

Nahuel Moreno

The Transitional Program Now

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Nahuel Moreno

The Transitional Program Today

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Preface

Juan Carlos Giordano¹

In this important reissued work, *The Transitional Program Today*, the reader will find forty-one theses prepared by our teacher Nahuel Moreno in the early 1980s. His goal was to prepare our current with a revolutionary political line, responding to the new political phenomena after World War II.

It was an attempt to update *The Transitional Program* developed in 1938 by Leon Trotsky, the great Russian revolutionary, the document that laid the theoretical and political groundwork for the founding of the Fourth International. What a task! And Moreno addressed it with the method he always taught us, considering Marxism as a guide to action, not a dogma, and that any analysis, forecast or policy must be continually updated in the light of ever-changing reality. Confirming, in turn, that the foundations of the Fourth International and the theory of permanent revolution (opposed to the revolution by stages put forth by the Stalinists) were still more relevant than ever.²

In the second half of the twentieth century, what happened was Trotsky's "highly unlikely" hypothesis: that petty bourgeois or Stalinist parties, under exceptional circumstances, may go beyond what they themselves wanted on the road to a break with the bourgeoisie. This forced a re-elaboration of his writings since these leaderships expropriated the bourgeoisie in a third of the planet — China, Eastern Europe, Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea, together with the former USSR — leading to the then bureaucratic workers' states. But there was no progress towards socialism; rather, they led to the restoration of capitalism.

Reading *The Transitional Program Today* will allow the reader to find answers to several questions: Why, if there have been rebellions in every continent have we yet failed to defeat capitalism? Why has there not been another revolution like the Russian of October 1917 headed by a revolutionary party? Why has "guerrilla warfare" ended in failure, demonstrating that, even if arms are taken up, if there is not a correct revolutionary strategy, the revolution cannot succeed? Why, if revolutionary socialists

1 Member of the national leadership of *Izquierda Socialista* [Socialist Left] and editor of its newspaper, *El Socialista*. He joined the ranks of the current led by Nahuel Moreno in Cordoba in the early 1980's, when the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* (PST) was coming out of clandestinity. A lawyer, he was a delegate for several years in the Professional Association of Judicial Employees (AGEPJ) of that province. In 2013, he was elected national deputy for *Izquierda Socialista* in the slate of the Workers' and Left Front (FIT) for the province of Buenos Aires as part of the rotating seats obtained between the different parties part of it.

2 Nahuel Moreno wrote these theses to develop a draft program with the purpose of unification with the organisation of French Trotskyist leader Pierre Lambert (Lambertism). The unification took place in 1980 under the banner the Fourth International – International Committee (FI-IC) between the Morenist current — at the time called the Bolshevik Fraction (BF) — and Lambert's current, the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI). Years later, this unification was thwarted because Lambert abandoned this program altogether, by capitulating to the bourgeois imperialist government of France led by François Mitterrand.

believe that Trotskyism was essentially correct, do parties which proclaim themselves as Trotskyist today do not yet influence large sectors of the masses to fight for the taking of power?

The answer to these questions is to be found in the “red thread” that criss-crosses the whole of reality. “The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterised by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat”, begins the *Transitional Program*. In other words, humanity has no future unless the treacherous leaderships are not defeated by revolutionary leaderships that fight for workers’ governments in each country and in the world, defeating imperialist capitalism and building socialism. “The alternative is clear. No longer is it barbarism or socialism, but holocaust or Trotskyism”, says Moreno (*The Transitional Program Today*, page 94 of this edition). Is building revolutionary parties, then, the fundamental task? The answer is clearly yes, generating significant debates.

Many activists may believe that it is enough to occupy a fighting position in a union, a student centre, a neighbourhood or a parliament. Or perhaps that it is best to mobilise “without apparatuses or parties” for the struggles to come to fruition. Others directly arrive at the wrong conclusion that there is no need to build revolutionary parties to confront capitalism, because they are making significant progress with alternatives like Chavism in Venezuela. Using these arguments, some in the vanguard support horizontalism (which proposes changes without taking power) or on “anti-partisanship”.

We understand these activists. But we are clear: without revolutionary leadership there will be no destruction of capitalism or construction of socialism.

The different moments in the construction of the revolutionary leadership

The III International founded by Lenin and Trotsky after the revolutionary triumph that brought the proletariat to power for the first time in history in the former Russia — October 1917, under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party— was the first attempt to put forth a centralised revolutionary international, a global party to lead the international socialist revolution. According to Moreno, with it the crisis of revolutionary leadership began to be overcome. But this attempt was thwarted. The absence of strong Bolshevik parties, the inability to build them on the run and the betrayal of social democracy at that time, caused severe defeats, particularly of the German revolution.¹ It caused the beginning of the bureaucratisation of the former USSR and of this necessary internationalist instrument. It began 20 years of defeats caused by Stalin, erasing from the historical memory of the world proletariat the lessons of Red October, the only one which has taken place so far.

Subsequent to World War II, in a contradictory way, and in the most revolutionary stage of all time, Stalinism and the non-worker currents, after expropriating the bourgeoisie, were strengthened, defying Trotsky’s prediction that they were declining and there would be a mass Fourth International. This left Stalin – and not the heroic Soviet people — as the victor against Nazi fascism. This explains the weakness of the Fourth International from its origins. To this must be added the murder of Trotsky in 1940 on the orders of Stalinism.² Trotsky embodied a unique experience, having led with Lenin in the seizure of power, the civil war, the Red Army, the III International and the early years of the Russian revolutionary workers’ state. At the same time, we must add that Trotsky did not anticipate that their ranks were going to suffer another unfortunate fact: opportunism.³ The latter yielded to

1 At the end of the inter-imperialist war of 1914–18 Europe was shaken by workers’ mobilisations encouraged by the victory of the first socialist revolution in Russia in 1917. In November 1919, the powerful German working class staged a revolution that overthrew the monarchy of the Hohenzollern (German emperor). The betrayal by social democracy and the absence of a leadership like that of the Bolsheviks in Russia led to the fact that the conquest of democratic freedoms did not advance to the triumph of a workers’ government and socialism.

2 Leon Trotsky was assassinated in August 1940 when he was living in exile in Coyoacan, Mexico. An agent of Stalin, Ramon Mercader, a member of the Spanish Communist Party, executed him with an ice pick blow to the head. Stalinism had already voted at meetings of their Central Committee that Trotsky was the number one enemy of the parasitic bureaucracy, greater even than imperialism. Trotsky had been the object of several previous attacks, including one conducted by the famous Mexican CP painter, Alfredo Siqueiros. “I find myself near death by the blow of a political assassin... please tell my friends ... I’m sure ... of the victory ... of the Fourth International ... forward,” said Trotsky before his death to his secretary Joseph Hansen, member of the leadership of the SWP (Socialist Worker’s Party), US Trotskyist party (*The Prophet Outcast: Trotsky, 1929-1940*, Isaac Deutscher). His funeral was held in Mexico. “About 300,000 men and women filed past the coffin, while on the streets played the ‘Gran corrido de Leon Trotsky’, made by an anonymous bard” (ibid).

3 Revisionist opportunism was led by Ernest Mandel and Michel Pablo after the Second World War. “The common thread

each leadership taking power or spearheading a revolutionary process, classifying it as progressive; it betrayed revolutions, such as the Bolivian in 1952,¹ and refused to build Trotskyist parties, because it believed the issue of revolutionary leadership was already solved. This prevented Trotskyism from seizing opportunities to gain influence in the working class and other popular sectors, fighting to seize power in a country, and thus return to the titanic task that Lenin and Trotsky began in the 1920s, of creating a new international workers' organisation.

That is why both Trotsky and Moreno, in *The Transitional Program Today*, insist that the great task of the Russian proletariat was getting rid of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Trotsky said: "the chief political task in the USSR still remains the overthrow of this same Thermidorian bureaucracy. Each day added to its domination helps rot the foundations of the socialist elements of economy and increases the chances for capitalist restoration" (*The Transitional Program for the Socialist Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, p. 104).

Moreno did not live through the revolutionary fall of the Berlin Wall because he died in 1987. Our current — already without him— considered it a colossal fact that the masses defeated the single-party dictatorships in the former USSR and Eastern Europe. But the fact that in this process a Trotskyist mass current did not arise made it impossible to prevent a return to capitalism in those countries where the bureaucracy was already a transmitter of restoration. The absence of a revolutionary leadership left room for restorationist currents to sow illusions in capitalism, prevailing confusion in the minds of the masses.

It is not true that Leninism led to Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration. Nor that what failed in the former USSR was "excessive statism", as the communist parties, "recycled" Stalinist currents or Chavism in Venezuela say. Firstly, this is to spread the most treacherous false consciousness: to make believe that socialism does not work, that Marxism failed, and that the most pressing need for the workers of the world, the need to build Leninist revolutionary parties is a task that has been "shown" to be impossible or wrong. Secondly, this tries to justify that it is not necessary to expropriate the bourgeoisie, and that it is enough to have a "mixed" economy, as Chavism claims in order to cover up the fact that it is governing in the service of the multinationals. Or that there is a "updating of socialism" in Cuba, when what returned to the island were the laws of the capitalist market and private ownership of the means of production.

We categorically say that capitalism is the failure. And that it was Stalinism that cut short, with executions and betrayals, the colossal experience of the Bolshevik party.

For our current true socialism is connected to the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, workers' democracy and full freedom for the masses to participate in the economic and political planning of a country. It is for this we need revolutionary parties that fight for the defeat of imperialism, for government of the workers with organisations of dual power (soviets, workers' councils or however they take place in reality) and for socialism with workers' democracy, to expand the revolution throughout the world to defeat the historical enemies of the proletariat.

of Moreno's disagreements with Mandel and other Trotskyist currents concerns his refusal to capitulate to the majority leaderships of the mass movement, the communist parties, socialist parties, bourgeois or petty bourgeois nationalist movements. We could say that in his polemics he was anticipating or stating the focal issues of the central debates of the next century. Should we build a Leninist party? Should we fight for workers' to take power by breaking with the bourgeoisie? Moreno's responses were positive, Mandel's were negative. It certainly is a debate that is still open" (Excerpt from "Trotskyism in the XXI century", dissertation by Mercedes Petit in the workshop "Trotsky as an alternative", Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Buenos Aires, November 2002. Quoted in "Nahuel Moreno, Native Trotskyism" by Hernan Brienza, Buenos Aires, 2006. *El Socialista* No. 56, 17 January 2007).

1 On 9 April 1952 the Bolivian miners, workers' and peasants militias defeated the army of the "rosca" (oligarchy) and dominated La Paz. In 1951 the MNR (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement), led by Paz Estenssoro, had won the presidential election. The "rosca" staged a military coup and refused to hand over power. In April, the insurrection broke out. Miners came armed to La Paz. A section of the police acquiesced to the insurrection. Three days later, the army collapsed. The workers' had weapons and founded the COB (Central Obrera Boliviana) with its main leader Juan Lechin, who shared the leadership with a Trotskyist group (the Revolutionary Workers' Party POR, which supported the positions of Ernest Mandel). All the conditions for the COB to take power were there. But its leadership called for Paz Estenssoro, who returned from exile, and they gave him the presidency. The MNR in power made an agreement with the bourgeoisie and imperialism. Lechin betrayed, and the then leadership of the POR and the Communist Party (PC) as well. There was no alternative leadership that would fight for a worker' and socialist solution, which would have meant a historic change to Bolivia and across the continent: that power be taken by the COB and peasant and indigenous organisations.

The defeat of the counter-revolutionary apparatus which, for decades, agreed with imperialism on “peaceful coexistence” and instilled in the masses the reactionary theory of “socialism in one country”, has opened, albeit with contradictions, larger spaces and opportunities to advance in that direction.

Our party “model”

The new generation of fighters will have to re-absorb this historical sequence of betrayals to avoid falling into scepticism and understand that only by building a revolutionary tool that educates the workers of the world in class independence, will we be able to make triumphant anti-capitalist revolutions and advance towards socialism. “The liberation of the workers is the task of the workers themselves”, Marx said.

In this sense, our national and international current, “Morenism”, has been at the forefront for over seven decades in building parties rooted in the working class.¹ And in training cadres to prepare for this difficult, essential and at the same exciting task.

The Morenist current has used all the tactics, always prioritising two strategies: to mobilise the masses and to build the revolutionary party. Acting on reality such as it is, without denying or repudiating it. Always trying to act in the living processes of the class struggle, never supplanting reality by our desires or “quotes” from a manual, as if they were biblical dogma. Fighting both opportunism and sectarianism.

On the latter Lenin and Trotsky were relentless. Trotsky attacked sectarianism with famous phrases. “At their base lies a refusal to struggle for partial and transitional demands [...] They refuse to draw a distinction between bourgeois democracy and Fascism [...] Sectarrians are capable of differentiating between but two colours: red and black. [...] These sterile politicians generally have no need of a bridge in the form of transitional demands because they do not intend to cross over to the other shore.” And he hit on sectarianism-opportunism: “In practical politics, sectarians unite with opportunists, particularly with centrists, every time in the struggle against Marxism” (*The Transitional Program for the Socialist Revolution*, op. cit. p. 108-109).

Our current has always battled for constructing parties for action, not to repeat abstract generalities, even if they are correct. Looking for slogans to mobilise the masses, based on their immediate needs and their current level of consciousness. Carefully studying reality to discover opportunities. Being audacious, skilful and broadminded to connect with currents approaching the revolutionary program.

In addition, Moreno always argued that no party with mass influence will be achieved via an evolutionary accumulation but rather that it will be a process that will go through agreements and fusions — also through crises and setbacks — where currents will emerge that approach Trotskyist or Trotskyist-like positions with which to connect. For that we need to be open, though fighting the risk of falling into loose parties, what he called “movementism”. And being disciplined, while battling the plague of sectarianism.

A party where full internal democracy prevails in its daily life, with clashes of ideas and dissent, because only in this way we can develop and implement a proper political line and correct it when it is proven wrong.

Moreno always stressed that we need to learn from the mistakes made, both in policy and in the construction of our parties. But we are sure that without revolutionary parties, although there will still be revolutions bringing down bourgeois dictatorships or democratic governments, these processes will slow down, freeze and inevitably go back, if they have at their head reformist, non-worker or counter-revolutionary leaders. This is what Nahuel Moreno called “recurrent Februarys”, comparing it to the Russian process of 1917 (the fall of the Tsar). That is to say, revolutions which by not having revolutionary leaderships — such as then the Bolshevik party— are repeated and repeated without advancing to true socialism.

¹ In 1944, with a handful of young people, Nahuel Moreno began construction of the GOM (Marxist Workers’ Group), in the workers’ neighbourhood of Villa Pobladora, Avellaneda, Buenos Aires. From then until his death, our teacher dedicated his life to building the working class and internationalist party in our country and the world.

In this arduous journey it is necessary to unite revolutionaries, engaging in fraternal relations with other organisations. We need to engage in common campaigns, respond to the world class struggle, and debate differences with respect and camaraderie, with the aim of strengthening a principled current that fights for the reconstruction of the Fourth International. Political relations taken up by our international organisation¹ with sister currents from other countries indicate that we are on that path, following the legacy of Marxism-Leninism and Morenist Trotskyism.

In his *Transitional Program*, Trotsky says about the Fourth International, “Its task — the abolition of capitalism’s domination. Its aim — socialism. Its method — the proletarian revolution” (*The Transitional Program for the Socialist Revolution*, op. cit. p. 111). And Nahuel Moreno confirms this in *The Transitional Program Today*: “As long as the proletariat does not overcome its crisis of revolutionary leadership it will not be able to defeat world imperialism.” We are working on that.

To continue on this Herculean task we rely on the millions who go out to fight a capitalist system that offers only misery, exploitation and plunder. Wherein imperialism is at its greatest crisis of political and military domination of its history. In which revolutions occur overthrowing dictatorships (such as the Arab Spring) and bringing down bourgeois governments through revolutionary mass mobilisation. And where the counter-revolutionary, bourgeois nationalists and reformist apparatuses are increasingly challenged to contain and divert the masses, just like the rotten union bureaucracy.

In that context, a colossal multitude of workers and youth search for a consistent program, as the river seeks its bed, which can only be provided by the party of the world socialist revolution.

Although some things did not take place as Moreno predicted in the work we are reissuing (the possibility that the hour of Trotskyism is opening as he wrote in thesis VIII or on the dynamics acquired by the triumph of the political revolution in the former USSR), *The Transitional Program Today* remains a fundamental text of reevaluation of Marxism and Trotskyism. This obliges revolutionaries and the new generations of fighters to have it in their bookshelves as indispensable study material.

This reinforces one of the main lessons bequeathed to us by the teachers of Marxism in the fight against dogmatism: reality is always richer than any schema. Attentive to this, from our current we keep complementing these elements and bringing them up to date in light of the great events of the class struggle that have occurred in the nearly three decades since the death of our teacher. In the service of the great and exciting task of building revolutionary parties worldwide to equip the working masses with their own leaderships, is the reason why Moreno wrote this book and for the same purpose, we re-release it.

Trotsky says in his *Transitional Program*: “But has the time yet arrived to proclaim its creation? The sceptics are not quieted down. The Fourth International, we answer, has no need of being “proclaimed”. It exists and it fights. Is it weak? Yes, its ranks are not numerous because it is still young. They are as yet chiefly cadres. But these cadres are pledges for the future. [...] If our International be still weak in numbers, it is strong in doctrine” (*The Transitional Program for the Socialist Revolution*, op. cit. p. 111).

This revolutionary spirit and confidence in the working class has inspired our organisations to move forward. So it will be. §

1 IWU-FI (International Workers’ Unity – Fourth International). See www.uit-ci.org.

Nahuel Moreno

The Transitional Program Today

Introduction

The relevance of the Transitional Program

These theses do not repeat the analyses or the tasks formulated in the *Transitional Program*, the foundation document of the Fourth International. It is not a question that we consider this document to be obsolete or superseded by history, rather exactly the opposite. Two fundamental facts characterise the stage we are living in: the definitive crisis of imperialism and of the Stalinist bureaucracy of the workers' states, and the historical return to centre stage of the proletariat of the most industrialised countries, as a key player in the process. In these circumstances the *Transitional Program* and its central focus — the construction of the Fourth International in all countries of the world, in order to defeat the counter-revolutionary bureaucratic apparatuses, overcome the crisis of revolutionary leadership and carry out the world socialist revolution — are more current than ever.

However, to overcome the crisis of leadership, it is necessary to respond to the new problems introduced by the colossal revolutionary upsurge of the post-war years, which the *Transitional Program* did neither foresee nor explain.

The most important of these new post-war problems is the existence of the new workers' states, which emerged thanks to the mass mobilisations that forced the petty bourgeois bureaucratic, counter-revolutionary leaderships to break with the bourgeoisie, expropriate it and seize power. In other words, the variation which Trotsky describes as highly improbable is the only one that has happened so far.

But when pointing out this new phenomenon, we must add that our program is more relevant than ever. Indeed, should this variation become general to all countries of the world, then the need for political revolution against these petty bourgeois and bureaucratic leaderships and therefore to build Trotskyist parties and the Trotskyist International would become essential. If these bureaucratic leaderships remain in power, the only alternative for humanity will be revolution or nuclear holocaust.

We raise this as a theoretical hypothesis to demonstrate by the absurd, since in no way do we believe the bureaucratic leaderships, completely at the service of the imperialist counter-revolution, will expropriate the bourgeoisie in the whole world.

Apart from that, Trotsky himself pointed out two gaps in the *Transitional Program*, two problems he consciously did not deal with: the economic situation and the problems and tasks that would rise after taking power. In these theses we try to fill both gaps.

As for the first, we note the world economy is a whole dominated by imperialism; the economy of the workers' states is subject to it and there are not two economies. We also demonstrate how one of the essential postulates of the program — *the productive forces of humanity have stopped growing* — is confirmed and enhanced, since the boom of the imperialist economy develops the destructive forces and subjects the vast majority of humanity to misery and growing super exploitation.

Regarding the second, we assert that in the stage of transition from capitalism to socialism — which starts with the expropriation of the bourgeoisie — the needs of the mass mobilisation give rise to several new slogans, as well as to the extension of older ones that become more important. Thus, the scourge of the Stalinist bureaucracy, the war between workers' states or the invasion of one by another, gives rise to a key slogan which can only be raised by us: *The Federation of the existing workers' states*. At the

same time, the issue is posed of the defence of one workers' state invaded by another, especially if a small state is the victim of Pan-Russian or Chinese chauvinist designs.

Other problems we address are: the new weight gained by democratic slogans and the struggle for the Constituent Assembly; guerrilla warfare; the character of the post-war revolutions; how in this stage "February" revolutions have become generalised and even come to expropriate the bourgeoisie, and how the internal logic of this phenomenon confirms the permanent revolution.

That is, our theses propose to confirm the *Transitional Program* and its method, enriched by the new phenomena that happened after it was written. We want to demonstrate how its analysis and fundamental postulates have been ratified at the end of the twentieth century, in which we witnessed the greatest revolutionary upsurge ever known by humanity. §

THESIS I

History has confirmed the foundation basis of the Fourth International

Our International was founded in 1938 based on a series of analyses and general principles that supported it. These foundations upon which the Fourth International was built have been completely corroborated by the experience of more than a hundred years of workers' struggle, and specifically by the struggle of the proletariat and the colonial peoples in the last forty years. Briefly, these principles were the following:

First: that the productive forces of mankind had stopped growing under imperialism and, as a consequence of this, all technological development did not improve the standard of living of the masses but, on the contrary, provoked a growing misery and new wars. On the other hand, the productive forces have come into contradiction not only with the private capitalist imperialist property but also with the existence of national states.

Second: that due to these contradictions, an historical epoch of wars, crises and revolutions would open up. By "historical epoch" we understand a century or so.

Third: that the character of the class struggle and the revolution becomes global. This specifically meant we entered the most revolutionary epoch of history, when all phenomena have to be judged from the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary point of view and not from the point of view of the states or of any other structural or superstructural phenomenon.

Fourth: that the crisis of humanity is consequence of the crisis of leadership of the proletariat. In other words, so long as the proletariat does not overcome the crisis of leadership, humanity will go from crisis to crisis, each of which will be more acute than the previous.

Fifth: that the crisis of leadership of the world proletariat is not an abstract phenomenon but the consequence of the fact the recognised leaderships of the workers' and mass movement, among them the Social Democracy and mainly Stalinism went over to the imperialist bourgeois order. Historically any bureaucratic or petty bourgeois leadership (nationalist, leftist, Social Democrat or Stalinist) directly or indirectly serves the imperialist counter-revolution.

Sixth: that this betrayal of the leaderships is due to social causes: the bureaucratisation of the workers' organisations — among them the USSR — and the formation of a labour aristocracy. The labour bureaucracy and the ruling petty bourgeoisie and its parties, being a privileged sector, cannot be reformed for the revolution. Hence Stalinism is the hegemonic sector of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, since it monopolises control over the main workers' state, an unlimited source of privileges.

Seventh: that the ideology or theory of all those petty bourgeois and bureaucratic currents — mainly Stalinism — is socialism in one country and peaceful coexistence with imperialism. These are the most nefarious theory, ideology and program for the world proletariat.

Eighth: that the only theory and program that consistently opposes the Stalinist and Social Democrat theory of socialism in one country and peaceful coexistence or collaboration with imperialism, is the theory of the permanent revolution. In its second formulation it is the theory of the international socialist revolution, of the permanent mobilisation of the working class and its allies to seize power, to establish a revolutionary dictatorship to defeat imperialism in the world, to destroy in a revolutionary way the national states and establish the federation of the world socialist soviet republics to begin building socialism.

Ninth: that the expropriation of the national bourgeoisie and landowners is a tactical question for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. Its great strategic goal is to develop the socialist revolution in the region and in the world and to liquidate national frontiers, so as to establish socialism all around the globe.

Tenth: that the main task to overcome the leadership crisis of the proletariat is to build mass Trotskyist parties and the world party of socialist revolution, the Fourth International, in all countries of the world. These Trotskyist mass parties can only be built if they carry on an implacable struggle against all the bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships within the mass movement, regardless of whether these leaderships may circumstantially lead some progressive or revolutionary struggle, forced by the pressure of the mass movement, and even if they come to break with the bourgeoisie and establish a workers' and peasants' government.

Eleventh: that nothing demonstrates better the counter-revolutionary character of Stalinism than its role as a Bonapartist government in the USSR itself. This government unavoidably leads the USSR to a growing crisis of an economic, social, political and cultural character. The bureaucracy with its regime undermines day after day the first workers' state in history, progressively degenerating it. Only a political revolution against the bureaucracy, led by a Trotskyist party, can overcome that historic crisis of the workers' state, which suffers an acute degenerative process. The goal of this political revolution is to impose again a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat according to the model of Lenin and Trotsky.

Twelfth: that the political revolution that needs to be made in the USSR against the ruling bureaucratic caste is part of the world-wide struggle to sweep out of the leadership of the mass movement all the Stalinist, Social Democrat and petty bourgeois parties that lead it.

Thirteenth: that all the previous points have amalgamated in the letter as well as in the method of the *Transitional Program*. It is the program to mobilise the proletariat for the seizure of power and for the establishment of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and to develop the permanent mobilisation of all workers' in the world for the building, to the beat of the mobilisation, of the only revolutionary leadership that this process can have, Trotskyist parties and the Fourth International. §

THESIS II

A century of struggles of the world proletariat: great victories and gains; leadership crisis and the decadence of humanity

Before the 1880s, the proletariat only appeared on the historical stage sporadically, at crucial moments as in the revolution of 1848 and in the organisation of the First International that culminated in the Paris Commune. Only in the last three decades of the XIX century did the proletariat with its allies, the peoples and oppressed sectors, come to occupy the role of main protagonist of the historical process. Only from then on do its struggles take on a continuous and systematic character. During the present century it has not stopped fighting for a single minute against the exploiters, specifically against capitalism and imperialism. Thanks to their struggles, the proletariat and the workers have achieved fundamental minimum gains such as the great trade unions, the workers' parties, social rights and, since the October Revolution and especially after the World War II, revolutionary conquests such as the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in many countries, which have transformed into workers' states.

In turn, the proletariat's allies — the backward peoples, the oppressed nationalities, the peasants, the oppressed races and sectors — also achieved big wins. For example, nearly all the colonies of the old empires have achieved their political independence; the peasants of many backward countries gained a bigger participation in the ownership of land; the Vietnamese people made American imperialism suffer its first military defeat; women obtained the right to vote, to abort and to divorce in many countries; where the bourgeoisie has been expropriated, the landowners were also completely expropriated; the black people in the United States have made great advances in their struggle against discrimination, etc.

This struggle of more than a century of the world working class against imperialism is divided into two eras, clearly marked by World War I and the Russian Revolution. Until World War I the proletariat achieved gain after gain, but within the capitalist and imperialist regime, without questioning it and without planning the revolutionary seizure of power. This is the reformist epoch. Beginning with 1914 and the Russian Revolution, the epoch we are now living in begins, one of chronic crisis and the decadence of imperialism and capitalism, and of world-wide confrontation between revolution and counter-revolution. This is the epoch of the international socialist revolution.

Despite these great gains of the workers' and popular movement, in these hundred years humanity and workers all over the world see misery increasing, wars and the possibility of a nuclear holocaust, even in the countries that claim to be socialist, i.e., in the bureaucratised workers' states. This is the consequence of imperialism — despite a century of struggle against it — continuing to dominate the world economy; and this domination is a source of growing misery, repression, wars and unheard-of sufferings for the workers. The existence of workers' states, the great trade union organisations and the big workers' parties has not provided any solution to these terrible scourges. On the contrary it has meant their sharpening and aggravation, as several contemporary facts demonstrate: the plans of exploitation and misery that imperialism and the governments of the workers' states develop are supported by the leaderships of the major workers' parties and of the trade unions; humanity has suffered two world wars and numerous local wars; we live under the ever present menace of a new nuclear war that would

exterminate all expression of life on the planet; the invasions to Hungary and Czechoslovakia, as well as the current invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR, and the invasion of Cambodia by Vietnam and of Vietnam by China, demonstrate that the existence of the current workers' states is no guarantee against war, but rather increases its danger.

This highly contradictory phenomenon — that the achievement of great gains due to the heroism and strength of the workers and the oppressed struggles has exacerbated the crisis of humanity — has only one explanation: the leadership crisis of the world proletariat, which has meant the latter has been unable to defeat imperialism, despite having had the opportunity to do so for decades. This crisis is a consequence of all the recognised workers' movement organisations — trade unions, parties and states — being today controlled without exception by bureaucrats and other counter-revolutionary leaderships that directly or indirectly serve imperialism, especially the Stalinist bureaucracy of the USSR.

The leadership crisis of the world proletariat or, put another way, the betrayal of the recognised bureaucratic leaderships of the workers' and mass movement, is the decisive factor for the historic defeats that happen, so that any victory or conquest is frozen or stifled and imperialism is not defeated.

The great workers' parties, the trade unions and the workers' states have become distorted in the straitjacket of bureaucracy: all of them are bureaucratic, none are revolutionary. All the acknowledged leaderships serve the counter-revolution.

There is a difference in so far as the counter-revolutionary apparatuses are concerned: the apparatus formed by the official Social Democrat leaderships continues to fulfil its counter-revolutionary role, and in the first post-war it played a decisive role; but as for stifling and betraying revolutions Stalinism has no equal. It is a product of the revolutionary era, the most gigantic bureaucratic and counter-revolutionary apparatus ever known in history. We are talking about counter-revolutionary usefulness and not of abilities. Nobody is more an agent of the bourgeoisie than a Social Democrat leadership, but at a global scale its usefulness to the bourgeoisie facing a revolutionary upsurge is much less than that of Stalinism.

Due to the Social Democrat leaderships, the gains of the proletariat during the reformist era ended up in an historic defeat: the imperialist war and the crisis of the Second International. Thanks to the Social Democrats, the European socialist revolution remained limited to the USSR and was defeated in Italy, in Hungary and —most importantly — in Germany. Afterwards, Stalinism occupies the front line as counter-revolutionary agent in the workers ranks and to it the later defeats are due.

The revolutionary era is divided, then, into three clearly delimited periods:

The first: from 1917 to 1923; in which the October revolution triumphs because of the existence of a revolutionary Marxist party, the Third International is founded and the European revolution breaks out.

The second: from 1923 to 1943 approximately; it opens with the defeat of the European revolution; it begins 20 years of uninterrupted defeats; it leads to the rise and victory of Stalinism within the USSR and the Third International, which contributes with its policies to the fascist victories of Chiang Kai-shek, Hitler and Franco, and to the second imperialist world war.

The third: the current post-war period where we are in presence of the largest known revolutionary upsurge, which is able to expropriate the bourgeoisie in China and in a third part of mankind. But now, because Stalinism is still the dominant leadership, relatively fortified by the military defeat of Nazism, the workers' states that emerge are bureaucratized workers' states and capitalism can recover in Europe.

Summing up, the two determinant elements of all contemporary phenomena, the first and last causes, what determines in all its different combinations all phenomena, are on one hand the *revolutionary upsurge* of the struggle of the working class and the oppressed peoples, and on the other hand *the crisis of revolutionary leadership*. This point on its own confirms the validity of the Fourth International.

As of the first imperialist war, at the start of the epoch of the definitive crisis of imperialism and capitalism, the epoch of the socialist revolution, the causal relations between historical events change. In relation to the great historical epochs and the normal development of societies, Marxism has sustained that the red thread that explains all phenomena is the economic processes. But in an epoch of revolution and crisis, this general law has a particular refraction that inverts the causal relationships, transforming the most subjective of the factors — the revolutionary leadership — into the fundamental cause of the other phenomena, including the economic ones. Until World War I the economic process had a predominant character while the subjective factors did not have great importance. The very struggle of the working class

was reformist, because it did not struggle against capitalist accumulation or against capitalist economic development, or against its laws; but at most it meant a slight variation of the process. This is why it was a reformist epoch. However, since World War I it is no longer so. The economic processes are no longer the determinant ones and the subjective factor — the leadership — becomes the fundamental one. Let us not forget this is so because the whole epoch is determined by the revolutionary struggles of the masses.

The existence of Marx and Engels in the nineteenth century was not an objective factor in the outcome of any historical process. Their existence could neither guarantee the victory nor avoid the defeat of the proletarian revolution in 1848, nor of the Paris Commune. However, the existence of Lenin and Trotsky and of the Bolshevik Party could guarantee the victory of the October Revolution, while in Germany the lack of a Bolshevik party and of a Lenin and a Trotsky meant that the triumph of the socialist revolution could not be guaranteed. Similarly, the existence of bureaucratic counter-revolutionary leaderships at the head of the great socialist parties led to the outbreak of World War I.

A fundamental historical consequence of this inversion in the causal line of historical events will manifest itself in the dialectic of victories and defeats of the world proletariat.

