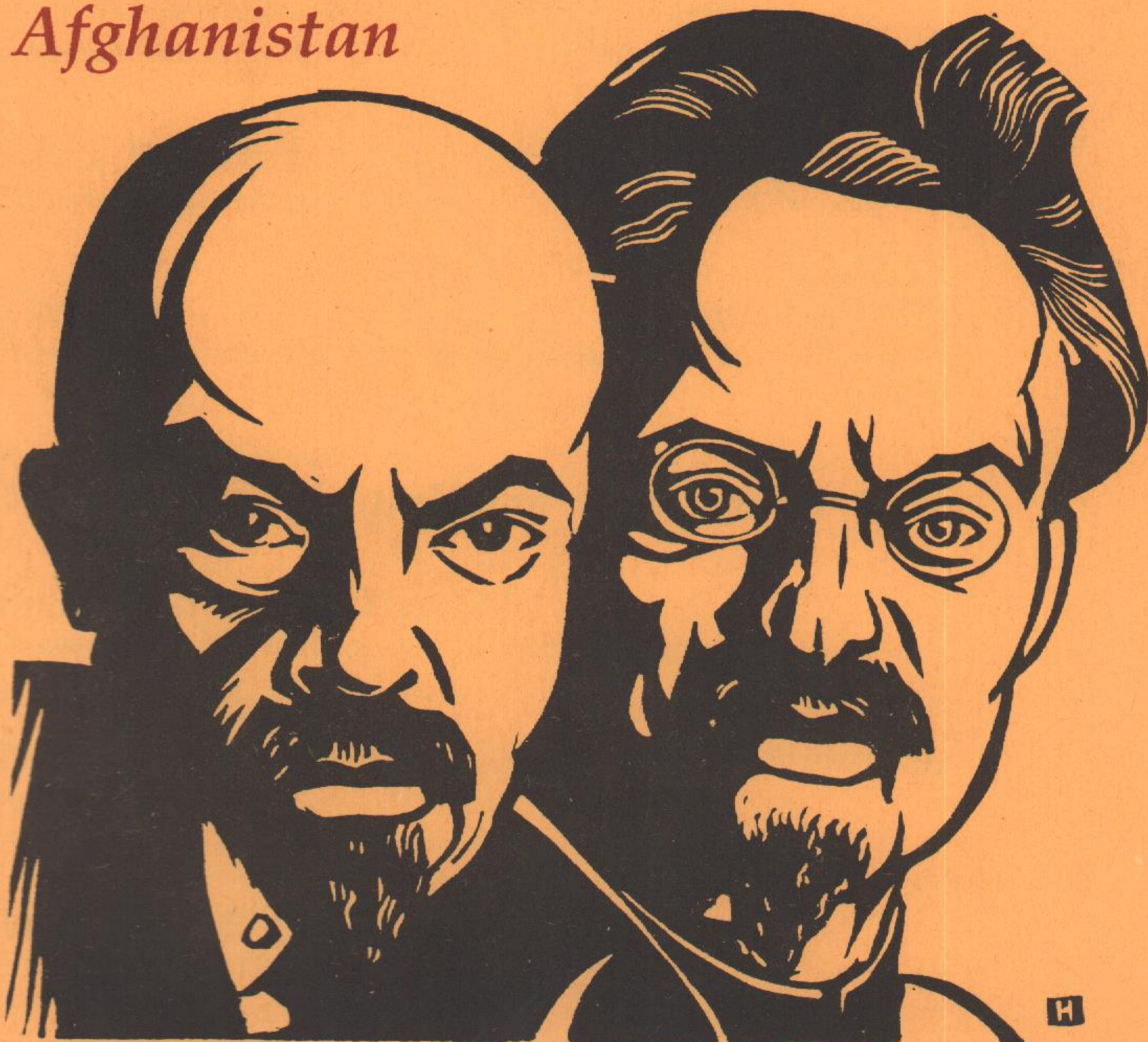


# TROTSKYIST INTERNATIONAL

Issue number 1 Summer 1988 Price £1

*Morenoism: a history*  
*Pierre Juquin and the French left*  
*The Waldheim affair*  
*The Pulacayo Theses*  
*Afghanistan*



The English language journal of the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International

# TROTSKYIST INTERNATIONAL

Issue number 1 Summer 1988

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# Editorial

## Introducing *Trotskyist International*

*Trotskyist International* is the English language organ of the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International (MRCI), which was founded in April 1984. The name of our journal is also a declaration. It represents our commitment to refound a revolutionary international in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky. Today no such international exists. Trotsky's Fourth International collapsed into centrism in 1951. The various tendencies who claim to be the Fourth International—Mandelites (USFI), Morenoites (LIT), Lambertists (OCRFI), etc—are centrist caricatures of Trotskyism. They have dragged Trotsky's revolutionary banner through the mud of opportunism and liquidationism for more than three decades.

The founding conference of the MRCI set itself the task of defending the historic programme of Trotskyism against these centrist distortions and re-elaborating it as a guide to action in the current period of world imperialist rule. *Trotskyist International* will play a vital role in that task. The journal will publish the resolutions and theses of our international tendency. It will be a journal that does not shrink from sharp polemic.

The nucleus of a new revolutionary communist international will be forged in struggle against centrism, Stalinism and social democracy. It will need to rally revolutionary workers against misleaders, around a new revolutionary programme. Our journal will be part of that struggle. Neither will we neglect our history—the history of Trotskyism. We will defend and rediscover what was correct and valid in our movement and criticise all that was misguided or in error. The workers' movement has no use for diplomacy or cover-ups.

Some of our articles will be taken from the press of the MRCI sections, edited for an international audience. Others will be written especially for *Trotskyist International*. We hope to stimulate a debate amongst those groups or individuals who recognise the political bankruptcy of the major tendencies which claim the mantle of Trotsky's Fourth International and we invite contributions and letters on the subjects dealt with in our journal. We also encourage contributions on the revolutionary and workers' movement in areas of the world where the MRCI has yet to reach.

This first issue of *Trotskyist International* contains a

number of theses and resolutions passed by the most recent MRCI delegate meetings. The Theses on Gorbachev and the resolution on Afghanistan analyse recent developments within Stalinism and develop communist tactics in relation to them. The article on the French LCR and Pierre Juquin is an edited version of an article which appeared in *Pouvoir Ouvrier* number 11 written during the French presidential campaign. The article traces the origins of the "Rénovateur" movement and demonstrates the LCR's capitulation to it.

The article on the Kurt Waldheim affair looks at the scandal of the ex-Nazi president from the vantage point of an analysis of Austria's position in the post-war settlement. This article is a translation of a bulletin produced by our Austrian section and sold on the February demonstration at the height of the anti-Waldheim movement.

In the last few years the history and positions of the biggest current in Latin America claiming to be Trotskyist—the Morenoite LIT—have become a matter of debate and argument in Europe. This has been a result of the LIT's attempts to build sections outside of its Latin American heartland since its split first with the USFI and then with the OCRFI of Pierre Lambert. In the first part of this article Peruvian Trotskyist J Villa looks at the origins of Moreno's current in Argentina, its capitulation to Peronism and the falsity of its claims to have stood against the guerrillaist line of the USFI in the 1960s.

Also in relation to Latin American Trotskyism we print for the first time in English the Pulacayo Theses of 1946 with an introduction explaining their political setting, their significance to the Bolivian labour movement and their basic weaknesses.

Finally we assess the results of the "open conference" initiatives which followed the explosion and disintegration of the International Committee of Gerry Healy.

We hope that our new journal will make an important contribution to the gathering together of forces committed to refounding a genuine Trotskyist international. We invite any individual readers or organisations which agree with its analysis and political line to enter into discussion with us with the aim of jointly carrying out that task.

Basic documents of the MRCI—the "Declaration of fraternal relations", "22 Theses in defence of Trotskyism" and others—are available, many in French, German and Spanish as well as English, on request (see page 24 for details)

### The MRCI:

Pouvoir Ouvrier (France)  
Gruppe Arbeitermacht (Germany)  
Irish Workers Group  
Workers Power (Britain)

### Fraternal groups:

Poder Obrero (Peru)  
Guia Obrero (Bolivia)  
These groups are in the process of discussions with the MRCI with the aim of becoming affiliated sections

# The French LCR and Pierre Juquin

Adapted from *Pouvoir Ouvrier* 12

**"In the heart of the French Communist Party, voices are being raised in the name of pluralism and living Marxism, in the name of a radical break with capitalism and with reformism... faced with such a situation, all that is necessary is to keep our communist identity, our desire to unify, our role of making things move, in order to meet up with a partner prepared to build the revolutionary party".<sup>1</sup>**

Thus spake the "Trotskyists" of the French Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) in March 1987, with regard to the "Rénovateur" current inside the French Communist Party (PCF). A year later, the LCR are busy putting up posters for Pierre Juquin, presidential candidate for the Rénovateurs. The LCR's orientation to the "revolutionaries" of the Rénovateurs is in full swing, with all eyes on the post-election period in the hopes of building a common organisation. The LCR's position is not simply based upon the particular circumstances in France: it draws its political inspiration from the perspectives of their international organisation, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI). However, this current "turn" of the French section has not gone smoothly. Once again, the LCR is in turmoil as rival tendencies grapple with the implications of the Ligue's analysis of Juquin's candidacy and of the Rénovateurs.

## The origins of the Rénovateurs

Juquin is the leader of the Rénovateur movement, which has emerged from the PCF over the last 18 months. To understand the roots of this movement, and the motivations for Juquin's ostensible break with Stalinism, we have to go back to 1984, when the PCF received a massive electoral shock. Between 1981 and 1984, the French Stalinists had been members of a joint Socialist Party (PS)/PCF government, under the "socialist" president, Mitterrand. After a few months honeymoon, the PS/PCF coalition had to face up to the rude reality of managing capitalism in the crisis-ridden 1980s. They instituted an austerity programme similar to that seen in many imperialist countries over this period: cuts in working class living standards and in jobs, decrease in inflation, increase in profits.

The PCF's voters took the participation of their party in these attacks badly. At the European Parliamentary elections of June 1984, the PCF vote slumped to its lowest figure for over fifty years (11%!) as PCF voters either abstained or voted for the PS. By becoming so closely identified with the openly anti-working class

policies of the PS, the PCF was gradually cutting its own throat. Voters either refused in disgust to sanction such an orientation, or they drew the natural conclusion, why not vote for the PS?

The different parts of the PCF apparatus made different deductions from this slap across the wrists by the French working class. The majority line was to quickly leave the coalition government, and to try and bureaucratically turn on the tap of working class struggle that they had so firmly closed for three years. This was coupled with an ideological offensive, in the shape of attacks against the PS, in the hope that militants would forget that the PCF had ever held office with their reformist rivals!

Another part of the apparatus, especially those local representatives (mayors, local councillors) who form an important part of the PCF machine, drew different conclusions. Where these PCF members risked being overtaken by the growing PS vote, there was a strong tendency to oppose the sectarian line being taken by the national leadership, and to try and adapt all the more to the growing tide of PS support. In general, these members did not have a history of struggle against the Stalinist leadership: they only moved into opposition when their positions were threatened as a consequence of the PCF's electoral decline. Attempts inside the party to soften the line met with abrupt and bureaucratic responses, as is generally the case in Stalinist parties, and the critics were forced more and more into open opposition. The "Rénovateurs" were born.

Over the next three years, as the party lurched from one electoral disaster to another, the opposition current grew, still with the vain hope of reforming the PCF from the inside. At the beginning of 1987 Alain Amicabile, a leading member of the Rénovateurs, stood as an independent communist candidate in a local election. At the same time, a manifesto, "The Revolution, Comrades" was published. The Rénovateurs were on their way out of the PCF.

Since then an alleged 4,000 militants have joined the movement, either being expelled from or leaving the PCF. As LCR leader Alain Krivine proudly boasted at a debate with the Rénovateurs in Paris, the majority of these people aren't "youngsters with only a couple of years experience in the movement, but people aged 40-50, the '68 generation". Although this is true, there is no reason for complacency: youth are the lifeblood of any political organisation, and they are in short supply in the Rénovateurs! An important part of the Rénovateurs' base is amongst teachers: there is little evidence that a significant proportion of the PCF's industrial base have

joined them.

One of the most notable people to leave the PCF was university professor Pierre Juquin, 35 years a Stalinist hatchet-man. In the 1970s and 1980s he was the party's chief spokesman, second only in the public eye to General Secretary Georges Marchais. In this role, Juquin had spent much of the 1970s justifying the dizzying twists and turns of the French Stalinist party as it made and broke agreements with the PS. In October last year, Juquin declared himself a presidential candidate. The LCR quickly withdrew its own candidate, Alain Krivine, and threw itself into Juquin's campaign. For Juquin, the LCR play a dual role: on the one hand they serve as "left cover", shoring up his revolutionary credentials, on the other, they have been able to provide him with a ready made national apparatus with experience in running election campaigns. He has, however, been careful not to be too closely identified with the LCR, making quite clear that he is not the candidate of any organisation (not even the *Rénovateurs!*), and only deigning to give an interview to the LCR in February 1988, months after the LCR had endorsed his candidature!

The whole *Rénovateur* current, and Juquin in particular, bear the traces of their origin inside the reformist PCF. This is clear from even a cursory reading of their most coherent and thorough-going explanation of their politics, their manifesto "The Revolution, Comrades!". They talk of "the necessity of 'producing French'",<sup>2</sup> thus employing the nationalist slogan of the PCF which is used to justify import controls and their popular frontist policy with "progressive sectors" of French capital.

The manifesto rejects any idea of a revolutionary break with capitalism. Instead it searches for a middle road between reform and revolution: "Is there no other choice, in the workplace or at the summit of the state, than management or a radical break?" the manifesto asks,<sup>3</sup> "What is the relationship that should be established between reform and revolution?"<sup>4</sup> Revolutionaries have clear answers to these questions. No, it is not possible to "manage" the capitalist state, nor to find a middle road which leaves intact the real power base of the capitalist class: their control of the civil service, courts and judiciary, police force and army. The capitalist state needs to be smashed and replaced with a system of workers' councils in order establish "The Revolution, Comrades"!

The *Rénovateurs* offer only reformist answers to these questions, answers designed to dupe the workers into believing that a "peaceful" road to socialism is possible. Juquin offers himself as the French Allende, and the LCR is quick to fall into line behind him. Thus the manifesto talks of "the democratic and peaceful revolution which France and Europe need".<sup>5</sup> The road to socialism is presented as being that of governing with "allies" (the PS) "on the basis of change". The "change" required is left suitably vague in order to bargain precisely with these "allies" in a future government.

In this respect the fact that their manifesto has absolutely nothing to say about the record of the 1981-84 PS/PCF government is particularly striking. They do not criticise the record of this anti-working class government because, fundamentally, they consider that there was no alternative to the PS/PCF programme of managing the crisis for the bosses. Thus they leave the door open to a future coalition government with the PS,

although the programme of such a government could only be a repetition of that of 1981: left rhetoric masking an austerity programme. Juquin has been particularly evasive on this point. He has even made it clear that he is prepared to take a ministerial position in the next Mitterrand government, as long as there aren't too many bourgeois ministers for his taste!

Neither the manifesto nor Juquin address the burning issues of the French class struggle, for example, how can rank and file workers fight unemployment? Their only reply is to "affirm the right to work and to full employment" and to point out that:

"The alternative to unemployment is the development of the production of wealth as a function of use and the evolution of need, rather than the accumulation of money; this involves a massive cut in working hours."<sup>6</sup>

An excellent proposal until one learns how it is to be achieved. Juquin has said that all that is needed to implement this demand is to use the EEC's Treaty of Rome! This only underlines the difference between reform and revolution. Although reformists may adopt a slogan used by revolutionaries, they are unable to provide any way for the idea to become a reality, apart from legalistic reforms which leave out the question of how to impose the demand upon the bosses. The sliding scale of hours with no loss of pay will not be simply legislated by the European Assembly. The bosses will not accept it. It will have to be won by fierce struggle, and any tendency or candidate that pretends otherwise is trying to dupe the workers.

On the international arena, the *Rénovateurs* show few signs of having really broken with Stalinism. Iran, Iraq, Nicaragua and South Africa all get a mention in their manifesto, but they say nothing about Poland and Solidarity. Do the *Rénovateurs* support the crushing of Solidarity by Stalinist tanks? Despite their claims to have made a "complete break" with Stalinism, their silence on this point speaks volumes. Similarly, they make quite clear that Gorbachev is their man. No call for a political revolution from these characters—they are quite happy with the bureaucratic reforms being instituted by the current masters of the Russian bureaucracy. As Juquin put it in an interview "I feel in phase with Gorbachev".<sup>7</sup>

Far from being a "voice of living Marxism", as the LCR would have it, the *Rénovateur* movement represents no real break with reformism. Furthermore, there is no sign that the leadership represents a split to the left of the PCF. Like the Eurocommunists of the 1970s, the *Rénovateurs*, with their refusal of the need for a Leninist party and their talk of the need for a "democratic" revolution, represent a social democratic wing within Stalinism. Their lack of a strong working class base or even a particularly active orientation towards workers' struggles means that they do not represent an important tendency within the working class, mobilising around key questions in the class struggle, nor a tendency that has yet completely broken with Stalinism and embraced the revolutionary programme.

Nonetheless, their split represents an important opportunity for revolutionaries, firstly because open fissures within the PCF are rare events and need to be plumbed for all that they are worth, secondly because trapped within the *Rénovateur* movement are many militants who are searching for a programme and an

2. *Critique Communiste* 61 p 4)

3. *ibid* p 7

4. *ibid*

5. *ibid* p 9

6. *ibid* p 4

7. *Informations Ouvrières* 25 March 87



Juquin (left) and Krivine

organisation that can meet today's situation in France. Neither Juquin, nor the suitors of the LCR, will provide these militants with what they need.

#### The initial response of the LCR

Because of the various pre-existing opposition tendencies within the LCR, when the *Rénovateurs* first appeared on the scene the leadership of the LCR was forced to raise some meek criticisms of their positions. In April 1987, to reassure critics within the LCR, two leaders of the majority wrote:

"In the manifesto of the *Rénovateurs*, the question of the state and the revolutionary break is the central strategic question. We are pursuing a discussion on this point."<sup>8</sup>

*Inprecor*, the French-language fortnightly of the USFI, made the following "forthright" criticism of the manifesto's reformist position on the state:

"From a revolutionary Marxist point of view, several key points require substantial debate and clarifications. In particular, as far as the problem of the bourgeois state is concerned, certain formulations [!] of the manifesto on this point could be understood [!] as opening a gradualist perspective to the passage to socialism."<sup>9</sup>

Both these "criticisms" are in fact left cover for an opportunist orientation. Neither the USFI nor the LCR have ever made any clear characterisation of the politics of the *Rénovateurs*. For Marxists, it is necessary to understand the nature of an organisation's politics, and to place a sign above it, giving the direction of movement: to clearly state what is. But the LCR has avoided this elementary task, and has preferred to plunge itself into joint electoral work without even a clear description of the forces with which it is working.

Despite the promises of the leadership, there has been no attempt to debate the question of the state with the *Rénovateurs*: Professor Daniel Bensaïd produced a

toothless reply in the same issue of *Critique Communiste* as the manifesto was published in, a "reply" which itself manages to avoid mentioning the necessity of destroying the bourgeois state and replacing it by workers' councils and an armed militia. Instead, Bensaïd puts forward an equally evasive formulation worthy of the Stalinists themselves:

"We consider that any presence within the state institutions should be guided by the necessity of reinforcing the widest possible democracy, and of the autonomy of the mass movement."<sup>10</sup>

There is no mention either of the consequences of a false position on the state for key programmatic questions: the nature of the police, of parliament, of the army, and or on tactics towards these bodies. This is not surprising: the USFI in general, and the LCR in particular, have a long history of junking the revolutionary programme, from Ernest Mandel's "structural reforms" of capitalism in the 1960s to the rabid opportunism towards social democratic currents in Europe in the 1980s. Thus the LCR concludes its tactics towards the *Rénovateurs*:

"What is necessary, then, is not to quickly find the elements of a common minimum programme, but, in order to deal with the major questions of the day, to tease out the principled from the secondary, the strategic from the tactical, that which is necessary before we can begin to march together, and that which can be resolved whilst marching."<sup>11</sup>

The question of the state is clearly something "secondary" that can be "resolved whilst marching" for the "Marxists" of the LCR!

**"Never mind the politics, feel the movement!"**

As good centrists, the LCR have never been particularly concerned by the political positions being peddled by the *Rénovateurs*. For them, the most important question

8. *Critique Communiste*, supplement to No 62, p 35

9. *Inprecor* 28 April 87, p 17

10. *Critique Communiste*, supplement to No 62, p 15

11. *Critique Communiste*, supplement to No 61, p 41

is the "dynamic" of the movement, and the belief that it offers the LCR yet another short cut to building a mass party. As the majority of the LCR leadership put it in their last Congress' documents:

"To our mind, what is at stake in the process in which we are involved is the common construction of a revolutionary party."<sup>12</sup>

The people upon whom the LCR are relying in order to build this Party are the 4-5,000 *Rénovateurs*, plus the other militants who have been mobilised in the "Support and Initiative Committees" around Juquin's candidacy. The problem is that, despite the existence of several hundred committees, the only people really active in them are the LCR and the *Rénovateurs*. There is no "Juquin dynamic" in terms of an important mobilisation of the youth or of the working class in support of his candidacy. Where are the massive mobilisations on the university campuses? How many union branches are going to support Juquin? How many shop stewards? How many PCF branches? The answers to these questions are "Nowhere", "None", "Not many" and "None", respectively.

Even the LCR is beginning to face up to this reality. Plans for a daily paper during the last few weeks of the election campaign have now been dropped: they accept that there would be no audience for such a venture. However, the key criticism we have of the LCR's orientation is not simply that it sees a movement that does not exist. It is rather a question of how the LCR orients to even the few thousand people mobilised around Juquin.

In saying that the Juquin campaign opens the possibility of "the common construction of a revolutionary party", the LCR considers that a large proportion of those around Juquin (and even Juquin himself) are "revolutionaries", and that anybody mobilised around the main planks of Juquin's platform (35 hour week, f6,000 minimum wage, unilateral nuclear disarmament, independence for Kanaky, etc) is a likely candidate to join the future party. The starting point for revolutionaries is the organisation of workers in a Leninist vanguard party, armed with a programme for international proletarian revolution. Laudable as they may be, Juquin's limited series of reforms will not necessarily lead to the reinforcing of the revolutionary movement. That depends upon how workers are mobilised around these demands. There is no reason to believe that there is anything magic about this "dynamic". No reason, of course, unless like the LCR you believe that there is an inherent "anti-capitalist dynamic" in virtually every movement under the sun! For the LCR, as for the USFI as a whole, the question of programme comes a poor second: the final goal is nothing, the movement is everything!

The majority of those non-aligned individuals mobilised around Juquin's election campaign are probably honest reformists. They want to fight for a better world, but their political weapon—their programme—is not up to the task they set themselves. We have to explain why, and propose something better. That involves a clear critique of the politics of the leadership of the *Rénovateurs*, and especially of Juquin, as well as common action in the class struggle, so that the superiority of the revolutionary programme can be demonstrated and these workers won away from Juquin's reformism

to Trotskyism.

Although the promised discussion on the state never took place, the LCR have raised some meek criticisms of Juquin, particularly after his notorious television interview in February. In the issue of *Rouge* the following week, the LCR's paper noted that Juquin's frankly reformist performance:

"... revealed the vagueness that surrounds certain aspects of Pierre Juquin's propositions, particularly in terms of the coherence of the slogans he raised."<sup>13</sup>

In translation, this means that apart from his Sunday-speechifying about a better world for everyone, his concrete proposals were openly reformist.

Juquin's performance on this prime time TV slot was quite studied. He was presenting himself to the general public as a sensible left reformist, quite aware of the necessity to be "realistic". It was also a public slap in the face for the leadership of the LCR, who only two weeks before had published the following resolution from their central committee:

"In avoiding the trap of the logic of 'realism', it is necessary to put the emphasis on workers' demands and struggles, in order to impose measures that involve a break with the logic of profit."<sup>14</sup>

We agree, but Juquin doesn't, as he made quite clear to millions of viewers. He jumped into the "trap" of "realism" because he agrees with it! And all the LCR could find to say was that there was a "vagueness" surrounding the "coherence of the slogans he raised"! What diplomacy!

In private, LCR members will admit that Juquin is a reformist, but argue that they are trying to win the "left wing" of the *Rénovateurs*. Of course, the problem is you do not win the rank and file of a movement by hiding your criticism of its leaders. On the contrary, such a course simply reinforces their illusions. The best elements of the *Rénovateurs* must be convinced of the fatal weakness of Juquin's politics, especially on the nature of the state. They must be convinced on the nature of Stalinism and the need for a political revolution. The experience in the PCF has led Juquin in particular and the *Rénovateurs* in general to reject what they see as "Leninism" and the democratic centralist party. Indeed many, especially Juquin, doubt the need for a party at all. Again, Trotskyists would have to put to the fore a critique of this "anti-partyism", with a defence of real Leninism and the necessity of a democratic centralist party. The LCR, of course, does none of this, believing that the "dynamic" of this "anti-capitalist" movement will do this task for them.

The other essential aspect of winning over reformists is united action, through which non-revolutionary forces can see in action the superiority of the revolutionary programme. And in this regard, too, there is a major problem in the LCR's orientation to the *Rénovateurs*: it is totally electoralist and the only "united action" involved is drumming up support for Juquin's election campaign: putting up posters, organising meetings, etc. There is no way here of showing the superiority of the revolutionary analysis of the trade unions and how to transform them, how to struggle for the shorter working week, and against unemployment, etc. The LCR is trapped in a propaganda bloc in which it is limited to fighting for ideas, and it is Juquin who decides what these ideas should be.

12. *Critique Communiste* supplement No 14 to issue 63, p 41

13. *Rouge* 4 February 88

14. *Rouge* 21 January 88



### The opposition inside the Ligue

All these shenanigans have produced a series of oppositions inside the LCR. Before the 1987 Congress there were two tendencies which claimed to be to the left of the majority of the leadership: that around Matti (the Workers' Unity Tendency, a name which indicates their neo-Lambertist positions) with three other CC members in its wake, and another tendency supported by ten CC members, led by "JLM". This latter grouping has since become a faction, opposed to the LCR's support for Juquin. Despite their best intentions, neither of these groups has been able to provide a genuine political alternative to the majority's position.

In summer 1987, the situation was as follows: the Matti tendency was in favour of "preparing for an independent workers' party" and presenting an LCR candidate at the presidential election. The JLM tendency proposed "confrontation and unity with Lutte Ouvrière" and... the presentation of an LCR candidate at the presidential election. The agreed position of the organisation was that Krivine was their candidate, and that there was no question of withdrawing him in favour of Juquin unless the latter agreed to a number of key points (overt disavowal of the 1981-86 Mitterrand governments being among them).

Juquin wouldn't be pinned down and refused to sign the LCR's document. Nevertheless, the Ligue leadership withdrew Krivine's candidacy, without previous consultation with the CC! Faced with this *fait accompli*, only the JLM tendency was prepared to draw the conclusions of this bit of manoeuvring, and they declared themselves a faction. Whatever their political weaknesses (and there are many), at least these comrades showed themselves to be more serious than Matti's perpetual "loyal opposition".

Unfortunately the faction doesn't have much to say for itself, apart from the fact that Juquin is a reformist and that the LCR should have presented Krivine. The problem however is not just whether or not to present a candidate, but rather what to say to the workers during an election campaign, and what one's candidate says. And thereby hangs the weakness of the faction's position. Because, had Krivine stood, it is highly probable that his election programme would not have been very different from that of Juquin! Certainly the LCR's campaign in the 1986 parliamentary campaign concentrated on the same issues (35 hour week, Kanaky, etc) without offering any concrete programme of action for the French working class. The faction merely repeats this error, arguing simply that the LCR is "first and foremost an organisation that is capable of marking the situation by its intervention".<sup>15</sup> It also seriously underestimates the hold of reformism on the French working class, arguing the workers no longer look to either the unions or the PS or PCF. If all this is true, how were the unions able to stop the railway workers strike of 1986-87, and why are the workers going to vote in their tens of millions for the PCF and the PS in the presidential elections?

In the current situation in France a revolutionary intervention into the election campaign would have to concentrate on the key issues facing workers and how to fight around them. This would be very different from Juquin's campaign. Let us look at two issues he raises: unemployment and peace. On the question of unemployment, propaganda should be made not only for the 35 hour week, but also for the sliding scale of hours under workers' control, for job-sharing with no loss of pay, for a massive programme of public works, for occupations of factories threatening closure, for the organisation of the unemployed by the trade unions, for workers' control over hiring and firing and of track speed. To win these demands, workers need to take action in the workplaces and on the streets. It's no good depending on friendly legislators in parliament to carry out these tasks. To really defend workers' interests, working class action is needed around specific demands.

To meet people's fear of nuclear destruction, revolutionaries have to explain the root cause of war: the continued existence of class society, and to argue against utopian solutions of "disarmament" which foresee a peaceful disarming of the bourgeoisie. Against this reformist nonsense peddled by the *Rénovateurs*, revolutionaries must argue against all military spending, against conscription, for the unionisation of soldiers and the formation of soldiers committees. For the organisation of protest strikes in the civilian armaments industry against French imperialism's use of the fleet in the Gulf or atomic tests in the South Pacific. To counter reformist illusions in the state, a revolutionary election campaign would point to the record of the state forces in breaking up strikes and occupations, in murdering working class militants. The defence of every strike, occupation and demonstration by workers' defence guards needs to be organised, and the dissolution of the police, the CRS and every other repressive state force has to be fought for.

This is not ultimatism, this is explaining to workers how they can fight and how they can win. Any other

15. *Critique Communiste*, supplement to No 61, p 100





approach, such as those of both the LCR and the *Rénovateurs*, is hopelessly tainted by reformist prejudices, and will do nothing to persuade workers that their existing political parties are inadequate.

#### The origins of the LCR's current orientation

The LCR's orientation towards the *Rénovateurs* has not appeared out of the blue: it has international roots and consequences which are much more important than a quick electoral waltz with Juquin. It is this aspect which the oppositions in the LCR need to examine, if they are to hope to come to grips with the leadership's positions.

The *Rénovateurs* are only the latest in a long list of "forces" (often semi-fictitious) which have been the object of the LCR's attentions over the last two decades. There was the "Alternative" movement (Greens, left reformists, etc) in 1985-86, disillusioned members of the PS and PCF in 1983, a supposed "June '36"-type movement that the Ligue expected to be unleashed by the election of Mitterrand in 1981, Eurocommunism in 1977-78, the "new mass vanguard" in 1975, the electors of Alain Krivine in 1969, "red bases" in 1968, PCF members in 1965, etc.

Many of the twists and turns were faithful reflections of the USFI's projected "mass movements", which were always to be the latest key to building the revolutionary party. The XIIIth Congress of the USFI (1984) was no exception. The resolution on "Building the Fourth International" declared:

"The present stage of building the Fourth International should therefore be situated within this overall process characterised by the emergence of a broad spectrum of forces breaking to varying degrees with reformism, Stalinism and national populism. These currents are capable of rediscovering a revolutionary practice on the basis of their own experience, but they do not immediately pose the question of the programme of

world revolution and the rebuilding of a revolutionary International... We stand now merely at the beginning of profound and lasting transformations in the workers' movement."<sup>16</sup>

Now the most important forces this report is referring to are a lot weightier than Juquin and Co. The USFI is clearly orienting to the FSLN in Nicaragua, which has become for the USFI one of several organisations

"... that are struggling resolutely and honestly for the victory of the proletarian revolution in their country. The Sandinistas did not suddenly become revolutionary the day after their victory. They already were before then, and there certainly exist future Sandinistas in several countries today, whether we know of them or not."<sup>17</sup>

While there may not be any Sandinistas in France, there are the *Rénovateurs*! The aim of the USFI is to fuse with these "new forces", even if they explicitly reject Trotskyism and building the Fourth International. This tactic has already been "successfully" applied by the German section of the USFI, the GIM. In October 1986 the weak and demoralised GIM fused with an ex-Maoist organisation, the KPD, to form the VSP (United Socialist Party).

