

THESES FOR THE RE-CONSTRUCTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

English-language text of December 1984

Un-Checked and Un-Revised

C O N T E N T S

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## Publishers' Note

What follows is a translation of the French-language edition of the Theses for the Re-construction of the Fourth International. These theses were adopted in December 1980. They include the amendments which the General Council of the Fourth International (International Committee) adopted in May 1981, and are the only changes from the original text of the Draft Theses, which were published in a special issue of "Correspondance Internationale - La Verite" in November 1980. The editors of the French text eliminated certain errors in typography or in syntax which had slipped into the first edition. They also made easier to read some passages which had been hastily translated from the original Spanish.

## P R E F A C E

The Socialist Labour Group, like the Parti Communiste Internationaliste which was responsible for the French-language text, does not in any way regard this document as having been produced to lie in the archives or "for the historical record". On the contrary, we have produced this definite edition of the Theses in English because we believe that the document retains in every respect its theoretical and political relevance to the struggle to re-construct the Fourth International and to the strategy for building the revolutionary party in each country.

The "Theses for the Re-construction of the Fourth International" demonstrate by their entire content that the Founding Programme of the Fourth International is valid and relevant today. They do so by incorporating in the analysis the developments in the international class struggle since World War II. Their purpose is to serve as a theoretical and political instrument by the aid of which to re-construct the Fourth International. In our opinion there is only one cause for the crisis and dislocation of the Fourth International. That cause is the revisionism which developed in its leadership in 1950 - 52.

The adoption of these Theses in 1980 by a World Conference, at which organisations from thirty-five countries were represented, laid the principled basis for the formation of the "Fourth International (International Committee)", of which the Parti Communiste Internationaliste - at that time the United OCI - was the French section. These Theses were not elaborated by purely "intellectual" activity divorced from intervention in the class struggle. Nor was the decision to produce them taken without reflection. On the contrary, the Theses were produced because they meet the requirements of a definite stage in the struggle to re-construct the Fourth International. That stage is connected directly with the study of the problems which are arising from the class struggle itself and from the tasks which face the Trotskyist organisations.

In October 1979 two international currents, the Bolshevik Fraction (BF) and the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (LTT), both of which had formed within the "United

Secretariat", broke away from the "United Secretariat". They did so because that body refused to allow them their right for a World Congress to be democratically prepared, so that the serious divergences which were tearing the "United Secretariat" apart could be discussed. The BF and the LTT saw the political content of the split as lying in their refusal to surrender an essential element of the Programme of the Fourth International of the justification for its existence, the need to construct revolutionary parties, sections of the Fourth International, in all countries.

This was the political basis on which the Bolshevik Fraction and the Leninist-Trotskyist tendency made contact with the Organising Committee for the Re-construction of the Fourth International (OCRFI). The origin of the OCRFI lies in the resistance of the majority of the French section of the Fourth International to revisionism from 1951 onwards and in its struggle to re-construct the Fourth International on the basis of its principles and of the Founding Programme.

These three currents formed a "Parity Committee". The principal task of the "Parity Committee" was to prepare a World Conference. The drafting of the Theses was undertaken within this framework, on the basis of a joint political declaration which was adopted in February 1980, and the draft was completed in September 1980 (1).

We begin by reproducing the original preface to the draft, which makes unnecessary any long explanation of the limits which the authors set to their work: in this preface they wrote:

"We do not in any way claim to have solved every question. These can be solved only by the widest possible international discussion, in conjunction with active intervention in the class struggle. The authors believe that certain questions still need to be tackled and discussed. We do not claim that the World Conference, for which we have written this draft, will be in a position to announce that the Fourth International has now been re-constructed: we do not proceed by issuing ultimata."

These are the clearly-defined limits within which the Theses are an important document. They develop the defence of the principles and method of the Transitional Programme. They analyse the essential elements of the class struggle since World War II: the nature and causes of the "boom" in the capitalist economy: the significance and the origins of the bureaucratic workers' states, based on the expropriation of capital: the development of the political revolution and its combination with the social revolution: the link between the anti-imperialist wars which overthrew the old colonial empires and the world proletarian revolution. These analyses make the Theses an advance in political analysis. That analysis is combined with an examination of the principal strategic aspects of the international revolutionary struggle of the working class and of the struggle to construct revolutionary parties, sections of the International, in each country.



The Theses therefore take up most of the essential problems underlying the crisis of the Fourth International which continue to be matters of concern today. The Theses do so in the light of the historical experience and interventions of the Trotskyist organisations. They therefore form an element in the solution of the crisis which cannot be ignored. This fact alone emphasises how important they are.

The "Draft Theses" were adopted in December 1980 by the World Conference at which the "Fourth International (International Committee)" was founded. They formed the theoretical and political basis for the creation of this international organisation. The World Conference discussed numerous amendments. These were referred for final adoption to the General Council, the body, widely representative of the sections, which was elected at the World Conference. The General Council adopted a certain number of amendments in their final form in May 1981, and these amendments are incorporated in the present version.

The development of the Fourth International (International Committee) was interrupted (as is well known) by the disruptive and liquidationist attack which Nahuel Moreno directed against it. This took the form of a grossly slanderous attack on the PCI and its policies. The allegations on which this attack was based were so remote from reality as to make clear that it was merely the pretext for a split which Moreno wanted for other reasons. Underlying them was his un-disguised refusal to develop the Fourth International (International Committee), because its existence was threatening what he regarded as his own particular "sphere of influence". This purpose of his attack, therefore, was to defend his "sphere of influence" rather than to contribute positively to a struggle of tendencies.

In other words, the struggle to reconstruct the Fourth International ran into the obstacle of "national Trotskyism", as has happened so often before. It ran into a rejection in practice of the International. This is always a sign that political and social forces hostile to the Fourth International and to the proletarian revolution have intervened.

This preface is not the place for a history of Moreno's attempt to liquidate the advances which this part of the struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International has made possible (2). None the less, two points should be stressed.

Moreno and his supporters succeeded in inflicting a blow on those who are fighting to construct the Fourth International. However, it did not lie within their power to liquidate the gains which the formation and development of the International Committee represent. The Fourth International (International Centre for Reconstruction) has preserved these gains. Already in May 1981 the Fourth International (International Centre for Reconstruction) included Trotskyist organisations and groups in thirty-one countries. It publishes its international journal, "International Tribune" in French, Spanish, Portuguese, English and German.



Meanwhile, Moreno's attempt to re-establish an international fraction on a liquidationist basis has been rewarded by the progressive disintegration of his fraction in a number of crises and splits. Leaders and militants of the organisations which used to belong to the Bolshevik Fraction are rejecting Moreno's liquidationist operation as an obstacle to their struggle and have opened discussion with the Fourth International (International Centre for Reconstruction).

The continuity of the struggle has been preserved. But not only that. The struggle is going forward on a broader front. The activity and interventions in the class struggle of the organisations affiliated to the Fourth International (International Centre for Reconstruction) and its internal discussions are advancing the struggle to reconstruct the Fourth International.

Today (May 1982) the Fourth International (International Centre for Reconstruction) is preparing a World Conference to be held in summer 1982. The Theses are a common point of reference and of departure in the preparation for this Conference.

Which brings us to the second point: has Moreno's disruptive operation in some way or other rendered the Theses useless?

The same question can be put another way: has this disruptive operation something to do with the content of the Theses?

People who oppose the struggle to reconstruct the Fourth International have amused themselves by remarking that the Theses could not prevent the split, despite the importance which we attach to them, and that this fact shows at least that the Theses are inadequate.

But this is not much of an argument. The theoretical contributions of Marx and Engels to the programmes of the Social-Democratic Parties did not "prevent" the Second International from collapsing. When we say that, we do not get things out of proportion. At the same time, the reformist leaders had to repudiate the principles and the method of Marx and Engels and to revise Marxism, in order to justify their capitulation to imperialism. The writings of Lenin, the Theses and Resolutions of the First Four Congresses of the Communist International, did not "prevent" Stalinism. At the same time, Stalin and the bureaucracy had to attack the foundations of Bolshevism explicitly. The "Transitional Programme" which Trotsky drafted did not "prevent" the crisis of the Fourth International. At the same time, the revisionists had to attack the foundations of the "Transitional Programme" in order to develop their liquidationist activity.

Moreno could not undertake his destructive work without attacking the content of the Theses. He did this in the first place indirectly. One of his "charges" against the PCI was that it upheld the line of the workers' united front under a Popular Front Government. This argument takes all the content out of the demand in the "Transitional Programme" for a break with the bourgeoisie; it contradicts the

Theses. But he also attacked the Theses directly. One of the resolutions on the basis of which Moreno's new international organisation was founded states:

"Even if the Theses remain valid... it would nevertheless be necessary to re-open a discussion on a series of points, in order to change or to complete or to re-phrase what the Theses say about the character of the period since 1974, about the workers' united front, the anti-imperialist united front, the revolutionary united front, the political revolution, the Popular Front Government, organisational questions and the question of the internal regime."

When we de-code this, we can see that it means revising everything.

Trotsky said that every group which claims to be working to construct a revolutionary party and which seeks contact with the masses must have a political "passport" enabling it to be identified. Moreno could proceed with his liquidationist adventure only because he had no such "passport", or was carrying false credentials.

However, the Fourth International (International Centre for Reconstruction) declares politically what it really is. The Theses for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International are precisely one of the elements which make up what it is.

Francois Forgue

May 28, 1982

#### Footnotes

- (1) On the question of the split in the "United Secretariat" and the formation of the Parity Committee, the reader is referred particularly to Nos. 1, 2 and 3 of "Correspondance Internationale - La Verite", between January and September 1980.
- (2) The main points in Moreno's disruptive attack and in the discussion in the International Committee can be found in No. 13 of "Correspondance Internationale - La Verite", the monthly organ of the Fourth International (International Committee for Reconstruction).

## FOREWORD TO THE DRAFT THESES

(September 1980)

This draft is submitted for discussion by the groups, organisations and sections affiliated to the three international currents, the Bolshevik Fraction (BF), the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency (LTT) and the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI), which formed the Parity Committee for the reconstruction (reorganisation) of the Fourth International on the basis of its founding document.

The enlarged meeting of the Parity Committee in February 1980 adopted the final declaration and charged Nahuel Moreno with the preparation of a preliminary draft. On the basis of that preliminary draft, the second enlarged session of the Parity Committee, in May 1980, appointed a commission, composed of Comrades Nahuel Moreno, Pierre Lambert and Christian Nemo (with the close association of Stephane Just and Luis Favre). This commission collectively presents the following draft Theses for discussion.

We affirm the validity of the Transitional Programme adopted at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in 1938. We affirm, further, that the crisis of the Fourth International has one single cause only, that is, revisionism, the source of which was Pablo-ism in 1950 - 52.

In drafting these theses we attempted to apply the method of Marxism as Trotsky defined it in these lines, written on January 1, 1936:

"The theoretical prognoses of Marx and Engels did not foresee, in any case, the possibility of political revolutions on the basis of property nationalised by the proletariat. But they did not foresee the Bonapartist degeneration of the proletarian dictatorship either. Both of these things belong to those stages, transitional forms, etc., of which history provides a wealth of examples. The general laws of the evolution of capitalism to socialism, as established by Marxism, do not lose their force by virtue of these 'episodes'."

We adopt this method and re-affirm that "the general laws of the evolution of capitalism to socialism, as they are established by Marxism" and as they are applied in the Transitional Programme have in no way lost their force. The counter-revolutionary policies of the petty bourgeois leaderships (including the Stalinists), along with the crisis of the Fourth International, have resulted in the crisis of the leadership of the proletariat remaining un-resolved. The movement towards world revolution has been obliged to make its way forward through the establishment of a series of workers' states (Eastern Europe, China, Cuba, Vietnam) which have shown themselves to be workers' states bureaucratized from their formation. At the same time, the economic "boom" of the period 1950 - 1974, the driving force of which was the arms economy,



and which set in motion a gigantic destruction of productive forces, has paved the way for very violent manifestations of the crisis of the capitalist mode of production and for the break-up of the international division of labour. The early-warning signs of this are already visible.

We regard these "new phenomena", which the theoretical forecasts of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky could not foresee, as "belonging to those stages, transitional forms, etc.," We have tried to analyse them as such and with them all the processes in the present movement towards the emancipation of the exploited and oppressed masses. Our aim is to create the conditions for re-organising (re-constructing) the Fourth International and constructing revolutionary parties of the Fourth International in every country. We do not in any way claim to have solved every question. These can be solved only by the widest possible international discussion, in conjunction with active intervention in the class-struggle. The authors believe that some questions still need to be tackled and discussed. We do not claim that the World Conference, for which we have written this draft, will be in a position to announce that the Fourth International has now been reconstructed: we do not proceed by issuing ultimata.

We know only too well the consequences of proclaiming the existence of what one would like to exist. The SWP leadership correctly denounced Pablo-ite revisionism in 1953, but it then imposed on the International Committee a line which announced that the Pablo-ite leadership had "forfeited its power". This did not, however, stop the same SWP from going ahead with an un-principled "re-unification", without discussion, with the Pablo-ite leadership of the United Secretariat in 1963, after it had done all it could to block any discussion in the International Committee between 1953 and 1963.

We reject this method. The permanent crisis of the United Secretariat since 1963 resulted in 1979 in yet another dispersal of the forces affiliated to it, showing how destructive this method is. The Parity Committee has been set up precisely in order to break away from all the methods of revisionism and of its allies, from those who adopt administrative and bureaucratic methods, such as expelling the Bolshevik Fraction and the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency, and who refuse to open that discussion without which the bases of democratic centralism cannot be re-established - who, in a few words, reject the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

The purpose of these Theses is to contribute to re-establishing democratic centralism and to taking another step towards re-establishing and reconstructing the Fourth International. We believe that we can say that such a step forward can be achieved at the World Conference, enabling the Bolshevik Fraction, the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International and the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency to be dissolved. Let us make clear once more that this does not mean announcing that the Fourth International has been reconstructed as a single, centralised international centre. But the discussion will go on after the World Conference on a new

basis. It will go on within an organisational structure which the World Conference will discuss, in particular, so that a single section of the Parity Committee can be formed in the coming period in each country, by the fusion of the national organisations of the Bplshevik Fraction, of the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International and of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency.

We propose that the World Conference shall found an organisation, to be called "Fourth International (International Committee)", based on the adoption of these draft theses.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

### The Significance of These Theses

#### THESIS I. THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME IS RELEVANT TODAY

The corner-stone of the Transitional Programme is the building of the Fourth International in every country and throughout the world, in order to ensure the defeat of the counter-revolutionary bureaucratic apparatuses by resolving the crisis of revolutionary proletarian leadership, through the struggle for the final victory of the world-wide socialist revolution. These tasks are more relevant today than ever before.

These theses alone can provide solutions to the new theoretical and political problems posed by the revolutionary wave which emerged from World War II. The specific forms of this revolutionary wave, the most gigantic until now, could not have been foreseen by the Transitional Programme. None the less, the new problems posed by this revolutionary wave cannot be correctly resolved on the political plane unless they are tackled with the method of the Transitional Programme. That is what these theses aim to demonstrate. In this way they will contribute to the struggle against revisionism, which has claimed that these new, un-foreseen events lead to conclusions which call into question the principles of Trotskyism, the revolutionary Marxism of our epoch.

The most spectacular of these new problems is the formation of a number of bureaucratic workers' states, which govern one-third of humanity. These states were produced by the revolutionary wave of the working people, which forced their petty bourgeois, bureaucratic and counter-revolutionary leaderships to break with the bourgeoisie, to expropriate it and to take power. In other words, this variant, which Trotsky regarded as "highly improbable", has been the only one to be realised in the post-war period.

While this process has been unexpectedly wide-spread for more than one reason, it has nevertheless fully satisfied the conditions for such events to occur which were stipulated in the Transitional Programme, improbable as it believed them to be. The petty bourgeois apparatuses have been forced to go "further than they themselves wished along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie". In fact the forward surge of the masses forced their leaderships to go all the way to the expropriation of the national and foreign exploiters, in accordance with the method advocated by the Transitional Programme. Trotskyist organisations with influence among the masses were absent. Bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships were at the head of the revolutionary process. This led to the result that national bureaucratic workers' states were formed in the countries in question.



The Trotskyist slogan of the political revolution, which the Transitional Programme advanced for the USSR alone, now has much wider application and unprecedented relevance. In all these countries it is necessary to drive out the parasitic bureaucracy and to restore or to introduce the democracy of revolutionary workers' councils.

It is impossible to state in advance whether or not this variant of bureaucratic workers' states will arise elsewhere. In any case, there is absolutely no possibility that it can happen throughout the world. The bureaucracy is no more than a historical accident. Its existence is closely dependent on the continued existence of the world imperialist system. This explains why the task of carrying through to the end the political revolutions against the bureaucratic, petty bourgeois governments of the bureaucratic workers' states - a task inseparable from the construction of Trotskyist parties and a Trotskyist international, the leadership of which is the sole guarantee of victory for the political revolution - becomes ever more urgent. Hence, the Transitional Programme becomes more and more necessary and relevant.

If the bureaucracy retains power in the bureaucratic workers' states, which implies that the imperialist system also remains in place, humanity will have only two possibilities before it: either a holocaust, or the victory of the world proletarian revolution and, within it and as an essential part of it, the political revolution. For the bureaucracy is the principal support of imperialism in the world as a whole, just as it is the principal enemy of the conquests of the October Revolution in the bureaucratic workers' states.

More generally, the post-war period is characterised by the fact that, despite the absence of revolutionary parties, many processes similar to that which led to the revolution of February 1917 have developed: the revolutionary movement of the masses manages to break up the bourgeois state and to give notice in this way that the proletarian revolution has begun. But none of these revolutions has gone through to the end. As there was no revolutionary leadership, the bureaucracy has controlled the course of the revolutions which defeated the bourgeoisie. The revolutions have expropriated the bourgeoisie, but have resulted only in the formation of new bureaucratic workers' states. From this point of view, none of these revolutions has the characteristics of the revolution of October 1917.

We have to recognise that the perspective of our International, the victory of revolutions of the same type as that of October 1917 in Russia, has not materialised up to now. The same is true of the perspective advanced by the Theses on the Permanent Revolution and by Trotskyism in general, according to which the expropriation of the national exploiters can be carried out only through a political process like that of the Russian Revolution, that is, by means of workers' organisations led by a revolutionary Marxist party.

But these new "February revolutions", some of which have gone so far as to expropriate the bourgeoisie, without experiencing the political process which characterised the October Revolution, serve only to emphasise the validity of the Transitional Programme and the absolute necessity for it, for new October Revolutions to triumph. Even if a February Revolution manages to expropriate the bourgeoisie, it will not lead to a process of mobilisation and of permanent revolution against imperialism and to the abolition of all national frontiers, if it does not develop into an October Revolution. On the contrary, the counter-revolutionary theory of "Socialism in one country" leads to a relapse into that form of barbarism which consists of the defence of national states; in this case the national frontiers of the bureaucratic workers' states. In the case of the countries of Eastern Europe, this means the oppression of numerous nationalities and the economic and political oppression of these countries by the Kremlin bureaucracy.

If humanity is to go forward, the victory of new October Revolutions becomes more and more necessary. This is precisely what justifies the existence of the Transitional Programme.

Trotsky himself pointed out, moreover, that two important questions had consciously been incompletely dealt with in the Transitional Programme. These are the economic situation and the tasks to be carried out after the conquest of power by the proletariat. Today the economic boom, on the one hand, and the formation of new bureaucratic workers' states, on the other, compel us to sharpen and to deepen our analysis of these two questions.

As to the first question, we confirm the Trotskyist analysis in these theses. The world economy, taken as a whole, continues to be dominated by imperialism. There are not two world economies, as those who have revised Marxism maintain. At the same time, if we consider our epoch on the scale of history, the social relations which were born out of the October Revolution and the capitalist mode of production are absolutely antagonistic to each other. Similarly, we undertake to show how the principle that "mankind's productive forces stagnate", one of the essential principles of Leninism and Trotskyism, is confirmed and enriched. Even the economic "boom" of imperialism, which has now ended, had a fundamentally parasitic character. It developed destructive forces, plunging the majority of mankind into poverty and super-exploitation which is continually increasing.

The second question relates to the concrete form which the transition from capitalism to socialism has taken up to the present, that is, to the bureaucratic workers' states. This question has raised unforeseen problems. It obliges us to specify the slogans which can keep the mass movement in a state of permanent mobilisation. The ruling Stalinist bureaucracy is, for the masses, a kind of gangrene. It has caused wars between these states and invasions of some of them by others. This has prompted us to advance a fundamental slogan: A Federation of



the existing Workers' States. Of course, this slogan must be inseparably related to the extension of the world revolution, to the struggle for the United Socialist States of Europe and of the world, and to the unconditional defence of the national rights of the people and nationalities oppressed by the bureaucracy, including their right of secession. All these slogans are part and parcel of the same historic task, that of carrying through the political revolution against the bureaucracy of the bureaucratic workers' states.

There are other questions also with which we deal in these Theses:

- the historic role of Stalinism, the main counter-revolutionary agency, which has done its utmost to destroy the continuity in the workers' memory of their history; it nearly succeeded in doing so, but was unable to prevent the Fourth International from keeping alive the heritage of Bolshevism:
- the revolutionary impact of democratic and national slogans:
- role of the slogan of a Constituent Assembly:
- guerrilla warfare and its role in the revolutionary upsurges of the present period, etc.

These Theses are not confined, however, to proving that the new developments of the post-war period confirm and enrich the Transitional Programme. We also undertake to prove that the analyses and fundamental principles of the Transitional Programme are increasingly relevant to the closing years of the 20th Century, in which we face a revolutionary upsurge which is even more powerful than during the immediate post-war period. Two major facts characterise the present period: on the one hand, there is the insoluble crisis of imperialism and of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the workers' states: on the other hand, the various processes of the world revolution are more closely interwoven than ever before. These processes - that of the social revolution in the imperialist and imperialist-dominated countries and that of the political revolution in the bureaucratic workers' states - form a unity while they are necessarily differentiated.

This new stage makes more relevant than ever the main themes of the Transitional Programme: the permanent mobilisation of the proletariat and its allies, the oppressed masses of the world, on the basis of a programme of transitional slogans enabling us to defeat world imperialism, the national exploiters and the ruling bureaucracies in the workers' organisations, as well as to drive out of power the bureaucracies in the bureaucratic workers' states, in order to abolish national frontiers and to bring into existence the world federation of Soviet Socialist Republics, which is the one and only way to undertake the construction of Socialism. It is also more important than ever to build the Fourth International in every country of the world, in order to wrest the leadership of the workers' movement and of the masses from the bureaucratic, petty bourgeois apparatuses which practice class-collaboration, the policy of the Popular Front and of peaceful co-existence with imperialism. This is the only means to overcome the historic crisis of proletarian leadership



and, therefore, to carry the world revolution which is now taking place through to the end.

1941

1941



THESIS II: HISTORY HAS CONFIRMED THE BASES ON WHICH THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL WAS FOUNDED

Our International was founded in 1938. It was based on a series of analyses and general principles, fundamentals which have been fully confirmed by the experience of our entire epoch from World War I to the present, which is the period of the world proletarian revolution.

Let us briefly outline these principles one by one:

1. The productive forces of humanity have ceased to grow under the rule of imperialism. Consequently, every advance in technology, far from helping to raise the standard of living of the masses, leads instead to growing poverty and new wars. The productive forces have come into contradiction not only to capitalist private property but also to the existence of nation-states.
2. These contradictions have resulted in a historical period of wars, crises and revolutions, starting in 1914.
3. The class-struggle and the revolution have taken on world-wide dimensions. Concretely, this means that we have entered the most revolutionary period of history, a period in which everything that happens must be evaluated from the stand-point of world-wide revolution and counter-revolution, and not from the stand-point of nation-states or any other stand-point at the level of national structure or super-structure.
4. The crisis of humanity is the consequence of the crisis of proletarian leadership. As long as the proletariat has not resolved this crisis of leadership, mankind will stumble from one crisis to another, each deeper than those which preceded it.