The Social Democrat left, confident in the linear and evolutionary process, when witnessing setbacks and defeats as a result of the immaturity of the proletariat or of the betrayal of its leaderships, formulated a Marxist dialectical law in a beautiful phrase: the proletariat's road is paved with defeats that lead to victory. Thus, they were noting the dialectic of defeats and victories, the transformation of the former into the latter. But World War I, by showing with all harshness the new determinant factor of the historical process — the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the world proletariat — established an inverted dialectic of the relationship between victories and defeats, valid for the whole epoch that opens with World War I and more current than ever. We may formulate this law as follows: as long as the proletariat does not overcome its crisis of revolutionary leadership it will not be able to defeat world imperialism; and as a result, all its struggles will be full of victories that unavoidably will lead to catastrophic defeats. Nothing shows this better than the post-war economic boom: its actual cause is the betrayal of Stalinism, which called on Western workers to toil more than ever for imperialism.

As long as the apparatuses continue to control the mass movement, every revolutionary victory will be unavoidably transformed into a defeat. This is due to the relationship between the bureaucratic apparatuses and the permanent mobilisation of the workers. Any bureaucratic leadership takes its power from the direct or indirect support it has from the exploiters to stifle the workers permanent mobilisation. Moreover, this mobilisation is a deadly menace to the bureaucracy itself. Therefore, any achievement the bureaucracy is forced to head is administrated by the latter to stifle the revolutionary mobilisation, to paralyse it with this gain, at this point. But in this revolutionary epoch, any advance which is not followed by another advance is a step back. Hence the bureaucracy, with its policy of stifling on one hand, and of defence of its privileges against the masses on the other, is forced to struggle against the permanent mobilisation of the workers, to transform their victories into a defeat of the permanent revolution. §

THESIS III

The reformist era, the organisation of the great socialist parties and the crisis of the Second International

Until World War I, before entering into its definitive crisis, imperialism displayed the maximum possibilities of capitalist development in all corners of the globe, mainly in the developed countries. There was, just as in the current post-war period, a huge economic boom. Thanks to the capitalist colonisation of the underdeveloped countries of the world, different advanced capitalist nations transformed themselves into imperialist powers, growing quickly without clashing with each other. We had approximately 50 years (from 1870 to 1914) of vigorous capitalist development, with short interruptions: cyclical crises which were quickly overcome. (Although, to be exact, we should say that this development truly began towards the end of last century, because previously there had been a stage of capitalist depression.) All this explains why — except for the colonial wars, the Russian-Japanese war and the violent colonisation processes of the underdeveloped countries — there have been no big upheavals in international politics. While the spoils from the backward countries lasted, there were no major problems among the imperialist powers.

The workers did not stop the frontal battle against capitalism and imperialism for a single day. Thanks to those heroic struggles, the working class of the advanced countries obtained colossal democratic and minimal gains — the eight hour day, the vote, among others — as well as the emergence of powerful trade union and political organisations.

It is true, as well, that these gains were torn from imperialism while it was enriching itself thanks to the exploitation of the underdeveloped countries; allowing it to grant them concessions without putting in danger its own existence. Therefore, this first stage in the struggle of the world proletariat against imperialism acquires, with exceptions, a reformist, and non-revolutionary character; of quantitative accumulation of victories and gains within capitalism itself; without questioning capitalism or raising the issue of seizing power from it. None of this means the bourgeoisie made concessions on its own. On the contrary, each advance of the proletariat was the result of a merciless struggle against that bourgeoisie.

The seemingly peaceful and progressive development of capitalism under the first era of imperialism, shows its true character when World War I breaks out. Here were revealed the sharp contradictions between the development of the productive forces inside the strait jacket of private capitalist and imperialist property on one side, and the national boundaries on the other. And not only have these, but all capitalist contradictions (fierce competition between monopolies, production anarchy) come into the light of day with the war — of which they are, in fact, the cause. All these contradictions had seemingly been mitigated, due to the emerging of monopolies and colonisation of the backward countries by the financial capital; but the very outbreak of war showed that it was not so, but rather on the contrary, these contradictions had developed and sharpened.

When there were no longer any underdeveloped countries to be divided up, the imperialist bandits fought in World War I to settle who would dominate the colonial and capitalist world. This dreadful conflagration was the new expression of the capitalist crisis, which up to then had only manifested itself as a cyclical crisis. Capitalist competition ceased to be expressed as the bankruptcy of some companies, but rather through the destruction of entire countries. The crisis of the capitalist world order was paid by

the proletariat with its own holocaust. The 50 years of victories, of accumulation of gains, transformed themselves overnight in the first serious historical defeat of the working class. Because World War I was just that: a terrible historical defeat of the world working class.

That defeat was because the Second International, with its national parties, had gone over completely to the bourgeois order. The leaderships of the socialist parties managed to persuade the working class of their countries to run into the trenches and to be killed in favour of their own national exploiters. The quantitative accumulation of gains had transformed, little by little, the trade union and political leaderships of the working class into powerful institutions tolerated by the imperialist regime, which transformed them into reformist and bureaucratic leaderships as agents of national capitalism within workers' ranks. At the same time, the existence of imperialism with its super profits had allowed the stratification of the working class and created privileged sectors, the labour aristocracy, which supported the leaderships of the workers' movement and, through them, their own national bourgeoisie. As a result, the Second International had never been a true international, but rather was a federation of parties. This federal nature of the Second International was directly opposed to the imperialist character of the era. The Second International was never a world party and even less a mortal enemy of imperialism. The absence of a consistent revolutionary, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist international, as well of revolutionary national parties, is what allowed capitalism to lead workers and humanity to a first bloody bath.

But the 50 years of upsurge, struggles and victories of the working class not only did have these catastrophic results for the workers' movement; they also generated its opposite: fighting against the reformism of the official leaderships of the socialist parties and trade unions, fighting against the reformist bureaucracy, an anti-reformist, anti-bureaucratic, Marxist, trade unionist and anarchist revolutionary left had been developing on an international scale. This revolutionary left acquired regional or national characteristics, but it never elevated itself to an internationally organised tendency, nor were there conditions to do so. Anyhow, it was a fundamental part and the other face of the sustained upsurge of the proletariat.

The highest expression of this revolutionary left current of the workers' movement was the Russian Bolshevik Party. It was the national result of that international, anti-bureaucratic, revolutionary and anti-reformist left, but at the same time it was qualitatively different. It was the only revolutionary Marxist party with mass influence that emerged in those 50 years of uninterrupted struggle of the workers' movement, and moreover, it was a new kind of Marxist party, the only one organised to lead the revolution.

In opposition to Bolshevism, the revolutionary Marxist left of the Second International — and in general the non-Marxist revolutionary left as well — acquired a disorganised propagandistic, trade unionist or intellectual character, which did not succeed on or proposed to build highly centralised revolutionary parties sharply delimited from the reformist bureaucratic wing. On the other hand, this current was in general spontaneist; it believed the masses with their revolutionary actions would resolve on their own the problem of their revolutionary leadership.

The Bolshevik Party is a unique case and its existence and development were due to an exceptional combination of circumstances. The first had to do with the very situation of Russia: under the tsarist regime there was no margin for political reform, since the autocratic regime did not allow for it. It was a revolutionary, not a reformist stage, because what was urgently in the agenda was the revolution against the tsar. This imperative need fell in the hands of a young industrial proletariat, highly concentrated, politically and ideologically part of the European proletariat. Moreover, the political leadership of that proletariat was also part of the currents that existed within the European proletariat. Thus, there were anarchists and Marxist tendencies; and among the latter, revisionist and Marxist first, opportunist and revolutionary later (Mensheviks and Bolsheviks). The combination of all these factors led the Bolsheviks to the building of a party, independent from the reformist Mensheviks and with unique characteristics in the Marxist and revolutionary spectrum: highly centralised, with professional revolutionaries, the only way to respond to the urgent historical need of leading the workers' revolution against the tsar. Russia was the country in Europe where the problem of power was raised with an urgent and immediate character: to oust the existing government and to impose another one, i.e., to carry out a democratic revolution. This combination of circumstances gives rise to a new kind of Marxist party, built to make revolution and take power. §

THESIS IV

The exceptional character of the October Revolution and the Third International

Sixty three years after its victory, we must recognise the October Revolution has been an exception so far this century — there has been no other with its characteristics. Neither in victorious nor defeated revolutions has there been a similar revolutionary process. The October Revolution is so far an exception, as is also its outcome: the Third International. To clarify the reasons for this we must study the exceptional character of the October Revolution, as well as the intimate relation of the February Revolution to it, and the proposal for a workers' and peasants' government. This proposal was raised by the Bolsheviks during February and October and did not happen at that time, but it did repeatedly in this post-war.

The exceptional nature of the October revolution is due to the existence of a party such as the Bolsheviks. Without the existence of this party and of the revolutionary left of the world proletariat, there would have been neither a victory of the October Revolution, nor its most important achievement, the foundation of the Third International. It should be emphasised that the Russian Revolution, in a sense, opens a new era of humanity, the era of the world socialist revolution; but at the same time it closes another era. It is the combination of the end of one era and the beginning of another. The determining factor of the October Revolution, the Leninist party, is the result of the previous era of fifty years of upsurge and victories of the world proletariat. Without this era the emergence of the Bolshevik Party cannot be understood. Specifically, the world proletariat and the Russian party took 50 years in building the Bolshevik Party, which only finished being solidly structured in 1917, and which only appeared as a clearly differentiated party in 1902.

Without an October Revolution and without a Bolshevik Party it would not have been possible to found the Third International, or to drive as the essential and most important task of the revolution, as posed by the Bolsheviks, the development of European and international socialist revolution. Thanks to the struggle of the revolutionary left before and during the first imperialist war, the Third International, guided by Lenin and Trotsky, began to overcome the leadership crisis of the proletariat. It is the first attempt, since the start of imperialism, to found a centralised and revolutionary International, i.e., a world party to lead the international socialist revolution.

But neither the founding of the Third International nor the colossal upsurge of the European proletariat could automatically create true national Bolshevik parties; they only could provide the foundations for. Historical experience showed, once again, the construction of a Bolshevik party can never be an automatic product of objective circumstances, regardless of how favourable they are. The propagandistic, intellectual or trade unionist past of the old revolutionary left, as well as the lack of a strong and independent organisation of the Marxist revolutionary currents within the Second International — its existence within reformism as an opposition to the bureaucratic leadership — had a decisive subjective weight in preventing the rapid formation of these national Bolshevik parties. That was how the lack of national Bolshevik parties and the impossibility to build them on the go combined with the betrayal of the Social Democracy, to allow the bourgeoisie to overcome the first wave of post-war socialist revolution in Germany, Italy, Hungary and the whole of Europe. This failure of the first post-war revolutionary wave, plus the exhaustion of the Russian proletariat and the defeat of the German proletariat at the hands of the Social Democracy, sparked the beginning of the bureaucratisation of the Soviet Union and of the Third International. And this bureaucratisation of the Soviet Union and of the Third International will

turn out to be the decisive political factor for the twenty years that follow the defeat of the post-war revolutionary upsurge.

The emergence of a revolutionary era caused what was imperialist reaction or generalised reaction — as Lenin said of the previous, evolutionary and reformist, stage of capitalism — to now transform itself into counter-revolution. Imperialism changes the reactionary methods of the previous stage into methods of civil war, directly counter-revolutionary.

The victory of the bureaucratic Stalinist leadership within the USSR and the Russian Communist Party is merely an expression of the counter-revolutionary advances within the first workers' state and the Third International. In turn, Stalinism will also be a decisive factor for these counter-revolutionary victories to continue, and thus to open the most tragic 20 years in this century of struggles of the proletariat and workers all over the world. Twenty years of only defeats for the workers and victories for the counter-revolution. §

THESIS V

Twenty years of defeats caused by Stalinism

The 20 years of counter-revolutionary victories and defeats of the world proletariat, begin with the victories of Mussolini in Italy and of Stalinism in the USSR from 1923 on, shortly before Lenin's death. Of these two counter-revolutionary victories, the victory of Stalinist bureaucracy over the proletariat of the USSR will be determinant and have a decisive historical importance. This will facilitate and enable other counter-revolutionary victories. The strength of the Russian proletariat and of the October Revolution was so gigantic that several stages were necessary to consolidate the counter-revolutionary victory of Stalinism. It began with a reactionary process, and culminated with a political counter-revolution, the Moscow Trials. As a result, a parasitic and privileged caste, with a clear Bonapartist character, seizes power. Like any counter revolution it uses civil war methods and exterminates all currents of the workers vanguard, the Soviet Communist Party, and the independent revolutionary Marxists. This counter-revolutionary Bonapartist government of Stalin makes its most cruel attacks against Trotskyism, the only true heir of the revolutionary traditions of Bolshevism.

This bureaucratisation process happened not only in the Soviet Union, in the workers' state, but also in the whole of the Third International and in all communist parties in the world. It was due to this victory of Stalinism within the working class that Chiang Kai-shek and later Hitler and Franco could defeat the working class. Each of these made other counter-revolutionary victories easier, because they consolidated the Stalinist apparatus within the Soviet Union and within the Third International, increasingly aggravating the crisis of leadership of the world proletariat. Due to this crisis, the proletariat could not successfully fight the economic crisis of 1929, which meant reaching the deepest level of misery yet known to workers. As another result of the crisis of leadership, this growing worker' misery was also manifested in the Soviet Union.

This whole streak of historical defeats had its climax in two immense defeats of the world proletariat, combined into a single process: World War II. In this war, an inter-imperialist war is combined with the first counter-revolutionary war of the century, conducted by Nazi Germany against the USSR. These are two wars of completely opposite social characteristics: one is the inter-imperialist war of the Axis against the Allies; the other is the war of Nazism against the Soviet Union. At the beginning of the October Revolution, the civil war was combined with the intervention of the Allied powers; but it was not a full-blown war conducted by imperialism against the new-born USSR, because of the crisis of imperialism. The Nazi invasion of the USSR was a full-blown counter-revolutionary war.

Throughout this period of defeats, the fiercest class struggle did not stop for a single moment. It is the era of fascism, but also of the fight against it. The civil war against Chiang Kai-shek and Franco, as well as that of Trotskyism against Stalinism, are the most eloquent expressions, in different sectors of the class struggle, that this struggle is more acute than ever before, and that, despite the counter-revolutionary victories, the period was still one of socialist revolution and of international counter-revolution.

During this whole period, the greatest battles of the world proletariat are defensive. Of these defensive battles, the two most important are those given by the working people of the USSR against the Nazi invasion and, at the level of the superstructure, of the Trotskyists to save the revolutionary Marxist legacy §

THESIS VI

The foundation of the Fourth International

The current weakness of our International — as well as the fact that the successful revolutions have been led by the bureaucracy — have led some revisionist sectors to pose the problem whether it was correct to found the Fourth International, since this was not needed to expropriate the bourgeoisie in a third part of the globe. Deutscher and other similar intellectuals have raised this question to end up answering categorically that it was a great mistake by Trotsky to have founded the Fourth International.

We argue the opposite: the foundation of our International was the greatest success of Trotsky and of our global movement. Our International is founded at the lowest point of the retreat of the workers movement for very profound reasons: it is a phenomenon parallel to the defence of the USSR. It answers the same need, but it is even more important than the defence of the USSR: to firmly unite all revolutionary Marxists around a program that synthesized all that the world Marxist movement had learned since the Communist Manifest, and especially since the Russian Revolution. It was absolutely essential for revolutionaries to build a strong international organisation to defend these achievements of Marxism, synthesized in Trotskyism and its program, from the full on counter-revolutionary attacks carried out by Stalinism and other counter-revolutionary apparatuses to delete them from the historical memory of the workers and their vanguard.

Not to have founded the Fourth International would have meant to abandon each Trotskyist current of revolutionary Marxism of that time to its national fate, i.e. left alone, virtually defenceless, to face the revisionist and bureaucratic attack of Stalinism and the Social Democracy.

Additionally, the foundation of the Fourth International had an offensive purpose: to prepare a common framework and a program for the revolutionary Marxists of the world, for the unavoidable revolutionary upsurge which would come soon and would be diverted or betrayed by all bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships of the mass movement. Only the foundation of the Fourth International could answer these defensive and offensive needs.

Furthermore, there is no law stating the International should be founded riding a great victory of the workers movement. Ultimately, this is the only relatively serious argument of Trotsky-leaning theorists who are sceptical about the role and the urgent need of the Fourth International. The only International that was founded riding a huge victory was the Third. Both the First and Second were founded at the beginning of the upsurge and when it had just intensified.

The Fourth International was precisely founded when the end of the descent could be seen and at the beginning of the unavoidable revolutionary rise. And having been able to found it, having been able to give it a program and an organisation for this world revolutionary rise and the unavoidable betrayal by the leaderships was a sign of the maturity of the conscious factor in the Trotskyist ranks. Thus, we were preparing the organisation and the program to contest the leadership of the mass movement with the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, and so to overcome the crisis of leadership the revolutionary upsurge would face.

The other more or less credible argument is the Fourth International was not needed to expropriate the bourgeoisie in many countries. But this criticism seeks to attribute to our international limited, tactical and national objectives — to expropriate the bourgeoisie or imperialist investments in only one country — when the objectives of our International and the needs of the working class are much broader: to

defeat imperialism in the world, liquidate national frontiers, organise the proletariat in a revolutionary way to exert power and to mobilise the masses around the globe to start building socialism.

Founding the Fourth International in 1938 and defending the USSR against the counter-revolutionary war that was being prepared against it, was essential, as shown by the fact that as soon as it was founded it withstood the first revisionist attack. This attack nearly won control over one of the strongest parties of our movement, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of the United States. As a sharp expression of the advance of the counter-revolution in the world, a revisionist tendency arose in our International, the anti-defencists, which if it had not been confronted by the common framework of our newly-born International and by Trotsky, could have dispersed the Trotskyist ranks all over the world. Thanks to the foundation of the Fourth International we were able to keep intact our program of defence of the Soviet Union and defeat the first great revisionist current that emerged in our ranks. Therefore, the foundation of our International with the formulation of the *Transitional Program* is the greatest achievement of our movement. In this way we defended the two greatest achievements of this stage of 20 years of defeats: the Soviet Union, and the only existing revolutionary Marxism, Trotskyism. §

THESIS VII

Thirty years of great revolutionary victories

The end of World War II opens the most important stage of revolutionary upsurge ever known. Unfortunately, this revolutionary upsurge is accompanied by the worsening of the crisis of revolutionary leadership, i.e., with a strengthening of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses that lead the mass movement and with a continued weakness of our International. This very contradictory combination generates a world situation that may be briefly summarised in the following characteristics:

1. The proletariat and the masses of the world obtain a series of spectacular victories. The first is the defeat of the Nazi army — i.e., of the imperialist counter-revolution — by the Red Army, although this circumstantially strengthens Stalinism, which rules over the USSR. To this colossal victory follows, subsequently, the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in a third of the world — mainly in the most populous country on earth, China. But all these victories that led to the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, did not arrive at that by means of an October Revolution.

2. The greatest crisis of imperialism that we have ever seen takes place. All old existing colonial empires leave the war completely disintegrated. And US imperialism cannot fill the void left, due to the colossal revolutionary rise of the masses.

3. Due to the weakening of all the old empires the stage of imperialist wars for the division of the world closes. The US victory in the imperialist war wipes out the problem of dominance over the capitalist world.

From the post-war period on, the whole capitalist world — even the imperialist countries — has to accept the leadership and dominance of the US in structuring a counter-revolutionary united front at a global scale. The usual inter-imperialist tensions cannot change this situation; US hegemony is imposed on the capitalist world, together with its counter-revolutionary leadership and the impossibility, for the moment, of new inter-imperialist wars. We enter the stage of the preparation and execution of counter-revolutionary wars. One stage in the character of wars is closed, and a new one opens. The stage of inter-imperialist wars is closed and we enter into the stage of counter-revolutionary wars.

4. But this war not only unifies the counter-revolutionary capitalist and imperialist united front at a global scale. A counter-revolutionary united front between imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucracy is established as well, on the basis of the peaceful coexistence agreed in Yalta and Potsdam, and the new world order: the UN, the sharing of zones of influence, etc. Although there is the “cold war” and major tension between Washington and Moscow, and although there are several counter-revolutionary hot wars, such as in Korea and Indochina, whose goal is to smash or to deviate the revolutionary upsurge, both Washington and Moscow act generally in agreement in defending this new world order organised in Yalta and Potsdam. Stalin and Roosevelt split the world in two blocs, controlled by imperialism and the Kremlin respectively, in order to stop, divert, crush or control the revolution of workers worldwide.

5. Thanks to this counter-revolutionary agreement and to the indispensable collaboration of Stalinism, US imperialism can implement the “Marshall Plan” that leads to

the establishment and stabilisation of the capitalist economy in Western Europe and Japan, and the division of Germany and its proletariat. This support for the counter-revolution in Japan and Europe by the Kremlin allows imperialism to have an economic boom for nearly 20 years. This economic boom will have its counterpart in the development of the economy of the worker's states under bureaucratic control; there will be a parallel phenomenon to the capitalist economic boom in the worker's states. This means that thanks to the Kremlin, imperialism could compensate for its crisis at an imperialist level, with its stabilisation as metropolitan capitalism, i.e., it could compensate for the expropriation of capitalism in relatively peripheral countries — bordering the USSR — which allowed it to maintain its hegemony over the world economy and achieve a process of capitalist accumulation and development beyond any comparison in the metropolitan countries.

6. The crisis of revolutionary leadership of the mass movement, and the consolidation of bureaucratic and petty bourgeoisie apparatuses continued. Against all forecasts of revolutionary Marxism, the colossal upsurge, with its victories, did not provoke a crisis in Social Democracy and Stalinism and our strengthening, or in other words, of starting to overcome the crisis of leadership of the world proletariat. On the contrary, the decades following World War II combine an extreme crisis of imperialism and a colossal upsurge of the revolutionary mass movement, with a crisis of leadership — so far without solution — of the world proletariat, i.e. with a colossal strengthening of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses of the mass movement. The other side of this is the extreme weakness of Trotskyism.

This crisis of leadership is the fundamental reason for all the highly contradictory phenomena we have seen in the post-war period from the capitalist reconstruction of Europe and Japan, to the bureaucratized worker's states, through the division of Germany and military invasions of some workers' states by others.

The revolutionary upsurge has been expressed so far through the traditional organisations of the mass movement, to the extent that all expropriations of national bourgeoisies have been carried out by bureaucratic or petty bourgeois leaderships that gave birth to bureaucratic worker's states, as is the case of Cuba. And this, paradoxically, has strengthened more than ever the counter-revolutionary apparatuses. Because of it, they could freeze or derail the world revolutionary upsurge, thus saving imperialism.

7. Bureaucratized workers' states are, in a sense, a consequence of the division of counter-revolutionary tasks between imperialism and the Kremlin, with their two spheres of influence. Imperialism concentrated, with the help of Stalinism, on restoring the functioning of the capitalist state economy in the imperialist countries. Stalinism concentrated on the weaker links of the world capitalist chain, where the crisis was more acute and shared borders with the Kremlin bureaucracy itself — in Eastern Europe, in China — to slow or crush the independent and revolutionary mobilisation of the masses.

For the Kremlin bureaucracy its intervention in neighbouring countries was a matter of life or death for its counter-revolutionary, parasitic existence. The bureaucracy could not, under any circumstance, accept a revolutionary mobilisation of the workers movement and the masses beyond its control on the other side of its borders, since it would be reflected within the USSR, endangering its very existence. Imperialism was also aware that a direct intervention in these war-torn countries and in a catastrophic economic, political and social crisis could generate a revolutionary mobilisation against capitalism, independent of the Kremlin and leading to a revolutionary process all over Europe.

On a world scale, the expropriation of capitalism in the countries of Eastern Europe, China, Yugoslavia, Korea and North Vietnam is an unexpected combination of: a) a forced concession by imperialism to the Stalinist counter-revolutionary bureaucracy so that it can re-establish capitalism in Japan and Western Europe with the Stalinist bureaucracy's help; and b) the colossal post-war upsurge in the weakest links of the world capitalist chain. These have been forced concessions from imperialism to better manoeuvre and gain time, in the face of the colossal post-war upsurge and the total collapse of capitalism in Europe and Japan. Imperialism was very careful to ensure that these concessions to the mass movement were made through the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy and at the time also through the petty bourgeois Castroist bureaucracy, namely, through counter-revolutionary and opportunist apparatuses, a guarantee to curb the process of permanent revolution.

Those worldwide concessions were forced consequences of the great revolutionary upsurge in the immediate post-war, which transformed a third part of mankind into bureaucratized workers' states, did not fail — due to the really contradictory combination that forced imperialism to make those concessions

— to be colossal victories of the global movement of workers and the masses. As such, they should be defended against any attack from the imperialist counter-revolution.

8. The other side of these victories, of these bureaucratised workers' states, is that they managed to slow the revolutionary process and to defeat internally the revolutionary and workers movement, preventing, by any means, the process of revolutionary upsurge and permanent mobilisation to continue.

In relation to the revolutionary mobilisation of the workers of the world, the bureaucratised workers' state is a huge concession by the exploiters and the bureaucracy; this colossal victory of the mass movement is transformed by them into a concession to better defeat and freeze the permanent mobilisation. It is a victory against national exploiters and imperialism; followed immediately by a defeat to the permanent mobilisation of the masses at the hands of the bureaucracy, which — because of the revolutionary pressure of the masses and the crisis of imperialism — has to go as far as the expropriation of the national bourgeoisie, in its political desperation to control and crush the mass movement.

9. The pressure of the bureaucratic leaderships of the mass movement, due to the strengthening achieved when they expropriated the national bourgeoisie in some countries, acted as a transmission belt within the ranks and leadership of our own International: Pabloist revisionism. With its control of the leadership, this revisionist current managed to break up our International, thus helping the opportunist leaderships of the mass movement and aggravating the crisis of leadership of the world proletariat. Due to Pablo's revisionism, as from 1951 we have three decades of continuous crisis of our world movement. None of the objective we have given in previous points justify on their own the crisis of our International and its weakness. The first and fundamental reason for the weakness and disintegration of our International lies in Pabloist revisionism, which attacked the fundamental principles of our movement. There is no better proof of this than the fact that the only true possibility of an October revolution, the Bolivian revolution of 1952, was betrayed and led into a dead end by this revisionist leadership, which is responsible for one of the five greatest betrayals against the workers movement in this century.

10. The consolidation of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, their strength, takes place together with the onset of their crisis, as a result of the upsurge of the masses. Throughout this period, an increasing crisis of Stalinism is developing, which manifests itself initially — just as it had been foreseen by Trotsky — with the emergence of a national Stalinism. As different countries were expropriated, the Stalinist bureaucracy of those countries ceased to draw its privileges from Kremlin dependence and became a state bureaucracy, with its own interests. A national bureaucratic Stalinism emerged that began having major tensions with the Kremlin. Tito and Mao are the highest expression of that crisis of Stalinism triggered by national Stalinism. Along with this crisis, there have been expressions of national Stalinism at the level of other parties as well, specifically the Euro-communists, but not to the point of breaking with Moscow since they continue to be dependent on it. Their separation from Moscow is only quantitative.

Parallel to this crisis of national Stalinism versus Moscow Stalinism, there have been some inklings of a positive crisis, from the left — i.e., sectors that position themselves toward Trotsky-like positions — provoked by the beginning of the political revolution, mainly in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

11. Since 1953 there have been powerful outbreaks of the process of political revolution, foreshadowing a more general phenomenon. This political revolution starts with — the most important precedent — the Berlin strikes in East Germany in 1953, but it explodes with Poland, and, above all, with the start of a direct political revolution in Hungary in 1956. The other spectacular development was the "Prague Spring" in 1968. This shows that the political revolution is an unavoidable process, which has not yet become generalised and has not arrived at the USSR, other than incipiently. Each wave of political revolution has been stronger, and has begun to express democratic tendencies toward national self-determination.

12. Throughout this phase — in these 30 years from 1943 to 1973 — neither the USSR nor the US proletariat comes onto the world stage. Even the proletariat of the European countries, after the revolutionary situation that occurred in the immediate post-war period beginning in 1947, no longer has a crucial role: it does not have the same level as that of the people and workers of the backward, colonial countries, although it has some extraordinary manifestations, such as the French strikes of 1953 and 1968, and the systematic mobilisations and strikes in Italy and Britain.

13. The workers of the entire world have defeated several counter-revolutionary plans of US imperialism to attack the USSR and other workers' states. In the immediate post-war period, workers

of the whole world, especially Americans in soldiers' uniform, refused to continue the war against the USSR as imperialism had planned. Subsequently, they caused imperialism to fail in Korea, and within the United States they drove McCarthyism back. But the defeat of US imperialism in Vietnam is not the defeat of its plans, but the *first military defeat that it has had at the hands of the workers*. Therefore, it is an historical fact that apparently opens a new revolutionary stage. §

THESIS VIII

Are we at the onset of the stage of Trotskyism?

Around 1974 there is a leap in the upsurge of the world socialist revolution and the crisis of imperialism, which shows we have entered into a new stage of the world revolutionary upsurge. This fourth stage is that of the generalised crisis of imperialism and the bureaucratised workers' states, the end of the economic boom, the beginning of the European socialist revolution with Portugal, and the generalised political revolution in the workers' states — the apparently definitive crisis of Stalinism. Let us examine each of those problems.

The Vietnamese victory in the war seems to be the starting point of the new stage, since it meant the first military defeat of US imperialism in its whole history. This has produced a crisis of bourgeois political leadership, aggravated by the economic crisis that has deepened even further. The US defeat has encouraged the revolutionary upsurge all over the world, giving it enhanced strength. We would like to stress that the Vietnam victory not only is a partial defeat but rather provokes the first sharp crisis of US imperialism, the crisis of its bourgeoisie who do not know which way to go against the rise of the world revolution.

The other aspect of this crisis is the end of the generalised economic boom, both in the metropolitan countries and the bureaucratised workers' states. The crisis of 1974-1975 has become sharper, year after year, acquiring a chronic and widespread character: it covers the entire world, not just the capitalist countries. Perhaps the biggest economic crisis takes place in the workers' states, as evidenced by Cuba, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia. This shows conclusively that the bureaucratic leadership of the workers' state economies is disastrous, leading to an inevitable crisis.

Neither imperialism nor the bureaucracy is able to take a policy to get out of this chronic crisis, which increasingly worsens.

The chronic crisis is accompanied by the beginning of the socialist revolution in Europe, with the Portuguese Revolution and the great mass mobilisations, and with the crisis of leadership of the whole European bourgeoisie. Before the Portuguese Revolution, the European proletariat had carried out huge battles, whose highest point was the great general strike in France in 1968. The Italian and British proletariat had fought relentlessly to prevent the decline in their standard of living and work. But the Portuguese Revolution opened a new stage of the European socialist revolution. Having overthrown a fascist dictatorship, it opens an incipient process of dual power, something unknown since the immediate post-war in any other country — except Eastern Europe where there was a beginning of political revolution, as in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. This Portuguese revolutionary process, widespread throughout Western Europe, has its counterpart in the East European countries in the great Polish strikes and mobilisations, etc.

The defeat of US imperialism has encouraged the upsurge of the revolutionary movement in the colonial world, which combines with the upsurge in Europe. Thus we find the great triumphs of Nicaragua and Iran, on the one hand, with the continued upsurge in Central America, especially in El Salvador, on the other hand; and with the beginning of a new revolutionary upsurge in the whole Latin America.

This new stage that seems to have opened a few years ago in the world revolutionary upsurge has not yet brought the Soviet proletariat onto the stage. But there are signs that it will appear in the historical

process, just as the US proletariat has already begun to show some important struggles of economic character for several years now.

With the entry of those two working classes into the process of the world socialist revolution, the world revolution will greatly accelerate, especially if the German and Japanese proletariats join them, and mainly, because of its tradition, the German (which has not played a decisive role even in the revolutionary process currently underway in Europe).

If these trends are confirmed, mainly the chronic and accelerated crisis of the bureaucratised workers' states and Stalinism, together with an intensification of the revolutionary upsurge, then the era of Trotskyism, of overcoming of the crisis of leadership of the proletariat by our transformation into parties with mass influence, would have opened. It would thus open, then, the epoch of new victorious October Revolutions. §

THESIS IX

Some unforeseen facts and a false analogy

Our party, and Trotsky himself, did not foresee that the crisis of leadership of the world proletariat would continue without the beginning of a solution for over four decades. Consequently, neither did it foresee the colossal development, influence and flourishing of the bureaucratic counter-revolutionary apparatuses — mainly of Stalinism — nor the extreme weakness and propagandistic character that our International would continue to have, despite the colossal revolutionary upsurge of these four decades. Also not foreseen was the possibility of a revisionist crisis, such as the one that developed at the start of the 1950s that disintegrated our International for over nearly thirty years.

