

International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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Effective Solidarity with Polish Workers and the Struggle Against Imperialism

by Ernest Mandel

Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan and Ernest Mandel, as contributing editors of *Intercontinental Press*, sent a short letter dated January 10, 1982, to this publication dissociating themselves from 3 aspects of Larry Seigle's article entitled, "How to aid the Polish workers," which appeared in the December 28, 1981, issue of *Intercontinental Press*:

1. They considered that Larry Seigle's 'News Analysis' article seriously underestimated the importance of the blow struck on December 13, 1981, against the Polish working class and workers movement. The crackdown was not characterized as the beginning of a political counter-revolution — i.e. the elimination of all the political gains won by the Polish proletariat from July-August 1980.

2. They judged that Larry Seigle did not draw the necessary conclusions of the gravity of the crackdown on the Polish workers, that is the need for the international working class to act to defend its class brothers and sisters in Poland. Now, effective action in favour of Polish workers can only be carried out on the basis of a *broad workers united front*. For revolutionary marxists this means implementing the classic tactic of the workers united front.

3. They thought Larry Seigle distorted the Cuban Communist Party's position, which on the question of Poland breaks with proletarian internationalist duty. This is made possible, once again on *this* question, by a lack of workers democracy, due to the systematic mis-information of the Cuban working class on the Polish events by the mass media and CP channels in Cuba.

In its March 1, 1982, issue *Intercontinental Press* published a long seven-page response from cdes Steve Clark, George Novack and Larry Seigle (hereon, CNS) to the Frank, Maitan and Mandel (hereon FMM) letter which was not even one page long. But, instead of responding to the three specific points raised in our letter, CNS go off into a whole series of other questions. They introduce into the debate a great number of problems which our letter barely touched on and try to turn the discussion onto positions that we reject as much as cdes CNS. The object of all that is not to reply to precise criticisms on specific questions and to not even say clearly whether our criticism is correct or false.

The Gravity of the December 13, 1981, crackdown

We said that cde Larry Seigle's 'News Analysis' seriously underestimated the gravity of the December 13, 1981, crackdown by not characterizing it as the beginning of the political counterrevolution. Cdes CNS respond that cde Seigle's aim was to combat the 'despair' which supposedly marked the reaction of certain foreign commentators. He wanted to avoid giving the impression that the Polish working class was 'crushed'. This is a classic diversion. We have nowhere declared that the working class was crushed. Neither have we defended a defeatist position on the future of the mass movement in Poland. It is certain that the resistance continues, that Solidarnosc is reorganising under-

ground, that some 150 underground bulletins are coming out and that new explosive actions of the masses are possible and even probable.

But all that is beside the point. The question turns around a central problem: Have the Polish workers lost the political gains of 16 months of a rising political revolution, Yes or No? In these conditions is it exact to say that for the moment this rise has stopped and is replaced by the beginning of the counter-revolution, or should we claim, like cdes CNS, that the revolution continues? Yes or No? In Summer 1980 Polish workers, with the Gdansk Agreements, won the right to strike. This has now been taken away from them. Trade unionists have been sentenced to up to 10 years imprisonment for the sole 'crime' of having organised a strike. In 1980 Polish workers had won the right to a free, uncensored workers press. This right has now been taken away from them. The Journalists Association which supported Solidarnosc has been dissolved. Only those people who publicly and explicitly approve the December 13, 1981 crackdown have the legal right to publish any sort of article in Poland. All Solidarnosc's press has been banned. If anybody continues to put such press out — printing or distributing it — they can be condemned to years in prison.

In Summer 1980 Polish workers fought for and won the right to constitute their own trade union independent of the state, with leaders freely elected by the membership on the basis of the broadest workers and trade union democracy. They thus elected dozens of thousands of leaders in the factories, offices, at local and regional level. All these rights have been taken away. All Solidarnosc leaders and cadres who continue to function on the basis of the trade union's statutes — which are moreover solemnly recognised by the tribunals — are immediately now arrested, interned, and taken individually in front of the same tribunals. A member of Solidarnosc's national Praesidium has been sentenced to seven years imprisonment, just on the charge of having carried out his statutory functions after December 13.

Between July/August 1980 and December 1981 Solidarnosc had organised 10 million workers and took up not just 'purely' trade union questions but all problems which concerned the Polish proletariat. This was perfectly legitimate since it was the only workers organisation in Poland which the immense majority of workers had freely and voluntarily joined. Today this public and legal mass organisation has been destroyed. It certainly still exists but for the moment it groups together less than 1% of the workers it previously organised.

After Summer 1980 Polish workers had (if not formally) defacto won certain powers of workers control. It became increasingly more difficult for the bureaucracy to impose changes in prices, wages, job levels, even the designation of factory directors, without the preliminary agreement of the workers concerned. Today these powers have been brutally removed. The bureaucracy has imposed price rises which

reduce real wages in one fell swoop by 25/30%. It has carried out mass redundancies in the factories, targeting above all the most active and visible trade union militants.

Let's summarise: these are serious blows struck against our class in Poland and on the international level. They must be denounced as such and consistently fought against. To muddy the waters with a speculative debate on the extent of the defeat and the perspectives for the resistance is, for a revolutionary socialist, to *dodge this elementary duty of class solidarity*. It is as if one minimised the defeat inflicted by Ebert/Noske/Scheidemann on the German working class in 1919, on the pretext that it was not 'crushed' (in fact it was not at that time, it happened 14 years later) or that the revolution could rise again (as it in fact did in 1923). Nevertheless Trotsky and the Communist International had indeed characterised the dissolution of the workers councils (soviets) in January-February 1919 as a serious blow against the working class, as the beginning of the counter-revolution and temporarily putting an end to a revolutionary upsurge.

Solidarity actions are necessary in response to such attacks

When the fundamental rights of our class are violently attacked general propaganda or routine denunciations of imperialist anti-communism are clearly insufficient. We try to *mobilise* the most conscious and militant sectors of the international working class, immediately and everywhere throughout the world, in *specific actions and campaigns*, to defend our class brothers and sisters when they are on the firing line.

The demands: "Stop the repression of elementary trade union rights in Poland!" "Free the detained trade unionists!" "Restore the right to strike!" "Freedom for the trade union press without censorship!" are demands to be put forward throughout the world in all the mass workers organisations and taken up by the maximum number of trade unionists and workers militants. They should be the basis of one-off demonstrations and actions as well as a systematic longterm campaign.

If these mass organisations were led by revolutionary marxists they could organise these specific actions and long term campaigns within the framework of full, total programmatic clarity on all questions of international policy parallel to these campaigns. But unfortunately this is not the case today. Revolutionary marxists are only a small minority inside the mass movement and not its recognised leadership. In these conditions there are only two possibilities. Either they try, despite everything, to *stimulate mass actions* and campaigns to defend their Polish class brothers and sisters through the application of the workers united front tactic, despite the fact that on a big number of questions of international politics the leaders of the mass organisations are not ready to follow them programmatically. Or they prefer to abstain from promoting any mass action or campaign in favour of Polish workers as soon as that involves the hypocritical traitors and criminals of the working class, who unfortunately are still in the leadership of the immense majority of the mass workers organisations throughout the world.

It is this second line of conduct that *cdes CNS* seem to recommend by systematically *counterposing* the need to unmask Social Democracy, Stalinism etc., in our general propaganda to the necessity of involving the mass organisations that these bureaucrats lead in common actions in defence of Polish workers. Rather they should *combine* intransigent

defence of our whole programme with the systematic pursuit of a united front policy. In not doing this these comrades come close to defending arguments very close to the sectarian ultimatism of the 'Third Period' (defended by the Comintern between 1929 and 1934) which had disastrous effects as we know in Germany.

We know that the leaders of the British Labour Party, of German Social Democracy, of the Italian and Spanish CPs, of the PSOE in Spain, of the French CP, (without speaking of the AFL/CIO, Argentine CGT and Mexican CMT trade union bureaucrats) are corrupt to the marrow. We know they have betrayed the interests of their own members and the international working class dozens of times and they continue to betray them, independently of the specific positions they might defend on such or such a precise question. We know they are, and will remain, the worst hypocrites, not only when they denounce some crimes of Stalinism from time to time, but also when they denounce some of the crimes of imperialism and of the reactionary dictatorships (which after all they do occasionally).

But unfortunately what *we* know is not yet known or at least fully appreciated by *dozens of millions of organised workers* throughout the world. If it were the case it would not be the traitorous and hypocritical bureaucrats who would lead the immense majority of mass organisations but instead honest worker militants with a respectable class consciousness who would not cover up any crime of imperialism or Stalinism. But if we want to mobilise these organised workers in defence of our Polish brothers and sisters, we must start from their concerns and their real level of consciousness today — as it is and not how we would like it to be. Our starting point is the way in which *they* see their organisations and leaders and not the way in which *we* characterise them. If not we will be limited to formulating a series of ultimatums to the masses — whose response we know in advance. And this response is then consequently taken as a pretext to abstain from any *action* and means we withdraw to simple propaganda around our *programme*.

Cdes CNS characterise the French SP leaders as hypocrites since they denounce Stalinism's crimes in Poland without simultaneously denouncing the crimes of French imperialism in Africa and elsewhere. Perfectly true. But aren't the leaders of the British Labour Party and the TUC the same sort of hypocrites who have not only supported British imperialism for decades, covered up its crimes, assisted in the exploitation of hundreds of millions of colonial slaves, but also unleashed and led colonial wars and introduced nuclear arms into Great Britain, in the imperialist army? Does adding all that up mean refusing to carry out a united front campaign with these same bureaucrats against the stationing of Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe or even, with sectors of them, a campaign for unilateral disarmament?

We answer, but such a campaign, including marching shoulder to shoulder with hypocritical bureaucrats, weakens imperialism. Right. But the freedom of Polish trade union leaders, the restoration of the right to strike in Poland, the legal re-appearance of a trade union and the self-organisation of ten million Polish workers, would it reinforce or weaken imperialism? Where is the difference then?

Were the Soviet and German Stalinists of the Third Period right when they refused to call on the SPD leaders for a workers united front campaign against the rise of fascism in Germany, alleging that these leaders were criminal hypocrites who refused to denounce the murder of hundreds of workers by the police chiefs who belonged to this party; the banning

of dozens of working class demonstrations; the outlawing of workers organisations on numerous occasions; their responsibility in the assassination of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg; and their responsibility in the consolidation of capitalism and the bourgeois state in Germany which had been tottering at the time of the November 1918 revolution? All these charges are perfectly well founded, just as well founded as the accusations that CNS make today against the French SP leaders. Nevertheless Trotsky and the young international Trotskyist movement roundly berated the Comintern and the KPD because they did not apply the united front tactic in Germany, for the defence of the basic rights and freedoms of the German working class, because they did not call on the traitorous and hypocritical Social Democratic leaders to join this workers united front.

What do we mean by the workers united front

Once again cdes CNS introduce a typical diversionary tactic by raising the question of our strategic and propagandistic line, implying that FMM were recommending a "propagandistic or ideological united front" with French or European Social Democracy. They write:

"The only meaningful solidarity activities are those that objectively advance the working class in the capitalist countries along its own strategic line of march. Our starting point must be to find ways to deepen the class consciousness, political understanding, and combativity of workers who are motivated by solidarity with the Polish struggle. That means promoting awareness not only that Stalinism is counter-revolutionary, but also that social democratic anticommunism and "third campism" are deadly enemies of the workers movement and workers democracy." (*Intercontinental Press*, March 1, 1982, p. 157.)

As a description of what revolutionary marxists must explain in their written and oral propaganda it is perfectly correct. But as an outline of the *conditions of a united front in action*, only the second sentence is correct: "Our starting point . . . Polish struggle." The first and third sentences represent typically sectarian ultimatism. If a pre-condition for common mass actions with CP, SP and trade unionist workers is that they recognise beforehand that "social democratic anti-communism and third-campism" are dangerous, or worse still, if we refuse to commit ourselves to common actions with anybody unless they accept that, we will have common actions . . . only with ourselves. That is, we would reject the united front tactic, against the fascist threat, against imperialism and against Stalinism's crimes.

We would like to put the following question to cdes CNS: Is it correct to argue for united front action with the mass workers organisations led by the worst of traitors and hypocrites on the single question of the liberation of the chairman of the Lodz MKS, member of Solidarnosc's national Praesidium, sentenced to seven years in jail for carrying out his trade union functions, or just for the restoration of the right to strike in Poland? Are such actions, without any pre-condition nor any supplementary political conditions except that the action is carried out with the workers movement's methods of mobilisation, correct or not? In what sense is such a united front action different from united front activity against the fascist danger, against remilitarisation, or imperialism's crimes, or against the repression suffered today by workers in Turkey, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay at the hands of the bourgeois military dictatorships.

Let us repeat: it is a case of united front *actions* with work-

ers organisations — excluding bourgeois parties or groupings — and not propaganda activities. We do not carry out common propaganda with reformists or Stalinists. We make propaganda on our programme, which means the denunciation of reformism and Stalinism. But in addition to such propaganda we can and must often lead more or less broad-based mass actions in united fronts with organisations led by bureaucrats of all colours.

We must do this when the objectives of such actions correspond to the burning needs of the national and international class struggle, i.e. correspond to the immediate and historic interests of the proletariat. If the achievement of these objectives strengthens the international proletariat's positions against its enemies, helps carry forward the proletarian struggle and revolution nationally and internationally, then to propose a united front on such objectives to all the mass organisations of the workers movement, whatever may be the traitorous, hypocritical and criminal character of their bureaucratic leaderships, is perfectly legitimate from a revolutionary marxist point of view. This is even more the case since an effective united front action on these objectives will increase the prestige and political influence of revolutionaries with respect to the reformists and Stalinists. For revolutionaries organise such struggles without the hesitations, dallying, backtracking and periodic capitulations of the workers bureaucracies. And the refusal to commit oneself to such a common battle, in a common class interest, will make revolutionaries lose more political influence and prestige to the bureaucratic apparatuses.

Let's get this clear: the principal aim of workers united front proposals and actions is to promote and to win a common objective of the whole class. We do not subordinate such objectives to the needs of party-building. It is not our aim to "unmask" the apparatuses, at the most this is a by-product of a united front campaign. And that is the case only on condition that the broad masses perceive the effectiveness and sincerity of revolutionaries who fight without ulterior motives for the common interest of the whole class.

Two instructive examples

It is a bit embarrassing to have to remind cdes CNS of these elementary truths. Unfortunately, in refusing to implement the united front tactic in the international defence of the Polish workers they break with an old tradition of our movement, as the FMM letter warns them. To see this it is sufficient to take two other burning examples of the international class struggle which urgently call for the application of the united front tactic.

In the framework of its worldwide offensive against the working class the capitalists are led to progressively attack the most elementary trade union and workers rights. The most typical example was the Reagan administration's attacks on the air controllers right to strike and its operation of breaking up the PATCO trade union. Should we proclaim: "*The only meaningful solidarity activities with PATCO are those which objectively advance the working class in the capitalist countries along its own strategic line of march . . . That means that we must not only promote the awareness that Reagan is a strike breaker but that the trade union bureaucracy, beginning with the PATCO leaders, are mortal enemies of the workers movement and of workers democracy and we must lead a fight to the death against the crimes of Stalinism, Social Democracy and the confusion of 'third campism.'*"

As a description of the general propaganda which re-

volutionary marxists must not fold up when they make a united front in defence of PATCO workers, that is perfectly okay. But as a precondition for organising united front action in defence of the right to strike of the air controllers and of the trade union movement as a whole in the USA and the world, it would have been the height of sectarianism and ultra-left ultimatism. It was necessary to call on all trade union organisations to organise solidarity actions with PATCO without pre-conditions. This includes calling on organisations led by reformist bureaucrats, Stalinists, bourgeois nationalists etc. It is not necessary to demand these actions be placed in some sort of denunciation of such and such an ideological section of the mass movement. But if that is obvious in the case of the defence of the PATCO workers (whose leaders, let's remember called for a vote for Reagan!), why is this not obvious in the case of the defence of the Polish workers right to strike?

At the moment American imperialism is threatening the insurgent masses of El Salvador (and of Nicaragua, Grenada and Cuba) with a massive and bloody counter-revolutionary intervention. Given this intervention and the necessary response do we argue: "*The only meaningful solidarity actions with El Salvador are those that objectively advance the working class in the capitalist countries along its own strategic line of march . . . That means promoting awareness not only that Reagan and imperialism is perpetuating savage crimes against the masses in Central America but also that the crimes of international Stalinism and Social Democracy, as well as the confusions of 'third campist' supporters be mercilessly denounced.*"

Once again there is nothing wrong with such a line as long as it is a question of propaganda made by revolutionary marxists. But as conditions or objectives of a workers united front against imperialist intervention in El Salvador it would be the height of sectarianism and ultra-left ultimatism. We put our efforts into mobilising Social Democratic, Stalinist, trade union and political mass organisations, independently of the traitorous character of the bureaucratic apparatuses which control the great majority of these organisations. In the framework of this united front we do not demand that the evils of Stalinism, reformism and the trade union bureaucracy be denounced etc. . . . an approach which would make building a united front clearly impossible.

Is there something exceptional involved in the defence of Polish workers trade union and political rights?

Cdes CNS place themselves within a healthy tradition which perfectly confirms the correctness of all these arguments in favour of the workers united front on precise action objectives — a tradition which they call 'single issue movements'. Such practice is perfectly legitimate on condition revolutionary marxists do not give up general propaganda for the whole of their programme. The question is therefore posed: Why do cdes CNS break with this tradition, which we share with them, in the case of defending Polish workers trade union and political rights which have been repressed by the December 13, 1981, crackdown?

The answer given by people like the 'Spartacists', who capitulate to Stalinism, is clear: one cannot apply the united front tactic to the defence of Polish workers rights when their aggressor is the bureaucracy of a workers state. But this response is completely incoherent — if what it presupposes

is not added. (Incidentally we must congratulate the 'Spartacists' for having explained their 'logic', i.e. of having clearly revealed the basis of their counter-revolutionary position on Poland). They say we must not apply the workers united front tactic for the defence of trade unions, trade unionists and the workers right to strike in Poland because these workers are, in their great majority, reactionary ('pro-imperialist'). Their trade union is a 'scab' one, and their strikes are 'counter-revolutionary'. It does not matter much if the Spartacists add: all this is the product of 35 years of "Stalinist madness." But since the "Stalinist madness" (that is, the bureaucratic dictatorial regime with all its political, economic and ideological byproducts) is hardly an affair of the past, such an 'analysis' necessarily represents a rejection of any political revolution and of any defence of workers in Poland or in the other 'Peoples Democracies' and in the USSR until an undefined future (when Stalinism's crimes stop producing 'regrettable effects?').

Cdes CNS scarcely share this objectively counter-revolutionary position. They are supporters of the political revolution. They defend the specific demands of the *Transitional Programme*, which explicitly includes the demand for trade unions independent of the state. What is the logic then behind their rejection of the application of the workers united front tactic for the defence of these demands, for the defence of the rights that the bureaucracy has just brutally taken away from the Polish workers?

Up to what point they get tied up in thorny and confused contradictions on this question is shown by the following quote:

"But the question is posed, why did 1,000 Gaullists *want* to join the demonstration? Could it be because they found themselves in agreement with the social democrats and other labor lieutenants of the capitalist class who organized the action and established its political character?" (*IP*, March 1, 1982, p. 157.)

Certainly it well might have been like that. Unfortunately for cdes CNS, it was hardly like that in reality. Their explanation is not the only one possible, nor the correct one. The correct explanation is that the Gaullists wanted to join the demonstration *in spite of* its slogans (which were as a whole clearly marked by proletarian and internationalist positions) and *despite* their hostility to the very principle of international workers solidarity. This is because they knew that Solidarnosc's cause is very popular among Parisian workers and realised, as good opportunist bourgeois politicians, that in this way they will try to influence these workers in an anti-communist direction.

To grasp why our interpretation is correct just replace 'Social Democrats and other labor lieutenants of the capitalist class' with 'leaders of Solidarnosc' and then formulate the analogous question for cdes CNS — a question which is a particularly awkward one since the Stalinists and their apologists throughout the world continuously pose it:

"*The question must be asked: why does Ronald Reagan, Mrs. Thatcher and other important imperialist leaders spring to the defence of Solidarnosc, of Lech Walesa and other Polish trade union leaders? Could it be because they find themselves in agreement with these leaders and the actions they have organised in Poland?*"

That might be the case. But it does not correspond to reality. Reagan and Mrs. Thatcher are not any more in agreement with the aims and actions of Solidarnosc than Mr. Chirac and other bourgeois forces in France who do not agree with the demand for the full respect of the right to strike and

trade union rights. They all try to pass themselves off as supporting a popular cause because the Stalinists have given them the chance for demagoguery which costs them nothing. To unmask their hypocrisy it is sufficient to carry out persistent mass action in favour of full trade union rights in Poland, with class methods, and to draw all the consequences which follow for Turkey, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, the West Bank, South Africa . . . not to speak of France and the United States (PATCO!). But we cannot expose them by refusing to commit ourselves to a defence of the Polish workers right to strike on the basis of the broadest and most unconditional workers united front. On the contrary such a refusal gives them a good opening, allows them to exploit Stalinism's crimes even more than they have already, and it makes revolutionary marxists appear objectively complicit with these crimes in the eyes of the masses. It is a suicidal policy which only objectively aids imperialism.

In speaking of the movement against nuclear weapons which is spreading like a bushfire in the United States, the *Militant's* editors (April 16, 1982) wrote that there are bourgeois forces inside the U.S. Congress which are trying to divert the anti-war forces to supporting the aim of 'freezing' nuclear arms at the present level. They correctly denounce this operation but they do not at all draw the conclusion that the movement itself is reactionary or pro-imperialist. Why then deduce from the fact that there are bourgeois forces trying to divert the solidarity with Solidarnosc movement towards anti-communist ends that this movement is pro-imperialist.

We have not changed our position

Cdes CNS insinuate that we have changed our position on the need to denounce imperialist maneuvers and hypocrisy on bureaucratic repression in Poland — like we did in 1953, 1956 and in 1968, on the occasions of the military intervention in East Germany, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. This accusation is totally unfounded.

In the first declaration of the United Secretariat on the Jaruselski crackdown, a declaration published right after December 17, 1981, it is stated:

"These people — who are the shameless apologists of the Chilean, Brazilian, Uruguayan, and Argentine dictatorships; who justify the repression of the Palestinian people; and who do not lift a finger against the Turkish military (tied to NATO) which has suppressed the trade unions and the right to strike and arrested thousands of trade unionists — have no moral right to raise their voices against the violation of workers rights and liberties in Poland. (*IP*, January 18, 1982, p. 14.)