The gaps in the "Unification platform of the German revolutionaries"<sup>18</sup> show the differences that still exist between the GIM and the KPD, differences that effectively prevent the fused organisation from intervening in the German class struggle. The fusion document says nothing on: the nature of the USSR and the other workers' states (an important question in West Germany!); orientation towards the trades unions; the nature of the SPD and tactics towards it; the nature of the Greens; the proletarian revolution (characterised as a "political revolution" by the Platform<sup>19</sup>); "socialism in one country", never mind the key questions of tactics and strategy in the international class struggle! But, no doubt, all these are problems that can be "resolved whilst marching" as the LCR would have it. In France there is a bit

16. Ibid p 40

17. Ibid p 38

18. *Quatrième Internationale* 22/23 pp 117-131

19. Ibid p 123

more of a problem—it is not clear that the *Rénovateurs* want to form a party at all!

Apart from the faction, *all* the tendencies in the LCR are keen to build a party with the *Rénovateurs*, which obviously raises the question of what kind of organisation they will build together. The LCR is currently having a substantial internal debate on this question,<sup>20</sup> provoked in part by the *Rénovateurs*' refusal to commit themselves to building a party. This was made graphically clear at the end of Juquin's 7,000-strong Paris meeting. "Can we change things by an election campaign?" he asked the crowd. "NO!" they shouted back, to the obvious pleasure of the LCR. He then asked "Can we change things by building a party?" "NO!" they shouted again. The LCR probably felt less comfortable.

The current in-word for the *Rénovateurs*' future project is a "front". What exactly this means isn't clear, but we can be sure that: i) it will not be a democratic centralist organisation, and ii) the reins of power will be held by the current *Rénovateur* leadership. Whether the whole of the LCR membership can be persuaded to go along with liquidating themselves into such a group remains to be seen. One thing is certain: none of the tendencies inside the Ligue has any idea how to combat the leadership's opportunist line.

#### What kind of International?

For the USFI leadership, the French tactic is just one aspect of a whole world orientation which has been given added impetus since they decided that the FSLN had established a new "dictatorship of the proletariat". For the USFI, the "Fourth International", built by Trotsky in order to become a mass revolutionary international, is but one element in a great "recomposition process". Thus, faithful to its forty year old centrist analysis, the 1984 World Congress declared:

"When Yugoslav, Chinese, and Vietnamese CP leaderships led the seizure of power in their respective countries, they were acting as revolutionary leaderships, despite the bureaucratic deformations of their theory and practice—'revolutionary centrist' if you will, but revolutionary. At this very moment, the international development of the class struggle, the advances of the revolution, the establishment of new workers' states, are fostering a general trend towards a recomposition of the workers movement and its vanguard."<sup>21</sup>

Thus the Stalinist parties, which overthrew capitalism in a bureaucratic and counter-revolutionary manner excluding the working class and poor peasantry from any exercise of political power, become "revolutionary centrists" for the practical politicians of the

USFI. Thus our "Trotskyists" continue their decades-old dream of a common international with these Stalinists and tendencies like the FSLN. And although the Congress explicitly refused to go all the way in groveling before the "Castroite current" so beloved of the neo-Stalinists of the American SWP, there is barely a hair's breadth of difference between the position of the Mandelites and that of the SWP in terms of which tendencies they would like to be part of the "new international". Further, little separates the USFI from other members of the "world Trotskyist movement". Compare the USFI's orientation to fusion with these various "revolutionary" movements with the LIT's position for "a Trotskyist or Trotskyist-like organisation"<sup>22</sup> or the FI(ICR)'s "For an international of 'independent' workers' parties". All these fake Trotskyists have the same method: first build a big organisation, then worry about the programme!

Like Moreno and Lambert, the USFI pretends that their position is similar to that of Trotsky's. Thus Bensaïd, in a recent book, suggests that Trotsky's strategy in the 1930s was:

"to build nationally based revolutionary parties which could intervene and affect the situation, and were not necessarily a section of the new international which was being built".<sup>23</sup>

The last Congress of the USFI went even further in deforming the truth, suggesting that in proposing the "Bloc of Four", Trotsky "did not envisage an International limited to revolutionary Marxists but a broader international of which they would be a decisive component".<sup>24</sup> This version of events is completely false, and designed to fit in with today's positions of the LCR/USFI. Whilst it is true that the "Bloc of Four" was aimed at centrist organisations, the document signed by the four organisations (the Trotskyist International Left Opposition, the German SAP and the Dutch RSP and OSP) was designed to produce principled programmatic agreement, by winning over the centrists to revolutionary positions. Thus the signatories agreed on defence of the USSR, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the soviet form of the state, democratic centralism, a new international, etc, and agreed to go on and produce a common programme. Would that the LCR's orientation to the *Rénovateurs* had been so clear!

No revolutionary party can be built with the kind of orientation proposed by the USFI. The experience of the GIM shows this clearly. None of the tendencies inside the LCR have the necessary programmatic clarity which could prevent the leadership taking the organisation down this opportunist road. Only a thorough-going revolutionary critique of the history of the LCR and of the USFI can provide the necessary basis for a principled struggle against the Ligue's current orientation.

20. See "Révolution et Parti", *Dossier Rouge* 24 for the various positions

21. *Resolutions of the XIth Congress of the Fourth International*, p 37

22. Darloush Karim (Nahuel Moreno), *The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*, Colombia, 1979 p185

23. *Stratégie et Parti*, Paris: La Brèche/Collection Racines, 1987, p 54. The first part of this book has been translated into English in the series "Notebooks for Study and Research", under the title "Revolutionary Strategy Today"

24. *Resolutions of the XII World Congress*, p 43

# MRCI Theses on Gorbachev

Adopted by the MRCI conference, July 1987

1. From the mid-1970s the Soviet economy has shown mounting signs of slowdown and stagnation. Initially, this effect was partially offset by the high world market price of Soviet raw material exports. That cushioning no longer exists. The Stalinist model of a centrally bureaucratically planned economy has increasingly become a drag on the development of the productive forces. Its initial achievements in the sphere of industrialisation cannot disguise its inherent historical limits. The reactionary doctrine of socialism in one country isolated the Soviet economy from the world division of labour and forced industrialisation to be based on the material and cultural backwardness of Russia.

The stifling of proletarian democracy drained post-capitalist property relations of their lifeblood: the direct involvement of the producers themselves in extending and perfecting the productive forces to meet human need. In the hands of the usurping bureaucratic caste the planned economy necessarily developed with profound unevennesses and disproportions. The political expropriation of the proletariat meant that the bureaucracy met their top priority planning targets at the expense of industries and services that would improve the immediate lot of the masses. From the outset, the political expropriation of the working class and the consequent wall of secrecy and privilege that surrounds the bureaucratic caste led to apathy and cynicism on the part of the mass of workers.

2. The bureaucracy was able to develop the productive forces in the 1930s, albeit with gross disproportions. It was then able to concentrate its resources to both defeat German imperialism and reconstruct the USSR after the war, without assistance from imperialism. However its inherent deficiencies became increasingly evident in the 1960s and 1970s.

a) We now witness an economy whose formal growth rates (themselves in decline) cannot conceal a mounting technological gap between most sectors of the economy and the major capitalist powers. There are massive unevennesses between the technological level and relative innovation within the various branches of industry. There are major deficiencies in the quality and range of production in most sectors.

b) At the head of this system is a lethargic, historically indolent and rigidly compartmentalised administrative and management structure. This huge layer is under no real compulsion to modernise and innovate. Freed from the terror over its ranks of the Stalin period, it has an historic tendency to plunder the planned economy and to the corrupt use of its political power. This was dra-

matically expressed in the Brezhnev period. The inherent conservatism of this giant bureaucratic layer is an ever-increasing drain on the potential of planned post-capitalist property relations. Under these conditions, the planning apparatus and the division of labour within the bureaucracy have become less and less effective as a means of improving quality, overcoming waste and meeting the needs of the masses.

c) The arbitrary and corrupt rule of the bureaucracy stifles initiative, discussion and innovation. This has led the working class and the intelligentsia to become increasingly alienated from, and hostile to, the bureaucratic regime. In itself this is a factor contributing to Soviet economic stagnation. In conditions of economic slump that alienation increasingly threatens to spill over into open struggle against the privileged bureaucracy. For sections of the bureaucracy and for the masses, this was graphically revealed by the struggles of the Polish workers. Solidarnosc signalled loud and clear that the bureaucracy cannot rely on the working class to remain passive in the face of mounting evidence of the bureaucracy's crisis.

d) A particular legacy of Stalinism is an agricultural sector that has been registering growth in productivity at an even slower rate than the rest of the economy. Shortfalls in agricultural production, together with the more generalised shortage of consumer goods, have made a nonsense of many of the bureaucracy's incentive bonus schemes. This situation also threatens to ignite popular opposition: the majority of large-scale conflicts between the workers and the bureaucracy are over the question of food shortages.

e) The accumulating problems of the planned economy threaten the ability of the Soviet bureaucracy to maintain its defensive military competition with imperialism and its support for key pro-Soviet regimes around the world.

3. Gorbachev openly proclaims the need for a grand reconstruction of Soviet society (the "perestroika") in order to break with its stagnation, corruption and demoralisation. In a rhetorical fashion, he regularly points to the scale of the USSR's crisis. Gorbachev's programme for tackling the crisis has much in common with that of Andropov, his old mentor and KGB chief. Andropov and the KGB proclaimed the need to purify soviet society by purging it of its dishonesty, corruption and stultification. The scale of the purge was envisaged as being minor compared with that of the Stalin period, however its principal instrument was to be the more effective overseeing of the bureaucracy by the appa-

tus of repression—the KGB and Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD)—the police. This apparatus was also to be unleashed in pursuit of labour discipline. The Andropov project underlined the profoundly repressive nature of the Soviet bureaucracy.

4. Gorbachev came to power in a bloc with Andropov supporters. His initial priority was to get the economy “working again” by controlling the activity of the middle layers of the managerial and administrative bureaucracy. This was mainly to be carried out “from above” by merging ministries and by sharpening the instruments of central direction and, in particular, the inspection mechanisms. Gorbachev’s project was to streamline the Stalinist machine, to produce more immediate and direct links between the individual enterprises and the central economic apparatus. This remains at the heart of his economic programme.

5. Faced with continuing economic stagnation and, no doubt, with bureaucratic resistance within the giant state apparatus, Gorbachev has been forced to refine his programme. Initially the centre was to be the main agent of reconstruction, together with management in the enterprises. Their task was to increase efficiency and to apply “glasnost” to shortcomings in the system. From early 1987 onwards, the hallmark of Gorbachev’s rhetoric has been the need for democratisation from below in order to carry out perestroika. It is this element of Gorbachev’s programme that most threatens his political base within the bureaucracy. The terms of this “democratisation” are severely restricted: it is seen as a limited means of pressurising the inert bureaucracy from below. The bureaucratic leadership is to keep strict control on its terms and limits. It is seen as a vital means of convincing sections of society to actively identify with the regime’s reforms and against their opponents, be they bureaucrats or proletarians.

Gorbachev’s democratisation is extremely tentative. It will be discussed at a special party congress in 1988. What is intended?

a) The introduction of the electoral system for party appointments. This can also serve as a weapon in the hands of the central bureaucracy against entrenched local cliques.

b) The possibility of more than one candidate standing in soviet elections. Based on the Hungarian model, it is a means by which Gorbachev and co hope to mobilise more non-party elements to participate in the soviet apparatus and thereby to buttress its credibility.

c) Plant managers are to be elected every five years and foremen every two years. This is a measure aimed both at keeping local management on their toes, and at strengthening the identification of at least a section of the workforce with management.

None of this is intended to subvert “the leading role of the party”: it is a means of pressurising the apparatus to work more effectively. However, it will:

i) Sharpen conflicts within the bureaucracy itself as the most unaccountable elements attempt to protect their privileges and prerogatives.

ii) Sharpen democratic expectations amongst the masses. To this extent it will serve to re-awaken political argument and debate.

6. Gorbachev is a reflection of the deep crisis of Stalinism. This system does not have the vitality and capacity for self reform necessary to progressively reopen the transition to socialism. Only a political revolution in which the masses overthrow the bureaucracy and take power into their hands through soviets and a workers militia can unlock the door to genuine socialist construction. The workers will have to democratically overhaul the plan to meet human need in order for inequalities and all forms of oppression to disappear. This is not Gorbachev’s intention.

However, the prospect of a serious conflict with the most inert and repressive elements within the bureaucracy, and of more or less open splits in the bureaucracy’s ranks does threaten to open up a period when the working class will have more opportunities to organise and consciously assert itself within the crisis of Soviet society. Unlike Khrushchev, Gorbachev has been careful not to raise proletarian expectations with offers of major increases in living standards. He wants to win the backing of the intelligentsia and to severely restrict those workers who have been mobilised in his support, for fear of unleashing sharper struggles. He is aware that to the extent that perestroika encourages the working class to break with its tradition of passive cynicism it potentially opens the road to a left threat to the Stalinist bureaucracy.

7. Political leadership remains the central problem in a working class that is the overwhelming majority of Soviet society, has a high level of formal culture, but which has no tradition of political independence because of years of terror and institutionalised repression. The bureaucracy drowned the Soviet Trotskyists in blood and has systematically expunged that tradition from the proletariat’s historical memory. The reconstitution of revolutionary communism (Trotskyism) in the USSR will be key in determining whether the Soviet workers remain the oppressed victims of the bureaucratic caste sharing a “common ruin” or organise to take power. An open and honest accounting of Lenin and Trotsky’s struggle against bureaucratism and chauvinism can play a vital role in this process.

8. What will perestroika mean for Soviet workers? Unlike the Yugoslav and Chinese bureaucracies, Gorbachev is anxious not to weaken the central bureaucracy’s hold over industry. He hopes to link an increase in the operation of market mechanisms in certain spheres (enterprises to be profitable, prices to be brought into line with market values, private restaurants, etc) with more efficient centralised coordination. The proposed openings to foreign capital and the plans to join GATT and the IMF are far more cautious than either the Chinese bureaucracy’s “open door” enterprise zones or the Yugoslavian bureaucracy’s abolition of the state monopoly of foreign trade. In the countryside, fields will be leased to teams, including to family units. This is not meant to determine the entire shape of Soviet agriculture in the same way as the Chinese land reforms. While Gorbachev aims to strengthen the operation of market forces, his project does not embrace the restorationist logic that other sections of world Stalinism have employed in order to meet the crisis of

Stalinist rule. However, there will certainly be a sharpening debate within the Soviet bureaucracy, with an increasingly vocal marketist tendency.

On every front Gorbachev's policies will have a profound effect on the working class. Unions will lose much of their welfare role and will be pushed towards playing a greater role in keeping tabs on management and expressing some of the workers' grievances, as a means of heading off a Solidarnosc-type explosion. The new profitability principle will sharpen the contradictions within the unions, if they are both to be a safety valve for workers' grievances and to tie the workforce to management in a joint drive to boost labour productivity. This will take place at a time when there will be very real attacks on the working class:

- i) An end to job security rights.
- ii) A drive to increase differentials and inequalities between workers, as well as an end to certain preferential wages for manual workers. There will be a revival of forms of Stakhanovism as the bureaucracy tries to strengthen a supportive labour aristocracy of "productive workers".
- iii) Tighter managerial discipline.
- iv) The erosion of the social wage through price in-

creases. Higher prices, and in some cases higher wages will be introduced, but with no guarantee that the latter will secure access to quality goods.

v) For many workers, particularly those working in old or worn out factories, there will be the prospect of wage cuts at the hands of the inspection agency.

9. The task of Trotskyists is to fight for the programme of political revolution in the context of the level of consciousness of the Soviet workers, and taking into account their illusions. We must be able to relate the programme of political revolution to the proposed reforms and to the debates taking place, while never confusing the political revolution with an extension of those reforms or, like Mandel, dropping the slogan of political revolution in favour of a more radical, thoroughgoing and "democratic" perestroika. The programme of political revolution cannot be reduced to democratic, non-class specific demands; it is a programme for working class power. However, this does not mean that we will absent ourselves from the battlefield when the masses struggle for key democratic rights.

## A programme of political revolution

### Against social inequality and political repression!

- End the bureaucracy's privileged access to the special shops, sanatoria and health resorts. Make their services available to all. Abolish the extra pay packet systems, open the wage policies of every enterprise and institute to inspection by the workers. No state official to be paid more than the wage of a skilled worker.
- For a return to the Leninist norm of the Party max. No party member or official to earn more than the average wage of a skilled worker.
- Equal access for all to education at every level. For the dismissal of all educational officials and teachers who have accepted bribes. For workers inspection of entry procedures. For a return to Leninist polytechnic education—all must learn to work, all must learn to administer.
- Abolish the censorship laws. For the free circulation of leaflets and literature, subject to working class scrutiny of their contents. For access to the press for all working class bodies in proportion to their support.
- For workers' courts of elected jurors and the release of all "political" prisoners of the regime that those jurors see fit to liberate.
- For a new legal code to be openly discussed by workers. This code must place elected workers' courts at the centre of the legal machinery. All laws must be published openly for all to see. The new code must defend the USSR, in the necessary manner, from imperialist and counter-revolutionary agents.
- For the abolition of the KGB and its replacement by a workers' security commission on the lines of the revolutionary Chekha. For the abolition of the MVD and

its replacement by a workers' militia.

- For all workers to be trained, armed and organised in territorial militias.
- For the standing army to be cut to a size commensurate with legitimate defence of the USSR against imperialism and physical assistance to other workers' states and to all forces fighting imperialism. This was the historic role of Trotsky and Lenin's Red Army.
- For the right of soldiers to assemble, organise and publish. For soldiers' councils free of all bureaucratic control.
- Drive out the corrupt and the parasitical. For the immediate dismissal of all officials who have ever disciplined workers for criticism or for defending their rights. As the platform of the Left Opposition declared:  
"An article should be introduced into the Criminal Code, punishing as a serious crime against the state, every direct or indirect, overt or concealed persecution of a worker for criticising, for making independent proposals, and for voting."
- For the right of the workers to dismiss all officials/managers known to have profited from corruption. All officials so dismissed to stand trial and receive the necessary punishment in a workers' court, and to be entitled to no more than the state pension after their ill-gotten gains have been confiscated.

### For independent working class organisation!

- Defend and extend the right of the working class to its own independent organisations. For genuine free

trade unions, free of bureaucratic control, in which all officials are elected, recallable and paid the average wage of the membership. For that right to include the right to form new representative unions as well as to oust the layer of officials who masquerade as workers' representatives in the present state unions and to replace them with the workers' own choice, free from "the leading role of the party".

- For the right to strike. For a workers' factory committee in every enterprise.
- Open the books of the enterprises to inspection by the factory committee. For all decisions in the plant to be discussed and ratified by the factory committee. The factory committee should appoint and oversee all administrative personnel with the right to immediate recall and reallocation to the factory floor, as against three yearly elections of state appointees.
- For factory committee management of the factory shop and canteen. For equal access of all workers to the goods in the shops and canteens.

#### For Soviet democracy!

As the Russian Revolution demonstrated, the workers' council of recallable delegates is the form through which the working class exercises state power in a healthy workers' state. Rooted in the factories, the working class communities and the oppressed layers of society, they organise the great mass of the once-exploited to become rulers of their own state. Such bodies have nothing in common with the present soviets in the USSR which have a mock-parliamentary form, with geographical constituencies and, more importantly, which are the creatures of the ruling caste.

The soviets with which the working class will exercise its rule must be forged anew in struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy. Through the political revolution they will be transformed from organs of struggle into organs of direct power. Gorbachev has talked of the need to democratise the existing Soviet institutions. Following the Hungarian example, he has proposed that the CPSU should allow more than one screened candidate to stand in an election. Given that Russian workers will be confronted with this controlled attempt to render more credible the democratic mandate claimed by the soviets, and given that the democratisation of the soviets is being discussed in the factories, revolutionary Marxists must raise their distinct voice:

- For a return to the Leninist norms of soviet representation. For all delegates to be "accountable" in the form of recallability. For delegates to represent facto-



ries as well as housing complexes in a direct and recallable manner. For Leninist soviets not bogus parliaments and bogus constituencies.

#### For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party!

- No to the leading role of the CPSU! It is the party of the bureaucracy that parasitically squanders the product of Soviet workers' labour. For the freedom to form parties committed to the defence of the gains of October 1917 and for freedom for such Soviet parties to put forward candidates and platforms in elections. For the right of any group of workers to put forward candidates for election. No to pre-election screening by the CPSU or any stooge front it may put forward. No limit on the number of candidates—let the workers, not the CPSU, decide!

The majority of active workers have illusions either in Gorbachev himself, or at least in aspects of his perceived programme for democratising and revitalising Soviet society and for rendering the bureaucracy less arbitrary, privileged and unaccountable. Despite the intentions of those who originated this programme, it therefore awakens progressive aspirations amongst the toiling masses. The experience of the Czechoslovak CP in 1968 and of the "horizontal movement" within the Polish Workers' Party in the Solidarnosc days, suggests that proletarian mobilisations will find a reflection in the state parties. This is so because large numbers of workers are captive members of these parties. This is especially the case with the CPSU.

We firmly believe that the Soviet working class requires a new revolutionary Leninist-Trotskyist party if it is to successfully take power back into its hands. However, we cannot ignore the fact that in an escalating political-revolutionary situation, the bureaucracy will come under challenge from sections of the party membership. Where we cannot directly win such rank and file elements to the ranks of Trotskyism, and recognising that such opposition will often be the first politically-independent act of such workers, we should en-

courage them to put their party to the test by demanding:

- Elections at every level, elections based not upon the criteria of "administrative efficiency" that Gorbachev wants to introduce, but upon open platforms and political competition in open debate. For the lifting of the ban on the formation of factions and on the circulation of platforms which was temporarily imposed by the party of Lenin and Trotsky in 1921.
- The road to political revolution does not lie through reforming the CPSU but through breaking it up as an instrument of mass mobilisation in support of the repressive and privileged bureaucracy.

#### Political revolution and the national question

Like the Tsarist Empire it replaced, the USSR is a "prison house of nations". Down with Russification. For the right of all Soviet nationalities to their own language as an official language. Down with the Great Russian chauvinism against which Lenin waged his last struggles.

- For the right of all Soviet nationalities to self-determination up to and including secession, subject to the defence of planned property relations and of the USSR. At the present time we would not advocate secession for any republic: it is not necessary in order to prevent the masses falling under the sway of reactionary forces, as was the case with Trotsky's use of the slogan "For an independent Soviet Ukraine" in the 1930s.
- We firmly oppose anti-Semitism, which the Stalinist bureaucracy uses as a means of dividing the Russian masses and protecting itself from their anger. It attempts to canalise existing widespread discontent and direct it against the Jews.
- While making no concessions to Zionism, Russian revolutionaries must consistently defend Jewish people in the USSR against oppression, including their right to emigrate if they so wish, subject to the legitimate security interests of the USSR.

#### For the proletarian internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky!

- Full support for workers' liberation struggles around the world, and against their cynical manipulation and betrayal by the Soviet bureaucracy. Against the brutal suppression of the east European workers by the Kremlin and its agents.
- For the right of all present members of the Warsaw Pact to leave that pact while maintaining the defence of planned property and of the USSR. For the publication and re-negotiation

of all inter-state treaties on the basis of complete equality. For an end to all unequal pricing mechanisms except those that benefit the most impoverished and backward.

- No to a bureaucratic solution to the war in Afghanistan. Faced with pro-imperialist feudal forces, the Stalinists have consistently shown their reactionary nature by oscillating between military repression and rotten deals with these forces. We demand that the USSR provide sufficient support, up to and including troops, to defend the progressive forces in Afghanistan, and that the support be given without strings tying the progressive forces to capitulation. While not endorsing the invasion of Afghanistan or prettifying the role that the Soviet Armed Forces (SAF) have played there, Soviet workers must not allow their rulers to murderously leave the PDPA and their supporters in the lurch.
- The only road to peace and a just end to the war that will serve the Afghan and Soviet peoples, is that of workers' revolution in Afghanistan. A key task of the political revolution in the USSR is to further that end.
- Guns and aid with no strings to all those who are fighting imperialism.
- For real solidarity with workers struggling against capitalism. No more scabbing on such struggles through the export of goods to break strikes.

#### For a democratically centralised planned economy!

As the bureaucratic system of planning reaches its historic limits, there is a growing pressure within the bureaucracies for increasing the internal role of the market and opening it up to world capitalism. Against the stranglehold and stagnation of the old mechanisms such proposals can appeal to sections of workers as a type of "self-management", free from central interference. The doctrines of "market socialism" thus intersect with the most narrow forms of factory consciousness and serve to keep the working class sectionalised and divided as a class force.

- We are for a democratically centralised planned economy which reopens the transition to the historical elimination of the market and all remnants of capitalism. This can only take place through democratic



management of the producers themselves, as expressed by workplace-based Leninist soviet organisations. Only the democracy of the toilers can give full expression to both needs and abilities. Only through the democracy of the producers can each have an interest in the development of all.

An isolated healthy workers' state will have to coexist with market forces at the same time as seeking to overcome them. Without a doubt elements of the Stalinist bureaucratic elimination of the market have actually served to retard the development of sectors of the Soviet economy e.g: the kolkhoz in agriculture, and the service sector.

In these sectors our programme must be based on the following elements:

- Down with the state serfdom of the kolkhoz and sovkhos. Down with any return to private family farming which, as in China, will serve to retard the long term development of agriculture and of rural society.
- For the democratic reorganisation of the farms, based on the democracy of the rural toilers, not on the whims of the functionaries. For soviets of agricultural workers comprised of farm workers representing working units, and directly accountable to them.
- For a massive injection of funds to raise the material and cultural level of the countryside to that of the cities. Transcend the distinction between town and country. For a genuine and operational co-operative sector, free from bureaucratic tutelage.

#### Down with all forms of sexual oppression!

One of the most reactionary currents revealed in the current debate in the USSR is that which sees the problems of Soviet society as being in no small measure the result of the "defeminisation" of Soviet women and the "feminisation" of men. This current argues that the presence of women at work and the existence of the social wage has undercut the family unit. There is a renewed campaign to strengthen the family as a unit of social cohesion and stability. There are arguments for easing women back into the home so as to make it possible for Soviet men to win back their self respect as breadwinners. Women workers are also likely to suffer in the labour shakeout. However, there are also signs that the democratisation of the press has allowed women to denounce the double burden they bear in Soviet society and their appalling conditions.

For the first time, youth papers have started to admit that some Soviet youth are gay and face particular problems as such.

- No to the oppression of women—for the real socialisation of housework. For the plan to provide the creche and sanitary facilities that can make this possible. For a massive programme to build restaurants, canteens and social amenities in order to lift the burden that women bear in the USSR.
- For a woman's right to work and equal access to jobs not subject to protective legislation. In order to fight the legacy of male chauvinism and oppression we fight for an independent working class based Soviet women's movement.
- No limitation on abortion rights, but for the provision



of free contraceptive devices for all to end the barbaric reliance on abortion and give Soviet women real control over their fertility.

- Abolish the barbaric laws against Soviet gays and the brutal repression of gays and lesbians.

#### Take the road of political revolution!

The alternative to oppression, stagnation and deprivation is for the Soviet workers to take up these struggles against the Soviet bureaucracy. There is an alternative to the rule of the bureaucracy: the workers must take power into their own hands through a proletarian political revolution. That revolution will not have to expropriate the capitalists, but will have to build on that expropriation by ending political rule over the masses and over the productive forces that the caste plunders and squanders.

In the hands of the workers the plan can and must be revised from top to bottom to meet the needs of the workers and the most oppressed and impoverished sections of society. When they are again in control, the Soviet workers will put an end to all repression that is not absolutely necessary for the security of the workers' state. In order to make a political revolution that can put the USSR on a Leninist path once again it is necessary for the working class to organise and struggle independently. It must not wait for Gorbachev but organise now to form its own unions and factory committees. It must initiate the struggle to oust the corrupt parasites who have been allowed to rule for too long. In the face of inevitable attempts to repress independent workers' mobilisations, the working class must unite its struggles through soviets of workers' deputies and an organised militia aided as much as possible by those sections of the SAF that can be rallied to its side.

In this struggle a new mass revolutionary party must be forged in the tradition of Lenin's Bolshevik Party. Without such a party the working class will be incapable of decisively beating its enemies.



# *Resolutions and theses of the MRCI*

Adopted by the MRCI conference, April 1988

## *The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan*

1. In 1978 the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) seized power. It was a party based on the urban intelligentsia and the upper ranks of the armed forces. The party was based on the Stalinist monolithic model but was riven by factional conflicts. The PDPA's programme consisted of a series of democratic reforms, based on continuing the policy of co-operation with the USSR which had been pursued by the king until 1973, and which Daoud, in conjunction with the CIA and the Shah of Iran, was attempting to stop. The seizure of power had popular support in the towns. It was, however, not a Soviet organised putsch. The Soviet Union had hitherto been content with Afghanistan as a neutral buffer state. In return the Soviet Union pumped in large amounts of aid, being concerned only that the Afghan regime was "friendly". But the effects of Soviet aid (army training, education, etc) were to pro-Sovietise the majority of the army officer corps and state bureaucracy.

The initial reform programme of the PDPA embraced land redistribution to the advantage of the rural poor, an industrialisation programme in co-operation with the USSR/Comecon and a programme of women's rights involving a campaign for literacy and against the bride-price. Conflicts within the PDPA, the repressive and bureaucratic nature of the PDPA's "reform" programme, coupled with mounting imperialist subversion, dramatically narrowed the base of the regime during 1979. This was a direct result of the Stalinist policies of the PDPA which proved incapable of mobilising the most oppressed layers of Afghan society against the most entrenched reactionary interests. The reforms were sufficient to provoke protests from the bigger landowners and the mullahs, but they were not radical enough to win active support from much of the rural poor. They did not provide sufficient military and material aid, and were carried through in a bureaucratic manner. This prevented the independent organisation of the masses. In an escalating civil war the disparate forces of Islamic and monarchist reaction threatened to completely destroy the weak and faction-ridden PDPA regime.

The Stalinist programme of a "stages" model was responsible for this situation: the idea of independent bourgeois democratic development proved once more to be an illusion. There can be no fundamental improvement of the conditions of the masses without a dramatic boosting of the productive forces to a sufficient level to lay the necessary material bases for this. This can only be achieved by the programme of permanent revolution in the whole of Central Asia.

2. The Soviet Union entered Afghanistan in order to preserve a friendly regime on its southern border and to thwart imperialism's plans, which hoped to turn Afghanistan into an anti-Soviet buffer which could be used as a listening post and to strengthen Islamic reaction in Soviet Central Asia. The bureaucracy organised the invasion in order to protect its own interests.

The invasion did not take place at a time when imperialism was immediately threatening the USSR with war. However, it did coincide with US losses in the region (Iran), the election of Reagan and the end of the Carter period of detente. Hence Afghanistan's civil war was to become a major front in the renewed anti-Soviet drive of imperialism.

While entering Afghanistan to protect its own interests, the Kremlin bureaucracy was forced to intervene on the progressive (i.e. PDPA supporting) side of the Afghan civil war. But it had no interest in defending or extending the reform programme of the PDPA. Its military might was aimed against those that wished to do so, as well as against the forces of militant reaction. However, in attacking the rebels, the Soviet Armed Forces (SAF) physically defended the fragile progressive forces in Afghanistan to some extent. This was the only progressive consequence of the invasion.

3. We condemn the invasion as counter-revolutionary because:

a) Its formal violation of the PDPA government and party and the installation of a Soviet backed minority faction split the progressive forces and threw some of them into the arms of reaction. Further, by formally

violating the Afghan peoples' right to self-determination, it handed an extra weapon to imperialist backed reaction. The invasion therefore weakened the indigenous working class and poor peasantry, even if it temporarily strengthened the military offensive against the reactionary rebels.

b) It threatened any independent organisation of the working class with full scale Stalinist repression. Given the imposition of the counter-revolutionary Kremlin bureaucracy's military repressive regime, Afghan revolutionaries have to struggle to break this hold in order to seize power, which is their strategic aim.

Nevertheless, once the intervention had occurred, revolutionary communists had to adopt tactics related to the existing situation, however undesirable or disadvantageous. In conditions of civil war, where the working class and its allies are unable to take independent military action against Afghan reaction and the Soviet backed Afghan government, we suspend the demand for the withdrawal of the SAF.

Because of the weakness of the progressive forces in the Afghan civil war and their inability to defeat both reactionary Afghan forces and drive out the SAF, there was a need for a united front with the SAF against reaction. Behind the lines of the SAF and the PDPA, the vanguard of the Afghan proletariat would constitute itself in a merciless struggle against Afghan and imperialist reaction and in a struggle against Stalinism's drive to demobilise the best of the popular masses in its own bureaucratic interests. Being aware of the aims of the SAF, no Trotskyist could "Hail the Red Army!". However, our goal remained and remains Soviet withdrawal when the progressive forces in Afghanistan were militarily and politically armed to defeat reaction.