We feel this lack of foresight is inherent in the Marxist law that reality is always richer than any schema: i.e., the latter is superseded by the former. But also, specifically, the founders of our International made a mistake in making an analogy between this and the earlier post-war period. We thought that in this immediate post-war we would have a repeat, revised and extended, of what happened in the previous one that brought to power a Marxist revolutionary party — the Bolshevik — through the October revolution and the foundation of Third International, and which began to have mass influence and to overcome the crisis of leadership. There is no reason to put in doubt the anecdote, told several times by Joe Hansen, that Trotsky was thoroughly convinced that in the immediate post-war period our International would be so massive and it would have so many spontaneous revolutionary mass parties that we Trotskyists would be minority, since the majority of those revolutionary parties would have another ideology. Nothing shows better that this was the outlook than the firm forecast by Trotsky that by 1948 *there would be millions following the Fourth International*.

This analogy and these predictions have proved wrong and this must be acknowledged. This means our International was correct with pinpoint accuracy in the analysis of the epoch, but not in the immediate situation after the war. We made a conjunctural analysis that was too optimistic and too much based on an analogy, and which was revealed to be wrong.

As a consequence of this unexpected extension of the crisis of leadership of the workers movement, we find several unanticipated new facts. These very important facts are:

1. All successful revolutions which expropriated the bourgeoisie led to the formation of bureaucratized workers' states.

2. Due to the existence of many bureaucratized workers' states, we find that there are wars or preparations for war among them, or invasions of one workers' state by another.

3. The boom of the bourgeois economy in this post-war has been the most colossal in the whole history of capitalism.

4. The largest technological revolution in the whole history of humanity has been conducted under the rule of imperialism. This technological revolution (cybernetics, rockets, atomic energy, petrochemicals, chemical fertilisers, scientific discoveries in all fields at a rate where ten years are equivalent to century's worth of previous discoveries such as penicillin, new drugs, etc.) is realised in the most spectacular advance of humanity: the beginning of the conquest of the cosmos, of the universe.

5. The fundamental, decisive, importance acquired by the democratic struggles and revolutions.

6. The extraordinary importance acquired by guerrilla warfare for the victory of the Chinese Revolution and other revolutions.

7. There has been, so far, no other October revolution, i.e. headed by a revolutionary Marxist party, neither victorious nor defeated. §

THESIS X

Revisionism tends to destroy the International

For almost 40 years we have been immersed in the most colossal revolutionary upsurge; an upsurge that has led to the expropriation of the bourgeoisie by means of victorious revolutions in many countries, without our International leading any of those victories. Nor has it taken power in any of those countries. Despite this upsurge and these victories, our International remains very weak and propagandistic.

This weakness is due to the same reasons that explain the strengthening of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses of the mass movement. More specifically, it is explained because the formation of Trotskyism, from the period before its foundation until its first years of existence, happened during a stage of retreat and defeat of the workers movement. As a result, there were no objective possibilities for its cadres to be forged in the heart of the workers movement; they acquired an intellectual and propagandistic character and our movement, therefore, could not be formed by proletarian leaders. Our International had been founded swimming against the tide. The strengthening of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses in the post-war period meant that, in a way, we kept on swimming against the tide despite the upsurge, because the mass movement followed the bureaucratic leadership.

However, despite this strengthening of the apparatuses and the current weakness of our International, it has grown, it has developed and has had opportunities to grow and develop much more. It even had the possibility of seizing power in Bolivia, which would have changed everything. These 40 years of revolutionary upsurge have confirmed the law that when there is an upsurge the apparatuses gain strength, but so does the revolutionary left. That this process did not happen much more intensely is due to the very history of our International and, more specifically, the nefarious role of Pabloist revisionism.

The year 1951 splits in two the history of our International: before and after Pabloist revisionism. From this date, when the leadership of the International is taken over by revisionism, our International falls into crisis, it disintegrates.

Previously, with the assassination of Trotsky we had had another crisis, but of very different character. His death caused a leadership crisis which prevented our International from advancing much more during the post-war period. The loss of Trotsky is a qualitative fact in the history of our International. As a result of his death, we were left — in fact — without our historic leadership. Generally our movement recalls the infamous date of August 21, 1940 from the point of view of the biography of our teacher, and we do not stress enough what it meant from the political point of view for the world proletariat and for our International. Nor do we emphasize enough that the assassination was not only motivated by revenge but also had a precise counter-revolutionary purpose: to leave the post-war revolutionary upsurge and the Fourth International without its personal historic leadership.

Stalinism achieved that goal to a large extent: in fact, our International was left without a leadership built and experienced in the class struggle that could face the new and tremendous problems posed by the post-war period. As a consequence, during the war, the leadership and the centre of our International was left, in fact, in the hands of the SWP, which, on the other hand — although it played a progressive role in the reconstruction of our International during the war and the immediate post-war period — refused to become the focal point of the leadership, which was its rightful role to assume. As a result, in the immediate post-war the leadership fell into the hands of the new European leadership, mainly of Pablo. Trotsky's death caused our International to be unable to respond quickly to the new phenomena

raised by the war and the post-war period: the combination of inter-imperialist war with counter-revolutionary war; the division of Germany and its disappearance for decades as centre of the European revolutionary process; the occupation of Eastern Europe by the USSR; the transformation of these states into bureaucratised workers' states; the situation in of Yugoslavia and China; the "Marshall Plan; the capitalist reconstruction of Europe; and the economic boom. The documents of our International after Trotsky's death are sectarian and rudimentary. Their strong point is the defence of Trotsky's teachings.

But together with these gross failures, thanks to its existence, thanks to its method and program, and thanks to the defence of the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky, the Fourth International has been the only current of the workers movement which was able to give a revolutionary Marxist answer to all phenomena, although with some delay. This is how we correctly defined the new workers' states led by Stalinism as bureaucratised. The crisis of leadership caused by Trotsky's death was slowly being overcome as the new leadership of the International began to mature, particularly the French and British sections of the time. This process of overcoming the crisis of leadership caused by Trotsky's assassination is cut off abruptly as a result of Pabloist revisionism. The impact of the "cold war" and of the new bureaucratised workers' states under Stalinist rule upon the new leadership of our International that had not been forged in the class struggle had catastrophic effects. It blew up the slow progress and maturation, and although it did not destroy our International as Pablo intended, our International disintegrated.

This was the result of our international leadership being, essentially, an intellectual leadership, unable to resist the pressure of Stalinism and of the mass movement leaderships that seemed all powerful due to their control over the new workers' states facing US imperialism in the "cold war". Faced with this double pressure of the imperialist counter-revolution in full offensive and Stalinism — which had occupied Eastern Europe to better crush the independent mobilisation of the proletariat in these countries — Pablo capitulated completely to Stalinism and to all petty bourgeois bureaucratic leaderships of the workers movement. Pablo's policy of "entryism *sui generis*"; his analysis that the cold war would force the communist parties to go towards civil war and the workers revolution; and his theory of "a century of deformed workers' states", were attempts to smuggle into our ranks a global conception in service of Stalinism, justifying his policy of betrayal and demobilisation. His revisionism was embodied in the fact he tried to disorient the Fourth International and its sections, abandoning the most uncompromising struggle against the main counter-revolutionary apparatus of the mass movement, Stalinism.

Pabloism had devastating effects upon our International. Not content to capitulate to Stalinism, he began to capitulate to any leadership or apparatus controlling the mass movement. This capitulation was hidden under a false objectivism: the pressure of the mass movement is so strong that it will force all leaderships to adopt a permanent revolutionary centrist course, increasingly progressive, that unconsciously will lead them to Trotskyism. Due to the Pabloist leadership, the glorious and immaculate names of our International and of Trotskyism have been dragged through the mud of opportunism and betrayal.

The high point of Pabloist betrayal happened in Bolivia. In this country, the Bolivian Workers Revolutionary Party (POR), section of the International, guided by Pablo, committed one of the most outrageous betrayals against a revolution so far this century. It was equal to or greater than the betrayal of the Mensheviks of the Russian revolution; than that of the Social Democrats during and after the World War I; than that of the Stalinists in China, in Germany or in Spain, etc. In Bolivia, the working class, educated by Trotskyism, performed — in early April 1952 — one of the most perfect proletarian revolutions ever known: it destroyed the bourgeois army, it formed workers' and peasants' militias as the only actual power in the country, and it organised the Bolivian Workers Centre (COB) to centralise the workers movement and the militias. The bureaucracy that ran the COB handed over power — which was in their hands — to the bourgeois nationalist party, the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR). Bolivian Trotskyism was powerful, it had great influence in the workers and mass movements, and it had participated as co-leadership in the workers and popular insurrection that destroyed the army. The International Secretariat (IS), headed by Pablo, advocated the treacherous and reformist position of critical support to the bourgeois government. The current crisis of Bolivian Trotskyism, the current crisis of the entire Fourth International, the strength of Stalinism in Bolivia and of all the petty bourgeois nationalist movements in Latin America, all these start from that criminal policy of class collaboration that Pablo forced our whole International to apply in Bolivia. The Pabloist revisionist principle was

always the same: the MNR, under pressure from the mass movement, would be forced to make a socialist revolution.

Not content with delivering the Bolivian revolution to a bourgeois government, Pabloism expanded its betrayals to France and Germany. In 1953 a great general strike broke out in France against the will of Stalinism. Not only did Pabloism carry out entryism into the Communist Party, it also endorsed the Stalinist betrayal. The same happened with the beginning of the political revolution in Eastern Europe. When the East German workers went to a general strike against the bureaucracy in Berlin, and the Russian tanks entered to repress the strike, the International Secretariat (IS) was against demanding the withdrawal of the Red Army, becoming accomplices of the bureaucratic repression of the workers movement in East Germany. They did the same at the beginning of the Hungarian revolution against Stalinism.

Although it is Pablo who has taken this revisionist deviation to its ultimate theoretical and political consequences, revisionism is not limited to him. It is a much wider current which has managed to keep our International in permanent crisis since then. Like any revisionist current it is an unprincipled front, formed with different forms and currents. This revisionist current, which took over the leadership of our International in 1951, is characterised by having consistently capitulated, for the last 30 years, to the bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships of the mass movement; and by having abandoned our uncompromising struggle against those leaderships to build and develop our parties as the only possibility of overcoming the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the mass movement. This is how revisionism has systematically capitulated to these bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships, instead of denouncing them: it characterised them as progressive and transformed itself into left wing of the bureaucratic and petty bourgeois currents, abandoning any independent Trotskyist activity clearly delimited from these opportunist currents. Given that it forms an unprincipled front, revisionism is headed by personalities and leaders with different characteristics in each stage of its development. But all these personalities, leaders and nuances have in common their line of capitulation to those opportunist currents that headed some victorious revolution or some mass movement. This is why it capitulated in its first stage to Titoism, to Maoism, and in general to Stalinism and its different variations, and then it also capitulated to the MNR in Bolivia. That first revisionist stage is followed by a second one, the capitulation to Castroism.

The fact that when it took power, Castroism was a petty bourgeois current of the mass movement and not a current directly linked to the bureaucracy, has been used by revisionism to mask its capitulation from 1960 until now. This capitulation to Castroism — defining the Cuban State, in fact, as a revolutionary workers' state and not as a bureaucratized workers' state — has had different stages. The first one was a straightforward capitulation to Castro. Subsequently it capitulated to the Guevarist guerrilla on a Latin American scale. This spread to Europe with the capitulation to the vanguard, first Guevarist and later — after “Che” died — to the ultra-left vanguard. And lately this capitulation to Castroism has been extended to the Nicaraguan Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). As always, revisionism has different nuances today: there is the clearly revisionist current which, like Pablo in 1951, carries its positions toward the ultimate consequences i.e., not only does it capitulate to the FSLN but directly to Castroism, to the Vietnamese leadership, to the Stalinist bureaucracy. There are other currents which are shamefully revisionists, on which we will expand somewhat.

Following like a shadow the leaders who express their revisionist positions clearly and unambiguously — such as Pablo at the time and the SWP now — there is a centrist current which is part of the same revisionism. This revisionist current has developed some of the most important revisionist theoretical issues such as, for instance, that there is a neo-imperialism which develops the productive forces, and other similar revisionist theoretical variations. This centrist current is a fundamental part of revisionism and is characterised by two facts: firstly, that in form does not break with Trotskyist formulations; secondly, that it is an organic part of revisionism although it discusses with it internally, but without denouncing it as revisionist, since it limits itself to stating that the differences are a matter of tactical or theoretical mistakes. If it formally defends some Trotskyist positions it is only to better smuggle in revisionist positions. There is, in fact a clear division of tasks between these two variations, a very similar relationship to what Bernstein and Kautsky had since 1914.

Summarizing, we can say that revisionism is characterised by maintaining, throughout the 30 years of its history, the following: 1– the productive forces of humanity go on growing under this new

stage of imperialism, which they define as neo-imperialist or neo-capitalist; 2– the leaderships of the mass movement — bureaucratic, Stalinist or petty bourgeois — may take a centrist course, permanently progressive, which leads them to revolutionary positions. More specifically, that the bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships, forced by the pressure of the mass movement and the opposite imperialist pressure, and being forced to expropriate the national bourgeoisie, become revolutionary centrists. Therefore, they must be supported and not fought frontally as opportunist leaderships; 3– as a result of the above, there are areas of the workers movement and some countries, where it is not raised, as an urgent task, to build Trotskyist parties to defeat these counter-revolutionary leaderships; 4– therefore, neither is it necessary to build a Trotskyist party nor to make the political revolution in Cuba.

Centrism within revisionism justifies its organic link with the clearly revisionist currents, arguing that we put forward a definition of revisionism with a factional overstatement; that it is not a Marxist definition but an epithet. The argument is that revisionism is characterised for being a current of Marxism that reflects the interests of the bureaucracy and the labour aristocracy, and that our International never had a bureaucracy. One half of this centrist reasoning is correct: there is revisionism only when behind it there are social forces enemies of the historical needs of the working class. It errs when it limits these social expressions only to the bureaucracy and the workers aristocracy.

Not all revisionist currents known in the history of Marxism have been product of the workers bureaucracy. Bernsteinism, the first revisionism at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, was not supported by the labour bureaucracy but by the petty bourgeois intellectuals who had joined the German Social Democratic Party. And from there, it spread all over the world, reflecting the same social layer. The same thing happened within our own movement with Shachtmanism and anti-defencism. This was an intellectual petty bourgeois current that questioned all the fundamental principles of our movement because it reflected a class sector alien to the workers movement and its most exploited sectors.

Pabloist revisionism and its centrist partners are rooted in the same sectors, and for the same reason: they have the same method of reasoning as the anti-defencists. In common with revisionism, anti-defencism abandons the defence of fundamental aspects of the revolutionary Marxist heritage. Anti-defencism abandons the defence of the greatest objective achievement of the workers movement until World War II: the soviet state of the USSR. Further, it capitulates to the advance of the counter-revolution, mainly in the United States. The characteristic of modern revisionism, and what it has in common with the anti-defencists, is they are also anti-defencist, but not of the USSR but of the Fourth International, the greatest subjective achievement of the world proletariat. In this they bow to the pressure of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses of the mass movement or of the bureaucratized workers' states, the apparatuses that reluctantly conducted some of the most progressive struggles and achievements of the workers movement. Both have the same method of applying the identity principle, but applied to different stages. The anti-defencists of the USSR are revisionist in the stage of advance of the counter-revolution; the anti-defencists of the Fourth International are revisionist in the stage of advance of the revolution.

The anti-defencists of the USSR said: counter-revolutionary Stalinism is a product of the advance of the counter-revolution, and the USSR as a state is also counter-revolutionary. They put an equal sign between the counter-revolutionary leadership of the workers' state and the workers' state itself, without seeing they were highly contradictory phenomena and circumstantially were part of the same whole, the degenerated workers' state. The current revisionism of Trotskyism puts an equal sign between the advance of the revolution and the counter-revolutionary bureaucratic leaderships: since the revolution advances, the leaderships heading the mass movement also are advancing inexorably with it, even being bureaucratic and petty bourgeois.

From a formal point of view, this reasoning answers to a profound logic: if the opportunist parties will keep on empirically leading the international socialist revolution, why be sectarian trying to fight against these parties and to oppose ours to theirs? Thus they refuse to distinguish between those two highly contradictory poles of contemporary reality, which form a circumstantial, momentary unity, placing an equal sign between them: the upsurge of revolution is equal to the revolutionary transformation of the leadership. Out of this reasoning they draw the conclusion, overt or covert, that the Fourth International is no longer necessary, that it may be transformed into an international Fabian Society of the revolutionary era. In short, they are defeatist regarding the Fourth International, taking away its *raison d'être*: the

intransigent struggle against the opportunist leaderships during the revolutionary upsurge, until the final defeat of the counter-revolutionary apparatus in the mass movement or in the bureaucratized workers' state.

Both revisionist currents, anti-defencism as well as Pabloism and the centrist current which serves it, reflect the same social roots they are leaders not made in the heat of the struggles of the workers movement, who came to the leadership as intellectuals and betrayed as such. This class character of the revisionist currents explains their survival; and the centrist role in favour of revisionism its other form had to play. Any revisionism, in its different forms, has in common this class basis that makes it impressionistic and inclined to be impressed by the major facts published by the bourgeois or bureaucratic press. Because of that—like any petty bourgeois current—it does not believe in the working class and its revolutionary struggles, or in the possibilities of the Fourth International. Hence, they are always looking for shortcuts, variations that may spare us from the hard and terrible place we have as intransigent fighters against the bureaucratic apparatuses of the mass movement, and as builders of Trotskyist parties all over the world. §

THESIS XI

The Parity Committee reorganises the forces that resisted revisionism

Not only did Pabloist revisionism cause the most terrible crisis in our International, but increased resistance as well. Unfortunately, this resistance was not due to a leadership proven internationally. The revisionist leadership could not be opposed — due to the weakness of our International itself — by a solid international leadership and organisation. Not that the resistance to the revisionist course has been any less, but it had a national, regional or fragmentary nature, due to the absence of such international leadership. Different national parties, or international or regional tendencies, did resist revisionism. This is why the history of resistance to the revisionist course is an uneven history, closely linked to the process of the class struggle.

The historical merit of having been the first to realise what Pabloism meant as a revisionist current betraying Trotskyist principles, belongs to the old French section — the Internationalist Communist Party (PCI), now the Internationalist Communist Organisation (OCI) — which launched a principled battle virtually alone. Quickly the French comrades were supported by most of the Latin American Trotskyists, except the Bolivian comrades beholden to the IS and Pablo, apart from Lora's current, which had a policy of abstention.

In November 1953, the Trotskyist party with the most prestige and the strongest tradition, the United States SWP, joined the battle against Pabloist revisionism, breaking dramatically with it. The International Committee (IC) was then founded to defend our International against the revisionist attack by Pabloism.

However, the IC, under the influence of the SWP, never went beyond the character of a mere defensive united front, a federated organisation, which did not even become an international tendency. The IC had an almost vegetative life. It had loose connections and was unable to develop a strong, centralised leadership that could provide a definitive fight against revisionism, expel it from our ranks and rebuild our International on a principled and militant basis.

The essence of the position of the SWP leadership was of an International or IC federation of national Trotskyists, and the Latin American Trotskyists fought relentlessly against this.

Because of this nationalist position of the SWP, the hegemonic party within the IC, it was not possible to defeat revisionism, even though the IC bought together 80 percent of the militant Trotskyist forces in the world. This nationalist policy of the SWP combined with a change of position by Pabloism between 1956 and 1959. Either because of this change in the course of the Hungarian revolution or as a result of the Cuban revolution, the SWP leadership turned to unify with the Pabloist International Secretariat (IS), without asserting that it was a clearly revisionist tendency.

The SWP quickly broke up the IC, scattering its forces and provoking a serious crisis in it, precisely at the time when revisionism was at its weakest point. Thanks to the breakup of the IC, Pabloist revisionism was saved. The reunification of 1963, which led to the emergence of USec (United Secretariat), was the consequence.

The event in the class struggle that let the SWP break up the International Committee and to play into the hands of Pabloism, was the Cuban revolution, headed by Castroism, a petty bourgeois, non-Stalinist leadership. That development caused deep confusion within the Trotskyist movement, and especially in the ranks of the IC. The IC could not respond in a united way to this new phenomenon, which in its most

general aspects matched Trotsky's analysis about petty bourgeois leaderships going beyond their goals against the bourgeoisie. What caused this confusion was the fact that it was not a Stalinist leadership. No current of the Trotskyist movement was able to respond with a principled position to this new and complex phenomenon. Nobody was able to make the following global and principled analysis: with the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, Cuba became a workers' state; but on making this revolution under a petty bourgeois and deeply nationalist leadership (though this nationalism had progressive aspects at the time, being Latin Americanist), the new workers' state was bureaucratic from birth. Therefore, a political revolution and the construction of a Trotskyist party was needed, since the 26 of July Movement first, and the Cuban CP later, were petty bourgeois or bureaucratic parties. Put another way, a petty bourgeois leadership does not cease to be so because it is not Stalinist or, indeed, not even if it is anti-Stalinist.

The Cuban phenomenon was within the framework of the *Transitional Program's highly improbable hypothesis*, at the same level as all the other bureaucratized workers' states of the post-war period. Whether or not it was Stalinist was and is a secondary issue. Within the IC some — among them the SWP — emphasised the character of workers' state of the Cuban state and the revolutionary character of Castroism, and concluded there was no need to build a Trotskyist party. Others denied the character of workers' state and emphasised the opportunist petty bourgeois character of the Castroist leadership and of the 26 of July Movement, as well as the need to build a Trotskyist party to fight them. The fact that the SWP broke up the IC prevented it from arriving at a correct and principled position about the Cuban revolution, and aggravated the widespread confusion.

For Pabloism and Mandelism, the Cuban revolution was a magnificent opportunity to fortify and revive their revisionism, their denial of the need to build Trotskyist parties. Revisionism found the opportunity to hand over to Castroism the task of leading the socialist revolution, which it had previously left in the hands of Stalinism. Revisionism entered a new stage, but remained the same: in the 1950s the revolution and the transformation into revolutionary parties passed through Stalinism and all the bureaucratic and nationalist apparatuses of the world mass movement; in the 1960s they changed recipient: Castroism will build revolutionary parties, since it is one of them. The split between the USSR and China led the International Secretariat (IS) for a while to raise something similar with respect to Maoism.

The trouble is that the SWP fully accepts this revision of the Trotskyist program and analysis in regard to Castro, although it remains opposed to Maoism, rightly, as a form of national Stalinism.

This is how the SWP went to the unification with the IS. On the basis of many correct and principled programmatic statements, such as the correct recognition of Cuba as a workers' state, it hid a deep capitulation to Castro and the abandonment of the *raison d'être* of Trotskyism: the imperious need of building a Trotskyist party in Cuba and in the rest of Latin America to fight this petty bourgeois current heading the new workers' state, Castroism, until achieving a political revolution of the Cuban workers against it. The political basis of reunification passed through a revisionist agreement: not to fight the Castroist leadership as an enemy of Trotskyism and of the workers movement.

What was left of the IC after the division of it by the SWP manoeuvre failed to respond with an analysis and global policy to the new phenomenon, as a fundamental consequence of its Healyist leadership. It took them years to recognise Cuba as a bureaucratic workers' state where there was a need for political revolution. It answered to the new revisionist front of the USec with a confused analysis and policy which fortified it rather than weakened it.

The 1960s is a decade of great confusion in the Trotskyist ranks, a confusion that allows revisionism to recover, since the absence of a correct and consistent global analysis allows it to add grist to its mill of revisionist positions and policies of not fighting in Cuba to build a Trotskyist party to lead the political revolution against the petty bourgeois leaderships.

The new revolutionary upsurge, beginning approximately in 1968, pushes the forces that claim to be Trotskyist, both within the ranks of the USec as in the IC, to respond. Thus, the great general strike of 1968 in France; the beginning of the political revolution in Czechoslovakia in the same year, the Prague Spring; the revolutionary upsurge in Latin America, especially in the Southern Cone; and the incredible struggle of the Vietnam people against the US invasion, as well as its impact within the United States itself with a huge mass movement to bring back the American soldiers from Vietnam; polarises the forces and

1 It refers to **Thomas Gerard "Gerry" Healy** (1913–1989), a British Trotskyist leader.

causes a very intense internal struggle, both within the USec as within the IC. Starting in 1969 within the USec a struggle opens, first of tendencies and later factional, between the majority of the USec and what later will be the Leninist Trotskyist Fraction (LTF), taking their forces repeatedly to the verge of split. This started at the 1969 Ninth World Congress as a struggle against the guerrilla war strategy supported by the majority of the USec. It quickly became clear that this was not a mere strategic discussion but a principled one, covering all the issues of method and program of our international. As always, what is at the heart of the debate is the issue of the urgent need to build Trotskyist parties mercilessly fighting the opportunist currents within the mass movement. Just as in the 1950s, when revisionism capitulated to Stalinism and all the counter-revolutionary apparatuses and thus abandoned the struggle to build Trotskyist parties, and in the 1960s, when it capitulated to Castroism, in the 1970s this capitulation meant abandoning the struggle for the building of Trotskyist parties in favour of supporting the Latin American and European Guevarist guerrilla, the flip side of petty bourgeois Castroist *opportunism*.

As the struggle against the revisionist majority of the USec developed, and critical new developments of the class struggle occurred, the LTF itself began to divide into an opportunist wing, which had a tendency towards collaboration with the majority of the USec, despite their apparent antagonistic positions, and a wing which increasingly intensified its most intransigent struggle against revisionism. The opportunist wing was headed by the new leadership of the SWP. The fact that it was a new leadership is qualitative, although it does not exempt at all the responsibility of the old leadership for its policy regarding Cuba and the IC. The old leadership was Trotskyist: although it had serious national Trotskyist deviations, it nonetheless reflected a Trotskyist and proletarian tradition. The new leadership sprang from the student movement and, since its inception had social connections with the old and new European revisionist leadership: they were all part of the European or US student movement.

The tendencies that directly oppose the liquidationist and petty bourgeois course of the SWP are the Bolshevik Fraction (BF) and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency (LTT). Leaving aside nuances, both tendencies come together to fight the capitulationist course of the SWP. They decide to put an end to the uncompromising struggle of the LTF against the majority of the USec, and make an unprincipled front with it, thus endorsing its revisionist method, policy and program.

Within the IC there is a similar phenomenon: the split of the IC and the emergence of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (CRFI) are parallel phenomena to the crisis of the USec and the emergence and crisis of the LTF, and are due to the same reasons, the rise of the world revolution. In this case the Healyist sector has the same revisionist, nationalist role as the SWP within the LTF. It is no coincidence that today in Nicaragua the positions of Healy and the SWP are as similar as two drops of water. The IC splits in two, a sectarian nationalist wing which rapidly transforms itself, just like SWP, into complete opportunism, and another wing, led by the CRFI, which uncompromisingly defends the Trotskyist principles.

The new rise of the world revolution, with great revolutionary victories in Iran and Nicaragua and with the general upsurge in Latin America, definitively blows up the Fourth International of the USec. By unconditionally supporting the FSLN after the fall of Somoza, the USec betrays openly the most elementary principles of Trotskyism, such as: the unconditional defence of all those socially or politically persecuted by a bourgeois government (in this case Trotskyist militants); the systematic struggle against any bourgeois government; the struggle for class independence inside the ranks of the workers movement, fighting relentlessly against petty bourgeois leaderships like the FSLN; the permanent task of the Fourth International to build Trotskyist parties in all countries of the world. This attack immediately triggered a principled united front among the CRFI, the LTT and the BF to organise the unitary defence of Trotskyist principles. From the outset, the members of the Parity Committee (PC) are aware they should not repeat the mistakes of the IC and that a clear program and a centralised leadership are in order to defeat revisionism. §

THESIS XII

Strengthening and crisis of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses

In this century of struggles, mainly in this post-war period, we have witnessed a growing strengthening of the bureaucratic apparatuses. If this process continued there would be no possibility of building mass Trotskyist parties and of overcoming the crisis of leadership. It is therefore essential to make a thorough Marxist study of this phenomenon, as well as its counterpart: the weakness of the Fourth International.

Before World War I — during the 50 years of rise and reformist victories of the workers movement — we find the strengthening of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses is accompanied by the development of a revolutionary left which becomes stronger day after day, as evidenced by the strengthening of the Bolshevik Party and by the delimitation of that left in the heart of the workers movement of other European countries.

In contrast to this process, the 20 years of counter-revolutionary victories before the World War II led to an absolute strengthening of these counter-revolutionary apparatuses. Specifically, the Trotskyist movement became increasingly weaker and Stalinism increasingly stronger as the counter-revolution achieved victory after victory. There was no strengthening — as in the former reformist period — of both roles of the workers movement, but only of one of them, the counter-revolutionary one.

As counterpoint to the analogy we made between this immediate post-war and the previous one, the revolutionary rise and victories of the workers movement have served in the past 30 years to strengthen, apparently increasingly, the counter-revolutionary apparatuses of the global workers movement. This was due to a law which, on occasions, has been described by Trotsky himself. The mass movement in its revolutionary upsurge cannot provide by itself a revolutionary leadership, or does it go, on its own accord, towards the tiny, nearly non-existent revolutionary cores. It is forced to go to go to the existing mass parties and to accept them — in a first stage — as its leadership, although those leaderships are bureaucratic counter-revolutionary apparatuses. This combination of revolutionary upsurge with bureaucratic and Stalinist apparatuses and with petty bourgeois leaderships as Castroism, continued for a long time because of our extreme weakness and made the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in a third part of mankind to be led by these counter-revolutionary leaderships, in a determined effort by these to accompany the mobilisation (even up to the expropriation of the national bourgeoisie in many countries) in order to stop it. But, in turn, this expropriation of the national bourgeoisie and this emergence of workers' states controlled by the bureaucracy constituted a new element which fortified it and made the bureaucracy acquire a redoubled, and unexpected by us, strength. The expropriation of the bourgeoisie — this great revolutionary victory — has been exploited by the bureaucracy to gain a high reputation in the workers movement of its country and of the world: the fulfilling of that colossal revolutionary task consolidated gigantic counter-revolutionary apparatuses on a global scale. The advantage of the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, of the nationalisation of the whole economy, as well as the imperialist economic boom, allowed these ruling bureaucracies to generate an economic boom of the national state they ruled over, and this enabled them to extend their power and prestige for several decades.

If this combination were not critical, unstable, and conjunctural, despite the time it lasts there would be no historical possibilities to overcome the crisis of leadership and build the International. Fortunately it is not so. As the rise continued, it began to question and erode— it has always been so

— those bureaucratic leaderships. The mass movement has always had to do the historical experience with the traditional, bureaucratic leaderships, before rejecting them. The mass movement always has had to make the historical experience of the traditional bureaucratic leaderships before discarding and destroying them. The working class has always gone to these mass parties, even when they are at the service of the bourgeoisie and only after a rather long experience it overcomes them.

Therefore, although we have seen an incredible development and strengthening of the workers bureaucracy and its apparatuses, at the same time, as a consequence of the rise, a slow but growing crisis of them began, as evidenced — among many other facts — by the beginning of the political revolution in Germany in 1953, its continuation in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968, as well as the continuous open or covert crisis of Stalinism on a global scale.

Paradoxically, the source of the biggest crises of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses lies in the support base of their fantastic power: the ruling of the government apparatus of the bureaucratised workers' states. That source of unlimited perks and privileges for the bureaucracy places them as the immediate and direct enemy of the masses of those countries (as long as there are no imperialist attacks). In the bureaucratised workers' states, the bureaucracy cannot divert the mass movement towards the proposition that its enemy is imperialism, the bourgeoisie and the national landlords, but it rather appears to the masses as their immediate, direct enemy. The bureaucratised workers' states strip naked the workers' bureaucracy, showing it as the mortal and frontal enemy of the world workers movement and its mobilisations. The current source of the enormous power of the bureaucratic apparatuses is also, for the same reason, the source of its organic, structural, historical weakness. In these countries, any mobilisation of the oppressed, of the working class and the toilers, goes immediately against the bureaucracy, and the revolutionary rise faces here, without mediations, the counter-revolutionary apparatuses. It will be enough to shake the USSR or China, for all counter-revolutionary and bureaucratic apparatuses of the world to begin tumbling, entering into their definitive crisis. This is the stage of the world revolutionary upsurge which we have entered: of the definitive crisis of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses of the mass movements, and mainly, of Stalinism.

This is because, fundamentally, the bureaucracy has become an absolute obstacle to the economic development of these countries, which have entered into a chronic economic crisis.