This does not mean, however, that the struggle of the oppressed and the exploited cannot win partial successes and conquer new positions for the world revolution. But these successes and conquests remain precarious. They deepen the crisis of imperialism, but they also strengthen the counter-revolutionary resolution of the world bourgeoisie in its state of deadlock.

5. The crisis of leadership of the world proletariat is not an abstract, subjective phenomenon, caused by the low level of consciousness of the proletariat. It is objective and concrete, due to the existence of the bureaucratic apparatuses which are the recognised leaderships of the workers' movement and of the masses, particularly to Social-Democracy and Stalinism, which have definitely gone over to the side of the bourgeois order. Historically speaking, all the bureaucratic or petty bourgeois leaderships (nationalists, ultra-lefts, Social-Democrats or Stalinists) are directly or indirectly servants of the imperialist counter-revolution.

6. The causes of the treacherous role of these leaderships are social. They are located in the aristocracy of labour, which is at the origin of the bureaucratisation of the workers' organisations, as well as in the formation of a bureaucratic caste which is parasitic on the conquests of the October Revolution.

The petty bourgeois leaderships, which include the Stalinists, cannot be won for the revolution. The principal role among the counter-revolutionary apparatuses is played by Stalinism, because Stalinism has the monopoly of control of the principal workers' states, which affords it immense advantages.

7. The ideology of all these petty bourgeois and bureaucratic currents - especially that of Stalinism - is that of "Socialism in One Country" and of peaceful co-existence with imperialism. This ideology is what they call their "theory". These are the weapons with which the bureaucracy struggles to defeat the world revolution.

8. The only theory, the only programme, which consistently opposes the Stalinist and Social-Democratic "theory" of "Socialism in One Country" and of peaceful co-existence, and which opposes their practice of collaboration with the various bourgeoisies and with imperialism, is the theory of the Permanent Revolution.

The first formulation of the theory of the Permanent Revolution - before the Russian Revolution of 1917 - deals with the combination of democratic and socialist tasks and with the role of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only force capable of carrying through the tasks of the democratic revolution in backward countries.

The second formulation - that of 1928 - was precisely for the purpose of replying to the Stalinist "theory" of the construction of "Socialism in One Country", and of setting out the tasks which arise after the seizure of power, not only in the backward countries, but in any country. Its central theme is the dynamic of the international socialist revolution, of the permanent mobilisation of the working class and its allies to take power, to set up a revolutionary dictatorship, to defeat imperialism throughout the world, to put an end to nation-states by means of revolution and to set up the World Federation of Socialist Soviet Republics, so as to undertake the building of Socialism on the world scale.

9. The objectives by means of which Socialism will be brought about are the abolition of private property in the means of production, the abolition of the employing class and of wage-labour, the withering-away of the State and of classes. In order to put an end to the rule of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat will have to expropriate those sectors of capitalist production which have reached a monopolistic stage, that is, to expropriate finance-capital which is connected with the international finance-capital controlling the world market. The

question of how far the expropriations should go is a tactical one, to be decided by the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. In any case, neither the expropriation of finance-capital nor that of the national bourgeoisie or of the landed proprietors in themselves exhaust the tasks of the revolution. The great strategic object is to extend the socialist revolution throughout the region and then to the whole world, to get rid finally of imperialism and of national frontiers, in order to introduce Socialism throughout the whole planet.

10. In order to overcome the crisis of leadership of the proletariat, the principal task is to construct Trotskyist parties with mass influence in every country in the world, and to construct the world party of the socialist revolution, the Fourth International. Such Trotskyist parties, with mass influence, can be built only by waging an implacable struggle to the end, in the heart of the mass movement, against all the bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships. This is not affected by the fact that these leaderships can be forced to lead certain progressive or revolutionary struggles in particular circumstances under the pressure of the mass movement, and that these struggles can even force them to break with the bourgeoisie, in an exceptional combination of circumstances, and introduce a Workers' and Peasants' Government, as the Transitional Programme envisaged.
11. Nothing reveals the ~~counter~~-revolutionary character of Stalinism more clearly than the role which it plays as a Bonapartist government in the USSR itself. That government is leading the USSR to an inevitable crisis of the economy, society, politics and culture which is becoming ever more serious. Day by day the bureaucracy and its regime undermine the foundations of the first workers' state in history. Only a political revolution, led by a Trotskyist party, will be able to resolve this historic crisis of the workers' state which is involved in a process of profound degeneration. The purpose of the political revolution is to re-establish a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat on the model of Lenin and Trotsky.
12. The political revolution against the ruling bureaucratic caste, which is necessary in the USSR and in the other bureaucratic workers' states, is part and parcel of the world proletarian revolution, as well as of the world-wide struggle to drive out of the leadership of the mass movement all the Stalinist, Social-Democratic and petty bourgeois apparatuses which dominate it today.
13. All the fore-going points were summarised in the words and method of the Transitional Programme, which is the programme for the mobilisation of the proletariat for the seizure of power and the introduction of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

The programme starts from the objective conditions and the varying levels of



consciousness of the masses. It mobilises them and ensures that this mobilisation is maintained and continues to develop, as the basis on which can be built the only revolutionary leadership which can consciously express this process, the Trotskyist parties and the Fourth International.

## C H A P T E R     O N E

### The Struggles of the World Proletariat throughout more than a century confirm the relevance of the Fourth International

#### THESIS III.    FROM THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO TO THE PRESENT PERIOD:    THE GAINS AND THE VICTORIES:    THE CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP:    THE CONTINUAL DEEPENING OF THE CRISIS OF HUMANITY.

The proletariat presented itself on the stage of history as a class, formed by all its earlier movement towards organisation and struggle, from 1848 onwards, and then began to express its own historic interests as against those of the bourgeoisie, when capitalism was still playing its progressive role and was in the ascendant. Herein lies the significance of the Communist Manifesto, of the formation of the First International and of the Paris Commune.

During the last two decades of the 19th Century the proletariat began to play the major role in the historical process, as its struggles became continuous and systematic. At that time it consisted principally of the proletariat of Europe and of USA, and the participation of oppressed peoples and layers of society was still limited. Throughout the 20th Century the proletariat has not ceased for one moment to fight against its exploiters, capitalist and imperialism. Through these struggle the proletariat and the working masses wrested a number of fundamental gains from the bourgeoisie, such as the mass trade union organisations, the workers' parties and all their social rights. In these years that gigantic conquest, the October Revolution, opened the period of the proletarian revolution.

Since then there has been no other victorious October Revolution. None the less, the proletariat has won revolutionary conquests since World War II such as the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in a number of countries where the apparatuses have stamped a bureaucratic character on the workers' states from their origin.

The allies of the proletariat, the backward peoples, the oppressed nationalities, the peasants and the oppressed races and layers of society, have also won great conquests. Nearly all the former colonies of the old empires have obtained their political independence. In many backward countries the peasants have achieved greater participation in land ownership, although they have not succeeded in imposing a radical agrarian reform, because large landed proprietors have experienced this radical fate only in countries where the bourgeoisie has been expropriated. In many countries women have won the right to vote, limited access to abortion and the right to divorce. In USA the Blacks have made considerable advances in their struggle against discrimination. While the American bourgeoisie was able to contain the revolutionary force of the Blacks after the Civil War, the latter have now be-

come a revolutionary force allied to and an integral part of the American working class. The people of Vietnam thwarted all the plans of US imperialism, in every aspect, military, political and social.

This struggle between the working class of the world and imperialism has gone on for over a century, which can be divided into two clearly-distinguished periods, the turning-point being the First World War and the Russian Revolution.

Capitalism was a progressive force, at least until the beginning of the 20th Century. Up to the First World War the working-class won one conquest after another within the framework of bourgeois society, without being able to settle directly the question of the revolutionary seizure of power. For the proletariat this was the period of reforms.

1914 and the Russian Revolution opened the period in which we are living today. It is a period of crisis, of the chronic decadence of imperialism and of capitalism, of confrontation between revolution and counter-revolution on a world scale. This is the period in which the dilemma is sharply posed: Socialism or Barbarism? In this period the fate of civilisation and of humanity itself are at stake. The working class has shown, shows and will continue to show that it can revolutionarise the world, and that its capacity to do so is thwarted by the treacherous leaderships and by the crisis of the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. This is the period of the international socialist revolution.

Despite the great conquests which the workers' movement and the exploited and oppressed masses have won in the course of their last hundred years' struggle, the working people of the world and the whole of humanity face increasing poverty, more and more far-reaching wars and the possibility of a nuclear holocaust... including the peoples of the countries which claim to be socialist, the bureaucratic workers' states. This is the consequence of the fact that imperialism continues to dominate the world economy. On the world scale, the rule of imperialism is an ever-increasing source of poverty, repression, war and immense suffering for the exploited and oppressed masses.

The fetters with which the bureaucratic apparatuses have shackled the movement of the working class have prevented the international proletariat from overcoming in its own way the chronic ills to which capitalism gives rise, despite the immense conquests which are embodied in the existence of the great workers' organisations. The continued existence of imperialism reduces hundreds of millions of human beings to poverty and even to starvation. It has produced two world wars and innumerable local wars. It now threatens humanity with another world war, a nuclear war which could destroy every sign of life on the planet. In the advanced countries, imperialism maintains its existence with the active support of the apparatuses by adopting



the most corrupt forms of rule. It does its utmost to destroy the fundamental conquests of the working class. At the same time, the longer imperialism survives, the more the bureaucratic degeneration of the workers' states becomes a fetter on the progress of the countries in which the bourgeoisie has been expropriated.

The invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR and of Kampuchea by Vietnam, like the attack by China on Vietnam, show that the counter-revolutionary bureaucracies of the workers' states cannot avert these dangers and especially that of war, but can only make them worse.

This situation is highly contradictory: on the one hand the great conquests which have been won by the heroism and the strength which the workers and the oppressed have shown in their struggles, and, on the other hand, the ever-deepening crisis of the human race. It can be explained only by the crisis of proletarian leadership, which has prevented the proletariat from sweeping imperialism away, when it would otherwise have been able to do so decades ago. This crisis itself results from the fact that the organisations which the working masses recognise as their own (trade unions and parties), as well as the workers' states, are without exception under the control of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy and of counter-revolutionary leaderships. These are in the service of imperialism, directly or indirectly. Chief among them is the Stalinist bureaucracy of the USSR.

The crisis of the leadership of the world proletariat and the treacherous role which the recognised bureaucratic leaderships of the workers' movement have played are the decisive factor in the historic defeats which the world proletariat has suffered. This is the real reason why all the workers' conquests have been thwarted and why imperialism has not been swept away.

The great workers' parties, the trade unions and the Workers' States have all been distorted in the strait-jacket of bureaucracy. They are all bureaucratic. Not one of them is revolutionary. All the leaderships which are recognised as such are in the service of counter-revolution.

None the less, there are differences between the various counter-revolutionary apparatuses. The Social-Democratic apparatus continues to play its own special counter-revolutionary role, which was decisive in the years following World War I. But when it is a matter of slowing down and betraying revolutions, Stalinism has no equal. Stalinism is a product of the epoch of revolution. It is the most gigantic counter-revolutionary apparatus which history has ever known. Nothing, of course, is more an agency of the bourgeoisie than a Social-Democratic leadership. But we speak here about counter-revolutionary effectiveness, not about counter-revolutionary nature. Social-Democracy is much less effective than Stalinism in defending the bourgeois order on the world scale.

It was the fault of the Social-Democratic leaderships that the conquests won by the proletariat in the period of reforms were not enough to avert the historic defeat,



inflicted by the First World War and the crisis of the Second International. It was thanks to the Social-Democrats that the European Socialist Revolution was unable to be victorious except in Russia and that its road was blocked in Italy, in Hungary and, most important of all, in Germany. But in the following years Stalinism has replaced it in the front line as the agency of counter-revolution in the workers' ranks. Stalinism has been the major element responsible for the later defeats.

The period of the revolution falls into several stages.

In the first stage, from 1917 to 1923, the October Revolution was victorious in Russia because there existed a revolutionary Marxist party: the Third International was founded and the European Revolution broke out.

The second stage lasted roughly from 1923 to 1943. It opened with the defeat of the European Revolution, the beginning of twenty years of magnificent revolutionary struggle and of un-interrupted defeats. Stalinism arose in this stage, and was victorious alike in the USSR and at the heart of the Third International. The policies of Stalinism contributed to the fascist victories of Chiang Kai-shek, of Hitler and of Franco, making possible the outbreak of World War II, weakening the USSR against Nazism and thus making it easier for the Nazis to wage counter-revolutionary war against the USSR.

The third stage begins at the end of World War II, with the greatest revolutionary upsurge ever known. The bourgeoisie was expropriated in countries inhabited by one-third of the population of the world, including the most populous country in the world, China.

But Stalinism had been relatively strengthened by the military defeat of Nazism. It remained the dominant leadership and soon successfully capitalism to be re-built in Europe. It was also able to bureaucratise the workers' states which resulted from the revolutionary activity of the masses and from the break-up of the bourgeois states under the victorious blows of the Red Army.

These states are products of the revolutionary activity of the masses. They were controlled by the Kremlin bureaucracy, or by bureaucratic parties, as in China and Yugoslavia. They were formed as bureaucratic workers' states. We shall see that the task to be carried out there is the political revolution, as in the USSR and as in the bureaucratic workers' states in Cuba and Vietnam which appeared later.

The proletariat has also won new conquests in the Western imperialist countries. The bourgeoisie has had to concede these conquests in order to be able to stifle the revolutionary wave which was born out of World War II, which the bureaucracies of the Social-Democratic workers' parties and especially of the Stalinist parties succeeded in heading off.



Finally, from 1968 onwards, the specific features of the period of the imminence of the revolution have begun to emerge. These features will be analysed fully in Chapter Two.

THESIS IV: FROM CAPITALISM IN ITS ASCENDANT STAGE TO IMPERIALISM: THE PERIOD  
WHEN THE GREAT SOCIALIST PARTIES WERE ORGANISED

Capitalism displayed its greatest possibilities for development throughout the world at the point at which it was about to enter its imperialist stage, especially in the advanced countries, before World War I marked in 1914 the opening of its historic crisis.

Throughout out the transition from capitalism in the ascendant to monopoly capitalism, the advanced countries in particular could enjoy possibilities of development because they were sharing out the world and plundering it, interrupted though this development was by cyclical crises. Their rivalries at world level accumulated contradictions which gave rise to colonial wars and the beginning of an arms economy. None the less, a process of organic growth of capital was taking place throughout this period, and this enabled the imperialist countries continually to reach compromises.

The proletariat, however, did not abandon the fight against capitalism for a single day. In the advanced countries its heroic struggles won enormous class- and democratic gains - in particular the eight-hour day and the right to vote - and ensured that powerful trade union and political organisations developed.

These gains, to be sure, were won from capitalism at the time when it was drawing vast super-profits from the exploitation of the under-developed countries. This enabled capitalism to concede these gains without its own existence being threatened. Moreover, the struggles of the proletariat and the gains which it won drove capitalism to develop technology as one of the factors in the rise of the productive forces, which were then still growing.

This is why the first stage in the struggle of the world proletariat against capitalism resulted in wide-spread reforms being obtained and in a quantitative accumulation of gains within capitalist society, thanks to its revolutionary methods of struggle, but not in the seizure of power, which had already been placed on the agenda in theoretical terms by the Communist Manifesto and in a practical sense by the Paris Commune. This does not mean in the slightest degree that the bourgeoisie conceded these reforms voluntarily. On the contrary, the proletariat could win every step forward only at the price of a desperate, revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Capitalism experienced in its ascendant phase what appeared to be peaceful and progressive development and then passed into the stage of imperialism and in 1914 revealed its true nature. 1914 revealed how sharp the contradictions had become between the development of the productive forces and the strait-jacket in which capitalist private property and national frontiers were binding them, as well as the ferocious competition between monopolies, which caused the war to break out.



The emergence of monopolies and the colonisation of backward countries by finance-capital seemed to have rendered these contradictions less severe, until the outbreak of the war showed that, on the contrary, they had become more far-reaching and sharper. When there remained no more under-developed countries for the imperialist bandits to share out, then they confronted each other in a world war to determine which of them would dominate the world.

That terrible conflagration was another expression of the crisis of capitalism, which, up to that time, had revealed itself principally in the form of recurrent crises. Capitalist competition now expressed itself in the destruction of entire countries and not merely the bankruptcy of a certain number of businesses. The proletariat paid with the deaths of millions of proletarians for the crisis of the capitalist world-order.

The political reason for this defeat of the proletariat was that the Second International and its national parties went over un-reservedly to the side of the bourgeois order. Fifty years of victories and accumulated gains could not avert this first major defeat of the working class, World War I.

The explanation is to be found completely in the early stages of the crisis of the leadership of the proletariat. The imperialist super-profits which the bourgeoisie obtained enabled it to bring into existence privileged layers within the working class, a workers' aristocracy, and to discipline and corrupt the political and trade union leaderships of the proletariat. These leaderships became reformist, bureaucratic apparatuses, agencies of the bourgeoisie in the heart of the powerful institutions built by the working class. They took in hand the subjection of the working class to collaboration with the bourgeoisie and imperialism.

Moreover, the Second International never was a real International. It was, rather, a federation of parties, during the period when the proletariat was able to make the gains and to win the rights on which the Social-Democratic Parties were based, in each country and by revolutionary activity. We recognise the progressive role which these parties played in this period, just as Marx, Engels, Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky recognised it. The social conquests and the rights which the working class won formed it as a "class for itself" as against the bourgeoisie and its state. During the stage of imperialism the federal nature of the Second International worked directly against the needs of the workers' movement.

However, powerful revolutionary oppositions arose within the Social-Democratic organisations at the same time as the process of bureaucratising them. Here and there this revolutionary Left acquired a regional or a national position, but it never was able to take shape as an internationally organised tendency. The conditions for doing so did not indeed exist. None the less, this revolutionary Left was one fundamental aspect of the continual rise of the proletariat.

The highest expression of this revolutionary Left current in the workers' international movement was the Russian Bolshevik Party. This party was formed within the Second International as a fraction of the Russian Social-Democracy, in order to carry through the tasks of the revolution in an under-developed country, where the democratic tasks of the bourgeois revolution had not been carried out. The Bolshevik Party was forged within the Second International, where it laid down for the first time, under the leadership of Lenin, the principles of democratic centralism, as the basis for constructing the instrument which is indispensable for the victory of the revolution, and which had already been contained, though not fully developed, in Marx's conception of the party.

The Bolshevik Party was a Marxist Party of a new type, the only consistently Marxist revolutionary party, the only party organised to lead the struggle for the seizure of power. The working class of the world and of Russia needed fifty years to construct a Bolshevik Party with mass influence. It appeared as a sharply differentiated party only from 1912 onwards and succeeded in stabilising its structure only in 1917.

Apart from the Marxist current which Rosa Luxemburg led in the Social-Democracy in Germany, the currents which claimed to stand for revolutionary Marxism, such as that led by Guesde, like those which did not stand on the ground of Marxism, such as revolutionary syndicalism and anarcho-syndicalism, all retained a propagandist, disorganised character, whether it was syndicalist or ideological. They neither could nor wished to construct strongly centralised revolutionary parties, sharply separated from the reformist, bureaucratic wing.

From 1914 onwards Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg condemned the Second International and its parties, and the latter labelled them "stinking corpses". There were theoretical divergences between them, for example on the national question, on which history has demonstrated the correctness of the theoretical and practical positions of Lenin.

But it was Rosa Luxemburg who grasped more quickly than Lenin the significance of the degeneration of the German Social-Democracy and of the Second International in a whole series of fields. All these problems were the subject of sharp discussions between Lenin and Luxemburg. These discussions developed, however, within the framework of fundamental agreement, because both took their stand firmly on the ground of revolutionary Marxism.

The fact remains that the weaknesses of Rosa Luxemburg's position on the role of the party and on the relations between the masses and leaderships, the "spontaneous" and the "conscious", as compared with the positions of Bolshevism, were later explained by Trotsky (who shared them at the time) and were also revealed by events.

The Bolshevik Party was unique in the Second International. Its existence and development were the product of an exceptional combination of circumstances. There was, in the first place, the situation in Russia itself. The Tsarist regime afforded no

margin for the development of a reformist policy. The stage in history was revolutionary. It demanded imperatively that the revolution be carried out against the Tsar.

This urgently necessary task fell to the young, highly concentrated industrial proletariat, which was an integral part of the European proletariat. The political leadership of the Russian proletariat was also part of the currents which existed within the European proletariat. There were in Russia anarchist tendencies and Marxist tendencies, currents which were first revisionist and Marxist and later opportunist and revolutionary (Mensheviks and Bolsheviks).

The combination of all these factors led the Bolsheviks to build a party independent of the Menshevik reformists. The characteristics of the Bolshevik Party were unique: it was strongly centralised, with the professional revolutionaries subjected to the control of the party by means of the principles of democratic centralism. It was thus in a position to shoulder the responsibility of leading the workers' revolution against the Tsar, and to rise to this urgent historical task.

Russia was the country in Europe where the question of power was posed in a most immediate and urgent way. When the Bolshevik Party formed the Soviet government, the Soviet Republic, by carrying through the democratic tasks and beginning to carry through the first socialist tasks of the Russian Revolution, it demonstrated that the solution of the problems of the democratic revolution lay in the conquest of power - the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat - thereby linking the proletarian revolution in Russia to the proletarian world revolution.



THESIS V: THE CRISIS OF REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP IS THE DOMINANT FACTOR OF OUR EPOCH

With the First Imperialist War, there opened the epoch of imperialism, of the organic crisis of capitalism and of the proletarian revolution. From then on the class struggle was to develop according to a new combination of its political and economic aspects.

Marxism teaches that the basis of all the processes in society is to be found in the social relations of production, in the economic infra-structure. This general law must not be understood mechanically. At all times the economic relations find their "concentrated" (Lenin) expression in politics, in the political relations between the classes, which, in their turn, condition the concrete forms of the economic development. In our epoch, the epoch of crises and revolutions, this general law is refracted in a particular way: the decisive question is that of the political relations between the classes, which dominate the economic relations.

There is an objective basis for this state of affairs. It is that capitalism has exhausted its historic mission. The productive forces have ceased to grow. Every serious demand tends to pose the question of power and, for that reason, takes on an immediately political character. The task to be carried out is to establish a new social mode of production, socialism. In these conditions, it is the most subjective factor, the question of the revolutionary leadership, which acquires decisive importance and ultimately dominates all the other phenomena, even the economic ones. This is the precise and scientific sense in which the Transitional Programme declares that, in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, "The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership".

As the Communist Manifesto states, history is the history of the struggle of classes, and modern history, in its successive periods, is fundamentally the history of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. However, this struggle takes place in economic and political conditions which vary from one period to another, as Marx pointed out in his preface to "A Critique of Political Economy":

"In social production human beings enter into definite and necessary relations to each other quite independent of their will, productive relations which are in accordance with a definite stage of the development of the material productive forces. The totality of these productive relations forms the economic structure of society, the material basis on which the legal and political super-structure rests, and definite forms of social consciousness correspond to it. The mode of production of material life determines the social, political and intellectual process of life in general. It is not the consciousness of human beings which determines their being, but on the contrary it is their social being which determines their consciousness.

At a certain stage of their development the material productive forces of society come into contradiction with the existing <sup>productive</sup> relations or with the existing property relations, which is only a legal expression for the same thing, within which they have previously moved. These relations then change from forms of development of the productive forces into fetters on these productive forces and an epoch of social revolution begins. With this change in the economic basis of society the whole enormous superstructure also changes more or less rapidly.

When observing such changes one must always differentiate between the material changes in the economic conditions of production, which must be registered with scientific accuracy, and the legal, political, religious, artistic and philosophical forms, in short the ideological forms, in which human beings become aware of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one cannot judge the individual by what he thinks of himself, so also one cannot judge such an epoch of change from its own consciousness, but one must rather explain this consciousness from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the conditions of production....

Speaking generally, the Asiatic, the classical, the feudal and the modern bourgeois modes of production can be termed progressive epochs of the economic social forms. Bourgeois productive relations represent the final antagonistic form of the process of social production, not antagonistic in the sense of individual antagonism, but an antagonism which develops from the social conditions of life of the individuals.