It is permissible to form tactical united fronts against black reaction with petit bourgeois democrats and Stalinists, be they Afghan or Soviet. Such fronts are of course tactical, i.e. of limited duration or for limited goals (principally the preservation of the lives of the working class and intelligentsia). Equally important is the defence of these forces against Stalinist repression. No united front is possible with the SAF whenever they are attacking progressive forces. In all such circumstances revolutionaries must unequivocally stand with these forces.

4. We reject the proposition that because of the invasion of Soviet troops the national question takes precedence over all other issues and has a progressive dynamic against the SAF. From this point of view it would be logical to regard the establishment of one or several reactionary Islamic states as progressive. This is wrong on several counts:

a) There is not *one* Afghan national question. There are many.

b) The fate of the tribes and nationalities can only be settled internationally; their self-determination could only be realised beyond the framework of the present Afghan borders which divide Baluchis, Pathans, Uzbeks, etc.

c) Oppressed nationalities such as the Baluchis see the SAF as a defence against the Pathan dominated rebels.

d) Even "independent" national states would be under even tighter imperialist influence through Balkanisation.

However, national oppression may occur against peoples who are not in reactionary opposition to Kabul. In these circumstances we would support their right to self-determination, up to and including secession, including armed defence against Pathan chauvinism, whilst excluding any alliance with reactionary forces.

5. The rebel Mujahedin is sufficiently well armed and strategically located to be a permanent threat to the Afghan army and the SAF. US aid to the rebels stands now at \$1 billion with supplies ranging from stingers to long range mortars. The rebels are militarily and politically disunited, divided between monarchists (some of whom are backed by Saudi Arabia) and Islamic fundamentalists (Iran is backing the Shiites).

The Islamic elements are wracked by Sunni/Shiite conflicts. All these divisions render the rebel forces incapable of securing a final victory. Their military actions have, however, proved to be an important thorn in the side of the SAF. All the rebel groups share varieties of the reactionary project of bolstering feudal forms in Afghanistan.

The Pakistan based rebels consist of six groups who form the Islamic Alliance, all of which receive aid from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The strongest group is the fanatical Hezbe-Islami which wants to install a far stricter Islamic code than that which operated under the king. Alongside these groups there are, or were, three political currents in Afghanistan itself, as well as the fighters of the individual tribes (Nuristani, Hazara—the latter with Iranian support). These three groups are the social democratic Settem-i Melli (supported by the Pakistani secret service and with the best links with the Chinese bureaucracy), the Maoist GAKA (Schola-e Jewed), and the politically diffuse SAMA which embraces the intellectuals and deserters. Every rebel current has been on the wrong side of the barricades. Despite the views of the Maoists and of some sections of the USFI, none of these forces has a progressive character. The "national" right of self-determination of the Afghan peoples currently has a predominantly reactionary character. Alliances or united fronts with these forces are impermissible.

The opposition has been able to take strength not only from imperialism but also from the USSR's attempts to compromise and conciliate with them.

6. In the face of this opposition, the PDPA and the Kremlin have increasingly sought a new stabilisation by making deals with the rebel leaders. Thus Karmal renounced elements of the Khalqi land reform and women's literacy campaigns. This was designed to appease the reactionary opposition, yet failed to stem their resistance. With the ousting of Karmal and his replacement by secret police chief Najibullah, the regime has stepped up the pace of such policies in the name of "national reconciliation".

Its policy towards the countryside is one of seeking deals with tribal chiefs which involve recognising the chief's authority over what are then designated as "peace zones". They are given Soviet arms and aid in a tacit recognition that the PDPA is no longer in control of these areas. Said Ahmad and Malek Jelani, two rebel chiefs once much touted in the West, have signed such deals. Where tribal chiefs will not reach an accommoda-

tion, whole areas have been wasted, facing the population with the choice of either moving into the towns or of joining the millions of refugees in Pakistan.

Campaigns for women's literacy, which provoked the Herat revolt led by the reactionary rebels has now virtually ceased. With the Najibullah purge of the Karmalites, the last woman has been ousted from the Politburo. The new campaign for national reconciliation explicitly drops any commitment to women's rights against the Islamic Code.

The Najibullah regime is campaigning to extend the private sector which already accounts for 52% of the gross industrial product. Investors are now being given a six year exemption from income tax. Big landlords who are prepared to co-operate will have their land returned, the previously landless who cannot make their land pay because of the lack of seed or because their divided lands lie too far from their homes will have to give it back.

In the areas around Kabul, Commissions of National Reconciliation are trying to work with one time oppositionists. Seats have been left vacant in the government for future conciliators. Attempts are still being made to woo the monarch. Najibullah recently stated that the King "could play a big role in unifying the country". From 1980 this drive for reconciliation with reaction has consistently gone hand in hand with a drive to reach a global compromise with imperialism at the expense of the Afghan workers, peasants and their allies.

7. The USSR did not invade Afghanistan in order to "structurally assimilate" it into the Soviet Union, nor to underwrite the transformation of the country into a degenerate workers' state. Despite the presence of the SAF and the close links with the USSR, Afghanistan remains a capitalist state, however primitive.

The USSR's aim has always been to reach a deal with imperialism that would restore Afghanistan's "neutral" status from the pre-Daoud days. This policy now takes the form of the Geneva negotiations in which the USSR has made clear its willingness to sacrifice the PDPA regime and withdraw its troops in exchange for a "neutral" Afghanistan. Its hopes for achieving this lie in global detente with the USA. To achieve a settlement in Afghanistan would remove a number of obstacles to the USSR's current foreign policy aims: improving its relations with various Middle East countries (Iran and Saudi Arabia), and smoothing the path of rapprochement with the Chinese bureaucracy.

The Kremlin bureaucracy clearly recognises that it cannot win the war in the short term without massively extending its commitment, e.g. taking the war into Pakistan, a policy which it is not prepared to risk. Hence the USSR's pressure on Pakistan in particular, in order to achieve a quick settlement.

By declaring its intention to pull out its troops in a fixed period, the USSR has posed point blank to Pakistan and its backer, US imperialism, the question of what form of government they are willing to accept in Afghanistan. Both the imperialists and Pakistan have backed Islamic reaction against the USSR. However, they are now worried that division within the opposition as well as the fundamentalist dynamic of its most armed elements could serve to further destabilise the region. An intensified civil war in Afghanistan or the

emergence of an Iranian type fundamentalist regime would not please either Pakistan or imperialism.

The Soviet bureaucracy hopes to push the Reagan administration and Zia into accepting a joint government in Afghanistan—a coalition of PDPA and Mujahedin elements presided over by the monarchy. They hope to restore the pre-1974 status quo—an Afghanistan firmly within the Soviet sphere of influence, but open to limited imperialist penetration, providing it is not aimed at destabilising Soviet interests. Whilst such a settlement may be temporarily achieved, the project of a permanently "neutral" Afghanistan is a utopia which flows from the Soviet bureaucracy's reactionary dream of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

Such a treacherous withdrawal by the USSR confronts the Afghan left, workers and peasants with the imminent threat of a bloodbath at the hands of the reactionary forces. It would have been carried out at the price of the lives of thousands of young Soviet workers in uniform.

8. While the PDPA militia appears to have stabilised its numbers, at least in Kabul, there is no sign that the independent forces as yet exist that will be able to defeat the heavily armed, imperialist backed Mojahedin forces. To demand the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops would be tantamount to handing all the progressive forces in Afghanistan—the urban workers, women, teachers, intelligentsia, etc—into the clutches of an Islamic dictatorship. We therefore continue to argue against the withdrawal of the SAF. Instead we focus on demands on the SAF to provide the necessary troops, ammunition and economic aid to make land reform, industrialisation, literacy and the defeat of reaction really possible. We demand such aid with no strings. We demand the immediate arming of the urban workers *en masse*, and their organisation into militias in the face of a potentially unilateral Soviet withdrawal. We fight to win the PDPA militants and sympathisers to complete opposition to the Stalinist treachery currently being hatched in Geneva.

9. Inside the USSR we oppose the treachery of Gorbachev and the Kremlin. We also oppose the "peace movement" campaign for withdrawal. Instead, we argue for genuine internationalist aid from the Soviet workers to Afghanistan's workers and peasants, and a fight against the bureaucracy in order to secure that aid. That fight for internationalist aid and against the bureaucracy's class collaboration with imperialism must be used to re-awaken the revolutionary traditions of the Soviet working class on the road to the political overthrow of the bureaucracy. For political revolution in the USSR!

10. The Afghan working class and poor peasantry needs a programme to answer its present crisis. The key elements of that programme must include:

- No to national reconciliation with reaction! No to the restoration of the monarch.
- For a Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage and defended by the armed organisations of the masses, not a Loyah Jirgah of the PDPA and tribal and feudal chiefs! For the Constituent Assembly to be open to all parties that have not sided with reaction in

the civil war.

- For the nationalisation of the land. The land to those who work it. No to the restoration of the lands of the big landowners. For a programme of interest-free credit for the small farmers and peasants, in particular to aid a programme of co-operativisation and resettlement. No expropriation of the lands belonging to the small peasants.
- For equal political and social rights for women. Away with the veil and the bride-price!
- For the separation of mosque and state. Expropriate the mosque's lands. Education for all in schools free of the Mosque.
- Social and political integration of the refugee population returning from Pakistan.
- No to the repressive regime of the PDPA and the SAF. For independent trade unions. For workers', peasants' and soldiers' councils. For soldiers' committees. For fraternisation with the SAF workers in uniform.
- For a programme of industrialisation in the towns and modernisation in the countryside that can provide the material basis for politically defeating reaction! Such a programme will necessitate international co-operation within the region, especially between Afghanistan and the Central Asian Soviet Republics. The best form that this co-operation could take would be a federation of revolutionary workers' states in Central Asia.
- Every independent mobilisation of the workers and peasants must be defended against Islamic and Stalinist reaction. For the formation of armed defence squads and a workers' and peasants' militia.
- Down with the Geneva sell-out! Down with a reconciliation with the king enforced by Soviet troops! No *unilateral* withdrawal of the SAF: Afghan workers

must decide on the aid they need to defeat reaction. For Soviet aid—arms, training, funds and volunteers—with no strings and under the control of Afghan workers and poor peasants. We oppose a Soviet withdrawal until the workers and peasants can defeat reaction in all its monarchist, feudalist and Islamic forms.

- Should the Soviet bureaucracy come to an agreement with imperialism which involves the disarmament of the PDPA militias and handing over the Afghan proletariat, poor peasantry and their allies to Islamic reaction, we are in favour of the armed defence of these forces against the SAF. We would be for the *defeat* of the SAF in such a conflict, and for forcing them from Afghan soil. For breaking it up and winning its best elements to the side of the Afghan working class and poor peasants. Outside Afghanistan, this would involve calling for the withdrawal of the SAF and for an internationalist campaign of military and financial support for the Afghan working class, poor peasantry and their allies.
- Soviet workers must not allow their rulers to murderously leave the Afghan workers and peasants in the lurch. For internationalist aid to Afghanistan against the Kremlin bureaucracy's Geneva sell-out.
- No confidence in the Kremlin lackeys of the PDPA. For a revolutionary (Trotskyist) party in Afghanistan.
- For a workers' and peasants' government based upon workers', peasants' and soldiers' councils.
- There can be no solution within the borders of present day Afghanistan:

**For a federation of revolutionary workers' states in Central Asia.**

## *Solidarity with the Palestinian uprising*

1. The heroic uprising of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since December 1987 is a magnificent response to the Zionist's plans for the 40th anniversary celebrations of the foundation of the state of Israel. It registers in the most dramatic way possible the unbroken resistance of the Palestinian people to attempts by Zionism to destroy their national identity and struggle.

The current uprising is centred in the refugee camps. It is within them that the most brutalising effects of 21 years of Israeli military occupation are felt. The deliberately engineered poverty of the camps, the abolition of all Arab civilian local administration and the exhausting effect of enforced labouring across the Green Line have all led to a spontaneous revolt whose aim is to expel the Zionist military administration from the "occupied territories" of 1967.

2. Socialists and trade unionists across the whole world must rally to the support of the Palestinians. In 1948 world Zionism colluded with US imperialism to push aside the decaying rule of the British Mandate and by force of arms establish an exclusively Jewish state in the midst of another nation—that of the Palestinian Arabs. Neither then nor now can any legitimacy be accorded to the state of Israel nor any recognition given of its right to exist.

Israel was founded by the conversion of a settler minority into a national majority, achieved through the forcible exclusion of hundreds of thousands of Arabs from its borders, mass expropriations of Arab land and systematic discrimination in employment. A Jewish state in Palestine is by its very nature antagonistic to the right of Palestinian Arabs to national self-determination.

It created a widespread diaspora of the Palestinians themselves. The state of Israel, massively buttressed by the funds of US imperialism, the Zionist diaspora and German reparations, is a force for political reaction and a gendarme for US, Japanese and European imperialism in the Middle East. It serves to constrain or divide any possible national revolutionary threat to the economic and political interests of imperialism in that region. It must be destroyed and replaced a single, secular workers' state of Arabs and Israeli Jews in Palestine.

The PLO project of an international conference is designed to impose an imperialist peace on the Palestinians, with the creation of "bantustan" states in Gaza and the West Bank, policed by Israel, Jordan and the UN. The strategy of a separate West Bank/Gaza Palestinian state, either as a form of co-existence with Israel, or as a "stage" towards Israel's destruction, is a dead end for Palestinian and Israeli workers alike.

3. The international labour movement must answer the call to aid the Palestinians. Break all links with the Histadrut and the Israeli Labour Party, which, far from being organs of proletarian struggle, are instruments of Zionist rule. For firm ties of solidarity action with the Palestinians. Material aid must be organised to sustain the resistance.

Workers must demand of the leadership of the social democratic and Stalinist parties and unions that they organise mass national demonstrations, fact finding trade union delegations to the occupied territories to report back to rank and file meetings. In organising these the labour movement must provide itself with the means to refute the Zionist claim that anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are the same. The labour movement must be won to an internationalist campaign of working class solidarity aimed clearly against imperialism and not to

a humanitarian pacifist movement of protest which condemns the violence on both sides.

We must fight for these demands:

- End the beatings, the murders and the jailings.
- For the right to return of all Palestinians.
- Down with the internal borders and all restrictions on movement between "Israel", the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem.
- For free elections for all municipal authorities and the legalisation of all political parties including the PLO and its constituent organisations.
- Repeal all repressive and emergency regulations and release all political prisoners.
- Israeli troops out of the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem, Golan Heights and Southern Lebanon.
- Defend the right of the Palestinians to armed resistance inside and outside the occupied territories.
- For free trade unions in the occupied territories. No bans on political parties and their propaganda. No censorship.
- For full recognition by imperialism and Zionism to the chosen representatives of the Palestinian people. For the right of the Palestinians to self-determination.
- Demand the Arab bourgeoisie of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan break with US imperialism and Zionism. Demand they renounce Camp David. For full material aid to all the chosen representatives of the Palestinian people, including the PLO. Reopen all PLO offices.
- Against the closure of the PLO UN offices by US imperialism.
- For arms, food and medical aid to the camps under the control of the Palestinian resistance and international working class organisations. We reject the call for UN peace keeping forces for the camps.

## *Austrian workers and the European Community*

The European community (EC) was founded by the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy and the Benelux states after the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1958. The main objective of this Treaty was to further the economic integration of the member states that had already begun in 1948, under the protective domination of US imperialism, through the Marshall Plan and the establishment of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation. Political integration was also an objective. The formation of the EC has to be seen in the context of the cold war. US imperialism tried, after the creation of NATO in 1949, to encourage the European bourgeoisie in the building of a powerful capitalist European block against the Soviet Union and eastern Europe.

The objectives at the time of the founding of the EC were a customs union, establishment of free movement of capital and labour and the working out of a joint plan

for transport, scientific research, energy, currency, industry and agriculture. As a consequence from 1962 on there has been a common agricultural policy, the progressive removal of tariffs between member states and, from 1978, the introduction of the European Monetary System. To date the number of members has risen to twelve.

The EC consists of four major imperialist powers and their subordinated imperialist and semi-colonial satellites. Its character is that of an imperialist economic alliance closely interconnected with the European wing of NATO.

The EC is a creation of the imperialist epoch in the post-war boom phase. In 1958 it was at first only the richest imperialist powers who united, not the European bourgeoisie as a whole. Since then a number of weaker states (Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Spain) have been admitted largely as cheap producers of labour

power. In addition the EC has established economic hegemony over a number of Mediterranean states via the status of associate membership.

As a customs union it created higher tariffs for the rest of the world. Despite their economic co-operation, the special spheres of interest of each of the European powers in the semi-colonies were not given up. An original and continuing objective for the major European imperialist powers is the creation of a vast home market and thus to increase their economic and political strength vis à vis the USA and Japan.

From the 1960s sections of the European bourgeoisie have from time to time expressed the hope that closer economic integration would lead to the creation of a supra-national European state. This state, based on a European integrated capitalism, would have sovereign political power, able to subordinate the individual interests of any nation state to the collective interests. The European Parliament, however, could not take on this task. Since the late 1970s repeated crises have delayed the development and threatened to undermine the existence of the EC. On the other hand the growing rivalries in the world economy between the United States, Japan and the EC drive the major imperialisms of the continent towards greater integration. This finds its most developed expression in the project of a "single Europe" in 1992 with the removal of all internal economic barriers.

Of course, major contradictions obstruct the road to the dissolution of several rival imperialist powers into a common western European imperialism. Moreover, these contradictions could blow the EC apart.

It is not the task of the European proletariat to support or aid the formation of a "European imperialism" but to unite itself against its own combined bourgeoisies and to hold out the hand of class solidarity to workers outside of Europe and to national movements of struggle against oppression by imperialist powers, whether within Europe (e.g. Ireland) or worldwide.

At the same time neither can it link up with the most backward sections of existing national capital to preserve the existing separate states or obstruct the development of the productive forces on a European scale. We do, however, defend the jobs, social welfare conditions and democratic rights of all workers against attacks on them arising from the rationalisation and reconstruction involved in this process. The major EC states are members of NATO—a reactionary imperialist alliance against the USSR and eastern European degenerate workers' states, and against the semi-colonial countries. Therefore the European workers must fight to break up NATO, must oppose the entry of any presently neutral state into the NATO system and must also fight the emergence of a new European military super-power.

### **The Austrian bourgeoisie and the EC**

After the unsuccessful attempt at the beginning of the 1960s and the Association Agreement with the EC of 1972, there has been for the last two years a major discussion over joining the EC. The basis for these exertions is that the creation of a unified internal market in 1992 will raise the external barriers and this will make it very difficult for Austrian capital to be competitive within

the EC. In addition, some sections of Austrian capital have limits to their sales and their ability to make profit that could only be solved at a higher level, i.e. in the context of a pan-European domestic market. Because of international economic interpenetration, the great export dependency of Austrian capital and likewise the strong influence of foreign, especially Federal German, capital in Austria there appears to be no alternative for Austrian capital but to go into the EC and try to survive there.

Consequently, the biggest proponents of the fastest possible entry are industrial capital and agribusiness who certainly have the best chances to profit from a common market and, equally, can see no other chance of surviving. That "on the way to Europe there will be some corpses by the wayside" (Krejci, head of the Industrial Association) is to be expected. Alongside the small farmers and the small and medium-sized businesses, it will be mainly the wage workers who will be affected. In order to make Austria "ripe for Europe" there will have to be tens of thousands of redundancies, more social service cuts, a worsening of working conditions such as flexibility and increases in work speed, etc. At the same time, it has to be said that if there is no entry to the EC, Austrian capital will have to take similar measures, with similar consequences, in order to survive.

However, Austrian workers must clearly understand that entry into the EEC is a direct result of the same crisis that has led its bourgeoisie to introduce these attacks. Entry into the EEC marks the necessity for the Austrian and European bourgeoisies to intensify their attacks; as such, entry goes hand in hand with the general attempt by the bourgeoisie to make workers pay for the capitalist crisis. It will mark the stepping up of "rationalisation" and restructuring at the expense of Austrian workers and small farmers.

However, a nationalist campaign by reformists around a future parliamentary decision or referendum could only weaken the unified Europe wide resistance required by workers. The capitalists will use the EC as a means of masking the fundamental roots of the problems workers face. For these reasons we have no interest in voting in a referendum or having the SPO vote in a parliamentary decision, which would offer them the false alternatives of capitalist exploitation in Austria or the capitalist club of the EC. Revolutionaries should therefore actively seize the opportunity provided by such a national debate in order to advance an internationalist programme of opposition to the capitalist EC and its anti-working class plans, to the attacks of the Austrian bourgeoisie, and for abstention, thus posing the only real alternative for Austrian workers: international links between workers throughout Europe, a concerted fight against capitalism at home and abroad, and for the Socialist United States of Europe.

### **The Austrian workers and the EC**

What are the concrete tasks facing the Austrian working class now that joining the EC is ever more openly discussed?

A whole range of mistakes has to be avoided if we are not to be betrayed and demoralised either in or out of the EC. Firstly, the EC will not solve any of the burning

problems with which the working class is confronted today. On the other hand, under the cover of patriotism and Austrian independence, it is precisely the weaker capitalists, who won't be able to stand the competition in the EC, who will try to oppose entry. On this point the working class position must be clear: we can have no interest in sticking up for either section of capitalists against the other and marching with them for their profits. Our defence of workers' present conditions is based exclusively on the international interests of the proletariat.

**Whether Austria enters or stays out of the EC the attacks on workers living standards will intensify. Whether or not these attacks occur more rapidly or more intensively *inside* the EC is not of decisive importance for the strategy of the Austrian proletariat. In or out it will face unemployment, social cuts, worsening of working conditions, etc.**

Whether in or out of the EC the main interest of the working class lies in the struggle against unemployment and cuts. We do not oppose the inevitable centralisation and concentration of capital in Europe, or its necessary political consequences, in a sterile manner. We fight against capitalism within its own development. We do not pose against the bourgeoisie a backward looking programme of national development but an international programme of struggle. The increased public discussion can be utilised to make propaganda for such a programme.

However, we cannot simply counterpose the goal of socialism, proletarian democracy, against the massive interests of the industrial associations and the Socialist Party bureaucracy which marches in step with them. Obviously, the socialist revolution will do away with all these imperialist alliances, including the EC, and replace a capitalist unification of Europe with a Europe of the workers. We must take care to ensure that the cost of this bourgeois unification is not borne by us but that the capitalists themselves pay for *their* entry into the EC. *They* expect better profits for themselves in the EC, *they* want entry, so they must accept responsibility for the "corpses by the wayside" which entry will demand.

Only a fighting working class can challenge Austrian and EC capitalism. During the process of integration into the EC the big bourgeoisie may try to offload its costs onto the backs of the small farmers and petit bourgeoisie, etc. These strata could become a force for reaction and even fascism unless the working class can show them that a fight against capitalism can prevent their ruin and social misery.

Our aim is the building of a European labour movement pledged to the world wide struggle of the working class. However, we cannot expect the trade union bureaucracies or the social democratic or Stalinist politicians to lead the way to such a movement. On the contrary they are the main obstacles to it within the

working class.

Only by forging revolutionary Trotskyist parties throughout Europe joined in a world Revolutionary Communist International can capitalism be overthrown and a socialist united states of Europe be built. This is the aim of the MRCI. In the trade unions we fight for the building of Europe-wide rank and file links between workers in order to meet the co-ordinated attack of the multinationals (international combine committees, popularisation of, and solidarity with, all workers' struggles) These should, of course, demand that the officials take action to defend workers' interests and put pressure on the union bureaucracies and condemn them for passivity and obstruction. If they will not take such action then the rank and file organisations should pursue their goals independently.

#### **For European working class unity!**

- In any referendum or parliamentary vote we call for workers or their representatives to abstain on the question of EC membership.
- Against economic nationalism! Against the chauvinist demand for import controls. Against the capitalist EC and its anti-working class plans.
- For factory occupations against closures.
- For worksharing without loss of pay.
- For the 35-hour week without loss of pay throughout Europe.
- For the nationalisation of threatened industries without compensation and under workers' control.
- No to immigration controls. No to the expulsion of immigrant workers and their families. For full political and social rights for immigrant workers including the right of residence for their families.
- For international workers' solidarity in struggle and for international boycotting action.

#### **Fight European imperialism!**

- Defend the gains of the October Revolution in the USSR and the eastern block. Against the control of the Stalinist bureaucracy and against any attack by imperialists.
- Against any involvement by Austria in NATO
- For the breakup of NATO.
- Against the formation of a European Imperialism.
- Against the formation of a European military alliance; not a penny or a man or woman for the military.
- For solidarity with the semi-colonial regimes in their resistance to European imperialism; cancel the debts to the EC.
- For the United Socialist States of Europe.

**This statement was passed by the MRCI conference with Pouvoir Ouvrier (France) dissenting from the paragraph typed in bold. Pouvoir Ouvrier believes that entry into the EC will increase the tempo of the attacks on workers though this in itself can be no basis for opposing entry.**

# Amendments to the "22 theses in defence of Trotskyism"

The following amendments to the "22 theses in defence of Trotskyism" were tabled by the Internationale Kommunistische Liga (IKL) of Austria at a two day meeting in Vienna on 20 and 21 February 1988. Participating in this meeting were representatives of Workers Power (Britain) and the Arbeiter Standpunkt group (Austria) for the MRCI, the IKL and the Gruppo Operaio Rivoluzionario (GOR) of Italy. The IKL announced its agreement to the "22 Theses" with the addition of their amendments. The MRCI representatives accepted these amendments as improvements of formulation and clarification of certain points and said that they would recommend their adoption by the next MRCI delegate meeting at Easter 1988. They were indeed subsequently adopted and will be incorporated into the second addition of the "22 Theses".

Differences existed, however, with the IKL over the use of the Theses. The IKL had hoped that they could be the basis for a discussion framework involving, initially, the MRCI, the IKL, the GOR and the Revolutionary Workers' Party (RWP) of Sri Lanka. They hoped that perhaps other groups could be drawn into such a framework at a later date. The GOR's range of disagreements with the "22 Theses", however, proved considerably broader than the IKL had expected. The IKL originally proposed the exclusion of theses 18 and 22 (on the Fourth International and the re-elaboration of the *Transitional Programme*) realising that the GOR would not agree to these. But the GOR representative made it clear that, even with these items removed, the "22 Theses" could not, for them, be the basis for a discussion framework.

The MRCI, for its part, had issued the "22 Theses" as

the starting point for a fundamental programmatic discussion with groupings which claimed to be Trotskyist and which claimed to reject the opportunist and sectarian errors that had fragmented the FI and leading its political degeneration into centrism. The MRCI considered, and still considers, that the best method for establishing agreement and clarifying differences is to proceed on the basis of amending this document. Of course, if any similarly comprehensive document were submitted by any grouping, the MRCI would consider taking it as a basis for amendment as well. This seems to us the only solid basis on which to take forward any serious attempt at international revolutionary regroupment.

We see little purpose in creating long lasting discussion forums which do not have the aim of political and organisational fusion in view. The task facing revolutionaries is to establish a democratic centralist international tendency on a firm programmatic basis. As part of this task we are still very willing to discuss with groups like the IKL and the GOR but we are unwilling to restrain the progress of the MRCI towards our fundamental objectives. Nor do we think programmatic clarification is aided by sonorous but programmatically limited declarations. History has repeatedly proved such declarations to be totally inadequate as a basis for an international organisation able to intervene in the class struggle in a disciplined fashion. The absence of a real "International" for nigh on forty years is not an argument for delay. Quite the reverse, it is a motivation for intensifying work to re-establish a true organised, political, revolutionary continuity with Trotsky, Lenin and the founders of scientific socialism.

The following amendments should be read with reference to the English published edition.

#### Amendment 1

Thesis 3

Page 5. Line 26. Insert after "bourgeoisie":

"In propaganda, revolutionaries will at the same time criticise and fight against bourgeois and petit bourgeois aims and methods of struggle."

#### Amendment 2

Thesis 3

Page 5. Line 32. Insert after "United Front":

"Although we would recognise that the national bourgeoisie in oppressed countries since the 1920s has become to a higher degree an agent of imperialism."

#### Amendment 3

Thesis 3

Page 6. Lines 36 and 37, delete "politically differentiate the petit bourgeois nationalists from" and replace with:

". . . make a qualitative political differentiation between the petit bourgeois nationalists and . . ."

#### Amendment 4

Thesis 5

Page 7. Add to the end of the thesis:

"This was, for example, the case with the self-management committees and Solidarnosc committees in Poland in 1981."



*Amendment 5.*

Thesis 6.

Page 7. Line 34. Add after "... situation of 1952).":

"In 1981 in Poland and 1985 in Bolivia we demanded the expansion of trade union rank and file committees into real workers' and peasants' soviets."

*Amendment 6.*

Thesis 7.

Page 7. Line 8, add to the first paragraph:

"Without seeing the revolutionising of the trade union apparatus as a necessary pre-condition for the proletarian revolution, we argue for trade union rank and file movement against the bureaucracy on the basis of action programmes which orient on the current tasks of the working class."

*Amendment 7*

Thesis 8

Page 8. Delete penultimate sentence of the thesis ("It will also mean refraining . . .") and replace by:

"It will also mean that faced with an imminent puch we would not agitate directly for the fall of such governments, without thereby diluting the principled necessity of a revolutionary overthrow of these governments."

*Amendment 8*

Thesis 9

Page 8. Line 25, Insert after "... and where . . .":

"... in the course of the class struggle ..."

*Amendment 9*

Thesis 14

Page 11. Line 31, after "... despite the Galtieri dictatorship.":

"In order to transform the war into a consistent anti-imperialist war from the side of the Argentina, it is necessary to overthrow Galtieri."

*Amendment 10.*

Thesis 17.

Page 12. Line 38, Delete "a united front" and replace with:

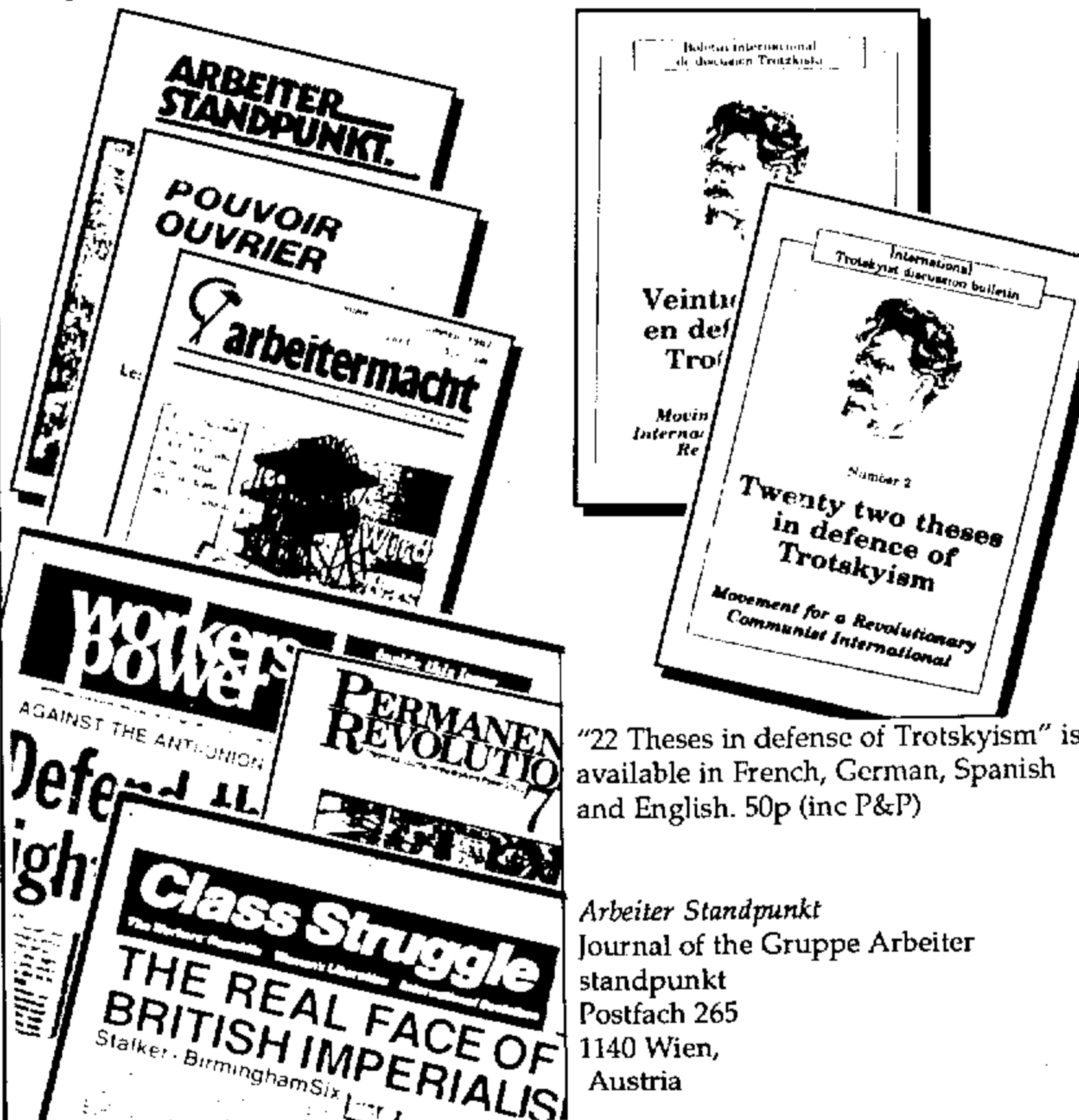
"unity in action"

*Amendment 11*

Thesis 17

Page 12. Lines 47 to 48, Delete "... or its designation of the Greens as part of the left.