To some extent, this strengthening of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses explains the almost congenital weakness of our International. However, other factors are combined in explaining it. For a start, we should point out that where the analogy we made at the foundation of the International (of this post-war with the previous) revealed most wrong is with respect to building large mass parties. We believe the time necessary to build a revolutionary party, and the specific subjective elements that lead to that formation, has been underestimated. A party can only achieve mass influence in a revolutionary upsurge, but the opposite is not true: a revolutionary upsurge does not lead automatically to mass influence of the revolutionary party. Because for a revolutionary party to acquire mass influence takes many years of upsurge to be able to build a leadership and the cadres that can use the upsurge to strengthen the party within the mass movement, and this subjective process of formation of a revolutionary party takes time. Therefore, the appropriate analogy is the one we should do with the stage of formation of the great socialist parties and, fundamentally, of the Bolshevik party. These parties were built in a long process of decades of rise of the workers movement. That it was a reformist upsurge, when minimum tasks were raised, does not undo the fact there were decades of upsurge which allowed to build very strong socialist parties. The same happened with the Bolshevik Party, the only revolutionary Marxist party that era of upsurge gave us. It took the Russian and the international proletariat 40 or 50 years of struggle to achieve the structuring of this party.

The same happens with our International. Moreover, if we take into account we did not value enough the fatal counterrevolutionary role of the 20 years preceding World War II and, fundamentally, of Stalinism. Stalinism fulfilled the role of erasing from the historical memory of the world proletariat the legacy of the Russian Revolution, destroying the revolutionary vanguard in the period between the two Wars. It virtually cut this historical continuity, leaving only very few slender threads of it and these few threads were in the hands of our International. This fact made much more difficult to structure Trotskyist mass parties, which was already difficult in itself.

At the same time, the existence of Pabloism was a fundamental additional factor, not only to weaken the Fourth International but also to disintegrate it in all its sectors, even those who resisted Pabloist revisionism.

So it is that Trotskyist parties may be built only if the revolutionary rise, the era of wars, revolutions and crises continues, although it will be a slow process and with spectacular leaps in certain countries. But the new era which has opened will make possible to a high degree these spectacular jumps in the structuring of our parties.

This may be so because after 40 years of revolutionary upsurge, thousands and thousands of experienced and seasoned Trotskyist cadres have emerged, capable therefore to capitalize on the historical crisis of the counter-revolutionary bureaucratic apparatuses, mainly of Stalinism. §

THESIS XIII

Stalinism and Castroism are counter-revolutionary agents, because of their policies and the class sector they reflect

To justify its support of bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships of the mass movement, revisionism has developed the theory of dual nature: this claims that such leaderships are bourgeois in one sense and proletarian in another. Regarding Castroism, this reasoning is extended with a political consideration: for not being Stalinist it has been guaranteed a revolutionary course, or it is directly revolutionary. This argument of a negative character — any leadership which has not a Stalinist origin and that expropriates the bourgeoisie is revolutionary — does not consider the simple fact that Castroism did transform itself into a Stalinist party.

This theory, besides being revisionist, refuses to make a Marxist, class, analysis of the political phenomena. The petty bourgeois and bureaucratic currents of the workers movement reflect a privileged sector of the mass movement, which has developed in the imperialist era. It is antagonistic to the workers and popular grassroots movement. Although Engels pointed out the problem, neither he nor Marx could thoroughly study the stratification of the working class caused by capitalist development late last century, namely the emergence of a labour aristocracy. Much less could they study a phenomenon that they did not even suspect which was the emergence of a powerful labour bureaucracy. Capitalism in its imperialist phase, in its final stage, keeps using methods that characterised it throughout its existence and has to do with its character of trader, of negotiator. It has been, and it is, characterised by negotiations with sectors of adverse classes, trying to corrupt them and to incorporate them into its system. It did so with feudalism, creating feudal lords or absolute monarchs who ministered to it, and so divided the feudal class. It has done the same with the working class: managing that, in spite of being the most homogeneous class of contemporary society — much more so than the bourgeoisie or the petty bourgeoisie — it is not monolithic, it has different sectors. In rough terms we may say that linked to the working class there are three clearly delimited sectors, which emerged in the imperialist era: the bureaucracy, the aristocracy and the workers rank and file. The aristocracy and the rank and file are part of the working class, they work in capitalist companies. The bureaucracy, instead, does not work in the capitalist companies; it is not a structural part of the working class, but rather of the modern middle class according to Trotsky's definition. In any case, since it lives off its wage or salary we may define it according to Marx as a "*sui generis*" sector of the working class. What is important is not this, but rather to stress the role of the bureaucracy, its function in society today.

We should not confuse the nature and function of the bureaucracy with its social location. Nor to believe the contradictions caused by its origin and location make it change its true nature. The bureaucracy is the agent of the counter-revolution within a workers institution, over which it takes ownership to have a privileged life, separated from the working class. Let us zoom in on that process.

The big monopolies cannot rule directly any country or any social sector. They are a negligible part of the humanity and, therefore, its direct representatives cannot cover the whole of society. To control their companies, the governments, the parliaments, the parties, the trade unions, the armies, the police, the judicial and cultural apparatus, imperialism and the big monopolies are forced to appeal to specialised sectors of the modern middle class, which act as their transmission belt, such as, parliamentarians,

technocrats and executives, the military, the politicians and the bureaucrats. Amongst these agents of imperialism and the monopolies there may be struggles, serious contradictions among themselves or with capitalism itself. For example, bourgeois parliamentary politicians are agents of the monopolies in parliament, but they have serious frictions that lead them to confrontations even to the point of a civil war, as in Spain, with the out-of-parliament, fascist agents of the monopolies. But from this fact we cannot draw the conclusion that the petty bourgeois parliamentary agents of imperialism have a double nature. Their nature remains, despite these contradictions, that of being agents of the monopolies in parliament and, as such, they defend the parliament against the fascists and against the monopolies themselves if these have decided to do without parliament. Similarly, a factory manager is an agent of capitalism, same as the foremen: he is the petty bourgeois agent who defends the capitalist interests within the capitalist production. His nature is different from that of a general, who is a military agent of capitalism and of imperialism. One is an economic agent, the other a military agent. Among them there may be many contradictions, even managers may be opposed to a tax increase to finance armament production. Similarly, a strike breaker is an agent of capitalism, specialised in breaking strikes and trade unions. He is not the same as a trade union bureaucrat, who is an agent of capitalism inside the trade union and the strikes. While the former has as a task to destroy the trade union or any strike that happens, the latter must defend “his” trade union, and at a certain moment he may be in favour of a strike that defends his trade union or strengthens it, entering into a contradiction with the strike breaking agent or the manager. The national bourgeoisie in semi-colonial countries, for instance, is historically agent of imperialism inside the national borders, although at some point it may have deep friction with imperialism itself, when the latter threatens its privileged life.

The workers bureaucracy is an agent of imperialism within the workers movement, so it has friction with other agents of imperialism and even with imperialism itself when the latter tries to destroy the workers institutions whose control and monopoly allow the bureaucrat to have a privileged life. But this does not mean that the bureaucracy has a double nature rather it is just responding to its nature as an agent of imperialism within the workers movement and its organisations. As any middle class sector, agent of imperialism, it has a contradiction between the defence of its position, source of its privileges, and its nature as agent of imperialism.

These general characteristics are typical of both the Social Democrat bureaucracy and the Stalinist bureaucracy. The difference has to do with the greater strength of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and with the sources of their strength, the institutions in which each of them is located. The Social Democrat bureaucracy is positioned in each national state and in large workers organisations, but it has never ruled over a workers’ state. The Stalinist bureaucracy, however, is characterised by the privileged ruling over workers’ states, an institution infinitely more powerful than the most powerful of the Social Democrat organisations. But in terms of their nature, there is no qualitative difference: both are agents of the imperialist counter-revolution within workers organisations. The difference is they are agents in different workers organisations.

Something similar happens with petty bourgeois currents like Castroism that manage to lead a revolutionary mass movement and even to expropriate the national bourgeoisie and imperialism. They are a social sector different from the working class, a sector that, just like the bureaucracy, is part of the modern middle class. Nothing shows it better than the fact that, as soon as they seize power, they transform themselves into technocrats or bureaucrats — at state or political level — without major scares. If before the capture of power they were a modern middle class current that led the mass movement, after taking power they transform themselves automatically, due to their specific differentiation from the working class, in bureaucracy.

Revisionism asserts that these petty bourgeois currents, mainly Castroism, may transform themselves into revolutionary workers currents as a consequence of having expropriated the national bourgeoisie and imperialism. We believe exactly the opposite. For social reasons, they can never transform themselves into a revolutionary current that reflects the interests of the workers rank and file, of the poorest and most exploited sectors of it. This impossibility obeys the most elementary of the Marxist laws. No socially privileged sector accepts loss of its privileges or transforms itself as a whole, as social sector, into another lower social sector. On the contrary, any social sector with privileges tends to increase them. Any privileged sector may, when forced by circumstances, go beyond its political goals in order to defend

and increase these privileges, when threatened with their loss. It never will unite with the most exploited sectors and fight against its own privileges. Never in the historical process, which moves precisely due to this conflict of interests, have we seen a privileged sector voluntarily relinquish its own privileges, i.e. to commit suicide as a class sector. If this were so, reformism would be right.

These interests, distinct and privileged with respect to the working class, make both the bureaucracy as well as the petty bourgeoisie which leads mass movements to be an historical part of the world counter-revolution, declared enemies of the permanent mobilisation of the workers and mass movement, of the permanent revolution within and without their countries. Hence, any privileged sector defends the source of its privileges against any attack or any potential danger of attack by the mobilisation of the working class. Any bureaucrat defends his trade union, and not only does he defend it, he also tries to improve it, but in the sense of “his” trade union, of the trade union ruled by him, not of the trade union ruled by a workers rank and file that increasingly mobilises more and more. Therefore, all these sectors are politically tied to imperialism and to the privileged sectors that exist in the world, to stop the process of permanent mobilisation of the masses, of the workers, peasants and people’s grassroots, of the poorest and most exploited sectors. The nature of agent of the counter-revolution of this bureaucracy is given by that mortal struggle of all bureaucratic and petty bourgeois sectors — without exception — against the permanent revolution and its political expression, Trotskyism, which it considers as its fundamental enemy.

Nothing shows better the counter-revolutionary character of the bureaucracy than its role in the economic process. In the capitalist countries, it is always in favour, directly or indirectly, of the exploitation of the working class and the toiling masses. Social Democracy would guarantee imperialism at the beginning of the century the exploitation of colonies and of their own metropolitan working class. And it has followed that policy ever since. Stalinism always guaranteed the same for its friendly empires. This character of the bureaucracy shows its true nature when there is a critical situation, because when there is a boom it can disguise that nature by negotiating for crumbs. It is in the critical moments when the bureaucracy — including and often preferentially the Stalinist — supports or plays along the plans of super exploitation of their capitalist “friends”. It even makes joint plans with them to overcome the crisis. To give just one example: what is otherwise, the shameless support Castro is giving to the Videla government which is applying the most terrible plan of super exploitation ever known in Argentine history?

In the economy of the bureaucratized workers’ states, the role of the Stalinist bureaucracy is even more pernicious than its role in the capitalist countries. The imperialist economic boom, the reconstruction of an economy destroyed by war in the USSR and in the first workers’ states of the post-war period, as well as the colossal advantages obtained from the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the nationalisation of industry and foreign trade, did allow for the bureaucracy to play a provisional and relatively progressive role for a time. But as the economy of the bureaucratized workers’ states begins to develop, the privileges and the totalitarian leadership of the bureaucracy become increasingly an absolute obstacle together with “their” national state, to the development of the productive forces and the welfare of workers. At this point, happening from the year 1974, the bureaucracy starts elaborating and trying to apply austerity plans for the super exploitation of the workers. It increased armament production to defend its privileges against a possible attack by imperialism or other bureaucratized workers’ states, but mainly to defend itself against the mobilisation of the workers. These are the only “solutions” addressed by the bureaucracy to overcome the crisis of its economy which in fact did not have a solution. At this level, save in exceptional circumstances, the bureaucracy is part and parcel of the global counter-revolution, an absolute fetter to the development of the productive forces and an ever more terrible spoliator of the toilers.

The workers aristocracy is the transmission belt of the bureaucracy to the workers movement. Through it, the bureaucracy tries to impose a bureaucratic and totalitarian regime in the workers organisations that allows it to manipulate them and to increase its privileges. To achieve this it creates — together with imperialism — the workers aristocracy, as the best way to stop the mobilisation of the workers rank and file, to negotiate permanently, and to practice class collaboration at a national level and pacific coexistence at an international level. Hence, socialism in only one country, trade unionism in only one union, class collaboration at a national level and pacific coexistence at an international level are the centrepiece of the bureaucracy and of petty bourgeoisie policy. §

THESIS XIV

Productive forces decay while destructive forces keep growing under the economic boom

The absence of a 1929 like crisis in this post-war period — i.e. a shock to the entire capitalist world from the centre to the periphery — the economic boom of imperialist and most developed countries of the world for 20 years (roughly as of 1950), plus the combination of these elements with a spectacular technological development, led revisionism to build a new anti-Marxist economic conception.

This conception holds that in the first place a new stage has opened: neo-capitalist or neo-imperialist, which it is allegedly different from the imperialist defined by Lenin, that of total decay, of chronic crisis of the capitalist economy. With an abusive generalisation of these new facts, this new theoretical-political current accepts both the theories of bourgeois economists as well as of the bureaucracy, and it transfers them into our ranks as an economic theory at the service of its capitulation to the bureaucratic apparatuses.

The second revision — the main one — is the assertion that in this supposed new stage; the productive forces have made a colossal development, in the form of huge technological progress. This is an anti-classist and anti-human conception, and precisely the base of support of the imperialist ideologues.

For Marxists, the development of the productive forces is a category consisting of three elements: man, technology and nature. The primary productive force is man, specifically the working class, the peasantry and all the toilers. Therefore, we believe that technological development is not a development of the productive forces if it does not allow for the enrichment of man and nature, i.e., a greater mastery of nature by man, and of man over society.

Technology — as well as science and education — is a neutral phenomenon that it is either productive or destructive according to the class use given to it. Nuclear power is a colossal scientific and technological discovery, but transformed into an atomic bomb, it is a great tragedy for mankind; it has nothing to do with the progress of the productive forces, but rather with the destructive forces. Science and technology may lead to the enrichment of man — to the development of the productive forces — or to the decadence and destruction of man. It depends on their use; and their use depends on the class that has it in their hands. Currently, not only is the development of productive forces hampered by the existence of imperialism and capitalist private property, but also by the existence of national states, among which we include bureaucratized workers' states. At the time of death agony of capitalism these nation states serve the same nefarious role as the feuds in the period of transition from feudalism to capitalism.

In this post-war period we have seen the colossal development of the armaments industry, i.e., of the destructive forces of society, and also a technological development which has led to an impoverishing of man, to a crisis of mankind, to increasing wars and a beginning of the destruction of nature. The present development of the capitalist and bureaucratic economy has a growing trend towards destruction of man and humanized nature. The revisionist analysis of this point is partial and analytic, since it does not define the consequences of the development, nor its trends.

If revisionism is right, its conceptions would mean that we have entered into a reformist era, in which the question is to get the biggest possible slice for the workers within this progressive development process. If so, the whole conception of the *Transitional Program* would be wrong. But the current stage of capitalism produces growing misery for the masses. The dominance of imperialism over the global economy is an

obstacle to the development of the productive forces. And Marxism, Leninism and Trotskyism are more relevant than ever, because they are the only science that explains why a revolutionary era opens: because the development of the productive forces is hampered by the dominant social system, to the extent that causes decadence, a crisis in their development.

The third revision is a consequence of the previous one: if the productive forces develop under neo-capitalism, then the workers constantly and consistently improve their standard of living at a global scale. The major problem for the masses ceases to be misery, since with ever growing consumption they become alienated.

The facts have been so categorical against this revisionist theory that nowadays, shamefully, they try to hide it. But this was the official position of the revisionists in the 1960s: the misery of the masses is relative — since they keep improving their standard of living — and not absolute, as Marxism asserts for the imperialist era. The facts and the orthodox Marxist conception argue that a revolutionary stage opens when life becomes untenable for the masses, when there is increasing unemployment and misery, lower wages, etc. The imperialist and capitalist economy, as well as the bureaucratic one, in its final crisis stage, of putrefaction and of confrontation with the world socialist revolution, is the stage of increasing and absolute misery for the mass movement as a whole. Revisionism has taken as a reference for the formulation of its theory the situation of the working class in the advanced countries during the boom and not of all masses.

The fourth revision holds that the economic crises of imperialism — like the one of 1929 — have disappeared, and we have on the contrary, a sustained economic boom. This view ignores that the boom is exceptional and provisional and, so are the facts that explain it. The alleged new stage is not really anything other than the capitalist economy in its definitive crisis of putrefaction and, crucially, of confrontation with the world socialist revolution. The current imperialist economy, including its boom, can only be understood as a part dependent on the political and social situation, linked to the total process of the struggle between the worldwide international socialist revolution and the counter-revolution. Politics rules over economics in this stage, and nothing can be understood by applying the revisionist method of separation.

The major political events of the post-war are what explain the lack of a crisis of the magnitude of 1929, not economic automatism alone. All “abnormal” economic phenomena ultimately have to do with the counter-revolutionary policy of the Kremlin and Stalinism all over the world. Without this conscious policy, there would have been no economic boom, no Marshall Plan, no recovery of the German or Japanese economy, nor of the European economy as a whole, and we would have seen a crisis far above the crisis of 1929 in the advanced capitalist countries. The fact that the crisis has not happened has nothing to do with the most powerful trends of the capitalist economy in its state of putrefaction. It is not due to economic phenomena but rather to political phenomena. For example, the Kremlin ordered Western communist parties to support the recovery of the capitalist economy devastated by World War II, urging the working class to make sacrifices in order to raise these capitalist economies.

The performance of Stalinism, as an agent of over-accumulation and excess profits, was the political instrument that made it possible. This policy in turn allowed the Kremlin to rebuild the economy of “its” bureaucratized workers’ state, and to strengthen itself relatively within its sphere of influence.

But despite the Kremlin’s help, imperialism only managed to transform the catastrophic cyclic crises — of a 1929 type — into a chronic global capitalist crisis that has gone from the periphery to the centre, taking in the capitalist world as a whole, including — as a contradictory piece of this world economic system dominated by imperialism — the bureaucratized workers’ states.

The economic boom was based at first on the sacrifice and over-exploitation of the proletariat of the advanced countries who let itself be exploited by order of the Kremlin. Later, once the economy of the advanced countries entered into a boom, in the exploitation increasingly terrible of the backward countries, where it generated a growing and absolute misery. In turn, this restructuring of the capitalist economy gave way to an economy at the service of the world counter-revolution, as evidenced in the largest armaments production in human history, i.e. the most colossal production of the means of destruction.

All these phenomena have created the conditions for the crisis to advance gradually from the periphery to the centre of the global capitalist system. As of 1974 the crisis arrived in the most advanced capitalist countries and the bureaucratized workers’ states. Its most evident manifestation — not the cause

but the spectacular events that make it evident — are increasing inflation, crisis in oil prices and the world market, the crisis of the dollar and the international monetary system, the increases in gold prices, etc.

Completing this chain that separates revisionism from Marxism, accepting the conception of the theorists of the bureaucracy of “socialism in one country”, Pabloism has accepted the premises of Stalinism that in today’s world there are two antagonistic, politically and economically opposed worlds: that of imperialism and that of the bureaucratized workers’ states. This is neither politically nor economically correct. There are no two economic worlds at a global scale. There is only one world economy, a single world market, dominated by imperialism. Within this global economy dominated by imperialism, there are more or less sharp contradictions with the bureaucratized workers’ states where the bourgeoisie has been expropriated. However, these are not absolute, but rather relative contradictions, because of one political and one economic reason: the ruling bureaucracy of these workers’ states defends “its” national frontiers. It has no intention to destroy them by developing a federation of workers’ states. Therefore it makes strenuous efforts to practice class collaboration on an international scale, i.e., pacific coexistence with imperialism. The economy of all workers’ states bureaucratized or not, is contingent on the world economy controlled by capitalism, as long as imperialism continues to be economically stronger. This is why the economy of the bureaucratized workers’ states has followed as a shadow the cycles of the world capitalist economy. §

THESIS XV

A stage of February revolutions, and no October revolution

In contrast to all our forecasts, after the Russian there has been no October revolution, triumphant or defeated. The post World War II period, despite being the most revolutionary stage of history, has only resulted in February revolutions. Some were victorious, some were defeated and others frozen, but all of them were only February revolutions.

Before exploring the previous assertion, we must distinguish between an October revolution and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, since, before the war, the only revolution which came to expropriate the bourgeoisie was that of October 1917, and this led us to a false analogy and the assertion that both terms are synonymous. This post-war experience shows that this is not so.

Like any revolution, October is an essentially socio-political process with economic consequences. It has two characteristics that distinguish it sharply from all other revolutions. The first is the emergence of revolutionary organisations of workers and mass power, like the soviets. The second is closely related to the first and is decisive: the existence of a revolutionary Marxist party to lead the insurrection and armed struggle, and to take power only as a means to develop the mobilisation of the masses and the international socialist revolution. *Without these two conditions, there is no October revolution.*

A February revolution is different from an October revolution, but is closely linked to it; it must be the necessary prologue to that of October for the revolution to keep advancing.

February is a workers' and people's revolution that confronts imperialist exploiters, bourgeois and landowners linked to the bourgeoisie, and destroys the bourgeois state apparatus or causes its crisis. For their class dynamics and for the enemy that they face, both are socialist revolutions. The difference between them lies in the different level of consciousness of the mass movement and, mainly, in the relation between the revolutionary Marxist party with the mass movement and the revolutionary process underway. Put succinctly, the February revolution is unconsciously socialist while the October revolution is consciously socialist. We could say — flirting with Hegel and Marx — that the former is a socialist revolution *in itself (an sich)* while the second it is *for itself (für sich)*.

February revolutions have a logic that reflects the workers and mass movement in this stage of revolutionary upsurge. Nearly all revolutions arise when the deepest objective needs of the mass movement come to an intolerable situation. But in relation to this objective situation leading to the revolution, their level of consciousness and that of its leaders keep lagging. Despite this lag, revolutions happen. This is because the proletariat — unlike the bourgeoisie under feudalism — cannot mature its consciousness under capitalist conditions; it has no conditions for its consciousness to mature under the conditions of capitalism; this is not an evolutionary but a revolutionary process. As a dominated class it acquires it while fighting against another class for power.

This combination, a low level of consciousness with a revolutionary mobilisation on a scale such that it manages to make a revolution, gives rise to a February revolution. The low level of consciousness of the workers movement, even during the revolution, allows the counter-revolutionary apparatuses and the petty bourgeois currents (reformist by program and conception) to connect with it and lead it during a stage.

A February revolution is completely different from the October revolution as far as the level of consciousness and leadership are concerned. The October revolution is characterised by having at its

head a revolutionary Marxist leadership; the February revolution is led by the bureaucratic and petty bourgeois apparatuses of the mass movement. This consciously counter-revolutionary sector understands the meaning of the February revolution and takes part in it precisely to keep the revolution at this low level of consciousness and in a bourgeois democratic stage, limited to the national arena, preventing it from developing into a socialist revolution. In other words, it intervenes to curb its mortal enemy, the permanent mobilisation of the masses.

This is possible because, generally, the tasks faced by the February revolution are democratic. As a result of the backwardness of the mass movement, and the objective situation of the class struggle, these revolutions always have been made against despotic dictatorships, against totalitarianism and the Bonapartism characteristic of capitalism in its agony of death. As a result, the opportunist leadership, to curb the mobilisation, may advocate stopping the revolution when achieving these democratic or nationalist goals.

Trotsky made a brilliant analysis of the February revolution and its relation with the October revolution. He pointed to its character of socialist revolution which hands over power to the national bourgeoisie, through the opportunist leaderships. Both his studies and the writings of Lenin in 1917, show how any February revolution might — as a most highly unlikely variation — force the opportunist parties, pressured by the mass movement but just to control it, to go beyond their programs and goals. Even to break with the bourgeoisie as a step towards the expropriation of capitalism and the structuring of a workers' state. But this political and theoretical perspective was, again, highly unlikely. The classical analysis of Trotsky and of our International has been that the February revolution is the prelude to the October revolution and, without the latter, there can be no rupture with the bourgeoisie, or expropriation of the same, not even the fulfilling of the remaining bourgeois democratic tasks.

As for the tasks, we were wrong, since a third part of mankind — except for the USSR — has come to expropriate the bourgeoisie and achieved important democratic tasks (defeat dictators, expropriate landlords, distribute land to the peasants, etc.) without October revolutions. But from the point of view of history and development of the socialist revolution, Trotsky was right: if after the February revolution an October does not ensue — i.e. the conquest of power by a revolutionary Marxist party supported by the revolutionary organisation of the mass movement — there is no possibility for the revolution to accelerate and to acquire a permanent character.

The fact that we have confused February revolutions with bourgeois-democratic ones has led us to downplay their importance. Actually, February revolutions have a fundamental and decisive importance, as much as that of the conquest of the great trade unions in the reformist era. This century has shown that they are distinct categories, but were combined in the Russian Revolution. February is a socialist revolution, categorically socialist, which destroys the capitalist state apparatus through a revolutionary armed struggle of the workers. Whether or not the essential axis of the revolution program is the democratic tasks is an issue that falls under the *Transitional Program*. The transitional process leading to the February Revolution gives enormous weight to the democratic tasks. But this does not mean it is a bourgeois democratic revolution. In this century — save for exceptions as the Russian Revolution — there are no more bourgeois democratic revolutions; there are only socialist revolutions, although with or without the maturation of the subjective factor.

In Russia itself, there was a combination of socialist with bourgeois-democratic revolution in February. But this was due to the existence of tsarism and the landlords who supported it. In spite of this, the bourgeois democratic element — i.e. the struggle against feudal remnants — was not a decisive one, since tsarism was part of the world imperialist regime and was intimately tied to Russian capitalism.

Save for a few exceptions, this situation no longer exists in the world. There are no more tsars or dominant feudal landlords; everywhere imperialism, capitalism, capitalist landlords or bureaucracy rules. All present revolutions are socialist due to the enemy they face — the bourgeoisie and its state apparatus — and due to the class character of those who make them, the workers. The proletariat — due to, on one hand, the agony of death of capitalism, its putrefaction, the general decline that it causes to mankind, and on the other, its prejudices, low political level and the existence of bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships that reinforce them — was forced to carry out a February revolution as a prologue to the necessary October revolution. In other words, it pays with a double sacrifice and historical effort this backwardness in its consciousness level and this decadence of capitalism.

We must enrich the analysis of the Russian Revolution, giving an enormous importance to the revolutions of 1905 and February 1917. We must study their relationship to October. Because, against all our beliefs, there have been 1905 and February revolutions, but no October revolutions. All perspectives and hypotheses opened by the February revolution, and which were left behind because of the October victory, came to happen in this post-war period. We may say this post-war period is the stage of the unconscious socialist or February revolution, generalised to an international level. Seen with historical and theoretical breadth, February has a profound logic and importance. If we accept that there will only be a revolution when the industrial proletariat, led by a Marxist party, makes it, then the revolutionary process of the masses would be paralysed; there could be no possible revolution until the proletariat had matured its consciousness and that of its party, class struggle would stop and workers could not advance in the achievement of any conquest. But this is not the case the revolutionary struggles of the masses continue to achieve great historic gains, making victorious revolutions despite their lack of maturity.

This leads to the issue of what the chances are for new October revolutions to happen. Ultimately, the whole attack of revisionism, with its use of expressions taken from bourgeois sociology, goes against what they call “the model of the October revolution”. Like Pablo, they note that in this post-war period the model has not been repeated, and they draw from it the revisionist conclusion that this kind of revolution belongs to the past and will not be repeated. According to them a new theory of the revolution arises. But, like any revisionist current, they qualify as new the old theories of the pre-Marxist epoch, when the popular democratic revolutions against absolutism were on the agenda. They call new a very old model: that of all the democratic revolutions prior to October.

We believe exactly the opposite: there is no reason for new October revolutions not to happen; Februarys will mature in the consciousness of the working class and, in turn, this maturity will contribute to the strengthening of our parties. And these two processes will unavoidably lead to October revolutions, just as the 1905 and the February revolutions led to the Bolshevik October. It is an unavoidable sequence of the revolutionary upsurge. What we must indeed recognise is that the victory of October is much more difficult than that of February; and also that February revolutions happen and progress more than we thought, due to objective circumstances. But from there we cannot revise Marxism to theorize that the February revolutions are the only ones that can happen in this revolutionary period while that October was an unrepeatable exception.

Moreover, any February revolution which does not transform itself into an October revolution inevitably degenerates. No February revolution can have a permanent rhythm, because the role of the petty bourgeois and bureaucratic leaderships who head it is always the same: to freeze the process of permanent revolution, to stop it, to strait-jacket it, to defeat the mass movement. Therefore, any February revolution — whether it expropriated the bourgeoisie or not — gives rise to recurrent February revolutions. This means that a February Revolution is not a fundamental solution of the revolutionary process. It always requires making new Februarys or great mass mobilisations to halt the decline inevitably caused by the treacherous leaderships. A magnificent example of this phenomenon is the fact that the betrayal of the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries forced the masses to carry out the great mobilisation against Kornilov. To take another example: the Portuguese revolution of 1974 was a great February revolution that did not transform itself into an October and ended up putting the right-wing government of Eanes in power.

Not solving anything, the February revolution — even when it achieves big victories — generates recurrent Februarys. Not only does the February revolution happen in many countries in this revolutionary stage, but it also repeats itself several times in the same country, as long as it does not advance towards October. We therefore should more precisely characterise this period as revolutionary: it is the stage of objective revolutions, whether the subjective factor is present or not. The revolutionary upsurge is so big that revolutions happen, even with immature subjective factors.

But the February revolutions characteristic of this stage — and possibly they will be characteristic of it for a long time, while the conditions for October revolutions are maturing — are the prologue to October, though the process is prolonged and often thwarted — as it has happened in all cases of this post-war — without reaching it.

It has also created a new method for revolution that we had not contemplated, or at least we had not grasped its full extent: guerrilla warfare. §

THESIS XVI

Guerrilla warfare

The most dynamic, most important, richest revolutions of this post-war period — as the Chinese, the Vietnamese, and the Cuban — developed through guerrilla warfare. The entire process of guerrilla warfare in the colonial and semi-colonial world, when it did not lead to the expropriation of the bourgeoisie at least achieved the national independence of many colonies (Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, etc.). Our outlook did not contemplate the guerrilla warfare in the immediate post-war in the magnitude and importance that it took.

This is another consequence of our false analogy with the previous post-war period. Given that in the Russian Revolution the civil war happened after October, and that both in 1905 and in February and October 1917 the armed struggle had an urban insurrection character; given that in no other revolution (Germany, Spain, etc.) there was guerrilla warfare, we arrived at the false conclusion that history would repeat itself in the second post-war: there would be no guerrilla but only February and October type urban insurrections.

As mentioned, the Russian civil war happened after October. The leading presence of the Bolshevik Party gave it a character of a conscious socialist civil war, the extension of the October Revolution. Instead, in this post-war period the civil war has been before the February revolution, and the armed struggle has made possible the victory of those revolutions. This is because in this stage of crisis without end of imperialism, the general methods of struggle with which the exploiters face the mass movement have changed.

Whenever possible, imperialism and its agents attack the mass movement with the most ruthless methods of civil war, using not only their “official” armed forces, but also vigilante and fascist gangs. Given the methods used by the counter-revolution, and the successes it has achieved, guerrilla warfare emerges as an expression of the necessity of the mass movement to defend itself, using the same violent methods.

By always facing pro-imperialist and fiercely dictatorial governments, by being part of the revolutionary mass movement and acquiring a mass, workers and popular character, the guerrilla takes socialist characteristics. It faces the bourgeois state apparatus with the armed revolutionary mobilisation of the workers and the people. This is a result of its class dynamics because the guerrilla leaderships, by their goals and program, have always been popular-frontist. Just like the bureaucratic petty bourgeois leaderships, no guerrilla leadership has ever aimed consciously at making the socialist revolution. But when the mass movement takes up the method of guerrilla mobilisation, this is transformed into socialist, workers and people’s civil war that destroys the foundations supporting the bourgeois state apparatus, the armed forces.

This kind of civil war has happened when the mass movement has suffered serious defeats, has a low level of consciousness and, at the same time, and is forced to answer the brutal attacks of the counter-revolution. Thus, the opportunist petty bourgeois leaderships had the possibility to and did manage to constrain them within programs which are populist, democratic, nationalist, and not socialist or of development of the permanent revolution. Neither the opportunist leaderships nor the mass movement were conscious they were originating a February revolution much deeper than the Russian by the fact that, by being done with methods of civil war, it led directly to the destruction of the armed forces of the

bourgeois state. Just as February was an unconscious socialist revolution, the guerrilla is an unconscious socialist civil war because of the low level of consciousness of the masses and the opportunist policy of its leadership.