However, the productive forces developing within the framework of bourgeois society create at the same time the material conditions for the liquidation of this antagonism. With this form of society, therefore, the preliminary history of human society ends."

Marx and Engels established in the Communist Manifesto that socialism has an international content. They wrote at the time when the national democratic (bourgeois) revolutions were still following their historically progressive course, basing themselves on the objective analysis of the tendencies of the bourgeois economy to create the world market. They showed that the frontiers are destined to "wither away", like the states which they enclose, after the victory of the world revolution, to form the world unity of the socialist society, a society without classes or states.

The Marxists established by their analysis of the First Imperialist World War that it was an objective consequence of the revolt of the productive forces, strangled in the strait-jacket of private property in the means of production and of the frontiers of nation-states. Their analysis was at the basis of the foundation of the

Third International. The epoch of imperialism, of wars and revolutions, which had then opened, expressed concretely the contradiction between the level reached by the material productive forces of society and the existing relations of production formed within the framework of national states.

The working-class did indeed engage in many struggles of a revolutionary character against the bourgeoisie in the epoch of rising capitalism, the epoch of free-enterprise capitalism. But at that time the productive forces were developing powerfully within the framework of the capitalist mode of production. In these conditions, the class-struggles of the proletariat could not resolve the question of power and of constructing a new mode of social production; these struggles resulted only in winning victories, gains and reforms. This is the sense in which we may characterise this epoch as the epoch of reforms. These conquests, gains and reforms acted in a certain way as a spur on the development of capitalism itself.

But, once the monopolies had been formed and the epoch of imperialism and of decaying capitalism had begun, the productive forces ceased to grow within the framework of the capitalist mode of production. Then, in Marx's words, began "an epoch of social revolution". The class-struggles of the proletariat could not, in general, result in simple reforms. Henceforth at stake was the question of power and the construction of a new mode of social production, the starting-point of which is the overthrow of the political domination of the bourgeoisie and its expropriation.

"Politics is concentrated economics". The correctness of this formulation could be seen in the epoch of rising capitalism. The bourgeoisie had to engage in political battles against the old ruling classes and to take <sup>political</sup> power by means of genuine revolutions, in order to ensure the full development of the capitalist mode of production. Once the bourgeoisie had secured its political domination, the development of the capitalist mode of production in its ascendant phase seemed to proceed merely from the free play of its economic laws.

Yet from this very period the proletariat itself began to form itself as a class and to construct its own organisations, which were the very conditions for it to win its economic and social conquests; this process was a thoroughly political one.

Meanwhile, during the same period, the presence of Marx and Engels themselves was not enough to permit the proletariat to take power, even though the Communist Manifesto had opened the perspective of doing so. For the objective reasons that capitalism was still in its ascendant stage, victory could not be ensured, defeats of the proletarian revolution could not be avoided, either in 1848 or at the time of the Paris Commune.

On the other hand, the work of Lenin, of Trotsky and of the Bolshevik Party could ensure the victory of the October Revolution, once the epoch of decadent capitalism and of the proletarian revolution had opened. In Germany, however, the development of



the subjective factor was delayed and the revolution could not be victorious. In the same way, the presence at the head of the great socialist parties of the counter-revolutionary, bureaucratic leaderships made possible the outbreak of World War I.

These facts confirm that from that time onwards political and subjective factors have a decisive importance in the unfolding of the events of our time in this revolutionary epoch. To take another example: how can the "economic boom" after World War II be explained except by taking into consideration that Stalinism and its policy of betrayal was responsible for the survival of the imperialist states and called on the workers to go on accepting capitalist exploitation in much worsened conditions.

All this is expressed in the dialectic of the victories and the defeats of the world proletariat. The Social-Democratic Left relied at first on the perspective of a linear process of victories by the workers. Then it had to face up to the fact that the proletariat suffered defeats and retreated. It recognised that these defeats and the retreat resulted from the treachery of the leadership, and formulated a Marxist, dialectical law, expressed in one high-sounding phrase: "the path of the proletariat towards victory is paved with defeats". This stressed the dialectic of defeats and victories, the transformation of one into the other.

The crisis of revolutionary leadership of the proletariat was raised to a higher level than ever before by World War I and then by the rise of Stalinism, which made it clear that from that time onwards revolutionary leadership would be the determining factor in the historic process. To the extent that the proletariat does not overcome the crisis of its revolutionary leadership, it will be unable to inflict a decisive defeat on world imperialism, with the result that all the victories which it may win and all its gains will not defend it conclusively against the possibility of catastrophic defeats. As long as the counter-revolutionary apparatuses continue to control the mass movement, every gain by the revolution will be either destroyed by the counter-revolution or blocked and deformed in a bureaucratic strait-jacket. What is true for the whole period of revolutions is even more true for today. An inverse dialectic between victories and defeats has been established.

The antagonism between the conservative policy of the bureaucratic apparatuses and the permanent mobilisation of the workers is expressed in this way. This mobilisation is equally a deadly threat to the bureaucracy itself, which explains why the bureaucracy does its utmost to act as a brake on the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses, to control how they use their conquests and to block their mobilisation. The methods by which the bureaucracies try to brake the mass movement and to defend their privileges against it can result only in checking the permanent mobilisation of the workers, distorting their conquests and, for that reason, preparing the conditions for very serious defeats.

Nothing but the un-interrupted mobilisation of the world revolution, under a revolutionary leadership, can rescue mankind from the crisis which it is experiencing today.

THESIS VI: THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

Sixty-three years after the victory of the October Revolution, we must recognise that it was and still is an exception. No revolutionary process since the beginning of this century has been like it, among either those which ended in victory or those which ended in defeat. The Third International, which resulted from it, has the same exceptional character,

We need to study not only the revolution of October 1917 and that of February, and the close connections between them, if we are to succeed in explaining why things have happened in this way; we need also to examine the possibility, which the Bolsheviks advanced between February and October, of the "workers' and peasants' government", although such a government did not materialise during that period, it has appeared several times since World War II.

The exceptional character of the October Revolution is due to the existence of the Bolshevik Party. The October Revolution could not have been victorious, nor could it have had its greatest success, the founding of the IIIrd. International, without the existence of the Bolshevik Party and of the revolutionary left of the world proletariat. It is necessary to emphasise the point that, while the Russian Revolution opened a new epoch in the history of mankind, the epoch of the world socialist revolution, it at the same time marked the closure of the preceding epoch, that of reforms and of the evolution of capitalism. It combines the features of the end of one epoch with those of the beginning of another.

The October Revolution and the Leninist Party were the results of the preceding fifty-year period of upsurge and of victories of the world proletariat during the epoch which closed with it. The birth of the Bolshevik Party cannot be understood if it is abstracted from the epoch in which it arose.

At the same time, the founding of the IIIrd. International and the most important and essential task of the Revolution, which the Bolsheviks undertook, namely the development of the European and international socialist revolution, could not have been undertaken without the October Revolution and the Bolshevik Party. The IIIrd. International under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky began to overcome the crisis of leadership of the proletariat, thanks to the struggles of the revolutionary left, both before and during the first imperialist war. This was the first attempt since the appearance of imperialism to found a centralised revolutionary international, a world party, to lead the international socialist revolution.

Neither the founding of the Third International nor the colossal upsurge of the proletariat of Europe could automatically lead to the formation of genuine Bolshevik Parties in the various countries; they could do no more than lay the foundations for such parties. Historical experience demonstrated once again that the construction of a Bolshevik Party can never be the automatic outcome of objective circumstances,

however favourable these may be.

The main Social-Democratic Parties, and in particular the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, adapted themselves to imperialism at the end of the epoch of rising capitalism, despite having been created under the direct leadership of Marx and Engels. The reformist degeneration did not spare such currents as those of Guesde, Kautsky and Bebel, which declared themselves as standing on the ground of Marxism and which controlled the IIInd. International. Their purely formal "Marxism", the opposite of authentic Marxism, was opposed by a revolutionary Marxist Left which included Rosa Luxemburg and the Social-Democratic Party of Poland, Lenin and the Bolsheviki, and the Bulgarian and Romanian organisations. This constituted a minority, but was not organised internationally.

The result was that the apparatuses of the Social-Democratic Parties, which were quickly won over to reformism, and the Social-Democratic bureaucracies, were a powerful influence in preventing Bolshevik Parties from being formed quickly in the various countries in the course of the revolutionary wave which emerged from the First World War.

The fact that such parties did not exist, and that none were built in the wake of the revolutionary wave, taken together with the Social-Democratic treachery, enabled the bourgeoisie in Germany, in Italy, in Hungary and throughout Europe, to <sup>control</sup> the first wave of the socialist revolution after the war.

The failure of this first revolutionary wave, along with the exhausted state of the isolated Russian proletariat and the defeat of the German proletariat which Social-Democracy caused, resulted in the beginning of the bureaucratisation of the USSR and of the IIIrd. International. The consolidation of a parasitic caste in the USSR and the Stalinisation of the IIIrd. International were the consequence of the progress of the counter-revolution within the first workers' state. Stalinism in turn was to be the decisive factor in new victories of the counter-revolution. It opened up the most tragic twenty years in a century of struggles throughout the world by the proletariat and the toiling masses, <sup>twenty</sup> years of powerful revolutionary pressures, but also twenty years of defeats for the workers and victories for the counter-revolution.



THESIS VII: TWENTY YEARS OF DEFEATS CAUSED BY STALINISM

The world proletariat suffered one defeat after another during a period of twenty years, despite its heroic efforts (the General Strike in Britain in 1926, the Second Chinese Revolution in 1927, 1936 in France and Spain, etc.) to reverse the trend. This period opened with the victory of Mussolini in Italy and the rise of Stalinism in the USSR from 1923 onwards. The counter-revolutionary success which was to be historically decisive is the victory of the Stalinist bureaucracy over the Russian proletariat, which made easier, or, rather, made possible, all the other successes of the counter-revolution.

The Russian proletariat was so strong, and the October Revolution was so powerful, that several stages were needed to consolidate the victory of the Stalinist counter-revolution. What began as a reactionary process reached its climax in a political counter-revolution, of which the Moscow Trials were a striking expression. The result was that a privileged, parasitic caste took possession of the government and the state apparatus as a whole, as well as of the control of all the institutions and mechanisms of society. It acquired a Bonapartist, openly counter-revolutionary character, and resorted to methods of civil war against the proletariat and its vanguard. The counter-revolutionary policy of the parasitic caste wiped out all the currents of the workers' vanguard in the Soviet Communist Party, and, in particular, the representatives of Bolshevism, who were organised in the Left Opposition. It was essentially against Trotskyism, the only consistent heir to the revolutionary traditions of Bolshevism, that the counter-revolutionary, Bonapartist government of Stalin developed its murderous activity.

This process of bureaucratisation started within the workers' state. It then spread to the whole IIIrd. International and to all the Communist Parties of the world. The Kremlin bureaucracy imposed on the Stalinised Communist Parties an orientation aimed at preventing the working-class, by every means, from achieving unity and independence and from taking any new steps forward towards the proletarian revolution. This orientation was in keeping with its bureaucratic interests and was presented under the veil of the construction of "Socialism in One Country". To this end it resorted both to the ultra-left policy of the "Third Period" (expressed in the concept of "Social-fascism") and to the most open forms of collaboration with the bourgeoisie. After advocating the "bloc of four classes" for countries oppressed by imperialism, Stalinism confronted the opening of revolutionary crises in France and Spain by advancing the policy of the Popular Front as one of "the last political resources of imperialism in the struggle against the proletarian revolution".

This counter-revolutionary orientation actively assisted Chiang Kai-shek, then Hitler and later Franco to defeat the revolution. Each of these victories of the counter-revolution in turn consolidated the Stalinist apparatus in the USSR and in the IIIrd. International alike and in this way deepened ever further the crisis of

leadership of the world proletariat.

One of the major consequences of that crisis was that the proletariat was unable to fight successfully against the 1929 economic crisis, which resulted in a terrible fall in the living conditions of the masses.

Economic advances and a rise in the standard of life and of culture of the rapidly growing proletariat were achieved in the USSR on the basis of the gains of the October Revolution. At the same time, the Stalinist bureaucracy appropriated an increasingly large share of the surplus product and its methods of management provoked crisis after crisis in the Soviet economy, which also suffered more and more the effects of the imperialist blockade.

This series of set-backs for the proletariat resulted in World War II, a gigantic attack on the international working-class. This war combined the war between the imperialist powers with the attack by German imperialism on the gains of the October Revolution. This latter element gave to the war-effort of the USSR its character of a defence of the conquests of the revolution.

We therefore had, in fact, two wars, the social characteristics of which were absolutely opposed. On the one hand, the inter-imperialist war waged between the "Axis" and the Allies, and, on the other hand, the first great war of counter-revolution all along the line, that of Nazism against the USSR. Immediately after the Russian Revolution, the civil war was combined with the intervention of the allied powers, but imperialism was not able to develop its intervention fully, because the workers in the imperialist countries showed by their struggles the most active proletarian solidarity in protecting the newly-born Soviet Union. The Nazi invasion of the USSR, on the other hand, was nothing but a counter-revolutionary war, mainly because the German proletariat had been atomised by the defeat in 1933 (for which Stalin bears entire responsibility) and could not shake off the Nazi terror.

There was not a moment, during this whole period of defeats, in which there were not desperate class-struggles. It was the epoch of Fascism, but also the epoch of the struggle against Fascism, of civil war against Chiang Kai-shek and against Franco, as well as the struggle of Trotskyism against Stalinism. These examples of class-struggles, drawn from several different sectors, suffice to show that they were sharper than ever before. They prove that, despite the victories of counter-revolution, the <sup>whole</sup> historic period in which these <sup>twenty</sup> years were situated (1923 - 1943) was the period of the international socialist revolution and of the international counter-revolution.

Throughout that period the proletariat engaged in powerful revolutionary actions, even though it could not carry them through to victory, fettered as it was by Stalinism. The heroic resistance of the working people of the USSR to the Nazi invasion confirmed the analysis, which Trotsky made in The Revolution Betrayed, that the con-

quests of October live in the consciousness of the masses.

Throughout this period, the task of giving a conscious expression to this movement of the proletariat, which never ceased to be revolutionary, as well as to preserve the legacy of Bolshevism, fell to the International Left Opposition and then to the Fourth International, under the leadership of Trotsky.



THESIS VIII: THE FOUNDATION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Today our International is weak. The revolutions which have been victorious under the pressure of mass-activity have been led by the bureaucracy, which has succeeded in controlling their course up until now. These facts have led revisionists to ask the following question: Was it correct to found the Fourth International, since it has been possible to expropriate the bourgeoisie over one-third of our planet without its intervention? Deutscher and other intellectuals of his type have categorically replied to this question that founding the Fourth International was a grave error on Trotsky's part.

We firmly believe the opposite. Founding the Fourth International was the most important achievement of Trotsky and our international movement! Our International was founded at the lowest point to which the workers' movement was driven back, but it met an absolute necessity, that of pursuing the organised struggle to extend the world revolution, a struggle which cannot be separated from defending the gains of the October Revolution. It was necessary to unite all the revolutionary Marxists firmly round a programme which would concentrate all the lessons of the international workers' movement since the Communist Manifesto and, in particular, since the Russian Revolution. It was necessary to defend these conquests of Marxism - the conscious expression of the unconscious process, concentrated in Trotskyism and its programme - against the attacks of Stalinism and of the other counter-revolutionary apparatuses, which tried with all their might to wipe out the international proletarian revolution from the historic memory of the workers and of their vanguard. It was therefore indispensable to construct a solid international organisation united round a programme, the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

Without the dimension of the Fourth International, the vanguard in each country would have been at the mercy of national circumstances. It would have lost sight of the historic dimension of the struggle of the world proletariat, that is, of the world revolution. It would not have been able to resist the revisionist, bureaucratic onslaught of Stalinism and Social-Democracy. It is only by founding the Fourth International that Trotskyism could take hold of the legacy of Marxism and of Bolshevism, in the struggle against the theory of "Socialism in One Country" and the Stalinist policy of Popular Fronts.

Furthermore, the founding of the Fourth International had an aggressive object, that of preparing a common framework for the revolutionary Marxists of the whole world, in preparation for the inevitable revolutionary upsurge which was soon to begin and which would be diverted or betrayed by all the petty-bourgeois and bureaucratic leaderships of the mass movement, in the absence of a revolutionary vanguard. The foundation of the Fourth International was the only way by which this double requirement, defensive and offensive, could be met.

In the end, the only fairly serious argument of the theoreticians who want to be

"Trotskyists" and who express scepticism about the role and the necessity of the Fourth International is that an International can only arise from great victories of the workers' movement. But there is no rule that says this. The only International to have been founded in the wake of a gigantic victory of the revolution was the IIIrd. International. The First International was founded at the beginning of the formation of the proletariat as a class. The Second International was founded in order to demonstrate that the workers' movement had come into existence. In neither one case nor the other was the foundation preceded by a victory of the revolution.

The Fourth International was founded on the basis of the gains of the October Revolution and with the perspective of aiming at the world revolution, at the very time when the elements of a new revolutionary upsurge were being formed in the period of defeats, in its depths.

The fact that it could be founded and that it could provide a programme and an organisation for the new world-wide revolutionary upsurge, despite the treachery of the traditional leaderships, bears witness to the degree of maturity of the conscious factor in the Trotskyist ranks. The programme is not a system of ideas. It is the generalisation into principles of the unity between theory and practice. Without that there can be no question of constructing the revolutionary organisation of the proletariat. When we founded the Fourth International, we were, therefore, preparing the organisation and the programme which are necessary to tear the mass movement away from the counter-revolutionary apparatuses and in this way to overcome the crisis of leadership which the revolutionary upsurge would confront.

The other more or less plausible argument is that the Fourth International has not been necessary to expropriate the bourgeoisie in a number of countries. We have already replied to this argument in the Foreword to these Theses, and we shall return to it in a later chapter.

It was indispensable in 1938 to found the Fourth International and to prepare to defend the USSR in the counter-revolutionary war which then threatened it. This was demonstrated almost immediately after its foundation, when it had to resist a first attack of revisionism in one of the strongest parties in our movement, the SWP of the United States. A revisionist tendency, hostile to the defence of the USSR, appeared in our International. It was a sophisticated expression of the progress counter-revolution in the world. This tendency could have broken up the Trotskyist ranks throughout the world, if it had not been within the common framework of the newly-founded international, with Trotsky himself. Thanks, however, to the fact that the Fourth International had been founded, we were in a position to defend the integrity of the programme of the world revolution, to foil the first large revisionist current to appear in our ranks and in this way to ensure the defence of the two major conquests of this century: the USSR and Bolshevism, of which Trotskyism is the only heir.



THESIS IX: THIRTY YEARS OF GREAT REVOLUTIONARY TRIUMPHS

The closing stage of the Second World War witnessed the opening of the most important revolutionary upsurge <sup>which</sup> has yet been seen. It was accompanied in the years immediately after the war by a deepening of the crisis of revolutionary leadership, which has continued since. These same years have been marked by a relative strengthening of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses which lead the mass movement, as well as by the weakness of our International. This combination of highly contradictory elements can be characterised, along with the consequences which flow from it, as follows:

1. The proletariat and the exploited and oppressed peoples of the whole world have won a series of spectacular victories. First came the defeat of Nazism, that is, of the imperialist counter-revolution, by the Red Army. Following this enormous triumph, the bourgeoisie has been expropriated in the countries in which one-third of humanity live, particularly in China, which is the most heavily populated country on this planet. However, all these advances, which went as far as the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, did not enable the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of the democracy of revolutionary workers' councils to be introduced. They resulted in the formation of bureaucratic workers' states.
2. The greatest crisis which imperialism had ever experienced took place. It was during this phase that the colonial peoples won political independence, by means of a gigantic mobilisation. This victory in itself is a great gain for the world revolution.

However, it was only in the countries where independence was accompanied by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and of imperialism (China, Cuba, Vietnam) that the tasks of national liberation and of the agrarian revolution could really be carried out, in accordance with the laws of the permanent revolution. In most of the colonial countries, and especially in Africa, the policies of Stalinism enabled the nationalist, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships to obstruct the mass movement and to impose the formation of semi-colonial bourgeois states, which continue to be fundamentally subject to imperialist domination.

Algeria, Ethiopia and Angola strikingly illustrate this phenomenon. Petty-bourgeois leaderships using progressive-sounding phrases directed the upsurge of the masses into the strait-jacket of semi-colonial national states. This mass upsurge is an integral part of the rise of the world revolution.

3. The old imperialist powers came out of the war in a state of dislocation. US imperialism asserted its dominant position, though this did not mean at all that the inter-imperialist contradictions were solved: quite the contrary.

All the bourgeoisies had to line up behind US imperialism and accept its leadership in the defence of the world order. US imperialism has, to be sure, exper-



perienced a growing crisis, which is an expression of the general crisis of capitalism as it is confronted by the rise of the world revolution and the world economic crisis. None the less, the other bourgeoisies have been unable to call into question the hegemony of US imperialism within the capitalist system. No "new finance-capital" has been able to arise (despite what the revisionists assert about Iran, Brazil and elsewhere). West Germany and Japan may well have been relatively strengthened, but they are in no position to dispute the leadership with US imperialism. Even less has some united "European imperialism" been able to set itself up in opposition to US imperialism. For all these reasons, the situation excludes the threat of further inter-imperialist wars. The conflicts in this period, such as the Korean War or that in Vietnam, were not wars between imperialist powers, but were waged directly against the world revolution.

4. In the same period, active counter-revolutionary collaboration between imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucracy was concretely expressed in the agreements at Yalta and Potsdam. These introduced "peaceful co-existence" in the new world equilibrium represented by the United Nations and the division of the world into zones of influence.

The fact remains that Washington and Moscow alike act in general in common agreement in defence of the new world order introduced at Yalta and Potsdam, even though they have been on opposite sides in the "cold war", in deep conflicts and in a number of "hot" counter-revolutionary wars waged to divert or crush the revolutionary upsurge.

Stalin and Roosevelt reached these agreements for the specific purpose of braking, diverting and controlling the revolution of the workers of the world, with the sole object of crushing it.

5. US Imperialism was enabled to reconstruct and stabilise the capitalist economy in Europe and in Japan, by means of the Marshall Plan, when these counter-revolutionary agreements were reached and <sup>when</sup> it had the indispensable co-operation of Stalinism, especially in the division of Germany and of its proletariat. The support which the Kremlin provided for the counter-revolution in Europe and in Japan enabled imperialism to bring about an economic "boom", based on an arms economy and growing parasitism, which lasted nearly twenty years.

This explains why imperialism has been able to maintain its supremacy over the world economy and to experience a period of unprecedented capitalist accumulation, founded though this was on a basis of parasitism, despite the expropriation of capitalism in a number of countries and the establishment of new political relations with the colonial or semi-colonial countries.

6. The crisis of revolutionary leadership of the movement of the masses developed

and the bureaucratic, petty-bourgeois apparatuses retained the degree of relative consolidation which they had achieved. The colossal post-war revolutionary upsurge did not lead to the removal of the Social-Democratic and Stalinist apparatuses, but to their being relatively strengthened. The Fourth International remained weak. These developments were contrary to what our movement and its leaders prognosticated in 1943 - 45. Pablo-ite revisionism was later to dislocate the Fourth International for the benefit of the apparatuses. In this way, two factors were combined in the decades which followed the war: an enormous revolutionary upsurge and a <sup>deepening</sup> of the crisis of leadership of the world proletariat.

This crisis of leadership is the underlying reason for all the highly contradictory phenomena of this post-war period, from the reconstruction of capitalism in Europe and Japan to the formation of the bureaucratic workers' states, by way of the division of Germany and the armed invasion of some bureaucratic workers' states by others.

The revolutionary upsurge has expressed itself up until now through the traditional organisations of the movement of the masses. The result has been that all the conquests which the proletariat has won against the bourgeoisie and all the expropriations of the national bourgeoisie have taken place under the control of bureaucratic or petty bourgeois leaderships. This explains why those workers' states, including Cuba, were bureaucratized from their very beginning.

It would be pointless to deny that all these conquests by the workers, and in particular the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in a number of countries, were won by the masses under bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships. This is a problem of the highest importance. The Trotskyists did not understand it at the end of World War II, and their failure to do so prevented them from strengthening the Fourth International and its sections.