## MRCI Publications



"22 Theses in defense of Trotskyism" is available in French, German, Spanish and English. 50p (inc P&P)

*Arbeiter Standpunkt*  
Journal of the Gruppe Arbeiter  
standpunkt  
Postfach 265  
1140 Wien,  
Austria

*Pouvoir Ouvrier*

Journal of the Pouvoir Ouvrier Group  
Stenberg, H  
BP 166  
75564, Paris  
France

*Arbeitermacht*

Journal of the Gruppe Arbeitermacht  
Postlagerkarte 062262 A  
6000 Frankfurt 70  
Germany

*Class Struggle*

Monthly paper of the Irish Workers'  
Group  
c/o 12 Langrishe Place  
Dublin 1  
Ireland

*Workers Power*

Monthly paper of the Workers Power  
Group  
Also *Permanent Revolution\**  
its theoretical journal  
BCM 7750  
London  
England  
WC1N 3XX

All journals available from our British address at £2.00 (inc P&P) except \* which is £2.50 (inc P&P).  
Papers—50p per copy (inc P&P). For details of subscriptions, write to addresses above.

# *Force Waldheim to resign!*

Published by Arbeiter Standpunkt  
in Flugschrift Number 7 February 1988

"Every country gets the politicians it deserves" goes the old saying. Certainly, in the figure of Kurt Waldheim, the Second Republic has found the personification of its own vital ideological lies and the living symbol of the political hypocrisy of its ruling class. The mastermind and the accomplice in the general staff of the German Wehrmacht as the Federal President, the man who was an ex-Nazi before 1945 and an obliging democrat after, the man who tries to sell his notorious silences over his own wartime past as a genuine lapse of memory—Waldheim is certainly no "historical accident" for Austrian democracy. On the contrary, as the head of state he has given this system exactly the image it deserves—the face of the fellow traveller and supporter of the fascist dictators whose "doing his duty" in the world war was accepted by the domestic bourgeoisie as an excellent credential for his later career as a representative of democratic class rule.

After its one unsuccessful attempt in 1848, the Austrian bourgeoisie has never seriously fought for the realisation of a bourgeois democratic form of state. In contrast to, say, the French or the Italians, the introduction of bourgeois democracy in this country was not the product of a successful bourgeois revolution. Instead it was twice imposed on the ruling class by their wartime enemies, after catastrophic military defeats, as a component part of the political reparations burden.

More than this, if the historical task in 1848 consisted in the creation of an all-German democratic republic, then this way forward was blocked off by the victory of Habsburg reaction. Likewise, as the German Reich was founded in 1871 in a reactionary manner under the iron fist of Hohenzollern militarism and Bismarck's Junkers, so the German nationalism of the Austrian bourgeoisie and the alpine petit bourgeoisie turned into the reactionary ideology of Great German imperialism which was to reach its peak in the euphoria surrounding the Anschluss of 1938.

No less reactionary was the laying of the foundations of Austrian independent statehood after the collapse of the Danube Monarchy in 1918: it was the imperialist interests of the Entente Powers which dictated the creation of a separate Austrian state, not the struggles of an oppressed nation (as was the case with the Czechs) which found expression in the creation of their own nation state.

However, 1918 also gave life to the threat of a proletarian revolution and, even though the social democracy did everything possible to stop such a develop-

ment, in the eyes of the Austrian bourgeoisie every single democratic freedom granted to the workers' movement, and the democratic constitution of the Republic in general, was a potential danger to the maintenance of their power. Thus, even the bourgeois parties of the First Republic, led by the Christian Social Party itself, made no secret of their opposition to democracy. They did not rest until, in February 1934, against a background of world economic crisis and with the blessing of the Catholic Church and of Italian fascism, with the destruction and outlawing of the workers' organisations, they also liquidated bourgeois democracy.

Austro-fascism developed out of the "Heimwehr" wing of the Christian Social Party. Its corporate-statist dictatorship was intended to prevent the further development of National Socialism. The fact that this domestic dictatorship served only as a precursor of National Socialism was a necessary consequence of the particular political and economic position of the Austrian bourgeoisie. It fell to National Socialism to exploit this threefold reactionary heritage; German nationalist expansionism, enforced small nation status and brutal oppression of the labour movement, in the interest of the unification with the Third Reich. And it was the Austrian petit bourgeoisie, inflamed by the most malicious form of anti-Semitism, who provided the Stormtroopers of Nazi-fascist barbarism. The Austrian bourgeoisie and middle classes of 1938 were in no way the victims of Hitler's annexationist plans. On the contrary, it was precisely the Anschluss with the Third Reich which liberated them from the helplessness and impotence of the previous period.

The Great German option, swapping the plume for the swastika, gave them the chance to play an integral part in German imperialism's greatest war of plunder, and corresponded fully to the interests of Austrian capitalism as well as to the subjective desires of the Austrian petit-bourgeoisie.

As the "brown mob" indulged itself with the slaughter of Jews and the ruling class fused with its Great German brother via common Aryanisation, both of them prepared a triumphant welcome in Vienna for the return of the dictator from Linz. It is really little wonder that in occupied Austria, unlike in all the other countries of Europe, a bourgeois opposition only began to stir as the Red Army marched into the Vienna suburbs while, on the other side, an above average number of "Easterners" [Austrians] fulfilled their duty in the terrorist or-

ganisations and as the concentration camp executioners of the Nazi regime.

The military defeat of German fascism, therefore, was also a disaster of unparalleled proportions for the Austrian bourgeoisie. Their own state apparatus was smashed and heavy industry was expropriated and placed under foreign control. Left to the mercy of the Allied occupation powers, the Austrian state had only the political compromise between the Soviet Union and the imperialist west, the creation of a neutral buffer state, to thank for its reinstatement.

This was a trade-off whereby the USSR agreed to the re-building of capitalism whilst the USA was prepared to leave aside the integration of Austria into NATO and its final ratification was put off for ten years.

While codified class collaboration, in the form of "social partnership", provided the structural framework of the Second Republic, it was a complex of monstrous historical lies which was the basis of the official ideology of this state until today; the myth of Austria's role as a victim, the awkward covering up and suppression of all the authoritarian and fascist traditions of the bourgeois parties, the alleged collective re-education of the bourgeois and reformist politicians in the hail of bombs of the, in any case already lost, world war. Just as there was no struggle for bourgeois democracy against the Nazi terror-regime and it was only imported after its collapse so equally there was no real settling of accounts and no political victory over fascism. The National Socialists of 1938 disappeared without any difficulty into the democratic mass parties and immediately reappeared as fresh-baked anti-fascists to pursue their careers.

#### What's a war crime, after all?

The biography of Kurt Waldheim reads like a detailed description of the history of the Austrian bourgeoisie, no matter how many gaps there are in his memory. He grew up in the well protected household of Austro-fascist catholicism. Through his hasty entry into the Stormtroopers and the Nazi Student League, he was just in time to join the celebration on the Heldenplatz.

He was a diligent and responsible officer of the Nazi Wehrmacht, whether at the front massacring Russians, as a staff officer in the rear deporting Jews, or liquidating partisans and wiping out suspects among the civilian population. And none of this stood in the way of his more democratic career as a diplomat and ambassador, his two terms as UN Secretary General and now President of the Republic. Why should it—in a state whose first President, Renner, publicly called for the Anschluss in 1938, whose Chancellor, Raab, had, in his time, taken the oath of the Heimwehr fascists and in whose governments and major parties notorious ex-Nazis attained prominence?

In an organisation such as the United Nations, in whose ranks so many regimes of war criminals and mass murderers act out the imperialist farce of a world parliament, why should anybody worry about the impeccability of the life of the Secretary General?

It was, and is, precisely this habitual hypocrisy of bourgeois anti-fascism which gives the Nazis, both the old ones and those still active, an easy conscience, which

quietly rehabilitates them and then gives them public credibility as the blameless victims of an international campaign of slander. Even as the dark patches in the past of the presidential candidate became public, in the eyes of the bourgeois public the scandal only began when Waldheim refused to accept any responsibility for them. The main charge against him was not that he took part in the deportation of the Jewish community from Thessalonika but that he would not appear as a credible head of state because he kept on insisting that he knew absolutely nothing about it! Not that he took part in the Wehrmacht's extermination campaigns in the Kozara Mountains (and for his assaults on Yugoslav territory was decorated with the Military Order of the Ustascha regime) but that at first he brazenly and obstinately insisted that he had never ever been in Yugoslavia! This twisted logic, which first pardons war crimes as an unimportant matter only the louder to complain about the lack of credibility and the diminished international status of their head of state has worked to Waldheim's advantage, both before and after his election as Federal President.

In fact, for public opinion, the scandal in the case of Waldheim began (and ended) exactly where it threatened to endanger the carefully put together facade of post war Austrian society both at home and abroad. The brown colours of Nazism, with which all the main parties are stained, began to show through the twee, picture postcard image of the Alpine republic. It is not what he actually did as a Wehrmacht officer, or what he allowed to happen, nor even the fact that he had been a Nazi that is the bone of contention here but that, through his obstinacy he might damage Austria's high standing in the world (that is to say, our excellent relations with US imperialism) . . .

After all, what is a war crime? It is a mark of the poverty of these democratic moralisers that they can only condemn fascism for its contravening of the Geneva and Hague Conventions but accept without objections the fundamental nature of its wars. The crimes of imperialist war are only identified with its "excesses" and not in its "normal conduct". Correspondingly, the whole discussion about the Waldheim case revolves around whether he really was directly involved or not, how much (or how little) he actually knew, whether he acted as a convinced Nazi or not. What role he played as a staff officer in the fascist military apparatus, solely through his functions within the chain of command, is carefully left out of account.

And no wonder! If it were not then tens of thousands of Wehrmacht officers who also collaborated in the war (whether as conscious Nazis or just as military specialists within the machinery of repression) would also stand accused. That is the real point! Every one of them who held a leading position in the fascist state apparatus, whether in the military or the civilian spheres, voluntarily took co-responsibility for all the crimes of the Nazi tyranny.

And these leading positions are by no means limited to the summits of the Hitler regime; they begin with the judges, who condemned the tellers of Hitler jokes to the torture chambers and concentration camps, the mayor who helped to prepare the deportation of Jews from his community and the lieutenant who led his platoon on the Eastern Front in the invasion of the Soviet Union. All

these people took their part in the conduct and maintenance of the Nazi dictatorship. They all consciously carried out their duty to the regime in order to further their personal careers in the fascist state. It was precisely on this army of millions of fellow travellers and collaborators that Nazi rule depended for its success.

No less hypocritical was the condemnation of National Socialism expressed by the victorious Allies after the defeat of the Third Reich. All the powers which sat in judgement on it and its most prominent representatives at Nuremberg had themselves made pacts with Hitler before, and even after, the outbreak of the Second World War. All of them, in the course of their own history, had committed exactly the same kind of crimes as those of which they accused the Nazis; genocide, mass deportations, civilian massacres, torture and abuse of the much praised human rights. Thus, Great Britain and France in their colonies, thus the USA against North America's original inhabitants and the populations of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, thus the USSR in the division of Poland (carried out jointly with the Nazis) and against the Crimean Tartars.

Precisely this ambiguity of the democratic, "victors' justice" benefited fascism in the eyes of the masses here in Austria. Instead of condemnation it effectively rehabilitated it—and the unscrupulous way in which the democratic governments took in and protected the mass murderers of the Gestapo into their own secret services (as with the USA in the case of Altmann-Barbie) completed the tragic farce of this so-called "de-Nazification". It is not to a Commission of Historians or the US Immigration Department that Waldheim and his like should be made to answer but to an international workers' tribunal of the victims of the fascist terror and of the Holocaust!

### What is a head of state for?

The office of the Federal President is anything but the necessary limit on parliamentary democracy that they like to tell us. In order to represent Austria adequately in the world one could as well choose our head of state out of the ranks of our winter sports stars or our no less well-known singers. In fact, however, the post of the Federal President is designed to provide a form of bonapartist dictatorship which can take hold of the business of the state should there be a crisis in the bourgeois democratic exercise of power, that is to say, should Parliament ever become incapable of functioning as the agent of bourgeois class rule.

The special powers of the President (the right to dissolve Parliament, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, the right of amnesty and the prerogative of mercy) which were, not accidentally, introduced by a constitutional reform in 1929, underline this eloquently. The fact that, for a long time, there has been no such presidential intervention in the internal affairs of the country has a very simple explanation: in the First Republic, it was the Christian Social majority itself which took the road of depriving Parliament of its power and it was the Chancellor who prepared the putsch so that the President was no longer needed. In the Second Republic, the parliamentary system has functioned so smoothly in the interest of the ruling class that there has

been no need for such an intervention. Nonetheless, these forty years of social peace are now coming to an end and, in the face of a deepening economic crisis and growing social struggles, there is a real danger that precisely the kind of "strong president" that Waldheim has made it clear he would like to be, could deliver the death blow to parliamentarism.

If Waldheim, even now, when he is in a situation of extreme political isolation and weakness, can still publicly insist that his "critics should be silenced" it is not difficult to see what kind of regime could be expected under the right circumstances.

We are, fundamentally, enemies of any kind of presidential republic. However, where political tradition has ensured that the office of President is so firmly established as an institution of the state that its destruction could only take place as part of the overthrow of bourgeois parliamentarism in general, we are in favour of, alongside the obligation of a general election for the President, the complete removal of all Bonapartist powers which could, potentially, enable him to close down the Parliament or suspend basic democratic rights. It has been said recently, in many quarters, that a resignation by Waldheim would need a constitutional amendment. Be that as it may, we are in favour of a constitutional amendment—one which would strip him of all the special powers of 1929, one which would unconditionally subordinate all his decisions to Parliament, which makes him subject to recall at any time—and gave him the average wage of a skilled worker!

### Drive Waldheim from office!

We do not demand Waldheim's resignation because his disputed past will harm Austria's reputation, nor because he cannot disprove the accusations against him. No, there are three concrete political grounds, based on entirely different considerations from those of most of his opponents, which allow us to call for his immediate resignation.

First, during his election campaign, and even more so during his period in office, Waldheim has become a declared representative of the most reactionary wing of the bourgeoisie. If we succeed in making him fall then we can inflict a heavy defeat on this brown and black mob. If we do not succeed, then the coalition of interests that are represented by the proposers of anti-working class austerity measures, the authoritarian state technocrats and the provincial anti-Semites, will have been able to maintain an important base for a future offensive. In this respect we should not forget Waldheim's "Unemployment Speech" of last autumn.

Secondly, Waldheim's retreat would intensify all the contradictions of the delicately put together coalition government. One part of the OVP<sup>1</sup> would love to get rid of him as soon as possible. Another part sees in him an ally and a guarantee of increasing its political weight on domestic questions. On the other hand, the SPO<sup>2</sup> desperately needs the coalition as a disguise and to give an excuse to its rank and file and to the electorate for its reckless austerity programme. The SPO attacks Waldheim half-heartedly from the standpoint of the "national interest", without using any serious political (as opposed to moral) arguments against his continued

1. Österreichische Volks Partei: Austrian Peoples' Party, main Austrian Conservative Party

2. Sozialistische Partei Österreichs: Austrian Social Democratic Party

presidency. All these internal contradictions of the already unstable coalition between the social democratic reformists and the bourgeoisie would be posed much more sharply by a mass campaign for the fall of Waldheim. It could even come to the break-up of the coalition and new elections. But that is exactly what we want to stop the coalition's austerity programme, to lead a simultaneous offensive against Waldheim and an offensive against the professional traitors of the working class in the party and trade union leadership of the social democracy!

Thirdly, the case of Waldheim has unintentionally revealed the rottenness of bourgeois democratic consciousness and the fascist swamp on which the Second Republic was founded and on which it still exists. Waldheim's past and present is an open wound on the body of the democratic state. The discussion in the past few months in Austria, as well as internationally, has done more to discredit belief in the bourgeois state and the dominant ideology of democratic class rule in the public's eye than ten years of abstract revolutionary propaganda. It is exactly that wound that we have to hit to prevent it closing, to prevent the abscess healing—as has happened often before. We demand Waldheim's resignation not to save Austria's reputation (we can leave that to diplomats of Waldheim's stripe), but to use a campaign against him to make the bourgeois essence of the system, that he heads, visible to the mass of the population.

We intervene in order to argue credibly for a revolutionary perspective that goes way beyond the horizons of the dominant idea of democracy, a perspective of working class democracy, of free soviet power and the smashing of the bourgeois state apparatus. The political level from which such a perspective of a working class programme of struggle must begin, however, must be the immediate and most urgent demands of the working class in the face of mass redundancies, social cuts and the merciless austerity programme of the coalition government, the very government which the Waldheim case has thrown into such embarrassment.

The SPO has opposed Waldheim remarkably reluctantly. When the first accusations about his wartime past were raised it first tried to use them as moral ammunition—only to loudly proclaim its loyalty to the President as soon as Waldheim was elected. Only when the criticism would not stop and more facts reached the light of day; only when the Commission of Historians (which was intended to "clean-up" Waldheim) produced its report, did demands for his resignation come to be heard again within the SPO. Its whole conduct, all the manoeuvring to maintain the coalition, the position of leaving it up to the President whether to go or not (instead of forcing the issue) and its latest project to put

up a common, well-respected, candidate with the OVP (and from the OVP's ranks) should Waldheim go—has strengthened, not weakened, Waldheim's position, and has rendered the SPO's opposition to him more and more unbelievable.

Waldheim will not leave voluntarily. He has often stated that clearly. He has to be forced. All the parliamentary manoeuvres, all the moral appeals, all the exposure in the international mass media and all the reports of historians will not be able to do that. In order to force Waldheim to resign we need a mass movement of the trade unions and the SPO itself, one that expresses its protests openly and which connects this protest with the resistance to the policies of the government, policies of which Waldheim is already a symbol.

We need a mass movement on the streets which hits now—when the time has come for hitting—which calls for his resignation again and again without regard for the interests of the political strategists of the grand coalition. That Waldheim was allowed to be President of the OGB<sup>3</sup> Congress last year was bad enough. It would be a political failure of the first order if the trade union movement were to remain completely silent now. It is a central task of all oppositional trade unionists to fight against the current sell-out of working class interests by the trade union and SPO leadership by organising a broad rank and file protest movement within the trade union movement.

The student strike last autumn showed what potential for protest has been revived at the universities. The central aim of the newly created student movement must be to make its protest and resistance felt in all spheres and on all questions. This is especially so in the case of Waldheim, where a common fight alongside the workers' movement is needed. On 24 October last year, some 50,000 people of all layers of the working population demonstrated against social cuts and austerity policies. This protest must be restarted and carried further. It must be extended to a general mobilisation for the fall of Waldheim.

We need a broad, general and public campaign of mass protest in order to force Waldheim's resignation. We must clearly try to organise it as a rank and file movement and turn it towards common action.

Instead of allowing 12 March to become an official festival of state loyalty, official state hypocrisy and final absolution for the fascist past, we should take the opportunity to make it the first decisive date on which such a movement must prove itself!

- Force Waldheim to resign!
- Organise a broad mass movement from below!
- For a clear and unambiguous break of the SPO with Waldheim!
- No toleration and no compromise with this president!

# *The Open Conference project: a balance sheet*

Statement of the MRCI International Secretariat,  
May 1988

In October 1985 the British Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) expelled its long time leader Gerry Healy. The organisation and its "international", the International Committee (ICFI), were thrown into crisis. A series of splits has reduced both the WRP and the ICFI, with which it now has no links at all, into insignificant sects. At one point a potential advance from this crisis in the ICFI appeared to be the possibility of a large open conference of international tendencies claiming to be Trotskyist, being convened by the WRP (*Workers Press*).

The MRCI welcomed the WRP's call, originally made in 1986 and repeated in early 1987, for an international conference. We did so, not because we believed one such gathering in itself would produce a principled revolutionary regroupment, but because it offered an opportunity for groups that laid claim to the mantle of Trotsky's Fourth International to test that claim in open debate. The refusal of the major centrist organisations like the USFI, the Lambertists and the Morenoites to discuss programmatic questions with other tendencies has for a long time helped seal their members from the influence of communist criticism. The open conference could have provided the means of opening these organisations to communist ideas.

To have served such a purpose it was essential that an open conference be just that—open, non-exclusionist. No conditions, apart from a claim to be Trotskyist, should have been placed on participants. Such conditions could all too easily be used as an excuse by the major centrist organisations to justify their non-participation in an open debate. They could cry foul, and in the eyes of their members this would have been a justifiable response. The WRP went ahead and provided Mandel and Lambert with just such a ready made excuse. They developed a love affair (which has now, for no good political reason, been terminated) with the Morenoite international, the LIT.

Under the influence of the LIT the WRP introduced, as a precondition for participation in the conference, ten points which embodied the idea that the WRP and Moreno had, in however imperfect a form, represented a revolutionary continuity of the Fourth International. As they well knew the USFI, the Lambertists and a whole host of other organisations could not accept this analysis.

The MRCI, for reasons very different to the centrist fragments of the Fourth International, could not accept this analysis either. Moreover, we recognised the putting forward of the ten points as preconditions for what

it was—a shabby manoeuvre designed to preclude a real open discussion on disputed questions.

In the event the LIT/WRP manoeuvre achieved its goal of blocking a large, non-exclusionist, open conference. The Preparatory Committee, set up by these two groupings and the GOCQI of Varga, systematically excluded a series of organisations—some of which had spent large sums sending delegates to Britain for the initial meeting.

Not surprisingly after this farce was finished the WRP and the LIT fell out. The LIT got a small British group out of it and seemed content. Led by Healy's long time henchman Cliff Slaughter the WRP suffered yet more splits reducing it to a real membership of no more than sixty or seventy. Together with Varga they are now talking, very vaguely, of another open conference project.

Other groupings on the international left who disagreed with the WRP's chicanery, such as the International Trotskyist Committee (ITC), WSL (USA) and ourselves declared a continuing commitment to a genuine open conference in 1987. At that time the MRCI believed that there was still the possibility of using the flux caused by the explosion of the International Committee to convene a big open conference. Such an event could even have pulled in some of the larger tendencies which claim to be Trotskyist or at least dissident sections of them.

We maintained our clear idea of the function of such a conference. It should debate the key questions of revolutionary strategy and tactics that had been systematically distorted by centrism of the USFI, LIT, IC, etc, variety. It should seek to hammer out agreement on a revolutionary attitude to all of the problems of proletarian revolution world-wide. To this end we put forward the document we had produced as a submission to the WRP-called international conference, the "22 Theses in defence of Trotskyism".

We submitted this document to the international left as a basis of debate. It attempted to identify what we regarded as the key problems of revolutionary strategy, the key errors of the centrists and the way forward. We intended the document to be open to amendment to test whether or not real agreement could be reached between the MRCI and other tendencies as a step towards principled international regroupment. These conceptions remain at the heart of the MRCI's method of building an international tendency. Debate on differences, not backslapping because of partial agreements, is the way to a regroupment that will not result in yet

another unprincipled fusion followed by a split.

A year on we are obliged to recognise that life has moved on and the forces interested in a real open conference of this sort are negligible. An open conference now would not bring together any major forces which claim to be Trotskyist. Nor would such a conference provide any better an opportunity to debate differences between the smaller international tendencies, opportunities that already exist through the process of bilateral discussions. On the contrary, the effort needed for smaller tendencies to organise an open conference would very probably obstruct such bilateral discussions. Moreover, there would be a real danger of creating the illusion that open conferences, in and of themselves, are what is needed on the international left. They are not.

Unless they serve a definite purpose they will become a refuge for groupings and individuals who shy away from taking decisions, reaching conclusions and fighting around a definite programme of action in the international class struggle. They can become talking shops. For this reason we do not regard the convening of an open conference of the smaller groups on the international left as a priority for us to fight for, nor as an immediate practical perspective to work towards.

It is this belief that guides our response to yet another proposed "open Trotskyist conference" being suggested by the GOR (Italy) and RWP (Sri Lanka). During 1987 the GOR/RWP made strenuous efforts to obtain a place in the WRP organised Preparatory Committee. To do so they were willing to abandon previously held positions on the IC and declare that the FI was not dead but merely "dislocated", that its "continuity" was maintained by "the fight organised by the International Committee, even with weaknesses and contradictions, against Pabloism" until the early 1970s.

For all its talk about serious programmatic agreement the GOR/RWP was willing to drop its criticisms and endorse the WRP's Ten Points at the first hint of a big bloc of supposed Trotskyists. None of this saved the GOR from being unceremoniously sent packing when they could not swallow the final indignity demanded by the Preparatory Committee, namely the characterisation of the LIT as a revolutionary organisation. It is not at all clear that any significant forces would be attracted by this conference.

The experience of attending the "US Open Trotskyist Conference" confirmed for us the potentially negative aspects of such conferences. The US conference was held at Easter 1988 in San Francisco. It was sponsored by the Co-ordinating Committee for a US Open Trotskyist Conference. The organisations comprising the Committee were the Revolutionary Workers League (ITC), the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP) and the Workers Socialist League (WSL). Other US organisations attending the conference were the International Socialist League (FI), the League for a Revolutionary Party, the Marxist Trotskyist Tendency and the Bolshevik Tendency (BT). The US Spark group sent their apologies. As well as many individual socialists there were representatives from the MRCI, the ITC, the Internationalist Faction (Britain), the Irish Workers League and the International Communist League of Austria.

The conference was the second held in the USA as part of the process of international discussion amongst

groups that regard themselves as Trotskyist over the past two years. The intention of the Co-ordinating Committee in convening the Easter Conference was expressed in a short statement by them:

"We do not view the April Conference as a short term tactic to create an international alliance in opposition to any tendency or tendencies, but rather as a series of open gatherings moving towards a broader regroupment of Trotskyist forces."<sup>1</sup>

This approach to the conference embodied both the strengths and the weaknesses of the sponsoring organisations. It certainly revealed the possibility for organising a democratic conference. In stark contrast to the exclusionist and manoeuvrist approach of the WRP/LIT "Preparatory Committee", the Co-ordinating Committee ensured that every organisation present, delegates and observers, had ample opportunity to argue for their positions.

However, such democracy could not overcome the fundamental weakness of the conference which was its lack of perspective for serious revolutionary regroupment. Whilst the participating organisations all claim to be seeking some resolution to the fragmentation of the Fourth International, none of them were able to steer the conference in the necessary direction.

The MRCI representatives argued that the key tasks facing revolutionaries seeking regroupment are to assess the programmatic degeneration of the FI into centrism in 1951, and to reach a common position on strategy and tactics, on the political programme, which could form the basis for a refounded Leninist-Trotskyist international. The first step therefore must be to characterise the errors of centrism. We have put forward our own positions on this in the 22 Theses. These outline the points on which we consider the centrist fragments of the FI to have departed from a revolutionary perspective and programme for the working class.

Any attempt at regroupment should take such a characterisation as a starting point for discussion, followed by a thorough debate on programme around central issues such as Stalinism, petit bourgeois nationalism, social democratic reformism, tactics in the class struggle, especially for revolutionary situations. This is not being "ultimatistic" as the Morenoite ISL characterised the position of the MRCI, rather it is placing openly and honestly before all those who consider themselves Trotskyist, those positions on which we think the major centrist groups have misled and therefore potentially betrayed the working class. A discussion of these areas of dispute is essential if we are to avoid yet more rotten stitch-ups which claim to be regroupments but which blow apart at the first serious test of the class struggle.

The US Open Conference did not approach these questions in a serious fashion. The bulletins of the conference (the third one was given to delegates on the evening prior to the conference, the second we only received two weeks before the conference) contained no detailed documents. Granted, the organisers had limited resources, but without proper documentary exchanges in advance of a conference, differences—often reflected in differences of formulation—will not be properly discussed at the conference. Inadequate time was given to the section on the "Crisis in the Fourth International and prospects for resolving it". More time was spent on areas of practical collaboration within the

USA which, whilst necessary in working out joint actions, will not in itself resolve the burning task of the crisis of leadership in the world working class.

This reflected the differences within the Co-ordinating Committee itself. From the statements of the Committee it is clear that they underestimate the significance of programmatic debate as a route to regroupment. Collaboration can become an excuse for not confronting differences of programme. We are clear that the MRCI will collaborate practically with any tendency in the workers' movement providing such collaboration is based on action that serves the interests of the working class. But a conference of people who regard themselves as Trotskyists, as fighters for the resolution of the crisis of leadership inside the working class, should not need an open conference to discuss such collaboration. They need such a conference to debate the political causes for the collapse of the Fourth International and the programme necessary for refounding a revolutionary international.

The conference was, therefore, a wasted opportunity. In the absence of a focused debate on documents encapsulating different political lines, each group presented what they thought were central issues (special oppression in the case of the FSP, Poland in the case of the BT, Gorbachev in the case of the WSL). At the end of the debate no conclusions were reached and differences which had been inadequately debated were not really clarified. Of course the organisers could claim that this was merely an initial step. If so it was in the wrong direction. It was towards the creation of a permanent discussion framework, not towards revolutionary regroupment.

The danger exists that the groups on the Co-ordinating Committee, now committed to organising a similar event in 1990 plus assisting in an open conference in Europe, will not learn the lessons of the San Francisco meeting. The lure of an endless merry-go-round of committees and conferences, as solace for the real isolation the left faces in the USA and elsewhere, may well prove too much for the Committee. For this reason we warn the Committee of the danger of an open conference industry that will not get any of us one step

closer to programmatic clarity and hence regroupment. Moreover we say that the differences of perspectives on the Committee need to be openly debated. The groups on the Committee have their own radically different perspectives for revolutionary unity.

The WSL believe it can come about on the basis of recognising a world family of Trotskyism. For the FSP unity must be on the basis of programmatic agreement to orientate primarily towards the specially oppressed. While the ITC's concept of "Trotskyist centrism" has led them to differentially favour the USFI, the betrayals and centrism of the USFI are in fact no less dramatic than those of the others the ITC describe as true centrists (Lambert, Healy, etc). By suggesting otherwise the ITC undermine, in advance, any consistent fight against centrism.

None of these groups has placed regroupment on the basis of a re-elaborated *Transitional Programme*, one purged of centrism altogether, to the fore as an urgent task of the moment. We express the hope, however, that through the discussion of such documents as the MRCI's 22 Theses, through debating amendments or through the production of alternative theses from other groups, organisations like the RWL (ITC), who are committed to international regroupment will realise why the MRCI always insists—programme first.

In a statement to the conference the observers from the MRCI declared their support for the convocation of a non-exclusionist, democratic international conference. However having assessed the results of the US conference and the "Preparatory Committee" experience we state our belief that a meaningful international conference is now no longer a realistic perspective for the immediate future. Should events on the international left or in the international class struggle revive the real possibility for such a conference then we will, clearly, review our position.

The MRCI would like to thank the conference organisers for inviting us and allowing our full participation. We also thank them for their tribute to the memory of comrades who have been killed or have died in recent years, including comrade Remi Malfroy of the French section of the MRCI, who died last year.



From the archives of Trotskyism

# *The POR and the Bolivian miners in the 1940s*

## *An introduction to the Pulacayo Theses*

The Pulacayo Theses adopted by the Federation de los Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia (FSTMB) in November 1946 represent the most important political triumph for Trotskyists within a trade union which constituted the vanguard of its national working class. A small party, the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POR) found itself able to influence a powerful union federation sufficiently to win its congress to adopting theses which proclaimed the need for absolute class independence and for the strategy of permanent revolution. It did so in the teeth of the opposition of an, until then, influential Stalinist party, the Partido de la Izquierda Revolucionaria (PIR)—Party of the Revolutionary Left. How did it come about? To understand this one must understand the political situation of Bolivia in the mid 1940s.