And in the longer United Secretariat declaration "Revolution and Counter-revolution in Poland" dated January 8, 1982, it is stated:

"An imperialist campaign has been launched by various imperialist governments to justify their remilitarization drive — with the social spending cuts that go hand in hand. The Mitterrand-Mauroy government took advantage of it to announce the production of a seventh nuclear submarine. The Polish generals, the PUWP, and the Kremlin have offered the opportunity dreamed of by the reactionaries to try to disparage the antimilitarist mobilizations that had developed at the same time as the upsurge of the Polish masses.

"Finally, the bourgeoisie will use every weapon it can on the ideological and political levels to try, with the invaluable support of the trade-union bureaucracy and reformist forces,

to trap the working class in the following dilemma: either austerity with "democracy," or run the risk of a "totalitarian society" that also imposes austerity measures. The bourgeoisie will use this latter argument to increase its anti-socialist and anticommunist propaganda." (*IP*, February 15, 1982, p. 117.)

So they are picking the wrong quarrel in insinuating that we have not denounced the political maneuvers and campaigns of the international bourgeoisie and its agents on the occasion of the Polish events.

The difference between our position — the traditional position of Trotsky and of the IV International — and that of cdes CNS does not bear on our duty to denounce imperialism and to not make an alliance with it, faced with the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The difference is with the duty of combining this intransigent defence of the whole of our programme with the defence in action of Polish workers through mobilisations and interventions of the international working class, organised on the basis of the broadest workers united front. It is up to cdes CNS to demonstrate that there is something new or incompatible with our programme or tradition. They will have some difficulty.

Where does the defence of the USSR come into all this?

Cdes CNS weaken their case by mixing up the question of defending the Polish workers state with that of the defence of the USSR. They state:

"The Cubans begin from the correct standpoint of understanding that the overturn of any workers state by imperialism would be a historic blow to the world revolution. They believe firmly in the right and duty of the workers in all the workers states to collectively defend their anti-capitalist conquests against any attempts to subvert or reverse them. This places the Cubans on the right side of the class barricades as opposed to the counterrevolutionary positions of the social democratic and "third camp" forces, who do not defend the workers states against imperialism. (*IP*, March 1, 1982, p. 163.)

Although this paragraph expresses a programmatically correct position when applied to a situation where the defence of the USSR and the workers states is posed, it is once again a typical diversion from the problems arising from the political counter-revolution in Poland and the necessity of the broadest workers united front for the defence of the rights and freedoms the bureaucracy has just taken away from the Polish workers. For the question of the defence of the USSR is only posed in times of wars (or civil war) against the USSR and the other workers states — *which aim to restore capitalism there*. The defence of the USSR is the defence of the nationalised property relations and the monopoly of foreign trade when these are directly threatened by imperialism and its agents. The defence of the USSR does not mean defence of the diplomatic maneuvers of the Kremlin and even less the defence of the bureaucracy's crimes against the working masses of the country or countries they govern. As the political resolution adopted at the 11th World Congress clearly stated — which the SWP cdes approved (while being prevented from voting by the reactionary Voorhis law):

"Revolutionary Marxists uphold the need to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack. Any attempt to restore capitalism in the countries where it has been abolished would constitute a giant step backward for humanity. But

the conflict with imperialism must be clearly distinguished from the conflict between the oppressed masses in the workers states and the ruling bureaucracies, regardless of any confusion among the political dissidents resulting from the decades of Stalinist dictatorship. Against imperialism, the side of the workers states must be defended. Against the bureaucracy the cause of the masses must be espoused.

The necessary defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism does not and cannot imply any form of "ideological united front" with the bureaucracy against its political opponents. In its ideology, the bureaucracy does not offer a "variant of Marxism." As a parasitic social layer, its ideology covers up its oppressive nature. It has to be overthrown. (1979 World Congress Documents, special supplement to *IP*, January 1980, p. 25, paragraph 19e.)

Now both before and after December 13, 1981, the conflict in Poland was not between imperialism and some restorationist bourgeoisie in the workers states. Neither before nor after December 13, 1981 was there such a restorationist operation — either military or by subversive means — by the international bourgeoisie to detach Poland from the 'socialist camp' or to restore bourgeois power. They know perfectly well that such attempts would immediately trigger off the Third World War (let us just remember that Poland does not even have a common frontier with any bourgeois state and an imperialist military intervention in Poland would have to be preceded by an aggression against East Germany, USSR or other workers states). It is hardly ready to unleash the Third World War to restore capitalism in Poland — not any more than it was prepared to do so during the 1956 Hungarian revolution or on the occasion of the military intervention of the Warsaw Pact armies in Czechoslovakia in 1968. To raise the question of 'defence of the USSR' as the starting point of a correct attitude on the Polish events today is to confuse a propaganda campaign with a military campaign, the roll of drums with the blast of cannons. It is to turn oneself into the propaganda vehicle both of the imperialists and the Stalinist bureaucrats who try to make people forget the real stakes involved in these events: *the struggle of the Polish proletariat to take over the management of the nationalised economy and the state, which would strike a terrific blow against the Soviet bureaucracy and international capitalism.*

But there are two supplementary dimensions to this unfortunate way in which cdes CNS mix up the defence of the USSR and the workers states with the question of knowing how we must defend the Polish workers against the bureaucracy's counter-revolutionary crackdown. Before and after December 13, it is the Polish bureaucracy, with the blessing of the Kremlin bureaucracy which has undermined and which continues to undermine the economic bases of the Polish workers state. Without speaking of its social/political bases it is the bureaucracy which has put the country's economy in hock to the imperialist banks. The bureaucracy has asked for Poland to join the International Monetary Fund — accepting the IMF medicine to obtain the extension of imperialist loans (and among the conditions posed by the IMF there was the necessity of greatly reducing the 'subsidies to the price of food products' and 'overemployment', i.e. the need to drastically cut workers real wages and to introduce unemployment in Poland, which Jaruselski has done). To do that it was necessary to 'suspend' Solidarnosc and outlaw strikes. The imperialist bankers had furthermore demanded that 'the abuse of the right to strike in Poland' be stopped. The bureaucracy has just got the Diet (a docile rump) — the

same Diet which legitimised, after the event, the December 13 crackdown — to vote for the extension of peasant *private property* to 100 hectares throughout the country.

The Polish working class in fighting for its self-organisation, for workers councils managing the workplaces, for real workers self-management, is objectively struggling for a consolidation of the Polish workers state. The people who are objectively organising (and sometimes even subjectively) the subversion of the economic bases of the workers state are the top layers of the Polish bureaucracy — that is the government of this country before and after December 13. In the concrete context of present circumstances, the defence of Solidarnosc and the Polish workers against those who repress them means 'defending the workers state.' In this concrete case the Cuban CP leaders are *on the wrong side of the barricades*, even on the question of defending the workers state.

When we say that imperialism will not start a war to restore capitalism in Poland and the USSR *today* we are making a *conjunctural* analysis that the SWP cdes have up to now agreed with. But in no way does that mean imperialism does not try to achieve such a restoration in an *historical sense*. It has not abandoned this project and it will never do so. Only the problem is that there is a colossal obstacle confronting such a criminal and suicidal operation (a world nuclear war with this aim). This obstacle is the strength of the working class and the workers movement throughout the world — alongside the force of the liberation movement in the semi-colonial and dependent countries. As long as this force is not broken and the working class and national liberation movements are not paralysed by decisive defeats in a whole series of key countries, the unleashing of a worldwide counter-revolutionary war is impossible.

The most effective means of fighting against the danger of war is to intransigently defend the strength and democratic rights of the workers movement and the working class throughout the world. Its rising power must be maintained so that sooner or later revolutionary crises will break out during which the overthrow of capitalism in these key countries becomes possible (the only means of ensuring in the *long term* not only the defence of the USSR but also the survival of the human race).

Now in learning to "oppose its own foreign policy to the bourgeoisie's foreign policy," to paraphrase a famous formula of Karl Marx, the international working class and organised workers movement increase their capacity to defeat imperialism's political maneuvers and strengthen their capacity to fight imperialist re-militarisation and war preparations. In this way they can place even greater obstacles in the path of a Third World War and advance the cause and possibilities of the world revolution. At the same time this means they can defend the USSR and the workers states a thousand times more effectively than in aligning on the diplomatic positions of the Kremlin bureaucracy or in being the apologists of its crimes which spread disarray, demoralisation and scepticism among the working masses and bring even more grist to the mill of imperialist propaganda and militarism.

Does our position on this question — which is only the traditional position of Trotsky and the IVth International — make concessions to the theses of the 'third campists'? Not at all. The difference we have with the Cuban leaders' positions does not bear on the existence of two camps but on the *definition* of these two camps. For the Cubans the two camps are *two camps of states represented by their governments*. For us the two camps are above all two *class camps*. In one camp

there is the world working class, whose immediate and historic interests are an indivisible whole. In the other camp there are all those who exploit, oppress or repress the working class and limit its freedom of action.

When governments of the workers states militarily fight imperialism — albeit for their own ends and with their own means, ignoble as they might be (which we would obviously denounce) — they are in the working class camp. But when governments of the workers states battle, with arms and using mass repression against the working masses of their country, as they did in East Germany in 1953, in Hungary in 1956, in Czechoslovakia in 1968 or in Poland now, they place themselves in the other camp — opposed to the working class. Our position therefore conforms to a position of two class camps which does not automatically coincide with two camps of governments.

Has the Cuban leadership proved its proletarian internationalism and respected proletarian democracy on Poland?

The FMM letter had concluded that cde Seigle's article which appeared in *Intercontinental Press* on December 28, 1981, had distorted the Cuban leadership's positions on Poland in presenting this leadership as defending consistent proletarian internationalism throughout the world. We said that on Poland the Cuban leadership failed in its proletarian internationalist duty and that corresponded to a lack of proletarian democracy on this question. Instead of replying to these two precise criticisms cdes CNS throw up once again a typical diversion:

"Does the Cuban position on the events in Poland really signal the 'demise of proletarian internationalism' in Cuba? Such a far-reaching conclusion does not square well with the actual development of the Cuban revolution. Comrades Frank, Maitan and Mandel confuse a default on an important question by proletarian internationalists with the 'demise of proletarian internationalism. . . ."

"In face of this record, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel do not make a persuasive case for seizing the errors on Poland as a basis for concluding that Cuba's proletarian internationalism is dead." (*IP*, March 1, 1982, p. 163.)

We never said that "proletarian internationalism is dead" in Cuba, nor that the Cubans were abandoning proletarian internationalism in general. We said *exactly the contrary*, since in our letter we wrote:

"It is true, and all to the honor of Cuba, that that small workers state fully supports revolutionary fighters in many countries of the world, at great risks and at great costs to itself. We are enthusiastically on the side of Cuba in all such solidarity actions. But it is unfortunately untrue that 'Cubans are shoulder to shoulder with revolutionary fighters throughout the world.' In Poland. . . the Cuban press is now supporting counterrevolution and not the revolutionists." (*IP*, March 1, 1982, p. 156.) The difference between ourselves and cdes CNS, is not that we "deny" the proletarian internationalism of the Cubans and that cdes CNS recognise it. Even less do we think that the Cubans have abandoned the proletarian internationalism they formerly practiced, while cdes CNS affirm the contrary, the difference is that for us the Cuban orientation is still contradictory while cdes CNS deny this contradiction.

For us the Cuban leadership have been and remain internationalist with respect to the revolution in Central America, the Angolan revolution, the Palestinian revolution

and quite a lot of other revolutionary developments throughout the world. But they are not in relation to the struggle of the Mexican proletariat (and insufficiently with respect to the struggle of the Brazilian proletariat to just take the example of the two main countries in Latin America). Similarly with the struggle of the French proletariat in May 1968.

To deny this contradiction, to declare the Cubans are internationalists with respect to the whole of the world proletariat is to clearly make a travesty of reality. It also results in wrong forecasts — such as the one made by cde Barnes that if there was a military intervention against the Polish workers the Cubans would not approve it as they had approved the military intervention against the Czech proletariat. Unfortunately Fidel gave his approval to the military intervention against the Polish proletariat. The fact that this counter-revolutionary action was the work of the Polish army (with complete logistic, technical and material support from the Soviet army) and not of the Soviet army changes absolutely nothing as to the seriousness of this abandonment of proletarian internationalism or to cde Barnes' error of prognosis.

The abandoning of proletarian internationalism on this precise question (and not in general nor in all cases) has only been possible by a serious lack of proletarian democracy, that cdes CNS can only deny by smothering a precise criticism once again in a general formula.

"At the same time, the Cuban Communist Party has brought increasing numbers of workers into its ranks and leadership bodies, further strengthening its role as the vanguard of the Cuban proletariat. It understands that the Cuban working class is the only social force that can combat the problems of bureaucratism that impede the progress toward socialism in Cuba." (*IP*, March 1, 1982, p. 163.)

But even if all this is true that does not resolve the problem. Proletarian democracy is not only about having more workers in the party and the leading bodies or understanding the key role of the working class in the struggle against bureaucratism (it would be more correct to speak about a struggle against the social phenomenon of the bureaucracy). Proletarian democracy is also the possibility for workers to directly exert political power through democratically elected political structures, which is impossible without the right to constitute different political parties or tendencies within these structures. Proletarian democracy is the possibility for the working class to express itself, to freely give its political opinion on all the key national, international, economic and cultural questions of the day — which is impossible without honest and comprehensive information, without an uncensored press (except on questions of military security).

Now the Cuban working class has not been able to take a position with all the available information, on the Polish question, for the simple reason that the truth has been hidden from it. It does not know even today that Solidarnosc organised the immense majority of Polish workers. It does not know that Solidarnosc declared itself in favour of maintaining the collectivised means of production in industry and finance. It does not know that Solidarnosc's statutes were approved as being in conformity with the constitution of the People's Republic of Poland. The Cuban working class does not know that General Jaruzelski's crackdown dissolved this trade union, imprisoned its freely elected leaders, outlawed strikes, sentenced comrades to heavy prison terms simply for having met together with other trade union members, and shot and killed strikers.

The Cuban working class is distinguished by a high level of internationalist class consciousness. Its leaders were therefore obliged to hide the truth from it so that their approval of anti-working class repression in Poland would not be challenged by the Cuban workers themselves. We call this a limitation (or violation) of proletarian democracy in Cuba. Cdes CNS do not agree. We ask them the following question: Is it an application of proletarian democracy to hide the truth on the Polish events from the Cuban workers and not allow them to debate this serious question *with all the facts* at their disposal?

Cdes CNS accuse us of issuing a 'death certificate' (*IP*, March 1, 1982, p. 163.) on the proletarian internationalism of the Cuban leaders and their relationship to proletarian democracy. We have obviously done nothing of the sort. These comrades are thus obliged to falsify our positions, as they are led to make a travesty of the Cuban leadership's line, because they are blocked in the dead end of their formal logic — which (as is well known) is not applicable to cases of *evolution and movement*. Their 'logic' dictates either revolutionary marxists or Stalinist counter-revolutionaries, reformists, bureaucrats. Either deep black or clearest white. But reality, in full movement, does not let itself be imprisoned in such simple categories — which are a shade simplistic. The Cuban leadership, despite its remarkable position on many questions, has not adopted revolutionary marxist positions in theory or practice *on all* the key questions of the world revolution today. It is therefore not a revolutionary marxist leadership. It can still combine the best and worst positions: revolutionaries of action on certain key questions like the Central American revolution and at the same time justification of the bureaucratic counter-revolution in Poland. To grasp this living contradiction is to grasp the real character of the Cuban leadership and to understand the Cuban position on Poland. To deny this contradictory character makes it impossible to give an objective representation of the Cuban position on Poland, which is clearly a negation of the elementary duties of proletarian internationalism. For all that this does not exclude sincerely respecting this same internationalism with respect to other sectors of the world proletariat.

With their simplistic and apologetic analysis of the Cuban position on Poland comrades CNS mis-educate not only their own comrades and sympathisers in the USA and elsewhere. They also render a disservice to the Cuban revolution and its leaders. This leadership is tied up in a close economic and military dependence on the USSR — not through its own fault but as a consequence of the delay of the socialist revolution in the big semi-industrialised countries in Latin America and the industrialised countries (USA, capitalist Europe, Japan). Therefore it cannot but be concerned and ask itself the following question: is the crisis which produced the events of 1970, 1976 and their generalisation in 1980-1 particular to Poland or is it present under one form or another, in all the 'Peoples Democracies' and even in the USSR?

A whole series of other questions flow from this one. How can one avoid it? Should one stop being satisfied with vague and empty formulas of the type: "errors committed in the course of building socialism" . . . "loosening of the relationship between the party and the working class" etc., when diagnosing what is wrong. Errors which repeat themselves for 35 years? A "loosening" which is maintained for decades in 12 countries? Wouldn't it be better to return to an analysis of the bureaucracy as a social phenomenon, as Fidel Castro

himself had begun to do in his speech against Escalante? But doesn't that involve abandoning the simplistic vision of the world rigidly wrapped up in a conflict between the "socialist camp" and the "imperialist camp"? It means understanding that the *inevitable conflict between the proletariat and the bureaucracy* in the bureaucratised workers states is today one of the main dimensions of the political and social class struggle on a world scale.

And if reality is like that, isn't it urgent, for the Cuban revolution, for the Cuban workers, for the colonial revolution as a whole and the masses super-exploited by imperialism, to find a means of access and dialogue today with the masses oppressed by the privileged bureaucrats. They can explain to workers in these workers states how solidarity with the liberation struggles of the Third World is a 'vital' duty for them? *It is therefore also for reasons of self-defence* that the Cuban revolution must adopt a correct position on the Polish question, on the political revolution which is rising in the bureaucratised workers states.

By bluntly opposing the political revolution (which let us remember concerns a third of humanity and the world proletariat), the Cuban leaders dangerously mortgage the defence of the Cuban revolution and the indisputable sympathy it has enjoyed for a long time in the world proletariat as a whole. By defending Polish workers against the Jaruselski crackdown we also contribute to the defence of the Cuban revolution, not only from a general and theoretical point of view but in a much more practical and immediate way than it appears to superficial observers who are still taken by surprise by sharp turns in the world revolution.

Solidarity with the Polish proletariat and overall tasks of proletarian internationalism

In their letter to *IP*, FMM insisted on the exemplary character of the reactions of certain layers of vanguard workers in Europe, in certain Latin American countries and other continents, as "highpoints of elementary proletarian internationalism." Cdes CNS are heavily ironic about this definition. So they are obliged to divert the debate onto questions which have nothing to do with the strikes or demonstrations which were the response in Europe and elsewhere to Jaruselski's crackdown.

First of all, against our whole tradition, *they identify the masses with the conservative bureaucratic apparatuses which lead them*. But this is a false identification. From the fact that French, Norwegian or Swedish Social Democracy are pro-imperialist one can in no way deduce that the workers who participate in demonstrations led by these bureaucrats are automatically mobilised out of pro-imperialist motives. To show the absurdity such reasoning leads to, just ask the following question: Does any strike organised by a reactionary leadership become automatically a pro-imperialist strike? On the contrary, we must analyse, without any prejudices, the character of such demonstrations and strikes, examining their aims as well as the consciousness of the masses who take part and not content ourselves with a summary analysis of their leaders' political line. This is what we have done. That is not what cdes CNS have done.

Then cdes CNS use a dubious method of amalgam, tossing pell mell into the same sack: the pro-imperialist forces which demand that the bourgeois governments blockade Poland and boycott trade with it; the Aarhus dockers who organised a one-off protest action against the repression of their class brothers and sisters in Poland; *and* the position of the IVth

International, its sections in France, Great Britain, Denmark and elsewhere which declared themselves unequivocally *against* any form of *blockade and boycott of Poland*.

It is absolutely improper to identify the Aarhus dockers' line with the boycott/blockade position. These workers reacted spontaneously to the *reality of a strike by their class brothers and sisters — the Gdansk dockers — broken with bayonets*. They wanted to show the Polish and Soviet bureaucracy they cannot commit such a crime without paying a high price on an international scale. It was a class action, animated by an elementary spirit of class solidarity, which had nothing to do with pro-imperialist or anti-communist feelings.

We are not only against a blockade of the workers states. We are also against blockades of the semi-colonial countries by the imperialist powers, especially in a conflict with imperialism like that of the Malvinas. Take the case of a reactionary dictatorship, which imposes a reign of terror in the ports of Santos or Buenos Aires, shooting on strikers, imprisoning trade union leaders, forcing dockers to unload ships (i.e. breaking their strike) under the threat of arms. Would we call a one-off and symbolic refusal by Liverpool, Cadiz, Rotterdam or Aarhus dockers to unload a ship coming from Santos or Buenos Aires in these conditions "a racist blockade of a semi-colonial country" or would we call that an elementary action of solidarity with striking workers?

The distinction is even more necessary since there can be no doubt about the political orientation of the Aarhus dockers. They were committed to action against the Vietnam war. They participated in the struggle against remilitarisation and express solidarity with the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions. To accuse a sector of the working class which has proved a very sure class instinct of being "pro-imperialist," "anti-communist" on the sole basis of the fact that they go into action to defend their Polish class brothers and sisters repressed by the criminal Stalinist bureaucracy merits this scathing response: do you think therefore that these crimes are "communist" if opposing them in action means giving oneself over to 'anti-communism'?

This is really the heart of the debate. For cdes CNS, whose minds seem clouded by the particular situation in the United States where such sectors of the working class only exist on an infinitesimal scale, cannot explain, and do not even seem to understand, that the vanguard sectors of the working class and the trade union movement were the backbone of the solidarity actions with Poland. Also in 9 out of 10 cases they are ready to take solidarity action with the Central American revolution today and with any sector of the world proletariat hard hit by the enemy. For this reason it was easy for our comrades in the demonstrations on Poland to link slogans in defence of Solidarnosc with slogans in defence of the Salvadoran revolution (which was one more reason for stopping bourgeois formations participating in such demonstrations and actions).

Far from being the reflection of some sort of capitulation to bourgeois public opinion, the spontaneous reaction of hundred of thousands of workers in Europe and, for the first time, in Latin American countries like Mexico, Peru, Brazil and Colombia (and we are proud that it was us, the Trotskyists, who often played a determinant role) against the repression of the Polish proletariat by the Stalinist bureaucracy, reflects a step forward in their class consciousness and a progression in their internationalism. The fruits of this step forward will be gathered tomorrow, as the class

struggle develops in important sectors of the world revolution.