Guerrilla warfare with a civil war character are extremely progressive and, given the nature of the era, there will be new ones, because they are one more expression of the convulsive and revolutionary character of this era, of the putrefaction of the monopolist imperialist regime and of the methods of civil war with which this faces the masses, of the low level of consciousness of the workers and of the strength of the bureaucratic petty bourgeois leaderships.

The program of the guerrilla warfare is always directed against the highest expression of the counter-revolution: the fascist and semi-fascist dictatorships. Hence the democratic nationalist program of these revolutions. But this does not turn them into democratic bourgeois revolutions because, by their dynamics, they go against the capitalist property and state, not against feudal states. §

THESIS XVII

The opportunism of the guerrilla leaderships

The decadence of imperialism and the methods of civil war it uses to confront the workers, affect the “people” as a whole. This bourgeois imperialist counter-revolution causes a rebellion, not only of peasantry, students and the working class, but also of sectors of the petty bourgeoisie and, sometimes, sectors of the bourgeoisie itself. All these sectors were forced to adopt the method of guerrilla warfare to fend off the imperialist and capitalist counter-revolution that affected them. Even the bureaucracy of the workers’ parties, mainly the Stalinist, is also forced to use these methods in some circumstances, when faced with the advance of the counter-revolution that brings up to either defend itself, arms in hand, or to disappear. All these petty bourgeois and bureaucratic sectors, and even sectors of the lower bourgeoisie, which are forced to use unwillingly this method, will be the social and political basis of the leadership of this guerrilla war, given the lack of revolutionary Marxist mass parties that could direct it. It is one more expression of the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the world proletariat.

But these sectors which are forced not only to take part in the guerrilla warfare, but — because of the vacuum of leadership — to take charge of this guerrilla war, do not abandon their conception against the permanent mobilisation of the masses and against their democratic revolutionary organisation. On the contrary, they get involved for reasons of self-defence against the counter-revolution, but at the same time to slow down, channel and crush the revolutionary permanent mobilisation of the mass movement, which is the greatest potential danger they face as privileged sectors.

These sectors have begun to develop new revisionist theories and policies. Thus the Maoist theory of prolonged people’s war and the Guevarist theory of the guerrilla focus have emerged. Both have a common denominator which is overestimating and absolutizing guerrilla warfare, its technical and military aspects, and a minimising of the influence of the permanent mobilisation of the mass movement and of its democratic organisation. At the same time, for this reason these petty bourgeois and bureaucratic sectors that lead the guerrilla movement and the civil war, try, through the purely military organisation, to get a tight control over the mass movement, to confine it in the straitjacket of military discipline to prevent any initiative, any permanent revolutionary process and any democracy. Together with this goal they try, through the military organisation, to get rid of the class, socialist character the civil war has, developing the theory that it is a people’s war which develops a new man, where class differences disappear, where all classes join together. The idea is to transform everybody in guerrilla fighters, eliminating the class, socialist, character of the guerrilla. The entire policy of these leaderships aims to a rigid, bureaucratic, military control of the mass movement. Furthermore, the military hierarchisation, indispensable for a military struggle, is transferred to the political arena, imposing a rigid, bureaucratic political structure upon the mass movement involved in the guerrilla warfare.

Thus, petty bourgeois currents love guerrilla warfare as they conceive it, because it allows them to exercise the tightest control over the revolutionary mass movement.

This prevents the masses to raise their consciousness level and, in this way, they are kept within the theory that a limited bourgeois-democratic or national socialist revolution is being done, preventing, once the dictatorial government is overthrown, the masses from advancing further. Therefore, unity with the bourgeoisie is vindicated, dividing the latter into progressive and regressive sectors. It seeks to transform the guerrilla front into the opposite of what it is; it is turned into a front which does not fight against the

nodal point of the bourgeoisie, its state apparatus, but only against some bourgeois sectors, being united with other bourgeois sectors. In this way, the socialist civil war is oriented towards a popular-frontism of the worst kind combined with guerrilla warfare.

This conception of guerrilla warfare to impose popular front governments, this opportunist and reactionary policy of military and politically disciplining the mass movement, turns out to be much more dangerous when it is taken up and theorised by petty bourgeois, elitist groups, underclass, student and even vanguard sectors of the workers themselves, who, feeling powerless against the betrayal of the traditional leaderships of the mass movement, launch desperate actions on their own account and at their own risk. Urban terrorism developing in Europe and in other regions of the world enters these vanguardist guerrilla currents. The theorists and politicians of the rural guerrilla focus belong to the same social and political sectors as those of the urban guerrilla. This line of guerrilla or terrorism by small vanguard groups is disastrous for the mass movement, and it has to be fought as such by our sections. It is as pernicious as the counter-revolutionary line of the opportunist leaderships of the mass guerrilla.

We are completely against any adventurer action of groups of brave people separated from the mass movement. The guerrilla warfare that we advocate is the one that has as support the mass movement. It is the one that we support even though its leadership is opportunist, denouncing this leadership for its counter-revolutionary role, for its policy of stifling and disciplining the mass movement to prevent it from continuing its permanent mobilisation. We are completely against starting “mini civil wars” of small vanguard groups, completely separated from the mass movement. This petty bourgeois, elitist attitude of the focus and terrorist currents is the flip side of the bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships to the true, socialist, mass guerrilla warfare and it is equally disastrous, although these vanguard focus currents raise this policy as a rejection of the opportunist leaderships of the mass movement.

They have in common with the opportunist counter-revolutionary leaderships of the mass guerrilla warfare that neither trusts the permanent mobilisation of the workers movement, they are against it. Both have a paternalist conception of the mass movement; try to convince it that it is powerless with its mobilisation and independent organisation, so that it reaches the conclusion that the solution for all its problems comes from the actions of a small terrorist group, completely separated from the mass movement, or from actions completely under control of the military apparatus in the hands of the bureaucracy or the petty bourgeoisie, i.e., of the opportunist leaderships of the mass movement. In this sense, both the opportunist guerrilla leaderships as well as the guerrilla vanguard that fights against them are counter-revolutionary, regardless of the intentions of that vanguard itself. §

THESIS XVIII

The workers' and peasants' governments

The process which led to the formation of the bureaucratised workers' states in this post-war took place through a category that Trotsky had begun to analyse: the workers' and peasants' government. We have to dwell extensively on it, both to defend and to expand it, given the tremendous importance it has acquired in recent years.

Behind this formula hide three different issues: a formulation to popularise class relations in the dictatorship of the proletariat, a political tactic against the reformist parties to force them to break up with the bourgeoisie and to unmask them in front of the mass movement, and a theoretical problem. Let us look at these three issues in that order.

The formula of workers' and peasants' government was used by the Bolsheviks as a popularisation of the dictatorship. Their aim was to stress that it was a government of the two exploited classes, united in government against the exploiters. It has been useful in the countries with peasants' majority, to mark the political alliance in the dictatorship between the peasants and the proletariat, under the hegemony of the latter. In the countries with urban majority, which are not peasant but have a powerful middle class, it is necessary to extend this popularisation and this slogan, with *workers' and people's government*, indicating the alliance that will allow the proletariat to take power together with the urban and rural people.

Given the importance acquired by February revolutions, the slogan of workers' and peasants' government becomes crucial. As a slogan and tactic, it is a call to the petty bourgeois parties with mass influence to break with the bourgeoisie and take power to apply a revolutionary program against it. It becomes our most important policy of government, given the character of the revolution (of February) that these parties lead, and to fight their policy of class collaboration. This tactic aims to pave the way for the masses to break with the opportunist party and follow the revolutionary party as the only way to keep their permanent mobilisation. Breaking politically with the bourgeoisie, and even expropriating it, does not change the petty bourgeois or bureaucratic character of the opportunist party. We have to keep our relentless struggle against it, as Lenin and Trotsky pointed out in 1917 when they considered this possibility.

Now let us see what happens with this formula as a historical category. During the Russian revolution, after February, the Bolsheviks insist in demanding from the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries to break with the bourgeoisie and to seize power, as a transitional stage towards the dictatorship of the proletariat. They call on them to form a workers' and peasants' government. The Bolshevik leaders pledged only to defend this government against any attack of the bourgeoisie. At the same time, they refused to give it even the least political support, since they planned to continue leading a relentless struggle against them to displace them from power and to take it themselves, as the only guarantee of an uninterrupted development of the revolutionary process. The Russian opportunists refused to break with the bourgeoisie. Therefore, this possibility considered by the Bolsheviks did not materialise.

In the *Transitional Program*, Trotsky resumed this Bolshevik policy as a highly unlikely variation: in very urgent objective circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, revolutionary offensive of the masses, etc.), petty bourgeois parties, including the Stalinists, could be forced to break with the bourgeoisie and seize power, ushering a new kind of government in which, having broken politically with the bourgeoisie, they still had not expropriated it, a short interregnum to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This variation, highly unlikely according to Trotsky, is the only one that took place in the last 35 years. Since the post-war, all victorious worker revolutions happened through this kind of workers' and peasants' government. It was the Stalinist petty bourgeois and bureaucratic parties like those of Mao, Tito, Enver Hoxha and Ho Chi Minh, or nationalist democratic parties like that of Fidel Castro and "Che" Guevara, those that broke politically with the bourgeoisie and imperialism, took power and came to the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, inaugurating a bureaucratic dictatorship of the proletariat.

We can make a generalisation about the possibility of the existence of a transitional stage, which would represent *merely a short episode on the road to the true dictatorship of the proletariat* (Trotsky, *Transitional Program*), of political rupture with the bourgeoisie, but prior to expropriation, both for the case of the leading party that takes power being a reformist party or a revolutionary, Trotskyist party.

In the October Revolution there was an initial period during which there was a government that had broken politically with the bourgeoisie (the Bolsheviks in alliance with the Left Social Revolutionaries), but which had not yet expropriated it. Trotsky pointed out that there was a workers' and peasants' government and that, only from the autumn of 1918 — after the expropriation of the means of production — one can speak of a proletarian dictatorship in Russia.

In contrast to the dictatorship of the proletariat (under which the bourgeoisie has been expropriated) this is the government of that brief stage in the class struggle, a highly contradictory short period ranging from the political break with the bourgeoisie until its expropriation or until its regression to a bourgeois government. This period was characterised by having an anti-capitalist workers' and peasants' government, on a capitalist economic foundation. It is exactly the opposite of a degenerated workers' state, which has a government apparatus similar to that of the bourgeoisie, on a workers economic foundation, transitional, based on the expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

The capitulation of the USec to the GRN (National Reconstruction Government) of Nicaragua) urges us to think carefully about this slogan of workers' and peasants' government and about the policy we should have towards the same.

A workers' and peasants' government may be headed either by an opportunist or by a revolutionary Trotskyist party, which will lead to either a bureaucratic or a revolutionary workers' and peasants' government. This sharp distinction between two the kinds of government leads Trotskyism to two policies, diametrically opposite. If this is a workers' and peasants' government led by a reformist party — which has gone far beyond its will, being forced to break with the bourgeoisie because of objective circumstances and not because it is part of its program — Trotskyism, although it had been calling it to make this break and despite being strong in defending it from any attack by the bourgeoisie, will keep relentlessly criticising the government and the reformist party heading it, avoiding any confusion, not accepting any political responsibility for it. It will remain mortal enemy of this party and government, independently of acting in united front with it before the attack a common enemy. §

THESES XIX

The genesis of the new bureaucratised workers' states

Of the new phenomena, the one we should highlight is the bureaucratised workers' states because it means the emergence of a new theoretical category caused by reality.

Just as the previous post-war period caused a phenomenon unforeseen by Marxism, the degeneration of the first workers' state, the USSR — forcing Trotsky to formulate a new Marxist theory, to discover its characteristics of degenerated or bureaucratised workers' state — in this new post-war period we have to explain and define the new bureaucratised workers' states and the process that originated them.

The theoretical difficulty lies in the fact these new states emerge in the era of greatest revolutionary rise, as opposed to the first workers' state that is a product of counter-revolutionary victories. Two distinct stages, one counter-revolutionary and the other revolutionary, give birth to identical workers' states, i.e. bureaucratised.

To be sure, the February revolutions that come to expropriate the bourgeoisie are a new category, just as at the time the category of degenerate workers' state was. At the time, the category of degenerated workers' state surprised us because we believed the advance of the world counter-revolution would lead to the destruction of the workers' state. Nevertheless, the combination of the counter-revolution with the existence of the workers' state did not lead to its destruction, but rather to an extremely contradictory combination that joined the counter-revolutionary domination of the government apparatus with the survival of the workers' state, i.e. a counter-revolution that did not become social but only political. That did not come to destroy the workers' state but only to its degeneration. It was an extremely unstable combination of counter-revolution and workers' state. This was a result of the strength of the latter.

Today we have a combination of revolutionary rise with counter-revolutionary apparatuses which have proved much stronger than we suspected. We believed that, in its first phase, the revolutionary rise would have blown the counter-revolutionary apparatuses to smithereens and that there would be no expropriation of the bourgeoisie, no workers' state, other than by the overcoming of the crisis of leadership of the proletariat. In other words, the revolutionary upsurge would destroy these apparatuses and bring into power revolutionary parties that would expropriate the bourgeoisie. However, it was not so. Just as in the past post-war period there was an advance of the counter-revolution on the workers' state, which nonetheless could not change its character, today there is an advance of the revolution against the counter-revolutionary apparatuses although it failed to burst them open. Given its nature alien to the working class ranks, the rise could not change them either.

This combination has also given rise to a highly unstable phenomenon, the combination of two clearly antagonistic poles but united by an exceptional, conjunctural circumstance, in a bureaucratised workers' state. Different combinations originated identical phenomena: bureaucratised workers' states. The Stalinist USSR is the ultimate product of the counter-revolution; the post-war workers' states, of the revolutionary rise.

This is the genesis of all the new bureaucratised workers' states. Although there have been three different processes as far as situation and leadership, they all are essentially the same. One process was that of the East European countries, except Yugoslavia. In them, the leadership was in the hands of the Kremlin bureaucracy who militarily occupied countries of Eastern Europe. Another case is that of Yugoslavia, China, Korea and Vietnam. The leadership was national Stalinist, tightly linked to the

Kremlin, but without occupation by the Red Army and without direct Kremlin leadership. Finally, in Cuba we had a petty bourgeois opportunist leadership. All these leaderships have been petty bourgeois and the differences among them have only been specific, since they all had the same policy of preventing an October revolution and staying within the framework of a national democratic revolution, even when they have been forced to expropriate the bourgeoisie.

Seen from another angle, the February revolution is, historically, the prologue, the prelude to the October revolution. This is how we have always considered it. This is why in Trotsky's analyses of the October revolution he takes the revolutions of 1905 and of February 1917 as the prologue to October. What defines the February Revolution is the October Revolution. Something similar to what the Bolsheviks raised with regard to the USSR and the counterrevolution (either the revolutionary workers' state develops, or the bourgeois counter-revolution is victorious) is what we rose regarding the February Revolution and the upsurge that originated: if the February revolution does not become an October revolution, the bourgeois counter-revolution is unavoidable. But the complexity of the transition from capitalism to socialism has produced hybrids that are neither at one pole nor at the other.

In the USSR there was no bourgeois counter-revolution but, for now, a bureaucratic counter-revolution.

The same has happened in regard to the February revolutions: these did not become October revolutions in any country, but in many of them neither has the bourgeois counter-revolution been victorious, on the contrary, the bourgeoisie was expropriated. The result was the same as in the USSR, a bureaucratized workers' state, but from the outset. The processes, although the result is the same, are different. In the case of the USSR, it is a revolutionary workers' state which is degenerated by the counter-revolution. In the case of the bureaucratized workers' states that have emerged in this post-war period, the phenomenon is a February revolution, degenerated by the counter-revolutionary leaderships or an October revolution aborted by the same. As in any abortion, the foetus has some characteristics of the creature to be born, in this case of the October revolution — as the expropriation of the bourgeoisie — without having its full features and without being born. Nothing illustrates better the correctness of our definition that the fact that, while the great national day of the USSR continues to be the October Revolution, all the new bureaucratic workers' states have as their national day that of their birth, the date of their liberation, of their February revolution. China celebrates its national day the fall of Chiang Kai-shek; Yugoslavia the victory over Nazism, the same for the East European countries, equally for Vietnam, Korea and even Cuba. Nobody celebrates as its national day the day of the expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

These different processes that give rise to the same phenomena should not surprise us. The same happens in any organisation of the workers movement, for instance the making of a mass workers party or a trade union. These mass organisations are always the direct or indirect result of a large mobilisation of the workers movement, although nowadays all of them, by divergent processes, are bureaucratic. They may have become so after having been revolutionary, as for example the communist parties or the Third International. Or they may have been bureaucratic without having ever been revolutionary, as a product of the combination of a great rise, of a great struggle of the workers movement that made great achievements, but under a bureaucratic leadership. In this case, despite the great achievements of the mass movement, never did this trade union cease to be bureaucratic. And this is so because the mass movement obtained these victories within the straitjacket of bureaucratic apparatus, without becoming independent from them. §

THESIS XX

The bureaucratised workers' states

The case of Cuba

The bureaucratised workers' states that emerged in countries peripheral to the great imperialist metropolis have been the result of an exceptional national combination of four world phenomena: the acute crisis of imperialism, a colossal revolutionary rise, the tremendous power of the petty bourgeois bureaucratic apparatuses and the weakness of our International.

The guerrilla warfare that the opportunist petty bourgeois leaderships carried out originated the triumph of the February revolution; later, a workers' and peasants' government that came to expropriate the bourgeoisie and which transformed the country in a bureaucratised workers' state. In the opportunist guerrilla army we have all the conditions of the future bureaucratised workers' state: the mass movement is under the military discipline of the bureaucracy. The expropriation of the bourgeoisie will transform this bureaucratic movement in a workers' state, but without changing its character. On the contrary, it is the bureaucratic guerrilla movement that stains the new workers' state with its characteristics. On account of its petty bourgeois leaderships, the revolutions happened without the masses giving themselves democratic revolutionary organs that would enable them to further develop their mobilisation.

Cuba has been no exception. Like all new workers' states, it has been the product of a bureaucratic to the core army, the 26th of July Movement. The fact that Fidel Castro's party was not Stalinist, does not change its character of army that military and politically controlled the mass movement, without leaving the slightest margin for its independent democratic organisation or for any revolutionary initiative. This character has made Cuba from its beginnings a bureaucratic workers' state, just like the workers' states under control of the Stalinist parties.

This does not mean that there are no situational and specific differences among them. The differences lie in the fact that the Castroist movement was petty bourgeois, nationalist, anti-imperialist and democratic in its beginnings and, in this sense, it had a tendency to support the Latin American nationalist and democratic movement although with petty bourgeois methods, through a guerrilla focus away from the mass movement. Since its very beginning, Cuba was a workers' state led by a petty bourgeois current bureaucratically controlling the workers through its army.

Guevarist voluntarism regarding the Cuban economy is related to Maoist voluntarism and with Stalinist voluntarism one of the years of the Third Period: a typical petty bourgeois voluntarism. His conception of the "new man" was a typical petty bourgeois humanist statement that did not believe in the working class, in its struggle and initiatives.

The fact of having led a victorious workers' revolution and not being Stalinist does not change the petty bourgeois class character of the Castroist party. It is this character of the Cuban leadership that explains why it could become later on, without major hiccups and without any qualitative leap, into a Stalinist party: because its class character already joined it to world Stalinism.

Both those who argue that the Cuban leadership is revolutionary, as well as those who nowadays say it is a bureaucratic leadership but once was revolutionary and that we should look for the moment in which it transformed itself, undermine our method and our analysis of reality. The Cuban leadership has consistently been a petty bourgeois leadership, transforming itself from nationalist revolutionary directly into bureaucratic, always with the same petty bourgeois character and without major surprises, as it happens with all petty bourgeois currents that lead the mass movement.

Economic development guided by the bureaucracy and labour aristocracy towards national development, leads to a chronic crisis of the economy in the deformed workers' states and brings them closer to the bourgeois counter-revolution. The economic national development does not make them independent but, on the contrary, it ties them increasingly to world imperialism. In other words, while imperialism remain dominant at a global economic scale, the national workers' states will be subordinated to it and will be a part, albeit contradictory, of this capitalist economy and world.

Today we see clearly that the economic situation of the deformed or bureaucratised workers' states is tightly linked to the development of the world capitalist economy. Looking at the different stages of the workers' states, we see that the USSR has an autarkic development just as the different imperialist countries enter into a stage of autarchy. Subsequently, when the reconstruction of the world imperialist and capitalist economy happens, there occurs a parallel reconstruction of the economy in the workers' states. As the process of extraordinary capitalist development, of fantastic capitalist accumulation in the more advanced countries, advances, increasingly close ties develop between the economy of the workers' states and the world capitalist economy. And, as of 1974, when a growing crisis begins in the most advanced capitalist countries, this phenomenon is reflected in the economy of the workers' states that also enter into a growing economic crisis, having left behind the stage of reconstruction of the economy and of accompanying the extraordinary development of world capitalism.

As for the workers' states, we can point out that both bureaucratic and revolutionary politics have caused and cause two diametrically opposite economic orientations. That of the bureaucracy is an economy of ever greater subordination to imperialism. Each stage of development brings increasingly sharper crises and contradictions in their economies and nearer to a situation of chronic crisis and aggravated misery for workers. This poses an iron dilemma to make this economy work: either joining the market and the world capitalist production or advancing towards the political revolution so the workers movement may democratically adapt its economic plans to the development of the world revolution.

The policy of the bureaucracy to build socialism in one country, leads therefore to a chronic crisis of the economy of the workers' states, to sharp contradictions and to raise the possibility of the bourgeois counter-revolution; as opposed to the revolutionary policy of Lenin and Trotsky of extending the world socialist revolution as the only guarantee to achieve an expanding socialist economy. Only the policy of developing the revolution may solve the problems of the economies of the workers' states, balance their development, subordinating it to the triumphs of the world socialist revolution. §

THESIS XXI

The revolutionary and the bureaucratic dictatorships of the proletariat

There are revisionist Trotskyist currents which argue that, given the bureaucratic counter-revolutionary nature of the ruling party, there is no dictatorship of the proletariat in the USSR, in China or in the other workers' states.

Class dictatorship has different political expressions, and of sectors of the class itself. In a bourgeois regime, there is dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, both under military as well as under a parliamentary government or under feudal landlords. Trotsky made a similar analysis regarding the USSR defining it as a degenerated workers' state.

As long as the expropriation of the bourgeoisie exists, any workers' state, bureaucratic or not, is a dictatorship of the working class, from the social point of view. As social economic phenomenon, it is a proletarian dictatorship, albeit it is expressed in a distorted way through the bureaucracy, and although the working class does not enjoy any democracy at all.

This ultimately has to do with the character of the revolution in our time. There are only two poles: workers' revolution and bourgeois, imperialist counter-revolution. All contemporary phenomena are crossed by this reality. There are no third variations: in every country of the world there is a bourgeois dictatorship (of various kinds) or a workers' dictatorship, even if bureaucratic. There is no possibility for a petty bourgeois dictatorship because there cannot be a dominant petty bourgeois economy, petty bourgeois production relations. This is why the dictatorship must be defined by the ruling class.

To say that there is no dictatorship of the proletariat in the USSR or in any of the other bureaucratic dictatorships would mean to assert that there are bourgeois dictatorships in these countries. We categorically state that the bureaucracy is a petty bourgeois sector and agent of imperialism, but within the workers' states. We cannot fall in the confusion of denying the workers character of the existing dictatorships in the bureaucratic states. The bourgeoisie does not exist in the USSR for it to have a bourgeois dictatorship. The dictatorship is exercised, always and in a thousand ways, by the economically dominant class; and in the bureaucratic dictatorships the class that rules, in a social economic sense, is the proletariat.

But besides the social definition, there is a political definition linked to the class struggle at a national and international level. The goal of the ruling bureaucracy to demobilise the workers and mass movement is an essential part of its program to strengthen "its" national state, building "socialism" in "its" country and practising out peaceful coexistence with imperialism. It has to crush the mobilisation to achieve these ultra-reactionary goals. Let it be clearly understood that when we say that to strengthen "its" national state is a reactionary goal, we are not talking about the very progressive goal of the defence of the state, its strengthening as a subordinate part of the world socialist revolution.

This policy of demobilisation reinforces the pressure of the imperialist counter-revolution upon the country. This causes a sharp contradiction between the counter-revolution and the mass movement. As a result, the ruling over the government apparatus by the bureaucracy takes the form of a counter-revolutionary Bonapartist government, with a totalitarian regime of total control over the workers movement and of resistance against the increased pressure of the imperialist counter-revolution. It is Bonapartist because it tries to arbitrate between unsustainable contradictions, like any totalitarian Bonapartist government. Ultimately this bureaucratic government is an arbitrator, but at the same time transmission belt of the imperialist pressure on the workers' state. The existence and strength of the

Kremlin reinforce even more this Bonapartist character of the governments of all the current workers' states since it forms a parallelogram of counter-revolutionary forces with imperialism itself upon the bureaucratized workers' state.

Of course, this whole political process has a social base. This kind of government, as well as the ruling communist parties, reflects the privileged interests of the bureaucracy and the labour and popular aristocracy. It may play its oscillating Bonapartist role because of its petty bourgeois character. These political phenomena combine with the social character of the dictatorship to generate bureaucratic Bonapartist proletarian dictatorships. They are dictatorships of counter-revolutionary bureaucratic parties.

The revolutionary dictatorships of the proletariat, of Lenin and Trotsky, that giving rise to the October Revolution, are the opposite from the political and the social sector point of views. Firstly, they are based on revolutionary democracy and not on Bonapartism: their organs are revolutionary and democratic soviets or any other revolutionary mass organisation. They are the expression of the workers and people grassroots, although with industrial proletariat hegemony. And, what is decisive: they are headed by a revolutionary party that has as its supreme goal to develop the socialist revolution within and without its frontiers, to achieve a permanent mobilisation, to destroy its national state to develop the federation of socialist states and to extend the revolution all over the world. In a few words, it was headed yesterday by a Bolshevik party and it will be headed in a tomorrow by the only party that fights today for the banners of Bolshevism: a Trotskyist party. §

THESES XXII

Wars and occupations among workers' states

One of the most spectacular events of the last decades in relation to the existing proletarian dictatorships has been the invasion of one workers' state by another. The USSR to Hungary in the 1950s, the USSR to Czechoslovakia in the 1960s, China to Vietnam (preceded by the invasion of Vietnam to Cambodia) in the late 1970s. Unfortunately, this is a reality of the era and it will very probably happen again.

These possible wars between workers' states and occupations of one by another will acquire a new dimension as soon as the next revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat emerges. Up until now we have seen two invasions of workers' states by the USSR, provoked by the fear of the soviet bureaucratic caste that these states would transform into revolutionary, as a result of the onset of the political revolution and of the embryonic emergence of some kind of councils or soviets. For us it is very legitimate to conclude these workers bureaucracies will enter a desperate state when they see emerging revolutionary dictatorships of the proletariat forecasting their liquidation as privileged caste.

Without going into the discussion about the class character of the Cambodian state, the invasion of Vietnam by China put on the table the new fact of war between workers' states, none of them based on a revolutionary dictatorship. On the other hand, the possibility of a war between the two bureaucratized worker super-states, China and the USSR, should not be discarded.

This serious theoretical and political problem of war or invasion between bureaucratized workers' states, or between a bureaucratized workers' state and a revolutionary workers' state, is of paramount importance and force us to take a Marxist course of action to the different situations.

A variation of this possibility is the unavoidable armed uprising of the oppressed nationalities against these bureaucratic dictatorial governments, an uprising which we will support unconditionally.

If the war or occupation is between one of the two gigantic workers' states against a smaller one (as was the last case of China against Vietnam), we believe that, in principle, there is a struggle that is within the right to self-determination of the small proletarian nations and that such a war is caused by the hegemonic nationalistic zeal of the greater nation against the smaller workers' nation. In this case, we believe we must fight against Pan-Russian or Pan-Chinese chauvinism, for the right to self-determination of the smaller workers' state.

Suppose instead the case of a war between two bureaucratized workers' states of similar power. Say for example Cambodia and Vietnam, assuming they are workers' states. Our most general policy will be of brotherhood among all workers' states and for the peaceful and democratic settlement of the dispute. This position should be accompanied by a permanent campaign for the democratic federation of all the existing workers' republics.

But this line is essentially propagandistic and we cannot stay there in the specific case of a war or of military clashes. In principle, carefully studying whether any of the States have ambitions of hegemony over the other, we will have a policy of defence of the workers' state that has been attacked, and against the state responsible for having started the aggression.

When the war occurs between a bureaucratized workers' state and a revolutionary one, we Trotskyists will unconditionally support the revolutionary one, whether or not it started the war. §

THESIS XXIII

The political revolution

The political revolution, which Trotsky raised for the USSR as a degenerated workers' state and which had a limited importance within the *Transitional Program*, has acquired in this post-war period a decisive importance as far as its extension and its character. Now the need is no longer limited to the USSR, but covers a third of humanity and the most populous country on earth, China.

The political revolution has possibly become the most immediate and important specific task faced by the Fourth International, which is the only one able to carry it out. It is currently a wider process than the mere revolutionary struggle against the ruling bureaucracies. It is part of the overcoming of the crisis of leadership of the world proletariat in all countries. First of all, if the most powerful support base of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses of the mass movement is the USSR and Stalinism, it is logical that, if we can bring down the bureaucracy there, this will cause a cataclysm in all the bureaucratic apparatuses of the mass movement worldwide. But not only in this sense is the political revolution decisive to overcome the crisis of leadership of the world proletariat; it is more than this, since it presents us with a specific task: the struggle against the national bureaucratic apparatuses which are not Stalinist, or ruling a country, or are not even linked to Stalinism, like the Social Democracy and the trade union bureaucracies of the Western countries. These bureaucracies are as totalitarian as the Stalinist, although their scope is much more limited since they do not rule countries but only sectors, workers movement organisations of national type, mainly trade unions. But just as the bureaucracy of the USSR — albeit at a much lower level — these are sectors that enjoy all kinds of privileges. Destroying the strength of these counter-revolutionary apparatuses, pulling the masses out of their control, will be a struggle with many features similar to the struggle that must be carried out against the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR: revolutionary methods will have to be used and even there will be physical struggle.

The political revolution is a true revolution because it reflects the fierce, mortal struggle, between different social sectors, not classes but social sectors. The political revolution is the revolution of the workers and people grassroots against the labour aristocracy and its officials, i.e. its bureaucracies. It is political because it is the fierce struggle of *one sector* of the working class against *another sector* or against its officials. And we say it really is a revolution because the workers movement will have to massively mobilise to remove from the leadership of its organisations this sector, which will fight to death to defend its privileges.

The regression caused in all bureaucratised workers' states by the workers bureaucracy and aristocracy to remain in power and to increase their privileges, establishing a totalitarian regime, plus the immaturity of the leadership of the proletariat due to this totalitarian regime, show that the political revolution will have to (seemingly) go through two revolutionary stages which are roughly similar to the February and October Revolutions. This is what experience indicates so far. If we take into account Hungary and Czechoslovakia, we see that the political revolution begins as a workers and people movement for the achievement of democracy in general, uniting all dissenting sectors. It is going to be a workers and people's movement for democracy: all united against the Bonapartist and totalitarian government of the bureaucracy. Therefore, petty bourgeois currents will emerge that will have little clarity on whether or not it is appropriate to collaborate with imperialism in their eagerness to overthrow the

totalitarian bureaucracy. What will characterise this first anti-bureaucratic February revolution will be that no Trotskyist party will lead it, since it will not have had time to mature and to form.

Therefore, we think it is very difficult for the political revolution to happen in a single revolution. We believe that it will start with this first February revolution, which will usher in democracy in general; and in the process organs of workers' power will emerge, surely soviets or factory committees, and simultaneously the Trotskyist party will get stronger, the only party able to carry out the true political revolution, the October revolution, imposing a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. This Trotskyist party will fight against all petty bourgeois pro-restoration currents which will have — surely — joined with majority sectors of the bureaucracy in crisis and of imperialism, to establish close economic ties with imperialism on the grounds of free trade and other series of slogans serving the bourgeoisie, trying to take us back to capitalism. These petty bourgeois currents will fiercely oppose the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat during this interregnum between February and October of the political revolution, with pseudo-democratic arguments — such as that every company be controlled by its own workers and become cooperatives or some such variation — to allow them to demagogically return to the laws of the market, both domestic and foreign, combined with the proposal of bourgeois democracy. Behind this absolute pseudo-democratic proposal will be hidden the hand of capitalist restoration, albeit with pseudo-workers demagoguery. The October revolution of Trotskyism will possibly happen against this pro-restoration front.