When the delegates of the FSTMB assembled at the Pulacayo mining site over 15,000 feet up on the high plateau of the Andes, the Altiplano, their union was scarcely two years old. Founded in 1944 it had earlier in the year held its third congress. The congress at Pulacayo was its first extraordinary congress and it met to discuss the general orientation and policy of the union in the light of dramatic political events that had rocked the country only a few months previously. In July a furious mob, after a day of bloody street battles between workers, students and the army and police, dragged Gualberto Villarroel, the President from the Quemada Palace and lynched him, leaving his body to hang from a lamp post in the main square of the country's capital, La Paz. This brutal event came as the climax of a campaign led by the PIR in unholy alliance with traditional parties of the Bolivian ruling class—the feudal landowners and the big three mining trusts (Patiño, Hochschild and Aramayo, known collectively by the derogatory term, the Rosca).

The Stalinists characterised Villarroel's regime, installed by an army coup d'état in December 1943, as Nazi-fascist. The coup had been organized by a secret junior officers lodge called RADEPA (Razon de Patria—Reason of the Fatherland). Villarroel called himself and his junta "military socialist" but to understand his politics it is necessary to look back a decade to the Chaco

Wars.

In 1932/33 a desperate President Salamanca, under pressure both from a disintegrating political situation and egged on by foreign petroleum companies, started a war over the dry and barren plains of the Gran Chaco, where fabulous oil deposits were supposed to lie. It was a war that Bolivia lost, although it did pull itself back from the brink of total disaster. The price was horrific for both countries. For Bolivia it meant 65,000 soldiers killed, missing or dying in captivity—some 25% of total combatants. The war did however lead to a radical change in Bolivia's political life. Over 100,000 Indian conscripts were dragged from their latifundias where they worked as serfs, or from the traditional Indian communes. Workers left their factories and mines. Young middle class students became NCOs and junior officers. Bolivia was shaken out of the rural isolation of the nineteenth century. All these classes and strata were deeply radicalised. A series of novels, political and sociological studies marked the intellectual fruits of this radicalisation. Most influential was Tristan Marof's *La Tragedia del Altiplano*. This stigmatised the corrupt rule of the latifundia feudalists and the Rosca as the root cause of Bolivia's chronic backwardness and social misery and raised the slogans "Land to the Indians, mines to the state".

In May 1936 a wave of class struggle by workers and peasants culminated in a general strike. A group of young officers led by veterans of the Chaco Wars took power in a coup d'état. From 1936 to 1939 first David Toro and then Germán Busch tried to carry out the confused programme of "military socialism". Labour laws were passed stimulating the growth of unions and radical rightists and leftists contended for influence within the government. There was enormous ideological conflict and confusion with the government borrowing ideas from European fascism (the condemnation of liberal democracy, the need for a strong leader, denunciation of the Jews) and combined them with leftist anti-imperialism, Indian communalist ideas and Stalinist popular frontism.

In their efforts to loosen the choking grip of imperial-

ism and subjugate the Rosca to the dictates of their reform programme, this "military socialism" strove hard to win support from the peasantry and the proletariat—the more so as there was no available national bourgeoisie that they could count on strong enough to consolidate their bonapartism or willing to go on to the offensive against imperialism and the Rosca to create the basis for an independent industrialisation.

The short lived Toro junta had made a start of it in 1936: they drastically checked the concessional rights of the foreign petroleum firms, eventually decreeing the nationalisation of Standard Oil, one of the main guilty parties responsible for inciting the Chaco War, and so laying the foundations of the state petroleum combine. Under their aegis the right to organise trade unions was for the first time legally established, which led in turn to the rise of the first significant nation wide trade union movement, the Confederación Sindical de los Trabajadores de Bolivia (CSTB).

In this period too socialist ideas and organisations appeared amongst the intelligentsia and began to penetrate the ranks of the newly forming labour movement. Two workers' parties came into existence in this period. Firstly the POR founded in 1935 in Córdoba, Argentina by José Aguirre Gainsbourg and Tristan Marof (although Marof soon left to form his own party the PSOB). The POR was a small grouping of intellectuals attracted to Trotskyism but with limited contacts and understanding of it. They were, however, the founding nucleus of Bolivian Trotskyism. On the other hand there was the PIR, a party influenced strongly by Stalinism and pursuing its new popular frontist policy and increasingly dominated by the twists and turns of the Moscow line.

On the far right stood the Falange Socialista Boliviano (FSB) formed in 1937 with definite affinities to Spanish and Italian fascism. It was anti-communist, an advocate of the interests of the petit bourgeoisie, but also fiercely anti-Rosca.

After the fall of Toro, the more resolute Germán Busch, who as spokesman for the left wing union of ex-combatant veterans of the Chaco War had already become known as the driving force of the regime, took over the conduct of state business. The problem was to tame the awakening Bolivian workers' movement. In an attempt to do this they made vague promises of an agrarian reform, the introduction of the first employment legislation in the history of the country and statutory exchange controls on all capitalist transactions of the traditional members of the Rosca, who accordingly amalgamated in a united front, the *Concordancia*, to strike back. With the suicide of Busch in 1939—under circumstances which are not clear to this day—the reforming politics of "military socialism" faded from the political scene for the next four years.

Bolivia on the eve of the Second World War had once again become the unrestricted domain of the Rosca and US imperialism: A country, in which the Aymara and the Quecha speaking Indian peasants cultivated, as serfs, the land of a Criollo landed gentry, using primitive methods inherited from Inca times. A country in which the population was 80% illiterate; a country in which just 10% of the citizens enjoyed the right to vote; in which the state and government was under the de facto rule and control of three large mining combines. A

country without its own industry or infrastructure worth mentioning, 70% of whose exports consisted of tin—and whose subservience to Washington was so total that on the USA's entry into the war it froze tin prices for the duration of the conflict of its own free will.

In 1941 the *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (MNR) was founded. Prominent among its leaders were Víctor Paz Estenssoro and Hernán Siles Zuazo. It drew eclectically on the above traditions proclaiming that it was neither capitalist nor communist. It denounced the Rosca as a tool of Yankee imperialism. It denounced the huge enclaves of economic privilege and demagogically but vaguely espoused the Indian campesinos' struggle against the latifundia. Its basic project was to create space for the smaller capitalists to grow. Its leaders were not above launching anti-semitic polemics against Hochschild, one of the Rosca, and the general tendency to look towards Nazi Germany as a potential liberator from Yankee and British domination meant that the fascist characterisation was hard to shake off. Yet the MNR was not in its totality a fascist party though it had a proto-fascist wing. As we shall see it was also to develop a labour based left wing too. The MNR was bourgeois nationalist in its "programme" and central leadership whilst it aspired to a popular frontist style alliance of middle classes, national bourgeois, peasants, workers etc. Its aim was to raise the impoverished and confused medium and petit bourgeoisie to power in order to tackle Bolivia's problems of chronic backwardness.

As a logical consequence of pursuing the interests of the Rosca, the "democratic" government of Peñaranda annulled the economic and social legislation of Busch and declared war on the Axis powers. This declaration of war was, however, directed less against a distant German fascism than against the Bolivian mining proletariat. When the miners of Catavi stopped work in protest against a ban on strikes and pay restrictions in 1942, the government met a peaceful demonstration of miners with a bloodbath: the "massacre of Catavi" to which 200 people fell victim—an action which received the energetic support of the pro-Moscow PIR.

Thus when Villarroel, the leader of the "military socialists", seized power in December 1943, he was assured of widespread sympathy and support among the population; his regime appeared—especially in the context of the war then reaching its high point—to stand on substantially firmer foundations than those of his predecessors, whose political legacy he invoked. His government reckoned firstly on an institutional collaboration with civil powers—taking representatives of the MNR, including Paz Estenssoro as Finance Minister, into his cabinet. In the period of his government the foundation was laid for the fast and significant growth of the miners' union, the FSTMB, which soon grew into a genuine counterweight to the CSTB trade union centre, by this time controlled by the Stalinist PIR. The FSTMB was linked eventually with the First National Peasant Congress of Bolivia under the personal chairmanship of Villarroel, a process which culminated in the pronouncement of the abolition of forced labour, the "Pongueaje".

To subjugate the Rosca alone, the Villarroel Junta would have had to break their economic and political power; to take the initiative for a massive agrarian

reform. Villarroel dare not go so far—moreover the workers' movement had advanced too far to allow itself simply to act as the blind tool of the military nationalists. Yet to the eyes of the latifundists and the mining employers alike, his agrarian and economic policies were anathema. They constituted his death sentence. Incapable of realising his promises of a mass mobilisation in support of his regime, in the last months before his death he was driven into increasing isolation and resorted to methods of terror which only revealed the fundamental weakness of his regime. Thus a secret commando group of RADEPA officers kidnapped the second biggest mineowner, Aramayo, to oblige him to pay his taxes, and the secret police attempted the murder of Jose Antonio Arze, leader of the PIR, to swing it into support of the government.

In fact the PIR was to play a scandalous role in the overthrow of Villarroel, a role which has distinguished Stalinism in the history of the Bolivian nation. After Villarroel refused their offer to take over the position of civil coalition partner of the RADEPA junta given up by the MNR under US pressure, the PIR developed into one of the most rabid and irreconcilable enemies of the government. In tune with their support for the Allied war effort and the pernicious wage and price policies in the tin mines, they denounced the supposedly pro-Nazi position of the MNR. In a concerted action with the parties of the Rosca, exploiting the awakening discontent of the middle classes, the PIR-influenced unions of the CSTB, organised by the teachers union, led an insurrection in La Paz which ended in the murder of Villarroel. The Rosca, incidentally, repaid the eagerness of these popular frontists poorly: in little over a year the PIR—once praised as "democratic"—were, at the onset of the Cold War, roundly denounced as agents of Russian subversion and driven out of the provisional government and positions of power. The PIR never recovered from this fiasco.

The immediate consequences of the August 1946 events were catastrophic for civilian nationalism and its military supporters; the army was purged of Villarroel supporters from top to bottom, the MNR was driven underground and its leader, Victor Paz, forced into exile. Thus the MNR's chosen strategy lay in ruins. Neither the radical officers nor the still largely petit bourgeois Movimientistas had the social weight to budge the tin companies' stranglehold. To do this the workers and peasants would have to be roused. But then what might become of the MNR's commitment to private property? into the scene at this point steps an important figure.

The FSTMB had been founded under Villarroel's benevolent eye. Its young Executive Secretary, Juan Lechin Oquendo, was to be a central figure throughout five decades of the Bolivian labour movement. Born in 1914 to middle class parents, of Lebanese origin Lechin was never a worker in the pits themselves but a white collar worker at Catavi, the headquarters of the Patiño company. He had served in the Chaco Wars and was also a star goalkeeper in the Catavi football team. In the early forties he was drawn towards, and joined the MNR. As the most popular and dynamic leader of the Federation he was instrumental in swinging the new and powerful movement behind Villarroel and against the Stalinist PIR and their union federation the CSTB. The bloody



**Guillermo Lora**

fiasco of "military socialism" and the flight or exile of many of the MNR's leaders left Lechin to his own devices organisationally and also open to other political influences. The most serious influence at this moment was that of the POR. In 1945 POR cadres made contact with Lechin and were already working closely with him before the 1946 coup d'état.

After Villarroel's downfall the Stalinists and the newspapers of the Rosca redoubled their attacks on Lechin, the MNR and the POR making an amalgam and characterising them as Nazi-Trotskyists. This naturally consolidated the bloc between the Executive Secretary and the POR, an alliance that was to prove fruitful in the short term for both but which was to prove disastrous for the POR in the longer term.

In this process of collaboration the key role for the POR came to be played by Guillermo Lora. Born in the mining region at Uncia in 1922 Lora studied Law at the University of La Paz. He became involved with the miners struggle and was arrested after the Catavi massacre. He broke off his studies after joining the POR in 1943. In 1944 and 1945 he started working amongst the miners for the party, working closely with the miners of Siglo XX—Catavi, the huge mining and smelting complex of the Patiño Company.

From 5 to 12 November the 1946 Extraordinary Congress took place at Pulacayo. Forty-five unions of the large, medium and small mines were represented. The congress represented a defeat for the representatives of the Ministry of Labour and the CSTMB. Their representatives were received with great hostility by the miners and they rapidly left. Clearly the influence of the PIR was being annihilated by that of the MNR and the POR. Guillermo Lora was allowed to participate in the congress over the protests of the PIRistas. There he presented a document which he had drafted. Lora later wrote:

"The Pulacayo Theses, therefore incorporated a great deal of my own ideology, my few virtues and my many defects . . . Yet for me this remains the most important thing I have said, done, or written."<sup>1</sup>

The Theses were presented according to Lora "behind the back of Lechin" and "after some careful conspiracy". Indeed according to Lora:

"It was approved by the Congress largely because it

came as a surprise. The debate revolved around secondary details."<sup>2</sup>

Ironically the widespread publication of the document was due not to the FSTMB but to none other than the Patiño Company who came into possession of the, as yet, secret document and published it in full in their national newspapers hoping thereby to expose a "red plot". The effect was quite the opposite of their intentions. The miners espoused the document and in particular its individual transitional demands all the more fiercely.

The Pulacayo Theses undoubtedly marked a high point in the development of the class consciousness of the Bolivian proletariat, and was viewed as such by its enemies and advocates alike. For the first time the political independence of the working class was boldly and unequivocally asserted and linked to the goal of the conquest of power and the building of socialism. For the first time an attempt was made to formulate a programme of transitional demands with this very objective, and to do so on the basis of mass workers' action—strikes, occupation of the mines, up to and including the preparation of the armed insurrection.

The Theses constituted a distinct turning point in the development of the Bolivian labour movement, which until then had been ideologically stamped by craft sectionalism and by open class collaboration with "progressive" sections of the bourgeoisie and the state, seeing a bourgeois-democratic revolution as the only possible, and indeed most desirable objective, restricting itself in general to the gradual implementation of reforms and improvements in the living and working conditions of the workers.

The Theses on the other hand—in a clear break with the concepts of reformism and nationalism prevailing up until then—posed the question of power in the language of permanent revolution. This soon gained an almost mythical reputation, as much in the international movement as in Bolivia, as a thoroughly revolutionary programme; a myth which became ever more impregnable, despite the fact that the content, method, and worth of the Theses remained unknown to most of the Fourth International. Indeed at the time the Theses were adopted the European and North American centres of the FI were hardly aware that the POR existed.

Today we are obliged to read the Pulacayo Theses critically, set against the background of the experience of the historical inability of the POR to actually fulfil its stated role as a proletarian vanguard party of the socialist revolution—an inability which it demonstrated not only in the 1952 revolution but also again in 1971 and 1985.

The weakness of the Theses lies in their fundamental ambiguity as to their very purpose. They go beyond the limits of a trade union action programme to present the very strategy for the seizure of power. Yet they nowhere pose the central instrument for this task—a revolutionary combat party embracing the vanguard of the working class. Clearly the POR was the tiny nucleus of such a party and its task was to assemble and train more cadres to lead, not only the FSTMB, but also other unions and, equally importantly, to break out into the peasantry and to begin to organise and influence the sindicatos of the poorest peasants. On this last question the Theses are extremely weak. The Theses in their

eagerness to defeat the PIR and the CSTMB pose the workers' united front in an ultimatum and almost Third Period fashion. Whilst the Stalinist popular frontists are repeatedly and accurately stigmatised, the MNR is never mentioned by name, and is criticised only in the most oblique form. Since the MNR was in fact to become the "popular front" that would tie the miners to the bourgeoisie, this was a serious, not to say fatal, flaw.

It was clearly linked to the informal bloc being operated by the POR with left-Movimientistas. This was embodied in the unprincipled relationship with Juan Lechin, who was during those years a secret member of both the POR and the MNR. The Bloque Minero Parlamentario, which arose from these Theses and which captured seven seats in the lower house of the Bolivian Parliament and two in the Senate, could have been the basis for creating a genuine workers' party if it had been pursued along the lines Trotsky elaborated for the SWP in the United States. But it was not. There was no struggle to elaborate a full political transitional programme and no struggle to overcome the influence of the MNR. Far from the confusion of the rank and file miner militants being cleared up by the POR, the confusion in the union ranks entered those of the POR. Later Lora was to admit this himself:

"... Just as rare was any additional discussion within the POR of the trade union documents. It would have been logical to regard it as a platform for work in the heart of the workers' organisations. Instead of this further confusion reigned in the party over the character of the Pulacayo Theses: members were not clear whether the Pulacayo Theses were now the programme of the POR or whether they were merely a platform for facilitating and orienting the work of the militants in the heart of the working class. The PORistas resolved the problem according to their personal choice..."<sup>3</sup>

This led in Lora's words to the development of total confusion between the role of the party and the trade unions. This confusion extended to the leadership:

"... The syndicalist deviations, which were present in latent form, found assistance in this fact: they argued that the real programme of the POR was the Pulacayo Theses and thus from time to time even went so far as to train the membership in the framework of this document. From there it was easy to deduce that party and trade union were the same thing, and as work in the latter was much easier than in the former, it would be advisable for the party to entirely replace the union..."<sup>4</sup>

The other side of the coin of this syndicalism and opportunist failure to distinguish itself from MNR nationalism was a fatal sectarianism.

Thus the POR stubbornly regarded itself as the already existing vanguard party of the Bolivian proletariat. In reality it was no more than a propaganda group, whose members appeared unclear on the programme and tactics of their "party". Instead they satisfied themselves that in the Theses the guarantee of a revolutionary orientation for the trade unions was already available. Despite all the abstract condemnations of reformism and affirmations of class independence in its programme, it offered no tactics for the concrete application of its calls for a revolutionary party, and thereby avoided the core of the problem which was to combat reformism and petit bourgeois nationalism actively in the organisations of the class.

2. *Ibid*

3. G Lora, *Contribucion a la Historial Política Boliviana*, Vol 2, p63-64, 1978

4. *Ibid*

In the end it was the petit bourgeois nationalist MNR, not the POR, who harvested the fruits of the mass-radicalisation of the "Sexenio". In exile and underground the "Movimientistas" had carried out a sharp move to the left. Paz Estenssoro, who as Villarroel's finance minister had pursued an openly anti-working-class policy and had made no secret of his support for a "strong state" model a la Mussolini, now openly labelled himself as a "Marxist". The MNR, which had at its disposal hardly any organisational influence outside of the middle layers of the state apparatus, now began to undertake systematic work in the unions—above all in the FSTMB—where they without hesitation laid claim to the demands of the POR and to the Theses themselves. The success of this demagogic U-turn was not long in coming. It became possible firstly because of the directionless opportunism and sectarianism of the POR. Whilst any alliance with petit bourgeois parties was roundly condemned by the Theses, as was any agreement with them, shortly thereafter the MNR and POR built joint clandestine commando units. Understanding of the PORs' political relationship to the MNR remained totally confused, and finally in 1952 the POR itself proposed, on the recommendation of the Fourth International, a workers' and peasants' government of the MNR and the POR.

In 1949 the MNR was strong enough to bring the Rosca regime to the verge of collapse and to capture Santa Cruz, the centre of the Bolivian plains. In 1951 it came out of the elections as the strongest party in terms of votes. In 1952 it became the beneficiary of a popular insurrection which smashed the Bolivian army and opened a new situation of dual power. Far from the FSTMB or the newly founded Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) being led to power by the POR they became an integral component of the MNR apparatus, under the leadership of the advocates of the Pulacayo Theses. This position of collaboration was officially codified in the institutions of the "Co-Gobierno" between the COB and

the MNR, and in the subordination of the workers' and peasants' militias to the supreme command of the government. It would be sealed by the removal of power from the soviet-type structures in the mines, in favour of trade union joint participation, controlled from above, in the—now nationalised—mining enterprises of the Rosca.

"The worker who has the weakness to give up his battle-post in the ranks of the revolutionaries for a post as a bourgeois minister, goes over to the ranks of the traitors" explained the Theses categorically. Now however, when Lechin and several others took up trade union ministerial posts in the "Co-Gobierno", the POR demanded not the unconditional breaking of the COB from the government, but . . . more "worker ministers", in order to strengthen the left of the MNR—and thus to secure the revolution!

In the revolutionary process of the early 1950's it was not the bourgeois nationalism of the MNR that was shattered by its own contradictions, but the POR itself that was smashed. Unable to take the leadership of the revolution, it broke into a number of warring factions of whom the majority went over to the camp of nationalism entering the MNR.

The Bolivian working class paid dearly for the political and organisational bankruptcy of the only force which would have been capable of being their revolutionary leadership: it paid with twelve years of civil MNR governments which proceeded unscrupulously to hand the country over once again to imperialism, and liquidated every trace of proletarian dual power which had been set up against the bourgeois state. It paid with decades of barbaric military dictatorships, which were only the successors to the civilian MNR regime. It paid with the perpetuation of the appalling wretchedness in which the majority of the population are constrained for life, a wretchedness which makes Bolivia, now as before, one of the poorest countries of the Latin American continent.

## *The Pulacayo Theses of the FSTMB*

### I Basic principles

1. The proletariat, in Bolivia as in other countries, constitutes the revolutionary social class par excellence. The mineworkers, the most advanced and the most combative section of this country's proletariat, determine the direction of the FSTMB's struggle.

2. Bolivia is a backward capitalist country; within its economy different stages of development and different modes of production coexist, but the capitalist mode is qualitatively dominant, the other socio-economic forms being a heritage from our historic past. The prominence of the proletariat in national politics flows from this state of affairs.

3. Bolivia, even though a backward country, is only one link in the world capitalist chain. National peculiarities are themselves, a combination of the essential features of the world economy.

4. The distinctive characteristic of Bolivia resides in the fact there has not appeared on the political scene a bourgeoisie capable of liquidating the latifundia system and other pre-capitalist economic forms, of achieving national unification and liberation from the imperialist yoke.

These unfulfilled bourgeois tasks are the bourgeois democratic objectives which must unavoidably be realised. The central problems facing the semi-colonial countries are: the agrarian revolution, that is, the elimi-

nation of the feudal heritage, and national independence, namely, shaking off the imperialist yoke. These two tasks are closely inter-linked.

5. "The specific characteristics of the national economy, important as they may be, are more and more becoming an integral part of a higher reality known as the world economy. This is the basis for proletarian internationalism." Capitalist development is characterised by a growing interlinking of international relations, expressed in the growing volume of foreign trade.

6. The backward countries are subjected to imperialist pressure. Their development is of a combined character. These countries simultaneously combine the most primitive economic forms and the last word in capitalist technology and civilisation. The proletariat of the backward countries is obliged to combine the struggle for bourgeois democratic tasks with the struggle for socialist demands. These two stages—democratic and socialist—"are not separated in struggle by historic stages; they flow immediately from one another".

7. The feudal landowners have linked their interests with those of world imperialism and have become unconditionally its lackeys.

From this it follows that the ruling class is a veritable feudal bourgeoisie. Given the primitive level of technology, the running of the latifundia would be inconceivable if imperialism did not support them artificially with scraps from its table. Imperialist domination is inconceivable without the aid of the national governments of the elite. There is a high degree of capitalist concentration in Bolivia: three firms control mining production, i.e. the heart of the country's economic life. The class in power is puny and incapable of achieving its own historic objectives, and so finds itself tied to the interests of the latifundists as well as those of the imperialists. The feudal-bourgeois state is an organ of violence destined to uphold the privileges of the landowners and the capitalists. The state, in the hands of the dominant class, is a powerful instrument for crushing its enemies. Only traitors or imbeciles could continue to maintain that the state can rise above the classes and paternally decide what is due to each of them.

8. The middle class or petit bourgeoisie is the most numerous class, and yet its weight in the national economy is insignificant. The small traders and property owners, the technicians, the bureaucrats, the artisans and the peasantry have been unable up to now to develop an independent class policy and will be even more unable to do so in the future. The country follows the town and there the leading force is the proletariat. The petit bourgeoisie follow the capitalists in times of "class peace" and when parliamentary activity flourishes. They line up behind the proletariat in moments of acute class struggle (for example during a revolution) and when they become convinced that it alone can show the way to their own emancipation. In both these widely differing circumstances, the independence of the petit bourgeoisie proves to be a myth. Wide layers of the middle class obviously do possess an enormous revolutionary potential—it is enough to recall the aims of the bourgeois democratic revolution—but it is equally clear that

they cannot achieve these aims on their own.

9. What characterises the proletariat is that it is the only class possessing sufficient strength to achieve not only its own aims but also those of other classes. Its enormous specific weight in political life is determined by the position it occupies in the production process and not by its numerical weakness. The economic axis of national life will also be the political axis of the future revolution.

The miners' movement in Bolivia is one of the most advanced workers' movements in Latin America. The reformists argue that it is impossible for this country to have a more advanced social movement than in the technically more developed countries. Such a mechanical conception of the relation between the development of industry and the political consciousness of the masses has been refuted countless times by history.

If the Bolivian proletariat has become one of the most radical proletariats, it is because of its extreme youth and its incomparable vigour, it is because it has remained practically virgin in politics, it is because it does not have the traditions of parliamentarism or class collaboration, and lastly, because it is struggling in a country where the class struggle has taken on an extremely war-like character. We reply to the reformists and to those in the pay of La Rosca that a proletariat of such quality requires revolutionary demands and the most extreme boldness in struggle.

## II The type of revolution that must take place

1. We mineworkers do not suggest we can leap over the bourgeois democratic tasks, the struggle for elementary democratic rights and for an anti-imperialist agrarian revolution. Neither do we ignore the existence of the petit bourgeoisie, especially peasants and artisans. We point out that if you do not want to see the bourgeois democratic revolution strangled then it must become only one phase of the proletarian revolution. Those who point to us as proponents of an immediate socialist revolution in Bolivia are lying. We know very well that the objective conditions do not exist for it. We say clearly that the revolution will be bourgeois democratic in its objectives and that it will be only one episode in the proletarian revolution for the class that is to lead it.

The proletarian revolution in Bolivia does not imply the exclusion of the other exploited layers of the nation; on the contrary, it means the revolutionary alliance of the proletariat with the peasants, the artisans and other sectors of the urban petit bourgeoisie.

3. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the expression at state level of this alliance. The slogan of proletarian revolution and dictatorship shows clearly the fact that it is the working class who will be the leading force of this transformation and of this state. On the contrary, to maintain that the bourgeois democratic revolution, as such, will be brought about by the "progressive" sectors of the bourgeoisie, and that the future state will be a government of national unity and concord, shows a determination to strangle the revolutionary movement within the framework of bourgeois democracy. The workers, once in power, will not be able to confine themselves indefinitely to bourgeois democratic limits; they will find themselves obliged—and more so with

every day—to making greater and greater inroads into the regime of private property, in such a way that the revolution will take on a permanent character.

*Before the exploited we, the mineworkers, denounce those who attempt to substitute for the proletarian revolution, palace revolutions fomented by various sections of the feudal bourgeoisie.*

### III The struggle against class collaboration

1. The class struggle is, in the last analysis, the struggle for the appropriation of surplus value. The proletariat that sells its labour power struggles to do this on the best terms it can and the owners of the means of production (capitalists) struggle to seize the product of unpaid labour; both pursue opposite aims, which makes their interests irreconcilable.

We must not close our eyes to the fact that the struggle against the bosses is a fight to the death, for in this struggle the fate of private property is at stake.

Unlike our enemies, we recognise no truce in the class struggle.

The present historical stage, a period of shame for humanity, can only be overcome when social classes have disappeared and there no longer exist exploiter and exploited. Those who practise class collaboration are playing a stupid game of words when they maintain that it is not a question of destroying the rich but of making the poor rich. Our goal is the expropriation of the expropriators.

2. Every attempt to collaborate with our executioners, every attempt to make concessions to the enemy in the course of the struggle, means abandoning the workers to the bourgeoisie. Class collaboration means renouncing our own objectives. Every conquest by the workers, even the most minimal, is obtained only at the price of a bitter struggle against the capitalist system. We cannot think about reaching an understanding with our oppressors because, for us, the programme of transitional demands serves the goal of proletarian revolution.

We are not reformists, even when putting before the workers the most advanced platform of demands; we are above all revolutionaries, for we aim to transform the very structure of society.

3. We reject the petit bourgeois illusion according to which the state or some other institution, placing itself above the social classes in struggle, can solve the problems of workers. Such a solution, as the history of the workers' movement, nationally and internationally, teaches us, has always meant a solution in accord with the interests of capitalism at the expense of the impoverishment and oppression of the proletariat.

Compulsory arbitration and legal limitations of workers' means of struggle, in most cases mark the onset of defeat. As far as is possible, we fight to destroy compulsory arbitration.

*Social conflicts should be resolved under the leadership of the workers and by them alone!*

4. The realisation of our programme of transitional demands, which must lead to proletarian revolution, is always subject to the class struggle. We are proud of

being the most intransigent when there is talk of making compromises with the bosses. That is why it is a key task to struggle against and defeat the reformists who advocate class collaboration, as well as those who tell us to tighten our belts in the name of so-called national salvation. There can be no talk of national grandeur in a country where the workers suffer hunger and oppression; rather we should really talk of national destitution and decay. We will abolish capitalist exploitation.

*War to the death against capitalism! War to the death against the reformist collaboration! Follow the path of class struggle towards the destruction of capitalist society!*

### IV The struggle against imperialism

1. For the mine workers, the class struggle means above all the struggle against the big mining trusts, i.e. against a sector of Yankee imperialism which is oppressing us. The liberation of the exploited is tied to the struggle against imperialism.

Since we are struggling against international capitalism we represent the interests of the whole of society and our aims are shared by the exploited the world over. The destruction of imperialism is a pre-condition to the introduction of technology into agriculture and the creation of light and heavy industry.

We are an integral part of the international proletariat because we are engaged in the destruction of an international force: imperialism.

2. We denounce as declared enemies of the proletariat the "leftists" who have sold out to Yankee imperialism, who talk to us of the greatness of the "democracy" of the north and its world wide domination. You cannot talk of democracy in the United States of North America where the sixty families dominate the economy, sucking the blood from semi-colonial countries, ours amongst them. Yankee dominance throws up a vast accumulation and sharpening of the antagonisms and contradictions of the capitalist system. The United States is a powder keg, waiting for just one spark to explode it. We declare our solidarity with the North American proletariat and our irreconcilable enmity towards its bourgeoisie who live off plunder and oppression on a world scale.

3. The policies of the imperialists, which dictate Bolivian politics are determined by the monopoly stage of capitalism. For this reason, imperialist policy can mean only oppression and plunder, the continued transformation of the state to make it a docile instrument in the hands of exploiters. "Good neighbourly relations", "pan-Americanism" and so on, are just a cover which the Yankee imperialists and the Criollo feudal bourgeoisie use to dupe the Latin American peoples.

The system of mutual diplomatic consultation, the creation of international banking institutions with the money of the oppressed countries, the concession to the Yankees of strategic military bases, the one sided contracts for the sale of raw materials etc, are so many devices used by those who govern the Latin American countries to shamefully divert the riches of these countries for the profit of voracious imperialism. To struggle against this embezzlement and to denounce all attempts at imperialist plunder is a fundamental duty of

the proletariat.

The Yankees won't just stop at dictating the composition of cabinets; they will go much further: they have taken on board the task of directing the police activity of the semi-colonial bourgeoisie. The announcement of the struggle against anti-imperialist revolutionaries means nothing less than that.

Workers of Bolivia! Strengthen your cadres in order to fight Yankee imperialist plunder!

## V The struggle against fascism

1. Our struggle against imperialism must run parallel to our struggle against the embezzling feudal bourgeoisie. Anti-fascism, in practice, becomes one aspect of this struggle: defence and attainment of democratic rights and the destruction of the armed bands maintained by the bourgeoisie.

2. Fascism is a product of international capitalism. It is the final stage of the decomposition of imperialism but, in spite of everything, it does not cease to be an imperialist phase. When state violence is organised to defend capitalist privileges and to physically destroy the workers' movement, we find ourselves in a regime of a fascist type. Bourgeois democracy is a costly luxury which can only be afforded by those countries which have accumulated a great deal of fat at the expense of other countries where famine rages. In poor countries, such as ours, the worker will at one time or another will find himself looking down the barrel of a rifle

No matter which party has to resort to fascistic methods the better to serve the interests of imperialism, one thing is sure: if capitalist oppression continues to exist, it is inevitable that those governments will be characterised by violence against the workers.

3. The struggle against the fascist bands is subordinated to the struggle against imperialism and the feudal-bourgeoisie. Those who, under the pretext of fighting fascism, peddle confidence in equally 'democratic' imperialism and the 'democratic' feudal-bourgeoisie are only preparing the ground for the inevitable advent of a fascistic regime.