Furthermore there is a precise case which indicates the extent to which cdes CNS position is politically false — it is that of the mass trade unions led by the CPs, above all in France (CGT), Spanish State (CCOO), Italy (CGIL) and in Portugal (CGTP). In all these trade unions a decision was sparked off around the question of whether or not it was necessary to participate in solidarity actions with the Polish workers in a united front with other workers organisations (it goes without saying that nobody proposed a united front with governments or bourgeois parties). Stalinist factions said no. Should we have condemned the anti-Stalinists (including Eurocommunist and pro-Social Democrats) as anti-communist. The latter answered positively. Shouldn't we be struggling alongside them? Was it therefore 'communist' to refuse to fight against bureaucratic repression in Poland? How can communist workers break from Stalinist influence without taking this decisive step?

We wrote above that the march to the Third World War will only be stopped if the international working class progressively learns to counterpose its own foreign policy to that of its enemies on *all international questions*. But arriving at this consciousness (on which the very survival of humanity in the final analysis depends) is only possible on the basis of an elementary and intransigent stand of class solidarity — going from the national to the international levels. Four decades of social-patriotic and Stalinist reformist miseducation has struck terrible blows against the theory and above all the practice of proletarian internationalism. Today the Fourth International which embodies the community of interests of workers of all countries without exception and identifies with the revolution in the three sectors of the world revolution, can play an important role in renewing this theory and this practice.

But above all its chances of development and growth are closely tied to this resurgence of real proletarian internationalism, based on unfailing worldwide class solidarity. The more the proletariat, above all the industrial proletariat, occupies once again a central role in the real course of the world revolution the more the simple rule of class solidarity "one for all and all for one" will be applied in action by broader and broader sectors of workers. The rise of the Polish political revolution and the response to its temporary repression are a good sign. As the USec declaration of December 17, 1981, stated:

"Make no mistake about it — it is the same spirit that inspires the workers of the world to oppose the military intervention in Poland, to be against the imperialist preparations for intervention in Central America, and to mobilize in their millions against the escalation of the arms race.

"Through such actions the international working class forges its internationalist class policy, which it must put forward as an alternative to the international policy of the capitalists if it wants to stop the march towards a third world war. . . .

"That is why by mobilizing today in defense of the Polish workers on the biggest and most united scale possible, we are not only defending the Polish revolution and our class brothers and sisters in Poland. We are also struggling for our own interests, for those of the workers in all countries — and first of all for those in the Soviet Union — we are struggling for the interests and future of all humanity." (*IP*, January 18, 1982, p. 15.)

April 6, 1982

Revolution and Counter-revolution in Poland

[The following resolution was adopted by the May 1982 meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International. The vote was: 31 for; 19 against; 0 abstentions; and 2 not voting. It is reprinted from *International Viewpoint*.]

I. THE RISE OF POLITICAL REVOLUTION

1. Of all the political revolutions in which workers have risen up against the totalitarian power of the bureaucracy in the bureaucratized workers states, the Polish revolution of August 1980-December 1981 is incontestably the most advanced. While we should not expect each new revolutionary rise in the workers states to represent a further step in a linear progression, it is nevertheless a fact that the latest one in Poland shows that they are following an ascending course and tend to pose in practice the question of a revolutionary overthrow of the bureaucratic regime.

In none of the previous cases, except perhaps that of Hungary in 1956, have the workers set themselves the task of assuming direct economic and political power. Never have the workers discussed the tactics so broadly or so extensively worked out the means for achieving this goal as consciously as they have this time. It is true they only have reached this stage of maturity in the most recent months, in the last weeks. Even in the last hours before the proclamation of a state of war, the national leadership of Solidarnosc did not reach the point of adopting a strategy for the seizure of power by the workers. Nevertheless, the workers and the leadership of the mass movement did openly recognize that the question of power was posed and opened a discussion aimed at finding the means to resolve it. This is an original feature of the Polish revolution which constitutes an event of historical importance and reflects a qualitative leap forward in the development of political revolutions as a whole. Thus, the Polish mass movement and its main organization—the independent self-managed Solidarnosc union—went far beyond the most advanced gains of the mass movements led by strike committees in East Germany in 1953, by workers councils in Hungary and Poland in 1956, or of Czechoslovakia in 1968-69.

The Polish antibureaucratic revolution of 1980-81 unfolded in a country characterized by a whole number of features some of which are specific and whose influence on the course of the revolution is undeniable:

a) The high level of industrial development and a correspondingly educated working class with a leading role and social weight based on the existence of several highly concentrated industrial zones (some firms employing several tens of thousands of workers). The massive movement of agricultural workers into industry has not, however, left the working class in a state of perpetual political “adolescence,” contrary to the bureaucracy’s intention, since they promoted this process in the hope that that would make it possible to neutralize the social power of the workers. On the contrary, the working class has not become diluted in an alien social milieu. Instead, society has assumed an ever more proletarian character, thereby digging the grave of the bureaucratic regime.

b) The traditions and experiences of the Polish working class in its uprisings against the bureaucratic regime. The explosions of workers’ protests in June 1956 (Poznan), December 1970 (Gdansk and Szczecin), and June 1976 (Radom and Ursus factory in Warsaw), made it possible for the Polish workers:

-to lose any confidence they might have had in the ability of the bureaucratic regime, or any fraction of the bureaucracy, to achieve the aspirations of the working class. The myth of the “providential man”, embodied first by Gomulka and then by Gierek, no longer had any hold.

-to become convinced, on the basis of their own experience, of the limitations of spontaneous movements and of the necessity of self-organization.

-to move on to a new form of struggle: the mass strike with occupations. The experience of the workers self-management mobilizations of 1944-45 and 1956-57 had created a tradition of struggle for workers control over production and for workers management of factories; this legacy made it easier for the political revolution of 1981 to find the road to workers power in the factories as well as in the state.

c) The relative weakness of the power of a bureaucracy that had to confront not only a powerful and experienced working class, but that also had not been able to impose its total hegemony over society as a whole.

In Poland, forced collectivization

did not succeed in cowing the peasantry into accepting the yoke of the bureaucracy. The main sector of agriculture remains in the hands of peasant family units, which give independent working farmers a considerable margin of maneuver and facilitate resistance to the state. Moreover, the strength and influence of the Catholic church have buttressed a constant resistance with which the bureaucracy has found itself obliged to seek a compromise, in the framework of an unstable but persistent equilibrium. This position of the Catholic church, which expressed the interests of the peasantry in particular, has favoured the existence of a plurality of conceptions of the world, and thus the development of more or less critical and independent thought in wide sectors of society. Yet, if this breach in the monolithic control of society favored the rebirth of an autonomous mass movement, the fundamental conservative role of the Catholic hierarchy worked to hold back the revolutionary process.

d) The closer and closer association of the bureaucracy with certain capitalist forces. During the 1970s, the Polish economy became much more dependent on the imperialist countries, both on the financial and technological levels, which led sectors of the bureaucracy to establish links with foreign monopoly capital and to let itself be corrupted by it. Also, sections of the bureaucracy forged links in Poland with certain sectors of a middle bourgeoisie that had accumulated substantial commercial capital from speculation.

The bureaucracy also encouraged the development of a capitalist sector in agriculture and built up close ties with it. It gained the right legally to pass on some of its privileges (in 1972, guaranteed resources and pension rights, transmittable to the third generation, were instituted for “people performing leadership tasks in the party and state”). It became more and more under the spell of the values of bourgeois society.

e) An economic crisis of a severity unprecedented in the history of bureaucratized workers states. This represented a crisis of the system of bureaucratic management of the economy that over several years transformed itself from a re-

lative to an absolute brake on the development of productive forces for several years. On the one hand, the social character of production has been increasing uninterruptedly, and huge means of production are the property of the state. But on the other hand, a privileged minority enjoys a monopoly of power over the use of the means of production and the social surplus, and disposes of it in its own interests. After a period of frenetic growth in the early 1970s, these contradictions became explosive. A radical solution of the problem of economic management, and therefore of the question of power, had become necessary to save the country from a crisis.

f) The existence of oppositional groups whose activity within the working class the bureaucracy was forced to partly tolerate after the revolts of 1976. In addition to the KOR, which became the best known of these groups, we should mention the role of clandestine workers papers such as *The Worker* and *The Baltic Worker*, etc.

2. The Polish revolution is characterized and qualitatively distinguished from the beginnings of previous political revolutions in Eastern Europe by the following features:

-This was a mass movement of colossal dimension. Nearly 2 million workers directly participated in the strike wave of July-August 1980. Over 10 million workers—that is, over one-third of the entire Polish population—participated actively in the preparations for the general strike which was cancelled at the last minute in March 1981. Moreover, in the fall 1981, the campus strike movement encompassed the overwhelming majority of student youth. Although less sizeable and more dispersed over time and space, significant mass mobilizations also developed among the peasantry.

-Despite unavoidable fluctuations, the revolutionary wave lasted a long time. The bureaucratic regime only decided to resort to force and stage its counter-revolutionary military crackdown in the eighteenth month of the revolution. On December 13, 1981, the revolution was not defeated and was not in a phase of retreat. On the contrary, the mass movement had entered a new phase of quickening radicalization several weeks before, and the entire country was in the throes of a directly revolutionary political crisis. What happened in the days following the crackdown showed that the revolutionary potential of the mass movement was far from being exhausted. Workers resistance to the military dictatorship took on the dimensions of a near-general strike, despite the dismantling of the Solidarnosc organization and leadership structures in the wake of a powerful repressive operation. In many

factories, and especially in the mines, the police and army had to resort to violence in order to break the strike.

-The social composition of the mass movement was predominantly working class. The working class was not only the main driving force of the Polish revolution; it was its directing force. This is an undeniable fact recognized by all the other sectors who participated in the revolution: the students in revolt, the democratic intellectuals, the urban petty-bourgeoisie, and the active sectors of the peasantry. The highly concentrated industrial zones were the centers of the mass movement and the large factories were the fortresses of the revolution. They set the tone insofar as forms of struggle, demands, forms of organization, and pace of mobilization of the workers were concerned, and thereby put an unquestionably working-class stamp on the unfolding revolution. All the nonworking-class sectors of the movement were aware that their own chances of gaining success in the struggle depended entirely on the support of the large factories.

-The mass movement was distinctly organized even though it drew great strength from its spontaneous tendencies. The wage workers achieved the highest level of organization: 9.4 million out of 13 million were members of the Solidarnosc union. The best organized were the productive workers in heavy industry. In the other social layers, the level of organization was distinctly less. Only a minority of the peasantry and student youth were unionized, even though the students showed their organizational capacities on certain occasions, such as during strikes involving occupation of the universities.

-The mass movement was independent of the bureaucracy, whether state or party apparatus, and it uncompromisingly defended its independence. Evidence of this is the determination with which Solidarnosc opposed the attempt of the bureaucracy to intervene in the debate over its statutes by means of the courts. The high level of working-class independence was already obvious in the August 1980 strike. Instead of massively leaving their factories and rallying in front of the PUWP provincial committee headquarters, as they had done previously, the workers entrenched themselves in the factories they occupied, thereby forcing the representatives of the bureaucratic regime to come negotiate with them on their own grounds. This independence was subsequently confirmed at the time of the move to organize independent unions—the first and most important demand of the workers. It is true that for several months there were still illusions in the mass movement about the possibility of negotiating with the bureaucracy, of achieving a more or less lasting compromise based on the recognition of a

series of democratic gains of the working class and society as a whole. It is obvious that there were still illusions about the good will of certain figures and factions in the bureaucracy. But the workers rejected any subordination to this or that sector of the bureaucratic apparatus, and likewise refused to grant it any kind of legitimacy.

3. In the course of the revolutionary rise, various forms of struggle and organization emerged that brought the workers closer to the conquest of power. The first was the movement of workers self-management that was concretized in the formation of workers councils in the factories; these tended to become centralized, first on a regional level, and then on a national level. Solidarnosc's experiment with supervising distribution and the system of rationing of essential products significantly contributed to developing workers control over the economy, even though it was limited to only one region. The challenge to bureaucratic power was sharpened by the emerging forms of citizens' self-management on a territorial basis which corresponded to the mass movement's demands for free elections to the Diet, as well as the provincial and municipal councils. In the last few days before December 13, all these movements were becoming intertwined with the preparations for the active strike. This was the angle from which the workers intended to challenge the bureaucracy's power, beginning with its economic power.

II. WHY WAS THE COUNTERREVOLUTION VICTORIOUS?

4. The bureaucracy's response to the rise of the mass movement and the political radicalization of the workers was the December 13 crackdown. The political counterrevolution launched on that day was intended to shore up the crumbling power of the bureaucracy and preserve its privileges as a parasitic caste. The fact that it had to resort to the army and establish a military junta—an unprecedented move in the so-called "socialist countries"—reflected both the extent of the paralysis of the central administrative apparatus and the depth of the PUWP's crisis. The party had been shaken by violent internal struggles between rival factions, drained by the departure of 2 million members, especially workers, and become clearly incapable of exercising its "leading role". Only the repressive apparatuses—the police and the army—were still in a position to reestablish bureaucratic order. This is the reason for the resort to tanks and guns. Arrests and internments by the thousands, the ban on travel inside the country, the disconnection of the communications network, the

curfew, the massive firings, and the various other measures of intimidation, all were essential to decapitate the union and impose silence on a social movement embracing ten million people. The scale of the Polish proletariat's defeat was indicated by the loss of democratic and trade-union rights which the working class had wrested from the bureaucracy in the course of its fierce eighteen-month struggle. Overnight, the proletariat was deprived of the right to strike. The brutal lengthening of the workweek as well as the militarization of the key productive enterprises, the suspension of the Solidarnosc union—followed by that of the students and peasants organizations—and the abolition of all freedom of expression, clearly showed the ruling clique's determination to press its assault on the mass movement to the bitter end.

The abolition of the workers' right to organize freely in the union of their own choosing—undoubtedly the most significant political advance over previous revolutionary rises in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland itself—interrupted the development of a situation of dual power. Thus, it abruptly halted the revolutionary process in which the working class was demonstrating its capacity to run its own affairs.

In this regard, the seriousness of the blow dealt the Polish working class on December 13, at a time when the revolutionary nature of the situation that emerged in the last few months had become clear, should not be underestimated. This was indeed the beginning of a political counterrevolution—a counterrevolution designed to crush the movement while there was still time.

5. The August 31, 1980, Gdansk Agreements that recognized the workers' right to build their own mass independent organizations represented a magnificent victory of the Polish workers. But they also represented a compromise, because while the power of the bureaucracy was weakened, it was not overthrown. The bureaucrats were able to force a formal recognition of their monopoly of power in a clause of the Agreements that stated that the union to be set up would recognize "the leading role of the party in the state."

Nevertheless, this type of formal recognition could not guarantee the bureaucracy's continued grip on power at a time when it was proving incapable of meeting the social needs of the working class, and could not even keep production going at its previous level. The workers very rapidly moved to demand the removal of incompetent bureaucrats, which raised the spectre that more of these officials become "unemployed", that is might lose their status and privileges. Moreover, the fact that the protest move-

ments spread to all layers of society while conflicts in the factories, both on economic and social issues, were increasing and workers councils were spreading throughout the country and beginning to unite in coordinating bodies, first on the regional, and then on the national levels, tended to bring the scattered struggles together and turn them into a central confrontation with the state. A struggle to the death had begun between the tottering regime of the bureaucracy and the emerging power of the workers. A confrontation was inevitable.

6. Far from ushering in a period of stability and peaceful coexistence, the Gdansk Agreements led to an increase in partial and local conflicts. The moderate wing of the trade union, backed up by the majority of the experts and strongly supported by the Catholic hierarchy, sought to direct the movement into safe channels and prevent a confrontation. In the first few months, this sector clearly had a strong influence on Solidarnosc. But in a society based on the nationalization of the means of production, all economic issues immediately take on a political dimension. All immediate demands raise problems involving the reorganization of production, revising the plan, economic reform, etc.... The question posed was: Who runs the economy and in whose interests? Who rules? The working class or the bureaucracy?

Faced with its obvious inability to confine the union to the field of material demands, the moderate currents put forward the strategy of "self-limitation" of the revolution. According to this strategy's supporters, it was possible to wrest a series of concessions from the Polish bureaucracy by adopting a set-by-step approach that would never exceed certain boundaries and especially not challenge the "geopolitical context" in which the country found itself so as to prevent a military intervention by the USSR. According to them, the main danger of a confrontation came from the Soviet bureaucracy and not from the Polish bureaucracy, which was split and weakened. A guarantee of Soviet interests, tolerating the appearance of bureaucratic power emptied of all meaningful content in Poland, would allow the country to avoid the confrontation. This assessment underestimated the Polish bureaucracy as an opponent and underestimated its fierce determination to defend its own interests. This was most obvious during the negotiations for a "National Accord" that the supporters of "self-limitation" presented as desirable for its own sake. Since the bureaucracy no longer had anything to concede in exchange for a compromise, it demanded nothing less than the total subordination of Solidarnosc within a body that it would com-

pletely control. Its determination to safeguard its privileges by any means necessary was also obvious in the December 13 crackdown, which produced surprise and disarray among those who expected the military intervention to come from the Soviets.

Along with the hope of escaping a confrontation, another illusion prevailed in Solidarnosc. It was rooted in the very history of the eighteen-month struggle in which the union had always found a way, despite hesitation, to wrest new concessions from the bureaucracy. Many activists also believed the movement could continue indefinitely feeding on its own victories, that the support it enjoyed from the overwhelming majority of the population and its strength—ten million workers poised for a general strike to defend their union—would be sufficient to force the government to retreat.

7. The illusions kept the movement from preparing for the confrontation. It is true that the revolutionary currents that favored the development of control over production and distribution, initiated the idea of the active strike and understood the importance of coordinating the workers councils' activity, clearly perceived the need to create a more favorable relationship of forces that would allow for new advances. But they didn't have time to set up a national structure and had few spokespeople in the Solidarnosc national leadership chosen by the first congress of delegates. This is the reason why, in the decisive weeks of fall 1981, Solidarnosc lacked a coherent approach on the goal to be pursued and the means to achieve it. For lack of a correct evaluation of the enemy it confronted, the union leadership could not in time formulate an alternative strategy to that of "self-limitation." The decisions voted at the National Commission were often contradictory and could not be implemented. Faced with the question of power and an increasingly radical rank and file, the leadership hesitated and beat about the bush. The last meeting of the National Commission on the eve of the putsch gave a good picture of the contradictions that beset the organization. Alongside the programmatic advances that reflected a revolutionary viewpoint and were formulated by the Lodz, Cracow, and Warsaw leaders, came the hesitations of Lech Walesa and the Jan Rulewski proposal to hold free elections, which did not take into account the need to take the initiative in the confrontation with the bureaucracy. This is why the government was able to paralyze the mass movement without itself suffering paralysis from a general strike. In revolution as well as in counterrevolution, whichever side takes the initiative gains a considerable advantage because it can use its own

centralization against the scattered resistance of its opponent.

8. The December 13 setback was not a foregone conclusion. On the one hand, the bureaucracy had only unreliable troops at its disposal. The broad masses of the soldiers were not ready, of themselves, to let themselves be used in a civil war, while they were not ready either to go over to the side of the workers just like that. Fraternalization between the troops and the workers must be p

a long time in advance by activities of the workers movement on behalf of the soldiers. It implies a relentless struggle for the democratic rights of soldiers, their right to organize independently of the military hierarchy, the defense of victims of repression inside the military institutions, and the development of links between union structures and the barracks. These are all tasks that, aside for a few rare exceptions, were not assumed by the leadership of Solidarnosc because of its illusions in the Polish army, which it saw as a natural ally against the Soviet enemy. Moreover, we should stress that before they will go over to the side of the workers, soldiers must be convinced that the struggle at hand is not a mere skirmish, that the workers are determined to go all the way and replace the power of the bureaucracy with their own. A national strike in which production was resumed under workers control could have created such conditions.

While some regional leaderships of Solidarnosc and the self-management movement had begun to undertake the elaboration of emergency plans in the last period, they were unable to complete their work before December 13, 1981.

Obviously, their work was obstructed by the reticence, and sometimes the fierce opposition, of the moderate currents in the leadership of Solidarnosc who correctly thought that the tactic of the active strike posed the question of power. Solidarnosc was the only structure on a national—and often the only one on a regional—level that could have initiated and led an active strike in the fall of 1981. Workers councils did not yet exist in all factories, or were only being set up at the time. Regional coordination of the councils did not exist in the whole country and was only beginning to get organized. The National Federation of Self-Management had not yet acquired full legitimacy in the eyes of the masses.

When it became clear that the initiative in this field would not come from the national leadership, some regions decided to begin preparations for the active strike without further delay (Lodz, Silesia, Warsaw, Stalowa Wola), but they were unable to carry them through to completion for lack of time. The debate only surfaced on a national scale and with

force within the leadership of Solidarnosc a few hours before the crackdown.

Because they did not understand what was brewing, in particular when the School of Firemen Cadets in Warsaw was forcibly evacuated ten days before December 13, the leadership of Solidarnosc did not call for the general strike that the workers were ready for—in several regions at least—and that would have allowed the union to regain the initiative.

III. THE GENERAL POLITICAL LESSONS ABOUT THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION THAT EMERGE FROM THE POLISH EXPERIENCE

9. The rise of the political revolution in Poland after the summer of 1980, and the December 13, 1981, counterrevolutionary crackdown, have shed new light on the postcapitalist nature of the society dominated by bureaucratic dictatorship that exists today in the USSR and the other bureaucratized workers states. The entire revolutionary dynamic, the nature of the political, economic, social, and ideological conflicts that shook Polish society, were qualitatively different from those that distinguish the revolutionary rise of workers in a capitalist country. The focus of the struggle was not the overthrow of bourgeois rule and the abolition of the capitalist mode of production. Rather it was the question of the abolition of the monopoly over the management of nationalized property and the state appropriated by a privileged bureaucracy under the ideological cover of the "leading role of the party." The central question posed by social and political struggles in Poland in 1980-81 was not "capitalism or socialism," but "bureaucratic power or workers power."

Neither the nature of the economic crisis nor the nature of the solutions proposed in various quarters had anything to do with any sort of capitalism, even be it some hypothetical "state capitalism." There was no crisis of overproduction of commodities. There was a crisis of underproduction of use-values. There were no massive layoffs caused by the unprofitability or bankruptcy of firms. There was a shortage of raw materials, spare parts, and consumer goods accompanied by a relative surplus of means of payment.