There is a law which is common to all revolutions: in the first stage of the revolutionary crisis, the masses flow into the traditional organisations, even while they are acting against the ruling classes independently of the bureaucratic apparatuses, and the apparatuses can then be compelled to modify their counter-revolutionary policy in order to retain the leadership. This is the stage of illusions which even the February Revolution in Russia experienced. If then there is no revolutionary party in a position to take the leadership, these illusions lead the masses to defeat, or, in exceptional cases, to limited and deformed conquests, when the petty-bourgeois have to go further than they wished on the road to a break with the bourgeoisie.

Moreover, the newly-won revolutionary conquests were <sup>dishonestly</sup> exploited by the apparatuses to boost their own prestige, and especially by the Stalinist apparatus. But

at the same time these conquests had the contradictory effect of deepening the crisis of the Kremlin bureaucracy, as is shown by the break between China and the USSR, by that between Vietnam and China, by the East Berlin crisis, the revolutions in Hungary and Poland (1956) and the movements towards the political revolutions in Czechoslovakia (1968) and elsewhere.

7. In a certain sense the formation of the bureaucratic workers' states is one of the consequences of the counter-revolutionary division of labour between imperialism and the Kremlin. Imperialism has devoted itself to restoring stability to the functioning of the capitalist economy in the imperialist countries, with the aid of Stalinism. Stalinism has concentrated its efforts on the weakest links in the capitalist chain, where the crisis is sharpest and the revolutionary activity of the masses was highest, in the countries on the borders of the USSR, in Eastern Europe and in China, in order to brake and them to crush the independent, revolutionary mobilisation of the masses there. To intervene in the countries of the borders of the USSR was a life-and-death question for the Kremlin bureaucracy. It could not possibly allow a revolutionary mobilisation of the workers' movement and the working masses to develop outside its control on the other side of its frontiers, because this mobilisation would inevitably have repercussions in the USSR itself, endangering the Kremlin bureaucracy's own counter-revolutionary, parasitic existence. Imperialism recognised that a direct intervention on its part in these countries, which had been ruined by the war and were a prey to a catastrophic economic, political and social crisis, could provoke a revolutionary mobilisation, independent of the Kremlin, which could give rise to a revolutionary process throughout Europe.

The expropriation of capital in the countries of Eastern Europe, China, Jugoslavia, North Korea and Vietnam, then, resulted from the unforeseen combination of two factors, within the framework of the most serious crisis which the gener-world relations established at Yalta and Potsdam had so far encountered:

- a). A concession which imperialism was obliged to make to the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy, in order to get the advantage of its help and to be able to reconstruct capitalism in Japan and in Western Europe:
- b). The colossal post-war revolutionary upsurge in the weakest links in the chain of world capitalism.

Imperialism took good care that the concessions which it had to make to the movement of the masses were made through the agency of the bureaucracy, through the opportunist, counter-revolutionary apparatuses, so that the latter could undertake the task of restraining the process of permanent revolution which was opening.

None the less, these concessions were won on the world scale as a result of



of the revolutionary upsurge immediately after the war. They were immense conquests by the movement of the workers and the working masses of the whole world. As such, therefore, they must be defended against every attack by counter-revolutionary imperialism, in the same way as the conquests in which the workers' state in Cuba is expressed, despite its bureaucratic character.

8. However, the bureaucracy did succeed in slowing down the gigantic revolutionary process and in checking, country by country, the movement of the revolutionary workers and working masses. In this way the huge victory which the formation of new workers' states represented for the proletariat was limited and deformed by the bureaucracy. The existence of the bureaucratic workers' states, then, concretely expresses both the fruit of a massive victory over imperialism and the set-back inflicted on the workers' movement by the bureaucracy. The working-class character of these states is due entirely to the revolutionary activity of the masses. The bureaucracy, which was obliged to accept that conquest, merely imprinted on these states their bureaucratic character.

9. The relative re-inforcement of the bureaucracy immediately after the war, together with its having to go further than it wished in a number of countries, fed the development of Pablo-ite revisionism within the leadership of our International. This revisionist current divided the world into "blocks" and "camps". It invested the bureaucracy with the historical mission of making the revolution, in its own way. It broke up the world unity of the class struggle, which was at the very heart of the foundation of the Fourth International. It was able to disrupt our International and thereby to do a valuable service for the counter-revolutionary leaderships of the mass movement and to make the crisis of proletarian leadership much more serious. These are the reasons why we were unable to take advantage of the immense possibilities for the construction of a new revolutionary leadership of the proletariat which were offered by the situation prevailing in the early 1950's.

Thanks to Pablo-ite revisionism, three decades of continual crisis for our international movement opened in 1951. None of the objective considerations which we have mentioned earlier by themselves explains the crisis and the weakness of our International. The first and foremost cause for the weakness and disarray of our International is Pablo-ite revisionism, which attacked the fundamental principles of our movement. Nothing can demonstrate this better than the fact that, just when there was a definite possibility of a second October Revolution, namely the revolution in Bolivia in 1952, this revolution was betrayed and led into an impasse by this revisionist leadership, which committed one of the greatest betrayals of which the workers' movement has been the victim in the present century.

10. The consequence of the upsurge of the masses has been that, as the counter-revol-

utionary apparatuses grew in strength, they entered their crisis at the same time. This is why the crisis of Stalinism has continued to deepen during this period and had led it to the brink of dislocation.

This crisis has expressed itself particularly in a tendency - which Trotsky pointed out - for a certain "national Stalinism" to appear. The Kremlin bureaucracy has found itself in a contradictory position when the ruling classes were expropriated in the various countries and when it appropriated the credit for the revolution. Its own interests, which are those of a privileged caste, prevented it from forming a federation of workers' states to include the USSR, Poland, Romania and the rest, because it did its utmost to keep them in a state of dependence. It therefore had to set up "national states" of a bureaucratic type. Hence the development of complex conflicts and contradictions since 1945 between the Moscow bureaucracy and the satellite bureaucracies, which can maintain their own position only thanks to subordination to Moscow. The bloody trials which developed while Stalin was still alive and then the events in East Berlin, in Poland, in Czechoslovakia and in Hungary, etc., have shown both the scope and the limitations of these inter-bureaucratic conflicts. On the one hand, the satellite bureaucracies as such cannot break with Moscow without unleashing the process of political revolution. On the other hand, the contradictions between the Moscow bureaucracy and the satellite bureaucracies tend to disrupt all the component parts of the bureaucracy, on the lines of Trotsky's analysis of the antagonism between the "Reiss tendency" (proletarian) and the "Butenko tendency" (imperialist).

Of course, these are only tendencies, which have taken and will take forms which we cannot forecast. The fact remains that the central nucleus of the bureaucracy itself is the most active instigator of "Butenko-ist" tendencies. What better proof of this than the sympathy shown by this central nucleus for the various proposals for "reforms" (such as those drawn up by Liebermann), which tend to undermine State ownership.

We must add that the profoundly reactionary policy of the Kremlin bureaucracy has already collided with the no less profound movement towards the political revolution, the strength of which is drawn from the "relations of October", that is, from the social relations to which the masses are deeply attached and the control of which the masses wish to tear out of the grip of the Moscow bureaucracy and the satellite bureaucracies.

Imperialism is so completely aware of this state of things that, while it does its utmost to exploit the contradictions between the Kremlin bureaucracy and the satellite bureaucracies, it none the less supports every counter-revolutionary activity of the bureaucracies against the masses, for instance in Poland, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere.

The cases of China and Yugoslavia fall within this general framework, but must be analysed separately. Both Mao and Tito took power against Stalin's will, but in China and Yugoslavia alike the power of the bureaucracy was consolidated in close collaboration with Stalin and the Kremlin bureaucracy. To be sure, the origin of the Yugoslav and Chinese revolutions undeniably conferred a certain degree of autonomy on the bureaucracies of these two countries. Stalin could not treat Tito as he treated Gomulka, Slansky, Kostov and certainly Dimitrov, whom he eliminated from power in the effort to overcome the contradictions analysed above. Neither Stalin nor Khrushchev, moreover, could treat Mao in that way. (One of the aspects of the Korean War is to be seen precisely in the attempt of Stalin to exhaust the impact of the Chinese Revolution.)

Yet the Yugoslav and Chinese bureaucracies, as privileged castes, were caught in contradictions of the same kind as those facing the Kremlin bureaucracy, and both tried to overcome them in the same way, along the line of "peaceful co-existence". But the principal supports of "peaceful co-existence" are the Kremlin bureaucracy and US imperialism. No one will deny that there are major contradictions between the Kremlin bureaucracy and the Chinese and Yugoslav bureaucracies, on the one hand, and between the Kremlin bureaucracy and the satellite bureaucracies, on the other. But all the bureaucracies tend to look to imperialism, in their efforts to solve the internal contradictions of each bureaucracy as well as the contradictions between them. "Non-aligned" Yugoslavia depends no less than Poland on imperialist credits. The Peking bureaucracy repeatedly offers its services to Washington, but Carter (and Kissinger before him) laid down that US policy does not envisage forming a China-US bloc against the USSR. In plain words, Washington understands perfectly that, while it continues to increase its pressure on the Soviet Union, there can be no question of USA "qualitatively" changing its relationships with the USSR, that is, the system of "peaceful co-existence", which also provides the framework for the relations between the various bureaucracies.

Let us, finally, consider the Communist Parties of the imperialist countries or of the countries dominated by imperialism. These are agencies of the Kremlin bureaucracy. Their principal task is to mount a counter-revolutionary guard on the interests of this privileged caste. This fact means that everywhere they undertake the defence of the bourgeois order against the rise of the revolution, whatever may be the political form of the bourgeois regimes, whether it be decomposed Bonapartism in France, the monarchy in Spain or military dictatorship in Argentina. Nothing reveals the real significance of "Euro-Communism" <sup>more clearly</sup> than the evolution of the French Communist Party, which recently has publicly tightened all its links with the Kremlin - which in any case had never been broken!

The dependence of the Communist Parties on Moscow follows from their very nature.



The Social-Democratic apparatuses are direct agencies of imperialism in each country. The Stalinist apparatuses are indirect agencies of imperialism, through their subordination to the Stalinist bureaucracy, which has "definitively passed over to the side of the bourgeois order". Yet the linked crisis of imperialism and of the Kremlin bureaucracy cannot fail to be reflected within the Communist Parties. At one and the same time, the crisis of the bourgeois order, the defence of which they undertake, and that of the Kremlin bureaucracy, which their own very nature compels them to defend, in order to retain their place in each country and to play their counter-revolutionary role as "bourgeois-workers' parties", are expressed within the Communist Parties.

Trotsky discussed the problems of the future of the Stalinist parties, in the course of an article, the English-language text of which is in "Writings of Leon Trotsky: 1938 - 39", (Pathfinder Press, New York), in pages 52 - 78. The article is there entitled, "A Fresh Lesson: After the Imperialist 'Peace' at Munich", and is dated October 10, 1938. The relevant passage, from pages 70 - 71, reads as follows:

"As regards the ex-Comintern, its social basis, properly speaking, is of a two-fold nature. On the one hand, it lives on the subsidies of the Kremlin, submits to the latter's commands and, in this respect, every ex-Communist bureaucrat is the younger brother and subordinate of the Soviet bureaucrat. On the other hand, the various machines of the ex-Comintern feed from the same sources as the Social-Democracy, that is, the super-profits of imperialism. The growth of the Communist parties in recent years, their infiltration into the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie, their installation in the state machinery, the trade unions, parliaments, municipalities, etc., have strengthened in the extreme their dependence on national imperialism at the expense of their traditional dependence on the Kremlin."

This analysis provides the means to understand the crisis which today is tearing apart the international apparatus of the Kremlin. The development of the tendencies which Trotsky analysed feeds the forces which are calling into question the strict subordination to the Kremlin of the various Communist Parties and strengthening their direct linkage with their own bourgeoisie. These forces have developed enormously, for example, within the Italian Communist Party.

This "double nature" of the basic units of the former Comintern, of which Trotsky wrote, is a reality for all the Western Communist Parties, whether they claim to stand for "Euro-Communism" or not. For example, the defence by the Communist Party of the dictatorship in Argentina is completely in accordance with the needs of the Kremlin bureaucracy, though at the same time it encourages tendencies in the Argentine Communist Party towards greater "dependence in relation to its own bourgeoisie", as in the Spanish or the French Communist Parties. This has never

led, or ever will lead, to these Communist Parties being transformed into social-democratic parties, or into parties independent of Moscow. It will lead to their breaking-up, when their crisis reaches its height. The present development in the Spanish Communist Party is another example.

This crisis results precisely from the impossibility of the "social-democratisation" of a Stalinist party, in a situation in which the interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy demand that the party make itself directly responsible for maintaining the existing bourgeois regimes and, therefore, force the party by that very fact into a greater dependence on the bourgeoisie and liberate tendencies to nationalism. Proletarian revolutions alone have been able to break Stalinist parties from Moscow, as a by-product of these same revolutions. The "exceptional conditions" of which the Transitional Programme spoke have obliged the petty bourgeois parties - including the Stalinists - to go further on the road to the break with the bourgeoisie and also, in certain cases, to break with the Kremlin bureaucracy. But these Communist Parties, in China and in Yugoslavia, remain not only bureaucratic and counter-revolutionary parties, but continue to depend, in the last analysis, on the predominance of the bureaucracy of the USSR on the world scale, and, in this sense, they remain Stalinist parties.

Alongside these contradictions between "national Stalinisms" and Moscow Stalinism, we have witnessed a certain number of positive left-ward developments, caused by the onset of the political revolution, in which certain sectors have moved towards positions objectively close to Trotskyism, especially in Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

11. Since 1953 there have been powerful eruptions, which have fuelled the process of the political revolution and heralded its future appearance on a wider stage.

This process began with the strikes in East Berlin and the mobilisation of the East German proletariat in 1953. It spread to Poland and, in particular, to the outbreak of open political revolution in Hungary, in 1956. Then followed the "Prague Spring" in 1968 and the Polish strikes in 1970 - 71. This is an inevitable process. Though it is not yet general, it is already affecting the USSR. Moreover, every wave of the political revolution is stronger than the one before it. Every wave sharpens the determination of the peoples oppressed by the Kremlin to re-conquer their full rights to national self-determination, along with their democratic and class liberties.

The Soviet proletariat played a decisive role in defending the conquests of October (at Stalingrad). It emerged from the war exhausted, after losing millions of victims. The first of the great battles along the road to the political revolution have been joined in the other bureaucratic workers' states, without the Soviet proletariat so far playing the leading role. But in the years following the war, the Soviet proletariat has recovered its fighting capacity in its resistance to

the economic attacks of the bureaucracy and in the struggle for independent trade unions.

12. Meanwhile, the American proletariat, which played a major role by its refusal to let World War II be prolonged in the form of a counter-revolutionary war against the USSR and by its refusal to attack the Chinese Revolution, has not appeared in a leading role on the world revolutionary stage. But the struggle of the American masses against the Vietnam War contributed directly to the historic defeat of US imperialism. At the same time, it prepared for the new mobilisation of the American workers against the wide-ranging attacks to which they were subjected at the beginning of the world economic crisis. After the revolutionary situation which immediately followed the war, the struggles of the proletariat of Western Europe from 1947 onwards were contained. However, in this period, the peoples and the workers of the under-developed, colonial countries engaged in vast struggles for national independence. The proletariat of Western Europe was to raise its head again, for example, in France with the General Strike of 1953, with mobilisations and strikes in Italy and in Britain, with the new mobilisation of the workers in Spain. All these were advance warnings of the major developments which were to mark the year 1968 and those which followed.
13. The workers throughout the world have several times foiled the counter-revolutionary plans of US imperialism to attack the USSR and the other workers' states. In 1945, they refused, with the American workers in uniform at their head, to continue the war, which US imperialism intended to re-direct against the USSR. They then checked imperialism in Korea and forced MacCarthyism to retreat in USA. The military defeat of US imperialism in Vietnam was the first historic political defeat to be suffered by US imperialism. This decisive event belongs to a new revolutionary period. From that time onwards the relations of the classes on the world scale are characterised by the imminence of the proletarian revolution.



THESIS X: THE PERIOD OF THE IMMINENCE OF THE REVOLUTION HAS OPENED: THE SOLUTION OF THE CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP IS NOW ON THE ORDER OF THE DAY

Let us repeat once again, following Lenin: the present epoch, in which we live today, is the epoch of imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism. It is the epoch of the world proletarian revolution, which can win final victory only if the Fourth International, the world party of the socialist revolution, leads the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. Within this epoch there are various periods and combinations of events which affect parties in general and the revolutionary party in particular.

The revisionists deny that we are in the epoch of the proletarian revolution. This is why, after first advancing the "theory" according to which "centuries of transition" dominated by the bureaucracy would stretch between capitalism and socialism, they have more recently formulated other "theories", such as "neo-capitalism", "neo-imperialism" and, finally, "the third age of capitalism".

These various "theories" do not confine themselves to denying the Leninist characterization of the epoch of imperialism, as an epoch of total decadence, of chronic crisis of the capitalist economy, as "an epoch of wars and revolutions", etc. They draw from these "theories" their logical consequence, and call into question the thesis that the objective pre-requisites of the proletarian revolution have all come into existence. Consequently, these theories tend to the liquidation of the Fourth International.

The most recent years demonstrate, on the contrary, that there has been a qualitative leap forward in the advance towards the socialist revolution and in the crisis of imperialism. We have entered a new period of the world-wide rise of the revolution. This new period opened in 1968, it began its full development in 1974 and took a new leap forward in 1979.

The forward leap of the revolution is located in the world economic crisis of imperialism, which in no way spares the workers' states. There results from it a new period in the crisis of imperialism and of Stalinism. However, it possesses one qualitatively new, distinguishing feature. This is conferred upon it by its specific tendencies and inter-relations, and is of major importance; in it are contained the conditions necessary for overcoming the crisis of leadership of the proletariat. The isolation and the crisis of the Fourth International are being overcome. We have the conditions in which Trotskyist parties with mass influence can be built. With these it will be possible to go forward towards new October revolutions.

We define this period as the period of the imminence of the revolution because, in it, there are combined, at a higher level, the social revolution and the political revolution, while the crisis of leadership is beginning to be resolved. These herald the birth, for future social and political revolutions, of conditions like those which ruled in the Revolution of October 1917.

The period of the imminence of the revolution forms part of the process which began in 1943, like the periods which immediately preceded it. 1943 is the date of a historic turning-point. German imperialism, thanks to its military apparatus, had imposed its European "new order" on the larger part of Europe, including part of the USSR. Here was the greatest counter-revolutionary victory which imperialism had won since the Russian Revolution of 1917. Then, at the very moment when German imperialism began to collapse, the proletariat, which had suffered defeat after defeat during the preceding twenty years, recovered the initiative in the class struggle on the world scale.

In the course of World War II, every one of the old imperialist powers on the European Continent had been defeated on its own territory. British imperialism was to remain greatly weakened. In Asia, Japanese imperialism had defeated all these old powers, only to be crushed in turn by US imperialism, the only ultimate victor in the war, which was then at the height of its power.

Yet there was a real collapse of the capitalist system in conjunction with the colossal upsurge of the revolution at the end of the war. The years from 1943 to 1949 saw the proletariat and working<sup>people</sup> of the entire world win major victories. This period opened with the victory of Stalingrad and the revolutionary crisis in Italy and reached its culmination with the Chinese Revolution. It witnessed the greatest victories which the revolution has ever won, the expropriation of the exploiters and of imperialism over one-third of the planet, all this in spite of the fact that Stalinism succeeded in limiting the expropriations and constructing bureaucratic workers' states in the countries concerned, in this way depriving the masses politically of their conquests. It witnessed the combination of the relative re-inforcement of the apparatuses with the theoretical, political and organisational weakness of the cadres of the Fourth International.

The major, decisive importance of this historic turn has to be emphasised, just as we emphasise the role which the Kremlin bureaucracy adopted of containing and restricting the revolutionary wave which emerged from the war, and of giving its support in this way to US imperialism in the construction of the new imperialist order.

A new period in the class struggle after the war opened in 1949. This was characterised by the renewed efforts of imperialism to go over to the offensive against the movement of the masses and to inflict a major defeat on it. It was also characterised by the defeat of these efforts, which won some important victories, for example in Indonesia and in Brazil, but did not for all that change the nature of the period, which may be defined as unstable equilibrium.

Between 1949 and 1952 appeared the elements which were to characterise the following years. The counter-revolutionary apparatuses, and Stalinism in particular,

succeeded in containing the revolutionary wave. In this way they enabled imperialism to create the conditions for the economic "boom", which consisted of the injection of greater and greater credits for arms manufacture, and of the exploitation of the working-class, by means of the Marshall Plan, and of the colonial and semi-colonial countries. The "Cold War" had begun. Imperialism tried, without success, to defeat the world revolution in Korea. At the same time, the efforts of Stalinism to maintain the status quo after the war caused splits in its own ranks from the very beginning. The split with Yugoslavia revealed the deep internal contradictions of the bureaucracy and the difficulties which it experienced in controlling the movement of the masses. Meanwhile imperialism was confronted by a revolutionary war in Indo-China, with the upsurge in Latin America, with the great workers' revolution of 1952 in Bolivia, with the crisis of the Near East and with the instability of French imperialism, as well as other problems.

In 1953, for the first time, the political revolution and the social revolution appeared on the scene of history together, as two aspects of the same process of the world proletarian revolution.

The rise of the political revolution began on June 17, 1953 with the insurrection in East Berlin. As always, the forward leaps of history were prepared by a quantitative accumulation of elements, which suddenly resulted in a qualitative leap. This qualitative leap then became part of the period of unstable equilibrium, which was characterised by the renewed attempts of imperialism to change the relation of forces by powerful attacks, as well as by the powerful attacks of the proletariat, aimed at changing this unstable equilibrium in its favour.

From 1953 onwards the proletariat re-appeared on the scene in all the bureaucratic workers' states. This was the moment when Pablo-ite revisionism capitulated to the Stalinist bureaucracy and provoked the dislocation of our International, at the very moment when the first signs of the political revolution appeared and when the developments of the class struggle showed that the hour for building the Fourth International had struck.

The political revolution was a qualitatively new event in this period, though, we must repeat, it did not change the nature of the period, which was that of an unstable equilibrium, which imperialism tried to change by powerful offensives.

No major symptom of the political revolution had yet shown itself on the stage of history before 1953, despite the great victories which the world proletariat had won. The workers of the USSR, Eastern Europe, China and Yugoslavia had had to suffer the blows of great counter-revolutionary wars.

Tens of millions of workers had fallen in the course of these wars in these various regions, especially in the USSR and in China. There the proletariat had almost disappeared from the scene. Especially in the USSR, the working masses under attack from Nazism had paid with millions and millions of dead for the de-





fence of the revolutionary conquests of October, which lived on in their consciousness. They came out of World War II exhausted. This is what made the Soviet proletariat nearly disappear from the political scene. Hence the delay in the political revolution.

The crisis of leadership of the world proletariat had been sharpened by the Stalinist policy of "peaceful co-existence". At this time it permitted imperialism to restore the bourgeois order and to give it a relative stability, especially in Western Europe. The policy of the French and Italian Communist Parties had made an indispensable contribution to this stabilisation. They betrayed the proletariat in both countries. In France they made possible and easier the victory of the reactionary Bonapartism of De Gaulle, while in Italy they likewise made possible and easier the installation and maintenance of the reactionary government of Christian Democracy.

None the less, even though imperialism was supported by the active collaboration of the Kremlin bureaucracy and of the other parasitic bureaucracies, and even though it succeeded in reconstructing the economy and the capitalist states in Japan and in Western Europe alike, it could not inflict on the world proletariat a defeat so decisive as to reverse the process of class struggle which began in 1943. This is why the successive periods since this historic turn can all be regarded as being <sup>in a general period</sup> of proletarian victory, in which the proletariat has not suffered any decisive defeat.

