Somoza regime in its final desperation, under the 1972 earthquake sufferings, and the general class expropriation of all the major capitalists and big landowners will pose an open and total confrontation of the Nicaraguan revolution with the international bourgeoisie and imperialism; they will enact a total politico-military and economic blockade against the revolution. Here is a tremendous objective pressure on the proletarian permanent revolution from the international bourgeoisie and imperialism.

Objectively the confrontation is posed in a broader regional framework of Central America and Caribbean Sea; an international confrontation between the proletarian revolution of the Cuban workers state, the Nicaraguan revolution and the revolutionary struggles of the workers and peasants in the region, on the one hand, and US imperialism, its imperialist allies and the Latin American neo-colonialist bourgeoisie, on the other. In this confrontation, the Nicaraguan revolution can rely on the Cuban workers state. But Cuba is not strong enough economically and it is isolated relatively in the Caribbean Sea. The Cuban government has been expressing its full support to the Nicaraguan revolution materially, but it is obliged to make international maneuvers in its relations with the Latin American neo-colonialist governments in face of the intensifying politico-military threat from US imperialism.

In this context, the conservative nature of the Soviet bureaucracy, the reactionary conflict between the Soviet Union and China, and the counter-revolutionary pro-imperialist foreign policy of the present Chinese government are the great international obstacles for the further definite advance of the Nicaraguan revolution as a full proletarian permanent revolution. The existing workers states of the Soviet Union, China and others can give a full material support to the further proletarian advance of the Nicaraguan revolution. Thus, we must see the great international Stalinist obstacle very precisely in the present intermediate situation of the FSLN political power of the Nicaraguan proletariat.

IV.

11. The Nicaraguan revolution of the proletariat remains at an intermediate stage. In the final analysis, its fundamental causes are the objective pressure of the international bourgeoisie, especially US imperialism on the Nicaraguan revolution, which has real social and economic difficulties, on the one hand, and the totally nonsensical situation of the already existing workers states, especially the narrow conservatism of the Soviet bureaucracy and the counter-revolutionary international policy of the Chinese bureaucracy, and the fact that the whole international working class has not yet developed its independent capacity which would be effective enough to invalidate the negativities of the nationalist bureaucracies of the workers states internationally, on the other.

Thus, the factor of subjective consciousness is all the more vital for the further proletarian advance of the Nicaraguan revolution.

The April crisis of the GNR and the results have only confirmed the class nature of the July 1979 revolution and the very favorable political balance of forces for the FSLN in power and the worker and peasant masses as the result of the July 19 victory, in relation to the bourgeois forces in the national framework of Nicaragua. The April crisis and the actual result of it, at the same time, have shown the natural political limit of the workers and peasants mass-spontaneities to overcome the intermediate character of the FSLN political rule. The FSLN in power fought against the provocation and campaigns of the oppositionist bourgeois forces. The FSLN stood definitely in defense of the July 1979 revolution and in the definite interests of the workers and peasants, but it has not taken a new qualitative step-forward to break the intermediate limitation of the Nicaraguan proletarian revolution. The compromise situation has remained basically as it was before the April crisis.

12. A political and social compromise situation prevails between the working class with its FSLN in power and the militarily disarmed bourgeois forces in Nicaragua. This is the precise situation under which the Nicaraguan proletarian revolution has evaded a decisive and generalized politico-military and socio-economic confrontation with imperialism and the international bourgeoisies. Imperialism and the international bourgeoisies are working to utilize the intermediate situation of the FSLN political rule in order to block the further development of it toward a full dictatorship of the proletariat and to find a chance of their counter-revolutionary bourgeois offensive.

In any case, the actual evolution of the broader regional situation in Central America and the Caribbean Sea will force a decisive confrontation, internal and international simultaneously, to the Nicaraguan revolution in one way or another. A general class assault of the Nicaraguan proletarian revolution upon the bourgeois forces in Nicaragua is to provoke a direct and total confrontation with imperialism and the international bourgeoisies, and any eventual international confrontation is to force the FSLN political power to launch a general class assault upon the Nicaraguan bourgeois and landowning forces, with an utmost mobilization of the workers and peasants.

Thus, a thorough class assault on the remaining bourgeois and landowning forces is unseparably combined with the perspective of a decisive international confrontation with imperialism and the international bourgeoisies in Central America and the Caribbean Sea. This combination of the internal class assault and the total international confrontation is the key death-and-life question for the on-going Nicaraguan proletarian revolution in its actual practice. The national proletarian task and the international proletarian struggle are now definitely combined, and no one can separate them.

In the past, no proletarian revolution had established and consolidated itself definitely without having a severe international confrontation with imperialism and the international bourgeoisies. The Russian revolution had the bloody Civil War against the imperialist interventions and the domestic counter-revolutionary forces. The third Chinese revolution had the international war with US imperialism at the Korean peninsula, and the new Chinese

workers state was blockaded politico-militarily and economically by imperialism all through the 1950s and 1960s; only the victorious armed struggle of the Vietnamese revolution against US imperialism could have broken this two-decade imperialist blockade against China. The Vietnamese revolution had to have two revolutionary independence wars against French imperialism and US imperialism. As for the Cuban revolution the Soviet Union gave its international defense-cover for the Cuban revolution, when it consolidated its final direction of development as a workers state at the beginning of the 1960s. In this respect, the Vietnamese revolution is far more advanced than the Cuban revolution.

13. The Nicaraguan proletarian revolution cannot be an exception. The FSLN in power is preparing for the coming confrontation militarily together with the maneuvers in relation to the Nicaraguan bourgeois forces. The coming international confrontation is simultaneously an internal class confrontation with the remaining Nicaraguan bourgeois and landowning forces. This combined nature of the internal and international class tasks must be crystal-clear for the whole Nicaraguan workers and peasants and for the whole international proletariat. In this context, the whole preparation and struggles must be conducted for the total confrontation.