All this is the result of an economic policy designed to satisfy the interests of a deeply divided parasitic caste whose internecine struggles for control of the social wealth were reflected in its anarchic decisions, catastrophic lack of foresight, leading to such a thorough breakdown of the plan that only a caricature of centralized planning was left standing. The workers tended more and more not only to demand the elimination of social injustices arising from the bourgeois norms of

distribution, but also to impose social controls in order to prevent the bureaucracy from utilizing these norms to strengthen its privileges and divide the working class. They had understood, most of them instinctively but many also consciously, that the problems of distribution were directly connected with the problems of power and particularly with problems of organizing, orienting, and controlling production.

Despite all pressures, whether they emanated from the regime or from the technocratic wing of the movement for self-management, the workers counterposed elementary class behavior to the siren songs offering competition between firms and between individuals as the means of resolving the crisis. To the exaltation of so-called market economy values, they counterposed the cooperation of producers. To the project of competition between individual enterprises, they began to counterpose the cooperation of enterprise workers councils through a plan democratically elaborated and adopted.

They looked for salvation in solidarity, in the takeover by the workers themselves of the management and coordination of the enterprises, in the collective deciding of priorities concerning the use of resources, in challenges to excessive economic investments which often meant duplication of efforts, in the upgrading of social investments in the struggle against inequality and injustice in the field of distribution.

All these key values of a radical reorganization of planning, including its aims, methods, and organizational framework, are clearly proletarian and socialist in nature. They confirm the fact that, had the anti-bureaucratic political revolution triumphed, the social and economic foundations of the workers state would have been consolidated, not weakened, let alone destroyed.

10. Similarly, the rise of the political revolution in Poland, as well as the beginning of the counterrevolution of December 13, 1981, have confirmed that the bureaucracy is not a class like the bourgeoisie, the feudal nobility, or the slave-owners. The bureaucracy is not the agent of a specific mode of production. It doesn't have distinctive roots of its own in the process of production. Today like yesterday, its rule does not contribute to a further development of productive forces. It does not exercise any economically necessary function, not even in the process of accumulation. For all these reasons, it is led to deny its own existence and to hide its functions behind those of the proletariat and its vanguard, to continue to lay claim to Marxism, perverting it and using this deformed version for its own ends.

But when the bureaucracy finds it-

self in a permanent situation of open conflict with 10 million workers, the absurdity of its claims becomes glaring. It becomes clear that the management functions that the bureaucracy usurped could be fulfilled instead by the working class; that far from insuring the reproduction of the existing social and economic system, even with its own contradictions, it acts to undermine the foundations of the system and to prevent the full potential of the system from being realized on accordance with the system's own internal logic. In none of the previous antibureaucratic revolutions had the essentially parasitic nature of the bureaucracy become so evident to the masses as during the rise of the political revolution in Poland.

This is reflected not only in the fierce disputes over the management of enterprises counterposing the bureaucracy and the workers who aspired to workers self-management. It was reflected even more clearly in the workers participation in the preparations for the active strike. "The enterprises will go on running during the strike. Production and exchanges will continue; only the government will have nothing to say," warned Stefan Bratkowski in a letter to the Central Committee of the PUWP in October 1981. He was voicing the more and more widespread attitude of the workers. The understanding of the superfluous nature of the bureaucracy as a ruling layer, and the workers ability to do without it in the management of the economy and the state, were its main features.

However, the fact that the bureaucracy is not a class does not imply that it has no resources of its own or that it automatically becomes powerless whenever the proletariat begins to turn against it. The power of the bureaucracy lies in its control over the use of both the means of production and the social surplus through its exclusive monopoly of power within the state apparatus.

Moreover, the bureaucracy is conscious of its collective material interests. It obstinately hangs on to power, displaying even desperate courage in the face of the worst temporary setbacks. It is capable of promoting diversions, of backing off temporarily, of making significant concessions, of giving in, even formally, on principles, as long as it continues to control the centers of power and remains in a position to prepare a repressive counterattack.

This is why the idea that the bureaucracy can reform itself in the direction of democracy is an illusion. Equally deceptive are the proposals that bureaucratic power be subjected to social control or be forced to accept the participation of democratically elected workers representatives in the fundamental

decision-making of the regime. These ideas—which the Solidarnosc mass movement gradually moved away from as a result of its own experiences in successive confrontations with the bureaucracy—underlay the strategies of self-limitation and national agreement, seen as a historic compromise, that were advocated by many experts of the leadership of Solidarnosc, and even, almost until the very end, by the majority tendencies in the leadership of the union. However, such ideas were alien to the bureaucracy, not for ideological reasons, but because it could only preserve its power and privileges if the proletariat remained atomized and passive. And, of course, such a situation ceases to exist as soon as the slightest genuine workers democracy is instituted. 11. In a transitional society where totalitarian power is exercised by the bureaucracy, the repressive machinery of the state and its different apparatuses are parasites on the body of society. The essential political task of the working class in an antibureaucratic political revolution consists of destroying these apparatuses of domination. The interests of the working class, the poor peasantry, and of all the other layers of society oppressed by the bureaucracy coincide with this task. In a transitional society under bureaucratic dictatorship, all these layers are united by the fact that the bureaucratic machine oppresses them, crushes them, exploits them. To *smash* this machine, *demolish* it, is inevitably in the interest of the majority of the "people."

The bureaucracy, unlike the bourgeoisie, does not have deep roots in the socio-economic system. But this is precisely why it clings to the apparatuses that provide it both with its livelihood and monopoly over the exercise of power. During a political revolution, the bureaucracy is forced to resort to even more brutal than usual repression against the workers, and this leads it to reinforce the state machine.

What Trotsky defined as the tasks of the political revolution—"the violent overthrow of the political rule of a degenerated bureaucracy"—follows from the fact that: "There is no peaceful outcome for this crisis. No devil ever yet voluntarily cut off his own claws. The Soviet bureaucracy will not give up its positions without a fight. The development obviously leads to the road of revolution.

"With energetic pressure from the popular mass, and the disintegration inevitable in such circumstances of the government apparatus, the resistance of those in power may be much weaker than now appears. But as to this, only hypotheses are possible. In any case, the bureaucracy can be removed only by a revolutionary force. And, as always, there will be fewer victims the more bold and decisive is the attack." (*The Revolu-*

tion Betrayed, Pathfinder Press, p. 287.)

On the other hand, the political revolution by itself by no means puts an end to all the problems which arise in the transition from capitalism to socialism and the need for a workers state that derives from them. It must reconstruct the apparatus of a new type of state, much more integrated into the proletariat and under its control, notably in the military, juridical, administrative, economic, etc., fields. The Polish revolution has given useful information in both these regards.

For one, the first victory of the Polish workers over the bureaucracy was reflected in the destruction of one of the apparatuses of bureaucratic power. The strike committees' winning of the workers right to organize independent unions in August 1980, later, after the emergence of Solidarnosc, turned into a fight in which the state trade-union apparatus was largely dismantled and demolished (not completely through, since the bureaucracy remained in power). Even though the power of the bureaucracy was not challenged as such, the self-organization of the workers involved the destruction of one of the apparatuses that under bureaucratic rule make up the state machine.

As the movement for economic reform based on worker self-management developed, other state apparatuses—those that give the bureaucracy its economic power—were subjected to pressures tending to destroy them. An often fierce struggle broke out to prevent the nomination of enterprise directors on the basis of the PUWP "nomenklatura," and to get the compulsory enterprise associations and industrial ministries disbanded. The workers proposed various solutions to replace the bureaucratic apparatuses that they sought to destroy, including public competitions to be organized by the workers councils of the enterprises for the post of factory manager, restricting of the role of enterprise management to carrying out decisions subordinate to organs of workers self-management, and the formation of voluntary enterprise associations based on the workers councils.

On the other hand, the fundamental weakness of the Polish revolution was that it did not concentrate all its forces on destroying the repressive apparatus of bureaucratic rule. It is true that Solidarnosc did demand that a part of the police apparatus—especially its buildings—be returned to society and used to meet the needs of the majority. It supported the formation of the independent union of members of the civil police forces. And in the last days before December 13, its revolutionary sectors called for the formation of workers guards. But no struggle was organized, inside or outside the army, to eliminate the bureaucratic apparatus in the armed forces. This was

precisely the bureaucracy's last resource and the one it relied on to carry through its political counterrevolution.

12. The Polish revolution is the first antibureaucratic revolution in which the mass movement was able to find a solution to the problem of self-organization of the workers. In all previous political revolutions, like that in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968, the working class created organs of power and dual power—workers councils, or strike committees tending to convert themselves into workers councils—but not permanent forms of self-organization. This is where the superiority of the Polish experience lies.

The interenterprise strike committees of August 1980 did not turn into workers councils but into organizing committees of the union. The overwhelming majority of wage earners, organized at the grass roots in enterprise union sections, joined this union. Solidarnosc did not organize on the lines of occupations or industries, but on a territorial basis (the regions). The horizontal structures completely outweighed the vertical structures—although they did exist, the sections based on industrial lines had a very small role. This method of organization insures the unity of all workers, regardless of their trades or the industry in which they are employed. The specificity of Solidarnosc as a trade union organization lay in the fact that it was not based on trades or industries. All the enterprise sections were united in a regional organization, and the regional organizations in a national organization.

Another particularity of Solidarnosc is the fact that its union democracy had many of the features of the democracy of workers councils.

Because of this, Solidarnosc was an organization representing the majority of workers whose leading organs also tended to assume the role of organs of a counterpower.

It is not by chance that the Polish workers are organized in the framework of a trade union that ensures the protection of their rights, their dignity, and their interests—material as much as spiritual—against the state; that they, moreover, call the state “boss.” This reflects the situation of workers in a transitional society during the whole historic period in which the state and the bureaucracy, and the dangers bureaucratic deformation engender continue to exist. In the USSR and the Eastern European countries, the bureaucracy manages almost all the surplus product, thereby feeding its own privileges. It is naturally against this form of parasitic exploitation that the workers revolt, and organize themselves. Their work is reduced to being only the source of a wage necessary to procure the means of subsistence, often a poor one.

From this point of view, trade unions have tasks similar to those that they have to assume when labor power is a commodity hired by capitalists—to struggle against the state-boss in an attempt to improve the conditions of work and the remuneration of labor power.

“The transfer of the factories to the state changed the situation of the worker only juridically. In reality, he is compelled to live in want and work a definite number of hours for a definite wage.” (*Revolution Betrayed*, Pathfinder Press, p. 241.) From this fact, “Wage-labor does not lose its degrading character of slavery under the Soviet regime,” said Trotsky. In a general manner, although there is no longer in these countries exploitation in the sense of class exploitation, there is still:

a) use of “forms of exploitation” (Trotsky) for the extortion of surplus product and to determine its extent and use without workers having the right of control or of veto. “The differences in income,” said Trotsky about the transitional society under bureaucratic dictatorship, “are determined, in other words, not only by differences of individual productiveness, but also by a masked appropriation of the products of the labor of others.” (*Revolution Betrayed*, Pathfinder Press, p. 240.) These forms of exploitation will only disappear with a generalized system of self-management which allows the working class to decide itself the extent and the destination of its sacrifices.

b) parasitic exploitation in the sense in which Marx used the term, that is to say appropriation by the parasitic bureaucracy of part of the social product as the foundation of their privileges.

In addition, it is the bureaucracy which decides on the standard of living of the workers in the light of its specific caste interests, and it often brutally denies the material conditions needed to assure reproduction of the labor force.

This is the reason, along with the fact that labor power partially retains a commodity character, that the workers need a trade union.

At the same time, labor power no longer has strictly the status of a commodity. This essential difference is expressed notably in slower rate of work, and in setting wage rates in accordance with different criteria than those imposed by a labor market.

The defense of workers in the framework of new relations of production should preserve and reinforce the fact that they have the right to demand to be no longer mere wage earners. This logic should be reflected at the trade-union level.

—by struggles against all attempts to reintroduce the right of factory mana-

gers to lay off workers for economic reasons: closure of an enterprise must not be because of the automatic function of the market, but the relevant decision of a competent territorial unit (district, regional, national) and its organs of self-management. This closure implies the simultaneous re-employment of all workers in another job at least at the same level of qualification.

—by demands tied up with the workers right to decide on the use of the total social surplus product. A variety of options could obviously develop with respect to this. Thus, the “wage” demands should not be separated from the others. This precisely reflects the fact that the functions taken over by the bureaucracy could be assumed by the workers. The workers must have the right to make the decisions after a debate on the following:

- the part of the surplus product allocated to productive and unproductive investment funds and the sectors to get priority.

- the share allocated for the collective consumption and extending free goods and services.

- the part distributable in the form of wages in accordance with criteria established nationally.

Here again, a public debate must make it possible to produce consistent criteria (adjusting them in accordance with experience and degree of development reached). At the same time, such public debate must serve as a means of combating the following:

- effects of the market on the incomes that aggravate inequalities with little regard to the effective work put in.

- income differentials based on the so-called “quality” of work, which are a hidden form of appropriating part of the surplus product to feed social privileges.

Beyond that, the essential effect of the antibureaucratic political revolution does not bear on the sphere of distribution, but on that of production. To break up the power monopoly of the bureaucracy in the economy does not mean only denying it the right to decide on the use of the social surplus product, but also the right to determine the scope and limits of the social surplus product. This is why the need for combative and self-managing trade unions throughout this historic period involves the need for such trade unions to have the right to share in determining the organization of work (tempos, ways of measuring work, etc.).

This does not mean that the trade union should be responsible for the management of the economy, which is a task that belongs to the organs of workers self-management.

13. One of the essential lessons of the Polish revolution was the questioning by the working class of the concept of social

property as it had been presented by the bureaucracy in power. The Polish workers rejected the identification of state property with social property. The slogan "Give us back our factories!" which was raised during the first meeting of delegates of the self-management movement on July 8 in Gdansk, expresses this reaction very concretely, just as did the emergence of the concept of "social property" counterposed to the concept of state enterprise, or the distinction that came to be made between legal ownership and social control of the means of production.

From this standpoint, revolutionary Marxists fully support the aspirations of the Polish workers expressed in their struggle for self-management, and agree with all those who say, "We demand a real socialization of the means of production; that is socialism."

The transformation into state property of the means of production expropriated from the bourgeoisie is evidently a formal juridical act that has major importance for the socialization of the means of production. But in the same way that in the workers state power can be exercised either by the workers or the bureaucracy, the power to control the means of production may be in the hands of the working class or in those of the bureaucratic apparatus of the state. That is what decides the real socio-economic content of the property forms.

The bureaucratic caste profits from the state-owned means of production as if it actually owned them, but it does not take on any of the responsibilities of ownership. This double nature is the basis for the very widespread feeling in the transitional societies under bureaucratic domination that state property does not in fact belong to anyone.

Revolutionary Marxists defend state property in the workers states against internal tendencies and external threats that seek to restore the system of private ownership of the major means of production. But, at the same time, they advocate the transformation of state property into social property. Undoubtedly, the complete socialization of the means of production will only be possible when social classes, commodity production, and the state have completely disappeared. But the experience of the Polish revolution, especially that of the self-management movement which developed under the leadership of Solidarnosc, helps to clarify the point at which the socialization of the major means of production begins. In his criticisms of the totalitarian regime of the bureaucracy, Trotsky clearly indicates that the socialization of the means of production can begin and advances only as the state begins to wither away, that is, begins to be absorbed by a self-managed society. He

states that social property begins not at the point where private property stops, but where state property stops. This is precisely the view which gained currency in the Solidarnosc mass movement.

Certainly, the diversity of projects defended in Poland under the single name of self-management, as in the Yugoslav experience, indicates the dangers of a reductionist self-management orientation, according to which each work collective would manage its own means of work, with the market unifying the whole. In order for the process of socialization of the means of production to progress, a fight has to be waged from the start to keep it from being diverted by the state or by the market. We should not think that such an understanding is obvious.

In fact, the historic experience of Stalinism leads to rejecting all centralization and all mandatory planning. But practice proves that indicative plans, or social funds designed to reinforce great principles of solidarity are by no means sufficient to counter the growth of social and regional inequalities when it is the logic of decentralization and the market that essentially determine incomes and, above all, investments.

The market seems to offer a guarantee both for a certain economic rationality and for liberties that are trampled underfoot in the framework of hypercentralized bureaucratic planning. These ideas represent not only illusions but projects to which we counterpose the possibility of another kind of rationality: that of workers democracy based on the power of workers councils. So long as this alternative has not been put into practice somewhere, pro-market conceptions will retain considerable force.

The resistance by the workers to the workings of the market laws has been and will remain very great. But the idea that they can better control what they know better (their factory, their workplace) conflicts to a certain extent with integrated and coordinated self-management, and leads some to fall back on reliance on the market, experts, and other "competent" managers. Then, when there is real decentralization, not even thousands of strikes can rebuild the unity of the working class.

However, the close connection between the process of socialization of the means of production and the process of the withering away of the state unveiled by revolutionary Marxism, began to be perceived by wide sections of the Polish workers who struggled at once to socialize the state sector of the economy and to socialize the state itself. The struggle for workers self-management of the enterprises rapidly took on a broader dimension. The mass movement wanted to replace the bureaucratic state institutions with different institutions that would in-

sure the existence and the expansion of a genuine democracy of workers and citizens. The construction of a "self-managed republic," as advocated in Solidarnosc's program, would have tended to set up apparatuses suitable for a state in the process of socialization, that is to say that would be withering away as they merged with the masses, submitted to their direct control, and associating them to the direct exercise of power. The bureaucratic caricature of planning would have been replaced by a democratic elaboration of the plan through the broad participation of the organs representing the workers and the citizens and the possibility of submitting and discussing alternative proposals.

14. The Polish revolution once again confirms that in all workers revolutions, whether anticapitalist social revolutions or antibureaucratic political revolutions, the working class seeks to concretize its power in its own institutions of council democracy that combine the advantages of mass direct democracy with the advantages of representative democracy. The organs of struggle for power (or dual power organs) thrown up by the mass movements when they are led by the working class naturally tend to adopt the form of workers councils in the enterprises and the form of councils of workers delegates on the territorial level—two institutions whose historical precedents are the 1917 Russian revolution's factory committees and the soviets.

As previously stated, the leading organs of Solidarnosc in the enterprises, at the regional level, and at the national level, were in fact nascent organs of a democratic counterpower of the workers. The union democracy whose norms governed the functioning of these organs had the features of a council-type democracy. The workers councils, organs of workers control over production and of struggle for workers self-management of the enterprises, based on general assemblies of the workers (or of the delegates in the larger enterprises), corresponded exactly to this new type of institution. The regional coordinating bodies of workers councils pointed the way to workers power on a territorial basis, and the emergence of the organizing committee of the National Federation of Self-Management bodies (which was preparing to hold the first congress of delegates of councils) demonstrated the tendency toward centralization on a national scale. The independent peasant movement organized in the Solidarnosc private farmers union also called for the setting up of new forms of power in the rural zones, based on township general assemblies. The new organs of democratic management that appeared in the universities struggling for their autonomy also were close to the form of councils.

It is the working class that is the historic bearer of the tendency toward council democracy. The Polish revolution demonstrated that when the working class exercises its hegemony in the mass movement, the model of democracy and democratic institutions that it puts forward is also followed very closely—with some unavoidable variations—by the other oppressed social sectors involved in the revolution. This was the case in many other revolutions—think of the poor-peasant councils in the Russian revolution, of soldiers councils in the Russian, German, and Spanish revolutions.

This doesn't mean that the advance or even the triumph of the antibureaucratic revolution leads to the immediate disappearance of the institutions of parliamentary democracy and the complete rule of council democracy.

The traumatizing experiences of Stalinism and the bureaucratic dictatorship have unquestionably refurbished the image of parliaments in Eastern Europe, as tarnished as it had become. The idea of electing a parliament by universal suffrage, with several slates, the citizens having a genuine right to present candidates and choose among them, was very popular during the revolutionary rise in Poland. It is improper for revolutionary Marxists to oppose what emerges as a legitimate democratic demand of the broad masses. But they cannot therefore abandon their criticisms of parliamentary democracy; they must clearly indicate its limitations. The essential thing is to define the competence of parliamentary-type institutions in a workers state so that they do not undermine the power of the workers councils, whose democratic legitimacy is based on one decisive point—*Those who produce the material wealth must have the primary right to decide how it will be used.* This idea is a basic one in the history of the international working-class movement and was already put forward in Poland in 1956 by Oskar Lange, and later picked up by Solidarnosc as a means of resolving the problem at hand. It was the origin of the idea of a second chamber of the Diet, the Social and Economic or Self-Management Chamber which, according to the most advanced projects of Solidarnosc, was to be elected exclusively by the direct producers and to concentrate in its hands all the economic power of the state. Such an institution could be considered as a transitional form toward council democracy in a situation where the institutions of parliamentary democracy continued to exist. At the same time, it is no substitute for—and is not in contradiction to—a national congress of delegates of workers councils, or a permanent body originating in such a congress. In a transitional society in which various forms of

ownership of the means of production survive, the system of workers self-management represents the power not of all the direct producers, but only the producers in the nationalized sector of the economy. The working class, even though hegemonic, must guarantee the democratic expression in the organs of economic power of all the direct producers, including the peasants and the other layers of small owners of the means or production.

In both capitalist society and the transitional society between capitalism and socialism, the working class is the most consistent bearer of the tendency toward political democracy. This is so because it is the representative of a new mode of production that, in its highest phase, will institute unrestricted democracy, that is, a democratic workers state in the process of withering away.

In attacking bureaucratic power, the working class does not aspire to replace the existing bureaucratic dictatorship by workers democracy, but to assure also democracy for all citizens. Workers democracy rests on the cooperation of producers, and is founded essentially on the workers councils formed in the factories. The experience of the Polish revolution confirms that citizens democracy, as it emerges in the framework of a revolution led by the working class, is profoundly different from the distinctive forms of bourgeois democracy. Although it is not completely synonymous with workers democracy, it borrows the latter's features. This was obvious in the embryos of territorial self-management that appeared in Poland in the last phase of the revolutionary rise under the impetus of workers self-management. The newly emerging territorial self-management was a citizens democracy based not on the market but on cooperation and on mutual help of consumers, neighbors, or the solidarity of families.

15. Even during a revolution, the subjective maturing of workers is the outcome of a complex process, indeed a contradictory one in which the stages can be relatively prolonged. In the Polish political revolution, the workers had to go through almost a year and a half of sharp struggles in which they lost their illusions before they decided to take their destiny into their own hands. But this moment was preceded by an objective maturation which was reflected in their activity, and particularly in the forms of struggle. This is one of the great lessons of the Polish revolution.