Theoretically we should not discard, in the longer term, other variations of political revolution. There is some possibility that, as Trotskyism strengthens so much both in the bureaucratised workers' states as in the capitalist countries, the proletariat may carry out a single revolution, an October one, led by a Trotskyist mass party and save the February revolution. It would still be, nevertheless, a violent revolution. §

THESIS XXIV**The federation of workers' states**

Because of the bureaucratic rule, the workers' states face two serious problems that historically threaten their existence: a continuous economic crisis and the growing rivalry among them all. This is a direct consequence of bureaucratic control that imposes a petty bourgeois criterion in the conduction of the economy affairs and in the competitive defence of the own national state against the other workers' states, instead of international class solidarity. Because of the economic crisis and the growing rivalry, we find that the united front of all them against imperialism has definitely broken, opening a margin of manoeuvre that the latter is fully exploiting.

These facts make the existence of the workers' states (the greatest achievements of the world proletariat in this post-war period) to be historically threatened. And we do not say that it is immediate because the crisis of imperialism prevents them from using their enemy's crisis to its full extent.

We consider that the defence and development of the workers' states continues to be a fundamental task. Rather than rejoice, we deeply regret their crises and their growing rivalries and we denounce the bureaucracy as solely to blame for this state of affairs. The main culprit of this degradation of the workers' states and of these rivalries is the Kremlin bureaucracy. It is the one who clings — along with the national Stalinist bureaucracies — to maintain the independence of each national state. For the Kremlin bureaucracy, this division among workers' states is a source of greater enrichment, since it uses the capitalist world market to exploit economically the less developed workers' states through trade. It is the Kremlin bureaucracy that today sells oil to the other workers' states at prices close to world market. The most developed workers' state uses the world division of labour and the world market to oppress the less developed.

As if this were not enough, the Soviet bureaucracy has engendered the now growing rivalry with China, paving the way for the Chinese bureaucracy to surrender to US imperialism. At the same time, it has made the two utmost counter-revolutionary armed interventions against another workers' state: Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. These military attacks by one workers' state against another have continued, as China did against Vietnam, worsening the general crisis of the workers' states, developing armament production and playing into the hands of global imperialism.

Given this economic crisis, the growing rivalry and the armed attacks or the threats of armed attacks and wars between workers' states, we must raise a clear transitional slogan: *Immediate democratic federation of the existing workers' states.*

This slogan points to the political unity of all the workers' states in a single block against imperialism, eliminating thus the increasing rivalry and the threat of war among them, and to overcoming — through unity and the planning of the economy of a third part of mankind — the current economic crisis of the workers' states. It is the only slogan that can allow the overcoming of these very serious problems. Without a doubt, since the invasion of Vietnam by China, this slogan acquires a crucial importance, and should be one of the most highlighted by our program and our International. This slogan, which should be accompanied by an ongoing campaign, aims at solving the most urgent need of the world proletariat and the workers' states. It has a defensive purpose. Thus the Fourth International places itself, with this slogan, as the only one that gives a revolutionary answer to the serious problems the workers' states face at this time. It aims to overcome the current backwardness in the development of the productive forces and

the economic crisis, and to give thus a mortal blow to imperialism. It also serves to prevent imperialism manoeuvring with the differences between workers' states by opposing to it the most unbending unity. At the same time it will avoid the clashes of a workers' state against another, because national frontiers will disappear and there will be only one state organised as a federation. And, by transforming into a single one the economies of the workers' states, it will make the oppression of one state by others through trade disappear.

This slogan of *Federation of existing workers' states*, which is closely combined with *Federation of European Soviet Socialist Republics*, can only be achieved through a political revolution, because the current bureaucratic governments will never accept to eliminate their frontiers nor their customs to accept this federation, because by doing so, they would lose the main source of their privileges and of their petty bourgeois independence in their national state. Each bureaucracy defends its own country and its own frontiers and to our slogan of federation of workers' states they will ask: Who would hold government? Who can guarantee that it will be us? And right here the Trotskyist proposal of a political revolution arises as the only real possibility of achieving this federation, because we are the only ones who have a categorical answer to the problem of who will rule this federation of existing workers' states: the workers and peasants rank and file, democratically organised in soviets and enjoying the broadest internal democracy. Therefore, this slogan is intimately tied — it is part — of the political revolution in all the existing workers' states. We will never emphasise enough that this slogan becomes one of the most important — if not the most important — of the Fourth International in this specific stage of the world class struggle. We are the only International which can fight for the federation of workers' states, and as revolutionary workers' states emerge, it will be an essential task of them to propose the federation of the existing workers' states. Upon the base of workers' and revolutionary democracy — the only way of achieving this federation — we will need to start, of course, to pose the united front among them to fight against imperialism. §

THESIS XXV

The imminence of the revolution. What is a revolutionary situation?

We have defined this post-war as the most revolutionary era that humanity has known; the stage of great victories and of the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in many countries. Due to this characteristic, it corresponds to define the stage as one of *imminent revolution*, category which expands with each period of revolutionary rise.

Until 1953 the political revolution was not raised as an immediate possibility. It begins to take this character with the great rise of the masses in East Germany, following with capitalist Europe, where we had seen no revolutionary situation since the great mobilisations immediately after the war (1947). But this changed with the colossal victory of the Portuguese masses in 1974. This is the meaning of the category of imminent revolution, that includes all countries of the world, whether capitalist or workers'.

This brings us to an important theoretical problem: What is a revolutionary situation? Trotsky based his classic definitions of revolutionary and pre-revolutionary situations in the analysis of the Russian October. According to him, a pre-revolutionary situation met three conditions, which he considered *premises or prerequisites* for an October: crisis and confusion of the ruling class, radicalisation of the petty bourgeoisie — factor to which he attributed a great importance — and a revolutionary disposition of the proletariat. There was a revolutionary situation when to these three conditions a fourth of subjective character was added: the existence of a revolutionary proletarian party with influence of masses.

The theoretical problem we face is that there have been revolutions which had the same economic consequences as October — the expropriation of the bourgeoisie — but were led by opportunist petty bourgeois parties, not revolutionary workers' parties. As we have seen, in certain exceptional circumstances (China, Cuba), the absence of a revolutionary party has been compensated by the intensification of the three objective factors to such an extent that they forced the petty bourgeois leaderships (Mao, Castro) to break with the bourgeoisie due to the revolutionary pressure of the mass movement.

Recognising the fact that there has been a single October, and that all others were “Februarys”, we can enrich the classical analysis of Trotsky and say there are two types of revolutionary situations: a pre-October and a pre-February. Each one has clearly defined characteristics which distinguish it from the other. We call *pre-February* the situation Trotsky defined as pre-revolutionary, when the three objective factors combine with the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. If successful, it will be — as shown by theory and confirmed by history — an incomplete revolution, with limited national aims, in short, a “February” that expropriates the bourgeoisie and stops there.

In contrast, in a *pre-October*, the leading presence of a Bolshevik party with mass influence is added; if the revolutionary victory of “October” takes place, then it does not stop at the expropriation of the bourgeoisie of its own country, but it advances in the organisation and mobilisation of the world proletariat, in the extension of the revolution to the whole globe.

This analysis not only allows us to explain the processes of the February revolutions, and how to behave during and immediately after them, but it also raises new theoretical possibilities to the extent that the Trotskyist parties become stronger, gain mass influence and so they become an objective factor of the situation. These variations are fundamentally two, namely:

That, due to the strength of the Trotskyist party, the sequence characteristic of the Russian Revolution is broken and an October happens without a previous February.

That, riding on a February revolution, petty bourgeois opportunist parties take power but, because of the strength of the mass movement and of the revolutionary party, a transition from February into October happens in a pacific, bloodless, reformist way.

We are dealing with two theoretical possibilities that so far have not materialised. For these to happen will depend — we insist — on the strength and the mass influence achieved by the Trotskyist party. §

THESIS XXVI

February revolutions, dual power and the development of workers' and people's power

Our parties have to recognise the existence of a pre-February revolutionary situation to put forward democratic slogans appropriate to the existence of petty bourgeois leaderships controlling the mass movement, and the need to establish a unity of action as soon as possible to make the February revolution. We must understand that it is inevitable to do it and should not try to skip this stage, but rather to draw all necessary strategic and tactical conclusions from it; we must be the vanguard of this February revolution, the champions of intervention in it. But this does not mean to capitulate to the petty bourgeois leaderships which, if forced to make the February revolution, will try to limit it and to give it a democratic and national character. Any February revolution, by being an unconscious workers' and people's revolution, originates organs of power different from those of the bourgeoisie (state, army and police). This means, in the stages prior to its triumph and immediately after it, any February revolution unavoidably leads to a duality of power, more or less developed, potential or real, but to an unavoidable duality of power. This is to say, it originates the development of a pole of workers' and people's power.

Our fundamental task in any process of February revolution, before and after, is the permanent development of the workers' and people's power. Without ignoring the unity of action to make a February revolution, without disregarding the need to put pressure on opportunistic organisations that lead the mass movement to break with the bourgeoisie, without losing the breadth of outlook that allows us to achieve and deepen a February revolution, we must keep on differentiating ourselves most sharply from these opportunist leaderships in the fact that the fundamental axis of our policy is to develop the mobilisation and the revolutionary organs of workers' and people's power. This policy of development of the organs of revolutionary democratic self-determination of the masses is the essence of our policy in every revolutionary situation, either pre-February or pre-October. This is, also, the axis that clearly delimits us from the opportunist leaderships, who try to avoid by all means the revolutionary democratic self-determination of the mass movement, its permanent organisation and mobilisation, as well as the establishment of organs of direct revolutionary action of the masses.

If we abandon this cornerstone of our policy, we capitulate to the opportunist leaderships and we leave the working class to its fate. Only with a policy of development of the organs of workers' and people's power (where they do not exist we must call to create them) will we be able to make a bridge towards an October revolution, our real goal. §

THESIS XXVII

The fundamental importance of democratic slogans and tasks. The Constitutional Assembly

The democratic slogans and tasks are becoming increasingly important due to the deepest trends, both of imperialism as well as the monopolies and the bureaucracy. They all have a permanent trend towards totalitarian states. It is the only way to curb the permanently upward course of the mass movement. The influence of the monopolies on the state in the imperialist and capitalist countries, as well as the identification of the state with the bureaucracy in the bureaucratised workers' states leads to totalitarianism. Therefore the great democratic slogans and tasks for the whole people are increasingly current. This explains the general democratic character of contemporary February revolutions.

Regarding the nature of the tasks, they resemble the position of the bourgeois democratic revolution; but, by being raised against the bureaucracy, imperialism, monopolies and the states that respond to these sectors, they are part of the national and world socialist revolution. This explains why the petty bourgeois and bureaucratic leaderships insist upon the popular-democratic character of their revolutions, trying to give them a character that is not anti-bourgeoisie but anti-monopoly and, in the underdeveloped countries, anti-feudal. They do not admit that, despite being democratic tasks, they go against the capitalist and imperialist system and the bureaucratic regime, and this gives a new dimension to the democratic tasks that we recapture. By the nature of the tasks it is a French revolution, but by the classes that it fights it is a socialist revolution. It has to destroy capitalism in capitalist countries or the bureaucracy in bureaucratised workers' states, to impose these democratic slogans and tasks.

Hence the great importance attached to the slogan of *Constitutional Assembly* or similar variations in almost all countries of the world. But this task, before a February revolution, is played down by the much more important and decisive one of workers' and popular type: *Down with the ruling Bonapartist or dictatorial government*. A February revolution is made around a fundamental slogan which is not primarily *Constitutional Assembly* but *Down with the dictatorships*. This slogan applies in France, in England, in Spain, in Christian Democrat Italy, just as at the time it applied against Caetano in Portugal and against the Greek Colonels, as well as in the underdeveloped countries, as shown by the example *Down with Somoza!* It also applies against the bureaucratic Bonapartist governments: *Down with Brezhnev's dictatorship!* This slogan, calling not only the working class but all the people to overthrow these totalitarian, dictatorial or at least Bonapartist and ultra-reactionary Governments, is the key. But as soon as this goal is achieved, in many countries (especially in those who have had totalitarian regimes) it combines immediately with *Constituent Assembly* as the highest expression of democratic struggle. Without forgetting for a single minute that it is a bourgeois slogan, as it calls for a Constituent where every person is a vote, we need to recognise that it is a mobilising slogan that has different consequences — quite often — to its bourgeois democratic character. The latter especially in countries where there is a large middle class, mainly peasants.

It becomes a slogan to oppose to the bourgeoisie, to educate the mass movement and to develop the unity of the working class with the peasantry. But this slogan of *Constitutional Assembly* has to be part of a set. For instance, we propose *Constitutional Assembly* in order to give land to the peasants and for them to vote for the arming of the proletariat, the sliding scale of wages and hours of work, as well as the expropriation of the monopolies. We propose *Constitutional Assembly*, but saying: *we are the most*

democratic; we claim that access to radio and television be given to all political currents that overthrew the ruling dictatorship. None of these slogans overshadows the axis and the essential slogan of any revolutionary stage, be it Pre-February or Post-February, which is the development of workers' and people's power. Any attempt to rise in a revolutionary stage the slogan of *Constitutional Assembly* as essential is a direct betrayal to Trotskyist policy, which does not have as objective to make a democratic revolution, but rather to make a revolution that leads to the working class and its allies, organised revolutionarily, into power. Therefore, all the slogans should be combined with the ultimate goal of developing the workers' and people's power. This is how we formulate it and how we apply it towards the workers movement. §

THESIS XXVII

The right to national self-determination and our struggle for the destruction of national states

Due to the survival of imperialism and as an essential part of the set of democratic slogans our struggle for the right to self-determination of the oppressed nations and nationalities has become critically important. We fight for the independence of a geographically independent nation. For example, we are for the independence of Angola, Mozambique, India or Martinique. This means, not only are we for the right to national self-determination, but also for the national self-determination of any colony with respect to its empire. Likewise, we are for the national liberation of the semi-colonies, i.e., for the rupture of the colonising agreements that any underdeveloped independent country may have with imperialism — as, for instance, the Organisation of American States (OAS) or the colonising agreements of French imperialism with its former colonies that now are independent. We are for national independence in the colonies and for national liberation in the semi-colonies.

But this is a policy for the geographically independent countries, and we do not hold it for the nationalities oppressed within a geographically closed country. Our policy in these places is for the right to self-determination, and not for national independence and national liberation. Because in this case we are not dealing with a colony or a semi-colony but with an oppressed nationality. The right to self-determination is an algebraic slogan filled with different contents according to the process of the class struggles within the national State.

We defend the right of the Basque people to become independent if so they want, but this is different to us fighting for its independence. We defend the right to national self-determination of any oppressed nationality because we defend any exploited sector against its exploiters, even when they do not agree with our policy. By the same token we defend the peasants, whatever their slogans, against the exploitation by the landlords. Similarly we defend any oppressed nationality against the exploitation of imperialism or the national capitalism. But our defence should not be confused with our policy. We consider the existence of any national state as a great historical progress and we do not want to return to the balkanization of existing national states, to their division in multiple Lilliputian national states of as many oppressed nationalities. Our strategic policy is to achieve the unity of the Spanish proletariat and its political independence in order to face the bourgeoisie. The right to national self-determination is subject to our struggle to achieve unity and political independence of the Spanish proletariat. We are for the unity of the Canadian proletariat and for its political independence to confront and defeat Canadian bourgeoisie in government. That unity must be achieved regardless of the language the workers speak. This was Lenin's policy in Russia under tsarism. He fought for the right to national self-determination, but the struggle for that right was subordinated to the unity of all the proletariat of Russia, regardless of the language they spoke, the religion they believed in or the culture they had. Our struggle in Canada is against the Canadian capitalism as a whole — whether they speak French or English — and for the unity of the whole Canadian working class. This is the supreme task of a Trotskyist party, and the struggle for the right to national self-determination is subject to it.

In exceptional circumstances, for instance if there is a great mass movement fighting for independence we support critically this struggle of the masses, as we support critically any mass mobilisation against

the exploiters, the bourgeoisie and the oppressing state. But “critically” means that, as soon as the central power is defeated, we continue with a systematic struggle for the unity of the proletariat of these countries, proposing the State Federation.

Our historical struggle is for the destruction of the national states to achieve much more powerful nations than those achieved by capitalism, and finally, for the unity of the continents and of the world. Therefore, we can never be for this tremendous regression of the productive forces that would mean the emergence of new national states with borders and independent customs. Our great slogan is for the right to national self-determination inside federations of socialist workers’ states united to form ever larger nations. This is our great slogan, in which we combine the need to destroy the national states of the oppressing bourgeoisie with the right to national self-determination and with the need for more extensive and powerful nations to make easier the development of the productive forces. Although we may accept the formation of these national mini-states as a temporary phenomenon and as a momentary setback in the development of the productive forces and of the advance of the revolution against the central bourgeois power, we would continue insisting that this unity should be re-established into one state, through the federation of socialist republics. §

THESES XXIX

The anti-imperialist, democratic, feminist and other fronts

The word “front” and its identification with the expression “workers’ front” have caused confusion in our movement which has been skilfully used by revisionism to smuggle its positions into our ranks. This smuggling consisted in placing an equal sign, as to its importance and character, between a workers’ front — a front to achieve an action of class independence — and different “fronts” that may be formed for anti-imperialist, democratic, feminist actions.

It is no coincidence that in none of his works from the 1930s Trotsky ever calls for the establishment of anti-imperialist fronts or of any other kind. The famous formulation of the Eastern Theses about the anti-imperialist front is the only real antecedent of such a statement in the revolutionary Marxist literature. Although these theses make a parallel between the workers’ front in the Western countries and the anti-imperialist front in the Eastern countries, the text itself makes clear how the great task still is to achieve full political and organisational independence of the working class, and not to make stable fronts with the bourgeoisie. The great task of the Fourth International is to make the workers independent of any stable relation and organisation with other classes. The greatest task of the Fourth International is to make the working class politically independent. But this does not mean to ignore the progressive struggle of any class sector of the population against imperialism, the capitalists, the feudal landlords, male chauvinism or the totalitarian and dictatorial bureaucratic governments. Trotskyism has to combine its permanent and systematic struggle for the independence of the working class, separating it from any other class sector and organising it independently, with the encouragement of and the intervention in any progressive struggle, even if it is not a workers struggle. If we act otherwise the working class will never be the leader of the whole exploited people, and — what is worse — our parties will never be the leaders of the working class. The party overcomes this contradiction by encouraging any kind of unity of action that is positive for the developing of any progressive class struggle. But the unity of action is the opposite of a front. It is the opposite in time, in structure and purpose. A front creates relatively permanent organisms; it poses the organisation of united front committees and a relatively democratic functioning of the same, as well as continuity in the action. Unity of action, on the contrary, is momentary and does not create any organisation with more or less democratic functioning. It rather functions by agreements and by keeping the absolute independence of the organisations that agree. Unlike the front, unity of action is fleeting.

Hence we are for anti-imperialist unity of action; for unity of action by women for abortion, divorce or the right to vote; for unity of action with any political party to demand equal access to radio and television; for a demonstration with whosoever to claim for democratic rights against a Bonapartist and totalitarian government, and even against a bourgeois democratic one. But we do not confuse unity of action with the formation of a front. We are against making fronts with bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties to defend democracy, even when we agree with them on the defence of certain democratic points. Under the name of “front” are structured organisations which are front-populist (though in some cases they may play a relatively progressive role, like the nationalist movements), because different classes take part in it — especially the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie — and because their goals, which are not the political independence of the working class. These front populist variations can have a slightly more progressive character in the backward countries when they propose to fight against imperialism or the landlords, but long term they are as dire as metropolitan popular fronts. When this front (which we must

never promote because we consider it a variation of popular frontism) happens and when the working class or an important part of it takes part in it, then we may take part in it because it objectively exists, but in order to break it, to denounce it from within and to politically and organisationally wean the working class in it. This means we may take part in a nationalist movement but with a clear sense of denunciation of class collaboration and raising the independence of the working class.

Systematically, to show we are not sectarian and that we are for any precise, specific anti-imperialist and democratic task, we should propose the unity of action (for instance, joint mass demonstrations) to demand the rupture of a colonising pact, expropriation of imperialist businesses, and the liberation of prisoners by the totalitarian regime, and so on. But we should systematically expose the front as opposed to our policy of unity of action, because it makes the working class dependent on class organisations that are not theirs.

This clarification that we are not for an anti-imperialist, or anti-feudal, or feminist anti-sexist, or democratic anti-dictatorial united front, but that we are for anti-imperialist, feminist, democratic and anti-landlord actions is important because there has been a trend to camouflage popular front policy with such names.

Although during a stage such fronts may be relatively progressive, historically they serve the bourgeoisie and they slow the process of political independence of the proletariat. It is therefore essential to eliminate definitively from our policy the call for any kind of front which is not a workers' front, and to raise instead the line of unity of action. The workers' front is different, because it does not aim at the permanent collaboration with another class or with sectors different from the working class, but rather at the independence of our class regarding all these sectors. It does not confuse the different classes into a common organisation; but it rather tends to separate the working class from the other classes. §

THESES XXX

Germany, the centre of the European socialist revolution

Nothing shows better the ultra-reactionary character of imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy than the partition of Germany and the subsequent division of its proletariat. The true aim of the counter-revolutionary united front in Germany was to divide the proletariat to prevent it from resuming its historic tradition, which made it the most organised and of the greatest Marxist tradition in the world.

Although realised as an adjustment from the government, the unity of Germany had been a great historic achievement. Although it had not been complete, since Austria stayed out, the unity of all the small German states had made possible a great development of the productive forces and culture. Its liquidation meant a setback, not only for us but also for the bourgeoisie. The definitive crisis of the capitalist regime is manifested in this loss of gains from the era of its rise. In this case, the Soviet bureaucracy, as an ally of imperialism, is destroying not only a victory for the bourgeoisie in its progressive stage, but also a gain of the proletariat.

In Germany the European revolution is synthesized; in the East it is raised a political revolution and in the West a workers and socialist revolution. The unity of the nation is the unity of the two revolutions. Therefore, without the unity of the proletariats of both sides, there is no possibility of a new unified Germany.

This revolutionary struggle acquires therefore a special importance, because the whole European proletariat — Eastern and Western — is confronted, like Germany, with the task of uniting all European nations through a *Federation of Socialist Soviet Republics of Europe*, which only can be achieved by the combination of the political revolution in the East with the socialist revolution in the West.

Hence, when the German proletariat resumes its place at the forefront, it will have to make this synthesis and will be at the centre of the European socialist revolution process. §

THESIS XXXI

It is time to build mass Trotskyist parties, using the opportunities

Our parties and our International have failed in these almost 40 years of revolutionary rise to become strong parties with mass influence. Apparently this is impossible. If we delve into the analysis, we may find deep objective reasons hidden in this difficulty. This objective reason has been, for us, the strengthening of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, accompanying their revolutionary triumphs of this post-war period. Revolutionary will, by itself, cannot defeat the objective processes. Revolutionary will is a condition, but on its own is not enough to build Marxist revolutionary mass parties if the objective situation does not allow it. If the counter-revolutionary bureaucratic apparatuses continued increasingly consolidating, covering bigger sectors of the mass movement under its control, the Fourth International would not be able to build parties with influence in the mass movement. Fortunately, this is not the case.

The objective situation, first slowly and for the last five or six years at high speed, is opening enormous possibilities for the building of Trotskyist mass parties. These increasingly favourable objective conditions are due to the fact that in the last 30 years the crisis of imperialism on the one hand, and the crisis of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses on the other, have been growing and for the past five or six years these crises have even acquired a convulsive, chronic character. Together with this, revolutionary crises are increasingly multiplying. The combination of these factors opens every time greater opportunities to fortify the Trotskyist parties.

But for our parties to be able to consolidate within the mass movement, it is essential that they be able to study carefully reality to discover the opportunities that will open to us. These opportunities — election campaigns, strikes, struggles of oppressed sectors of the proletariat — take on an immediate character, once gone they are not repeated again. It is therefore essential to launch ourselves to use them with all boldness as soon as they show up.

Among these opportunities stand out the struggle of the most exploited sectors of the proletariat, because of its permanence and for being systematically ignored by the bureaucratic apparatuses and the labour aristocracy. These sectors, to which we should preferably direct our work, are the pariahs of modern industrial societies, the workers who add to their condition in the worker ranks their status as part of oppressed sectors or nationalities. This is the case of migrant workers which in some European countries make up one fourth of the manual labour force, the workers of the oppressed nationalities or of the interior of the underdeveloped countries — for instance black people — and women workers everywhere, the Porto Ricans, the *Chicanos* who are part of the American proletariat, the indians and the black workers of African countries.

The *Transitional Program* is the only one that will be able to give an answer to their needs, and they will be the greatest fighters in many countries. §

THESIS XXXII

The revolutionary processes, the mass workers' organisations and the building of Trotskyist parties

In the previous thesis we have dealt with the imperative need to scrutinize reality to discover any opportunity offered by the growing revolutionary struggle we are witnessing. This also raises, as a matter of urgency, to be precise about what processes and what organisations our parties and militants must work on.

The Fourth International will become a mass international to the extent that its sections, without exception, work on the revolutionary processes that occur in their countries. The argument of not working on a revolutionary process under the pretext of disagreement with its political program, or with the leadership it may have, is a true betrayal to the Fourth International. Our parties must work in processes such as the last year of guerrilla warfare in Nicaragua, regardless of whether it is led by an opportunist organisation like the FSLN. Precisely, the number one duty of our parties is to intervene in these processes to contest the leadership of the revolutionary mass movement with the opportunists. Failure to do so means to abandon these masses in the hands of the opportunist, class collaborationist leaderships.

Equally important as this is to work in the workers' organisations, whoever may lead them or the character they may have. Any Trotskyist party must work preferentially in those trade union organisations which group most of the workers, whatever the origin and the current structure of those organisations. We go where our class is, to raise our policy and to fight the leaderships controlling its organisations. This statement of principles of working inside the trade unions, whatever their characteristics and origins is a cardinal principle of Trotskyist policy. This is categorically evidenced by the program raised by Trotsky with reference even to the fascist trade unions:

“We cannot select the arena and the conditions for our activity to suit our own likes and dislikes. It is infinitely more difficult to fight for influence over the working masses in a totalitarian or a semi-totalitarian state than in a democracy. The very same thing likewise applies to trade unions whose fate reflects the change in the destiny of capitalist states. We cannot renounce the struggle for influence over workers in Germany merely because the totalitarian regime makes such work extremely difficult there. We cannot, in precisely the same way, renounce the struggle within the compulsory workers' organisations created by Fascism. All the less so can we renounce internal systematic work in trade unions of totalitarian and semi-totalitarian type merely because they depend directly or indirectly on the workers' state or because the bureaucracy deprives the revolutionists of the possibility of working freely within these trade unions. It is necessary to conduct a struggle under all those concrete conditions which have been created by the preceding developments, including therein the mistakes of the working class and the crimes of its leaders. In the fascist and semi-fascist countries it is impossible to carry on revolutionary work that is not underground, illegal, and conspiratorial. Within the totalitarian and semi-totalitarian unions it is impossible or well-nigh impossible to carry on any except conspiratorial work. It is necessary to adapt ourselves to the concrete conditions existing in the trade unions of every given country in order to mobilise the masses not only against the bourgeoisie but also against the totalitarian regime within the trade unions themselves and against the leaders enforcing this regime. The primary slogan

for this struggle is: *complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state.* This means a struggle to turn the trade unions into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labour aristocracy.”¹

As stated by Trotsky, we go to the organisations where the working class is, whether controlled by the state or not, not to capitulate to the policy of state control but on the contrary, to make the trade union and workers’ organisations independent from state control or bureaucratic control. But we go there because this is the battle field against the state and the opportunist leaderships. In addition, the pretext that we do not work in some organisations because they are dependent on the Bonapartist or totalitarian state is an argument that amplifies the independence of the other trade union or workers’ organisations. Today all the non-revolutionary trade union organisations depend in greater or lesser degree on State control, on their link with the bourgeois state or the bureaucratic totalitarian State in the workers’ states. To work only on organisations controlled by reformist bureaucracies with the argument they are independent of the state is not to denounce the state control that these organisations have in a high degree and, moreover, to abandon the workers who are in the organisations most subjected to state control — or have an origin of greater subordination to the state — in the hands of the bureaucracies that control them. This is to abandon our revolutionary duty to be where working class is in order to fight their treacherous leaders and state control. The discussion about whether we will be able to transform those organisations in revolutionary ones or we will have to create new ones is a vicious argument that will be resolved by history. It is much more serious still if, under the pretext of this historic perspective, we propose the creation of pure revolutionary organisations, like red trade unions. This is an ultra-leftist policy that goes against the whole trajectory of the Fourth International; which requires that any party and any militant be active within the workers’ organisations where the workers are, whatever their character. Membership of the Fourth International passes through the acceptance of this elementary principle. §

¹ Leon Trotsky, *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay*, Marxists Internet Archive, 2003. www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1940/xx/tu.htm. Italics by Trotsky

THESIS XXXIII

The workers' parties and Trotskyism

Revisionism, to theoretically justify its capitulation to petty bourgeois parties, abandons the class definition and makes an intellectual definition of parties: they are nothing more than programs that do not reflect class sectors.

Political parties are organisations of class and of its different sectors of class, fighting for state power. Without classes there is no state, without state there is no politics and without politics, there are no political parties. These, however, have their specific history, different from the political defence of the sectoral class interests in general.

It was the great bourgeois revolutions which gave origin to the different political parties. The class struggle had to develop fully, to reach its culmination in the bourgeois society, to come to manifest itself on a superstructural level in the formation of political parties.

Marxism begins by making a clear distinction among different kinds of workers' parties. Lenin and Trotsky have insisted that there are two clearly delimited kinds of workers' parties, as different from each other as the vegetal and animal kingdoms. Next to the revolutionary workers', Trotskyist, parties are the reformist, bureaucratic or petty bourgeois parties, which, in addition, are historically counter-revolutionary. These parties politically reflect the labour aristocracy, the workers bureaucracy and the petty bourgeoisie mainly in the metropolitan countries and in the workers' states, where these privileged sectors feed on the crumbs they receive from imperialist exploitation the first and of the state administration the latter. They are, therefore, the superstructural expression of a sector of the working class, of the modern petty bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy. These parties are the Social Democracy in its different variations, Stalinism and the petty bourgeois parties.

They remain reformist and, in general, counter-revolutionary, direct or indirect agents of imperialism, even when they take power heading a workers' revolution, given their role is to prevent this from national or international extension. The existence of these reformist parties, especially of the Second International, made necessary the foundation of the Third International and subsequently, after the bureaucratisation of the latter, the foundation of the Fourth International for the same task.

One of the reasons why this definition is essential is that it is the only valid explanation for the fact that no revolutionary dictatorship (an October revolution) has triumphed after the one of Lenin and Trotsky: no revolution has been led by a Trotskyist party.

A correct definition of our International and of our Trotskyist parties is essential. We find revisionists that repeat the old Stalinist-Bukharinite position, heavily criticised by Trotsky in the program of the Communist International for the Sixth Congress: to define the party from the point of view of the form, as a revolutionary vanguard, theory of Marxism, embodiment of experience, and so on. The modern Stalinist-Bukharinites utter similar generalities, refusing to define our International clearly and categorically; above all, they refuse to point out the class character, or of sectors of a class, of our parties.

Our International is precisely the only existing International, and its parties are the only ones fighting for the permanent revolution, i.e., for a *Transitional Program* towards socialist society, for a workers' revolution to impose a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat that continues fighting to develop the international revolution. The other existing workers' parties — Social Democrats and Stalinists of Moscow, Maoist or Castroist — if they take power forced by the objective circumstances,

they will impose a bureaucratic, nationalist, reformist dictatorship, since their program is and will be the construction of socialism in only one country and peaceful coexistence. Our International is the only world party that fights for the international socialist revolution; our parties are the only ones that may lead the struggle for an October revolution in each country. Therefore our International is the only one that reflects not only the historical interests of the proletariat but also the immediate interests of the very same class sector that will be able to carry through those historical tasks, the workers rank and file.

This ultra-general but essential definition of the workers' parties and of our International does not mean denying the existence of centrist, intermediate formations that move from one pole to the other, that from revolutionary go to reformist and bureaucratic or vice versa. This happened, for instance, with the Communist Party of the USSR, that changed from revolutionary under Lenin and Trotsky into bureaucratic and reformist under Stalin. Or with the left of the Social Revolutionary Party in Russia, that changed from petty bourgeois reformist into revolutionary when it agreed with the Bolsheviks to make the October Revolution, and then returned to the camp of the counter-revolution. Also in Germany we have the example of the centrist fraction of the Independent Socialist Party that joined the Communist Party.