To eliminate the fascist peril once and for all, we have to destroy capitalism as a system.

In the fight against fascism, far from artificially dulling class contradictions, we must sharpen the class struggle.

*Workers and all the exploited: let us destroy capitalism in order to definitively destroy the fascist peril and the fascistic bands! It is only by the methods of proletarian revolution and within the framework of the class struggle that we can smash fascism.*

## VI The FSTMB and the present situation

1. The revolutionary situation brought about on July 21 [the overthrow of Villarroel] by the irruption onto the streets of the exploited, deprived of bread and liberty, and by the combative defensive action of the miners forced to defend the social gains and to extract further gains, has allowed the representatives of the mineowners to construct their state apparatus thanks to the treachery and collusion of the reformists who have

made a pact with the feudal bourgeoisie. The blood spilled by the people aided its executioner to consolidate its position in power. The fact that the governmental Junta was a provisional institution did not in any way modify this situation. The mineworkers were right to adopt an attitude of distrust vis-à-vis those in power and to demand from them that they oblige the companies to comply with the law. We cannot and must not solidarise with any government which is not our own, that is, a workers' government. We cannot take this step because we know that the state represents the interests of the dominant social class.

2. "Worker" ministers do not change the nature of bourgeois governments. As long as the state is the defender of capitalist society, "worker" ministers become common pimps in the service of the bourgeoisie. The worker who is weak enough to swap his battle station in the revolutionary ranks for a bourgeois ministerial portfolio, joins the ranks of the traitors. The bourgeoisie has created "worker" ministers the better to dupe workers and so that the exploited will abandon their own methods of struggle, giving themselves over heart and soul to the guardianship of the "worker" minister.

*The FSTMB will never enter a bourgeois government, because this would mean the most bare-faced betrayal of the exploited and the abandonment of our revolutionary class struggle line.*

3. The next elections will install a government in the service of the big mining companies, because there is nothing democratic about these elections. The majority of the population, the indigenous [Indian] people and an enormous percentage of the proletariat are, by means of obstacles created by the Electoral Laws and because they are illiterate, refused the right to take part in elections. Sectors of the petit bourgeoisie, corrupted by the dominant class, have the decisive weight in the outcome of elections.

We harbour no illusions about the electoral struggle, we workers will not come to power by stuffing a ballot paper in a ballot-box, we will get there by social revolution. That is why we can assert that our behaviour towards the future government will be the same as towards the present Junta in power. If the laws are complied with, so much the better; that's what governments are supposed to do. If they are not, the government will find itself up against our most strenuous protest.

## VII Transitional demands

Each union, each mining region has its particular problems and the trade unionists in each of these must adapt their day to day struggle to these particularities. But there are also problems which affect worker militants throughout the country and create the possibility of uniting them: growing poverty and the bosses' boycott, which are becoming more menacing each day. Against these threats the FSTMB proposes radical measures.

### 1. The establishment of a basic minimum wage and a sliding scale of wages

The suppression of the pulpería barata [company shops] system and the enormous gap between standard



of living and real wages, demands the fixing of a minimum wage.

*A scientific study of a working class family's living needs must serve as the basis of indexation for the minimum wage, i.e. of a wage which would allow that family to live a human existence.*

In line with the decision of the 3rd Miners' Congress (Catavi-Llallagua, March 1946), this wage must be complemented by a sliding scale of wages. In this way we can ensure that the periodic adjustment of wages is not nullified by rising prices.

We will put an end to the ceaseless manoeuvres which consist of swallowing up wage rises through devaluation and the hiking—almost always artificial—of the cost of living. The unions must take charge of the checking of the cost of living and must demand from the companies the automatic increase of wages in line with this cost. The basic wage, far from being static, must rise in line with the increase in the price of basic necessities.

## 2. The forty hour week and a sliding scale of working hours

The introduction of machinery into the mines has resulted in the intensification of the work rate. The nature of work underground itself means that the eight hour day is in fact longer and that it destroys the workers' vitality in an inhuman way. The very struggle for a better world demands that we free, however little, man from the slavery of the mine. That is why the FSTMB will fight to win the forty hour week, complete with the introduction of the sliding scale of working hours.

The only way to struggle effectively against the constant danger of a bosses' boycott is to win the sliding scale of working hours which will reduce the working day in line with the number of unemployed. Such a reduction must not mean a cut in wages, since the latter is considered to be the minimum living wage.

This alone will allow us to avoid the situation where worker militants are crushed by poverty and where the bosses boycott artificially creates an army of unemployed.

## 3. Occupation of the mines

The capitalists attempt to contain the rise of the workers' movement with the argument that they are obliged to close unprofitable mines: they attempt to put a rope round the necks of the unions by invoking the spectre of lay-offs. Moreover, temporary suspension of extraction, as experience shows, has only served to make a mockery of the real potential of the social laws and to re-employ workers under the pressure of hunger in truly shameful conditions.

The big companies use a double accounting system. One is intended for the consumption of the workers and for when it comes to paying taxes to the state; the other is used to establish the rate of dividends. For that reason, the figures of the accounts books will not make us give up our legitimate aspirations.

The workers who have sacrificed their lives on the altar of the companies' prosperity have a right to demand that they are not denied the right to work, even in periods where this is not profitable for the capitalists.

The right to work is not a demand aimed against such and such a capitalist in particular, but against the system as a whole; that is why we cannot let ourselves be

stopped by the lamenting of certain bankrupt small manufacturers.

If the bosses find they cannot give their slaves one more piece of bread, if capitalism, in order to survive, must attack the wages and gains won, if the capitalists immediately reply to all demands with the threat of a lock-out, the workers no longer have any other option than to occupy the mines and to take in hand, on their own account, the management of production.

The occupation of the mines, in itself, goes beyond the framework of capitalism, since it poses the question of who is the true master of the mines: the capitalists or the workers? Occupation should not be confused with the socialisation of the mines: it is only a question of avoiding the situation where the success of the bosses' boycott, condemns the workers to die of starvation. Strikes with mine occupations are becoming one of the central aims of the FSTMB.

From this point of view, it is obvious that the occupation of the mines can only be considered illegal. It couldn't be otherwise.

*An action which, from all points of view, goes beyond the limits of capitalism cannot be catered for by already existing legislation. We know that in occupying the mines we are breaking bourgeois law and we are on the way to creating a new situation. We know that from now, the legislators in the service of the exploiters will give themselves the task of codifying this situation and will try to smother it by means of regulations.*

The Supreme Decrees of the junta in power forbidding the seizure of the mines by the workers, does not affect our position. We knew in advance that it is impossible in such cases to count on government support, and we are aware that we are not operating under the protection of the law. Therefore, no other perspective remains to us but the occupation of the mines without conceding the slightest compensation to the capitalists.

In the course of the occupation of the mines there must emerge mine committees formed with the agreement of all the workers, including those who are not unionised. The mine committees will have to decide the future of the mine and of the workers involved in production

*Mineworkers: to thwart the bosses' boycott—OCCUPY THE MINES!*

## 4. Collective agreements.

The law of the land states that the employers are free to choose between individual and collective contracts. Up till now, because it suits the companies, it has not been possible to win collective agreements. We must fight for the implementation of only one type of work contract: the collective contract.

We cannot allow the individual worker to let himself be crushed by the power of capitalism. In fact, he is unable to give his free consent since such a thing cannot exist while domestic poverty forces the acceptance of the most ignominious work contracts.

*To the organised capitalists, who pull together to rob the worker through individual contracts, we oppose collective contracts of the workers organised in trade unions.*

- a) The collective work contract must above all be revocable at any time by the wish of the unions alone.
- b) It must be obligatory for all, including non-union members; the worker who is going to sign a contract

will find suitable conditions already established.

- c) It must not exclude the most favourable of the conditions which may have been won from individual contracts.
- d) Its implementation and the contract itself must be under union control.
- e) The collective contract must be built upon our platform of transitional demands.

*Against capitalist extortion: COLLECTIVE WORK CONTRACTS!*

### 5. Trade union independence

The realisation of our aspirations will only be possible if we are able to free ourselves from the influence of all sectors of the bourgeoisie and its "left" agents. "Managed" trade unions are a cancer in the workers movement. When trade unions become appendages of government, they lose their freedom of action and lead the masses on the road to defeat.

We denounce the CSTB as an agent of government in the ranks of the workers. We can have no confidence in organisations which have their permanent secretariat in the Ministry of Labour and who send their members out to propagandise for the government.

The FSTMB is absolutely independent from the different sectors of the bourgeoisie, from left reformism and from the government. It practises a revolutionary trade union policy and denounces as treason any accommodation with the bourgeoisie or government.

**WAR TO THE DEATH AGAINST GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED TRADE UNIONISM!**

### 6. Workers' control of the mines

The FSTMB supports every measure which takes the unions on the path towards the achievement of real workers' control over all aspects of mine work. We must disclose the bosses' business secrets, their secret accounting, their technological secrets, the processing of minerals, etc, in order to organise direct intervention into these secret plans by the workers themselves. Because our objective is the occupation of the mines, we must turn our attention to throwing the light of day onto the bosses' secrets.

The workers must control the technical management of the mines, the accounts books, must intervene in the assignment of the different categories of work and, especially, they must make known publicly the profits drawn by the big mining companies and the fraud they perpetrate when it comes to paying taxes or contributions to the workers' Insurance and Savings Fund.

To the reformists who talk of the sacred rights of the bosses, we oppose the slogan of **WORKERS' CONTROL OF THE MINES.**

### 7. Arming the workers

We have said that, as long as capitalism exists, the workers will be constantly threatened with violent repression. If we want to avoid a repetition of the Catavi massacre we must arm the workers. To repulse the fascist bands and the strike breakers, let us forge suitably armed workers' strike pickets.

Where are we going to get the arms? The fundamental task is to convince rank and file workers that they



must arm themselves against the bourgeoisie, which is itself armed to the teeth; once that conviction is driven home, the material means will be found. Have we perhaps forgotten that we work every day with powerful explosives?

*Every strike is the potential beginning of civil war and we must approach it with arms adequate to the task. Our objective is victory and for that we must never forget that the bourgeoisie can count on its army, police and its fascist bands. It falls to us, then, to organise the first cells of the proletarian army. All the unions must form armed pickets from the younger and most combative members.*

The trade union strike pickets must organise themselves militarily and as soon as possible.

### 8. A strike fund

The mining company stores—pulperías baratas—and low wages are the companies' means of keeping in check the workers, whose daily wage is their only resource. Hunger is the worst enemy of the striker. So that the strike can come to a successful end, we must relieve the striker of the burden of a starving family. The unions must reserve part of their income to build up strike funds, so that they may grant, as the case arises, the necessary aid to the workers.

*Break the burden of hunger which the bosses impose on strikers; organise strike funds right away!*

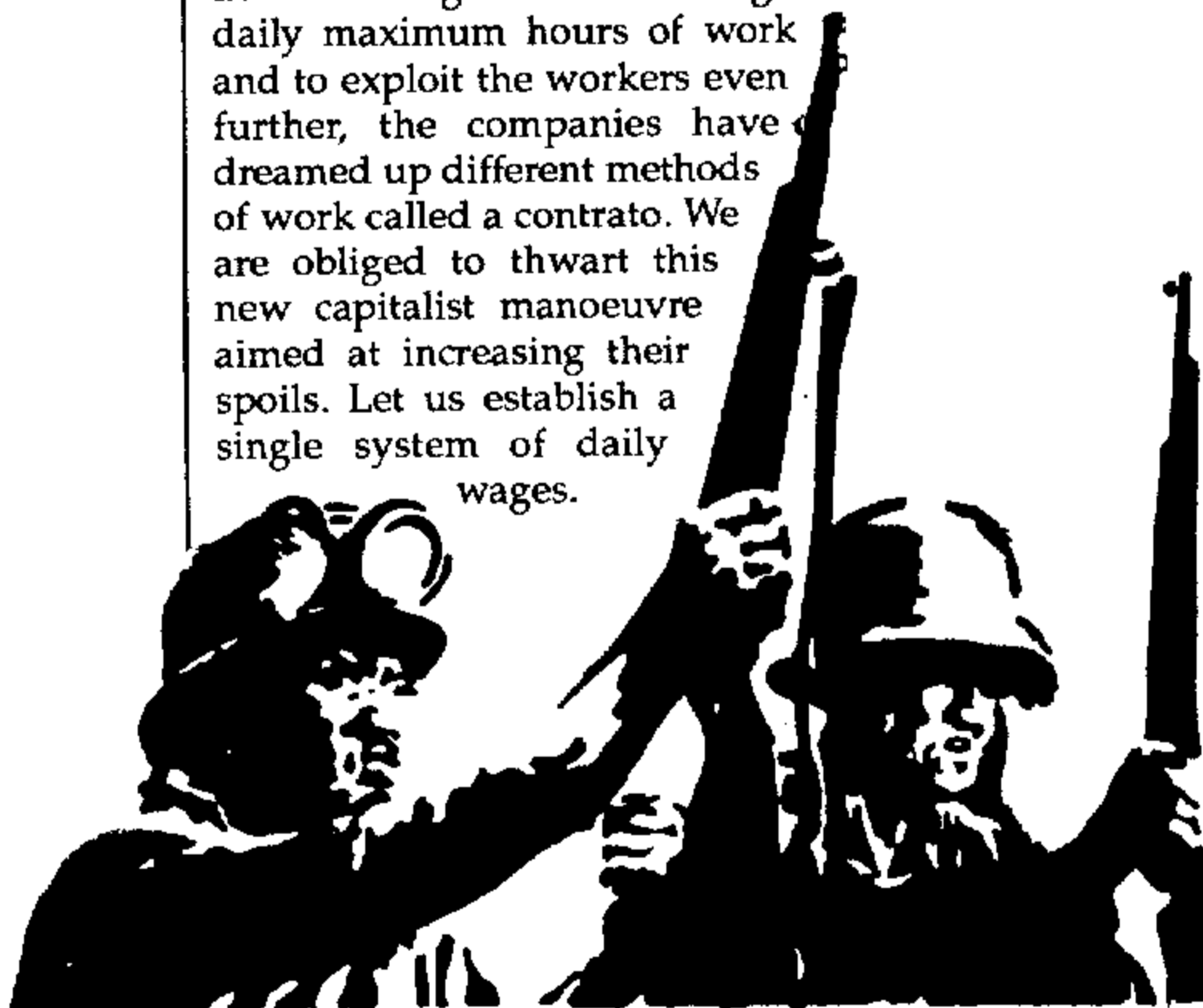
### 9. Control of the abolition of the pulpería barata system

We have already seen that the pulpería barata system made possible the unwarranted enrichment of the bosses at the expense of workers' wages. However, simply doing away with these shops is only worsening the situation of the workers and is turning into a measure contrary to their interests.

So that the elimination of the pulperías baratas fulfils its function, we must demand that this measure is accompanied by a sliding scale of wages and recognition of the basic minimum wage.

### 10. The elimination of "a contrato" work

In order to get round the legal daily maximum hours of work and to exploit the workers even further, the companies have dreamed up different methods of work called a contrato. We are obliged to thwart this new capitalist manoeuvre aimed at increasing their spoils. Let us establish a single system of daily wages.



## VIII Direct mass action and the parliamentary struggle

1. Amongst the methods of struggle of the proletariat, direct mass action occupies a central position for us. We know only too well that our liberation will be first and foremost our own work and that to win it we cannot count on the help of any forces other than our own. That is why, at this stage of upturn in the workers' movement, our preferred method of struggle is the direct action of the masses, that is to say the strike and the occupation of the mines. As much as possible we must avoid striking for insignificant reasons in order to avoid squandering our strength. We must go beyond the stage of localised strikes. Indeed, isolated strikes allow the bourgeoisie to concentrate its forces and attention on a single point. Every strike must start off with the aim of becoming generalised. What is more, a strike by the miners must spread itself to other sectors of workers and to the middle class. Strikes with occupation of the mines are on the agenda. The strikers, from the outset, must control all key points of the mines and, above all, the explosives depots.

We declare that in putting the direct action of the masses to the forefront, we are not denying the importance of other forms of struggle.

*Revolutionaries must be everywhere where social life throws the classes into struggle.*

2. *The parliamentary struggle is important, but in periods of upturn in the revolutionary movement, it takes on a secondary character.* In order to play an effective role, parliamentarism must be subordinated to the direct action of the masses. In times of retreat when the masses abandon struggle and the bourgeoisie takes back the positions it has abandoned, parliamentarism can play a prominent role. In general, bourgeois parliaments do not resolve the essential problem of our epoch: the fate of private property. This question will be resolved by the workers in the streets. Although we do not renounce parliamentary struggle, we subject it to definite conditions. We must send to parliament tried and tested revolutionary militants who are in full agreement with our trade union activity. Parliament must become a revolutionary tribunal: we know that our representatives will be in a minority, but we also know that they will undertake to expose, from inside the assembly itself, the manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie. But above all the parliamentary struggle must be tied to the direct action of the masses. Worker deputies and mineworkers must act according to one line only: the principles of these theses.

In the course of the next electoral struggle, our task will consist of sending to parliament the strongest possible workers' bloc. We stress that, while we are anti-parliamentarists, we cannot, however, leave the field free to our class enemies. Our voice will be heard in the parliamentary arena as elsewhere.

*To the electoral manoeuvres of the left traitors, we counterpose the formation of the PARLIAMENTARY BLOC OF MINERS!*

## IX To the bourgeois demand for national unity, we oppose the workers' united front

1. We are soldiers of the class struggle. We have said

that the war against the exploiters is a war to the death. That is why we will destroy every attempt at collaboration within the workers' ranks. The door to betrayal opened with the famous popular fronts, which, drawing away from the class struggle united the proletariat with the petit bourgeoisie and even with certain sectors of the bourgeoisie.

The policy of popular fronts has cost the international proletariat many defeats. So called "national unity" is the most cynical expression of the negation of class struggle, the abandonment of the oppressed to their executioners, and is the end point of the degeneration which the popular front constitutes. This bourgeois demand has been launched by the reformists. "National unity" means the unity of the bourgeoisie and their lackeys with the aim of muzzling the workers. "National unity" means the defeat of the exploited and the victory of La Rosca. It is impossible to talk of "national unity" when the nation is divided into social classes engaged in a fight to the death. As long as private property reigns, only traitors or paid agents of imperialism can dare to speak of "national unity".

2. To the bourgeois demand for "national unity" we oppose that of the Proletarian United Front. The uniting of the exploited and the revolutionary elements in one unbreakable bloc is imperative in order to destroy capitalism which is, itself, united in a single bloc.

Because we use the methods of proletarian revolution and because we do not step outside the framework of class struggle, we will forge the Proletarian United Front.

3. To counteract bourgeois influences, to achieve our ambitions, to mobilise the masses towards proletarian revolution, we need the Proletarian United Front. Revolutionary elements who identify with our declarations and proletarian organisations (factory workers, railway workers, printers, lorry drivers, etc) all have their place in the Proletarian United Front. Lately, the CSTB has been calling for a Left Front. Even now, we do not know for what purpose such a front is to be formed. If it is only a pre-electoral manoeuvre, and if they seek to impose a petit bourgeois leadership on it—the CSTB is petit bourgeois—we declare that we will have nothing to do with such a Left Front. But if it will allow proletarian ideas to be dominant and if its aims are those of these theses, we would rally all our forces to this front which, in the last analysis, would be nothing other than a proletarian front with minor differences and under a different name.

*Against the united front of La Rosca, against the fronts which the petit bourgeois reformists think up almost daily:*

*Let us forge the Proletarian United Front!*

## X Union confederation

The struggle of the proletariat requires a single command structure. It is necessary to forge a powerful UNION CONFEDERATION [Central Obrera]. The history of the CSTB shows us the way in which we must proceed if we are to succeed in our task. When federations turn themselves into docile instruments of the petit bourgeois political parties, when they begin to make pacts with the bourgeoisie, they cease to be the

representatives of the exploited. It is our duty to avoid the manoeuvres of the trade union bureaucrats and sections of craft workers corrupted by the bourgeoisie.

The Confederation of Bolivian Workers must be organised on a truly democratic basis. We are tired of fiddled majorities. We will not stand for an organisation made up of about a hundred craft workers being able to have as much weight in the electoral balance as the FSTMB which numbers about 70,000 workers. The decisions of majority organisations cannot be overturned by the vote of almost non-existent groupings.

The proportional influence of the various federations must be worked out on the basis of the number of members.

*PROLETARIAN, NOT PETIT BOURGEOIS, IDEAS MUST TAKE PRIME PLACE IN THE UNION CONFEDERATION.*

Moreover, our task is to furnish it with a truly revolutionary programme which must take its inspiration from what we put forward in this document.

## XI Agreements and compromises

1. With the bourgeoisie we must make neither bloc nor agreement.

2. We can form blocs and sign agreements with the petit bourgeoisie as a class, but not with its political parties. The Left Front, and the Union Confederation are examples of this type of bloc, but we must take care to fight to put the proletariat at its head. Faced with attempts to make us follow the petit bourgeoisie, we must refuse and break these blocs.

3. It is possible that many pacts or compromises with different sectors will not come to fruition; nevertheless, they are a powerful instrument in our hands. These compromises, if they are undertaken in a revolutionary spirit, allow us to unmask the betrayals of the petit bourgeois leadership and draw their base towards our positions. The July pact between workers and university staff is an example of the way in which a broken agreement can become a formidable weapon against our enemies. When certain academics without any standing launched an attack on our organisation in Oruro, the workers and revolutionary elements from the University attacked them and so gained some influence amongst the students. The declarations made in this document must form the starting point of any alliance.

The success of a pact depends on us, the miners, initiating the attack against the bourgeoisie; we cannot expect petit bourgeois sectors to take such a step.

The leader of the revolution will be the proletariat. The revolutionary collaboration between miners and peasants is a central task of the FSTMB; such collaboration is the key to the coming revolution. The workers must organise peasant unions and must work with the Indian communities.

For this the miners must support the peasants' struggle against the latifundia and back up their revolutionary activity.

It is our duty to bring about unity with other sectors of workers as well as with the exploited sectors of artisans: journeymen and apprentices.

# Free Eleuterio Gutierrez!

## A statement by the Free Eleuterio Gutierrez Campaign

For decades Bolivia has been one of the countries most exploited by world imperialism. The whole economy rests on exports of tin. In October 1985, following the collapse in the international tin market, COMIBOL, the state owned mining corporation nationalised in the revolution of 1952 by the very President Paz Estenssoro who is again ruling Bolivia today, faced a dramatic program of privatisations and closures. On 22 August 1986, around 10,000 miners and their families left the town of Oruro, high in the Altiplano, on a 150 mile "march for life and peace". They were heading for the capital, La Paz, to bring home to the government and the industrial and urban workers the reality of the crisis engulfing the mining communities.

At Calamarca and San Antonio, just one stage from La Paz, troops surrounded the marchers, 162 miners were arrested, and the rest of the workers and their families were forced to return to Oruro at gun point. At each stage of their return to their mining areas, they received an ovation from the local communities. At the same time, the government declared a three month state of siege and published its plans to sell mines to the private sector. Since then the miners have been facing severe difficulties. The closures have meant mass redundancies and the dispersal of whole mining communities.

In the previous phase of struggle against government austerity measures, Eleuterio Gutierrez Marcani, a miner working in the Bolivar mining site, was arrested. His record as a worker and a class fighter is an impeccable one. As a miner he worked for 17 years in the Bolivar mine. His job was in the technical department as assistant to the mine engineer. He qualified by finishing a correspondence course, gaining skills in topography. He had the respect of his comrades by his dedication and achievements such as his role as one of the leaders in the successful struggle for the nationalisation of the Totoral mine. On various occasions he was elected as delegate to the Bolivian Mineworkers Federation congress.

Since September 1985, when Paz Estenssoro launched his infamous Decree 21060, implementing his right wing economic policies, the miners' answer was a heroic resistance, with hunger strikes and stoppages, including one at the mine in which Eleuterio worked. On the night of 17 September 1985, unknown persons stole two theodolites and a spirit level. On 30 September, Eleuterio and other workers were arrested for theft. Immediately, a workers' meeting was assembled which poured scorn on the accusation.

Eleuterio is a well known militant. In one of his letters he states "Because I have been a leading member of the union for many years, I have been regarded a 'danger-

ous element' by the managers". Eleuterio has been in the leadership of several militant marches on La Paz by many thousands of miners with the support of the peasants, students and many other workers. He is also a political militant—a Trotskyist. He stood as a candidate for the POR (Revolutionary Workers' Party) for the council in Oruro, where he was a member of that organisation.

Eleuterio is clearly a class war prisoner. The whole basis of the accusation rests on the testimony of a locally well known criminal element (Victor Rufino) that COMIBOL management has used to frame Eleuterio. On 16 October 1986, the mine workers of Bolivar District Mine, meeting in a general assembly, unanimously agreed to give every material and moral support to all the miners imprisoned in the jail of San Pedro in Oruro. Among those miners in prison was Eleuterio. Part of the resolution says:

"We demand the immediate release of our comrades in prison and at the same time we demand an immediate clarification of the offences they have been accused of."

Later, on 16 November 1986, Brother Emeterio Leano, General Secretary of the Bolivar miners' trade union branch and Brother Dioniso Gabriel, secretary of industrial conflicts, sent a letter to Dr Mario Escalante (the prosecutor in the Oruro court) in which they said the following:

"We interrogated Mr Rufino in a friendly way, asking him to tell us the truth and not to cause injury to the comrades accused by him; literally by his own free will and without any pressure, he stated that everything he said in the Bolivar mine and the city of Oruro was untrue, because the mining police have promised him a job with the company and also because he had been tortured all that night and threatened with death if he did not make a statement against these comrades [Eleuterio and Ballesteros] in line with the statement made by one of the technicians in the office where the comrades worked."

Also, these two trade union leaders stated in their letter to the prosecutor that:

"... Comrade Eleuterio Gutierrez has never had a bad record with the company and also with his trade union organisation, and least of all with his comrades at work and in COMIBOL."

The trade union leaders sent two copies of this letter to the prosecutor and, again, another one in similar terms on 18 August 1986, as testimony of the impeccable record of comrade Eleuterio and explaining how he was being framed by the managers and private police of COMIBOL. During the court proceedings it was demonstrated again and again that Eleuterio was innocent.

Rufino changed his testimony and recognised that he had accused Eleuterio under pressure from COMIBOL. The solicitors of the accused comrades, during the trial, proved all the way through that the case was a complete frame-up and that behind all these lies was "a sinister hand" (implying the hand of COMIBOL). Eleuterio's defence lawyer presented a legal document about the long criminal record of Rufino. All this has been ignored by the prosecutor; in a despicable show trial, Eleuterio has been condemned to seven years in prison. His only "crime"—in all this mockery of justice—is to be a class fighter and a Trotskyist. His fellow worker, Ballesteros,

has also been unjustly sentenced to seven years.

Eleuterio's imprisonment is part of a pattern of persecution of working class militants in Bolivia. He is languishing in prison because he put up a militant fight in defence of the interests of his class. Support for Eleuterio and Ballesteros by the international labour movement will be a valuable act of solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Bolivia, who are facing savage economic conditions and the greatest political threats. We urge you to get your political representatives and union leaders to take up this case now, which is about to go to appeal at the high court.

**Send letters, urging action and indicating support to:**

**The Bolivian Embassy  
105 Eaton Square  
London SW1**

**Trade Union Federation of Bolivian Mineworkers  
4th floor  
Ayacucho 288  
La Paz  
Bolivia**

**Letters of protest about the show trial and support for the appeal should be sent to:**

**Corte Suprema de la Nacion  
Sucre  
Bolivia  
(The Bolivian high court)**

**Send messages of support and donations for Eleuterio's defence to:**

***Free Eleuterio Gutierrez Defence Campaign*  
BCM 7750  
London  
WC1N 3XX  
England**

# *Barbaric Trotskyism: a history of Morenoism*

## Part one; 1941–1978

**"I believe that we have made many more mistakes than Trotsky or the Bolsheviks. When I say that ours has been a barbaric Trotskyism it is because I believe it to be the harsh truth and I am not being demagogic."**<sup>1</sup>

It is little more than a decade since Nahuel Moreno's Argentinian party (then the PST) declared itself to be "the largest Trotskyist party in the world". Despite the possible objections to this claim we must accept that the International Workers League (LIT), built around that party, is numerically the largest international "Fourthist" organisation to arise in the semi-colonial world and is the group which has the greatest majority of militants in Latin America. Nowadays the Morenoites maintain that they, along with the Mandelites, are the only two truly international organisations in the "world Trotskyist movement". In this article we propose to analyse the history and the programmatic ideas of Morenoism from its origin through to the late 1970s.

### **Moreno the anti-Peronist**

During the early 1940s there appeared within the ranks of Argentinian Trotskyism an important discussion on the character of the revolution in the semi-colonial countries. One section maintained that the slogan of "national liberation" was reactionary and that the main enemy was their own national bourgeoisie. This position failed to understand that Argentina was a nation dominated by imperialism and that this gave a lopsided and dependent character to the development of the productive forces in the country. By equating an oppressed nation with an oppressor nation this position would fall into the gravest error of identifying the nationalist and anti-imperialist movements of Latin America with European fascism. The other section of Argentinian Trotskyism, led by Liborio Justo, ("Quebracho") maintained that the slogan of "national liberation" was part of the democratic programme that the proletarian revolution had to complete. Even though this position of Justo was the closest to that of Lenin, he nevertheless held a series of stageist and sectarian conceptions.

In 1941 the Socialist Workers Party, (SWP(US)) and the Fourth International (FI) sent Sherry Mangan to Argentina and Chile to try to reorganise the Trotskyist ranks in those countries. Mangan committed an error in encouraging an organisational unification without a sufficient programmatic basis around those who counterposed the class struggle and socialist revolution

to the struggle for "national liberation". Justo refused to join the fused organisation, the PORS, and by 1942 had broken with the FI. His organisation, the LOR, disintegrated shortly afterwards.

It was in the context of these discussions that the young Hugo Bressano (Nahuel Moreno) entered Trotskyist politics. Initially he was with the official section of the FI. He then went over to Liborio Justo's group where he took the party name of Nahuel Moreno. Later he broke with this group to launch his own organisation, the GOM, in 1944, renamed the POR in 1946.

The relationship between the struggle for "national liberation" and the struggle for socialism was raised again, and with burning immediacy, during the rise to power of Colonel Juan Peron in the mid-1940s. The onset of war in Europe produced a growing economic and political crisis as the Argentinian government struggled to cope with the disruption of the country's trade. While the USA could, and to some extent did, replace Britain's exports of fuel supplies and manufactured goods to Argentina, US protectionism kept her markets firmly shut to Argentinian grain and beef. This provoked growing antagonism from the Argentinian bourgeoisie and encouraged anti-Yankee nationalism. This was exacerbated by the State Department's attempts to bludgeon Argentina, through economic sanctions, into declaring war on Germany, Italy and Japan and joining the Pan-American Defence Alliance.

By 1943 the conservative government of Castillo, which was already fragmenting, was removed by a military coup. General Ramirez's military government had a powerful nationalist faction represented by the United Officers' Group, which included Peron. Peron's group had gained the upper hand in the government by the start of 1944. Both "moderate" and "nationalist" wings of the military had been united by their anti-communism and the military regime marked its coming to power by breaking a major meat packers strike. Peron, however, recognised the need to lean on the working class organisations for support—both against the bourgeois and landowning opposition at home and against the pressures of US imperialism.

Through his control of the "Secretariat for Labour and Social Welfare" Peron set about winning over the trade unions to support the military regime. Through intervening in disputes and imposing settlements favour-

1. Nahuel Moreno "Conversations on Trotskyism" in *Notebooks from "El Socialista"* p47

able to the workers as well as through introducing state welfare measures—such as accident insurance—Peron had increasing success. By 1944, when both the USA and Britain had broken off diplomatic relations and the USA had frozen Argentina's gold assets and imposed an embargo on oil and machinery, the powerful railway workers' unions could be mobilised to demonstrate in the regime's defence. At the same time "opposition" unions, normally ones dominated by the Communist Party (CP) or Socialist Party, both of which supported the war and the allies' pressure on the regime, were not recognised as having "legal standing". These were often put under the control of government appointees.

Peron outlined his intentions very clearly to the Buenos Aires stock exchange in August 1944:

"Señores Capitalistas: don't be afraid of my unionism. Never has capitalism been firmer than now... What I want to do is to organise the workers through the state, so that the state shows them the way forward. In this way the revolutionary currents endangering capitalist society in the post war period can be neutralised."<sup>2</sup>

In this Peron succeeded. In 1945 an attempt from within the military to remove him from power resulted in the powerful strike movement of 17 October 1945. It restored Peron to power and led to his victory in the presidential elections of 1946.