Since August 1980, that is, since the very beginning of the revolutionary rise, the main form of struggle of the Polish workers, adopted as such by Solidarnosc in its subsequent struggles, was the mass (passive) strike combined with factory occupations. The significance of this

form of struggle when it is generalized and becomes the main form of struggle, is much more important than appears at first sight. Here is what Trotsky says about it:

"Independently of the demands of the strikers, the temporary occupation of the factories deals a blow to the idol of capitalist property. All strikes with occupation raise in practice the question of who rules in the factory: the capitalist or the worker? While the strike with occupation raises this question episodically, the factory committee gives it an organized expression."

Something very similar takes place under the rule of the bureaucracy. A strike involving occupations poses in practice the question of who should control the factories and their product—the working class or the bureaucracy? The form of the strike movements in Poland demonstrated that the workers were capable of putting the factories they occupied, as well as all the means of production concentrated in them, to work for society as a whole and in the interest of all. Trotsky also noted that the emergence of factory committees as a result of strikes involving occupation created a situation of dual power in the factory. The enterprise committees, the regional leaderships, and the national leadership of Solidarnosc de facto have created dual power at all these levels, not only because they developed out of this type of strike, but because they also have taken the lead in carrying out new occupation strikes.

The transition from objective maturity to subjective maturity for the seizure of power is marked by an ever broader involvement of the working class in the preparation of a higher form of occupation strikes. We are referring to the active strike that was called for by the most revolutionary currents in Solidarnosc. According to the conception that evolved inside Solidarnosc, the active strike does not confine itself to raising the question of economic power in practice, but it must also move to resolve it through revolutionary mass action. Moving beyond the proclamation of occupation strikes, the workers were to resume production under the leadership of the strike committees, according to alternative plans drawn up by these committees. Such plans were to reflect the genuine social needs and priorities. The strike committees had to extend workers control to encompass distribution.

At the same time, they had to form workers self-defense guards. Through active strikes of regional scope, and then of national scope, coordinated and centralized by the leading organs of Solidarnosc, economic power was to be wrested from the bureaucracy. Once firmly in the hands of the workers, it would be turned over by

the strike committees of Solidarnosc to the organs of workers self-management consolidated during the active strike, and centralized on a national scale. The victory of the active strike would mean that the workers had succeeded in accumulating sufficient forces to wrest from the bureaucracy the remainder of its political power. Rooted in the natural tendencies of the workers movement and its own forms of struggle, the tactic of the active strike constitutes one of the most important contributions of Solidarnosc to the general strategy of the political revolution.

16. The subsequent development of the revolution, and especially its culmination in the seizure of power by the proletariat as a whole, inevitably would have sharpened differentiations based on social interests and conflicting political orientations that were already latent in the months before the December 13, 1981, crackdown. The material interests of the majority of the proletariat and those of the independent peasantry, the urban petty-bourgeoisie, and the materially privileged *intelligentsia* (especially its technocratic wing), are not identical, either in the immediate sense or in a historical sense. The debate on economic reform by itself was enough to bring out differences clearly rooted in different social interests. But all these layers had an interest in freeing themselves from the unbearable tutelage of the bureaucracy.

The working class cannot dilute its own historic interests nor the power that it conquers for the sake of some illusory general interest of a society in which the division into classes and the division between manual and intellectual labor survives. Being the builder of socialism, it must insure its supremacy through the democratic exercise of power. But at the same time, it must win over to this revolutionary undertaking the broadest possible layers, beginning with the peasantry and the other groups of independent producers, and maintain an alliance with them; this is the only way to advance toward socialism. The very broad social alliance forged around the working class in the heat of the common struggle against bureaucratic power in the course of the political revolution, is a solid starting point to move in this direction.

The hegemony of the working class within self-managed postcapitalist society will remain assured so long as, beyond these basic institutions of state power, the following factors exist:

- the overall predominance of collective ownership of the means of production, which does not exclude the existence, or even the prevalence, of private property in agriculture and petty trade, but which obviously excludes any dynamic of progressive expansion of private property to other economic sectors;

- the progressive limitation, on a strictly voluntary basis, of what remains of private property and of commodity production;

- the shielding—fundamentally by state monopoly of foreign trade—of the national economy from the pressures of the world capitalist market and growing coordination with other workers states free of bureaucratic oppression;

- the existence of other political and economic mechanisms that can keep a symbiosis from developing between the private commodity sector and international capital leading to a subordination of planning to market laws;

- the systematic limitation and reversal of all phenomena of social inequality;

- the predominance of the principle of solidarity over that of material interest in social investments, the functioning of the state, official education, and—progressively—in everyday economic life;

- the teaching and practice of genuine international workers solidarity without subordination of any nation or nationality to another, and with a systematic struggle against all xenophobic and racist prejudices to overcome the exaltation of an unhealthy nationalism.

For the antibureaucratic political revolution to be victorious in an Eastern European country that is a satellite of the Soviet bureaucracy, the following are required:

- self-defense against pressures and threats of military intervention, or against aggression, whether it emanates from the ruling bureaucracies of other workers states or from imperialist powers;

- the protection of the national economy from the world capitalist market and increasing coordination with the economy of other workers states freed from bureaucratic oppression;

- internationalist aid to all the sectors of the world revolution, and in the first place to the most immediate ally of such a political revolution—the workers movement in workers states where the bureaucratic dictatorship still rules.

IV. THE INTERNATIONAL IMPACT OF THE POLISH EVENTS

17. The proclamation of the state of war dealt a severe blow not only to the Polish proletariat but also the international proletariat as a whole. The fight of the millions of workers of Solidarnosc had been one of the most advanced points of the struggle of the proletariat on a world scale, representing an experience without precedent in the history of the struggle against bureaucratic dictatorship and of the workers aspirations for the real socialization of the means of production and social wealth.

In this fight between a bureaucratic government and the masses, revolutionary

Marxists were one hundred percent on the side of the masses. The workers state was not the target of any imperialist assault designed to restore capitalism. No coherent social force in Poland itself wished to, or could, reintroduce private appropriation of the means of production. What was under attack was the bureaucracy and its dictatorship, which had usurped power within the workers state. The proletariat tended to radically question the power of the privileged minority backed up by an entire repressive apparatus. The elimination of the bureaucratic caste could only strengthen the working class on the international level, not weaken it.

The liquidation of bureaucratic power would have demonstrated, in practice, in the eyes of the masses of the whole world, that the economy and society can be led by the workers as a whole. A giant step toward socialism would have been accomplished. It would have deeply influenced the behavior of workers both in the USSR and Eastern Europe, and in the imperialist countries, and given a huge boost to both the antibureaucratic political revolution and the proletarian revolution. This is what explains the emergence of the Holy Alliance against the Polish revolution, from Wall Street to the Kremlin.

The Kremlin could rejoice that its “advice” was diligently applied without it being forced to participate directly and massively in the repression. The price of such involvement would have been very costly, both in political and material terms. General Jaruzelski and his group, when they tried to break the back of Solidarnosc, were not only defending their interests as a Polish bureaucracy; they were also defending those of all the bureaucratic regimes. The bureaucracy’s self-defense reflex worked with a vengeance. Caste solidarity was complete: This is what they call “proletarian internationalism.”

Those who, for whatever reason, aligned themselves with the position of Jaruzelski, were in fact defending the interests of these bureaucracies against those of the proletariat. On this score, the motives of the Cuban and Nicaraguan leaders were obviously quite different from those of the PCF leaders, not to mention the leaders of the DKP or the American CP. But the objective significance of the position they adopted was the same.

True proletarian internationalism called for active support and active solidarity with the Polish workers against the Polish and Soviet bureaucracies.

18. The fundamental interest of the international bourgeoisie was a halt to the alarming rise of the antibureaucratic political revolution in Poland. This interest was all the stronger since the problem was

not only the threat that the experiences of workers self-management might spread toward capitalist countries, but involved the settlement of the 27 billion dollar debt, and the on-going servicing of this debt. This is why the most representative spokespeople of imperialism had taken a stand, before General Jaruzelski's crack-down, in favor of "restoring order" and "the workers returning to work" in Poland, as a condition for rescheduling the debt. On the day after the crackdown, newspapers that speak for big business such as *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, and *Le Figaro*, as well as the official spokespeople from the West German and British governments, again adopted similar stances: "Most bankers believe an authoritarian government is a good thing because it will impose discipline."

The cynicism of the imperialist bourgeoisie shows up glaringly in the way that it decided to link this basic orientation—which is in keeping with the anti-union and antiworking class stance of the imperialist bourgeoisie all over the world—to a demagogic propaganda campaign that pretends to condemn the crackdown and defend Solidarnosc. It is in fact a completely crooked operation undertaken to try to cash in on the natural revulsion aroused by the repression of trade unionists in Poland among broad layers of the international working class and to try to channel it in a procapitalist and anticommunist direction. This confusionist operation is designed to achieve specific ideological and political goals:

-On the pretext that it is necessary to resist "Soviet intervention" and "totalitarianism," Washington took advantage of this international situation to step up its aid to the bloody dictatorships in Central America, and to call for an end to all restrictions on its military aid to the Turkish dictatorship, a bastion of NATO.

-A campaign was launched by various imperialist governments to justify their remilitarization effort and the cut-backs of social expenditures this implies. The Polish generals, the PUWP, and the Kremlin, have given reaction the ideal opportunity to try to beat back the anti-military mobilizations.

-Finally, trying to turn everything to its advantage, with the priceless help of the union bureaucracies and reformist and Stalinist forces, the imperialist bourgeoisie tried to lock the workers of capitalist countries into the dilemma: either austerity under "democracy," or the risk of a "totalitarian society" that would also impose austerity. The bourgeoisie used this latter argument to step up its general antisocialist and anti-Communist propaganda.

Imperialist forces harmonized their voices in an antiworking-class concert. But in a context characterized by econo-

mic crisis and new advances of the colonial revolution, the Polish crisis brought on a new worsening of interimperialist contradictions. The West German bourgeoisie took the lead of the European imperialist powers, resisting any escalation of retaliatory measures that would have imperiled its outlets in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. American imperialism, being less involved in East-West trade (except for agrobusiness), could afford the luxury of brandishing the threat of an economic embargo. Each partner of the imperialist alliance thereby combined its general defense of the system with the pursuit of its own particular interests.

19. The reactions of the Social Democratic and Communist parties to the defeat suffered by the Polish proletariat can only be understood in the context of the combined crisis of imperialism and Stalinism. Over and above the very different positions they took toward the imposition of the state of war, the reformist apparatuses always displayed either extreme reserve or more or less open hostility toward the fight of the workers. What type of ideological camouflage they used to disguise their opposition, primitive anticlericalism for some, simplistic "campism" for others, was not very important. The fact is the *material*, social basis of their position lay in the threat that the dynamic of the struggle and self-organization of the Polish workers would, at least eventually, have an impact on and weaken the bureaucratic control that all these apparatuses exercise over their own organizations, especially at a time when they are involved in a policy of compromise and even systematic capitulation with respect to the austerity demands of the bourgeoisie. What has frightened these bureaucratic apparatuses in the rise of the Polish proletariat was first of all its fight for a *self-managed union movement, that is for trade union democracy*. In fact, their reserve and hostility toward Solidarnosc reflected an international solidarity of bureaucrats. Moreover, the reformist apparatuses used the Polish workers' defeat to warn against any central confrontation with the class enemy which, according to them, could only lead to a crackdown of the Jaruzelski type in the West too, that is to the establishment of a "strong state." They therefore took advantage of it to justify a collaborationist and capitulationist policy toward the bourgeoisie.

The Social Democratic parties of the German Federal Republic, Great Britain, and Austria fundamentally lined up behind the interests of their own imperialist bourgeoisies. While they rejected any cold war-type policy, they also rejected any mobilization of the workers on a class basis to defend the rights and liberties of the Polish workers that were trampled on by Jaruzelski. Their motives

were the same as those of their bourgeoisies—holding onto the profits of the East-West trade. Even the official Social Democratic left (like the Benn tendency in Great Britain and the left of the German SPD) was most often silent and accepted the political framework imposed by the leading apparatuses.

In France, the pressure of the workers, the far left's capacity for initiative, the rivalry between the SP and the CP, and the impetus given by the leaderships of the SP and CFDT who had their own specific goals in mind, led the protest movement to assume more massively the character of a class mobilization in support of the Polish working people.

The rise of the political revolution in Poland, as well as the launching of the bureaucratic counterrevolution, have led to a new stage in the crisis of the communist parties, a crisis already fueled by internal developments of the class struggle in most countries. The centrifugal tendencies at work in all the CPs of capitalist countries redoubled. The contradiction between the identifications of these parties with the USSR and their insertion in the reality of their own country was exacerbated. The interplay of these various factors—in particular circumstances of each country, of each CP's historical trajectory, and each CP's relation to its respective Social Democratic party—was reflected in the adoption of a whole gamut of different positions by the various CPs.

At one end of the spectrum stood the positions of the French CP, the Portuguese CP, the CP of the German Federal Republic (DKP), and that of Denmark. Fundamentally, these parties supported the institution of the state of war which allegedly "made it possible for socialist Poland to escape the mortal danger of counterrevolution." Paradoxically, but in fact as a result of the convergence of their own interests with those of the Kremlin, some of these CPs presented the crackdown as a lesser evil compared to.... a Soviet intervention. According to them, any mobilization in favor of Solidarnosc could only "add salt to the wound" and prevent the Military Council of National Salvation from keeping its promises to proceed toward a "liberalization"....by stages.

At the other end of the gamut were the positions of the Italian CP and the Spanish CP who condemned Jaruzelski's crackdown and demanded the release of the prisoners and the reestablishment of trade union freedoms. They went very far in their conflict with Moscow; the PCI even went so far as to state that "the phase of development of socialism that was inaugurated by the October revolution has exhausted its potential." But the position on Poland advocated by the PCI implied a call for closer collaboration

with the Church and petty-bourgeois forces, and not an orientation toward the democratic power of the workers. It was therefore a reflection of the class-collaborationist strategy pursued by this party in Italy itself. This position led to a quest for a more systematic rapprochement with French, German, and Scandinavian social democracy. This is the reason why a significant section of combative worker militants did not approve of the orientation of their leadership on Poland. It was not a question of militants nostalgic for Stalinism, but an instinctive reaction against what appeared as a new concession to the class enemy.

The positions of the British, Belgian, Dutch, and Swedish CPs fell in between these two poles, although they did include an explicit condemnation, at least on paper, of the December 13 crackdown.

The form and character of the rise of the masses in Poland, as well as the contradictions between the CPs and within the CPs, impelled similar differentiations within the trade union movement of several European countries.

Contrary to what occurred during the crushing of the East German workers revolt in 1953, the Hungarian revolution of 1956, and the "Prague spring" of 1968-69, opposition to bureaucratic repression within the international workers movement was not confined, this time, to the imperialist countries alone. For the first time, in a series of semicolonial countries, especially in Latin America (Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, etc.), not unimportant sectors of the workers movement demonstrated their solidarity with the victims of this repression and sometimes even called street demonstrations. The attempt by the lawyers of the bureaucracy to label all those who oppose the bureaucratic dictatorship, even when they are the majority of the working class of a country, as "objectively proimperialist" forces, is beginning to lose ground within the anti-imperialist movement. Each new rise of the world revolution can only deepen this profound resurgence of true proletarian internationalism.

To the militants of the CPs and national revolutionary movements critical of support for Solidarnosc, the Fourth International should explain that a strengthening of the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist forces in the West demands the application of a united front policy, including Catholic and socialist workers and their mass organizations. The realization of such a united front is gravely handicapped by the rejection of a campaign of solidarity with Solidarnosc for reasons of purely ideological opposition to the anti-Communism of the reformists. Evidently, the systematic campaign for the united front in solidarity with Solidarnosc, as in

solidarity with the Central American revolution, etc., is always combined with defense of the revolutionary Marxist program, including the struggle against false and counterrevolutionary socialist ideas.

20. The repercussions of the Polish events on the rest of the bureaucratized workers states are still difficult to assess. Clearly, the rise of the Polish proletariat found no immediate mass response in any of these countries. This is not surprising in view of the uneven development of the economic and social crisis in the different countries and in view of the fact that vanguard sectors of the working class lagged behind the Poles in renewing their experience of waging a sustained struggle of their own.

Nevertheless, in several such countries, like Rumania and the USSR, a crisis in the supply of basic goods is ripening and causing broad discontent among the masses, not unlike what happened in Poland during the 1976-80 period. Moreover, in other countries, such as Hungary and the GDR, political opposition tendencies are emerging among the youth and intellectuals and will gradually search out a way to link up with the workers. The bureaucrats are perfectly aware of these facts and are frightened by them. In all these countries, they are panic-stricken by the thought that the "Polish example," that is an explosion of anger by the workers leading to mass strikes and workers self-organization, could be repeated in their own country. This even applies to the People's Republic of China. There the leading faction of the bureaucracy did first extend discreet support to Solidarnosc in the belief the Soviets might intervene and a "national liberation struggle" against this superpower would ensue. But later, under the pressure of discontent and strikes in China itself, it decided to redirect its fire, accepting de facto Jaruzelski's coup.

The bureaucracy's reaction to this threat displays its lack of a clear orientation, a reflection of its disarray and crisis. While it very naturally leans toward harsher repression of "political dissidents," it hesitates to launch an all-out attack against workers actions, stating, not without good cause, that the blood spilled in the ports of the Baltic in 1970 was the origin of all that followed in Poland. Selective repression on the one hand, and an attempt to give the trade union organization new weight by granting it some elbow room in pursuing economic demands on the other—these seem to be the tactical lessons drawn from the Polish events by the bureaucracy of several bureaucratized workers states.

As for the better informed and more experienced section of the working class in these states, it followed the actions of its brothers and sisters in Poland

with sympathy, even though it most often has not yet found a way to translate that sympathy into action. But the "Polish model" will undoubtedly have a profound influence on the development of the antibureaucratic political revolution in many bureaucratized workers states.

V. THE TASKS OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISTS

21. While the rise of the Polish revolution demonstrated once again the proletariat's capacity for initiative, action, and self-organization on a colossal scale once it moves in a collective and united mobilization, it also confirmed this other lesson of the history of the workers movement: the unsurmountable limitations of the spontaneous activity of the masses. Neither when what was needed was to define exactly the goals to be achieved by Solidarnosc—the economic reform project; that is, reorganization of the economy on a different basis than that proposed by the various factions of the bureaucracy and petty-bourgeoisie—nor especially when the need was to elaborate a strategy and a precise tactic for defending Solidarnosc against the stalling maneuvers of the bureaucratic dictatorship which finally led to the December 13, 1981, crackdown (that is, a strategy for the seizure of power), did the spontaneous reactions of the rank and file, more or less expressed in the local and regional structures, suffice to bring out a clear, let alone a correct line. Thus, grave errors were committed that seem decisive after the fact, like the lack of an orientation toward the soldiers based on calling for democratic rights and the right to self-organization in the army.

More generally, in every revolution, the ability to seize the initiative in a centralized fashion is an essential advantage, an advantage which precisely can only be secured by a leadership acting as a vanguard. The lack of such an organized vanguard was cruelly felt in Poland.

Of course, the official bureaucratic propaganda's use ad nauseum of a vocabulary drawn from the revolutionary traditions of the workers—and the reinforcement of this identification of the bureaucratic rulers with Marxism and Leninism by Western bourgeois propaganda—led to a visceral rejection of concepts such as "revolutionary vanguard party" by a very large number of Polish union activists. This called, and still calls, for a great deal of careful educational work by revolutionary Marxists to convince these activists of the need to build such a party. But this need can be demonstrated very concretely and very clearly by an analysis of the very events that shook Poland since the summer of 1980, or even since the workers revolt of 1976.

We are speaking of course of a

party which clearly formulates its own role and its own goals in relation to those of the mass organization of the workers. The revolutionary vanguard party which revolutionary Marxists seek to build in Poland is not a substitute for the proletariat in the exercise of power. Power must be exercised by the institutions created by the workers at the state level after the overthrow of the bureaucratic dictatorship: workers councils democratically elected and federated on the local, regional, and national level.

Within these councils as well as within the organs of self-organization of the masses such as Solidarnosc, party militants will defend their political positions by political and not administrative means. They will try to win and hold the confidence of the workers solely on the basis of their dedication to the class and its movement, and of their spirit of class solidarity and sacrifice for the common cause, as well as the correctness of their program and political line. They will reject all material benefits, all economic privileges of any kind. But they will be a vanguard force insofar as they embody the collective memory of the Polish and international working class, all the lessons that emerged from the 150-years experience of struggle of the Polish and international proletariat. The existence of such a party corresponds also to the interests of the whole of the working class. Before December 13, 1981, it would have facilitated the accomplishment of many concrete tasks facing the mass movement.

22. To the fear expressed by some that a relatively small initial nucleus of revolutionary Marxist activists could do less effective work than the activists not set apart organizationally in any way whatsoever from the structures of Solidarnosc, we must answer that Polish history has already demonstrated the efficacy of small nuclei acting in a favorable context. The intervention of a few hundred activists, mainly from the KOR, beginning in 1976, played a decisive role in forging the links that connected activists of the various factories, links that greatly contributed to the success of the summer 1980 strikes, and to the emergence of Solidarnosc as a mass organization.

Moreover, by no means is the point to counterpose in mechanical fashion the formation of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard party to the emergence of a natural leadership of the class within the enterprises and organs of self-organization. The activists who first come together on a mainly programmatic and political basis are merely the initial nucleus of a party. They do not proclaim themselves the "leadership of the working class" by a voluntarist exercise lacking in any practical meaning. They attempt to win the confidence of the working class by their intervention, and in so doing, attract the

best workers emerging from the very process of self-organization. They become the *actual* leadership (that is they earn this distinction in the eyes of the masses) only insofar as they succeed in fusing with the natural leaders of the class in the workplaces.

To the fear, likewise formulated by some, that the emergence of a party would divide the working class and deepen political cleavages within the organs of self-organization, we answer that such cleavages are inevitable among ten million workers, given the tremendous economic, social, political, cultural, and ideological problems which they must face, and the difficulty of finding correct answers.

In fact, such a differentiation did arise within Solidarnosc in the 17 months of its open existence. Moreover, it continues today in the resistance. The appearance of a vanguard party—one respecting the norms of workers democracy within the mass movement—would only mean that the fight would be waged more effectively to assure the adoption of positions best suited to the class as a whole from among a welter of contending positions. Building the revolutionary vanguard party does not conflict with the struggle for unity in action and the broadest and most democratic united organization of workers. To the contrary: This is one of the central goals the party fights for, under all circumstances, as dictated by its program.