These hybrid phenomena between the two broad categories of parties in the world are defined by their dynamics regarding them. Will their centrism take them quickly towards Trotskyism or otherwise towards opportunism, nationalism or reformism? It is essential to pose this question to define our attitude towards them, even more if we know that this is a quick process, a movement that needs to be detected to act expeditiously. If the centrist current after a few months is not clearly oriented towards Trotskyism and to work in common with our International, it is just another variation of the spectrum of ultra-leftism or ossified centrism of the petty-bourgeois parties, historically the domain of the bourgeois counter-revolution. §

THESIS XXXIV

Entryism and the unity with centrist mass tendencies

In an effort to win mass currents or large sections of the vanguard, the Trotskyist movement has repeatedly used in this post-war period the method of entryism, advocated by Trotsky in the 1930s in relation to the Socialist parties and as an exception for short periods.

But revisionism advocated entryism *sui generis* into the communist parties which was a long-term alternative to accompany the supposed revolutionary course of its leaders. The Argentine Trotskyists made an indirect entryism into the trade union organisation of Peronism, the 62 Organisations. Many other Trotskyist organisations have practised entryism into the socialist parties when they were on track to become mass parties, like the OCRFI in the Portuguese Socialist Party and in the Venezuelan MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement), and like the Bolshevik Faction and the OCRFI in the PSOE (Spanish Socialist Labour Party). And there has been permanently or nearly permanently entryism in the British Labour Party since the beginning of the post-war. All these experiences need to be summarized to draw conclusions for the future.

We Trotskyists are in principle an independent organisation to be able to lead a frontal attack against the opportunist organisations within the workers and mass movement. Our historical and principled task is to confront political opportunism in the mass movement with our policy. Therefore, the entryism advocated by Trotsky was not done infringing this principle but rather as a tactical manoeuvre, provisional and of short duration, that started from being aware of an objective situation and an opportunity that opened to us. Specifically, Trotsky discovered there was a course to the left of new sectors of the masses that entered into the Social Democrat parties that resulted in strong left tendencies, or at least strong in relation to the small propaganda groups we were. Trotsky then drew the conclusion that it was necessary to enter into these parties and to quickly gain these left currents for the Fourth International, for our Trotskyist positions, and to break with their leadership. He started from the premise that any progressive centrist organisation, if it does not quickly enter the Fourth International, it either crystallises as a centrist organisation or tendency, impossible to be gained for the Fourth International or it changes its orientation, transforming itself into an ultra-leftist or a right wing current. He therefore considered entryism as provisional, as a rapid short term manoeuvre to gain hundreds or thousands of militants for the Fourth International. To gain those young workers or students who entered the socialist party and, in the desire to make the revolution, adopted increasingly leftist positions.

The entryism advocated by Trotsky had to do with a political and social reality: the emergence of highly progressive centrist currents within the mass organisations. Entryism was one tactic among others. The method with which Trotsky faced the problem of entryism and of the relationship with progressive centrist currents remains correct and is gaining increasing importance. Large Trotskyist parties of masses cannot be built on a linear path, by an evolving accumulation of militants and a gradual and systematic growth. It will be a convulsive process, made of unions and divisions, both in individual countries and on an international scale. If, despite the crisis of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses and the revolutionary rise, no large currents emerge that orient themselves towards Trotskyist or Trotskyist-like positions, it will then be impossible to build strong Trotskyist parties with mass influence in a few years.

Trotskyism has to have a flexible, skilful, careful and comprehensive policy towards any current emerging from the traditional parties or from the trade union movement that orients itself towards

revolutionary positions. But this flexible and comprehensive policy cannot be at the expense of hiding principles, or of adopting the immature positions of these currents, capitulating to them. The comprehensive policy starts from achieving a common activity tending towards a common organisation around those fundamental points of our revolutionary program on which we agree. To build the party, we Trotskyists have to have the ability to raise revolutionary positions — not our whole program but its fundamental points — that allow to co-ordinate a revolutionary action with those emerging currents of the mass movement, that lead to even form a front or a common party, in a process that takes them towards our Trotskyist positions. It is of prime importance to achieve these common actions quickly, and if possible common organisations, with any current that orients itself towards us, to avoid the tremendous danger that they crystallise as centrist organisations. When such mass tendencies emerge — they will emerge and they will be a decisive factor for the transformation of our party in mass party — the great task is to provide them with a dynamic increasingly leaning towards a common organisation, towards a common revolutionary party, in order to avoid precisely that they achieve their own organisation and leadership, what would then make much more difficult the incorporation of the majority of them into our policy and program.

Entryism is part of this policy we should have with any centrist organisation that moves towards revolutionary positions and arises from mass parties or organisations. To make entryism, it is necessary this centrist tendency has already arisen; it has to be an objective fact. We should not make entryism in a centrist organisation for the “possibility” of this tendency to appear in the future. Given this situation, we must bear in mind that entryism requires two basic conditions to carry it out. First, to have solid Trotskyist cadres who can withstand the tremendous pressure of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses. Second, to do it as a tactical short term manoeuvre. Any entryism that lasts more than one or two years means that we are transforming our members and our organisations into members and organisations that orient their policy around the answer to the leaderships of the organisms where they made entryism, and essentially that their activity towards the masses is being limited by the straitjacket of those counter-revolutionary apparatuses. Any entryism militant is forced to give daily response to the policy of those leaderships, and cannot do the same with the daily struggle of the masses. Inevitably there is an adaptation to the environment in which he is active, an adaptation to a political environment which is not ours nor of the mass movement as a whole; it is an adaptation to a sector of the mass movement, fully under control of bureaucratic and reformist apparatuses. Therefore, entryism can only be short term. All the experiences show that long term entryism leads to demoralisation and never to a great growth of our parties.

Additionally there is another reason to not make, in principle, long term entryism, and perhaps not even for a minute, in reformist political organisations: the profound change that has occurred in this post-war period in the social democratic parties. In the pre-war the social democratic parties were organisers of a section of the vanguard of the mass movement. The premises of these parties were meeting points and centres of discussion for a sector of the workers movement. To become a member of a socialist party meant to get in touch with a significant segment of the working class of the country where we were active. But today, thanks to radio and television, these parties are empty, they do not organise any sector of the mass movement at all, they only get the votes of a sector of the workers movement using for this purpose the radio and television provided to them generously by imperialism and capitalism. The statement by a leader of Spain's PSOE that he prefers ten minutes of television to 10,000 militants, is categorical with regard to this new orientation of the social-democratic parties, which empty their own parties of members to avoid the control and pressure of the workers ranks.

The opposite is true for trade union organisations. Here entryism is a must. It is here where we find the most important sectors of the organised working class in nearly every country of the world; it is here where the class acts and expresses itself massively. We have to enter into all these mass organisations and remain there through thick and thin, adopting any measure of clandestine type for this purpose. But this entryism is not political entryism. The party keeps on acting politically in independent form; it combines entryism of its members in the massive trade union organisations, getting them to stay there, regardless of who leads them; but politically, the party keeps on addressing the whole of workers movement, popularising and defending Trotskyist politics. The same happens when we make sectoral or individual entryism — when it is convenient for us, as a tactical and partial manoeuvre of a sector of the party, of

some few militants — into youth or workers sectors of reformist organisations or of communist parties (what is perfectly licit and useful). §

THESIS XXXV

Propaganda, agitation and action.

The role of slogans

Marxism, since the beginning of the century, has clearly defined the difference and the relationship between propaganda and agitation. Propaganda is the explanation of many ideas to a few people and agitation is the explanation of a few ideas to many people.

While propaganda is done through articles, talks, conferences, courses, books, agitation is carried out through slogans. This does not mean we do not explain and support these slogans through articles and even leaflets and talks. But the few ideas we want to express through agitation we specify them in slogans, i.e., a phrase accessible to the workers and popular way of talking and which clearly indicates the idea we want to express. As our goal is to mobilise the masses, the most difficult aspect Marxism has is to formulate these phrases or slogans. It is a science and an art. Just as we, in trying to mobilise the working class, elaborate phrases that are understandable to the masses, the counter-revolutionary apparatuses do the same, they formulate slogans, phrases that are understood by the wide masses, but with a goal opposite to ours, to demobilise them. The French Communist Party in the immediate post-war period launched the famous slogan *Produce first* to curb the wave of strikes and the process of revolutionary mobilisation of the French proletariat. Likewise Peron, when he fell in 1955, to curb mobilisation of the Argentine workers, of a workers movement he could no longer control, launched his famous slogan *Unsaddle until is clear*, in other words doing nothing to see what was would happen.

Our goal is the opposite: to achieve those slogans, those phrases the workers movement understands, and that through this understanding can be mobilised, take action. There are two kinds of slogans. Some are aimed to start convincing the mass movement, although there are no immediate prospects for it to go into action. We still agitate them. For instance, the slogan that Soares together with Alvaro Cunhal take the government in Portugal was a magnificent slogan, although we all were aware that, due to the situation of the class struggle, the betrayal of those parties and our little strength, the two parties would not unite to fight for a Soares-Cunhal government. This does not mean we should not agitate for this slogan. But there are other slogans which are for action or that make possible an action or a mobilisation of the mass movement as a whole or in some of its sectors, as, for instance, when we call for a strike which is heartfelt by the workers, when there is a strong pressure among them for going into strike or into any other similar mobilisation. These are slogans for action. The party, after making the analysis of which slogan is for action, makes strenuous efforts for this action to be performed by the mass movement, because it is possible, because the conditions for that action are present.

Every slogan has to give an answer to the current situation of the workers and mass movement, given it is a synthesis of the immediate needs of the masses and their level of consciousness. In an effort to achieve a mobilising slogan, we should express not only the immediate needs of the mass movement, but start from its level of consciousness when formulating the slogan. We should try that the slogan be a synthesis of the immediate needs and immediate consciousness of the mass movement, with the aim of achieving a mobilisation. It was thus that Trotsky, given the unemployment in the USA (immediate need), and the fact that the workers believed in Roosevelt (immediate consciousness), advised to raise a mobilising slogan of pressure upon Roosevelt to give a job to all the unemployed. This slogan took into account, on one hand, the low political level the American proletariat — who trusted in a government agent of the monopolies and imperialism — and on the other hand, the need to overcome unemployment.

This slogan for action, opportunistic as it may seem (to press Roosevelt or ask him to provide jobs), is correct, from our Trotskyist point of view, if it is the best formula to mobilise the workers, if it is a bridge to its mobilisation, for its unity, for them to come out to fight. Trotsky is a master in matching our slogans to the level of consciousness of the working class, whatever that level is. Thus he said that if the German middle class broke with Hitler, it was possible to raise the slogan of a meeting of the Reichstag, the old Reichstag that elected Hitler, to take away his powers as Prime Minister and appoint a new government that would possibly be a bourgeois government. Trotsky was starting at the legalistic, bourgeois democratic mentality of the German middle class, to see if he could drive it to its unity with the working class through an institution recognised by all petty bourgeois and workers organisations, even by those that had voted for the fascist Hitler, just to defeat him, just to achieve a mobilisation of the entire German population against him. This is a high example that Trotskyism is not ultra-leftism, but a scientific policy expressed in the art and science of slogans to mobilise the masses from the level of their needs and the level of their consciousness, whatever that level.

These considerations are essential to be able to quickly transform our parties in parties with mass influence. Once Trotsky was dead and due to the objective circumstances of the tremendous power of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, we have had a tendency of limiting ourselves to a propagandistic activity, abandoning the most important science and art for a revolutionary party, which is formulating suitable slogans for each moment of the class struggle. We need to urgently resume this science and art. We need to abandon the prejudice to formulate slogans appropriate to the low level of consciousness of the working class. We need to abandon that fetishism of general, propagandistic slogans that survive months and months, and sometimes even years and years. What is tremendously difficult for a Marxist, precisely, is to have the necessary nimbleness to keep changing the slogans as the situation changes in the class struggle. Today this need is urgent because the class struggle changes minute by minute in all countries of the world. We can formulate a law: an authentic Trotskyist party, in this revolutionary era, is one which systematically goes on combining and changing its slogans. Any Trotskyist party which in this time of uninterrupted changes in the class struggle continues with the same slogans and analyses is wrong.

This does not mean that the revolutionary party always advocates a single slogan. The complexity of the class struggle, the needs of different sectors of the mass movement and of its allies, the changes in the situation, make the Trotskyist policy to be always specifically expressed through a set of slogans, of several slogans combined, some of which are predominant, the determinants. But these do not go alone but combined with the others. We must achieve a clear combination of a few slogans whose structure keeps changing.

The Bolshevik Party raised *Constituent Assembly, All power to the Soviets, Bourgeois ministers to resign, Down with Kornilov*. In the short span of a few months, different slogans were appearing and acquiring emphasis, but always within a combination and around an axis — which was not permanent either — which was *All power to the Soviets*. These supreme examples must be assimilated by all Trotskyist parties. Our main activity will give character to our parties: if they are propagandistic, not towards the mass movement, not for action, our parties will keep on being propagandistic, sects and not mass parties. §

THESIS XXXVI

Principles, strategy and tactics

What happens with the slogans also happens with the relation that exists between principles, strategy and tactics, and their link with the slogans. We have a set of principles that make the essence of our movement, such as our opposition to class collaboration, to popular fronts, our unconditional defence of the most intransigent class struggle and our struggle for the independence of the working class, for the socialist revolution, for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, for the right to the national self-determination. But these principles —which must be present in each of our actions, in each of our slogans, in each of our talks or propagandistic articles — should not be confused with strategy and tactics.

We Trotskyists have, in this revolutionary era, only two strategies until the capture of power: to promote the permanent mobilisation of the working class and its allies to make a socialist October revolution and, together with this, to strengthen and develop our party to lead that revolution, transforming it into a party with mass influence. Everything else, everything we do, is mere means, of greater or lesser importance, and used during shorter or longer times, but simple means at the service of those two major strategic objectives. We must never confuse a tactic with a strategy, or to put it another way, a means with the ultimate goal. Confusing a tactic with a strategy, results in transforming a means into an end in itself. Revisionism within the Fourth International has a tendency to transform tactics and means into strategies. For instance, entryism, a provisional, short term, exceptional means was transformed with entryism *sui generis*, in a full strategy for 18 years. The means, same as the slogans, change systematically. If there is a pre-election period, we have means and tactics different from a non- election time period. In a stage with possibilities of general strike, we have means different from those of a stage where no general strike is possible. If the stage opens possibilities for strikes in some trades or even in factories, the means are different. If there are struggles of allies of the working class, the means, i.e. the tactics, change. No revolutionary party can tie its hands stating that its permanent activity, its strategy is the general strike, or the united front, or the workers' and peasants' government, or partial strikes, or workers control, or occupation of factories, or the participation in elections, or entryism.

Tactics change as much as slogans. The means and the slogans have to be variable, plastic, suitable to the moment and changing systematically. This does not mean that a tactic may not have subordinated means; in this sense we may talk about an electoral strategy and its tactics, the means we will use for that electoral strategy. But at scale of the era in which we are living, there are only two strategies and all the rest are means or tactics we use and discard permanently according to the situation of the class struggle.

It is very serious to confuse principles, strategy or propaganda with tactics and slogans. We, in principle, are for the overthrow of all democratic bourgeois institutions; even more so in this era in which those institutions are the form, the wrapping, of semi-Bonapartist and Bonapartist regimes. But this is a principle; it is not for the propaganda. Tactically and for the slogans, this principle and this strategy of going towards the destruction of the organisms of bourgeois state ruling, we adapt them to the immediate needs, to the means we and the masses have, and to the level of consciousness of the masses, to orient the mobilisation in this direction. This means that, perhaps tactically, as the best way to educate the mass movement (which, having a low level of consciousness, believes in those organisms as an achievement) we may mobilise the masses — without saying that we believe in these organisms because that would violate the principles — through tactics and slogans that say: let us demand from this parliament in which

you trust, let us demand from your parties that are in this parliament, let us mobilise to achieve such and such gain.

This position is much more “leftist” than that of Trotsky of mobilising to demand from Roosevelt. The level of consciousness of the masses tells us which tactics and slogans are suitable for mobilising them, and we should not reject them, nor leap ahead of that level of consciousness, confusing principles and strategy with tactics and slogans. If we do not act this way and if we make the mistake of believing that by only having principles and by only doing propaganda we make advances, we commit a crime as big as the opposite mistake of revisionism, which is to believe that strategy and principles are tactics and slogans. In this case it is asserting that the principles are tactical, the means. However, the principle is a category opposite to the tactic, although closely linked, because the tactic is a means and a principle is much more than a strategy, it is the foundation of our policy.

Any tactic has to be principled and any principle has to accept to be expressed through means. But each of these categories has its environment. The environment of tactics, like that of slogans, is the environment of the immediate, not the historical; it is the environment of the immediate necessities and the immediate consciousness — regardless of how backward this is — of the mass movement. And if the means does not adapt to these conditions, it ceases to be a means: it is the repetition of the principles. §

THESIS XXXVII

The united workers' front

The united workers' front is one of the best tactics the Leninist party has in relation to opportunist workers' parties. But it is neither a strategy nor a principle. As any slogan and any tactic, it depends on the objective circumstances. Only when there is a present and urgent need for the workers movement to unite and there is a consciousness of this need within the workers movement — fundamentally in its majority and most backward sector — we can apply this tactic. Otherwise, it becomes the proclamation of an apparent principle. This means that usually only when there is a fierce offensive of the bourgeois class the conditions arise to raise the united front; because the working class suffers this brutal offensive against it and wants to give a united response. This is why the moments of united front are those of a brutal offensive against the standard of living and working conditions of the working class, or when the danger of a Bonapartist or fascist coup arises. This is the moment to call all workers' parties to the fight against this fierce economic or political offensive against the proletariat. With this approach, which tends to achieve total unity of the working class for a defensive action, we achieve two goals: if the other parties accept the united front, there is a colossal united action of the working class that puts it in its way to further offensive mobilisations; and if the workers leaderships do not accept, we will be able to unmask them in front of the mass movement.

This is the traditional approach to united front by the Third International. But, like many of the categories elaborated by it, experience has shown to be richer than their politico-theoretical formulation.

Thus have arisen and there are *de facto* united fronts of the working class, accepted or not by its parties, constituted by rank and file organisations, such as factory committees, soviets, trade unions. Regarding these organisms, which may acquire either a defensive or a revolutionary character according to circumstances, our International has a permanent policy of developing them, without marrying to any of them. We call for the formation of those organisms appropriate to the stage of class struggle the masses are going through. In this field we do not have a permanent means, tactic or slogan either. At any given time we fight for the strengthening of the trade unions, or to transform them into revolutionaries, or we set up revolutionary unions of masses. At other times we fight for factory committees. And at still other times it may be soviets or militias. Without refraining from asking the workers' parties for the formation of these organisms of united front for the action of the mass movement, in this case we do not place emphasis in the approach to other parties but in our call to the mass movement to form these united front organisms. §

THESES XXXVIII

The character of our Party and of our International

All our parties and our International as a whole claim proudly, as their example, the structure of the Bolshevik party. This means we believe our party must consist of professional revolutionaries on the one hand, and it must have a democratic centralist regime on the other. We vindicate more than ever centralism as the number one requirement of any Trotskyist party. In this revolutionary period Trotskyism is relentlessly persecuted, not only by the bourgeois state, the bourgeois parties and the fascist groups, but also by the opportunist parties which rightly consider us their mortal enemy. Furthermore, our parties are built to carry out armed struggle for the capture of power, the insurrection. We can only achieve this supreme purpose with a rigid discipline, whose only guarantee is centralism and a dedication that only professional militants may have.

But at the same time, within the party there has to be the most absolute democracy, which allows taking the experience of the party and the mass movement as a whole, the only way to develop the line. On the other hand, it is the only way to make a true and democratic balance sheet of the lines voted.

There can be no democracy without rights for tendencies and factions. But this is an exceptional right because the emergence of tendencies and factions is a calamity for a party which is centralised for action. The ongoing discussion on all party organs is the greatest tool of policy making for a Trotskyist party. The party must live systematically discussing. It must confront individual experiences or of different agencies and different working sectors so that through the clash and the discussion a correct line arises, the best possible. But this virtue of the permanent discussion turns into the opposite when a party lives permanently discussing from groups organised in factions and tendencies, and even more if these survive through time. When this happens, the factions cease to be factions to become cliques. The party ceases to act in unitary way towards the mass movement to turn inward, it freezes, it creates a parliamentary environment of permanent debate and inevitably it stops acting unitarily and becomes principally engaged in discussion, i.e., it stops acting mainly in the mass movement. Discussion is an essential and decisive means for our activity, but only a means. The existence of permanent factions and tendencies transforms the discussion in an end in itself and not a means of centralism and of unified action in the mass movement.

As important as professional militants, democratic centralism and permanent discussion, is the organic character that any Bolshevik Trotskyist party must have. A Trotskyist party does not deserve the name if it acquires characteristics of tendency, propaganda group or movement. The working class will only be able to defeat the bourgeoisie with an iron clad organisation. This need of the working class must be taken and raised to its maximum power by our parties. In our parties, everything should be done organically and through organisms, nothing outside of them. This allows us to define well those who are militants from those who are not. Only those who belong to an organism of the party and are subject to its discipline are militants. In addition, a strict hierarchy among organisms is essential. Our parties have organisms of leadership, rank and file organisms and intermediate organisms, with a permanent dialectic of discussion and execution. Anything that means going over these organisms — even if it is an appeal to the ranks in plenary meetings — is a negation of the Bolshevik structure. Anything that means mixing of existing organisms would be democratism and not Bolshevik structure. The Secretariat, the Executive

Committee, the Central Committee, the regional committees and the cells have their strict place within the party.

This operation through hierarchical organisms is the only guarantee that our parties, when gaining mass influence, will maintain the Bolshevik internal regime. So we will avoid the serious danger of creating Trotskyist movements with mass influence which, come the time for action, turn out to be anarchic and unable to act with the centralisation and discipline of a revolutionary army as required by the circumstances of the era. §

THESIS XXXIX

Currency of the theory of the permanent revolution and the law of uneven and combined development

Just as we vindicate more than ever the *Transitional Program* and Trotskyism, we must do the same with the theory of permanent revolution. We must however carefully distinguish between the theory and the written text of the *Theses* of the permanent revolution. In some respects, these *Theses* have aged. The sooner we recognise this, the sooner will we be in conditions to better fight revisionism.

The *Theses* did not contemplate the political revolution. They could not contemplate it since when they were written the historical reality had not raised the existence of a bureaucratised workers' state. But this new reality is nowadays an essential part of our policy and theory of permanent revolution. The political revolution is part of the world socialist revolution, together with the democratic tasks in form and content, and the February revolutions. Democratic tasks, February revolutions, and political revolutions are part of the socialist revolution. This combination of tasks not only happens on a world-wide scale but also at the level of each country, whether underdeveloped or not, whether imperialist or a bureaucratised workers' state. Therefore, one expression of the political revolution, the struggle against the counter-revolutionary bureaucratic apparatuses, happens within the advanced capitalist countries. The same is true for the democratic tasks.

Something similar happens with the category of bourgeois democratic revolutions, which the text of the *Theses* of the permanent revolution began with. No longer are there bourgeois democratic revolutions because there is no more ruling feudalism in the present world, but only different degrees of capitalism and imperialist domination. Yet there are two distinct types of socialist revolution: the unconscious, of February, led or capitalized by reformist parties; and the conscious, of October, led by Trotskyist parties. This is not to deny the fundamental importance of the democratic tasks.

This is why there will also be in the bureaucratised workers' states themselves February revolutions which will open as a prologue to an October revolution, as a prior stage to the transformation of the Trotskyist parties in mass parties. All these are problems which we have tried to elucidate in these theses, and that need to be incorporated into the theory of the permanent revolution.

But the *Theses*, not the theory, made an incorrect evaluation of the dynamics and of the transformation of the bourgeois democratic revolution into socialist revolution in the underdeveloped countries. The *Theses* categorically state that the bourgeois democratic revolution, and even more the socialist revolution, can only be carried through by a communist, Leninist, revolutionary party, supported on the revolutionary organisation of the proletariat itself. The *Theses* have as fundamental axis the process of transformation of the bourgeois democratic revolution into a socialist revolution, of expropriation of the bourgeoisie and imperialism by a social subject, the proletariat, and by a political subject, the revolutionary communist party. The *Theses* categorically state that only the working class, headed by a revolutionary communist party can carry out the bourgeois democratic revolution and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie through a socialist revolution. This has shown to be wrong. It must be acknowledged so. The *Transitional Program* itself modifies slightly, with its improbable theoretical variation, the categorical statements of the *Theses*. We have to recognise that petty bourgeois parties (including the Stalinists), forced by circumstances, have been pushed to break with the bourgeoisie and imperialism to carry out the

democratic revolution and the beginning of the Socialist Revolution, expropriating the bourgeoisie and thereby inaugurating new bureaucratic workers' states.

It is necessary to incorporate into the theory of permanent revolution, the recognition of the generalisation of February revolutions, the combination of February revolutions with October revolutions and that a February revolution can even expropriate the bourgeoisie and start the socialist revolution; what the bureaucratic leaderships cannot do is to continue them. This incorporation of a February revolution — this acknowledgement that February revolutions themselves may go beyond what the Theses of the permanent revolution stated — does not render the theory void but, on the contrary, proves it more than ever.

The theory of the permanent revolution is much broader than the Theses written by Trotsky in the late 1920s. It is the theory of the international socialist revolution that combines different tasks, stages and types of revolutions in the march towards global revolution. Reality has been more Trotskyist and permanent than what Trotsky himself and the Trotskyists foresaw. It has produced unexpected combinations: despite the failures of the subject (i.e., in some revolutions the proletariat has not been the principal protagonist) and of the subjective factor (the crisis of revolutionary leadership, the weakness of Trotskyism), the world socialist revolution has won important victories. It came to the expropriation of national and foreign exploiters in many countries, although the leadership of the mass movement continued to be in the hands of the opportunist and counter-revolutionary apparatuses and leaderships.

If we do not recognise these facts, we leave the field open to revisionist interpretations that lean on them in order to deny the class and political character of the theory of the permanent revolution. Thus, a complete revisionist theory, the substitutionism of Deutscher, has emerged: the communist parties symbolize the working class; therefore the Theses have been confirmed since communist parties have seized power and — as a matter of fact — they were revolutionary parties; although the working class did not take part in the revolutionary process, the Stalinist parties did reflect it; Trotsky was wrong not to point out that a class may be reflected by its party and not to realise that many communist parties were revolutionary. This criticism of Trotsky is intended to ratify the written theses. We disagree, we believe that they are February revolutions, i.e., workers' and people's revolutions with opportunist leaderships which, forced by the pressure of the mass movement, have been compelled to go further than what they wanted, expropriating the bourgeoisie.

The SWP leadership has embarked on another attack against the Trotskyist theory of the permanent revolution. According to this new SWP's theory neither the proletariat nor Trotskyism is any longer absolutely necessary for a continuous development of the permanent revolution. At most they are just one ingredient. The new theory of permanent revolution of the current leadership of the SWP is the theory of the unitary progressive movements of the oppressed, and not of the proletariat and Trotskyism. Any movement of the oppressed — if it is unitary and covers the whole of them, even of different classes — is itself increasingly permanent and leads unavoidably, without class or political differentiations, to the national and international socialist revolution. This view has been expressed particularly in relation to the black and the women movements. All women are oppressed, as all blacks are; if a movement of all these oppressed sections is achieved this mobilisation will not stop and it will lead them through different stages to make a socialist revolution.

To the SWP the socialist revolution is a combination of distinct multitudinous movements — without class differences — of similar importance: the black, women, workers, youth, elderly movements that almost peacefully reach at the triumph of socialism. If all women march together, they represent 50% of the country; if the same happens with the youth (70% in some Latin American countries), plus the workers, the black and the peasants, the combination of those movements will cause the bourgeoisie to be cornered in a small hotel, since it will be the adult, male, white bourgeois that will be opposed against the permanent revolution. It is the theory of Bernstein combined with the permanent revolution: the movement is everything and the class and the parties are nothing. This theory breaks down rapidly into anti-classist humanism, claiming the praxis to be the fundamental category as opposed to the class struggle as the motor of history.

The SWP says to wait and see what the bourgeoisie of the National Reconstruction Government of Nicaragua do to know what to expect because they belong to the movement that ousted Somoza. They apply thus their revisionist, non-classist and non-political conception of the permanent revolution. We —

against the SWP — must vindicate more than ever the classist and Trotskyist character of the permanent revolution. No bourgeois or reformist sector will follow us in the process of permanent revolution. In some exceptional situations, when the action does not undermine the bourgeoisie and private property, may march together bourgeois and workers youth, bourgeois and workers women, opportunist and revolutionary blacks; but this march together will be exceptional and not permanent. We keep staunchly defending the essence of both the theory as well as the written theses of the permanent revolution: only the proletariat headed by a Trotskyist party can lead consequently to the end the international socialist revolution and therefore the permanent revolution. Only Trotskyism can drive the permanent mobilisation of the working class and its allies, mainly of the working class. The only element we add is that the objective strength of the world revolution, combined with the crisis of leadership of the world proletariat and the chronic crisis of imperialism, has allowed for national February revolutions to go further than the theses forecasted: that petty bourgeois parties take power and start the socialist revolution. But these parties, when building bureaucratised workers' states of national type, when imposing their program of pacific coexistence and of socialism in only one country, paralyse the permanent revolution.

In this sense, the Theses were only wrong for some countries in the aspect of the station where the process of permanent revolution conducted by petty bourgeois — including Stalinist — parties would come to a stop; but they were right that the process would stop if it is not led by a Leninist communist party, i.e., a Trotskyist party. While the Theses believed it was impossible to overcome the bourgeois limit — even the feudal limits — reality has shown that these limits could be overcome by the pressure of the mass movement and, unwillingly, by the petty bourgeois parties heading them.

The theory of the permanent revolution is enriched with the most extraordinary research tool and instrument of political and theoretical elaboration that Trotskyism has bequeathed us: the theory of uneven and combined development. The momentum of the mass movement, combined with the crisis of revolutionary leadership has caused combinations not foreseen in detail (and which could not have been) by our movement. But these combinations not only confirm the process of permanent revolution exists but that it is so powerful it creates these combinations; and confirm more than ever the theory of the uneven and combined development as the greatest theoretical gain of revolutionary Marxism in this century. §

THESIS XL

Holocaust or Trotskyism.

An imperative need: the conquest of cosmos

Despite all the revolutionary triumphs humanity is on the brink of the precipice. Marxism and Trotskyism have pointed out that under the imperialist regime, and even under that of the bureaucracy, unless the crisis of leadership of the proletariat is overcome, the outlook for mankind is to fall into barbarism, into a new regime of slavery as the continuation of the imperialist regime. Only socialism would allow humanity to overcome the world of necessity and enter into the world of freedom. Either we enter into the most horrific world of exploitation and misery, of shackling of humanity into barbarism, or we enter through socialism into the world of freedom.

The monstrosity of the imperialist and bureaucratic regime has caused the category of barbarism to be left behind. The colossal means of destruction developed by imperialism and the bureaucratic workers' states has changed the danger facing humanity. It is no longer a question of falling into a new regime of slavery, barbarian, but rather of something far more serious: the possibility that planet Earth will become a lifeless desert or with a degraded life due to genetic degeneration caused by the new armaments. But not only is there the danger of degradation of life due to a nuclear war, there is also an immediate danger: to continue destroying nature, mainly energy sources, essential basis of the domination of nature by man. The depletion of oil resources in a few decades or a century poses a terrible threat to humanity.

Against these perils, the bureaucratized workers' states and the leaderships that rule these states are no solution. These leaderships take us to the brink of the precipice. The only way to avoid this is to eliminate national borders, imperialist domination and capitalist private property. To achieve the liquidation of national borders there is no other method than the permanent mobilisation of world proletariat and the unification of its struggles with this clear purpose. But the liquidation of national borders, imperialism and capitalist private property by means of the revolution and the permanent mobilisation of the proletariat and its allies, is only raised by one organisation, the Fourth International, it is only defended by one current of the workers movement, Trotskyism. Hence, despite our extreme weakness, the alternative is clear. No longer is it barbarism or socialism, but holocaust or Trotskyism.