It was, on the contrary, in this period that the Cuban Revolution triumphed and brought <sup>into existence</sup> another workers' state, this time in the capitalist West. In this period also developed the counter-revolutionary war of US Imperialism against Vietnam and the resistance of the latter. The Cuban Revolution was to be the starting-point of an intense revolutionary process in Latin America. This process was to be diverted by the Castro-ite and Guevarist leadership into a petty bourgeois guerrilla-ist policy, the influence of which was also to be felt in Europe.

The efforts of imperialism to recover the initiative and to defeat the masses all failed miserably, except in Indonesia, Brazil and a <sup>few</sup> other countries. On the contrary, the revolution won great victories and in the end it was imperialism which was defeated.

These <sup>twenty</sup> years from 1949 to 1968 saw all the conditions gathering for a new turn of historic importance in the class struggle. To be sure, this period did not experience so intense a class struggle or so powerful a revolutionary upsurge as the period which preceded it, from 1943 to 1949. But this was the period in which the political revolution appeared as a qualitative phenomenon. This point needs to be emphasised. We can say of the years from 1943 to 1949 that they produced the most intense crisis of imperialism, the greatest revolutionary upsurge and the greatest number of victories for the revolution to this day. But the



years which followed were the years when the proletarian revolution was extended to the bureaucratic workers' states. Further, from 1968 onwards, the period of the imminence of the revolution has seen the world-wide unity of the class struggle move to a higher stage, to an inextricable, permanent and no longer intermittent combination of the political revolution in the bureaucratic workers' states and the social revolution in the imperialist and capitalist countries. The period was, therefore, a new one, in which would take place the battles at the end of the 1960's and at the beginning of the 1970's, in Peru, in Bolivia, in Chile and in Argentina, which form part of the opening of the epoch of the imminence of the revolution.

What were the events which revealed that a new period of the revolution was opening in 1968? The General Strike in France, the crisis in Peru, the "cordobazo" in Argentina, the radicalisation of the national struggle of the Palestinian people, which developed in 1970 towards pre-soviet forms of organisation (Irbid) and the Popular Assembly in Bolivia. All that was in the capitalist countries. But the decisive event was the rise of the political revolution in Czechoslovakia in 1968. This gave a material form to a qualitative change, when the proletariat there constructed organisations which overcame the problem of dispersion of its forces which had characterised the earlier processes of the political revolution, in East Berlin and in Poland and Hungary. In Czechoslovakia in 1968 the proletariat went so far as to pose the necessity for a new party at the time of the XIVth. Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Despite the invasion by the forces of the Kremlin, the proletariat in "opposition" demanded the right to organise and made connections with the Polish "opposition", with the working-class movement of the world and with Trotskyism. A similar process developed in Poland. Its highest points were the General Strike in the Baltic ports in December 1970 and January 1971 and the formation of the Central Strike Committee at Szczecin, the explosion in 1976 and the strike wave in summer 1980, which demanded the right to form independent trade unions and raised the problem of a socialist workers' party. Activities and strikes pointing the same way as in Poland began to develop in the USSR itself.

This development of the political revolution from 1968 onwards in the bureaucratic workers' states opens up unprecedented possibilities for solving the crisis of revolutionary leadership, while at the same time it confirms the validity of the programme of the Fourth International. The proletariat moves spontaneously towards it, and greatly increases the number of opportunities for Trotskyism as the only alternative leadership in the world/revolution and in particular in the political revolution.

This does not mean that the mass mobilisation is or will be simultaneous in all the countries, or that the general character of the period means that revolutionary or pre-revolutionary situations are developing in all the countries. It is a mistake to confuse the characterisation of a whole world-wide period with the combinations of circumstances of the class struggle at the level of individual nations. But the unequal and combined development of the struggles of the world proletariat pose



more and more directly the problem of revolutionary leadership as a condition for future October revolutions.

Around 1974, the rise in the world revolution and the crisis of imperialism made a new forward leap. This was the victory in Vietnam. The military defeat of US imperialism led to the most severe political defeat of US imperialism in its whole history. This forward leap confirmed and strengthened the characteristics of the present period. It deepened the crisis of political leadership in USA and its effects were felt by all the other bourgeoisies. The world-wide revolutionary upsurge received a new access of strength.

The Portuguese revolution also strengthened the characteristic features of this period. The overthrow of the fascist dictatorship and the breakdown of the state apparatus created the pre-requisites for a situation of dual power. This had all the elements of the mobilisations in Europe following World War II (in France and Italy), of the Bolivian Revolution in 1952 and of the movement towards the political revolution in Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Despite the treacherous policies of the leaderships, which permitted a reactionary government to be restored, the revolutionary process in Portugal contributed to the crisis in most European countries.

The democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, and the struggles of the oppressed nationalities, also form part and parcel of the new development of the proletarian revolution, and are closely bound up with each other.

Meanwhile imperialism was suffering the effects of the end of the economic "boom" which had lasted two decades.

The crisis which began in 1974 - 75 is not a classical cyclical crisis. It gets deeper from one year to the next. It is moving towards a qualitative leap, as the conditions are being prepared for the world market and international division of labour to be dislocated. The crisis has become chronic, affecting every capitalist country and the entirety of the world market. Inflation, unemployment and monetary disturbances are the forms in which this crisis and its destructive tendencies reveal themselves. Even though US imperialism indisputably still has its position of leadership, it feels its economic and political power weakening. The crisis of imperialism is expressed continually in the revolutionary upsurge.

This economic crisis has its effects on the countries where the bourgeoisie has been expropriated. This is not due merely to the disastrous/<sup>mis-</sup>management by the parasitic bureaucracy of the planned economy based on the production relations resulting from the expropriation of capital. At the same time as the bureaucracy resists workers' control of the planned economy, it imprisons each economy in its national frontiers. It strengthens the national frontiers and introduces all the pressures of imperialism, which dominates the world market, into the economies of the bureaucratic workers' states.



Yet the facts demonstrate more every day that the productive forces demand that capital be expropriated on the world scale, that a new international division of labour be established and that national frontiers progressively disappear. The pressure of the world crisis of the capitalist mode of production combines with the contradictions which arise from the bureaucratic management of the workers' states, taking the form of far-reaching<sup>economic</sup> attacks on the working-class, which herald a general crisis of social relations.

The revolutionary upsurge has not been interrupted since 1968; it entered a new phase in 1974 and made a new leap forward at the end of the 1970's.

The Iranian Revolution dealt a severe blow to imperialism in one of its strategic bastions. Despite the conciliatory policy of the "Islamic" national bourgeoisie which was brought to the head of the revolution, and despite the counter-revolutionary orientation of Stalinism, the Iranian Revolution retains all its relevance.

The overthrow of the dictatorship of Somoza by the revolution objectively opened up the possibility of another Cuba in Central America and of encouraging the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses in the neighbouring countries, especially in El Salvador and in Guatemala. Here again the disastrous role which the petty bourgeois, collaborationist leaderships have played has once again been strikingly revealed, as well as the necessity for a revolutionary Marxist, that is, a Trotskyist party.

The revolutionary upsurge reveals itself today in many forms. The crisis of Stalinism tends to become more severe. The revolutionary upsurge tends to become stronger. In combination with the chronic crisis of imperialism, they open the possibility for Trotskyist nuclei to transform themselves into parties with mass influence. In other words, they open the way to begin to solve the crisis of the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat.

To conclude, a new phase of the crisis of revisionism opened in 1979 and with it a process of re-groupment of Trotskyism, in the formation of the Parity Committee. This is at one and the same time a product of the epoch of the imminence of the revolution and an element which goes to make up the processes which characterise it.

## C H A P T E R     T W O

### The Post-War Years:

#### The Factors which Formed the Period of the Imminence of the Revolution

##### THESES XI:    AN UNEXPECTED PROLONGATION OF THE CRISIS OF REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP

The development of the proletarian revolution since World War II has presented new theoretical and political problems to the Fourth International. However, these problems could not, and cannot, be solved except within the framework of the principles and the programme of the Fourth International.

Neither our International nor Trotsky himself foresaw that the crisis of leadership of the world proletariat would be prolonged through more than four decades without the beginning of a solution being in sight. The International, consequently, did not foresee also the relative development and the maintenance of the influence of the counter-revolutionary bureaucratic apparatuses - in particular the Stalinist apparatus - nor the propagandist character which the Fourth International itself would retain, despite the gigantic revolutionary upsurge which has developed during these four decades. It was even less able to foresee the possibility of a crisis of a revisionist kind, such as that which happened at the beginning of the 1950's and has disorganised the Fourth International for nearly thirty years!

Against all the forecasts, no revolution like that of October, that is, led by a revolutionary party and introducing the dictatorship of the proletariat, has happened since 1917. Even though the <sup>successive</sup> revolutions which have taken place in the period after World War II have brought about a major crisis of imperialism and a revolutionary upsurge greater than that which followed 1917, these revolutions have remained incomplete. They have remained February Revolutions, without the elements of dual power which came into existence being able to develop into an October Revolution, in the absence of a revolutionary party. The various bourgeoisies were able at the end of World War II to liquidate the elements of dual power and to restore the bourgeois states, particularly in Western Europe, in France, Italy and elsewhere, with the help of the Communist Parties.

In the Eastern European countries the bureaucratic workers' states were erected on the basis of the liquidation of the elements of democratic workers' power.

Some of these revolutions, in an important number of countries, went as far as the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, without the crisis of leadership of the proletariat being resolved and without being led by Marxist revolutionary parties.

All these revolutions began with the collapse of the bourgeois states and, in a sense,



stopped half-way and flowed back, some to the reconstruction of bourgeois states, as in France and Italy, and others to the formation of bureaucratic workers' states. The revolutions which took place immediately after World War II and later were controlled by bourgeois or petty bourgeois leaderships, while the Fourth International remained weak and in crisis. The workers' states which have been formed have been controlled by parties linked to the Kremlin, by Stalinist parties, or, in the case of Cuba, by petty bourgeois movements, which have been incorporated in and subordinated to Stalinism. The bureaucratic apparatuses have relatively strengthened themselves and, though in crisis, have maintained and extended their control on the mass movement.

None the less, we must proceed along the line of reasoning the basis of which was laid down by Trotsky, if we are to understand the strengthening of the bureaucratic apparatuses and the extension of their control. This process is inseparable from a mighty accumulation of contradictions, such contradictions as had already revealed themselves while Stalin was still alive, in the crisis of the relations between the Kremlin and the Yugoslav Communist Party, and in the Chinese Revolution, which was victorious against Stalin's wishes.

These decisive events, to which the Theses have already referred, had their effect in the ranks of the Fourth International. The weakness of its leadership became obvious when it was confronted by these events, to which it produced dogmatic, sectarian, propagandist or, what was more serious, revisionist

We understand Pablo-ism to be revisionism, not just a collection of deviations. None the less, certain theoretical problems are located at the basis of the episodic deviations and of the revisions of revolutionary Marxism and of the programme of the Fourth International alike, and these problems are intimately bound up with the lessons of the Bolshevik Revolution. In some cases, comrades accepted the October revolution one-sidedly, as an obligatory model, in its forms and methods, for all the revolutions of our epoch. In other cases, there were those who went so far, in extreme cases, as to deny the fundamental lessons of this same October Revolution and the character of the epoch the opening of which it marked.

It cannot be denied that the Fourth International, after the war, did not understand what Lenin (for all that) had explained in his lifetime: the foundations would remain the same (the revolutionary destruction of the bourgeois state), but the course and the forms which the revolution would take in the other countries could not be exactly the same as those which it had assumed in Russia. The concept of a "model" is alien to Marxism.

When Pablo-ism faced the appearance of bureaucratic workers' states, it reached the conclusion that we had before us a necessary historical epoch in which the bureaucracy would rule, an epoch in which there would be no repetitions of the October Revolution.

At the time when the Fourth International was founded, the world situation was characterised by the economic crisis which had lasted since 1929, by the treachery of Stalinism, by the rise of fascism and by the imminence of World War II. The Fourth International took account of this concrete situation, when it defined its perspectives and its immediate tasks, in which it relied on its programme, which summed up, in the form of principles, the historic lessons of the advance to the proletarian revolution in the epoch of wars and revolutions - principles which also enabled subsequent events to be understood. The experience of World War I led it to forecast that there would be an extraordinary development of the revolution when imperialism collapsed, and this would serve as a foundation for the development of the Fourth International and for its transformation into a world party resting on parties with mass influence in a certain number of countries.

However, the course of the events after World War II took new and unforeseen forms. As Trotsky said, theory is not a blank cheque which reality has nothing to do but honour: it is a guide to action. The weaknesses of the forecasts are related to this law of Marxism which teaches that reality is always richer than the most rigorous theoretical schemas.

We are dealing here with a phenomenon of the same kind as when Marx and Engels first formulated the perspective of the permanent revolution, in March 1850, when the revolution was already in reflux. Several times during the following years, as the letters bear witness, they believed, prematurely, that a new revolution was soon to break out. Again, Lenin in 1906 continued to believe that the revolution would rise when, in this case too, it was already in reflux. We know that, in the opposite sense, Lenin told his audience, in a speech which he delivered in Zurich in January 1917, that the revolution was not for that generation. All these facts confirm that "theory is not a dogma, but a guide to action" and that Marxism has nothing in common with some ideological system. We have mistakes of time-scale in the examples which we have just quoted. When we consider such mistakes, we must not overlook that the essential thing, for revolutionaries, is to know how to recognise whether reality had invalidated or confirmed the theoretical perspective.

The leadership of the Fourth International did not take into account that every revolution, like every great crisis of a social system, while it may repeat the processes, the forms and the methods of earlier revolutions and crises, at the same time incorporates changes of every kind. Historical analogies then can be seen to be only what they are, an <sup>auxiliary</sup> tool in concrete analysis.

When everything is taken into account, the period after World War II was radically different from what followed World War I. The weight of the October Revolution and its conquests made itself felt, not only in the form of pressure to expropriate the bourgeoisie in Eastern Europe and in China, but also in relatively strengthening Stalinism, which appropriated its heritage. After World War I the proletariat had

at its disposal the IIIrd. International, which was born out of the October Revolution. After World War II, the proletariat had nothing but the ruins of the IIIrd. International and a Fourth International, torn apart, beheaded and nearly destroyed. The crisis of the revolutionary leadership was to be prolonged and deepened during the three following decades.

In fact we had believed that the end of World War II and what immediately followed would see repeated, on a larger scale, what had happened in the analogous period twenty-five years earlier /<sup>when</sup> the imperialist war had been transformed into civil war, enabling a Marxist revolutionary party, the Bolshevik Party, the founders of IIIrd. International, to take power, and /<sup>when</sup> the IIIrd. International soon began to win mass influence and, therefore, to overcome the crisis of leadership of the proletariat. But the facts falsified this argument by analogy. It was a mistake of method to suppose that the course of World War II would confine itself to repeating on a larger scale that of World War I; it was to mis-understand this fundamental law of all revolutions which we quoted above. Reality indeed confirmed entirely the forecast of Trotsky; World War II did indeed lead into an unprecedented crisis for imperialism and into the greatest upsurge of the revolution yet known to history. But it cannot be denied that the Trotskyists did not understand that the first phase of the revolution would see the masses engaging in a class struggle which raised political problems at the <sup>level</sup> of state power, but relying on the treacherous traditional leaderships to fulfill their aspirations. traditional leaderships.

In this way we remained chained to a perspective which we had reduced to a schema. We could not draft in 1944 - 45 what should have been our "April Theses", because we were not in a position to analyse correctly the relations between the masses, the apparatuses and the organisations of the Fourth International in the process of being constructed, as they really were. When we have said that, there is no reason not to recognise that Trotsky's forecast, that the Fourth International would be the leading revolutionary force on the planet in the centenary year of the Communist Manifesto, has not been fulfilled. A remark which Lenin made after 1917 may enable us to understand the origin of what may be considered a false analogy. Lenin frequently stressed that only absolutely exceptional circumstances had permitted the "easy" victory of the October Revolution and that, without an identical combination of circumstances, the victory of the revolution in the West would be more "difficult".

In the event things may have become more difficult, but it was not in the power of anyone to forecast "theoretically" the capacity for counter-revolutionary resistance to the revolution which Stalinism was to reveal. On the other hand, it was possible to analyse Stalinism correctly, by the method of Marxism, and this was done, though neither Marx, Engels nor Lenin had been able to foresee its emergence,



but only experience could give answers. It did not lie in the power of anyone to foresee that the resources accumulated by the earlier development of capitalism would permit US imperialism, with the help of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracies, to reconstruct the world economy after the devastation of the war and then to lead this economic "boom" which would end twenty years later.

All this signifies that, while our International was founded on a completely scientific characterisation of the epoch, it did not foresee this aspect which we have just described in the immediate post-war situation. Our use of analogy led to an excessively optimistic analysis of the situation, and this analysis revealed itself to be incorrect. When that has been said, however, the years 1950 to 1953, only a few years later and as a direct result of the developments immediately after the war, saw the masses trying to re-organise round new axes, opening up in this way immense possibilities for the construction of a revolutionary leadership. It is the ravage of revisionism, and not what are said to be errors of forecasting, that should bear the responsibility essentially for the inability of our movement to seize this great opportunity.

The result of the unexpected prolongation of the crisis of leadership of the worker movement has been that the Trotskyist movement has been confronted with a number of new facts, the form of which could not be foreseen. These facts, which have enormous importance, are as follows:

1. All the victorious revolutions which have expropriated the bourgeoisie have ended with the formation of bureaucratic workers' states.
2. The existence of a number of bureaucratic workers' states has resulted in wars or threats of war between certain of them or to invasions of one workers' state by another.
3. Thanks to the support of the Kremlin bureaucracy, the bourgeois economy has experienced a "boom" which, though founded on the development of parasitism and of the arms economy, has been the largest "boom" in the whole history of capitalism.
4. The greatest technical discoveries in the whole history of humanity have been made in the epoch of imperialism. These discoveries (cybernetics, rockets, nuclear energy, petro-chemicals, chemical fertilisers, the scientific discoveries in the different disciplines) have not meant a growth of the social wealth of humanity. Yet these discoveries come essentially from the insane squandering of productive forces which characterises the arms economy, with fantastic military budgets, which became a flywheel to keep the world economy going.
5. Struggles for democratic demands, as both the theory of the permanent revolution and the Transitional Programme pointed out, have acquired a fundamental, decisive importance in the revolutionary struggle.
6. Guerrilla warfare has acquired extraordinary importance, through the victory of

the Chinese revolution and other revolutions.

7. There has not yet been any new October revolution, that is, a revolution led by a revolutionary Marxist party, which leads to <sup>the introduction</sup> of a dictatorship of the proletariat exercised through revolutionary workers' councils.

This aggregate of processes and phenomena has had its effect in the Fourth International, where it has formed the objective foundation for revisionist positions and conceptions to appear, and these have gone so far as to call into question the character of the epoch and the justification for the existence of the world party of the socialist revolution.

THESES XII: FEBRUARY AND OCTOBER: LESSONS WHICH REMAIN RELEVANT TODAY

Contrary to all our prognoses, there has been no other October Revolution, victorious or defeated, since the Russian Revolution. Though the period since World War II has been the most revolutionary in history, it has produced only "February revolutions", in the sense that, in each country, including those where the bourgeoisie has been expropriated, the revolutionary processes have not led to the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

Like all revolutions, the October Revolution was an essentially politico-social process, with economic consequences. What fundamentally distinguishes it from all the other revolutions was the existence of a revolutionary party, which enabled power to be seized by organs of the proletarian masses which had already been formed, the soviets. There can be no new October Revolution in the absence of the revolutionary party and of the soviets formed by the movement of the masses.

The February Revolution was different from that of October, but was intimately linked to it. It was the prologue to October. February was a workers' revolution, which confronted the exploiters, the imperialists, the bourgeoisie and the landlords linked to the bourgeoisie. It dismantled the bourgeois state apparatus, but without destroying or replacing it. None the less, its class dynamic and the nature of the enemy which it confronted were such that it had either to lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat or to accept defeat. It is in this sense that we can say that the February Revolution was the opening of the proletarian revolution and put the socialist revolution on the order of the day. The difference between February and October lies in the subjective factor. In short, the February Revolution is unconsciously socialist, while the October Revolution is consciously so. We could say - paraphrasing Hegel and Marx - that the first is a socialist revolution in itself while the second is a revolution for itself.

The February Revolution possessed a logic which reflected the situation of the movement of the workers and of the masses at that stage of the revolutionary upsurge. All revolutions arise when deep objective needs are transformed into a situation which the masses cannot bear. The degree of consciousness and of experience of the masses, and the character of their leadership, can, however, lag behind the objective situation which summons up the revolution. Despite this lag, revolutionary situations and revolutions can open up.

But if the working class is not freed in the course of the first stages of the revolution from the illusions which it has about the apparatuses, the latter can then be in a position to obstruct the course of the revolution.

Thus, while the October Revolution is characterised by the presence of a revolutionary Marxist leadership at its head, the February Revolution, which the revolutionary activity of the masses brought about, remained under the control of the bureaucratic



and petty bourgeois apparatuses. The latter, who are consciously counter-revolutionary, understand what the February Revolution means. They intervene in it precisely in order to try to prevent the masses from developing their consciousness in the light of experience, in order to try to keep the revolution within a democratic bourgeois framework and narrow national limits. Their aim, in brief, is to prevent the revolution from turning into a socialist revolution, by restraining and diverting their mortal enemy, the permanent mobilisation of the masses.

This is possible because, generally, the first tasks for which the mobilisation of the masses takes place are essentially democratic tasks. Revolutions are often made against despotic, totalitarian or Bonapartist regimes, to which capitalism characteristically tends in the epoch of its death-agony. Such circumstances permit opportunist leaders to try to restrict the objectives of the revolution to the accomplishment of democratic or national tasks, in order to divert the mobilisation of the masses. But these democratic and national objectives cannot be attained in the epoch of capitalist decadence except by driving the bourgeoisie out of political power and expropriating it. The obstacle which is labelled the "revolution by stages" can only lead the "February Revolution" to defeat, unless it is destroyed by the revolutionary activity of the masses.

The maturation of the consciousness of the proletariat develops from the revolutionary activity which it develops as an exploited class, in order to form itself as a class for itself as it wins rights and guarantees and forms its own organisations. Leon Trotsky compares these "workers' institutions" to the institutions which the bourgeoisie inserted for its own class action within the feudal system. But the bourgeois revolution had to "revolutionise" these institutions for them to become suitable to serve its historic aims. Likewise the proletariat will have, in the course of its revolution, to "revolutionise" the workers' institutions which have been inserted in the bourgeois system and dominated by the bourgeois apparatuses. The permanent content of the revolution must be applied to the "workers' institutions", which are positions conquered by the working class in bourgeois society, in order to make them into the instrument of its struggle as a revolutionary class, <sup>as much</sup> as to the "workers' institutions" which the proletariat forms while it is tearing power out of the hands of the bourgeoisie.

As the crisis of Stalinism is deepening, in the wave of the revolution which rose on the international scale and in each country, with the linked crisis of world imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucracy, the proletariat thus begins to "re-construct its consciousness round new axes". In this way is cleared the ground on which Trotskyist parties with mass influence may be built, and the Fourth International reconstructed. In Trotsky's brilliant analysis of the February Revolution and of its relationships with the October Revolution, he brought out that, despite the orientation of the opportunistic leaderships, its nature was that of a socialist revolution.

The spontaneous revolutionary struggle of the working people (in which, none the less, the activity of the Marxist vanguard forms an essential part) is able to go as far as dismantling the bourgeois state, forming their councils (soviets) and creating a system of dual power (more or less developed). But this same spontaneous revolutionary struggle of the masses cannot construct a workers' state possessing the form and content of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the absence of a leading, revolutionary party. Lenin and Trotsky had already considered the possibility that the processes which had produced a February Revolution of the classical type - the type of that of 1917 in Russia - would go further along the road of the break with the bourgeoisie than the petty bourgeois leaders wished.

Indeed this possibility became a major factor in the course of World War II and in the period which followed it. Petty bourgeois leaderships, in particular Stalinist leaderships, then found themselves obliged to expropriate the bourgeoisie.