To the fear, likewise formulated by some, that the building of a revolutionary vanguard party would allow a minority to manipulate the masses, we answer that the absence of such a party allows for far worse manipulations. Insofar as differentiations are inevitable within the bodies of self-rule over the answers that have to be provided at every stage of the struggle, the choice is not between an impossible unanimity and majorities "manipulated" by "active minorities." The choice is between, on the one hand, majorities manipulated by minorities which do not come out in the open—act behind closed doors, in the form of cliques without clear platforms or under the pressure of charismatic leaders or experts offering "scientific" credentials or simple demagogues—and on the other hand, majorities which are constituted on the basis of clear votes for coherent platforms, representing different orientations among which the mass of delegates *can choose* with a clear understanding of what is involved, on the basis of honest information circulated widely and democratically.

This is why the second solution is by far the more democratic and the less manipulative, the one which best keeps actual decision-making power in the hands of the working masses as a whole. This holds true on condition that the position of a revolutionary vanguard

party not involve any privileges, and that the *right* to constitute parties, associations, currents, and tendencies of all kinds, be guaranteed to *all* workers within the institutions and bodies of self-organization. This is why revolutionary Marxists resolutely fight for the multi-party principle in the construction of socialism and have written this principle into their program.

23. A victorious struggle against the bureaucracy calls—at least as much as the anticapitalist revolution—for a clear understanding of who are your enemies and your allies, both on the national and international fields. The Polish bureaucracy did demonstrate a clear sightedness about this. Despite its contradictions and the mediocrity of its functionaries, it always placed any compromises it was forced to accept in a clear strategic perspective. The accumulated experience of the international workers movement is an essential part of developing this sort of understanding. In order to be useful, this experience must be all inclusive; that is, it must reflect at once the struggles for the overthrow of capitalism and for the overthrow of bureaucratic dictatorships. The Fourth International is the only organization that embodies this dual struggle. With respect to Poland, in accordance with its resources, the Fourth International carried out the following work:

a) in the bureaucratized workers states, attempts to get out the truth about Poland;

b) in the advanced capitalist countries, giving impetus to the solidarity of the working class;

c) in the underdeveloped countries, while remaining at its post in the front ranks of the defense of the Cuban and Central American revolutions against US imperialism, it did not hesitate to take a stand in favor of solidarity with the Polish workers against the leaders of these same revolutions.

In Poland itself, the circulation of the Polish *Inprecor* showed the great potential for the development of revolutionary Marxism as the revolution advanced.

We are aware that compared to what is needed to insure a victory, what the Fourth International did was small. But all those who agree that the tasks that we undertook are essential ones should join us.

Our international organization had something to contribute to the Polish revolution, but it also had a lot to learn. Its role is also to make sure that in future eruptions of the political revolution, the lessons of the extraordinary struggle of the Polish workers will in turn become a source of education. In this respect, the organization of Polish revolutionary Marxists has an importance far beyond Poland itself. The struggle for the

overthrow of the bureaucracy will be a long one. For these comrades to succeed in maintaining ongoing activity regardless of the ups and downs of the mass mobilizations, would be a giant step forward for the next phase.

For revolutionary Marxists, the revolution and counterrevolution in Poland, besides reconfirming the validity of the program of the Fourth International on the nature of the bureaucratized workers states and the inevitability of an anti-bureaucratic political revolution, demonstrate the following:

—the growing centrality of the working class in the three sectors of the world revolution, and the increasing prevalence of classical proletarian forms of struggle and organization within it;

—the unity of the world revolution and the importance of the political revolution within it;

—the need, for historic as well as strategic and immediate reasons, to promote a turn of the organized workers movement and the daily practice of the class struggle back to the road of true proletarian internationalism, which defends unconditionally the rights and liberties of the working class everywhere in the world against whatever social force is attacking or suppressing them, and without subordinating the interests of the proletariat anywhere to the alleged "higher" or "priority" interests of any "bastion" or "camp" wherever it may be. Only on the basis of practicing such international class solidarity can the international proletariat succeed in accomplishing its historic tasks, including, in the case of an imperialist aggression, that of defending the USSR and all workers states;

—the need to build a revolutionary International and revolutionary Marxist parties, which are indispensable not only to give impetus to such international solidarity campaigns and such a return to true proletarian internationalism, but also and especially to insure the victory of the antibureaucratic political revolution itself.

The Fourth International will strive to intervene in the international debate around the Polish events by propagating all these key ideas that provide a political and organizational way forward to activists of the CPs, SPs, revolutionary nationalist organizations, trade unions, and centrist organizations who are worried, shaken, or disoriented by the Polish revolution and counterrevolution. But it holds that such a propaganda intervention can only be carried out in close connection with an action orientation aimed at organizing a broad class solidarity campaign with the Polish workers and unionists who are the victims of bureaucratic repression. In fact, revolutionary Marxists propaganda can be fully effective only if it is carried on in this framework.

24. While the December 13 crackdown can be said to have succeeded insofar as its immediate objectives are concerned, the bureaucracy has by no means achieved its goal. The breadth and the forms of the resistance movement testify that the Polish proletariat is refusing to accept a situation that deprives it of the freedoms won over sixteen months of struggle. The existence and regular publication of thousands of underground bulletins and newspapers show that Solidarnosc continues its activities, in clandestinity, in most enterprises and that some initial successes have been achieved in setting up regional coordinations and even leaderships.

The failure of the many attempts of the powers that be to establish a "dialogue" with intellectuals is patent. The unity that developed between the intellectuals and the working class has not yet been broken, despite the Junta's policy of creating divisions by granting preferential treatment to many of the imprisoned union leaders and experts.

Nevertheless, the government is doing everything it can to bring some Solidarnosc leaders to accept a rotten compromise with the Junta, in the knowledge that this can only discredit them in the eyes of the masses. Moreover, its proposals for a "national agreement" have struck a receptive chord in the Catholic hierarchy, which has an interest in seeing "order" restored.

Given the situation, the active solidarity of the workers of other countries will be decisive in convincing the Polish proletariat that it does not stand alone in its struggle.

The Fourth International will put all its strength into pushing the solidarity campaign with the Polish proletarian masses inside the international workers movement. All those inside the workers movement who today refuse to advance this mobilization are dividing the working masses—in their own country and internationally.

To mobilize against the banning of Solidarnosc means to simultaneously support the Polish workers and to defend the political and trade-union rights of all workers—of Turkey, Brazil, El Salvador, the Spanish state, or Rumania. To call for the lifting of martial law, immediate freedom for all prisoners, the elimination of all restrictions on democratic rights, for the right to meet and organize is to defend these liberties against the attacks of imperialism and the totalitarian bureaucrats. To organize active solidarity with the Polish workers today is to facilitate and prepare the same active support of the international workers movement with the mighty struggle being fought by the Salvadoran people against the Military-Christian Democratic junta and U.S. imperialism! These are the most

elementary lessons of proletarian internationalism!

All the links that have been forged over the past months between the independent and self-managed trade-union of the Polish workers and the workers movement of the capitalist countries must be used to break the isolation in which General Jaruzelski wants to confine the Polish masses. To send material food and medical aid remains an immediate task. That should make it possible to renew links, to pass on information, and to let the Polish workers know that their class brothers and sisters are their best supporters and not the imperialist bankers who welcomed the military crackdown with such relief!

This aid, if it is channeled through bodies independent of the Polish state (the church is the only legal independent institution of that type) can facilitate the rebuilding of links between Solidarity militants and sectors of the population. By doing everything possible to send trade-union commissions of inquiry to find out about the repression meted out to Solidarnosc militants, the workers movement can unmask the hypocrisy of both the bureaucrats who speak of "respect for liberty" and the spokespersons of imperialism who shut their eyes to the fate of trade-union militants in Poland...just as they do for Turkey.

Within the workers movement itself, revolutionary Marxists must systematically explain the aims and actions of Solidarnosc. The democratic way in which the trade union functioned, the broad and public way in which its main political positions were discussed, its debates on self-management, and the experiences of workers and social control must become the property of the international workers movement. This is the most effective way to undermine the sort of "bureaucratic solidarity" that we have seen operate so often since 1980, either in the form of calculated indifference from the trade-union leaderships, of open hostility, or in a way that deforms the workers objectives. The latter are presented as fitting into the framework of the class-collaborationist projects defended by these reformist apparatuses (co-management, "historic compromise").

By doing everything to build this working-class solidarity on the basis of class unity and independence, it will be possible to partly defeat the attempts of imperialism to use Polish events to reinforce its ideological and political positions.

Revolutionary Marxists are opposed to all proposals for an economic boycott by the governments or even the trade unions of the imperialist countries of Poland or the Soviet Union. Such a cam-

campaign can only play into the hands of the ambitious anti-Communist political maneuvers of Ronald Reagan, who is trying to camouflage his criminal policy in Central America and elsewhere.

Supporting a campaign of effective "sanctions," means in practice calling on the big banks and imperialist powers to squeeze Poland even more, with all the consequences of this for the Polish masses. A boycott does not affect the privileges of the bureaucracy. How can anyone believe that the rebelliousness of the workers necessarily increases when they experience even greater poverty?

Worse, such a campaign of "sanctions" ends up sowing the worst illusions on the nature and role of the imperialist banks, spreading the idea that it is the task of the workers movement to pressure the banks to "help" the Polish workers. In addition, its effect in Poland would be to push Polish industry into even closer integration with Soviet industry.

Finally, any perspective of this type

will facilitate, in the last analysis, the policy of the CP leaderships and make it easier for the Soviet bureaucracy to mount a nationalist campaign and play the card of the "besieged fortress." It will produce the isolation of the Polish people, which is precisely what General Jaruzelski wants. History has proven that the development of Stalinism has been favored by the isolation of the Soviet Union.

The Fourth International closely links its solidarity campaign with Solidarnosc with its efforts to stimulate mobilizations against the remilitarization drive, against NATO's policy of aggression, and against the criminal initiatives of U.S. imperialism, the real warmonger, in Central America and the Caribbean.

Within this perspective, the unity of interest of the working class on a world scale is crystal clear. Any reticence in giving support to the Polish workers can only hold back and divide the mobilization against nuclear rearmament in Europe, for a "Nuclear-Free

Europe from Portugal to Poland" and against imperialist aggression in Central America. In the same way, any abstention or opposition—as we see among the Social Democratic parties—with regard to the mobilization against NATO or in support of the revolutionary struggle of the people of Nicaragua, Guatemala, or El Salvador can only weaken the unity and breadth of support for the resistance of the Polish masses. ■

Solidarity with Solidarnosc!

Down with the bureaucracy's military dictatorship!

Freedom for all political prisoners, release all trade unionists, intellectuals, and students!

Reestablish all political, trade-union, and civil rights!

Long live the international

solidarity of the workers of all countries with all liberation struggles, in defense of all the exploited and oppressed, which form a single, united struggle for the socialist world of tomorrow!

Report to the May 1982 IEC on the Building of the Fourth International and the Crisis of International Revolutionary Leadership

Presented for the Bureau of the United Secretariat by Segur

This report is not intended to initiate another general discussion on the world political situation. We've had that discussion at the last world congress. We added some clarifications in the general resolution of the last IEC ("The World Situation and the Tasks of Building the Fourth International", *IMG Internal Bulletin-Documents from the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International*, May 1981, No. 1; also, *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, Vol. 19, No. 35, September 28, 1981, and No. 36, October 5, 1981, p. 946-959 and 978-983). Moreover, we'll unavoidably take up the topic again, next year, at the 12th World Congress.

Nor do we intend to go back over the more specific discussion on the Cuban revolution and leadership that was held at the IEC in 1981. We adopted a resolution on that question there ("The Cuban Revolution, the Castroist Current, and the Fourth International", *IMG Internal Bulletin-Documents from the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International*, May 1981, No. 2; also, *IP/I*, Vol. 19, No. 38, October 19, 1981, p. 1022-1031), and to this day, over one year later, we still have not received any counterresolution.

Rather, the point is to introduce an initial oral discussion on the role of the Fourth International and its sections in the building of a mass revolutionary International.

The issue did not just suddenly come up, out of the blue. It arose naturally, out of the developments of the world class struggle:

- To begin with, these developments are revealing more sharply than ever before the many consequences of the crisis of international revolutionary leadership.
- Next, they make us feel more keenly the gap between the enormous task before us and our present status as a vanguard nucleus still in a small minority.
- Finally, in some areas, like Central America, we are faced with advances of the revolution under leaderships that do not provide an overall answer to the crisis of world revolutionary leadership, but act as revolutionary leaderships in their own countries.

As a result, some legitimate questions have arisen in our membership; they are the living proof that we remain in close touch with reality. For some, these questions have turned into doubts: if there are revolutionary leaderships outside our own organizations, then, is the existence of the International still justified? If non-revolutionary Marxist organizations can achieve the seizure of power in some countries, then, isn't our program laden with flawed conceptions that paralyze us and keep us from action? Or simply, what is the role of minority revolutionary organizations in the big struggles that are shaping up?

We now stand merely at the threshold of a new wave of radicalization of international scope that will be incomparably deeper and more proletarian than that of the late 60s. In this early phase of the wave, all questions boil down to a

single, fundamental one: what do the International and its sections exist for? What is their future?

I. Why these questions are surfacing now

Our first concern is to understand why these questions are surfacing now.

In the late 60s and early 70s, most sections experienced an initial accumulation of forces by tapping a wave of radicalization that affected mainly the youth. Some sections were even born in that wave.

Toward the mid-70s, the situation changed in significant ways, as the economic crisis began, the Indochinese revolution triumphed, the Portuguese revolution was stopped, and the crisis involving China and Indochina developed.

Soon, the economic crisis and the increasing pressure of unemployment demonstrated the inadequacy of radicalism in economic struggles. Linking the day-to-day struggles to overall political solutions became a necessity. On this field, the large reformist parties were able to regain the initiative in the developed capitalist countries.

These changes, along with the defeat of the Chilean revolution, the failure of the Portuguese revolution, and the establishment of the Spanish monarchy, brutally revealed the limitations of revolutionary organizations, including our own:

- the political limitations of their threadbare strategic conceptions;
- their organizational limitations, for, lacking substantial roots in the heart of the working class, they were losing their grip on reality, sinking into powerlessness and getting demoralized.

At the same time, the China-Indochina crisis put this generation's anti-imperialist motivations and its identification with the colonial revolution to the test. In order to refurbish its image badly tarnished by defeat in Vietnam, imperialism launched a calculated campaign focused on human rights, the Gulag, and the boatpeople, which, for the first time, forced this generation of activists to move partly against the stream.

1. The success of the revolution in Iran, and especially in Nicaragua, in 1979, followed by the rise of the political revolution in Poland in the summer 1980, signaled the opening of a new political situation. At first, imperialism, still smarting from its defeat at the hands of the Vietnamese revolution, had been in a state of relative paralysis.

But after Reagan was elected, a counteroffensive was set in motion at the beginning of 1981. The IEC resolution of May 1981 straight away recognized and stressed this counteroffensive:

"The accession of Reagan to the presidency of the USA symbolizes American imperialism's will to take a tougher line and go on the counterattack. It has enormous economic

and military resources to commit to this operation. It began to mobilize them from 1977-78, when the Carter Administration launched a new escalation in the arms race.

"It has systematically prepared for the possibility of new direct counterrevolutionary interventions on a large scale. . . .

"The Reagan administration is accentuating and broadening this course of action. . . .

"The counteroffensive means that imperialism is ready to take more risks." ("The World Situation . . .", *IMG Internal Bulletin*, May 1981, No. 1, p. 2 & 3; also *IP/I*, September 28, 1981, p. 947.)

At the time, some comrades were reluctant to even mention this counteroffensive. They only wanted to talk about the impetuous and generalized rise of the world revolution. Reagan's rise to power made no difference whatsoever. The SWP (USA) corrected this analysis of Reagan's victory at its October 1981 plenum. It recognized the effects of that victory on the American working class.

Everybody now recognizes what is obvious: the attempted counteroffensive of imperialism. But some comrades have now gone over to the other extreme (sometimes, they are the same comrades who denied the imperialist counteroffensive, a year ago), and reduce the counteroffensive to the threat of war.

We must clarify whether we are dealing here with differences of tone and emphasis, or more substantial differences of analysis that could be reflected in differences over our tasks.

As far as we are concerned, the imperialist counteroffensive has an overall character. It is unfolding in the social, diplomatic, and military arenas. It takes the form of direct military aggressions against the colonial revolution, especially in Central America, and insistent threats against the Cuban workers state. It takes the form of strengthening the nuclear arsenal to bring economic, diplomatic, and military pressure to bear on the bureaucratized workers states, especially the Soviet Union. It also takes the form of the austerity policies directed against the working class of the advanced capitalist countries, and of attacks on the democratic rights of the workers movement that must follow those policies on the short or medium term.

A very broad radicalization is beginning to emerge in the United States, Europe, and Japan, in opposition to the deployment of imperialist nuclear missiles. Insofar as these mobilizations have concrete demands against setting up NATO missiles or against NATO bases, they do not represent an abstract peace or antiwar movement, but defacto mobilizations for unilateral disarmament. This is why we are fully committed to extending and developing this movement that has already mobilized millions of youth and workers in Europe, the USA, and Japan.

Our understanding of the overall character of the imperialist counteroffensive leads us to try and give this huge movement a class content, while avoiding any sectarian ultimata, by linking the struggle against imperialist militarism to the struggle against concrete imperialist interventions (Malvinas, Central America), and to the struggle against austerity (Jobs, Not Bombs).

2. Within this general framework, we are perfectly well aware of the urgency of the threat of war. Since World War Two, there has been almost no period without war. Today, these wars (Central America, Iran-Iraq, the Malvinas, Middle East, Angola-South Africa) are part of a new context of international crisis, and can trigger chain reactions.

But the starting point of our analysis and orientation remains the world class struggle, the advances of the revolution, the crisis of imperialist leadership, and the accumulation of contradictions in the bureaucratized workers states, not war in itself, let alone world war.

Our different approaches toward this problem can have concrete consequences. If the whole world situation is perceived from the standpoint of war, of military confrontation between imperialism and the bloc of its enemies (the proletariat, and the bureaucratized workers states and colonial states as well), then a temptation to subordinate the political revolution to the cohesiveness of the "progressive front" can arise.

That temptation became apparent when our American comrades explained that we could make a united front with Stalinists in defense of the Salvadoran revolution, but that united action with social-democrats in defense of the Polish workers was a no-no. This amounts to setting up a hierarchy of priorities in dealing with the colonial and political revolutions. The same trend was reflected in the discussion on Poland by the interventions which tended to dissolve the political revolution into a broader and vaguer notion of democratization that evaded the problem of the revolutionary showdown with the bureaucracy.

Setting our line and tasks, by inference, from the immediacy of war, can also lead to subordinating class independence to military performance, in the colonial revolution. Over the last two years, we have run into that line of reasoning twice when we discussed the differences over the relationship between military mobilization and class independence, first in the case of the Iran-Iraq war, then in that of the Malvinas.

Need we recall that, once before, in the case of Afghanistan, a rather militaristic approach to the class struggle led our American comrades to confusing a military initiative of the bureaucracy with a political victory of the revolution over imperialism. In his report on the self-criticism on Afghanistan, Cde. Barnes honestly recognized this danger:

"I tried to think out why the line in our press was different, on the one hand, from what the Cubans were saying; and, on the other hand, why the tone and approach in the press of our Australian and New Zealand comrades — with whom we thought we were on agreement on Afghanistan — was a bit different from ours.

"Over the winter I read a couple of issues of *Direct Action* from Australia, and *Socialist Action* from New Zealand, as well as a pamphlet the Australian comrades put out. There were a number of things that bothered me. . . .

"The January 17 *Direct Action* carried a giant front-page headline: "Soviet Troops Aid Afghan Revolution!" I didn't think that was true. I agreed with the three smaller headlines at the bottom of the front page: "No trade bans on the USSR," "No U.S. bases in Australia," and "No to Carter's war drive." But I didn't think it was correct to say that the Soviet troops were *aiding* the Afghan revolution. . . .

"The concluding paragraph of the *Socialist Action* editorial read: "The Soviet Union's bold move in Afghanistan makes more headaches for imperialism. It gives revolutionary struggles throughout the world more breathing space; it makes them more secure.

It is thus in the interests of working people everywhere."

Comrade Barnes concluded:

"Our first error . . . was that we isolated the occupation by Soviet troops from the broader Stalinist policy of which the troops were simply a component at a certain stage. That was a methodological error. We accepted the Stalinists'

framework a little bit." ("Correcting Some Errors on Afghanistan", *International Internal Information Bulletin*, No. 4, December 1980, pp. 35-36.)

Finally, if everything flows from the threat of war, then the response to this threat becomes a day-to-day dividing line inside the workers movement, even in the imperialist countries. This can lead to a sectarian and propagandistic approach toward the united front at the expense of promoting broad opposition currents in the unions and reformist parties on the basis of concrete opposition to the austerity policies.

That's why we want to be clear about placing the military aggressions and war threats in the framework of the overall imperialist offensive, and not make them the cornerstone of the whole situation. The only victory over imperialist militarism and war that can save the future of humanity, is revolution, including the disarmament of the imperialist bourgeoisies by their own proletariat, and not a military victory of the anti-imperialist camp over the imperialist camp.

Class struggle remains in command.

3. In order to grasp how the new political situation is affecting the building of the Fourth International, we must clearly perceive the difficulties and contradictions that hinder the imperialist counteroffensive.

First of all, this counteroffensive does not in the least imply that the crisis of imperialist leadership which the Vietnam defeat made patently obvious, has been resolved in any way. The ineffectiveness of American diplomacy in the Malvinas crisis is both an indication and a symptom. At bottom, the interimperialist contradictions have sharpened. While the great imperialist powers do consult each other and try and stick together to safeguard what is essential, they still have not been able to straighten out the monetary system, and their intervention networks set up during the post-World War Two period of American hegemony are becoming more and more inoperative.

One of the major reasons for this crisis is, of course, the resistance of the working class of the capitalist countries. Despite the collaborationist and capitulationist policies of their reformist leaderships, the workers have gathered enough forces and partial gains over thirty years of postwar expansion, to make it difficult for the bourgeoisie to rapidly sweep away their complex network of positions: trade union rights, protection against unemployment, indexing of wages, social security systems. The counteroffensive has been able to score some points, but not enough to stabilize the situation or prevent new waves of struggles and large-scale explosions.