Only the proletariat headed by Trotskyism will give an answer to the greatest challenge humanity has ever had: the conquest of the cosmos. This conquest of the cosmos is today an imperative need that changes the traditional dialectics of Marxism between freedom and need. Marxism had argued that on entering socialism we would enter the world of freedom and would leave the world of need. Nowadays, the depletion of earth's energy and growth of humanity imperiously raise the conquest of new sources of energy. In the short term — a few centuries — the energy provided by planet Earth will unavoidably be exhausted, even with its most rational use. But humanity has an infinite source of energy at its disposal in the cosmos: the sun's rays. This is a challenge for humanity, which can only be addressed if we leave behind the prospect of war and enter the stage of construction of socialism. Socialism will manage, overcoming then the absolute freedom posed by classical Marxism, a new combination of need and freedom to achieve a relative freedom. The need imposed by some men — the exploiting classes — upon other men — the exploited classes — will disappear to assume the urgent and human need to conquer the cosmos.

Only Trotskyism leading the proletariat, can make it possible for humanity to enter into the stage of the conquest of the cosmos, i.e., the creation of artificial satellites with as good or better life than

Earth, which will collect solar energy and send it to Earth by microwaves to have an energy nearly free of charge and in infinite quantities. Capitalism did play a progressive role because it meant the conquest of the whole planet, mainly of America, Africa and Asia, for a new kind of production. It was the great challenge that capitalism — in its progressive stage — fulfilled. Socialist mankind has a greater challenge, the greatest ever had by mankind: just at the very time when the continuation of the imperialist regime or the bureaucratic regimes raises the holocaust of the human genre, Trotskyism signals the possibility of the largest leap made by mankind, the conquest of the universe by socialism. §

THESIS XLI

It is time for the reconstruction of the Fourth International

We Trotskyists grouped in the Parity Committee are proud that, in the crisis of disintegration of the Fourth International initiated by Pabloist revisionism, we knew how to fight it keeping ourselves in the arena of the Fourth International and its program. Our forces are currents that bring together two-thirds of the militants who identify with Trotskyism and the Fourth International worldwide. We are perfectly conscious that Trotskyism is incompatible with the revisionism that dwelled through our ranks in the last three decades of our movements. We are conscious that revisionism has played a permanent role as servant of imperialism and fundamentally of the counter-revolutionary apparatuses that control, divert and crush the mass movement. Revisionism has fulfilled its disintegrating role and keeps trying by all means to prevent the International and its parties from transforming themselves in authentic Trotskyist parties with mass influence. Nothing shows more clearly the role of revisionism than its betrayal in Bolivia yesterday and its capitulation to the Popular Front in Peru today.

Not only are we aware of the role of revisionism, but also, as evidenced by these theses, that we apply consequently the live, rich, Marxist method of the *Transitional Program*, without abandoning any of the principles that characterise our International and which reality has confirmed, to observe the new phenomena and to enrich our program and our analysis. In doing so, we do not betray any of our principles, nor do we capitulate to the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, nor do we assign them any historic mission. On the contrary, we continue to denounce them systematically and permanently as agents of the counter-revolution within the ranks of the workers and revolutionary movement.

Furthermore, we believe more than ever in democratic centralism. We believe in an authentic democratic centralism, based on a revolutionary program, the program of Trotskyism, the *Transitional Program*. We do not believe in a democratic centralism for the revision of Trotskyism, or in some variation of federative kind to structure an unprincipled front against Trotskyism. This is why the conference of the Parity Committee revives the true democratic centralism in the Fourth International, lost since the crisis caused by Pabloist revisionism in 1951. Not only do we vindicate the *Transitional Program* but also the Bolshevik organisation of our International at a world scale, as it was the case when Trotsky was still alive and in the 10 years following his assassination.

That we rebuild our International on these programmatic and organisational bases does not mean we abandon to their fate all groups, tendencies and militants that claim to be Trotskyist and due to the confusion provoked by revisionism do not join to our ideas. We are conscious of having made mistakes. But those mistakes have no other explanation than the crisis of disintegration of our International caused by revisionism. As Marxists we start from the world revolution — the global unity of the class struggle — therefore from the International. Regardless that we kept ourselves in the arena of the Fourth International and its program, its disintegration has marked us all, those who are part of the Parity Committee as well as those who are not part of it. Therefore, we will not leave to their fate any militant or organisation claiming to be Trotskyist. On the contrary, the reconstruction of the Fourth International also means that we will cease to have a defensive attitude of the principles and of the *Transitional Program*, to move to an offensive attitude to defeat definitely revisionism, with a bold policy of proposing common activities, of joint committees, with any honest Trotskyist group that, even if it disagrees with some of our points or with our interpretation of the Trotskyist principles, considers the unity of Trotskyism indispensable. This

is why we make a fraternal appeal to any Trotskyist comrade or organisation that is willing to discuss with us and to make joint actions on the basis of Trotskyism. In this new offensive attitude against revisionism, we will exploit the slightest chance to achieve those common Trotskyists actions, as we have done in Peru. These initiatives for common actions will allow us to prove categorically that there is only one Trotskyist organisation in the world and in each country: our reconstructed Fourth International, the true Trotskyist International. This will be the best way of dividing waters and of achieving that the whole movement of masses and all the authentic Trotskyists know that anything outside the reconstructed Fourth International is revisionism, is anti-Trotskyism. §

Addendum

Nahuel Moreno

**On the front populist
governments
and on the tactic of
united workers' front**

Introductory note

The Fourth International (International Committee) [FI-IC] was founded in December 1980 in Paris. The following year this unification of the currents of Trotskyism led by Nahuel Moreno and Pierre Lambert respectively was thwarted. In May 1981 Social Democrat François Mitterrand became President of France. Since that time, the OIC (u) — Internationalist Communist Organisation (unified) — began to implement a policy of direct capitulation to the new government. A crisis began that culminated, a few months later, with the final breakdown of the FI-IC, due to the shift to opportunism by the current guided by Pierre Lambert. This situation led to the regrouping of Morenism forces with groups and leaders of Lambertism who rejected this revisionist course.

In the heat of the debate and given the need to get a positive outcome to the will to establish a principled international current, some central points quickly emerged. First, it was concluded that Lambert was denying the common program approved for the FI-IC in the conference of December 1980. This program had been elaborated based on the paper by Nahuel Moreno *The Transitional Program Today*, reprinted in this book. Second, it emerged that it had been assumed that there was a political and principled agreement on how to respond to popular frontist bourgeois governments, and hence this was not subject to common elaboration and debate. Reality showed that it was not so, and that a very important gap existed which should be filled. Third, in light of the controversy that led to the dissolution of the FI-IC, it emerged that the common document adopted had formulations on the subject of workers' united front which could lead to a totally wrong conception, and the need to rectify them explicitly and forcefully.

To enrich and complement the text of *The Transitional Program Today*, we include in this edition three papers with speeches and proposals Nahuel Moreno presented at the international meeting in January 1982 in Bogota (Colombia), which founded the International Workers League – Fourth International (IWL–FI).

The Editors

Speech on the opportunistic shift by Lambertism

[...] Comrades, I don't want to give a comprehensive report for the simple reason that for a Trotskyist the basic principles of revolutionary policy towards popular front governments are more than known. It is a more than a well-known issue, it's super well known. I still believe that there can be no one claiming to be a Trotskyist who does not think that if one denounces every day as traitors the socialist and communist parties when they weren't in power, from the moment they climb to power in the imperialist and counter-revolutionary government they must be denounced more than ever: if previously we did it daily now we must make every minute of the day.

Trying to delve into this issue, we find that Lenin and Trotsky regarding popular frontist governments had identical analysis and policy, but that they had not made a finished elaboration in any work. That this problem, which we thought so simple, is full of subtleties. For example, Lenin wrote countless works indicating that no support was to be given to any measure of a government like those of Russia in the year 1917, nor do we make the smallest agreement or front with the treasonous workers' parties which are part of it. Regarding the support to measures of the bourgeois governments, from Trotsky there is only what comrade Earl quoted, about his response to Sachtman and the policy of the French section in relation to measures of Blum in 1936, which counted with his support or advice. Both positions of the Old Man are very clear: supporting measures of popular frontism is betrayal.

Unfortunately, there is no pamphlet by Trotsky, or work, specifically dedicated to this topic. However, in relation to the popular frontist governments and the traitor parties comprising it, there are sharp and categorical articles by Trotsky demanding their permanent denunciation and the need to mobilise the masses against them. Because of this conjunctural and journalistic character of the works by Lenin and Trotsky on popular frontism and Kerenskyism, there are open theoretical problems that we must discuss.

For example, on the worker's front, which not only should we study it in relation to this discussion but to the *Theses* themselves. [...] Comrade Alberto said in passing something very important: to what extent the transformation by the OCI (u) of the united workers' front tactic in a principle and a strategy is one of the fundamental keys to understanding their capitulation to popular frontism? I am inclined to believe that the Comrade is right.

There are other problems like this. But all these problems are based on a series of fundamental principles of Trotskyism which are what we defended in the three documents¹ that we lay for discussion, and to vote in general lines. I say general lines because — I must insist — there are theoretical issues to be discussed. But there are principles that remain unshakable, programmatic basis of Trotskyism. These principles are those we knew but, as Hegel said, they are known by all but not acknowledged. In this meeting they will be proclaimed in normative form as fundamental principles of Trotskyism.

Well, what are we going to vote in this conference? [...]

We are going to vote than under a popular front government as under any other bourgeois government, our principled policy is:

¹ “La traición de la OCI (u) [The betrayal of the OCI (u)]”, *Correo Internacional* N° 1; “El gobierno de Mitterrand, sus perspectivas y nuestra política [Mitterrand's government, its perspectives and our policy]”, *Correspondencia Internacional* N°. 13; “Carta al CC del POSI [Letter to the CC of the POSI]”, *Correo Internacional* N° 2. The three documents are by Nahuel Moreno.

- That under popular frontist governments the central objective of Trotskyism, its first task, continues being the same as under the other bourgeois governments: to convince the working class and its allies to take in their hands the government and power, that there is no solution to any of the evils of capitalism — from misery to fascism — if workers do not make a revolution against the government and the bourgeois state to impose its own government and state. Our whole strategy and tactics aim to teach these primary and fundamental truths to the workers.
- That, therefore, it is our duty to denounce systematically and relentlessly the bourgeois imperialist governments and the capitalist state, whoever may be at its head. The hopes of the masses and all other phenomena that we consider for tactical adequacy of this denunciation, can never mean a change in the policy of attacking the bourgeois government minute by minute, whether or not it is popular frontist.
- That all support to measures of a bourgeois imperialist government, therefore counter-revolutionary (including the popular frontist), is a betrayal of Leninism, whatever such measures may be. The policy of supporting “anti-capitalist measures and rejecting the capitalist” or “supporting the progressive and rejecting the reactionary” is pure Menshevism, because it instils among the workers the treacherous notion that the government is not counter-revolutionary, bourgeois or imperialist, but a hybrid that at times can be bourgeois and at other times anti-capitalist.
- That, on the contrary, it is always our duty to denounce the bourgeois governments and never support any of their measures, however progressive it may seem, as this besides serving to deceive the masses, would give political weapons to the government for implementing all their counter-revolutionary policies, of which its “progressive measures” are an inseparable part.
- That, however, we will defend from all bourgeois and imperialist attack, the “progressive measures” which are regarded with sympathy by the working class, when they are threatened by more reactionary bourgeois sectors. We will also use them. This defence or use does not stop us from criticising the bourgeois government, whether popular frontist or not.
- We Trotskyists neither “advise” a bourgeois government (even front populist) nor do we believe they can have an anti-bourgeois and anti-imperialist policy. To think otherwise is a reactionary utopia serving the counterrevolution. A utopia because it claims that a bourgeois government can have an anti-bourgeois policy; and reactionary because it disarms the working class by creating false expectations of their mortal enemy, the government.
- We Trotskyists do the opposite: we explain to the masses the chronic inability, of class, a bourgeois government- has — even a front populist one — to go in favour of the working class and its inevitable need to defend capitalism and imperialism, whether it be of a government of bourgeois right or of pro-bourgeois workers’ parties.
- None of the above means that the Trotskyists do not take part in the physical struggle between bourgeois sectors. The Fourth International is for the “transformation of all imperialist war into a civil war”. Likewise, the Fourth International is involved in the civil war in the most “progressive” bourgeois camp, in the field of Kerensky against Kornilov, in the field of the semi-colony against Japanese colonial invasion, with the Spanish Republic against Franco. But these military interventions are mere tactics to get the working class understand that it must take power right now, getting rid of Kerensky, Chiang or Negrin. To accomplish these tasks, it is essential to build a Trotskyist party, and this must be systematically explained to the masses: only by building this party they will have a leadership who will not betray them, and that will lead them to the taking of power.
- As an essential part of these tasks, it is imperative to sweep off from the mass movement the treacherous workers’ parties and for that, we must drum home that no trust can be placed in them and to denounce them systematically. And when one of these treacherous workers’ parties rises to a bourgeois imperialist government, we must attack it more than ever. It is at this moment, when the masses may believe that the presence of the workers’ party in government makes it their own, when we must denounce that it has become more counter-revolutionary than ever.

All this takes the shape as a fundamental methodological issue, which comes from the discussion with all the revisionist currents. To distinguish between objective reality and our rules and policies. What does this statement mean? Here's an example.

The OCI (u) has only been able to use two quotes from Trotsky in defence of its position in France: one says that we must not excite the masses, we have to explain to them; the other, that the French workers, in their second wave, will fight against enemies of the Blum government, and not against Blum and, therefore, we have to place ourselves at the forefront of this struggle. The leadership of the OCI (u) makes a false interpretation, to say the least, confusing our policy with adaptation to reality.

Suppose that the Colombian masses decide to fight against Belisario Betancur (conservative) and not against the liberals who are in government. This is a fact and as such we take it, but without adapting to it, because our policy is not that the masses combat the conservative bourgeoisie and refrain from attacking the liberal bourgeoisie. But if the masses tend to make a big strike to expropriate the conservative bourgeoisie, it would be sectarian to deny this fact and not to be the best fighters and leaders of that struggle. But the action of the workers is not our policy or rather, does not exhaust our program for that struggle. We go into this process with the aim to bring the masses towards our program, whose focus is always political: to liquidate the state and the government. And everything we do has one goal: to educate the masses on the belief that if they do not throw down the state apparatus and the government of the day to impose a government of themselves, there is no possibility of overcoming any problems.

It is a question, then, to start from the reality that the masses are going towards a general strike only against the conservative bourgeoisie to bring them closer to our program: the fight against all the bourgeois system, including the liberal bourgeoisie, especially against their state and government.

This contradiction between what the masses believe and what we believe it is first and foremost, we solve it by the tactical route, but a tactic that continues vindicating the principles. What does this mean? The direction of the OIC (u) interprets that Trotsky says (in the second of the quotations above) not to attack the Blum popular frontist government, but only its imperialist enemies. But for both Lenin and Trotsky, the principle is “always attacks the bourgeois government, whether front populist or not”. The tactic only shows how we must do this systematic attack, taking into account, among other phenomena, the consciousness of the masses.

For example, if workers believe that the great enemy is the anti-Mitterrand bourgeoisie, anti-Blum or anti-liberal in Colombia, and that we only have to mobilise against them, we will be at the forefront of this struggle, but without ceasing to attack for one minute the government of Blum, Mitterrand or the liberals. How? Telling the masses that with the Blum government is difficult to defeat La Rocque because it doesn't give us weapons, because it capitulates to the bourgeoisie, because it doesn't really confront them. And with regard to Mitterrand that we don't trust he will face the bourgeoisie because he's their servant. That is what is tactical: to systematically attack the front populist government but starting off from the fact that that the masses believe they must fight only against the enemies of the government and not against this, raising the issue of power and of the state in a way understandable to the workers. Telling them, “the government in which you trust will do nothing against their bourgeois enemies, only your initiative and mobilising will defeat the bourgeoisie”.

This confusion between objective reality and our program and principles by the OCI (u) is deliberate and characterises all revisionist currents that believe there are no principles or, if any, they are for the holidays. However, the fight for our principles and our program is daily; the only thing that changes daily is the tactic, namely, how to express or explain them. If instead of taking the reality to develop our program and principles we adapt to the actual process of the stages of the mass movement, we are committing a betrayal: capitulating and tail-ending the front populist government or any bourgeois government in which the workers believe.

In this discussion there are class issues that characterise both the OCI (u) and the LCR (Revolutionary Communist League, Mandelism) and Pablo [the leader who led the opportunistic revisionism since the 1950s]. Marxism has not only a class policy, but a class analysis. If we say — as the OCI (u) and LCR do — that a government constituted by bourgeois can practice class struggle in favour of the workers or to adopt “progressive measures” or follow an “anti-capitalist course” we are committing a political crime. I touch on this point to refute the vulgar, revisionist argument that we should not close the door on the possibility or hypothesis that a bourgeois government becomes anti-bourgeois. Vulgar, because

when thinking thus all scientific, class meaning is lost; just as it happens with the pacifists who tells us: “How nice would be that we all loved each other, that no war existed, etc.”, without seeing that there is a class that hates the workers and inevitably carries out wars and exploits humanity. Still others who, using a vulgar thought, think we could support “progressive” measures and resist those that are not, because maybe the Mitterrand government will take the path of class struggle. From the methodological point of view, of Marxism, this is the total abandonment of class analysis and politics. Pure revisionism as analysis and as policy, because all bourgeois governments inexorably practice class struggle in the service of the bourgeoisie and, for reasons of class, are completely and utterly unable to practice it in the service of the proletariat. The character of a government — bourgeois or proletarian — is not an amorphous or secondary phenomenon. If it is bourgeois it practices the class struggle in the service of the bourgeoisie and, therefore, we have to denounce it as such, because to offer the government means by approving of its measures is a betrayal to class politics. There are no governments of undefined gender; it is either bourgeois or proletarian. And when the OCI (u) says the Mitterrand government has a dilemma, “either class collaboration or class struggle” and that its policy is to push towards the “class struggle” is committing two crimes: one in the analysis and another in politics.

I wanted to emphasize this methodological character in the current discussion, because making a class definition of governments and from there, developing our policy, is also a matter of principle. The leadership of the OCI (u) will attempt to bring Trotsky’s quote about the possibility that workers break with the bourgeois parties and establish a workers’ and peasants’ government, or the history of all communist parties or of Castroism which broke with the bourgeoisie in this post-war. They will insist that what they are practicing is the tactic of the workers’ and peasants’ front of the transitional program, of demanding that the workers’ parties break with the bourgeoisie and constitute a worker’s and peasant’s government. In our last work we already explained that this is an artful deception of the leadership of the OCI (u) to hide their revisionism. They do not advice or demand from workers’ parties other than a bourgeois popular front government, which not only is not the same, but it is the opposite. §

Thesis:

Opportunism, Trotskyism and the popular front governments

Those who wrote the theses of the FI (IC) believed that the problem of policy which we should use to face the popular front governments had been solved with the analysis by Trotsky and the one the Parity Committee of the Bolshevik Faction (Morenist) and OCRFI (Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, Lambertist) had made with respect to the Government of National Reconstruction of Nicaragua in 1979-80.

Mitterrand's rise to power has revealed this was not the case, that there are serious gaps and issues unresolved or that need to be re-evaluated. Like any theoretical problem not solved it causes profound differences in policy and practice. Add to this that all popular frontist governments have provoked responses, both opportunistic as well as revolutionary by leaders, current and organisations of revolutionary Marxism. Both opportunistic and revolutionary responses have had, throughout this century, almost the same features and even the same words. On account of the youth of the cadres and supporters of the Trotskyist movement in general, we would like to outline the responses of both opportunists and revolutionaries, to underpin the latter and the programmatic regrouping that we are making in the IWL–FI. Let us see what these recurring features that we can generalise are:

1. In relation to the popular frontist governments

The main point that differentiates opportunists from revolutionary and today revisionism from Trotskyism has to do with the policy regarding this type of government. Opportunism and Trotskyism are sharply differentiated in three fundamental aspects of policy.

The first has to do with whether to give support or not. Opportunists are characterised by giving their support to the popular frontist government. This support can be open or shameful; it can be to the measures of the government or in fact by not clearly opposing these measures, or any other variation of the sort. In opposition to this, Trotskyism is characterised by not giving any support, under any circumstances, neither to the government nor to their measures. This does not mean we do not defend these measures when attacked by the counter-revolution. On some occasions Trotsky — not Lenin — called this defence support, but it was support against the attack by others. But when there is no attack on those measures, we never support them when the government proposes them.

Secondly, the opportunists are characterised by holding a complicit silence regarding the government. They do not expose it as a bourgeois government and, like any bourgeois government, as counter-revolutionary. In other words, there is no policy of systematic denunciation, confrontation and frontal opposition to the government.

The revolutionaries, however, make a systematic, relentless denunciation of the government as bourgeois and counter-revolutionary; they call to not believe in any of their promises or measures.

Thirdly, the opportunist is characterised by not raising slogans of power that are the axis of all their political line and agitation. That is to say, the vindication of a type of government opposed to the existing one is not the axis of its policy.

Against this line of the opportunist, the axis of the Trotskyist political line is the systematic agitation of a kind of worker government diametrically opposed to the popular frontist, to counter pose it to it. These are government slogans agitated by the minute, such as: Bourgeois ministers out of the

government!, Government of SP and CP!, Government of workers' and peasants! Trotsky has even raised the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat or of workers' government and the most famous of All power to the Soviets! Always, always, Trotskyism has a great slogan which is fundamental: the slogan of power to oppose to the popular frontist government. This does not mean at all that when the masses still trust the government, it will raise the slogan to overthrow it. But this does not mean either that it hides from the working class its characterisation and political line. We prepare to throw out the government when we convince the workers that it is a counter-revolutionary government and that we must oust it. To convince the working class of this urgent and first need there is no other means than to denounce popular frontist government every minute.

2. On the bourgeoisie, imperialism and feudal reaction

The opportunist only denounces the bourgeoisie, imperialism and the feudal reaction as enemies of the workers, remaining silent on the popular frontist government as if it were not executor of the counter-revolutionary policy. The opportunist has a mania for attacking the bourgeois parties which were displaced by the popular frontist government. Within the Bolshevik Party, the opportunists had mania for attacking the Tsar and saying nothing about the government. The revolutionaries, instead, while attacking the bourgeoisie, imperialism and feudal reaction, do not cease to systematically attack, taking advantage of every opportunity, the government that, ultimately, is direct or indirect agent of them all.

On imperialism

The opportunist does not make a permanent agitation on the imperialist character of the government or the country itself. From the moment the popular frontist government assumes, a criminal silence occurs in relation to this character of the government and the country. In contrast, the revolutionary denounces the imperialist character of the government and the country with as much as or more strongly than before.

On the nationalistic movements and the oppressed nations facing the exploitation of imperialism

There are neither agitational campaigns, nor struggles nor demonstrations, nor statements on behalf of the colonies, semi-colonies, or nationalist movements facing his own imperialism by the opportunist. In contrast, the revolutionary makes more agitation than ever, since the situation allows him to carry out practical actions on their behalf. He consistently raises the slogan of independence of the colonies and semi-colonies, or the most absolute right to national self-determination. Likewise, he vindicates the nationalist movements, even when he disagrees with their politics, defending them unconditionally in a public and agitational way.

On the State apparatus

The opportunist does not denounce the government as a staunch defender of the bureaucratic structure of the state, and therefore, makes no permanent agitation for the destruction of the bourgeois state. The revolutionary, by contrast, consistently denounces the policy of the bourgeois state and calls to destroy it to impose a new type of state: commune according to Lenin, Soviet according to Trotsky.

On the Armed Forces

The opportunist does not denounce the sinister government policy to consolidate the hierarchical structure of the armed forces, the last bastion of the capitalist regime. Therefore, it makes no campaign to destroy them. The revolutionary, however, at this stage makes a fierce campaign and has a transitional program to destroy them.

On the counterrevolutionary workers' parties

The opportunist, as soon as the counter-revolutionary workers' parties come to power, abandons any criticism and denunciation of them as counter-revolutionaries and as the ultimate guarantee of survival of the capitalist and imperialist regime. He thus abandons one of the primary tasks of revolutionary Marxism. As a result, he tends to dilute the differences with the other parties rather than exacerbate them. The revolutionary does exactly the opposite: he denounces more than ever such parties as counter-

revolutionary, agents of imperialism and the bourgeoisie, and tries by all means to mobilise the masses to confront and fight them. That is to say, he increases his denunciation and stresses the differences taking advantage that they are part of the bourgeois and imperialist government. And just as he does not support any move by the government, he does the same with the counter-revolutionary parties: he does not reach any agreements with them to avoid lessening their repudiation.

On the world revolution

The opportunist ignores the world revolution and has no policy to develop it. This is how they all abandon, from Nin to Molinier-Frank, or Kamenev-Stalin in Russia, the development of the world revolution. The revolutionary, however, gives as much importance to the development of the world revolution as to the revolutionary process in his own country, and he denounces the government as an agent of the world counter-revolution, fraternal partner of US imperialism, cop of cops, attacking the chauvinist character of popular frontist government.

On the Fourth International

The opportunist, by abandoning a strict delimitation with the counter-revolutionary workers' parties, by failing to denounce them daily, abandons the main task of our program, which is to put to the mass movement and the vanguard to repudiate the counter-revolutionaries workers parties., that the main task is building a revolutionary party to deal with them. That this party cannot be other than a Trotskyist or Trotskyist-like party with mass influence. §

Workers' front: The origin of a tactic

Before anything else, I must clarify that our new approach to the subject debunks what we wrote in the theses of FI-IC regarding the workers' front. We will not resort to manoeuvres like Lambert and will tell it like it is.

At the time, we considered what the thesis on *united workers' front* said was correct, and a contribution from the comrades of the OCI (u). They insisted on such content, and we approved. We were not mature enough.

Now it is different: Mitterrand and Nicaragua have led us to make a new reflection on this tactic and what we write now is a discovery for us.

We have long suspected that there were problems in the tactic of the workers' front. We had been working on it without finding a solution. Many years ago we thought it was a strategy. It was a mistake that we later corrected: the united front is a tactic. During the Russian revolution this tactic only applied for a fortnight. Trotsky says it categorically, according to quotes we have contributed. The reading of Lenin corroborates it. He asserts we should not make any agreement with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries throughout the stage, despite the fact that the workers' front — as we all know — is a special type of agreement that is proposed to reformism. During the Kornilov uprising he changes and proposes to the social-traitors an agreement or front, only for a fortnight, as Trotsky said.

That is, the Bolshevik policy of 1917 was carried out without using the tactic of the united front. By contrast, the great slogan of Lenin in 1917 is “no agreement” with the opportunist parties, because they are part of the government or support it.

The workers' united front tactic arises between the III and IV Congresses of the Third International. It is, therefore, a tactic subsequent to the Russian revolution.

For those who agree with the OCI (u), this poses some problems: perhaps the Bolsheviks found in 1921 a permanent strategy or tactic, which because of ignorance they did not use before, and had it been applied it would have facilitated the Russian Revolution?

We do not believe so. It is a tactic and as such it applies at certain times. This tactic came when the III International found that, because the European revolution had not succeeded, the social democratic parties were still widely majority. This forced to change the tactics developed by the I and II congresses of the Third International.

During these congresses, the Comintern had followed the policy of Marx and Engels, “one working class, one party”. All Marxism —since Marx — develops in the notion that our parties should not be Marxists, but that the whole working class had to have a single party, with its own language and ideology, to the point that in his famous letter to Sorge, Marx argued that the workers' party of the United States should speak and think as the class itself, despite its semi-Masonic views.

It was Kautsky, who when he young was not bad a politician, who begins to insist that we must build Marxist parties. He vindicates Marxism to fight against the intellectual, petit bourgeois wing of the German Social Democratic Party. Thus the concept of Marxist workers' party emerged, which means that if it is not Marxist it is not workers', and which extended from Germany to all advanced countries.

The two conceptions, the one of Marx — “one class, one party” — and Kautsky's — “one party, but Marxist”— are adopted by the Third International, when it was founded.

A new tactic arises

The first and second congresses of the III International asserted that if the revolution triumphed in Germany and in one or two other countries, social democracy was going to be in an endless crisis and that there would be a single dominant workers' party, the communist. But after the second congress, when the revolution fails in Europe, Lenin, Trotsky and the III International face the fact that social democracy is still widely majority.

This is combined with the relative stabilization of capitalism, the regression of the European workers movement and, finally, that although the workers' revolution had not succeeded, the communist parties became mass parties, although minority.

This new situation raises the imperative need to win the Social Democratic workers to make the socialist revolution. The united front tactic emerges from this conjunctural and sporadic need. As such, it is part of the strategy to sweep off the working class the socialist parties to achieve the hegemony of the Communist Party. It is a tactic to weaken the social-traitors through the proposal and implementation of joint actions, felt by both parties.

The tactic did not raise a union or permanent agreements with the social democratic parties. Its strategy and principles was to destroy them. Precisely the III International alerts to the danger of trying to raise maximum slogans or programs of workers' revolution with the treasonous working class parties. It argues that doing so is betrayal and not united front, because it amounts to place some revolutionary trust in them.

When Stalinism applied this tactic with the English trade union leadership, saying "let's make a united front to help the English strikers", Trotsky said it was one of the greatest betrayals and they should have proposed that the Russian trade unions directly support the mining strike through the revolutionary wing of English trade unionism, to defeat the bureaucratic union leadership. Never, during the great English strike, should the united front tactic have been applied, but rather the support for the strike to defeat not only the bosses and the British government, but the union bureaucracy as well.

The united front tactic is an invitation. And it can only be raised when there are points in common between reformist and revolutionary parties. If a workers' party is in favour of the austerity plans applied by the government, it is impossible to have a united front with this party for an increase of wages. The basis of the united front is that at some point the reformist masses (who do not believe in the revolution) and their leaders (who want to readjust), taken by the class struggle, are forced to raise any slogan of struggle against capitalism. For example, when the government of Isabel Peron in Argentina cut wages by 40 percent and the working class and many Peronist leaders were furious, we invited the bureaucracy, and the workers who followed them to fight together to recover the purchasing power. Thus an impressive general strike was made.

What does it mean that the workers' front is a tactic? That is just a tool, a means among others, to build the party, winning sectors of the working class for it. Therefore, to say that it is "*the tactic*" or strategy, means that it is the only tool or means that the party has to build and achieve a wider audience in the working class. Or, at least, that it is the privileged tool or means.

Our strategy, our central task, to which everything else is subordinated, is to transform our organisations in parties with mass influence, with increasing working class influence, with more and more proletarian cadres in its ranks. That is the strategy. And whenever there is talk of tactics it needs to be referred to this strategy.

The OCI has been saying for years that the workers' united front is a strategy or privileged tactic (which is the same). The thesis said it is a tactic, a concession they made to us. We brought texts where Trotsky writes that the workers' united front is a tactic. Then they found us a single quotation from Trotsky in which he says it is not a circumstantial tactic, which refers, specifically, to a moment of the class struggle in a country: the stage prior to the assumption of Hitler.

If we take the workers' united front as a permanent and privileged tactic, it means the permanent way to build the party, or the tool or means preferred is the agreement with traitor workers' parties. The OCI (u) is consistent when putting, in fact, an equal sign between party building and the tactics of the workers' front.

A tactic for each situation

For us, every stage of the class struggle demands different means or tactics to build the party. These arise not only from the class struggle, but also of the relationship established between it and the party.

This relationship is not aesthetic or scientific. We do not study reality just to know it or for a thrill. Nor do we analyse the situation of our party as historians or sociologists.

We study the two realities, the class struggle and the party, to find ways to strengthen the party. It is an interested, political analysis. So much so that these means or tactics change, not only with objective reality but with the reality of the party itself. Assuming two similar objective situations, we will have very different tactics if our organisation is comprised of twenty students or twenty thousand steelworkers and miners.

This explains, among many other tactics, the entryism in the socialist parties of the 1930s. Had we been powerful worker organisations we would not have done entryism. This was our central tactic for two or three years, and not the workers' united front, because we were small groups. Entryism was the prime tactic in a given moment of Trotskyism, and was the negation of the united front tactic, although it served in France for a short time to take part in the united front the Socialist and Communist parties had agreed on. It was a means to break the socialist parties, as fast as possible, from within. We entered them not to develop a united front with the leadership, but to denounce it and to make the socialist left break with it.

The tactics of the revolutionary party are endless. They change according to the situation. For example, the PST of Argentina, when it ran for elections — the greatest tactical success of its history, it became a national party and allowed it to “own” a small part of the mass movement — practiced the tactic opposite to the united front: the workers and socialist pole. This meant to unite the classist and socialist activists to oppose them to the workers organisations and leaderships practicing class collaboration. If anyone in our movement had told us no to present ourselves to the elections because the correct tactic was to raise the workers' united front of the CGT and the workers' parties, he would have committed a crime.

That is why, for me, the supporters of the united front as privileged tactic or strategy commit the serious mistake of getting our leaderships used to not thinking about the true tactics that are required. They falsely believe they have solved the problem forever, repeating as a crutch “workers' united front”. And this is a serious methodological error, which adds to the political error, of adapting to the counter-revolutionary apparatuses as the only valid interlocutors. §