Such processes, however, are fundamentally the product of the revolutionary activity of the masses, even if the apparatuses continue to control their activity. Even if Lenin and Trotsky believed this perspective to be highly improbable, the essential thing for Marxists remains none the less to determine whether or not reality has invalidated the principles on which they based their conclusion, as they were formulated especially in the Transitional Programme. As we shall see, reality has fully confirmed Trotsky's demonstration, which established that the February Revolution is the precursor of the October Revolution, and that the October Revolution is necessary for the full development of the permanent revolution.

To be sure, history has demonstrated that the break with the bourgeoisie, its expropriation and the accomplishment of democratic tasks could be brought about without a new October Revolution, but by a process which the Transitional Programme regarded as exceptional. None the less, we should emphasise that the world proletariat has been able to realise these new conquests only thanks to the existence of the formidable spring-board which the conquests of October provided for them, living in their consciousness. The bureaucracy has been able to bring about the degeneration of these conquests but not to destroy them. The result is that the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, even when it is carried out under the control of the bureaucracy, far from proving that the bureaucracy has some kind of historic mission, is the product of the immense and enduring power of the October Revolution and of the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses. This is a fact which, moreover, is of capital importance in connection with the relations between the bureaucracies: while the pivot of these relations necessarily remains the Kremlin bureaucracy, the fact is that the Kremlin bureaucracy was formed on the basis of the degeneration of the October Revolution. Without this revolution, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in other countries, on which the existence of the other parasitic bureaucracies depends, would never have been accomplished.

This explains how the extraordinary weakness of the bourgeoisie in a number of countries immediately after World War II, combined with the crisis of imperialism and with the consequences of the victory of the USSR in the revolutionary war against the Nazis, resulted in extending the expropriation of capital to nearly one-third of humanity, thanks to the revolutionary activity of the masses even when it was in the grip of the petty bourgeois, bureaucratic apparatuses.

But Trotsky was completely correct, from the viewpoint of history as much as from that of the permanent development of the socialist revolution. If the October Revolution had not followed that of February, that is, if power had not been won by a revolutionary Marxist party, the policy of which expressed the revolutionary organisation of the masses and was supported by it, the revolution could never have acquired a permanent character. After Trotsky's death we confused the February Revolution with the democratic tasks of the revolution. That led us to underestimate this revolution. In reality it has a decisive importance, as decisive as that of the construction of the great trade unions in the epoch of reforms. The present century <sup>has</sup> shown that "February" and "October" were combined in the Russian Revolution, even though they appeared to be two distinct categories. "February" is categorically a socialist revolution, because the revolutionary mobilisation of the workers resulted in dismantling the capitalist state.

The transitional process which led to the February Revolution gave enormous weight to all the democratic tasks. But it did not result in the February Revolution being a bourgeois democratic revolution. In the present century, democratic tasks can be achieved only when capital is expropriated, with or without a leading revolutionary party. To put it another way, we now have only socialist revolutions, with or without the maturation of the subjective factor.

It is clear that, in Russia, the February Revolution combined democratic tasks with socialist tasks necessary for the democratic tasks to be accomplished. This resulted from the existence of Tsarism and of the landed proprietors who supported it. The struggle against the aristocracy, none the less, was not the determining element. The aristocracy and Tsarism itself already formed part and parcel of the world imperialist system and were intimately bound up with Russian capitalism.

Today the reasons why the capitalist mode of production dominates society and the state in all the countries where the bourgeoisie has not been expropriated are even stronger. At the same time, the <sup>classical</sup> democratic tasks remain to be carried out in India and, more generally, in South-East Asia, in the Near East and the Middle East, in important parts of Africa and in all the countries oppressed by imperialism, especially Latin America, even though finance-capital is dominant there. The struggle against imperialism <sup>there</sup> implies democratic tasks as a powerful lever in the struggle for the socialist revolution, because even though there are no Tsars of feudal landowners, there are the proprietors of large landed estates (latifundia),



All the revolutions of today are socialist revolutions because they are directed against the bourgeois enemy and the bourgeois state, by the only class, the proletariat, which can ensure that the demands, including the democratic demands, of all the oppressed layers of society are fully satisfied.

The revisionists have recourse to notions and to a terminology borrowed from bourgeois sociology. Their attack is directed, in the last analysis, against the perspective of new revolutionary processes of the same kind as those which were revealed in the revolution of October 1917. In imitation of Pablo, they emphasise that this did not happen at the end of World War II, and they draw the revisionist conclusion that this kind of revolution is no more than something out of the past. They advance a new theory of the revolution, according to which the most varied forces (the "new vanguards", the peasantry or the bureaucracies themselves) are entrusted with the power to make the revolution, to the exclusion of the proletariat.

But like all revisionist currents they label as "new" very old theories which go back to the epoch before Marxism and to the time when democratic revolutions against absolutism were taking place. They give the name "new model" to what is really a very old "model", that of the democratic revolutions before October 1917, before the epoch of the world proletarian revolution.

On the contrary, there are all the reasons in the world for thinking that the processes which resulted in the October Revolution and in its victory will develop again. As in February 1917, genuine proletarian revolutions are opening today despite the absence of a revolutionary leadership. They are ripening in the consciousness of the proletariat and this maturation provides the raw material for the construction of leading revolutionary parties and for the re-construction of the Fourth International. This double, objective and subjective, process will lead us to new October revolutions whether we are capable of building the revolutionary party or not, as those of 1905 and of February 1917 led to the Bolshevik October.

Every February Revolution which does not lead into a victorious October Revolution, either leads to a defeat pure and simple, or sees its drive towards the permanent revolution diverted and, finally, blocked by the petty bourgeois, bureaucratic leaderships. To the extent that these latter have not been swept out of the way, they will devote themselves to channelling<sup>ing</sup> the mass movement, to restricting its conquests and to deforming them bureaucratically. Every workers' state which has come into existence since 1917 bears witness to this. This is why a simple February Revolution resolves nothing, even when it results in great victories over imperialism.

There is a vast amount of ground to be covered between the opening of the proletarian revolution and the October victory. In situations like those of the February Revolution the bourgeoisie can have been expropriated, but the bureaucracy has been able to control and to deform this conquest. It would be to abandon Marxist thinking to draw the conclusion that only obstructed revolutions of this kind can take place today and





October was an exception.

The whole of these events, on the contrary, only strengthens <sup>the conclusion</sup> that the proletarian revolution is indispensable because it possesses the necessary dynamic of the permanent revolution.

A February Revolution cannot be a lasting solution. The Russian Revolution illustrates this in a positive way. The treachery of the Social-Revolutionaries and of the Mensheviks obliged the masses to mobilise against Kornilov on a large scale and this led them to win immense democratic and working-class gains by their struggles. Conversely, when the proletarian revolution opened in Portugal in 1974, we could observe there the content of a February Revolution. The masses dismantled the old state apparatus and began to construct their own organs of power. But the revolution has not <sup>yet</sup> become an October Revolution. The forces of counter-revolution have been able with the active help of the petty bourgeois apparatuses which controlled the workers' movement, to impose the reactionary government of Eanes.

The same necessity for the permanent revolution is expressed in the advance toward the political revolution. If this revolution does not drive out the parasitic bureaucracy and re-establish Soviet democracy, the conquests of October, which have been impounded by the bureaucracy, will be more and more seriously endangered.

All this confirms the revolutionary character of our epoch, despite the crisis of leadership of the proletariat.

The working masses can create a situation of dual power whether there is a revolutionary party present or not. The revolutionary upsurge is so powerful that the bourgeoisie can even be expropriated. But the definitive victory of the proletarian revolution and of the world revolution cannot be realised except under the leadership of the revolutionary party, of the re-constructed Fourth International.



THESIS XIII:    REVOLUTION AND WORKERS' CONSCIOUSNESS

The revolutions which followed World War II and succeeded in destroying the bourgeois states and expropriating capital, presented fundamental theoretical and practical problems to our International.

What happened, from the standpoint of the subjective factor of the masses? What role did the Stalinist parties play? Do these revolutions, which took place in the middle of the crisis of leadership, make the Fourth International and its parties superfluous?

The revisionist currents have given a variety of answers to these questions, which are raised by the revolutions in Eastern Europe, in China, in Cuba and in Vietnam.

Some have adopted positions of reliance on "spontaneity" or on "the movement", and deny the role of the party, and have conceded that the radicalisation of the masses in struggle would lead them of their own accord to revolutionary Marxist activities and to a revolutionary Marxist level of consciousness.

At the other end of the spectrum, we encounter positions of capitulation to the bureaucratic leaderships. These positions attribute a progressive role to the latter and confer on them the ability to transform themselves under the pressure of the masses. There can be no doubt that those who defend these positions claim that these leaderships can adopt a policy which tends towards revolutionary Marxism and could lead the masses towards revolutionary consciousness.

There is a third, centrist position between these two extremes. It is held by those who claim to defend Marxism and Leninism, but who believe that the development of workers' consciousness is a linear, evolutionary, phenomenological process; they ignore the specific role of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, particularly that of Stalinism, in the development of this consciousness. Thus they can ignore the place of the struggle of the Trotskyists against the apparatuses within the workers' movement in the development of its activities and the maturation of the consciousness of the workers' movement.

These different shadings of revisionism all have in common that they deny the fundamental role of the revolutionary party in the development of the consciousness of the workers' movement. Against revisionism, we maintain that what Marx, Lenin and especially Trotsky worked out on the subject retains all its validity. Trotsky especially, the last of our great teachers, could analyse the new reality of the rise of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses. We should, therefore, start from these teachings in order to interpret the later events and to determine our policy in relation to the development of working-class consciousness.

Analyses have constantly been enriched as a result of changes in objective reality. Lenin improved on Marx, and Trotsky improved on Lenin. It is not accidental that centrist

revisionism tries to rely on Marx and Lenin in this connection, and refrains from mentioning Trotsky, since Marx and Lenin could not study Stalinism.

Marx provided the fundamental theoretical framework for our problem with his well-known analysis of the qualitative leap from the class in itself to the class for itself. Marx regarded the class in itself as the class which is the object of economic exploitation by capitalism, the class which has not yet raised itself politically and theoretically to consciousness of its historic role. The class for itself is the self-conscious class, which is no longer only an economic class, but has transformed itself into a political class by means of organisation, and has set historic aims before itself, which is conscious of the revolutionary role which falls to it within society. The passing from a working-class in itself, unconscious and simply an exploited class or material for exploitation, which does not fight against exploitation, to the working-class for itself, which has acquired consciousness of its revolutionary political task, in the course of the class struggle, is formulated in the following passage which Marx and Engels wrote in 1847, in the Communist Manifesto:

"The collisions between individual workers and individual bourgeois tend to assume the character of collisions between the respective classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form coalitions against the bourgeois, closing their ranks in order to maintain the rate of wages. They found durable associations which will be able to give them support wherever the struggle grows acute. Here and there, this struggle takes the form of riots.

From time to time the workers are victorious, though their victory is fleeting. The real fruit of their battles is not the immediate success, but their own continually increasing unification... Nothing more is needed to centralise the manifold local contests, which are all of the same type, into a national contest, a class struggle. Every class struggle is a political struggle...

The organisation of the proletarians to form a class and therewith to form a political party, is perpetually being disintegrated by competition among the workers themselves. Yet it is incessantly reformed, becoming stronger, firmer, mightier."

By 1847, then, Marx and Engels were establishing that the process of the class struggle, which permits the proletariat to advance from the state of a class in itself to that of a class for itself, is the same as the process of its organisation ("unification"), which raises it to the political struggle and, therefore, to the "political party". Marx and Engels established, at the same time, in that period, that this unification ("organisation") of the working class and its acquisition of the "political party" as a result of the class struggle, is ceaselessly called into question by the bourgeoisie.



The historic work which Marx and Engels accomplished, from the Communist League up to the struggle for the formation of workers' parties and for the Second International, had throughout as its axis the organised struggle of a vanguard, in the First International, for the "Marxist fraction" and in the Second International, for the construction of "Marxist Parties".

When Lenin raised the question of the foundations of the Bolshevik Party in "What is to be Done?", his contribution was to deepen and extend the Marxist conception of the party, and to stress that the party alone, in the course of the class struggle, can raise the consciousness of the working class to the level of awareness of its historic mission.

Marx and Engels could not determine that a workers' aristocracy was going to develop with the transformation of capital into finance capital and to provide a social basis for the bourgeois apparatuses which were to take control of the workers' organisations (the parties and trade unions) which had been formed as revolutionary organisations. However Engels drew attention to the first developments of this process when they began to appear at the end of his life.

Marx and Engels had already written about the relations between the Communists and the other proletarian parties in the Communist Manifesto:

"The only ways in which the Communists are distinguished from other proletarian parties are these: on the one hand, in the various national struggles of the proletarians, they emphasise and champion the interests of the proletariat as a whole, those proletarian interests that are independent of nationality; and, on the other hand, in the various phases of evolution through which the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie passes, they always advocate the interests of the movement as a whole.

Thus, in actual practice, Communists form the most resolute and persistently progressive section of the working-class parties of all lands whilst, as far as theory is concerned, being in advance of the general mass of the proletariat, they have come to understand the determinants of the proletarian movement and how to foresee its course and its general results.

The Communists' immediate aims are identical with those of all other proletarian parties: organisation of the proletariat on a class basis; destruction of bourgeois supremacy; conquest of political power by the proletariat."

It fell to Lenin to determine the full importance of the role and the place of the party in the class struggle, after 1914 and the treachery of the Second International and of the Social-Democratic parties, on the basis of the Marxist principles of Bolshevism and within a rigorous analysis of imperialism.

Lenin enriched the principles which Marx and Engels laid down. He developed the relation between the spontaneous element and the party, particularly in his polemic



against the "Economists" on the necessity of a Marxist party founded on democratic centralism, which expresses the workers' revolutionary consciousness in its highest form and the presence of which is indispensable for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat to be victorious.

Lenin defined the spontaneous as "the embryo of the conscious". The spontaneous surges up <sup>out of</sup> the demands of the class struggle. It concentrates all the experience of the revolutionary struggle, its victories and its defeats. But there will not be a process of evolution which starts from the spontaneous and leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin's analysis presents <sup>the</sup> "spontaneous" as the raw material of the "conscious". But the "conscious" cannot form itself out of the ready-made raw material of the "spontaneous", without possessing as its basis the programme and the party which generalises the entire historic experience of mankind. This basis today is the programme of the Fourth International, which expresses in the form of principles the unity of theory and practice through the construction of revolutionary parties in each country, a task which is combined with the tasks of re-construction of the Fourth International.

The spontaneous will never produce the conscious by itself in the situation in which the bureaucratic apparatuses have developed to their present size, thanks to the victory of counter-revolutionary Stalinism over Bolshevism <sup>and</sup> over the IIIrd. International of Lenin and Trotsky. The conscious activity of revolutionary Marxists consists in performing the task of clarification at each stage of the "unconscious" struggle of the workers and the toiling masses. But there is not a Chinese wall between the "conscious" and the "unconscious". (We should remark on this point that the "spontaneous" and the "unconscious" do not mean the same thing and are not categories of the same nature). The most general results of conscious activity and of the "unconscious" class struggle have been stored up, on the one hand, in the experience which the masses <sup>accumulate</sup>; and, on the other hand, in the construction of the Bolshevik Party, in a continual, dialectical relationship between the conscious and the unconscious. The experience of the "unconscious" masses is what they themselves have accumulated in their relationships with the activity of the revolutionary vanguard.

We can understand what Lenin meant when he called the 1905 revolution a kind of "dress rehearsal" for that of 1917, when we consider all the factors which come together to produce this process. To put it another way, the February Revolution repeated in a certain sense what developed in 1905 and the October Revolution repeated it again in a certain way. Trotsky expressed the same idea when he wrote:

"The events of 1905 were the prologue for the two revolutions of 1917 - that of February and that of October. The prologue already contained all the elements of the drama, though they were not fully developed."

To be sure, the 1905 Revolution ended in defeat, and twelve years passed between the



Soviets of 1905 and those of 1917, but Lenin and Trotsky were evidently not writing just for effect when they spoke of the February and the October Revolutions as the Second and Third Russian Revolutions. Despite the defeat and the black years of reaction, the thread of historical continuity, the thread of the memory of the experiences and of the activity organised first in the Bolshevik fraction and later in the Bolshevik Party, was not completely broken.

Just as there is a combination of conscious activity with the unconscious class struggle, in the same way there is a dialectical interaction between the actions of the masses and their consciousness. In general the actions of the masses go beyond their consciousness when the class struggle takes on such forms as in a period of revolutionary upsurge or in the revolutionary situation. Their mass actions go further than their consciousness, with consequences and a content in the relations between the classes which go beyond what even the leaders think is happening. Hence the stress which Trotsky places on the conservative role of consciousness compared to actions.

On the other hand, the masses accumulate the experience of their actions, and these experiences then become an integral part of the memory of the working class. They become permanent and gain historical continuity from the work of the revolutionary party. What makes possible the maturation and advance of consciousness is experience gained in struggle.

The intervention of the counter-revolutionary, bureaucratic apparatuses in general and, in particular, that of Stalinism, in the development of the consciousness of the working-class, produces a whole number of new phenomena, analysed by Trotsky. The outcome of this analysis stresses that the Trotskyist party's role in raising the consciousness of the working-class to the level of politically revolutionary consciousness is indispensable. This party is necessary, to break<sup>down</sup> the obstacles presented by the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, which work in the opposite direction, doing their utmost to check the development of the workers' consciousness and to force it backwards.

The degeneration of the USSR, the formation of the Soviet bureaucracy into a privileged caste and the degeneration of the Communist International and its parties were new phenomena which Trotsky analysed step by step. They were to pose full scale the question of the place and role of the party in the class struggle. Trotsky formulated clearly the main features of the situation in the opening sentence of the Transitional Programme:

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

The Transitional Programme closes with these words:

"The present crisis in human culture is the crisis in the proletarian leadership. The advanced workers, united in the Fourth International, show their class the way out of the crisis. They offer a programme based on international experience in the struggle of the proletariat and of all the oppressed of the world for liberation."

There is an un-broken continuity of the fundamental texts of Marxism, from the "Communist Manifesto" (1847) to the Programme of the Fourth International (1938), through the First Four Congresses of the Third, Communist International. The Transitional Programme, "based on international experience in the struggle of the proletariat and of all the oppressed of the world", is the programme of that organisation, the method of which leads to the conclusion that "the laws of history are stronger than all the bureaucratic apparatuses" - the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, which work to slow down and to resist the development of workers' consciousness.

The hatred of Stalinism for Trotskyism and the methods of persecution to which Stalinism resorts all form part of the counter-revolutionary function which it performs.

Trotsky pointed out that workers' consciousness can be raised as the result of class actions and of that decisive factor, the intervention of the revolutionary Marxist party. But he also pointed out that we may witness a deterioration of workers' consciousness and that it may be "re-ified", that is rendered resistant to change by the conscious, deliberate and specific action of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, principally that of the most disastrous of them, Stalinism.

Stalinism is indeed the syphilis of the workers' movement. It has employed the material resources of the bureaucracy, as well as those of the bourgeoisie and of bourgeois states (in France, Italy and elsewhere), to corrupt tens of thousands of militants. These militants have worked with truly counter-revolutionary ferocity to prevent the proletariat from accomplishing its revolutionary historic mission, in order to defend their "place in society". Stalinism has done its utmost, at all times and by every means, to pervert the consciousness of the proletariat, in order to bind it to the bourgeois order, under the cover of pseudo-revolutionary verbiage.

Stalinism continues to attempt to transform Marxism into a number of different ideologies. These ideologies are founded on the illusions of the working class and of the working masses, and have been constructed to defend the material interests of the bureaucracy and of the bourgeois order, with the one ultimate aim of lowering the level of the workers' consciousness. This is the role of the "theory" of "Socialism in One Country", of the policy of Popular Fronts and of that of "Peaceful Co-Existence". Stalinism has become a centre of infection for the mass movement. All over the world it has influenced tens of thousands of "Communist" militants to behave like downright counter-revolutionaries and to propagate the most vulgar, petty bourgeois politics, while they



hoist the flag of Marxism.

Throughout the entire world and in every country Stalinism publishes books and journals, it organises courses and develops a continuous, systematic activity for the purpose of spreading an ideology opposed to the class struggle in the working class, opposed to proletarian internationalism and to the permanent revolution. In this sense we can say that the existence of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses has produced a much more complicated situation that Marx encountered in the last century, when he laid down for us the essential elements, which permit the development of the class-consciousness of the proletariat to be understood.

The traditional workers' parties, under the domination of their apparatuses, claim to be on the side of the working class in order to collaborate with the bourgeoisie, not to overthrow it. This policy of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses is the origin of a kind of "in itself" policy, if we may call it that, with a pro-bourgeois ideology which has nothing in common with Marxism even though it uses the forms of Marxism.

The organisational, ideological and political control which the Stalinists exert over wide sections of the mass movement has not abolished either the dialectic between activity, experience and consciousness, nor the laws of the development of the class struggle. The contradiction never ceases to develop between the aspirations of the masses and the movements which they initiate (aspirations and movements in the direction of the revolution), on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the efforts of the old apparatuses to imprison these aspirations and movements, as well as the illusions and false forms of consciousness which they encourage. The development of the contradiction between the requirements of the struggle and the strait-jacket of the apparatuses gives rise to activities which go beyond both the consciousness which the masses have of themselves and the positions of the bureaucratic leaderships.

The February Revolutions which have taken place since World War II and the particular conditions which are reflected in them give us exact examples of situations in which the revolutionary action of the masses goes far beyond the limits which the Stalinist apparatus intended to allow.

The revolutionary mobilisation of the masses (the spontaneous movement) was present in these revolutions. In the absence of revolutionary parties, the apparatuses concentrated all their forces to prevent them from resulting in new October Revolutions. The Stalinist apparatus was, therefore, able to liquidate the embryo revolutionary workers' councils which the masses constructed in the course of their mobilisation. It did its utmost to drive out of their consciousness the idea that these councils are necessary.

None the less, the Stalinist apparatus did not succeed in preserving private property in the various countries in Central and Eastern Europe, in China, in North Korea, in Vietnam and in Cuba, thanks to the experience of the October Revolution (which "lives

on in the consciousness of the workers", as Trotsky wrote) and to the place of the October Revolution in history. The conquests of October have had strength enough to impose the expropriation of the expropriators. After East Berlin, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the rest, we see today in Poland the working class trying to renew its links with the October Revolution, on the basis of what it has already won.

Wide sectors of the masses, in the actual course of these revolutions, have grasped again the most fundamental lessons of the October Revolution, with the help of the work of vanguard elements, in all of them, without arriving at full consciousness of their historic interests. They mobilised in the conviction that there was no solution which would permit them to satisfy their needs within the existing regime and that it was necessary to expropriate the bourgeoisie. Here were mobilisations which reached a high level of consciousness and <sup>which</sup> drew nearer and nearer to recognising the need to liquidate exploitation in the capitalist countries and the bureaucracy in the countries in which capital and imperialism have been expropriated, without actually arriving at these conclusions.

As far as the subjective factor of the masses is concerned, a process analogous to that analysed by Trotsky in the February Revolution has developed.

We must repeat that it was this mobilisation of the masses which obliged the petty bourgeois leaderships to go so far as to expropriate the bourgeoisie and to introduce a new state, in the concrete conditions of an exceptional crisis of imperialism and of the destruction of the state apparatus, which resulted from the world war in the case of the countries of Eastern Europe and from revolutionary war in the case of Cuba and Vietnam. At the same time, it was easier for the bureaucracy to maintain its control unbroken, to impose their bureaucratic character on the new workers' states and in general to operate a policy of braking and betraying the revolution, given the <sup>limitations</sup> of the consciousness of the exploited people and the immaturity of their development, which resulted from the weakness of the Fourth International.

The February Revolutions which have taken place, like the counter-revolutionary role which Stalinism has played, which includes the situations in which it was obliged to go to the point of expropriating the bourgeoisie, confirm the necessity for the Fourth International and for the Trotskyist parties, for a genuine historic leap forward in the consciousness of the proletariat and for new October Revolutions to take place. Nothing but the Fourth International can lead the working class to acquire consciousness of its historic interests. Nothing but the Transitional Programme can:

"... help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist programme of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat-

iat".