Alongside the deepening crisis of imperialist leadership, we see the bureaucratized workers states, in turn, sinking into a lasting crisis. This makes the situation radically different from that of the 1930s. For a long time, we quoted the comparative growth rates of the USSR and France, of China and India, of the GDR, in order to demonstrate the superiority of a planned economy over the convulsions of the market. Despite bureaucratic waste and mismanagement, these figures were proof of the superiority of a planned economy, during a period of accumulation, extensive agriculture, and priority on basic industry. But there comes a period when bureaucratic management too chokes off the development of the productive forces, and only democratic planning can set them free and allow for new advances. Trotsky had predicted this outcome, and it is the reason why the struggle for political revolution and socialist democracy is not an ideological preference or the reflection of a fetishism for democracy, but

a necessity born of the bureaucratized transitional societies' own contradictions.

The falling off of growth rates in the USSR and Eastern countries, the depth of the Polish economic crisis, show the increasing urgency of the choice between political revolution or a partial restoration of market mechanisms and an opening to the world market.

This combined crisis of imperialism and the bureaucratized workers states is affecting even the inner recesses of the international workers movement with unprecedented force, and causing a major realignment in comparison to which the changes over the last fifteen years were only early signals.

To grasp the magnitude of this whole process, we need only mention some of its striking features.

- The hardships of the crisis and austerity policy have already caused an initial differentiation in the European unions and mass workers parties, with the emergence of opposition groupings in the unions and the formation of opposition currents or poles in the mass reformist parties, some of which have led to breaks or splits, though these still involve only a minority.

- The wave of bureaucratic reaction in China and the China-Indochina crisis have sparked a wave of critical rethinking in the Asian Communist movement, especially in the Philippino and Thai Communist Parties; the discussion at the Fifth Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party shows that, even in Vietnam itself, the situation has not been stabilized.

- The international class polarization and the penetration of the imperialist crisis into the most industrialized semi-colonial countries is provoking a crisis inside the great populist formations that arose in the 30s, and tearing them apart. FOCEP's score in the 1978 elections in Peru already gave a glimpse of APRA's decline. The stormy growth of the Brazilian PT which has already signed up over 300,000 members in less than three years, and won its legalization, is the most advanced example today of the struggle to achieve class political independence. Soon, Argentina may experience a deep crisis of Peronism.

- The debates within Solidarnosc on the balance sheet of the 1980-81 period and on what strategy the resistance should adopt, are a sign that a vanguard of the political revolution is maturing in that country.

We could mention, and better yet, study, many more examples taken from Iran, and even Africa, though to a lesser extent in the latter.

4. This is the context in which we must view the role and influence of the Castro leadership. It is not merely one among several other forms of radicalization. It is a leadership that guided a revolution to victory, to the establishment of a workers state, and that has been at the head of this state for over twenty years.

The problems connected with the existence of such a leadership, have a particular place in the history of the Fourth International. Our understanding of the Cuban revolution was a central element of the theses adopted at the 1963 reunification congress. The background of the discussion which began at the 9th World Congress in 1969, beyond the immediate question of armed struggle, had to do with our evaluation of the role of the Castro leadership in Latin America; this is clearly established by the majority self-criticism on the 9th World Congress document. Finally, the role of the Cuban leadership and, more broadly, of the Castroist current, was again a central point of contention in the debate

on the Nicaraguan revolution that led to the 1979 split. . . .

All this is no mere coincidence. The fact is, the Cuban leadership has displayed important particularities. On the one hand, on the basis of its own experience, it has come close to a strategic conception of permanent revolution for Latin America ("either socialist revolution or caricature of revolution"). On the other hand, it never theorized the building of socialism in one country or renounced extending the revolution, at least in some Latin American countries. Concerning the former question, the Vietnamese leadership too has deeply questioned the Stalinist stageist conception. But the Cuban leadership also has the particularity of being, in great part, of non-Stalinist origin.

All this leads our American comrades to refer to it in their documents, as a revolutionary, proletarian, Marxist, leadership. Revolutionary? Yes, insofar as it is a leadership that has made a revolution and is helping to extend it in certain countries, one can refer to it as a revolutionary leadership. Proletarian? Due to its program and mass base in Cuba itself, one can also call it a proletarian leadership. Marxist? Undoubtedly, it is a leadership which claims to be Marxist and orients itself on the basis of a Marxist analysis of the class struggle.

But accumulating adjectives won't do if we are seeking to characterize its concrete politics and define our orientation toward these politics.

When the point is to resolve the problem of the crisis of international leadership of the proletariat, the decisive criterion is consistent internationalism, i.e., one's attitude from the vantage point of the world revolution as a whole. The Castro leadership plays a revolutionary role in certain colonial countries. From the vantage point of the political revolution, it plays a reactionary role by supporting the bureaucracy against the independent mobilization of the workers (Czechoslovakia, Poland). From the vantage point of the class struggle in the developed capitalist countries, it does not now believe in the revolutionary potential of the proletariat. It does not consider the Communist parties to be revolutionary parties, but feels the workers of those countries have the leadership they deserve, and therefore sets the priority on its own diplomatic interests and on state-to-state relations.

How can we account for these contradictions?

Some comrades describe them as "errors." That is a bit brief. How much do these errors weigh in the Cuban leadership's overall policy, and where do they fit in with it? The fact is, we are not dealing with tactical or marginal errors, but with an "error" that concerns at least one of the three sectors of the world revolution. If the point is to resolve the crisis of international revolutionary leadership, this type of error amounts to more than a handicap: anyone who has had a discussion with Polish workers of Solidarnosc, will understand without further ado that, with this kind of error, it would be very difficult to build an International in the Eastern countries. . . .

Other comrades justify the "errors" or the silence of Cuban policy by the needs of diplomacy. Being isolated and directly threatened by imperialism, the Cubans, they say, already have their hands full just defending their own revolution and have already taken on enough risks to extend that revolution in certain countries. Their task is not to substitute for the workers and revolutionaries of France, Spain, or the United States. There is some truth to this argument but, unfortunately, it is cancelled out by the fact that the Cuban leadership deliberately blurs the line between the interna-

tional policy of the Cuban party and the diplomacy of the Cuban state. The Bolshevik leadership, even when it was besieged by the counterrevolution, maintained the distinction between its state diplomacy and the revolutionary policy of the Communist International. At any rate, the mere fact that its internationalist policy is subordinated to its diplomatic requirements suffices to establish the limitations of the Cuban leadership from the standpoint of building an international revolutionary leadership.

Finally other comrades are sometimes satisfied with a description of the Cuban leadership's international policy as an eclectic policy: revolutionary in the colonial countries, reactionary in relation to the political revolution, and confused in the developed capitalist countries.

This amounts to underestimating the Castroist leadership and its policy; we are not dealing here with a mere patchwork quilt that would randomly string side by side some good and some bad material. There is a logic to it. One could summarize by saying that it is a policy of regional extension of the revolution (or regional internationalism) in the framework of a campist world policy relying on blocs between states (which is a misguided form of anti-imperialism). This is why we were justified in referring to the oscillations or vacillations of this leadership. They weren't oscillations between reform and revolution: in countries where it believes revolution is possible, the Cuban leadership has shown that it is willing to take considerable risks to help extend the revolution; but rather oscillations between this locally revolutionary policy and international alignment on the Soviet bureaucracy's diplomacy.

A contradiction does exist in this behavior.

And we take it into account when we reject the call for political revolution in Cuba. For us, this stand is not a pedagogical concession or a matter of "tone," designed to avoid appearing sectarian. It is the conclusion of our analysis of the degree of bureaucratization, of bureaucratic crystallization, and of the relationship between the leadership and the masses. This is why we believe that changes in the world relationship of class forces or significant breaches of the Cuban revolution's isolation, especially revolutionary developments in the advanced capitalist countries or the bureaucratized workers states, can cause all or part of the Castroist leadership to evolve, possibly at the cost of some internal differentiations.

But, again, not calling for political revolution does not mean that we give up the democratic tasks that need to be implemented in Cuba, as they would in any workers state with bureaucratic deformations (including the USSR in 1922-23!)

5. To sum up the first part of this report, we could say that there already exist two ways of approaching the building of the international revolutionary leadership today.

For our American comrades, the existence of the Castro leadership represents a qualitative change. This is shown most clearly by their last convention's resolution:

"The *Transitional Program* also noted that by 1938, aside from the cadres of the Fourth International, 'there does not exist a single revolutionary current on this planet really meriting the name'. The evolution of the international class struggle is ushering in a new period in this regard. The Cuban leadership, and more recently those in Grenada and Nicaragua, constitute other currents 'meriting the name' revolutionary. Their role in the class struggle internationally marks a historic step forward in the task of rebuilding the

kind of leadership that the world proletariat must have to emerge victorious."

Since the Cuban leadership has been in power for over twenty years, it would appear that it is the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution that ushered in a "new period" for these comrades.

For us, a change has occurred in the worldwide relationship of forces between the proletariat and imperialism and between the proletariat and the bureaucracy. In this framework, we see a radicalization and maturation of the vanguard and a modification of the conditions in which we are building the revolutionary party. The Castroist leadership and current (which is also heterogeneous) represent an important specific factor in this overall process. But in order to solve the crisis of international revolutionary leadership, we are convinced that we must take as our starting point the world revolution and the radicalization as a whole, and not the single subjective element represented by the existence of the Castroist leadership.

II. Struggle of classes or struggle of blocs?

Now more than ever, we can see the dialectical unity of the world revolution verified on a day-to-day basis. There isn't a single major event of the international class struggle that doesn't set off an immediate chain reaction all the way to the antipodes. The fate of the Polish political revolution directly affects the fate of the Central American revolution. An initially limited conflict, like that over the Malvinas, became an international event with huge consequences, for the Salvadoran revolution, for relations between Latin America and American imperialism, for relations between the imperialist powers. . . .

This is the logical outcome of the tremendous internationalization of capital and the division of labor that occurred over the latest period of imperialist expansion.

But this striking international dimension of the class struggle does not mechanically lead to the development of internationalism, let alone to a commensurate understanding of the need for an International.

The fact is, the world class struggle is developing through the mediation of powerful state apparatuses that continue to bear down very heavily on its course.

Yesterday the Cubans and the Vietnamese, today the Nicaraguans, were able to take power at least partially against the will and deep-seated interests of the Soviet bureaucracy. But once in power, in order to stand up to the imperialist threats, they all had to face the problem of their economic, diplomatic, and military relations with the USSR. This is an objective problem.

Similarly, when Kuron advocated the need for self-limitation in Poland, and urged an attempt to institutionalize a type of dual power that would leave military and diplomatic affairs to the bureaucracy, his reasoning was decisively affected by the existing division of the world into zones of influence and by the system of alliances between states inherited from World War Two.

The very same division continues to exert its full impact on the course of the class struggle in Europe, and especially in divided Germany.

The higher the stakes, the greater the conflicts, the more material and military means are necessary, the more they raise the question of the relations liberation movements or revolutionary organizations should have with state apparatuses. Many liberation movements are convinced that

they can only advance in the narrow margin between imperialism and revolution by securing the protection of the "anti-imperialist camp."

Underlying this view of the world are tremendous material pressures that are not hard to understand. Sometimes they lead to unexpected results. For instance, the revolutionary nationalist Basques did not side with *Solidarnosc* against Jaruzelski. The fact is that, from an international viewpoint, radical nationalism and "campism" can complement each other neatly. We also witnessed an organization like the MIR move from practical considerations on the need for relations with the USSR (in addition to Cuba), over to an apologetic position toward the bureaucracy to which it attributed a planet-wide progressive mission.

This pressure, why deny it, is also at work in our own ranks, despite years of education and tragic experiences on the nature and role of the bureaucracy. Some of the debates on the Iranian revolution, Poland, Afghanistan, and also on militarization, are a clear indication of this.

Fortunately the crisis of imperialism and the development of the class struggle are producing the political forces and activists that will make it possible to resolve the crisis of revolutionary leadership. Neither imperialism nor the bureaucracy can do anything about it. That is their contradiction.

But these forces are not going to come together spontaneously and form an International.

Even those forces that are drawing up negative balance sheets of their subordination to a state apparatus, whether Soviet or Chinese, or to a helmsman, whether Stalin or Mao, have now been burnt once and are as suspicious of an International, even one as modest as ours, as they are of an embassy. They often strive to bolster their political independence by establishing more and more bilateral relations: with the Cubans, with certain nationalist leaderships, but also with social democracy . . . and the Fourth International!

This creates an infinitely more complex situation for building the International than in the 1930s because all forces now operate in this highly cluttered magnetic field.

The key question for us is whether we can help currents in the process of breaking with the politics of blocs and camps, to systematize their break and move toward revolutionary internationalism, or whether we will let them slide back into the bureaucratic orbit, by way of Cuba or Vietnam. The contest is obviously uneven, but it must be joined.

Referring to Poland in his New Year's message, President Mitterrand said that we must find the means "to break out of Yalta." But since the only way out is revolutionary, the social-democratic president in the end merely preached resignation in the face of the "slow pace of history." His conclusion wasn't disinterested since the bureaucratic terror of Jaruzelski can be used to highlight the virtues of French bourgeois democracy and provides new arguments on behalf of the social-democratic version of the "historic compromise."

In his report on militarism and the war drive, Cde. Ryan emphasized that one must squarely reject the blackmail that would impose on the oppressed and exploited peoples the alternative of war or resignation. He cited the Cuban and Central American revolutions as model challenges to that dilemma.

He was absolutely right.

What the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutionaries have dared to undertake, the workers of Western Europe can also

dare to undertake with infinitely greater resources and a more favorable relationship of forces.

But the same holds true for the Polish workers: here too, the blackmail of war serves, in another guise, to undermine their struggle for emancipation from the bureaucracy. The war threat is used by Mitterrand as an alibi for turning his back on the Polish workers, by the Church for designating the tolerable limits of democratization, and by the CP as an argument to look upon Jaruzelski as a "lesser evil" in the framework of "Poland's geo-political constraints," in other words, of Poland's necessary place in the Soviet defense system.

Actually, all revolutionary politics that base their strategy on the existing relationship of forces between states, are guilty of shortsightedness and a false political "realism."

Note that comrades who have traveled to Cuba and Central America since the state of siege was proclaimed in Poland on December 13, report that this problem is a source of concern for the Cubans. This is not because they are moving toward an understanding of the political revolution, but because they are worried by the contradictions bureaucratic management has created in the Eastern countries, and fear the crisis will worsen, first in Poland, next in Rumania, and later perhaps in the USSR. . . .

They fear the consequences for themselves, on the economic and military aid they receive.

But this crisis of bureaucratic society is unavoidable, as unavoidable as the crisis of the capitalist system. No bureaucratic reform will succeed in averting it.

When this crisis deepens, the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutionaries will be less and less able to rely on the front of "progressive" states to defend their revolution. Historically, only the action of the international workers movement can provide an indestructible political defense of the revolutionary victories. It is the only force which can be relied upon in the last analysis.

This is how we should view our current solidarity work with the Central American revolution as well as with the Polish workers, i.e., as something more than a moral or symbolic task.

It represents the means to relieve the workers and activists of these countries, to reduce their exposure to diplomatic pressures and their reliance on states, and to break out of the damned dilemma of imperialist cholera or bureaucratic plague.

Whenever we speak of this joint struggle against imperialism and bureaucracy, some comrades begin worrying about the emerging symptoms of a third path or third camp line. The fact is there are only two camps in the class struggle: that of the world proletariat (including the proletariat of the bureaucratized workers states) and that of imperialism. If there is a third camp, it is that of the bureaucracy.

III. What time is it for the Fourth International?

All of us here want to build a mass revolutionary International. All of us are probably willing to build it with organizations or currents that might not necessarily agree with our whole program, as Trotsky himself had foreseen from 1933 onwards.

The perspective of a mass revolutionary International is a correct one, and our sections should be educated on that basis. Concern about it is justified.

But we must immediately go on to say that this perspective is not to be used as an agitational slogan as we would,

for instance, use the call for a mass workers party in countries where the working class hasn't yet achieved its political independence.

As soon as we start discussing a revolutionary organization, and all the more so, a revolutionary International, we are duty bound to pose the question of program. Perhaps it should not be our whole program but, in any case, it cannot be a minimum revolutionary program on a few current problems. The liveliness of the discussions we often have in our own ranks shows that substantial programmatic agreement on the key problems of our epoch (permanent revolution, political revolution, transitional demands and the united front theory, of the Leninist party) is a prerequisite for resolving differences through discussion in a sound common framework.

Can the perspective of a mass revolutionary International be reflected in particular organizational initiatives at this time?

In their reports to the Oberlin educational conference in August 1980, Cdes. Barnes, M.A. Waters, and Camejo, presented the turn to industry and the turn to the Castro leadership as a line for building the party. They claimed these were two inseparable aspects of their orientation.

Such a forceful assertion immediately brings to mind a simple question: we can visualize what the turn to industry means, even though different conceptions of it may exist. But what constitutes the turn to the Castro leadership?

Does it merely involve a change of tone and approach? According to some comrades, it involves recognizing the revolutionary qualities of this leadership, acting with some modesty and warmth. . . . All this is important, but it is still a matter of form. The warmth of one's tone is a subjective question that is perceived differently according to one's culture and disposition.

Or does it involve a programmatic turn toward the Cuban leadership? If that were the case, we would have to disagree, and would want to have a frank discussion about it. We don't see any fundamental point of our program that should be renounced in favor of the Cuban leadership's positions. We don't agree with dissolving the program of political revolution in a vague process of democratization of all the workers states. Nor do we see any need to renounce our conception of socialist democracy or of the need to build an International.

Or, lastly, does it involve an organizational turn that can be translated into a common plan for party-building? In that case, the Cubans should at least agree to contemplate the building of an International. They don't even pose the problem. Moreover, this is not the result of some oversight. Proceeding in that direction would imply, or assume, a radical break with the Soviet bureaucracy. To build an International, one would have to choose between Jaruzelski and Kuron, Husak and Petr Uhl.

One cannot exclude *a priori* that all or part of the Cuban leadership may some day evolve on the issue. But in order for this to happen, substantial changes of the international relationship of forces will be necessary.

In conclusion, we eagerly await the counterreport of Cde. Barnes so that we may at long last get an idea of what the turn to the Castro leadership means in practice.

It could also involve a turn not for the International as such, but on a regional basis, in Latin America, where the Cuban leadership plays a very active role.

At the world congress, we agreed that the place of organized revolutionary Marxists in Nicaragua was in the ranks of the Sandinista front. A similar approach would

probably be appropriate also in El Salvador and Guatemala today. But can the approach be generalized to all of Latin America?

We should begin by concretely asking our Latin American comrades what they think. What does building common organizations with the Castroist current mean today in Chile (given the current orientation of the MIR), in Bolivia, in Colombia, in Peru, in Brazil, in Mexico. . . ? And on the basis of what line would this be accomplished in each of those cases?

Personally, I have no qualms in asserting that this turn to the Castro leadership cannot constitute an overall party-building line, even if limited to one continent.

The discussion will show whether this turn to the Castro leadership involves more than a dangerous abstraction.

In dealing with the present tasks of building the Fourth International, we have to take up, if only briefly, the "unification of the Trotskyist movement" that was adopted by majority vote at the last world congress, after the split of the Morenoist current supported by the Lambertist current had already occurred. Twelve comrades of a minority of the French section's central committee have already announced that they would form an international tendency on this question if the unification perspective was not strongly reaffirmed and put into practice by the present IEC.

The fact is, we have to draw some lessons from the 1979 split. First of all, it is wrong to make common historical and programmatic references the main criterion of an approach toward unification, independently of the concrete orientation toward major events of the class struggle: the differentiations that emerged around the Nicaraguan revolution revived differences that had already appeared around the Cuban revolution. This shows that the real test of a rapprochement is not a written agreement arrived at around a negotiating table, but a convergence of attitudes toward developments of the world revolution and toward the mass movement of the countries where we compete in practice.

Moreover, we asserted in a world congress statement that the split organized by Moreno and Lambert was an unprincipled split. That was and remains true: a difference, even as serious as the one we faced, can be corrected in a few months in the light of experience and discussion. This is all the truer because our organizations are small and often rely on late or incomplete information. Within our own membership, the positions of various comrades underwent a substantial evolution over a few months period. Even the Lambertists' own evolution, if it is confirmed, would be further proof of the fact.

But the split created a new situation; no one can deny it. Worse still than the magnitude of the differences over the Nicaraguan revolution was their conception of the International, a conception that the split only served to confirm: a devilish mechanism of splits and excommunications based on conjunctural differentiations, that leads to the search for a monolithic orthodoxy. The same scenario reoccurred in relation to France, this time between Moreno and Lambert and after only three months of the Mitterrand government: a new split! If one were to adopt this approach, every six months, the class struggle would confront us with events that would delineate new programmatic boundaries and promote new regroupments. Thus, Camilo Gonzalez, a dissident from Morenoism, now advances the proposal for an open world conference based on the Polish question that would trace new demarcation lines. . . .

This conception carries with it permanent dispersal and

blind sectarianism, a fact already confirmed by the failure of the International Committee less than a year after it was founded.

Let's be clear: the conditions for the unification of forces claiming to be Trotskyist do not exist at this time, and "the unification of the Trotskyist movement" does not now constitute a concrete party-building perspective. Saying so bluntly does not mean we will ignore these currents or turn our back on them.

They do exist, and in some countries (France, Brazil, Argentina) they represent substantial forces. They tap the same sources of radicalization as we do, and they too attract activists turning toward revolutionary Marxist answers.

This is why it is absurd for comrades who, two years ago, were enthusiastic supporters of rapid unification, to now oppose even a confrontation of ideas by proposing that we boycott the Lambertist international conference, as Cde. Brewster did here. To the contrary, we should seize every opportunity and every arena to explain our ideas and continue the debate without concession, at the same time as we should closely observe the practical test of the class struggle in countries where these forces have significant influence.

At bottom, there is no miracle and no shortcut on the horizon. Neither the turn to the Cubans, nor, on a quite different level, the turn to the Trotskyist movement.

By contrast, the conditions for building certain sections are beginning to change. For years, we have unceasingly repeated that the building of the revolutionary party would not be the result of individual recruitment or a linear growth of the existing organizations. Nevertheless, since 1968, the bulk of the work of building the sections remained confined to the primitive accumulation of a nucleus of cadres. Fusions were the exception and marginal. Now though, our general statements of intent on the paths of party-building are beginning to become a concrete problem because of the differentiations under way in the working class.