Between 1946 and the early 1950s Peron consolidated his support amongst the urban workers and established control over a massively expanded trade union movement. The Peronist CGT went from half a million in 1945 to almost two and a half million in 1954. During this period, a favourable one economically for Argentina, the trade unions made significant gains in wages and conditions. Peron combined bombastic anti-imperialist rhetoric and demands for "national sovereignty" with very generous compensation for imperialist assets taken over (e.g. the British-owned railways). A nascent Labour Party formed out of the 1945 strike wave, which supported Peron as candidate in 1946, was dissolved by Peron in the same year and replaced by a Peronist "Party". It claimed to be committed to "social justice" ["justicialismo"] as a supposed third way between capitalism and communism. Despite the fact that in the last years of Peron's rule, before he was ousted by the military in 1955, the Peronist unions had become little more than the agents of the government's austerity measures, the Peronist movement retained a lasting influence over the labour movement, tying the workers' organisations to bourgeois nationalism.

The growth of Peronism from the mid-1940s disoriented the Argentinian Trotskyist groups even further. The group around Jorge Abelardo Ramos, an ex-member of the PORS, which published the journal *October*, went over from a sectarian position on the national problem to total opportunism. He began to develop a series of theories based on the idea that the national bourgeoisie was capable of taking revolutionary positions in the struggle against imperialism, that it was necessary to give critical support to anti-imperialist bourgeois governments and that it was necessary to move towards building a Latin American "national" left. Ramos would finally end up in the camp of bour-

geois nationalism. Another group around Pedro Milesi refused to break with their economic conceptions in relation to the national question and eventually disintegrated. The two most important Trotskyist groups that remained in existence during Peron's rule were the GCI of Juan Posadas and the GOM/POR of Nahuel Moreno. While the GCI moved in the direction of adapting opportunistically to the rising Peronist movement and, as a result, became the official section of the FI by 1951, Moreno's GOM/POR if anything tended to take a sectarian position in relation to the Peronist dominated trade unions and workers' organisations.

Moreno's GOM/POR correctly declared that "Peronism is a reactionary right wing movement". It wrote in capital letters that it was the "VANGUARD OF THE BOURGEOIS OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE GREATEST GAINS OF THE WORKING CLASS"<sup>3</sup>

While this was an accurate description of Peron's aims it should not have led revolutionaries to ignore or write off the workers being organised into Peronist led unions. Doing just this the GOM/POR proposed the destruction of the Peronist inclined CGT, siding with the minority "CGT No 2" controlled by the CP and Socialist Party, whose leadership sided with the US embassy and had a record of sabotaging strikes which affected "anti-fascist" employers.

Sectarianism is the response of the opportunist who is afraid of his own shadow. The sectarian, on losing time and resources through his policies and on realising that this method is a dead end, then tries to recover lost time through opportunist policies. Sectarian abstention from the Peronist unions was transformed by Moreno into complete integration into the Peronist Party.

### Moreno the Peronist

The 1951 third world congress of the FI not only endorsed and codified the centrist positions developed on Yugoslavia since 1948, but also extended these liquidationist positions to Latin America. The resolution "Latin America: Problems and Tasks", while containing some orthodox general formulations on the relation of communists to "anti-imperialist movements", was pervaded by exhortations to the sections not to "isolate" themselves from the masses through sectarianism.

At this time, a distinction was made between bourgeois nationalism—e.g. Cardenas, Peron, (Peron was described as "a reactionary government of the national bourgeoisie")—and supposed "petit bourgeois anti-imperialist movements" such as the MNR of Bolivia, the APRA of Peru, Auténticos in Cuba, etc. These latter movements were held to be potentially "revolutionary" in their struggle with imperialism (later Peron was added to this list).

Thus in Bolivia the FI section was advised that in a situation where the (in fact bourgeois nationalist) MNR led a mobilisation against the government, they were not to abstain:

"... but on the contrary intervene energetically in it with the aim of pushing it as far as possible up to the seizure of power by the MNR on the basis of the progres-

2. Quoted in D Rock *Argentina 1516-1987* London 1987 p257

3. N Moreno "Anti-imperialist mobilisation or class mobilisation" in *Permanent Revolution* (theoretical and political organ of the POR Argentina) No.1 p20



sive programme of the anti-imperialist united front.”<sup>4</sup>

In such a circumstance the section would advance the slogan of a “workers’ and peasants’ government” based on the Trotskyists and the MNR! Developing later out of this perspective was the idea of “entryism sui generis” into this movement, entering for long periods with the objective of winning over the left wing or even “winning over the whole movement”.

Moreno’s group which was present and participating in the congress, enthusiastically endorsed this resolution as well as the proposal to fuse all the Argentinian groups with the, now official, section, the GCI:

“Our party enthusiastically welcomes this revolutionary measure . . . According to this judgement the militants of the POR prepare themselves for entry into the section . . . The third world congress of the FI . . . has recognised one of the organisations that lays claim to the FI, the GCI, as its Argentinian section. The event is simply magnificent and transcends the limitations of our own Trotskyist organisations to become one of the most auspicious acts in the life of the Argentinian working class in particular and Latin America in general.”<sup>5</sup>

Despite this egregious praise the process of integrating Moreno into the Posadas group did not prosper. A little later Moreno joined with the SWP(US), the PCI (Lambert) and Healy’s group around *Socialist Outlook* to form the “International Committee”. This new organisation was born in dispute with the “Pabloite” leadership of the FI and was built as a new organisational alternative. The IC criticised Pablo for putting forward deep entryism into the Stalinist movement. However the sections of the IC would practise a much deeper entryism in the very heart of the social democratic and bourgeois nationalist movements, none more so than the Argentinian IC section under Moreno.

### Change of line

In Argentina, while Posadas’ Pabloite group kept to an opportunist line but maintained an independent party, the Moreno group agreed to dissolve itself into Peronism. As one of the leaders of the POR at the time put it:

“We were opponents of the Peronista government, implacable adversaries until 1954, when we saw the coming of an imperialist and anti-labour wave, and we reacted against it.”<sup>6</sup>

Certainly by 1954 all the indications were that the ruling class was moving to get rid of Peron. Mobilised behind the Catholic Church, driven on by a deepening economic crisis, the bourgeois and petit bourgeois poured onto the streets until the army delivered the coup de grâs in September 1955. But far from defending an independent proletarian standpoint—being neither for Peron nor for bourgeois reaction—Moreno’s grouping made a 180 degree turn and became the most slavish opportunists in relation to Peron and his movement. In 1954 the POR dissolved itself to join the newly formed Socialist Party of National Revolution (PSRN), which was a pro-Peronist party, having split from the Socialist Party because of its anti-Peronist stance. In the PSRN the Morenoites joined up with the likes of Jorge Abelardo

Ramos, who helped develop the PSRN programme. This was a classic “Stalinist” programme—first pressurise the national bourgeoisie to achieve independence from imperialism, then develop the proletarian revolution. Moreno soon controlled the PSRN mouthpiece *La Verdad* (The Truth) in Buenos Aires.

When Peron was overthrown in 1955 and the PSRN declared illegal, Moreno’s group continued to work with the Peronists producing a paper called *Palabra Obrera* (PO) which declared itself an “organ of revolutionary workers’ Peronism” produced “under the discipline of General Peron and the Peronist Supreme Council”. The paper was linked to a group of “left” Peronist trade union leaders called the “62 organisations” which acted as the transmission belt for maintaining the hold of Peronism—bourgeois nationalism—over the Argentinian trade unions.

The entry tactic, as developed by Trotsky and the ICL in the 1930s, was aimed at the social democratic parties—especially in Europe. The victory of fascism in Germany and the transparent responsibility of Stalinism had given rise to strong left currents in these parties, initially resistant to Stalinism and open to the revolutionary ideas of Trotskyists. Trotsky recognised the possibility of winning over these centrist currents to revolutionary communism by a short term entry into these parties, raising the Trotskyist programme and winning the best elements in a sharp struggle with the reformists. Moreno’s strategy was the opposite of this policy. Moreno entered an overtly bourgeois party, not a workers’ party, for a protracted period without raising any criticism of Peron.

An example of this is shown in issue 100 of PO of 4 September 1959. The edition is dedicated to reporting the first Congress of PO. In not a single congress resolution, nor in any part of the periodical can we find the least reference to Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky; instead we find a long quotation from Peron with his picture accompanied by fulsome and extensive praise. Neither are we liable to find the least reference to communism, socialism, a workers’ government or the need to build a workers’ party; instead we find the promise of the vindication of Peron and his programme:

“*Palabra Obrera* is not a publishing enterprise to show off photos of Peron . . . [we believe] in complying with Peron and the movement . . . Along the road we have, more than once, had to confront a campaign by our very own comrades, especially leaders, who allege that we are not Peronists, that we are splitters in saying what we think. Analysis of our progress shows that we do not pick fights with anyone; in order to maintain the unity of Peronism we propose to the best activists . . . that they join PO to give the Peronist movement the direction that the working class deserves, along with General Peron.”

Throughout the whole of this special edition there is not a trace of a class analysis of Peronism. Instead of proposing that the working class breaks with this bourgeois movement which was ever more tied to the Yankees and anti-communism, they proposed that there should be more “worker” candidates on the lists of a bourgeois party that they defended more than anyone else, in order to preserve its unity!

4. “Latin America: problems and tasks” Resolutions of the third world congress, in *Fourth International* New York, Nov/Dec 1951

5. *Proletarian Front* No.72, 3 December 1951

6. Ezequiel Reyes, quoted in R Alexander *Trotskyism in Latin America* Hoover Institute p61

7. *Palabra Obrera* No.100 4 September 1959

According to PO, Peronism was made up of two wings: the "softs" and the "hards". PO placed itself in the "hard" line, loyal to Peron:

"Workers' Peronism of the hard line, PO carries to its ultimate conclusion the economic programme begun by General Peron."<sup>8</sup>

The duty of all Marxists consists of prosecuting the class war, in preserving the independence of the working class from the bourgeoisie and its institutions. Morenoism, instead of attacking the most prominent and dangerous employers' party there has been in the history of Argentina and trying to make the workers break with Peron, attempted the impossible by climbing on board the bourgeois bandwagon and identifying itself with Peronism. Morenoism not only renounced the strategy of building workers' parties to make the proletarian revolution, but also took as its own the "economic programme begun by General Peron". That is to say, one of the absolute defence of private property against the proletariat.

In the 1950s no other current claiming to be of the FI went to the same extreme of class collaboration. The "Revolutionary Workers Peronism" group of Moreno even found itself further to the right than the right-centrist Posadas.

In 1958 elections were staged in Argentina. Peron was not permitted to stand so he cobbled together an alliance with one of the right wing representatives of imperialism and the oligarchy. Bourgeois nationalism, increasingly anti-working class, sought legitimacy before the most conservative sections of its own dominant class. Thus Peronism called for a vote for the reactionary Frondizi. Nevertheless, hundreds of thousands of workers who had supported Peron refused to obey this order to vote for Frondizi. The whole of the mass electoral movement against Frondizi was expressed by a million abstentions, 36% of votes being blank.

In these circumstances it was essential to try to intervene in order to drive a wedge between the working class and the Peronist bourgeoisie and launch a campaign for workers' candidates. Electoral tendencies to class independence did exist. Even the small party of Posadas, Pablo and Mandel presented itself in the guise of the "Workers' Party" and in only three districts in the province of Buenos Aires they won a significant total of 15,424 votes.

The subordination of Morenoism before Peronism was so acute that they called for a vote for the oligarchist Frondizi:

"On deciding to call for a vote for Frondizi, *Palabra Obrera*, despite considering it extremely dangerous that splits could appear in the masses when everyone is 'carried away' with the blank vote, accedes in a disciplined way, not because it considers it better than a blank vote, but in order to safeguard the unity of Peronism and only for that."<sup>9</sup>

The unity of Peronism was more important than the independence of the working class!

The Morenoites spoke the truth when they stated that "analysis of our progress shows how we do not pick fights with anyone, in order to maintain the unity of Peronism". Peronism was an expression of private



Juan and Eva Perón shortly before his death

property. Morenoism was the guardian of its unity. Perhaps the famous call of Marx and Engels should have been changed to: "Workers of the world unite . . . behind General Peron!"

This same line was applied in other areas. In Peru for example the group allied to Moreno participated in the creation of Belaunde's party Acción Popular. In 1956 the Peruvian POR split between those persuaded by the tactic of "entryism" into the APRA (supporters of the International Secretariat) and those who preferred to do the same with Belaundism (supporters of the IC). Belaundism was born as a bourgeois nationalist movement with a tenuous connection with the trade unions. Never at any time did it have any serious organic weight in the workers' movement (as did other nationalist parties from the APRA to the MNR) and its political positions were always very timid. Inside the Belaundists the IC section edited the periodical *Left*. Years later the same Belaunde would go on to massacre the peasant rebellion and sentence Hugo Blanco and other Morenoites to long gaol terms.

The "Revolutionary Workers' Peronism" of Argentina along with the POR of Chile and the POR of Peru were the basis of the foundation in 1957 of the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox Trotskyism (SLATO) that under the dominance of Moreno, acted as the bureau of the IC for this continent. If this was orthodoxy what could revisionism do worse! In fact the apologists for the IC tradition dare not look at their Latin American representatives in this period.

#### From Peronism to Castroism

Moreno's subservience to Peronism even led him for a short time to back Batista against Castro! Peron was on very close terms with Batista and Franco. When the 1959 revolution occurred Moreno equated it with the counter-revolution which overthrew Peron. The outcome was logical; it was necessary to have fought along

8. *Palabra Obrera*, *ibid*

9. *Palabra Obrera*, *ibid*

with Batista against Castro.

After holding this reactionary position for a short time (through his attachment to Peron) Moreno rapidly became a Castroite (and also a Maoist) convert. By 1961 Moreno was more than willing to dump the theory of permanent revolution as the price for the favour of these Stalinist currents:

"Of course, life has brought out the gaps, omissions and errors of the programme of permanent revolution . . . The dogma that only the working class can accomplish the democratic tasks is false. Sectors of the urban middle class and peasantry are, on occasion, the revolutionary leadership . . . History has rejected the theory that the proletariat, in the backward countries, is the revolutionary leadership . . . Mao Tse Tungism, or the theory of guerrilla war, is the particular reflection in the field of theory of the present stage of world revolution."<sup>10</sup>

It is little wonder that, given this developing position, by 1964 Moreno has joined the SWP(US) in reunifying with the International Secretariat to form the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI). The key to this reunification was uncritical support for the Castroites in Cuba, the recognition that a "blunt instrument" was indeed sufficient to achieve a socialist revolution. Thus *Palabra Obrera* declared:

"Fidel, like Peron here, brought together under his leadership diverse sectors of the Cuban economy, politics and society. With them he took power and smashed the corrupt bureaucracy of the old regime. But the Cuban employers and oligarchy did not want to compete for the fruits of victory with the peasants and workers. The oligarchy and imperialism put pressure on in a thousand different economic, political and military ways. And Fidel had to choose; continue the revolution to its ultimate end or build a bridge to concili-

ation. Fidel did not doubt for an instant; he broke all the bridges which connected him to the exploitative oligarchy and strengthened those which linked him to the most downcast sections of the people. A consequently revolutionary leadership thus forged its new revolutionary cadres with a programme and organisation linked closely to the Cuban poor."<sup>11</sup>

Not a word of criticism of this regime is uttered. The suppression of the "Trotskyists" of the Posadas current, the purging of the trade unions, the stifling of workers' democracy all go by without a protest from Moreno. The message is clear; Fidel Castro is a substitute for the revolutionary party. In Argentina we have to find from within Peronism a new Fidel and this principle can be applied elsewhere in Latin America.

In the 1950s the Morenoite strategy had consisted of integrating themselves with the bourgeois nationalist movements (such as Peronism). The 1960s saw the same method applied to Castroite currents. The Cuban revolution had an important impact on the left wings of both the nationalist and Stalinist parties. Now they were stirred to try to apply the old bourgeois anti-imperialist programme (which the traditional nationalist parties, MNR, APRA, etc, had put to one side in their pacts with the oligarchies) by armed methods. Thus were born everywhere new Castroite "movements", "fronts" and "armies". In 1964 Moreno's group in Argentina fused with the openly Castroite current, the FRIP, to form the Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores (PRT). From then until 1968 Moreno was at one with the policy of the USFI leaders, supporting the "guerrillaist" turn.

Castroism was a special synthesis of classical Latin American revolutionary nationalism and Stalinism. Originally a petit bourgeois nationalist movement, Castroism was forced to break with its right wing and with the, at first reluctant, support of Moscow, bureaucratically expropriate the bourgeoisie in order to build what from the start would be a degenerate workers' state. Encircled by imperialism, Castro chose to support all those governments and parties of the bourgeoisie that had not broken off relations with Cuba and as a form of blackmail support petit bourgeois guerrilla struggles in those countries which were for the blockade. The strategy of Castro was one of popular fronts and peaceful coexistence. The call to arms at specific moments was subordinate to this perspective. Castroism is inimical to the building of workers' parties. Instead it favours armed petit bourgeois movements. The Castroite bureaucracy was the enemy of workers' councils in Cuba, Czechoslovakia and anywhere else. Its goal was always to tie the proletariat to other social classes. It was to this movement that Moreno subordinated SLATO and later the USFI sections in Latin America with disastrous results.

#### The guerrilla line in Peru

The practical implications of Moreno's turn towards Castroism and Maoism were not long in coming. In Peru, where the POR had split between International Secretariat supporters (POR(T)) and the supporters of

10. N Moreno *La Revolucion Latinoamericana* Buenos Aires 1961

11. *Palabra Obrera* 1964



Nahuel Moreno

the International Committee (POR), the latter rapidly turned towards the Stalinist and nationalist currents influenced by Castroism and Maoism. They proposed to these currents the formation of a single party. Their slogan was, "The dissident APRA, the Leninist Committee, the MSP and the independents must declare if they are with the party of the Peruvian revolution". The dissident Apristas (APRA Rebelde) were a radical faction led by De la Puente and Valle Riestra which later became the MIR. The MSP was the party of Ruiz Eldredge, Sofocleto, Moncloa and other bourgeois third-worldists. Note that it is the Peruvian revolution that is spoken of—that is a national and not a proletarian, socialist or internationalist revolution. The programme they proposed for this fusion consisted of five points:

- 1 That elections are a fraud
- 2 That there was no peaceful road to the Peruvian revolution
- 3 For nationalisation of the large imperialist companies
- 4 Introduction of agrarian reform
- 5 Urban reform.<sup>12</sup>

Note that they did not propose that the nationalisations be under workers' control and without compensation and moreover that they refused to call for the nationalisation of the property of the national bourgeoisie and the "small imperialist companies".

This is a programme limited to bourgeois democratic demands and which accepts the maintenance of private property. It is also a little more moderate than the original five-point plan of the APRA.

With this line the Peruvian group formed the FIR (Front of the Revolutionary Left) in 1961. Similar positions led the Chilean POR to form the People's Socialist Party (PSP) and then the Chilean MIR. In Argentina Moreno's group united with the "Frente Revolucionario Indoamericanista Popular" of Santucho to found the PRT. These parties were created with populist policies sprinkled with Marxist phrases and abounding in the terminology of the armed struggle and Castroism.

The POR was the first group within the SLATO to implement the new guerrilla line. At its November 1960 congress, it adopted a set of "insurreccional theses" which outlined a strategy of guerrilla warfare, based on the peasantry, as a means of seizing power. A few months later, a full meeting of the Latin American Secretariat of Orthodox (sic) Trotskyism endorsed this line (April 1961) and promised to raise funds for the struggle going on in La Convencion Valley in Peru.

There, Hugo Blanco, a member of the POR recruited by Moreno in Argentina, had been working amongst peasant unions since late 1958. Returning to Cuzco in 1960, carrying the new guerrillaist line, the POR/FIR set about organising the armed struggle.

Blanco maintained at the time that the revolutionary party in Peru would have to be of a "special type" because it would be composed of the peasant unions. A union, as a united front body which groups together many diverse currents of thought and is composed generally of workers who have not broken with the ideology of the dominant class, can never replace the revolutionary party. Even less when the union is of a

non-proletarian class—the peasantry. While the "Trotskyists" in Cuzco were bravely pursuing peasant unionism, in Lima the FIR was pulling the worker and university cadres out of their centres in order to dedicate themselves to the "expropriation" of banks.

The development of peasant organs of a soviet type and armed militias in the countryside is a correct policy that must be tied to the creation of similar proletarian movements in the cities. Alongside this must go a campaign to build a workers' party. The formation of "liberated zones" which require the abandonment of work in the proletarian movement and its subordination to a petit bourgeois leadership is a strategy that has never and will never lead to the socialist revolution. This was the Maoist and Castroite strategy of "surrounding the cities from the countryside", a strategy that relegated the proletariat of the cities to a passive, supportive role. The main theoretical work of the Peruvian Morenoites, the "Insurreccional Theses", openly said that there was no need to apply the old model revolution of Lenin and Trotsky in Peru. Rather it was necessary to follow the road of China, Cuba and Algeria of proceeding from a prolonged war in the countryside to the city and thence to the construction of "popular revolutionary governments".

This strategy led to disaster for the POR/FIR in Peru. The bank "expropriations" of late 1961 and 1962 led to massive repression in La Convencion and by 1962 Blanco and his small band of followers were on the run in the mountains, with most of the FIR members in prison or in hiding. Blanco was caught in 1963 and spent the next seven years in prison. The launching of the Chilean MIR led to similar disastrous results, with the "Trotskyists" being unceremoniously expelled as the MIR became assimilated to Castroism.

Blanco and Moreno were later to claim, in their faction fight with the Mandelites of the International Majority Tendency (IMT) over guerrillaism, that they had always opposed the worst excesses of the guerrillaist strategy. Certainly it was true that as things went badly wrong in La Convencion, Moreno drew back from the practical conclusions of the "insurreccional line" (endorsed by SLATO) as he was to do later in Argentina. But Moreno's criticisms at the time were related to the *universal* application of the guerrilla strategy throughout Latin America and the danger of developing armed actions isolated from the masses. His critique drew not on the lessons of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, but instead held up the model of Mao's Stalinist-led mass peasant movement in China.

### The OLAS episode

In Argentina, Moreno was once more to become an enthusiast for Castroite guerrillaism at the end of 1967. Moreno's slavish opportunism in relation to every twist and turn of the Castroites was demonstrated even more clearly in this period. The launching of the Organisation of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS) in Havana in August 1967 was seen by the USFI leadership and Moreno as a signal that Castro was about to throw his

12. N Moreno *La Revolucion Latinoamericana* op cit

weight behind the guerrilla organisations in Latin America. This, combined with the despatching of Che Guevara to Bolivia, turned Moreno into a fervent guerrillaist again. Once again the tactic of "entryism", this time into OLAS, was placed firmly on the agenda. Moreno declared that:

"If in the past the trade union was our organisational vehicle for posing the question of power, today OLAS, with its national combat organisations for armed struggle, is the only organisational vehicle for power."<sup>13</sup>

This position was justified retrospectively by Moreno on the basis that the whole USFI thought that the foundation of OLAS presaged the opening up of a "continental civil war" in Latin America in which the "Trotskyists" had to participate "critically".<sup>14</sup> Of course there was no criticism at the time, only a rush to "enter" OLAS.

Moreno only reversed his position when it became clear that the Cubans, following the disaster in Bolivia and death of Guevara, were quickly abandoning the OLAS strategy and mending their fences with Moscow and the Latin American Stalinist parties. When a section of the PRT (with the encouragement of Livio Maitan) prepared to launch a guerrilla movement, the ERP (Peoples' Revolutionary Army), Moreno split the PRT and moved into opposition to "the guerrillaist turn" in the USFI, a turn he had helped to foster.

The examination of the positions and practice of the Morenoites during this period destroys two myths. Firstly, that the politics of the IC sections in Latin America represented any sort of "orthodox Trotskyism", any revolutionary alternative to the centrism of the Posadas dominated "Pabloite" sections. The sections of SLATO committed as systematic and equally opportunist errors as their International Secretariat brethren. Both currents demonstrated again and again that they represented a form of centrism which had nothing in common with Trotskyism.

Secondly, the record dispels the myth assiduously peddled by Moreno himself as well as his epigones that this current stood against the guerrillaist wave which led many hundreds of militants adhering to the IS or IC fragments of the Fourth International to their deaths.

Sorry to say, there was not one tendency throughout Latin America which defended the proletarian perspective of Trotskyism against petit bourgeois guerrillaist deviations in the 1960s.

#### From Castroite parties to reformist socialist parties

The late 1960s saw the Morenoite current on a rightist turn. Moreno's PRT (*Verdad*)—named after his journal—allied with Hansen of the SWP(US) to oppose the full scale guerrillaist turn launched at the ninth congress of the USFI in 1969. This belated retreat from the capitulation to Castroism and Maoism did not herald any fundamental change in Moreno's politics. In fact, it represented an electoralist, rightist reaction to ultra-left adventurism, not a revolutionary critique of it.

By 1972, Moreno had found a new, social democratic group to fuse with, led by a long time reformist, Juan

Carlos Coral of the Socialist Party of Argentina (PSA). The fusion programme of what became the PST was printed in the 13 November 1972 *Intercontinental Press*. In an accompanying interview, Moreno amazingly described the party as "95% Trotskyist". In fact it put forward a democratic programme, albeit dressed up in revolutionary verbiage, rather than a communist transitional one. It called for the "building of a great socialist, a revolutionary workers' party deeply rooted in the realities of the nation in solidarity with the socialist movement of Latin America and the world".

The "socialist movement" was (deliberately) left unspecified. The reader could assume Castroism, Maoism or even the Second International. The unification agreement did, however, reject any "outside control or direction", a token of its internationalist commitment! It called for the "democratisation of the armed forces" and the end of "their use in the service of capital" and the suppression of their "repressive role". Whether this wretched social democratic formulation was considered by Moreno to be part of the 95% Trotskyism or part of the 5% something else was not made clear. Finally, the emergence of a "socialist" government was seen in purely parliamentary terms through the "Constituent Assembly [which would] appoint a workers' and people's popular government which would expel the [foreign] bases and construct a socialist Argentina".<sup>15</sup>

Communists know that the armed forces have a central purpose; the defence of the interests of the dominant class and repression of the remaining classes. To ask the armed forces to stop being repressive is tantamount to asking a lion to stop eating its victims. This position is a classic social democratic and Stalinist one, sowing fatal illusions in the democratisation of capitalist armies. The demand for a workers' government elected via a constituent assembly is a Menshevik demand but it remained a permanent Morenoite formula.

Revolutionaries are obliged to fight for democratic demands (including a sovereign constituent assembly) at the same time as maintaining that only direct action and the formation of workers' councils can impose proletarian demands. The workers' government must be the product of the workers' councils and the armed militias. The reformists want the workers to believe that a socialist government may come out of a parliamentary majority. Communists know that although the "socialists" might control parliament, the real power resides with the bourgeoisie and its armed forces. To deceive the masses with the idea that socialism can come through the parliamentary road or by "abolishing the repressive role of the armed forces" is to politically disarm the proletariat and limit it to the arena of bourgeois democracy.

Moreno's fusion with Coral's Socialist Party represented a complete capitulation to social democratic reformism. Having taken on the colours of Peronism for many years, Moreno's organisation was now to combine it with a chronic adaptation to "constitutionalism". Far from "being a revolutionary workers' party", the PST distinguished itself by its fawning opportunism towards Peronism which, at this time, was on the verge of its "second coming".

13. N Moreno "La Revolucion Latinoamericana, Argentina y Nuestras Tareas" quoted in SWP (US) *International internal discussion bulletin* Vol X No.4 April 1973

14. See "A scandalous document - a reply to Germain" in SWP (US) *International internal discussion bulletin* Vol XI No.4

15. "The basis of unification of the PSA/PRT" in *Intercontinental Press* 13 November 1972

The overthrow of Peron had been followed by numerous regimes, either direct military ones or civilian regimes tolerated by the army as long as the Peronists were prohibited from participating in the elections. Peronism, however, remained the major political force in Argentina, especially within the trade unions. By the end of the 1960s there was a growing working class struggle, including an important popular struggle in Cordoba, led by the car workers in May 1969 which shook the regime. Major strikes accompanied by growing guerrilla actions by sections of the Peronist movement—the Montoneros, as well as by the ERP—provided a growing crisis in the military regime of General Lannusse in the early 1970s.

### The PST's accord with the bourgeoisie

There was a growing belief amongst the ruling class that the only person who could control the working class, through the Peronist trade unions, and disarm the left was Peron, who was in exile in Spain. Having participated in the Grand National Accord of General Lannusse, which aimed at a carefully controlled return to a restricted democracy, *Avanzada Socialista* (the PST's paper) on 8 November 1972 commented on Peron's imminent return: "Why is Peron coming? Hopefully it will be to impose fighting workers' candidates and not to make deals with the oligarchy". In peddling such illusions in Peron, the PST joined the rest of the Peronist "left" in looking to Peron to help fight the growing rightward forces.

Far from supporting the left Peronists, after his assumption of power in October 1973, Peron, with the support of the army and the Peronist bureaucrats in the CGT, proceeded to attack the Montoneros and the Peronist Youth Movement, introducing new measures against "terrorism". Meanwhile, the activities of the "Argentinian Anti-Communist Alliance"—a right wing death squad linked to the federal police—were ignored. In the second half of 1974 this organisation murdered seventy prominent leftist intellectuals, lawyers and workers. By early 1975 they were kidnapping and killing leftists at the rate of fifty a week. Peron died in July 1974, leaving his wife, Isabel Peron, in control of an increasingly crisis-wracked regime facing a rising workers' movement defending its living standards in a growing economic slump.

During this last period of Peron's government the PST became a craven defender of "institutionalisation", that is of the existing bourgeois democratic system. In March 1974, in the situation of increasing right wing killings and left wing guerrilla activity, the PST was drawn into an accord with six bourgeois parties and the CP. In the presence of General Peron the PST (represented by Coral), promised to adhere to "the institutional process", that is to renounce revolutionary struggle. It took *Avanzada Socialista* three months, under pressure from the IMT, to announce that this had been a mistake (!) and that they had in fact not signed it! Signed or not, their agreement with this perspective was clear. After one of many meetings in the government

palace, Juan Carlos Coral is quoted as saying to Isabel Peron, then president:

"The PST declares its categorical opposition to a coup d'état and violence in the form of terrorism and guerrilla activity which, although with different motives, are equal in provoking coups and thus stand in opposition to the democratic demands of the masses. We have no illusion that we can change the policy of the government by speeches but surely you Señora Presidente, and your ministers have taken note of some of our observations."<sup>16</sup>

This scandalous equating of the "left" Peronist and ERP guerrilla forces with the right wing death squads was only equalled by the PST's response to Videla's coup when it actually came on 24 March 1976—a coup that was to lead to 30,000 dead and "disappeared" Argentinians.

A militant of the PST at the time explained the situation within the organisation thus:

"The coup d'état found the party plunged into confusion. In December 1975 we had embarked on the preparations for the forthcoming elections, starting from the position that there existed a dominant 'institutionalist' section in the armed forces, backed by wide layers of the bourgeoisie. When in March, one week before the coup, the strikes against the Mondelli plan spread across the whole of the country, and it was the time to press for a general strike against the government and the supporters of the military coup, there appeared in *Avanzada* an article on the situation explaining that the National Committee was not united and therefore we had no position! Once the coup had happened the party spread hopes in its moderate and democratic character."<sup>17</sup>

The new press of the PST declared:

"We are in the presence of the most democratic military government in Latin America. It was impossible to wait for another nine months in this situation of nightmare until the election took place. The whole people were crying out against the government [of Isabel Peron] . . . The eruption of 24 March can be traced to these causes. Despite the principled objections that any healthy democratic person would raise against military coups or any concrete judgement of the measures of the present government, it is a fact that the military carried out in their own way what the popular wave of anti-government discontent was unable to do because of the defection of its leadership."<sup>18</sup>

What could this mean other than that the dictatorship of Videla was progressive! The second issue of the PST's press after the coup—it changed its name to *La Yesca* (*The Flint*) because it was a semi-legal publication—continued the same line despite the growing repression:

"*La Yesca* continues to exercise its right to freedom. Its continuation is proof that the democratic breach is widening and that freedom, this freedom with which it speaks to General Videla who has no wish for an obedient press, is strengthened."<sup>19</sup>

General Videla responded to this craven appeal by banning both publications!