At this point it is necessary to stress also the link between the conscious and the unconscious in the counter-revolutionary activity of Stalinism, which tried to break the thread of the historical continuity by exterminating the Old Bolsheviks and murdering Trotsky. Stalinism has tried by every means to destroy the "memory" of the proletariat and its historic mission. However, the thread of the historical continuity has not been broken, thanks to the work of the Fourth International under the leadership of Trotsky, although Stalinism did its utmost. Stalinism could not prevent a vanguard from gathering around and in the Fourth International and its programme. But it did succeed in perverting tens and hundreds of thousands of militants, on a gigantic scale, and continues to do so.

None the less, the proletariat is beginning to re-form its consciousness round new axes, while the crisis of Stalinism deepens, like the linked crisis of the world, imperialist system and of the Kremlin bureaucracy, within the rising wave of the revolution, in every country and throughout the world. In this way the bases are being laid for the construction of Trotskyist parties with mass influence and for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.



THESIS XIV: WHAT IS A REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION?

Lenin and Trotsky after him have completely clarified the answer to this question. Lenin wrote in his pamphlet, The Collapse of the Second International:

"To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation which leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) when it is impossible for the ruling class to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the 'upper classes', a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for 'the lower classes not to want' to live in the old way; it is also necessary that 'the upper classes should be unable' to live in the old way'; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in 'peace time', but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis and by the 'upper classes' themselves into independent historic action.

Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible. The totality of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation. Such a situation existed in Russia in 1905 and in all revolutionary periods in the West. It also existed in Germany in the sixties of the last century and in Russia in 1859 - 61 and 1879 - 80, although no revolution occurred in these instances. Why was that? It was because it is not every revolutionary situation that gives rise to a revolution. Revolution arises only out of a situation in which the above-mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary class to take revolutionary mass action strong enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, "falls", if it is not 'toppled over'." ("Collected Works", Vol. 21, pp. 213 - 214)

The fourth condition, subjective in character, which Lenin laid down for a revolution is the condition the content of which Trotsky analysed in the Manifesto of the Emergency Conference of the Fourth International, in May 1940. At that date, Trotsky had no doubt whatever, either on the ground of theory or on that of historical experience, about the fundamental conditions for the victory of the proletarian revolution:

- "(1) The bourgeois impasse and the resulting confusion of the ruling class;
- (2) The sharp dis-satisfaction and the striving towards decisive changes in the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie, without whose support the big bourgeoisie cannot maintain itself;
- (3) The consciousness of the intolerable situation and readiness for revolution- actions in the ranks of the proletariat;
- (4) A clear programme and a firm leadership of the proletarian vanguard."

The first three points correspond to those which have formed part of the definition of a revolutionary situation since Lenin wrote. Trotsky brought out the point that, for a revolution to be victorious, the objective revolutionary conditions must first exist. Then, naturally in agreement with Lenin, the founder and theoretician of the Bolshevik Party, who could not omit the point, there must also be a leading revolutionary party, "the conscious expression of the unconscious process", to provide a leadership able to lead the struggle to victory.

Now let us examine the new elements which the events since World War II introduce into this problem. The first new element, which strikes the eye immediately, is that, beyond dispute, the proletarian revolution has won a certain number of victories even though, strictly speaking, Trotsky's fourth condition was not fulfilled.

This experience has none the less demonstrated that Trotsky was quite right to lay down the four conditions - for the victory of new October Revolutions.

It is obvious that, in order to have a real October Revolution, which produces the dictatorship of the proletariat, we must first have a revolutionary situation, or, even better, a revolution beginning. But after that the fourth condition must be added to the three conditions which Trotsky laid down, the subjective factor, the existence of a revolutionary proletarian party which enjoys mass influence.

The theoretical problem which we face is that revolutions have taken place with the same social consequences as those of October and the bourgeoisie has been expropriated, when the revolutions were led, not by revolutionary parties, but by opportunist, petty bourgeois parties.

We have seen that there were exceptional circumstances, particularly encountered in China and in Cuba, in which the three objective conditions have been fulfilled so completely that they obliged the petty bourgeois leaderships (in these cases the leaderships of Mao and Castro) to break with the bourgeoisie under the revolutionary pressure of the mass movement, in spite of the absence of a Bolshevik Party. We have seen that this was mentioned, as a theoretical possibility, by the Transitional Programme.

Up to the present time, however, there has been only one October Revolution. Two possibilities have presented themselves in all the other cases in which the objective conditions of revolutionary processes, capable of leading to February Revolutions,

have presented themselves. This was the situation which led, in certain countries such as France and Italy, to the bourgeois order being restored. In other countries, such as Eastern Europe, China and Cuba, etc., it led to the theoretical possibility formulated in the Transitional Programme being fulfilled, although the conquests which the revolution won in these countries were bureaucratically deformed, in the absence of a revolutionary party.

These conquests express what we may call "incomplete revolutions", revolutions imprisoned in their national framework, therefore revolutions forever under threat, while the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat can be established in these countries only by means of a victorious political revolution. Without the Fourth International and its parties, without the victorious world revolution, mankind is doomed to barbarism. Socialism or Barbarism! This is what is at stake in the solution of the crisis of the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat.

We reject as completely devoid of foundation the perspective of revolutions leading to bureaucratic workers' states throughout the world. We have here a theoretical problem of the kind which led Kautsky to construct the revisionist theory of "super-imperialism". He started from one single one of the tendencies revealed by imperialism and raised it, abstractly, above all the others, which went to make up the concrete situation in contradiction to it.

Accordingly, we declare what the whole of these Theses demonstrates: one of the tendencies of our epoch has been expressed in the formation of bureaucratic workers' states. The Transitional Programme took this tendency into consideration, we repeat. It in no way contradicts the Marxist perspective of world revolution based on the dictatorship of the proletariat. The conquests of the revolution resulted in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and in the formation of the bureaucratic workers' states of the post-war years, but they will be able to survive only through the victory of political revolutions closely linked and integrated with the social revolution.

In any case, the objective revolutionary processes which make up a February Revolution mean that the movement of the masses expects the traditional organisations to fulfill its aspirations, in the first phase of the revolutionary confrontations. The proletariat has to go through the greatest historical experiences to be able to free itself from its old leaderships, as Trotsky points out, as well as for the party which can lead the insurrection to be formed. The Bolshevik Party was really formed as a leading party with mass influence in the experience itself of the February and October Revolutions. We lost in 1944 - 45 the essentials of what had been won during the war, and were incapable of constructing the party in that period, because we had not understood this law of all revolutions.

In general, the existence at the beginning of a revolution of a Trotskyist party with a mass influence, that is, having reached already the character of a real party, without yet being able to lead <sup>the</sup> revolution, is a decisive factor. If such a party



exists, indeed, the variant which Lenin considered possible in September 1917 may be realised, that the petty bourgeois, opportunist parties may be carried along by the revolutionary wave and take the power, but the transition from February to October may be carried through to the end in a peaceful and not a bloody form, by the intervention of the revolutionary party.

We are dealing here with a theoretical possibility which has not been fulfilled up to the present time. We emphasise that, for this possibility to be fulfilled, the strength and the mass influence which the Trotskyist party has won are indispensable.

Lenin and Trotsky identified four general situations, and these can still happen:

1. A Counter-revolutionary Situation: the counter-revolution wins a historic victory. It destroys the proletarian organisations by the methods of civil war and annihilates the possibility of workers' struggles for a long time. The proletariat suffers a historic defeat. Classical examples of situations of this kind are provided by the defeats suffered by the Italian and later the German working-class between the wars. After World War II Indonesia was one of the most characteristic cases; there the coup d'etat by the counter-revolution led to the massacre of 800,000 militant workers and left-wingers.
2. A Non-Revolutionary Situation: times of "peace", periods of stability, during which the bourgeoisie maintains its rule without great crises or resort to violence; there is neither great combativity on the part of the proletariat nor a crisis of the whole system.
3. A Pre-Revolutionary Situation: a situation in which three fundamental conditions are satisfied, crisis and disorder in the ruling class, radicalisation of the petty bourgeoisie (a great deal of importance must be given to this characteristic of the situation) and, finally, an inclination among the proletariat to revolution. It is a situation in which all these conditions are satisfied, but in which the state continues to be able to settle the general problems of society, although shaken by the social and political crisis.
4. A Revolutionary Situation: a situation in which the political crisis of the bourgeoisie reaches the point that the bourgeoisie cannot go on governing as in the past, while the bourgeois state is splitting up and beginning to be dislocated, that is, a situation which brings together the three conditions already established. It is a situation in which the distress of the masses forces every layer of the petty bourgeoisie towards the proletariat. It is a situation in which the proletariat can no longer go on living as in the past, in which everything summons it to undertake independent historic actions and in which it tends to form its own organs of power and to call into question more and more those of the bourgeoisie.

The situations which arise in the class struggle are often much more complex and unstable:

"In the course of history we meet stable, completely non-revolutionary situations. We also meet situations well known to be revolutionary. Let us not forget that counter-revolutionary situations also exist! But what particularly exist in our epoch of decaying capitalism are intermediate, transitional situations: between a non-revolutionary and a pre-revolutionary situation, between a pre-revolutionary and a revolutionary... or a counter-revolutionary situation. These transitional states are of decisive importance from the standpoint of political strategy." ("Once Again, Whither France?", Pioneer ed. p. 60)

Trotsky's analysis is confirmed today by the extremely revolutionary character of our epoch and by the role played by the traditional bureaucracies of the movement of the workers and the masses. The period in which we live has a convulsive character. It becomes more revolutionary every day. New upsurges of the mass movement continue to arise and to develop without interruption in all the regions and countries of the globe. There is hardly any sector of the world which is not affected, at least to a small extent and indirectly, by these struggles and confrontations. It is therefore more important than ever to analyse attentively the general relation of class forces and of the Government in each country, their immediate relation with the rest of their region and with the world as a whole, as well as the speed of change. This is the way to analyse precisely these intermediate situations of which Trotsky spoke. Everything is in movement and changes very quickly. Complex combinations of different situations and sharp changes result.

The world-wide revolutionary upsurge serves to promote a permanent tendency to change, to passing from one situation to another, in all countries, to passing from lower to higher levels of the class struggle, from non-revolutionary to pre-revolutionary or directly revolutionary situations.

The counter-revolutionary apparatuses are confronted by the mass movement and work in the completely opposite direction to it. The Social-Democratic leaderships normally yearn for non-revolutionary, stable situations, within the framework of bourgeois society, in the hope of avoiding revolutionary or counter-revolutionary situations alike which call their existence into question. Social-Democracy resorts to counter-revolution when it has to face an October Revolution (as in the Civil War in Russia) or the threat of such a revolution (as in Germany in 1919) or again in time of imperialist war or war against a colonial people.

Stalinism also yearns for non-revolutionary situations. None the less its dependence on the Kremlin can lead it, in case of need, to support openly counter-revolutionary regimes, such as that of Videla in Argentina.

The relative strength of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses is the reason why some situations which are at the beginning of becoming revolutionary do not explode, even though the conditions for explosion are over-ripe. Likewise it is the reason why some revolutionary situations are not deepened or why revolutions which take place

are defeated. The counter-revolutionary leaderships manage at the cost of enormous efforts to avoid these explosions and to maintain the situation in an intermediary stage between non-revolutionary and pre-revolutionary. France is a good example of a situation which, though on the edge of being revolutionary, does not explode, even though the conditions for an explosion are over-ripe. The Bonapartist regime would have been overthrown more than twelve years ago, and a clearly revolutionary situation would have been opened up, if it had not been for Stalinism.

The origin of the various situations of the class struggle in different countries lies in the dynamic combination of these two opposite tendencies: that of the movement of the workers and of the working masses which tends to create revolutionary situations, and that of the bureaucratic apparatuses which tend towards non-revolutionary and counter-revolutionary situations.

The transition from one situation to another produces crises, which can be either revolutionary or counter-revolutionary. The critical moment is the moment of transition, when the tension is at its highest. This moment passes quickly, which is why it is critical. The critical moment can happen without there being a stabilisation of the changing situation, or without its being continued. It is not every revolutionary crisis which results in a revolutionary situation. Precisely because it is a question of the critical moment of a leap, we do not know in advance whether this leap will really take place or whether we shall go back to the point of departure or even further. The same thing can happen with a counter-revolutionary situation.

As Lenin so well said:

"The revolution does not arise out of every revolutionary struggle".  
What indicates the beginning of the proletarian revolution is that the masses move into the centre of the political scene as a consequence of all their revolutionary activity. They begin to dismantle the bourgeois state and proceed to construct more or less developed organs of their own power. Thus the beginning of the proletarian revolution coincides with the appearance of a more or less developed situation of dual power, as in France in 1936, in Spain in 1936, in Portugal in 1974, in Iran, in Nicaragua and elsewhere. All experience proves what we have earlier demonstrated; the proletarian revolution can begin when the subjective factor (the party) is immature or non-existent. On the other hand, in the same way as a pre-revolutionary or a revolutionary situation can alternate with one another, the beginning of the proletarian revolution opens the way either to the victory of the revolution or to that of reaction and of the bourgeois counter-revolution.



THESIS XV: THE RELATIVE STRENGTHENING AND THE CRISIS OF THE APPARATUSES

The last few decades have seen the control of the bureaucratic apparatuses over the mass movement prolonged. The post-war period was marked even by a real re-inforcement of the hold, though only a relative re-inforcement, because it is highly contradictory.

The Marxist study of this phenomenon, the other side of which is the continued weakness of the Fourth International, reveals the explosive contradiction which it contains. This relative strengthening of the old organisations brings their politics into opposition, more and more, to the aspirations and to the movement of the masses. When we start from this contradiction, it becomes possible for us to bring together the objective and the subjective conditions for constructing Trotskyist parties enjoying a mass audience, that is, for solving the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.

Since the epoch of the rise of capitalism up to the outbreak of World War I - in other words, during the fifty years of the struggles and the rise of the workers' movement, in the course of which the proletariat was able to win wide-ranging reforms as class-conquests - the process of the bureaucratisation of the organisations which the working-class has built has developed in step with the development and strengthening of a revolutionary left, to which the development of the Bolshevik Party and of the oppositions within the workers' movement in other countries bear witness.

The twenty years of victories of the counter-revolution which preceded World War II, on the contrary, resulted in an absolute re-inforcement of the bureaucratic, counter-revolutionary apparatuses. The vanguard received one blow after another, while each victory of the counter-revolution strengthened Stalinism. The difference of this period from the preceding one is that, between the wars, Stalinism was partly able to destroy the revolutionary leadership organisationally.

The upsurge of the revolution and the victories of the workers' movement which began in 1943 did not, however, enable the masses to break the strait-jacket of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, the Stalinist, the petty bourgeois, the counter-revolutionary apparatuses of the workers' movement of the world. This illustrates a law which Trotsky expressed on various occasions: the movement of the masses can neither provide for itself a revolutionary leadership nor can it follow directly weak and almost non-existent revolutionary nuclei. The masses must turn towards their old organisations, must go through the existing mass parties and accept them as the framework of their struggle, in the first phase, despite the counter-revolutionary, bureaucratic apparatuses which control them. The crisis of the Fourth International has added to the importance of this phenomenon.

The revolutionary upsurge has developed broadly under the control of the Stalinist bureaucratic apparatuses, or with petty bourgeois leaderships, like Castro-ism, for this reason. Our International, furthermore, was extremely weak. The combin-

ation of these two factors has meant that the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, for one third of humanity, has been led by counter-revolutionary leaderships, in a desperate effort by the latter to go along with the mobilisation of the masses, in order to put a brake on it, to divert it and to try to block it. It is true that, just as the Kremlin bureaucracy has always fraudulently exploited the prestige of the October Revolution, the bureaucracies which control the new workers' states have no less fraudulently exploited the new expropriations of the bourgeoisie and the new workers' states which have been set up in order to strengthen their prestige, in the workers' movement in each country and throughout the world. These gigantic conquests by the revolution, therefore, have been able relatively to consolidate the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, on the national and on the world scale, and have enabled them through several decades to safeguard their prestige and to maintain their control over the masses.

None the less, this strengthening has only been relative, and not absolute, as it was in the past. This time it has <sup>taken</sup> place in the framework of a revolutionary upsurge, which generates crises for the apparatuses, and not of victories of the counter-revolution. Essentially, therefore, it is intensely contradictory. In the last analysis, the revolutionary character itself of these conquests contributes to undermining the power of the parasitic bureaucracy, which is antagonistic to the progress which the world revolution has achieved.

Step by step, therefore, with the advances which the revolutionary upsurge has made, it has begun to call into question and to erode these bureaucratic leaderships. The masses have always had to go through the historic experience of the traditional, bureaucratic leaderships before rejecting and destroying them. Only after such an experience, which may be shorter or longer, and on condition that the revolutionary party, which consciously expresses their whole movement, is being built, that the masses will go beyond these leaderships.

The relative strengthening of the bureaucracy and of the apparatuses, therefore, is combined with the other product of the revolutionary upsurge, the crisis of the bureaucracy and of the apparatuses, a crisis which has ripened slowly but which has continued to grow. Among other events which demonstrate this are the beginnings of the political revolution in Germany in 1953<sup>and</sup> its continuation / <sup>in</sup> Hungary in 1956, in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and in Poland today, as well as the open and concealed crisis of Stalinism on the world scale.

The greatest source of crisis for the counter-revolutionary apparatuses is to be found, paradoxically, in the actual basis of their parasitic existence, in their domination of the governmental apparatus in the bureaucratic workers' states. This source of privileges and of advantages for the bureaucrats presents them as the immediate, direct enemy of the masses. The elimination of the bourgeoisie and of the landed proprietors exposes the parasitism of the bureaucracy and its oppressive role,

and exposes it as a transmission belt of the pressures of imperialism in the workers' movement as well as the mortal enemy of the international workers' movement and of all mobilisation of the masses. We repeat: the source of whatever audience the bureaucratic apparatuses retain today is essentially the same as that of their organic, structural and historic weakness.

Any mobilisation of the oppressed, of the working-class and the working people, which takes place in any of these countries directly attacks the bureaucracy, because the bureaucracy has become an absolute obstacle to the development of their economy and plunges them into a chronic economic crisis.

The revolutionary upsurge in these countries confronts the apparatuses head on. It would be enough for it to shake the USSR or China for all the counter-revolutionary, bureaucratic apparatuses in the world to begin to totter and to enter their terminal crisis. The period of world-wide revolutionary upsurge in which we are is the period of the crisis of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses of the mass movement and, principally, of Stalinism.

In one way the explanation of the weakness of our International and the cause of its crisis can be found in the strengthening of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses. Other factors, however, are combined with this one. A revolutionary party can only win decisive influence over the mass in the course of a revolutionary upsurge, but the revolutionary upsurge does not automatically confer mass influence on the revolutionary party. In order to win mass influence, the revolutionary party needs a whole accumulation of experiences, and whole labour of education and organisation to prepare its leadership and its cadres, who have the capacity to take advantage of the upsurge to strengthen the party within the mass movement. There is no doubt that time <sup>can be</sup> needed for this subjective process of constructing the revolutionary party.

The growth of the great Socialist Parties and, above all, of the Bolshevik Party, are examples of an analogous process. These parties were constructed in the course of several decades of the rise of the workers' movement. It is true that it was still possible in that period to win reforms from capitalism by means of class struggle and powerful mass mobilisations. The analogy holds good, because it rests on the fact that it was these mass mobilisations which enabled the powerful Socialist parties to be constructed. We can say the same about the construction of the Bolshevik Party, the only revolutionary Marxist party to be built in this period. The Russian and world proletariat needed several decades to construct it.

The same thing is true for our International, but even more so, because Stalinism has tried with all its strength and by every means to wipe out of the historic memory of the proletariat the lessons of the Russian Revolution, by exterminating the revolutionary vanguard in the inter-war years. It almost succeeded in cutting this historic continuity and left surviving only a few terribly thin threads. It was our International which held these threads in its hands. This circumstance made



still more difficult what was already difficult in itself: the construction of Trotskyist parties with mass influence.

A supplementary factor to all of this has been that of Pablo-ism. The existence of Pablo-ism has been fundamental, not only in weakening, but in dis-organising the Fourth International everywhere, including those sectors which resisted Pablo-ite revisionism.

Trotskyist parties, therefore, will not be able to construct themselves unless the revolutionary upsurge, the revolutions and the crises continue to develop, and the process will without doubt go on for years and experience advances and retreats. However, the new period in which we live makes possible spectacular leaps forward in the construction of our parties. This can be the case because thousands and thousands of Trotskyist cadres have already come forward, after what will soon be forty years of revolutionary upsurge. They are trained and already are capable of taking advantage of the historic crisis of the counter-revolutionary, bureaucratic apparatuses, especially of Stalinism.

THESIS XVI: STALINISM AND CASTRO-ISM: THE SOCIAL BASES OF  
THEIR COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS

Adaptation to the bureaucracy is the foundation of all opportunist attitudes to bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships. Revision seeks to justify its policy of adaptation by elaborating a theory according to which the bureaucracy has a "dual nature". Thus it would be bourgeois on one side and proletarian on the other. More precisely, it would be socially an integral part of the working-class, and only its politics would characterise it as bourgeois.

This theory breaks with the Trotskyist analysis, according to which the Soviet bureaucracy is a bourgeois organ, an agency of imperialism at the heart of the workers' state, on which it is parasitic. The same is true for the bureaucracies which control the traditional organisations constructed by the working-class. These bureaucracies are apparatuses which as such have a bourgeois character within these organisations.

This revision of Marxism in particular prevents one from understanding what determines internationally the fundamental objectives which the counter-revolutionary politics of the various components of the Stalinist apparatus set before them and the forms which their politics take. This is especially the case with the leaderships of the Stalinist parties in the capitalist countries. To be sure, these parties as such have the character of bourgeois workers' parties. The destructive political consequences of failing to understand this were revealed, for example, in the illusions which the revisionists held about the Communist Party in Portugal in 1974 - 75, or, again, in their inability to condemn the real aims of the policy of division which the Communist Party of France operated from September 1977 onwards, to try to ensure that the Giscard regime survived.

With regard to Castro-ism, revisionism adds a political consideration to its general reasoning. It argues that, to the extent that Castro-ism is not Stalinist, its revolutionary course is guaranteed. The negative character of this argument - that every leadership which is not Stalinist in origin and which expropriates the bourgeoisie is revolutionary - ignores the fact that the Castro-ite movement transformed itself into a Stalinist party, that it subordinated itself to the Kremlin and that, under its own specific forms, it plays an active role in the politics of "peaceful co-existence". Revisionist logic turns its back on Marxism, which bases itself on an analysis of the class-content of political phenomena.

The petty bourgeois and bureaucratic currents in the workers' movement express the interests of a privileged social layer, which came into existence in the **epoch** of imperialism and which is antagonistic to the **rank and file** of the working class and the masses. Engels drew attention to the first signs of this phenomenon. Neither he nor Marx, however, were able to study thoroughly the stratification of the working class which capitalism produced at the end of the 19th Century, when it was reaching

the stage of imperialism. It fell to Lenin to illuminate in a masterly way the appearance of a workers' aristocracy and its organic links with the bureaucratisation of the Social-Democratic organisations.

Of course, the laws of capitalism continue to rule the economy in its imperialist stage. The bourgeoisie tries continually to integrate sections of classes which oppose the management and the reproduction of bourgeois society. It assimilated whole sectors of the old nobility to itself as the ruling class in its ascendant phase. It attempts to divide the working class and to subject to itself certain members of the working class as a layer of society. This is how a workers' aristocracy was formed in the stage of imperialism. It was marked off from the mass of workers and provided a social base for the formation of a bureaucracy which took control of the organisations which the workers constructed.

The particular interests of the workers' aristocracy tended to subject it to the bourgeoisie, but for all that it remained socially an integral part of the working class. On the other hand, no bureaucracy belongs organically or naturally to the working class. It is a bourgeois organism within the institutions with which the working class has equipped itself. Within the workers' states, it is a parasitic caste, its social composition is petty bourgeois and it is an organ of the class enemy.