The total expropriation of all the major capitalists and landowners and a full establishment of a workers and peasants state-structure; a full proletarian combination with the Cuban workers state and the revolutionary struggles of workers and peasants in the Central America and the Caribbean Sea; getting the treaties of politico-military and economic alliance with the Soviet Union and other workers states in Eastern Europe and Indochina — all those three are the combined tasks of the Nicaraguan revolution for its further proletarian leap forward. The perspective of the struggle is the one as an organic part of the whole Latin American revolution and, at the same time, as an organic regional part of the whole ongoing worldwide struggles against international imperialism.

14. In this context of the coming internal and international class confrontation, the question of a vanguard political party of the Nicaraguan proletariat is posed now for the FSLN and all the revolution needs its leading proletarian party for the not-so-easy struggles in the coming period. The spontaneous, empirical populist-type character of the FSLN as a proletarian organization must be overcome. A struggle must be conducted for formation of a definite revolutionary proletarian party with a full proletarian program of the Nicaraguan revolution in the ranks of the FSLN itself.

Appendix

Government, State and Property

1. Each time that we have tried to apply the notion of 'workers and peasants government' numerous differences have surfaced in our ranks. The origin of this state of affairs resides in the confusion existing in our movement between the notions of government, state and dominant property relations. Thus the notion of government is taken in a sense which often goes further than the usually defined government (council of ministers) and covers in fact the nature of the state. That is how the following schema is arrived at by certain comrades: the workers and peasants government begins the transformation in a socialist direction of the dominant property relations (in industry in particular) which, once it has been resolved, signals the birth of a workers state (cf. the analysis of the SWP on China).

2. Now, our two principal references on the concept of the workers and peasants government, that is, the C.I. resolution and the Transitional programme, in no way allows us to give a broad sense to the concept. It is indeed uniquely a question of a government composed exclusively of representatives of the proletariat and the peasantry without bourgeois ministers, in the same sense that a bourgeois workers government is that of a 'bourgeois workers party' (social democracy) and a workers communist government is the affair of a communist party alone. The workers and peasants government can appear within the framework of a bourgeois state. In this sense, it is indeed a central element of the Transitional programme. The problem then that is posed is that of the destruction of the bourgeois state and its replacement by a 'workers state,' that is, a state of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is this last task that we, the Trotskyists, assign to a

workers and peasants government. It is to this extent that for us such a government should coincide with the dictatorship of the proletariat.

For example, a Menshevik/S.R. government before October 1917 would have been a workers and peasants government coexisting with a state that was bourgeois — albeit atrophied. That is where the transitional slogan of the Bolsheviks came in: 'Down with the capitalist ministers.' The Bolshevik/Left S.R. government after October 1917 was the realisation of the workers and peasants government, but in the framework of a proletarian dictatorship.

3. The state, in the sense given to the term by the classics of Marxism, is the instrument of the dictatorship of a class. Essentially it is a question of a coercive apparatus. It serves to defend the dominant property relations or else to transform them (in a revolutionary period), but it must not be confused with the latter, if not it would have been necessary to conclude that the workers state only appeared in the USSR at the end of the twenties. In fact the dual power that was installed after February 1917 was nothing else but the coexistence of two states. October 1917 put an end to this transitional duality to the profit of the formation of a single workers state. During the first period it was a workers and peasants government but had become exclusively a communist one by the end. As for the dominant relations of property, they only became socialist during the epoch of the forced collectivisation (if one leaves out the interlude of the 'war communism' period).

4. In China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state was set up over the whole country in October 1949. The

government formed then was a 'coalition government,' as the Maoists themselves called it, between the CCP and the bourgeoisie. The collectivisation of dominant property relations only began in 1953 after a much briefer NEP than the original one (thanks to the presence of the USSR, whereas the latter was the only workers state at the end of the first world war).

5. In Cuba, the state born just after the victory over Batista was essentially proletarian (the nature of the PLA) built on the ruins of the bourgeois state. The government was a coalition government between workers and petty bourgeois/peasant tendencies (hybrid nature of the Castro movement) and bourgeois tendencies. We know what the evolution was.

6. In Algeria, on the other hand, the state set up after the retreat of the French was a bourgeois state with a petty bourgeois social base led by the FLN leadership in which bourgeois and petty bourgeois elements coexisted. The Ben Bella government was essentially that of a radical petty bourgeois wing of the FLN (the ideology of the latter was always Nasserite/Muslim).

7. Finally in Nicaragua, as in Cuba, Somoza's bourgeois state had been destroyed to the profit of an essentially proletarian state as 'deformed' and incomplete as was the

Castroist state. The FSLN is a front (as its name suggests) of workers and petty bourgeois tendencies. The Junta is a coalition government of the FSLN and similar tendencies with bourgeois elements. The recent substitution of bourgeois ministers by others changes nothing in terms of the nature of the *government*. It does not express anything more in terms of the *change* in the relationship of forces but rather reveals, by the way in which it took place, the *relationship of forces set up after July 1979*.

We won't see an 'Algerian road' in Nicaragua: a bourgeois restoration could not be based on the new state, as was the case in Algeria with the Boumedienne *coup d'etat*, but would have to destroy it. If there is a danger, it is that of a bourgeois *counterrevolution*, with perhaps the participation of the petty bourgeois tendencies of the FSLN itself, although it is a question of highly improbable eventuality at the present time.

8. Our fundamental tasks in Nicaragua turn around two axes: soviet democracy and collectivization, with all the respect due, in Nicaragua as in Cuba, to a leadership, which although not Leninist, has nonetheless the enormous merit of having *made* a revolution.

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