Morcoism was seeking to gain legal space by making political concessions to the most bloodthirsty dictatorship in the history of Argentina. Shortly after the

16. *Avanzada Socialista* 15 October 1974

17. Quoted in "On the positions of the Argentinian PST" *Politica Obrera* publications

18. *Cambio* No.1, quoted in *ibid*

19. *La Yesca* (*The Flint*) quoted in *ibid*

defeat of the 1905 insurrection in Russia the Bolsheviks started calling the most rightwing Mensheviks "liquidationist" because they held that it was necessary to maintain a legal workers' party at all costs by liquidating clandestine organisations and adapting them to what might be permitted by the Tsar. Moreno followed the liquidationists and not Lenin. On the occasion of the boycott of the world football championship of 1978 held in Argentina, the PST stated that, "the campaign mounted abroad by the ultra-left" had benefitted the dictatorship because:

"It only helped its plans with the ambiguous and utopian boycott tactic and by exaggerations [sic] and inaccuracies on the nature of the repression we endure... It is this inadequacy of the government's response to human rights which is provoking the increased international outcry."<sup>20</sup>

Morenoite policy consisted of pressurising the dictatorship into democratising itself and correcting its "inadequacies" on "the matter of human rights". This led to the call to form a Popular Front with the civilian parties of the bourgeoisie in order to seek a return to the oligarchist constitution of 1853 (which defended private property and repressive forces against the workers):

"The socialists make a call for unity in action to all political parties, especially to the Justice Party [Peronists], the UCR [the party of Alfonsín] the PI and the PC [Communist Party], to launch a huge workers' and popular movement for the full implementation of the 1853 constitution."<sup>21</sup>

At the same time it led to the seeking out of an alliance with the gangster-like Argentinian union bureaucracy which, in contrast with many other countries, is so reactionary that never in any way has it bothered itself by getting involved with any reformist workers' party and had assisted the dictatorship against many worker activists.

### The Brazilian "Convergence"

In Brazil the military dictatorship halfway through the 1970s was facing growing opposition. In 1974 the Portuguese revolution took place, which overthrew the fifty year old fascist dictatorship and which in turn affected many countries (especially Brazil). Morenoism was determined to capitalise on the leftest image of the Portuguese Socialist Party (PSP). To those many thousands of anti-militarist activists who put their hopes on the PSP of Soares, Moreno offered the idea of forming a grand Brazilian socialist party. Apeing the symbol of the Portuguese SP (which even now is used by the Brazilian section) and brandishing a reformist programme, the Morenoites summoned a convergence of the socialists. His Brazilian section soon became the "Socialist Convergence". They called upon such people as bourgeois ex-minister Alfonso to participate in this project. In the 1978 elections the Morenoites called for a vote for "worker" and "socialist" candidates of the MDB. This was the only opposition party permitted by the dictatorship, the forerunner of the current governing party in

Brazil and it had an unmistakeably bourgeois programme. The Morenoites called for a vote for those candidates of a bourgeois pro-imperialist party that showed sympathy for social democracy!

Trotskyists would have proposed a totally different policy. Rather than attempts to form a reformist or centrist socialist party that would help the bourgeoisie tame the masses and eliminate any danger of going beyond the process of "democratisation", it had to call for the formation of a workers' party. Here it would have used the revolutionary workers' party tactic developed by Trotsky in discussion with the SWP(US) in the 1930s. Fighting to build a mass movement of workers and trade unionists to break with the bourgeois parties and fighting within that movement for a revolutionary socialist programme to be adopted by such a party. Moreno's "socialist convergences" and "movements towards socialism" were a centrist parody of this tactic.

Rather than the alternative of voting for one of two reactionary parties of the dictatorship, revolutionaries had to call for a spoiled vote. Rather than peddle reformist theses creating illusions in a parliamentary road to socialism, Trotskyists advocate a struggle for democracy fought for by revolutionary means, struggling to build workers' and peasants' committees against the dictatorship, mobilised around the demand for a sovereign constituent assembly. In this context Trotskyists would have argued for any workers' parties to take up the burning demands of the masses: land to the tiller—for agrarian revolution, expropriation of the imperialist holdings and of the capitalists, for nationalised industry under workers' control, for breaking up the army and its replacement by workers' and popular militias. This was the method of struggle both for a revolutionary constituent assembly and for the struggle for workers' councils—soviets—and a workers' and peasants' government.

In contrast to the revolutionary programme of Trotskyism Moreno's group peddled only parliamentary cretinism:

"In the constituent assembly we will struggle for the workers to secure the vote for a constitution that will organise the country in a new way, under socialist planning. Or we will struggle for it to vote in a workers' government and a socialist constitution that will create the basis for the construction of a socialist Brazil."<sup>22</sup>

### Blanco and FOCEP's failures

In Peru despite the revolutionary possibilities opened up in the period 1978-80 the Morenoites showed themselves incapable of transcending their hopeless electoralism. A massive general strike in 1978 had forced the right wing military government of Bermudez to concede a "constituent assembly" based on a restricted franchise whose powers were limited to drawing up a constitution. While the Mandelites joined the UDP, an electoral coalition of Maoists, Castroites, the Stalinists and the bourgeois nationalists of the PSR, Moreno's group the PST—led at that time by Hugo Blanco—helped form FOCEP (the Workers', Peasants', Students'

20. *Opcion*  
August 1978

21. *Correo*  
*Internacional*

22. *Convergencia Socialista*  
No.5 November  
1978 p4, quoted  
in *Internacional-*  
*ism* (review of  
the FIT) Vol 2  
No.4 April 1982

and People's Front).

While FOCEP rejected alliances with bourgeois parties, a departure from Moreno's normal practice, the PST was incapable of developing a revolutionary programme for power. The PST's programme for the elections (which never *once* mentioned the fact that the party claimed to be Trotskyist!) did not even address the crucial question of the nature of bourgeois power and the need to break up the armed forces. Instead the transition to a socialist state is seen in terms of an evolution of mass struggles and "peoples' assemblies" until a workers' government emerged out of a coalition of workers' parties based either on a future democratic constituent assembly or peoples' assembly. None of the crucial tactics for achieving workers' power—the use of the indefinite general strike, the formation of workers' councils, the construction of workers' militias, figure in this "programme".

FOCEP's success in gaining 12% of the vote was to strengthen further its parliamentary illusions. On arriving at the Constituent Assembly the FOCEP deputies, instead of denouncing the reactionary character of it and its right wing majority and calling for immediate elections to a sovereign constituent assembly, moved to the right of their initial programme. They proposed that the existing assembly take the power in order to carry out democratic and anti-imperialist tasks. It was a Menshevik slogan not only because it sowed parliamentary illusions but because of its idea of a transitional "socialist" government. Ledesma, the president of FOCEP, called for the transformation of the undemocratic assembly into a Paris Commune. The PST proposed that it elect Blanco President of the Republic! The first "Trotskyist" President of a bourgeois republic!

The programme the PST wanted Blanco to carry out was one that was limited and bourgeois. Blanco had to be president not in order to expropriate the bourgeoisie... but in order to call new elections within three months and thus democratise the dictatorship of the capitalist class! Such was the confusion of these "Trotskyist" deputies and parties once their mass fronts had placed



Hugo Blanco (centre) and other FOCEP deputies

them in the bourgeois parliament. Within less than two years the threadbare nature of these policies, their failure to offer the workers and peasants any concrete means of struggle, and thus their inability to turn mass support into a revolutionary party rooted in the work places and farms, led to a collapse of the Peruvian far left and with it the influence of "Trotskyism". "Trotskyism" in Peru entered a decline so profound that today there are very few people who lay claim to these ideas in the country.

#### Launching the LIT

For the first three decades of its existence Morenoism had taken few steps to build its own international tendency. It had shown itself, like the other fragments of degenerate Trotskyism, capable of the most gross opportunism and capitulation in whichever faction it found itself at the time—the International Committee, USFI, Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, etc. In 1979 it was to launch its own international project under the banner of "orthodox" defender of the revolutionary party against the USFI's liquidationism in Nicaragua. The second part of this article will look at the hollowness of this "left turn" and the increasingly crisis wracked nature of the Internationalist Workers Party (LIT) today.



# The Heritage we renounce

## A review of a new history of the Fourth International

*The heritage we defend: A contribution to the history of the Fourth International*  
by David North, Labor Publications, Detroit, 539 pp \$12.95

Any book that claims to be "a critical Marxist history of the Fourth International" should be worth reading. The only other two books available in English which make a similar claim are *The Death Agony of the Fourth International* (Workers Power/Irish Workers Group 1983) and Pierre Frank's *The Fourth International* (Inklings 1972). In the event only the *Death Agony* lives up to its claims. North's book, like Pierre Frank's, has more in common with the publications of the Catholic Truth Society—riddled with chop logic, exhortations to the worshippers to keep their faith and a disdainful attitude to the facts of history.

In Frank's case the purpose of his work was to gloss over the manifold errors of the USFI wing of the Fourth International. North, on the other hand, has written a defence of the International Committee tradition. To the student of Trotskyist history who is concerned to understand the past the better to build in the present neither book is of much use. Not only is North's book not a "history of the Fourth International" (over half the chapters are exclusively devoted to the American SWP), it does not even attempt to address the real political problems raised in the fifty years since the foundation of the FI. North prefers to take refuge in well-worn proclamations of 'orthodoxy' and fiery incantations against the 'revisionists'.

North is the leader of the US Workers' League (WL) and guru of the misnamed "International Committee of the Fourth International" (ICFI). This motley crew is all that is left of Healy's ICFI which blew apart following the collapse of the British WRP in 1985. His book began as one of those interminable series so beloved of the Healyites (this one ran for 35 weekly episodes in the WL paper, the *Bulletin*), in response to an article by North's one-time ICFI comrade, Mike Banda of the WRP. Explaining its inordinate length North wrote, "autopsies can sometimes be messy and arduous affairs". We should add, especially if performed by butchers.

Having overseen the expulsion of Healy, Banda began to drift out of "Trotskyist" politics. His long article "27 Reasons Why the International Committee should be buried forthwith and the Fourth International built", published in *Workers Press* in February 1986, was but one step along a road which has since led him to embrace Stalinism. In this article, which piqued North so much, Banda mixes up a series of pertinent criticisms with one-sided assertions and historical howlers. North either avoids or fails to answer the former, and leaps upon and heroically demolishes the latter. He does so in the very worst traditions of Healyite polemic. Not content with proving Banda wrong North has to elevate the importance of his own somewhat minor role in world

affairs, by investing in the meanderings of Michael Banda a world historic significance. Thus, Banda is not just wrong he has become "an open political agent of world imperialism and its Stalinist lackeys".

### A partial history of the ICFI

The best we could have hoped for from North would have been some source material reproduced from the ICFI's files. Alas North's book fails to provide anything new. He sticks closely to the orthodox Healyite view of history, whereby the bad guys (the "Pabloites") are beaten by the good guys (the International Committee). Concomitant with this is the analysis of the forces of revolutionary Marxism as a series of ever decreasing circles, located, after each split in the ICFI as whichever faction David North happened to be in. North adds one new twist, namely the discovery that by the late 1970s the WRP had a "right-centrist character". (p 8) Thus for the last ten years North and his handful of acolytes have been the sole embodiment of Trotskyism, and the only true bearers of the banner of the Fourth International. The fact that for most of this period there was not a shred of evidence of political disagreement between North and Healy is conveniently overlooked. Nor will references to North's published disagreements with Healy over dialectics pass muster as evidence of his opposition inside the ICFI. It did not lead to any break with the ICFI's scandalous support for dictators in the Arab world or with any other aspect of that outfit's rotten political practice.

The last quarter of the book is entirely devoted to infighting in the Healyite ranks. This subject deserves study, but it is of no more interest (and probably of less) than the 1965-77 debates in the USFI over guerrillaism, the Moreno split of 1980, the Moreno/Lambert fusion, the USFI debate over permanent revolution and so on. None of these events or issues are even mentioned in North's "history". His reply would no doubt be that these "revisionist groups" do not represent the "Fourth International": how then does he explain the fact that even the 1971 Healy/Lambert ICFI split is not discussed? Even as a history of the ICFI North's book is a failure.

North's method of historical analysis is crude and simplistic. Wherever Banda criticises the history of the FI or of the ICFI, North will regurgitate the "orthodox" reply if one exists. He will quote Cannon or the ICFI at length, but he will not critically examine the problem and try to arrive at a politically solid conclusion. Let us take one of the early examples, that of the role of the

Trotskyists during World War Two, to which North devotes over fifty pages.

### The FI in World War Two

Banda attacked the Socialist Workers Party of the USA (SWP) for not having put forward a revolutionary defeatist position in the war, and raised similar criticisms of the other sections. As we have shown in *The Death Agony of the Fourth International*, this criticism (which was first raised by the ultra-left Munis at the time of the 1941 Minneapolis trial of 28 leading SWP members), is justified. The SWP in general, and Cannon in particular, did not clearly state "the defeat of your own [imperialist] government is the lesser evil", as the *Transitional Programme* puts it. Despite pages of bluster, North is unable to disprove this criticism of the SWP. Instead, he prefers to concentrate on reproducing Cannon's replies to some of Munis' more stupid and ultra-left criticisms. Given that the question of defeatism was the one criticism to which Cannon did not reply, North obviously did not feel in a good position to take up the argument! The whole problem with such an approach is that it leaves the problem of the SWP's war policy unanswered. If we are to learn from what was an essentially healthy period of the SWP's life then we have to face up squarely to the mistakes as well as the gains.

Instead of looking at the articles in the SWP's press during the war North dodges around the question of political line. Had he bothered to examine the SWP's material he would have achieved two things. He would have disproved Banda's stupid assertion that Cannon was involved in a "criminal betrayal". The SWP's line was always characterised by anti-imperialism and therefore was not (as Banda suggests) the product of a hopelessly social patriotic organisation. He would have also discovered that there was a real centrist vacillation by the SWP on the question of clearly stigmatising the US ruling class as the "main enemy" and of sharply posing the implications of a defeatist policy in relation to it. A vacillation and a betrayal, however, are two different things, a point that the Healyite school of polemical thuggery (to which North belongs) could never accept.

To defend the reputation of the other sections, North simply provides a list of the militants who were killed by the Stalinists and the fascists during the war. Although he would claim by so doing to be honouring their memory, nothing could be further from the truth. The memories of the those who heroically gave up their lives to try and build the Fourth International is not served by a selective and deceitful rendering of that organisation's history. The failure to face up to the errors committed by the British, French and other sections built into the practice of the post-war FI a bad method. And that was a disservice to the martyrs of the Fourth International, a disservice that North continues to perpetrate.

North confines himself to reproducing Cannon's attacks on the German exiles, the IKD, who said some similar things and who represented little in the FI. Perhaps he didn't know about the errors in France, in which case we can only suggest he was a bit presumptuous to try and write "a critical Marxist history". More

likely he preferred to stay on the safe ground, which had already been trodden by one of his "orthodox" forefathers.

And when he is obliged to depart from the traditional scriptures of the IC, North is unable to deal with the central problem which faced the Fourth International in the post-war years, the nature of the overturns in eastern Europe, Yugoslavia and China, and the nature of Stalinism. There is no "orthodox" account of these events or of the FI's analysis of them. However much North, and many others who cling on to a defence of the IC tradition, may protest, the history of the Healy group, the SWP and the French Trotskyists reveal unambiguously that International Committee "orthodoxy" was riddled with the same methodological flaw as "Pabloism", and held exactly the same centrist position on the nature of the Yugoslav revolution. Indeed the IC went on to render Pablo's centrism more profound in their various love affairs with Stalinists like Mao and Ho Chi Minh.

Trapped by his political method and his fidelity to the "IC tradition", North is unable to explain the political degeneration of the FI in the post-war years. Indeed, he barely even attempts any explanation, simply asserting that "The Third Congress of 1951 revealed that a full-blown revisionist tendency had developed within the leadership of the Fourth International" (p 197). How? Why? These questions are not even posed, never mind answered.

### Errors of perspective

He does not deal with the problems of perspective that were raised in the post-war years, except (predictably) to quote Cannon against Goldman-Morrow. He does not appear to consider it worth his (or our) time to examine the political bases of the FI's perspectives of 1946, which were essentially those of the *Transitional Programme*, involving an imminent revolutionary crisis within which the FI would come to the leadership. Was this adherence to the pre-war perspectives correct or not? Any "critical Marxist history" of this period has to answer this decisive question. North simply avoids it. When faced with the practical consequences of this analysis, in the shape of the American SWP's 1946 "Theses on the American Revolution", which foresaw the rapid transformation of the SWP "from a propaganda group to a mass party strong enough to lead the revolutionary struggle for power", North gushes about their "bold and inspiring perspective" (p 12). The fact that this perspective was completely wrong, the fact that it disoriented the SWP after the war, the fact that it led directly to a strengthening of the SWP's national centredness and their willingness therefore to "leave" the running of the FI to the Europeans, is neither here nor there for North.

Yet understanding this error of perspective is essential to understanding the errors of the post-war FI, and the roots of its centrist degeneration. Clinging to the pre-war perspective of an imminent revolutionary upsurge, the FI failed to understand that developments in the world situation had begun to falsify these perspectives, particularly in the USA and western Europe. The first signs of world economic stability were clear. FI mem-

bers in Britain and the USA noted these developments, giving the lie to the claim that such a recovery was impossible to foresee (though of course its duration was impossible to predict at that stage). Equally important in terms of reorienting the FI's perspectives was the recognition that the revolutionary situations that had come out of the war (Greece, Italy, Vietnam) had been betrayed by the Stalinists.

Other potential flashpoints (France, Germany) had been headed off by the bourgeoisie and their labour lieutenants, through "democratic" counter-revolutions. Moreover, the victories of the Red Army had allowed Stalinism to expand in eastern Europe and gain prestige in the west, thus contradicting Trotsky's perspective that the war would finish it off.

These developments were not understood by the FI leadership—Pablo, Frank, Mandel, Healy and Cannon. Instead this leadership collectively buried its head. Its false perspectives merely became matters of "tempo". It paved the way to the FI's political collapse, a process that began in earnest in 1948 after the Tito-Stalin split and culminated at the centrist Third World Congress in 1951.

### The Stalin-Tito split

Following the public declaration of a split between Belgrade and Moscow the FI's perspectives, increasingly at odds with the objective situation, now came to be used to justify an abject capitulation to Stalinism. For ten years the young FI had been living with the perspective of imminent revolution. However, its forces remained as small as they had been in 1938, and the mass reformist parties of the working class were still as strong as ever, despite the predictions of the *Transitional Programme*.

With the Tito-Stalin split, the FI found itself presented with the apparent fulfilment of its perspectives for Stalinism's demise and therefore of the possibility that important sections of the Stalinist apparatus splitting to the left. By aligning the FI with these forces the leadership—and they all endorsed the "Open Letter" to the Yugoslav CP which hailed the Stalinist butcher Tito as a friend of the revolution—hoped they could find a shortcut to the difficult goal of establishing revolutionary parties and a mass revolutionary international.

The whole of the FI (not Pablo, Pablo, Pablo, as North claims) embraced the view that the CPs were, under exceptional conditions such as civil war, capable of "projecting a revolutionary orientation". From this the FI concluded that Tito was a centrist. Yet, apart from fulfilling Trotsky's prediction that Stalinism would fragment along national lines following its wholehearted endorsement of "socialism in one country" there was no evidence that Tito's break with the Kremlin altered his politics one bit. Yet the race was on in the FI to grovel before Tito. Pablo was adept at it, but before we exonerate the IC, let us remember Healy's role in organising work brigades to go to Yugoslavia, his junkets at the Yugoslav embassy in London and other such antics.

These events occurred after the Second World Congress of the FI (1948) and marked the opening of a period when fundamental revisions were made of the Marxist

analysis of Stalinism, leading to the adoption at the Third Congress of the resolution on Yugoslavia which declared against political revolution in that country and argued that no section of the FI should be built there. Only the state-capitalist Swiss section voted against (for their own erroneous reasons) this monumental revision of Trotskyism.

Yugoslavia became the role model for all Stalinist parties that, to one degree or another, demonstrated an independence of the Kremlin bureaucracy. It provided the practical justification for the "theory" that under certain conditions (Pablo provided them for everyone with his notion of the impending world war-revolution, revolution-war) centrist formations would inevitably develop within Stalinist, social-democratic or petit bourgeois nationalist groupings. These would open the road to a workers' state which was merely "deformed" in the same sense as Lenin talked of bureaucratic deformations in the early Soviet state, and therefore in need of reform.

Enshrined within this theory was the justification for the FI's strategy of "deep entry". North is happy enough to attack "Pablo" for developing this analysis, but he does not either link this "entrism sui generis" to its theoretical roots, nor does he dare discuss Healy's thoroughly opportunist (and Pablo-approved) deep entry work in the British Labour Party (1948-56). Once again, his "orthodoxy" absolves him from explaining reality. This is not surprising, because close analysis reveals that the same method lies behind the FI's position on Yugoslavia, the SWP/Socialist Labour League's position on China and Vietnam, the USFI's position on Cuba, Lambert's position on the Algerian MNA, the WRP's analysis of the PLO, Gaddafi, etc. For the ICFI to attack the FI on Yugoslavia would threaten their whole "Fourth International" dreamworld.

This is shown all too clearly when North, who spends a lot of time repeating that the theoretical stakes were very high in the 1947-51 debate on the nature of eastern Europe, manages to avoid giving us any inkling of what the ICFI's answer to these problems is. Similarly he evades any discussion of the Chinese Revolution and the IC's attitude towards it. These are not mere oversights: they are the product of forty years of systematic political evasion and doublethink by Healy and his followers.

### The 1953 split

For North, as for all who claim the "IC tradition", the pinnacle of the post-war FI was the 1953 split, followed by the foundation of the IC. North, ever a man for the grand allusion (or is it illusion?) compares this ill prepared manoeuvre to the 1903 Bolshevik/Menshevik split. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Whatever the confusion over the 1903 split, it was clear even at the time that the two tendencies represented two different methods in terms of intervention in the class struggle. The political consequences of these different methods became apparent over the next decade. The exact opposite was the case in the 1953 split. Both "sides" had exactly the same methodology: they agreed on the centrist nature of the Yugoslav CP and on the revolutionary nature of Mao's China. They agreed

on the need for "deep entry" into the mass organisations of the working class. Where they disagreed was that the ICFI sections did not want to be subjected to the control of the International Secretariat (IS) and did not want to have to enter the communist parties. They did not disagree with the key revision lodged within "entrism sui generis", namely, that for the duration of the entry (a protracted period argued Pablo) there should be no open fight for the key, relevant elements of the Trotskyist programme. Indeed the question of liquidationist entryism was agreed on both sides of the split: both the IS and the IC praised Healy's opportunist practice in the British Labour Party.

In our book on the history of the FI, we described the split as having been "too early and too late". It was too early because the political differences between the IS and the IC were not sufficiently developed, and the split, therefore did absolutely nothing to help educate the cadres of the FI world wide against centrism. It was too late because the key issue—the nature of Stalinism and of Yugoslavia—had been unanimously accepted at the Third Congress two years previously. That had been the moment to fight, but Cannon, Healy, Lambert, etc kept quiet, precisely because they agreed with the centrist analysis.

Thus the SWP's "Open Letter" of 1953, through which Cannon and Dobbs bounced their co-thinkers into a split may sound "orthodox" on the nature of Stalinism but it does not deal with the real issue that led to the FI's political degeneration: are the Stalinist parties capable of "projecting a revolutionary orientation", as the whole of the FI agreed was the case in Yugoslavia and China? This error, common to both sides of the 1953 split, prevented the IC from ever functioning as a revolutionary alternative to the centrism of the IS. Moreover it paved the way for the 1963 fusion that produced the USFI.

### The IC and the Cuban Revolution

The fact that Healy did not participate in that fusion does not mean that he maintained a revolutionary position as against the SWP and the IS on the nature of the Cuban Revolution, agreement on which was the ostensible basis for the formation of the USFI. Indeed, Cuba shows only too clearly the inability of the Healyite IC of pre-1985, and of the North ICFI today, to understand the key developments in the post-war world.

Faced with the IS/SWP analysis of Cuba as a relatively healthy workers' state, the ICFI (embodied by Healy's SLL) argued that no workers' state existed and started hunting around for a phantom bourgeoisie to explain Cuba's supposed capitalist nature. The motivation for this sudden adoption of state capitalism with regard to a country which, by the mid-1960s had an economy clearly identical in nature (though not scope) to the USSR, was purely factional. Healy would not brook unity with the IS and its representatives in Britain. To justify his factionalism Marxist categories were gutted of meaning as Healy "discovered" the dialectic to explain the contradictions in the SLL's analysis of Cuba. In his hands the dialectic became a means of obscuring reality.

The bankruptcy of the ICFI SLL position was shown by the ease with which the Lambertists (who had main-

tained it for years) dropped it without so much as a whimper when they fused with the Morenoites in 1980. North himself unwittingly underlines the problem with his organisation's analysis. In the chapter on Cuba, North never once mentions the class nature of the Cuban state! Instead he prefers to sneer:

"The claim that the class character of the Cuban state could be determined simply on the basis of the expropriations and nationalisations carried out by Castro was a fundamental departure from the Marxist theory of proletarian revolution." (p 355)

North is wrong and the pro-Stalinist leanings of the IS and the SWP do not make him right. Hansen and the IS, like the Fourth International in the 1940s, were able to register empirically the development of a Cuban economy in which the law of value—the mainspring of capitalism—had been suppressed. Their real error was not their characterisation of Cuba as a workers' state. It was their inability to understand the counter-revolutionary manner, from the standpoint of working class power, in which this workers' state had come about. As with Yugoslavia and eastern Europe they combined empirical recognition of the creation of a workers' state with a political capitulation to the Stalinists who brought about a bureaucratic social overturn.

The IS/SWP relegated the political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat to a secondary question. None of the existent workers' states are healthy, precisely because the working class does not hold state power through soviets or similar bodies, and, except in the case of the USSR, they never have done. These states are all controlled by a Stalinist military-bureaucratic apparatus which rules over the workers and poor peasants. The key task of revolutionaries in these countries is to smash this apparatus and launch a political revolution.

However, the brutal fact of the existence of a post-capitalist economy, of a degenerate form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, was there in Cuba for all with eyes to see. Castro and co, like Mao and Tito before them, carried out a counter-revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, against the immediate desires of the Moscow bureaucracy, though with its eventual material backing, and without the independent and active participation of the workers and peasants or their independent organs of struggle (soviets).

Indeed the independent organisations of the workers had to be bureaucratically suppressed before the overturn. In doing so, the Castroite caste defended their own immediate interests, not those of the Cuban workers and peasants. Furthermore, they were only able to undertake this transformation on the basis of i) the bourgeoisie having failed to regain direct control of its repressive forces after the revolution against Batista i.e. a situation of dual power existing and ii) their own adoption of the bureaucratically degenerate USSR as a model; that is, their embracing of Stalinism. This analysis, developed at some length in our book *The Degenerated Revolution* (1982), maintains the revolutionary analysis of Stalinism and avoids the Alice-in-Wonderland "theorising" of the ICFI, who, as far as we are aware, still maintain that capitalism exists in Cuba to this day.

The ICFI's position on Cuba is not original. Their argument consists of the following syllogism: only the working class can expropriate the bourgeoisie; the

working class did not make the Cuban revolution; therefore, no expropriation has taken place. The final logic of this position, (at which the ICFI balk) is that workers' state equals workers in power. This was the position of Shactman, Bruno R and others during the 1930s, and it implies that the USSR is no longer a workers' state. At least the state capitalists/bureaucratic collectivists are prepared to bite the bullet on this point, even if it means junking even more of "the old Marxism".

### Inferior to Wohlforth's history

North does not dare come face to face with this problem. If he did he would be obliged to explain why the ICFI hailed Ho Chi Minh (the butcher of the Vietnamese Trotskyists) as the leader of the Vietnamese revolution. Where was the working class' direct political involvement in the overthrow of capitalism in North Vietnam in the 1950s? Where were its organs of state power? To avoid this contradiction the ICFI in the 1960s sought refuge in contrasting the "people's war" of the Vietnamese Stalinists with the small scale guerrilla operations of the Castroites prior to their seizure of power. The former was classified as a form of proletarian revolution, the latter as a means of placing a Bonaparte in power who would rule on behalf of a phantom bourgeoisie. This theoretical nonsense dressed up in a dialectical garb was designed to justify the IC's capitulation to one wing of world Stalinism as opposed to another. And, in not confronting the real problems of Stalinism and their impact on the IS and ICFI, North is skating over the fundamental problem of the last forty years. A failing that robs his analysis of any real use or interest.

Not all contributions from the "IC tradition" are as sterile as North's. In this respect it is a great shame that he did not bother to re-read more closely *The Struggle for Marxism in the USA* (1964), written by his ex-comrade Tim Wohlforth when Wohlforth was the leader of the Workers' League. Despite very serious faults, at least Wohlforth's document tried to locate the FI's problems in its political method with regard to its analysis of Stalinism and of the Yugoslavian Revolution. However, his political answer to this problem—his theory of "structural assimilation"—contained reformist implications and he found himself unable to apply it to Cuba, the ostensible cause of the split between the SWP and the ICFI (see *The Degenerated Revolution* for a full critique of Wohlforth's position).

North's book owes a great deal to Wohlforth's choice of quotes, but does not use any of Wohlforth's more pertinent insights. Instead, in the best Healyite tradition, North sees the world as being divided into goodies and baddies, marionnettes without any motivation or relationship with the class struggle. For example, North's "explanation" of the degeneration of Cannon and of the SWP in the mid-1950s resolves itself thus:

"Exhausted and unable to fight opportunism, Cannon became an opportunist." (p 323) Politics is reduced to age and physical fatigue. Ah! the wonders of science!

Even the sections dealing with the history of the SWP are unenlightening. Whilst drawing attention (like Wohlforth) to the SWP's totally false perspectives on

McCarthyism (their characterisation of it as a form of American fascism), North is unable to see the perspectival continuity between the assumption that "American fascism is on the march" (1954) and the 1946 "American Theses", which saw the American revolution just around the corner. Exaggerated catastrophism—something the ICFI, and now North's ICFI, have always revelled in—was lodged in these perspectives. The SWP's political activity over this decade is of a piece with, and was intimately connected to, the FI's post-war disorientation, as we have recently shown (*Permanent Revolution No.7*). There is no material in his coverage of the SWP that was not dealt with by Wohlforth that is not freely available in Cannon's writings. Indeed, on a whole series of questions, like the SWP's use of the labor party tactic, their electoral work or their union work, North has nothing to say. The interested reader will learn nothing of substance about the life of the SWP from this account.

Given that North has invested a lot of political (and financial) capital in Healy's paranoid "Security and the Fourth International" campaign, it is not surprising that this surfaces in this book, too. Thus the new reader can discover that, according to the ICFI's army of amateur sleuths, the current leadership of the SWP is composed of FBI agents. North also attacks Jean van Heijenoort, one time secretary of Trotsky, as:

"an odious and cynical subjectivist—whom Trotsky had dismissed from his household in November 1939." (p 109), who "for reasons which he never chose to make clear [...] maintained an extensive file of addresses of his old contacts within the Trotskyist movement." (p 122)

Like "Security and the Fourth International", these accusations are based on amalgam and innuendo typical of the "IC tradition" and directly culled from Stalinism by the leaders of the IC. Despite van Heijenoort's later errors, he was not "dismissed from Trotsky's household", nor was he at the time "an odious and cynical subjectivist". He was sent to the USA to develop politically and to participate in the political life of the SWP, and Trotsky so valued his contributions on dialectical method, written against Burnham, that he described them as "excellent", and got two of them reprinted in *Clave*, the journal of the Mexican section (*Oeuvres*, 23 p 196). Further, despite breaking from the FI and becoming a state capitalist, van Heijenoort continued to help researchers into Trotskyist history and to participate in the *Cahiers Leon Trotsky*, a quarterly journal set up by French historians around the Lambertists. In his role as Vishinsky, North ignores all this. It is far more to his taste to insinuate that van Heijenoort was, surprise surprise, an FBI agent. (p 122)

What we have in this book is serious distortion of the entire history of the Fourth International since 1940. It is as useless to the revolutionary fighter as Banda's outpourings were. Virtually every page contains an historical or political error. The reader who is already familiar with the history of the FI will learn nothing new; the inexperienced reader will be horribly misinformed and misguided by North's twisted Healyite logic. If you do read it, and it is an expensive waste of time at £10 a throw, make sure you re-read this review after every chapter a necessary protection against the IC wastes of the North!