We must not confuse the bourgeois social nature of the bureaucracy with its presence within workers' institutions. Even more, we must not believe that the contradictions of where it has its origin and the place which it occupies transform its real nature. Trotsky analysed these contradictions when he spoke of the "double function" - not the double nature - of the Soviet bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is an agency of the counter-revolution within a workers' institution, of which it takes control in order to lead a privileged existence, separate from the working-class base. Let us look more closely at this process.

The great monopolies cannot govern directly. They are only a very small part of society and their direct representatives cannot, as a result, embrace the whole of society. In order to run and to manage their businesses, Governments, Parliaments, armies, police forces and judicial and cultural apparatuses, imperialism and the great monopolies have to face the need to establish a specialised layer of society, a state bureaucracy, which especially includes parliamentarians, technocrats, managers, officers in the armed forces and bourgeois politicians. There may be contradictions and struggles between these different groups of agents of imperialism and of the monopolies. Some of them may even come into conflict with capitalism itself. The parliamentary bourgeois politicians are the administrators of the general interests of the monopolies, but they may sometimes, for all that, go so far as coming into conflict, even in civil war as in Spain, with the extra-parliamentary agents of the monopolies, the fascists. We should not conclude from this that the petty bourgeois parliamentary agents of imperialism cease to that extent to be the managers of the



bourgeois state. Despite these contradictions, their nature continues to be that of the agents of the monopolies in Parliament. As such, they may go so far as to defend Parliament against the fascists and against the monopolists themselves, if the latter have decided to dispense with Parliament.

In the same way a managing director is an agent of capitalism in the management of the economy. His function is not the same as that of a general, who is a military agent of capitalism and imperialism. There may be many contradictions between them, such as over their attitudes to raising taxes to finance armaments.

To take a final example: the national bourgeoisie in the semi-colonial countries may at any given moment be in sharp conflict with imperialism itself, if imperialism wishes to reduce the share of the surplus-value appropriated by the national bourgeoisie. Even in that case, the national bourgeoisie in a semi-colonial country remains an agency of imperialism in the national frontiers.

Limited as these comparisons are, they enable us to understand why neither the special functions which the bureaucracies of the workers' parties and trade unions fulfill, nor their intrusion into what are strictly organisations of the working-class, nor the contradictions which can arise at any given moment, and which can place them in opposition to one sector or another of the bourgeoisie or to the bourgeoisie as a whole, do not confer a working-class character or a dual nature on their apparatuses or on their agents.

A strike-breaker is one agent of capitalism. He specialises in breaking strikes and breaking-up trade unions. A trade union bureaucrat is an agent of the bourgeoisie within the unions and within strikes. The task of the former is to destroy all trade unions and to break all strikes. The latter may be compelled, at a given moment, to defend "his" union, even by means of a strike which takes on a mass character. This illustrates the general fact that it is within the workers' movement that the apparatuses are an agency of the bourgeoisie, and that for this reason they may come into conflict with some other agency of imperialism, if the latter tries to destroy the workers' institutions, the monopoly and control of which ensure that the bureaucrats get their privileged existence. To put it another way, the bureaucracy may find itself facing a contradiction between defending its own position, which is the source of its privileges, and its nature as an agency of imperialism, but, let us stress again, could not possibly confer a dual nature upon it.

These general characteristics are valid alike for the Social-Democratic and the Stalinist bureaucracy. The workers' institutions on which they are parasitic are not, however, the same. This gives greater strength to the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Social-Democratic bureaucracy occupies a place in the great workers' organisations, within each national state, but it has not reached the point of ruling a workers' state. When it has governed a country, it has done so within the framework

of the bourgeois state. The characteristic of the Stalinist bureaucracy, on the contrary, is that it is parasitic on the workers' states, which are infinitely more powerful than the most powerful of Social-Democratic organisations. But there is no qualitative difference between the natures of these two bureaucracies. They are both bourgeois agencies, but they are within workers' organisations of different kinds. This is where the difference lies between them. The bureaucracy which is parasitic on a workers' state is not for that reason any less an organ of the world bourgeoisie against the working-class.

The case of such a petty bourgeois leadership as that of Castro is the same. They were<sup>e</sup> lifted up to power and compelled by the class confrontation to go further than they wished on the road to the break with the bourgeoisie and with imperialism. In Cuba, the Movement of July 26 was petty bourgeois. It expressed a distinct **sector of society**, which belonged, from the standpoint of its social composition, to the petty bourgeoisie, and was like the bureaucracies in this respect.

The Castro-ite leadership, a petty bourgeois leadership, stood at the head of the mass movement before the seizure of power. After the seizure of power, it developed into a separate layer of the working-class, into a bureaucracy living parasitically on the working-class **foundations** of the state, preventing the mass movement from organising in workers' councils to exercise power.

The revisionists, however, declare that such petty bourgeois currents, as Castro-ism in particular, can transform themselves into revolutionary working-class currents by the sole act of having expropriated the national bourgeoisie and imperialism.

In fact, it is the social nature of such currents which explains why they cannot transform themselves into revolutionary currents defending the interests of the masses of workers and especially of their poorest and most exploited layers.

The petty bureaucracy has interests separate and distinct from those of the working-class base. These interests explain why historically it forms part of world counter-revolution. This is why it is the declared enemy of the permanent mobilisation of the workers movement and the toiling masses, of the permanent revolution in its own country and elsewhere. It defends its privileges against the mobilisation of the working class as soon as the latter threatens it.

Every trade union bureaucracy acts in the same way. It defends its trade union and even tries to make it develop, but in the sense that the union "belongs" to it and is controlled by it and not by the working class base which tends more and more to mobilise.

Politically every sector of the bureaucracy finds itself in full agreement with imperialism about applying a brake to the process of permanent mobilisation of the working-class, peasant and popular base and of the most wretched and exploited layers. Every section, with any exception, of the petty bourgeois bureaucracies fights to the



death against the permanent revolution and its political expression, Trotskyism, which it regards as its main enemy. Here is proof that their nature is that of agencies of counter-revolution.

Nothing demonstrates better the counter-revolutionary role of the bureaucracy than the role which it plays in relation to economic processes. In the capitalist countries it always defends either directly or indirectly the maintenance of the exploitation of the working class and the toiling masses.

Social-Democracy was doing its best at the opening of the 20th century to guarantee that imperialism would always exploit the colonies and the working-class itself of the metropolitan country. It has followed the same policy since then. Stalinism also has set itself up as the guarantor of the survival of the system of exploitation, on behalf of imperialism. The characteristic orientation by the bureaucracy is partly hidden during a period of economic "boom", because it can then negotiate the concession of a few "crumbs" to the workers. It comes out into the light of day in crises. At these critical moments for the bourgeoisie, the bureaucratic apparatuses, often with the Stalinist apparatus at their head, support the plans of the capitalists for super-exploitation, and help to apply them. Let us give just one example: is not the full support which the USSR and Castro have given to the Videla regime facilitated the application of the most terrible plan of super-exploitation which Argentina has experienced in its whole history?

The role of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the economies of the bureaucratic workers' states is as disastrous or even more so than in the capitalist countries. In the reconstruction of economies devastated by the war, in USSR and in the first bureaucratic workers' states after World War II, the extraordinary advantages derived from the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, <sup>with</sup> the nationalisation of industry and of external trade, enabled the bureaucracy to assume a relatively progressive function for a certain time in the special circumstances. But as the economy of the bureaucratic workers' state began to develop, the growing privileges which the bureaucracy <sup>has</sup> continually exacted and the totalitarian methods with which it directs the economy of "its" state have becoming an ever-increasing restraint on the development of the productive forces and on raising the standard of living of the workers.

In order that the productive forces shall experience a real leap forward, on the basis of the social relations which emerge from the October Revolution, it is necessary for workers' control over the planned economy to be applied and for the revolution to be extended throughout the world. This alone can enable the division of labour to be re-organised on a world scale.

The fact is that the bureaucracy turns its back on these tasks, which are the tasks of the permanent revolution. The bureaucracy subordinates the whole of its politics to defending the isolation of each of the states which it rules inside its



own frontiers, as well as to the pressures resulting from its dependence on the world market. It obliges the economies of the workers' states to suffer the effects of the general crisis of the capitalist mode of production, effects which are combined with all the contradictions due to bureaucratic management itself. At this point the bureaucracy finds itself obliged more and more to attack the conditions of existence of the working masses, which arouses a massive mobilisation of the working class to defend its past gains, as we saw in Poland in December - January 1970 - 71. This confirms, on this ground also, that the bureaucracy is an indissoluble part of the world counter-revolution, that today it forms an absolute obstacle to the development of the productive forces, that everyday it robs the working people more pitilessly, that, in a word, it is an transmission belt, within the workers' states, for the pressures of every kind which imperialism exerts on the revolutionary conquests of October.

The same is true within the traditional workers' organisations in the capitalist countries. The bureaucracy rests on the workers' aristocracy. It does its best to impose on these organisations a totalitarian internal regime which enables it to increase its privileges, while it manipulated the organisations in order to apply a brake to the mobilisation of the working-class base and to subordinate it to the requirements of class collaboration in each country and of "peaceful co-existence" on the international scale.

This analysis confirms the analysis which Trotsky established. The Social-Democratic apparatuses are the direct agencies of imperialism in the ranks of the workers. The Stalinist apparatuses of the Communist Parties are indirectly agencies of imperialism through their subordination to the Kremlin bureaucracy. This means that, while they serve the same counter-revolutionary function, they do not do it in exactly the same way. The Social-Democratic apparatus depends on the democratic bourgeoisie or what remains of it. The Stalinist apparatuses are relatively indifferent to the form of the bourgeois political regime (though evidently this influences the form of the politics which the Communist Parties put forward). The essential determinant of their politics is their subordination to the Kremlin bureaucracy. This explains why the Spanish Communist Party supports the monarchy, for the benefit of the policy of "peaceful co-existence" which the needs of the Kremlin bureaucracy dictate. This is why the French Communist Party supports the Bonapartist Government of Giscard and the Argentine Communist Party that of Videla.

In the same way the Communist Party in Portugal in the Vasco-Gonzalves period supported the attempt to install a Bonapartist Government and at the same time resisted by every means the proposals for a Constituent Assembly. This last example is one of the most significant.

In any case, it would be utopian and un-realistic to raise the question of the political revolution, if the bureaucracy which rules the workers' states has a "double

nature", in other words, it would not be an agency of counter-revolution. On the contrary, our task would be to apply pressure to the bureaucracy in order to develop its progressive, working-class side. Therefore, it would be a reformist way forward which was opening. But it is precisely because the bureaucracy is an integral part of world counter-revolution that the political revolution against the bureaucracy is itself an integral part of the world-wide socialist revolution. It is the national expression in each bureaucratic workers' state of the life and death struggle between world revolution and world counter-revolution.

The bureaucracy represents, on the national scale, a regressive factor, which day by day weakens the workers' state. The political revolution is necessary, to avoid the continually worsening degeneration.

THESIS XVII: DESPITE THE POST-WAR ECONOMIC "BOOM", THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES ARE DECLINING, WHILE THE DESTRUCTIVE FORCES CONTINUALLY GROW

There has not been until now (1981) a crisis like that of 1929, a shock which throws the whole capitalist mode of production into disorder. The imperialist countries and the other advanced countries have enjoyed for twenty years an economic "boom", which began in the 1950's. Science and technology have made spectacular progress in recent years. These three elements have combined to lead revisionists to work out a new, anti-Marxist economic theory.

They declare, to begin with, that a new epoch has opened, that of neo-capitalism or neo-imperialism. This epoch is not the same as "imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism", as Lenin defined it, a stage of irreversible decadence, of the chronic crisis of capitalism. This new theoretical-political current generalises incorrectly the events which we have recognised above. It accepts the "theories" of bourgeois economists, as well as those of Stalinists, and introduces them into our ranks, to support there a policy of capitulation before the bureaucratic apparatuses.

The consequence is that they go on to declare that the productive forces are developing strongly, thanks to the immense progress of science and technology. This conception conceals a deep hostility to the working-class and to humanity as a whole, and amounts to support for the ideologies of imperialism.

Marxists regard the category of the productive forces as being made up of three elements: man, science and technology, and nature. The principal productive force is man; in concrete terms, it is the working-class and the working people in general in the town and in the country. For this reason, progress in science and technology, by itself, is by no means the same thing as a development of the productive forces. For the productive forces to develop, progress in science and technology must at the same time result in humanity being enriched by the subordination of nature, that is, in enlarging the mastery of man over nature and society.

In fact, Marx expressed this idea in "The German Ideology":

"In the development of productive forces, there comes a stage when productive forces and means of intercourse are brought into being, which under the existing relationships only cause mischief, and are no longer productive but destructive forces..." ("The German Ideology", Lawrence & Wishart, 1970, p.94)

In the present epoch, which is that of imperialism and of the world proletarian revolution, the contradiction between the productive forces and the existing relations of production is expressed in the permanent tendency to crises of over-production, by the growth of the reserve army of labour and of unemployment in general, by the development of the production of luxury goods and of armaments. The greatest control which man has ever had over nature turns against society and, in particular, against the working-class, which suffers every kind of evil.



Science and technology may have an independent existence, in the sense that they express the objective world, but their development is socially determined by the need which the ruling classes have for them and the uses to which they put them. Nuclear energy, for example, represents a great technological step forward, but it becomes a tragedy for humanity when it takes the form of nuclear weapons. It is the part, not of the productive, but of the destructive forces. Science and technology can be employed to enrich humanity, that is, to develop the productive forces. They can also be employed to hasten the decadence and annihilation of humanity. It depends on the use to which they are put, and that depends on the social class which has the control of them.

Today the development of the productive forces is obstructed, not only by the existence of imperialism and of capitalist private property, but by the continued existence of national states, a situation which is served by the theory and practice of what passes under the name of "Socialism in a Single Country". These national states play the same role in the epoch of the death-agony of capitalism as did the survivals of feudal relations in the epoch of the transition from feudalism to capitalism.

Since the war we have witnessed a gigantic growth in the armaments industry, that is, in the production of destructive forces. We have at the same time witnessed an equally gigantic development of science and technology, but the method by which it has been socially used has led to the impoverishment of mankind, to a crisis of humanity, to more and more numerous wars of wider extent and to the edge of the destruction of the human race and of all that mankind has brought into existence throughout its struggle with nature.

The revisionist thesis which claims that there has been "development of the productive forces", moreover, falls back into mistakes by the opportunists and sectarians of whom Trotsky disposed in his own time. Opportunists and sectarians alike isolate one particular aspect of reality and give a historic dimension to it, or dissolve concrete conditions in a general perspective:

"Imperialist capitalism is no longer capable of developing the productive forces of humanity. For this reason it can grant the workers neither material concessions nor effective social reforms. All this is correct. But it is correct only on the scale of an entire epoch. There are branches of industry which have developed since the war with prodigious force (automotives, aviation, electricity and radio), despite the fact that the general level of production has not risen, or has risen very little, above the pre-war and war-time levels. Moreover, this decrepit economy has its ebbs and flows. The workers are almost continually passing from one struggle to another, and sometimes they are victorious. Of course, capitalism takes from the workers with its right hand what it has given them with its left. That is how the rise in prices is wiping out the great gains of



the Leon Blum era. But this result, determined by the intervention of various factors, in its turn, impels the workers upon the road of struggle. It is precisely this potent dialectic of our epoch that opens up a revolutionary perspective." (from "Ultra-Lefts in General and Incurable Ultra-Lefts in Particular (A Few Theoretical Considerations)", in "The Spanish Revolution (1931 - 1939)", by Leon Trotsky, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, p. 293).

The real development of the productive forces after World War II in certain sectors or in certain countries, has provided the revisionists with a basis for denying the general tendency of the epoch to a stagnation of the productive forces, in other words, for declaring that the epoch had changed its nature.

The revisionist analysis here is flagrantly superficial. It defines neither the consequences of the new development of the productive forces, the existence of which it announces, nor the tendencies of this development. If revisionism were correct on this point, it would mean that we have entered a new epoch of organic growth of capitalism and of reforms. The problem, consequently, for the workers, in this new, progressive process of development of capitalism, would be to win for themselves the largest possible slice of the cake. If this were the case, the whole conception embodied in the Transitional Programme would be wrong.

In fact, the present stage of capitalism can lead only to growing exploitation and increased poverty for all the workers. The domination by imperialism of world economy is an absolute barrier to the development of the productive forces. Marxism, Leninism and Trotskyism, therefore, are more relevant than ever, because they alone explain the fundamental reason why a revolutionary epoch has opened. The development of the productive forces is obstructed by the dominant social regime, by the system of capitalist private property, by the maintenance of national frontiers. It is obstructed to such an extent that humanity is dragged down into decadence.

The premises which the revisionists have established lead them to asserting that the workers are experiencing a constant improvement in their standard of life, that poverty and exploitation are no longer their principal problem; that is "the crisis of cultural values" or the alienation of the masses by the "consumer society". As if the basis of alienation were not now and in the future the desperate exploitation of man by man and the subordination of the economy to the production of surplus-value.

The facts have categorically refuted this revisionist theory, which was the official position of the revisionists in the 1960's and which today they shamefully try to conceal.

Revisionism took as its reference point the situation of the working class in the advanced countries during the "boom", treating the labouring masses as a whole as an abstraction.

The imperialist, capitalist economy in the present period of chronic crisis, of decay

and of confrontation with the world socialist revolution tends towards the increasing poverty of the working masses taken as a whole. This is the period of unemployment, of lowering of wages, in which life tends to become unbearable for the masses. It is a period of transition towards the dislocation of the world market and of international division of labour, which will make the tendency to deep poverty a reality for the whole of humanity, including the advanced countries. This tendency is the objective foundation for the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses. This is what makes the permanent revolution completely relevant today.

Marxism regards the imperialist economy today, including the "boom" which has now ended, as incapable of being analysed except as part of a whole, as dependent on social and political factors, linked to the process on the world scale of the antagonism between international socialist revolution and counter-revolution. In our epoch, politics dominate economics. This is precisely what revisionism, with its vulgar economism, cannot understand.

What explains why there has not been a crisis like that of 1929? The explanation lies in the great political events of the post-war period, and by no means in some automatic working of the economy. All the "abnormal" economic phenomena must be brought back in the last analysis to the counter-revolutionary politics of the Kremlin and of international Stalinism. Without their completely conscious politics, there would have been neither the notorious "boom", which the arms economy served as a fly-wheel, nor the Marshall Plan, nor the revival of the Japanese and the German economies, nor that of Europe as a whole, because the proletarian revolution would have made a leap forward.

This did not happen. But the explanation is not to be found by investigating the actual resources which capitalist economy may have possessed in the stage of its putrefaction. It is to be found in political phenomena, and, in particular, in the politics of the Kremlin, which obliged the Communist Parties of the Western countries to give their full support to the re-establishment of the capitalist economy which the imperialist Second World War had devastated, ensuring that the working class accepted all the sacrifices necessary for this purpose. This is what Stalinism did, acting as the political instrument to salvage imperialism, and thereby enabling imperialism to achieve super-accumulation and super-profits.

Super-exploitation of the workers in the advanced countries and the most advanced robbery of the backward countries are at the basis of the "boom" in the economy, along with a whole armaments economy in the service of world counter-revolution, the greatest production of means of destruction which the world has yet seen, as the driving force of this re-conversion of the capitalist economy.

But this has led to conditions in which the parasitic basis of the accumulation has been aggravated. The imperialist and capitalist system have become increasingly vulnerable. There are obvious ways in which this is expressed, in growing inflation,



in the crisis of the dollar and of the international monetary system, in the rise in the price of gold, in the new spread of protectionism, in generalised unemployment and in attacks on all the conquests and gains of the workers.

None the less, Pablo-ism completes the chain of revisions of Marxism of which it is the progenitor by accepting the premises of Stalinism, according to which there would be two antagonistic "camps" in the world today, that of imperialism and what they claim to be a progressive "bloc" of which the Stalinist bureaucracy is the leading figure. This is untrue. There is only one world economy, only one world market. This economy, this market are dominated by imperialism.

The contradiction at the heart of the whole system is not between imperialism and the bureaucracy but between the world bourgeoisie and the world proletariat. This contradiction explains the absolute antagonism which exists between the social relations of production which came out of the October Revolution and the capitalist mode of production. The bureaucracy is an agency of imperialism within the workers' state. In order to preserve its parasitic privileges, it accepts the existence of national states and of the capitalist world market, and spreads the pressures of imperialism and the consequences of the present capitalist crisis. It is not the leader of a "bloc" antagonistic to capitalism, but, on the contrary, the spear-head of the counter-revolution in the workers' states on which it is parasitic.

To return to the positions of the revisionists on the meaning and consequences of the "boom": they do not enable either the characteristics of our epoch, or the key-role of the working class, or the contradictions engendered by the "boom" itself to be understood. According to the revisionists, the activity of the proletariat needs to be re-assessed, on the ground <sup>that its</sup> social weight has diminished and that the content of its demands has changed. The determining role of the working class is said to have dissolved into broad fronts or movements. As motives for struggle, "quantitative" demands about wages and economic demands in general are said to have given way to "qualitative" demands about consumption and alienation.

All this ignores the gigantic changes in world class relations which have taken place in our epoch and especially since World War II. A contradictory process accompanied the "boom". Primary producers have been converted into proletarians and wage-labour has extended and become more general over the entire planet. Imperialism has succeeded in imposing wage-labour on the vast majority of primary producers in every country/ <sup>and</sup> has accelerated the concentration and centralisation of capital, the subjection of peoples and the progressive integration of world economy.

The directly productive proletariat in industry and agriculture, working in private enterprises or for the state, has experienced a great development in the capitalist countries in general. In the imperialist countries, however, technical progress and the growth of productivity have led many enterprises to employ fewer workers. However, even when this phenomenon is taken into account, it is a fact that the industr-



ial proletariat has grown in absolute terms on the world scale. This growth is linked to the extension of the market, to new forms of division of labour, to the development of new products and branches of production and to productive activity in the hands of states. The economic transformations which have taken place in the colonial and semi-colonial countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America strikingly confirm this process, which operates according to the laws of unequal and combined development. The increase in the number of workers who are not directly productive is part of it.

The growth in the proletariat and in wage-labour after World War II becomes obvious when we take into account the changes in the bureaucratic workers' states. Millions and millions of independent producers have been transformed into workers for wages there. The working class has had a considerable numerical development in the economies where capital has been expropriated.

This growth in the working class and in workers for wages in general has had the effect of developing the workers' organisations. Since World War II the trade unions and workers' parties have experienced an unprecedented growth in the capitalist countries. The conditions of the "boom" have enabled important concessions to be won from the bourgeoisie, including improvements in real wages and conditions of life in certain countries, especially the imperialist countries. No doubt this situation has permitted the bureaucracies of the workers' organisations to take advantage of these new gains to maintain the rule of the crisis-ridden bourgeoisie and to save the bourgeois regimes. None the less, the importance and the possibilities of these organisations and conquests by the workers, especially the trade unions, are not destroyed by the fact that the concessions which have been won from the bourgeoisie are used in a counter-revolutionary way and that the organisations have a bureaucratic character. All this is no less true in the bureaucratic workers' states in a specific form.

The extreme importance of all this development of the working class and its organisation during the "boom" will show itself in all its completeness as soon as the "boom" ends, when the material conquests of the workers and the improvement in their organisations become the object of a frontal attack, in the capitalist countries and the bureaucratic workers' states alike. The contradictions between a greatly strengthened industrial proletariat, with its allies, the proletarianised wage-workers, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy on the other, on the world scale, are developing on a basis of unprecedented breadth. Capitalism and the bureaucracy have nothing to offer but rising poverty and challenges to the workers' past gains. A cycle of chronic crises in the capitalist economies is opening, accompanied by a process leading to the dislocation of the world market. These, like the crises of bureaucratic planning, have the effect of sharpening the contradictions between the immediate needs of the masses and the control by the counter-revolutionary bureaucracies over their organisations or their states.

This contradiction reveals itself in what is happening in the class struggle today, not only in the capitalist countries, but also in the development of the political revolution, especially in the struggle for the free trade unions in Poland.

The revisionists can explain nothing of this process. Their theories about a new epoch of capitalism come into brutal collision with reality. Marxism and the bases of the Fourth International are powerfully confirmed by the present course of economic, social and political events.