Several groups or sections, in Great Britain, Peru, Germany, Bolivia, Spain, Brazil, Ecuador, Sri Lanka, Cyprus, . . . are faced with the problem of taking organizational initiatives: fusions, entry in reformist parties, regroupments, and participation in the building of a mass workers party. In Brazil, we even have to tackle simultaneously the building of the PT, that we want to develop as such, of embryonic tendencies inside it, and fusions with other groups to form a revolutionary Marxist organization.

We have to prepare, to borrow a Sandinist formula, to move beyond the phase of "passive accumulation" of forces, and take real initiatives to build the party.

This requires that we arm the leaderships of our sections with the method that Trotsky adopted in the formative years of the Fourth International.

In the first place, we have to be attentive and carefully distinguish what belongs to the united front and mass united action, from what belongs to party-building and its programmatic delineation. If we confuse the two, we will always incur the risk of achieving neither the one nor the other: neither genuine mass initiatives nor a genuine battle for party-building. The London Bureau organizations specialized in swimming in muddy waters by building both minority propaganda united fronts, and organizations lacking clear programmatic and organizational definition. Even today, minority revolutionary organizations remain tempted by this flawed approach.

If this starting point is clear, it means, for one, that in the course of the fusion initiatives that we may come to pursue

because of a partial practical or programmatic convergence, we should actively press for a discussion of the fundamental points of our program. Compromises on certain points are conceivable at the end of a fusion discussion. But then, it is a matter of clear and explicit compromises, that are judged to be acceptable in the framework of an agreement solid enough to make a common organization viable.

Moreover, compromise doesn't mean status quo. The discussion on the controversial points can be continued in the light of common experience, on the condition that a common conception of democratic centralism exists (which in itself is a full-fledged programmatic question).

It would obviously be absurd to try and define a universal tactic for building sections. Each case must be examined on its own, in light of the concrete organization at hand and the relationship of forces in the workers movement. Our party-building tactic can combine asserting an independent organization, fusions, fraction work in the reformist parties, and forming class-struggle tendencies in the unions.

In all cases, the cornerstone remains the existence of a nucleus of cadres who have a sufficiently firm and homogeneous understanding of the fundamental programmatic framework, to tackle tactical party-building questions with flexibility and daring. Hence the importance of educational work in general, and of the political education of leaderships in particular. Otherwise, every tactical party-building problem that departs even slightly from the organizational routine, will provoke disproportionate tensions and threats of split that will make us flounder. Such risks cannot be avoided altogether, but we can at least make them fewer by firming up confidence in the organization's roots and principles.

The other aspect of the problem is that it is not enough to merely speak of a nucleus of cadres, in general. The phrase often implies a definition of cadres in a rather ideological sense. We need cadres with roots and experience in mass work. This is why the turn to industry (which will be taken up in a special report at this IEC) and proletarianization are so important.

Solid roots in decisive industrial strongholds will provide the prop for all our moves, whatever the tactic of the moment. In case of fusions, they represent a decisive component of the relationship of forces. If the point is to build left-wings in the unions and reformist parties, the impact and weight of these left-wings will depend more and more on their social roots.

IV. The Fourth International

The Fourth International is the necessary and irreplaceable tool for intervening in the formative process of the international vanguard that we discussed in the first part of this report.

We should set aside any type of messianic megalomania, look reality squarely in the face, including our own reality, and patiently set ourselves to work.

The problem is that some comrades have raised doubts about the quality of our instrument. For instance, Cde. Peter Camejo, in his August 1980 report at Oberlin, raised the question of a sectarian degeneration of the International, especially in Europe.

This type of questioning comes from somewhere. We've always felt that the International is still a small minority fundamentally because of objective conditions. Moreover, this is also what the SWP comrades said in their last conven-

tion resolution. But these conditions have begun to change. Nevertheless, after significant growth between 1968 and 1975, in recent years, the International seemed to mark time and experienced a split.

Moreover, there have been setbacks in countries with favorable conditions, or at least a disturbing gap between what was possible and what was achieved.

Nonetheless, we must emphasize the fact that no other revolutionary organization in Europe did qualitatively better than us. Here and there, some far-left organizations exist that are as large or larger than our sections. But on the whole, looking back over the past ten years, we come out of the comparison relatively well.

No doubt, in other sectors, like Latin America, starting from initially comparable conditions and opportunities, some organizations were able to do better than us, temporarily or more durably. The Chilean MIR is an example. We have to determine on a case by case basis, how much our own subjective responsibilities and errors had to do with this turn of events. But, at the same time, we should never forget that conditions for party-building in one country are never independent of the relationship of forces in the international workers movement. The MIR and PRT, for example, benefited from their links with the Cuban leadership.

1. Let us now rise a bit above conjunctural considerations and examine the historical balance sheet; events have clearly confirmed not only the correctness of the foundation of the Fourth International, but also its irreplaceable role over the last thirty years.

Far from invalidating the fundamental tenets of its program, the international class struggle has extensively confirmed them, and continues to do so today through the revolution in Central America and the political revolution in Poland, even though each new experience brings its own lessons and enriches the program.

The International stood up to Stalinist barbarism and fought against the stream to defend the revolutionary Marxist heritage, thereby preserving the future of interventionist Marxism and allowing for the historical presence of a living Marxist alternative to the bureaucracy, within the workers movement itself. This is no small asset in the fight against the various anti-Marxist campaigns that use the bureaucracy as a foil.

Finally, while this or that section may have committed errors, while the whole International did not move at the same pace in every instance, its overall attitude toward revolutions still is the decisive test of its vitality. It is to its credit that it actively took part in the mobilizations in defense of the Chinese, Yugoslav, Vietnamese, Cuban, and Nicaraguan revolutions, even when activists who identified with Trotskyists were the target of repression. This is the proof that it was able to keep the general interests of the proletariat as the criteria for its orientation, and place these general interests above its own particular group interests.

2. It must be recognized, however, that the Fourth International had to pay a high price for this. For nearly a half-century it existed as a minority, a situation not foreseen by Trotsky. Such a lengthy passage through the wilderness does not leave a movement unscathed. Their prolonged minority existence produced an undeniable imbalance in our organizations, between theory and practice, and between analysis and action. Moreover, theory and analysis themselves do not come out unharmed from such an extended divorce.

That situation chronically brought forth sectarian tendencies. When one exists mainly by writing, reading, comment-

ing, and circulating documents, there is always a danger that a dogmatic and terroristic approach to interpretation will develop, and that it will only seldom or partially be subjected to the test of practice.

But this type of pitfall never appears all by itself. It always comes with its opportunist twin. In our case, opportunism takes the form of overconfidence in the strength of our ideas and their influence, regardless of whether they have been consolidated in an organization. One could trace the various forms of opportunist and sectarian slippage in the history of the International. There is no point in doing so here. We need only clarify that, contrary to Cde. Camejo's contention, the European sections were not particularly distinguished by sectarianism over the last ten years: whether one considers May 68, support to the Vietnamese revolution, the analysis of the Paris Peace Accords, Chile, or even support for the Angolan revolution, their side wasn't exactly the sectarian one.

3. We should add here that our minority existence did not only have political consequences; some were also organizational. We haven't built mass revolutionary parties for many years and our splits have become a legend. This is above all a reflection inside our own membership of the enormous external pressures; they bear down on us all the harder when they cannot be resisted by adequate education on our organizational norms.

The importance of written documents in our history and our flimsy social roots, meant that every tactical or conjunctural difference tended to become a principled question or even a new organizational boundary. Moreno and Lambert have even gone so far as to theorize this hellish practice.

We have waged the necessary struggle against this mechanism of sectarianism and political-organizational monolithism, especially after the 1979 split. If we want to build parties that bring together rather than disperse revolutionary forces, then we have to be able to distinguish what is basic from what is secondary, and move together in the framework of the fundamental program and respect for internal democracy.

But this struggle alone is still not enough. It can lead to differences being reflected in permanent tendencies and factions instead of ending in splits, thereby turning our organizations into something closer to debating federations than action parties. This incipient trend has already caused many of our members to become skeptical about the viability of our conception of democratic centralism in the case of numerically stronger organizations.

This is why the struggle against sectarianism must go hand in hand with education on the norms of party functioning. We need an exchange of experience on this matter; confronting the traditions of the different sections could be quite useful.

4. At present, in order to advance, the International cannot be content with merely repeating that developments of the world revolution confirm the essence of its fundamental program, even though this is true. Seeing reality only as the confirmation of theory would mean perpetuating the perverse relation between theory and practice mentioned earlier. Changes in the objective situation and our increasing ability to join day-to-day struggles present us with the opportunity to resume our motion from theory to practice and back, and attempt to translate our programmatic tenets into concrete strategic proposals.

The Polish revolution, which we've discussed extensively,

provides an unprecedented testing ground for the strategic questions of the political revolution.

But there are other fundamental problems that are also posed in appreciably different terms than they were in the 30s. This is true of the discussion on permanent revolution. In most discussions we have with militants in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, as a result of the weight of the Cuban and Vietnamese experiences, of the contributions of these two leaderships, and of the struggles now underway, the issue is no longer exactly permanent revolution versus revolution by stages, Stalin versus Trotsky, but rather the difference between Lenin and Trotsky. Whatever formula is used, whether democratic dictatorship, anti-imperialist united front, or workers and farmers government, no one can escape this debate which raises the fundamental theoretical problem of the transition from the state of one class to the state of another class, and what alliances are possible to achieve it.

Likewise, for many of the militants with whom we have discussions, the debate no longer involves the counterposition of world revolution to the theory of "building socialism in one country," as much as the counterposition of internationalism to the "expansion of the progressive bloc," in other words to "campism." Hence the key importance of understanding the bureaucracy, political revolution, and socialist democracy.

Finally, we can take a closer and more limited example, already dealt with at this IEC, which merely involves pondering over the orientation problems posed by the Salvadoran revolution. One month after the overthrow of Somoza, we adopted almost unanimously a resolution that wasn't wrong, but very general and listed among the tasks of the revolution: democratic rights, agrarian reform, a Constituent Assembly, etc. . . . Today, no one here would propose such a resolution for Salvador, because we are all aware that it would provide no answers for the problems the Salvadoran revolutionists confront today: the relationship between the political and military struggle, insurrectional strategy or strategy of prolonged war, the relationship between this strategy and negotiations and alliances. . . . We can describe this discussion, but from the outside; we have no answer. The fact is, though, that if we want to advance beyond propagandism, we must give some attention to these questions.

In 1972, we opened the discussion with Santucho too late, and we opened it on international questions (Czechoslovakia) and principled questions (the Fourth International). That was necessary. But on that ground alone, we stood little chance of convincing or even influencing Santucho. In order to do so, we would have had to discuss his concrete orientation in Argentina. The end result may not have turned out any better, because the stakes involved not only ideas but material forces. Nevertheless, the touchstone was the link between his general principles, his international relations, and his concrete policy in Argentina. If we are not capable of intervening in the latter arena, we will continue to be perceived by many revolutionary organizations, at best, as interesting discussion-mates, but not as potential partners.

5. There is one final question that it would be useful to broach in this report (one reason is that it is being raised more and more forcefully), but it would require an extensive separate treatment: the problem of relations between the center and the sections.

Add to this that it is a difficult question, whose terms change as the International develops, and about which, for

lack of adequate discussion, the most diverse opinions probably exist.

Nevertheless, we have to begin with a fact: the International is more than the sum of its sections, but it is first of all the expression of the reality of its sections. One often hears comrades abstractly pose "the question of building the International." Building the International is first of all building its sections. Modest but significant gains by a section can have cumulative effects and set off a chain reaction, as seen in the past. Unfortunately, so can setbacks.

The leadership bodies of the International, in the main, can only emanate from the section leaderships, and therefore reflect the latter's advances as well as their weaknesses. Under these circumstances, it often happens today that national leaderships of strong sections enjoy more authority, and sometimes have greater means, than the organs of the International as such.

We have to think about this situation and try and better define what the role of a center should be. It cannot fulfill the equivalent function of leadership for the International, as a section leadership provides for its cells and local branches. Small sections with internal problems often turn to the center, as a city unit would to its Political Bureau. This is dangerous because it tends to establish an immediate linkage between the smallest local questions and the broad international discussions. It is also frustrating because the center usually doesn't have the means to resolve these problems.

Nevertheless, having an international center is a necessity. It is difficult, expensive, and time-consuming, and it doesn't always yield instant returns. But it is the only sound way to build an International. International regroupments around one mother-section, like the Morenoists around the Argentine, and the Lambertists around the French, will not be able to develop beyond a certain limit. They remain constantly threatened by national Trotskyist deviations.

At the present stage, a center can put out the press of the International, set up an international educational program with workshops and schools, promote publishing projects, lead the debates of the International, coordinate campaigns, and occasionally help out some sections.

This in itself is already very ambitious.

It means that our functioning combines a centralizing effort with some federalism whose existence it would be dishonest to deny.

On the other hand, if we want to avoid the danger that the present de-facto uncontrolled situation will lead to a repetition of the practices that ended with the episode of the Simon Bolivar Brigade, we have to clarify the minimum duties of sections to the International in the present stage:

- they must circulate in their press, the positions adopted by a majority of the International to which they belong, on major questions;
- they must not conduct a parallel operation of building organizations, alongside that of the regularly elected bodies of the International, as was the case with the Simon Bolivar Brigade;
- they must participate in the campaigns and organizational efforts to build the International.

V. Summary

1. The SWP comrades were the ones who requested that we introduce an oral discussion on the question of the international revolutionary leadership at this IEC. We asked

them frankly and directly in our introductory report what the "turn to the Cubans" that they have been talking about for two years, actually involved in practice. Neither Cde. Celso's report, nor the discussion, nor the summaries, have shed any light on this matter.

The comrade stated that this turn did not involve any concrete organizational plan. We take note of this. However if this is the case, then we feel it is dangerous to lay such emphasis on a "turn" devoid of practical consequences, that every member and every section can then go on to interpret as they please, or try to inject with a palatable content.

Hollow ideas are not toyed with lightly.

2. The discussion too often tended to polarize between those who underestimate the role of the Cuban leadership and those who underestimate the weight of the Polish workers movement. This is unfortunate. The problems raised do not belong in the purview of a Standards and Weights Administration.

Yes, the existence of a leadership that refuses to capitulate in the face of the war drive and threats of imperialism, and contributes to extending the revolution, constitutes a fundamental element that no one here means to underestimate.

But it is wrong to state, as the counterreport and some interventions did, that the Cubans "extend the revolution on a world scale" The extension of the revolution "on a world scale" includes the political revolution in the bureaucratized workers states. For the Polish workers, the worldwide extension of the revolution means in the first place the overthrow of bureaucratic oppression in their own country.

Incidentally, we were surprised by Cde. Steteman's surprise at the idea that bureaucratic management chokes off the development of the productive forces. All the same, it is a fact. Bureaucratic planning and a priority on basic industry can develop the productive forces up to a point, but beyond that point, they become a fetter. Otherwise, why should we say, as Trotsky did, that bureaucratic management undermines the foundations of the workers state? It inevitably leads to the alternative of political revolution or capitalist restoration. The falling off of the growth rate in most Eastern countries, including the Soviet Union, shows that this alternative has become an immediate one.

Moreover, this is the reason why socialist democracy is a social and political necessity for the bureaucratized workers states, and not an abstract democratic requirement dreamed up by Western petty-bourgeois under the pressure of their own imperialism. It is the ABC of the *Transitional Program* as well as of the *Revolution Betrayed*. The main point of these democratic demands is not the institutional forms they lead to, but the fact that they open the possibility for mass mobilization which is part and parcel of the international extension of the revolution.

3. General formulas urging us to treat the Cubans as revolutionaries, as equals, to be modest, etc., appeared over and over in the counterreport and discussion. This is all fine and good as a warning against any sectarian inclination. But the question of tone must not be substituted for the question of substance.

It is true that there are things we can learn from the Cuban, Nicaraguan, or Salvadoran experiences. The way Cde. Sergio conceived his report on Central America was designed precisely to introduce the discussion on the lessons of these experiences: political and military struggle, prolonged war or insurrection, mixed economy, and political alliances against imperialism, etc.

The fact is, Cde. Therese's counterreport did not touch on

these questions. She talked about something else, the successes of the Cuban leadership.

We believe that we have something to learn from these experiences, in terms of concrete strategy, without renouncing what separates us from leaderships like the Castroists and Sandinists in terms of world revolution. Otherwise, the "mutual enrichment" or "reciprocal influence" the comrades referred to in their interventions, would be reduced to a polite formula designating something more akin to a one-way influence.

In this instance, as in all others, unity in action is a struggle that requires a clear delineation of what brings us and our partners together, as well as what separates us from them.

Instead, we've heard comrades in this debate go so far as to say that, in Cuba, "our section" is the CCP, in Nicaragua the FSLN, in Grenada the New Jewel.

We've always agreed to say that the place of revolutionary Marxist militants organized in the Fourth International would be in the Cuban CP, the FSLN in Nicaragua, and we could add, the New Jewel in Grenada. But participating in the activities of these organizations, or building them, should under no circumstances lead us to look upon them as "unconscious sections" of the Fourth International. Whether in the Cuban CP or the FSLN, our comrades would continue to defend the Polish political revolution, one reason being that we consider this to be part and parcel of the defense of the Cuban or Nicaraguan revolutions. We should not, even for one minute, consider as our "de-facto section" an organization that would take a position opposite to ours on a key question of the international class struggle like the political revolution in Poland or, some day, in the USSR. With such an organization, the only possible relations are relations of unity with conflict and without renouncing to defend our program.

4. What makes all these shifts in meaning possible is the fact that, contrary to the assertions of Cde. Therese, the comrades who supported the counterreport have established a hierarchy of the different sectors of the world revolution.

This can be perceived in various indications of greater or lesser importance. For example, the fact that the comrades feel a united front with the Stalinist parties in defense of the Salvadoran revolution is legitimate, while a united front with social-democratic parties in defense of the rights of the Polish workers is not. Or the fact that some comrades now feel the 1979 split was justified and necessary because of the differences which existed over the Nicaraguan revolution, but feel that differences of the same nature concerning Poland are compatible in the same organization. . . .

What is more alarming is that this "campist" slippage is beginning to be theoretically justified, as when Cde. Barnes writes in his report on the workers and farmers government:

"This is what we believe permanent revolution is. It is the strategic view of the world socialist revolution that integrates the proletarian revolution in the developed capitalist countries, the anti-imperialist, democratic and socialist revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, and the struggle to defend, extend, and democratize the workers states."

We see here how the political revolution is dissolved in a vague category of democratization that would apply to Cuba as well as China or the USSR. If it is an awkward formulation, then it is symptomatic. If it is more than awkwardness, it represents a confused idea that amounts either to emptying the political revolution of its content, or to posing the

same tasks in Cuba as in Poland, probably against the real intent of the comrades themselves.

5. There is a paradox in this discussion. Most comrades who criticized the majority report and supported the counterreport, did so in the name of openness to the world as it really is, and of a struggle against sectarianism. The paradox lays in the fact that these comrades combine excessive flexibility toward the Castroist leadership with a frenzied sectarianism in their day-to-day politics.

Look at what Cde. Stateman said for example. He wondered what was the point of worrying as much as we have about the Brazilian PT, differentiations in the European or Asian workers movement, and debates in Solidarnosc; why so much emphasis on these developments? The important thing for us, he said, are the revolutions that are going on now, "at this very minute," in Nicaragua, Grenada, El Salvador. . . .

This is a sectarian view that reduces revolution to "the minute" when power is seized, and to victorious revolutions alone. We also have something to learn from defeats and setbacks.

But, more importantly, the idea that we are only interested in the winners, would lead us to recognize revolutionaries only after the fact, after their victory, and perhaps, to continue turning our back on tomorrow's winners. The Sandinist leaders were probably no less revolutionary in 1977 than in 1980. But according to Stateman's criteria, since the minute of the Sandinist revolution had not yet arrived, it would have been out of place to worry about it, just as, in his view, it is out of place today to discuss Brazil, the Philippines or South Africa.

By contrast, when we analyze the process through which a revolutionary vanguard is forming and realigning on the international scene, we are trying to influence and convince the Castros and Ortegas of tomorrow. We are well aware of the relationship of forces and difficulties involved in this task. But it is the only approach that is consistent with the goal of building the Fourth International.

Here is another example of this sectarian nonsense: in essence, Cde. Therese reproaches the Polish workers with not having understood the role and importance of the Cuban revolution. It is a sign of their vulnerability to imperialist maneuvers.

First of all, we should remember that the very same comrades reproached us, in the resolution of the last SWP convention, precisely with trying to force the pace of the developing consciousness in Poland by criticizing the Walesa leadership on this or that point, when, according to them, it was actually behaving as a class struggle leadership acting in line with the movement's current level of development and the tasks of the hour. Now, in order to develop an understanding of the Cuban revolution in the Polish workers movement, we would have to introduce into it not only criticisms of Walesa's immediate orientation, but also much larger problems.

But the basic flaw in Cde. Therese's argument is that the Cuban CP leadership and a trade union of ten million Polish workers are not phenomena of the same kind and are not suited to a single approach for both cases. On the one hand, we are dealing with a political party, in power for twenty years, with a program, experience, and a cadre school. On the other, we are dealing with a mass movement, a product of struggle, that wrested its legal right to exist barely a year ago from a bureaucracy that has been smothering the politicization of the masses for thirty years.

In relation to the Cuban party, we defend our ideas and our program with firmness. In a mass movement, we use day-to-day experiences to promote new ideas, and we show understanding toward the initial limitations of the movement and the incomplete nature of its definitions.

In national politics, this is an elementary distinction. Just imagine us being programmatically indulgent with a Stalinist CP that claims to be Marxist, denounces imperialism, and supports Cuba in its own way . . . while at the same time levelling ultimata at a class struggle current emerging in a trade union, because it has not yet understood the importance of defending the Cuban revolution or the political revolution in Poland. That would be the height of sectarianism toward the experience of the masses themselves.

Unfortunately, this sectarian danger is not imaginary, as is obvious when we examine the formulations used in Cde. Ryan's counterreport on militarism and the war drive: "the breadth of the antiwar movement is only the expression of the extent of the illusions," and "our goal is to split the pacifist movement in order to bring forth an anti-imperialist tendency." We believe our goal is to base ourselves on the broadest mobilization against the concrete deployment of imperialist missiles, so that we may give it a concrete anti-imperialist content by linking it concretely with interventions against the colonial revolution, and an anticapitalist content by showing the connection between militarism and the bourgeois austerity policies.

But turning the understanding of this approach into a precondition for united action, aiming to "split" the mass movement on that basis, amounts to sectarian ultimatism that will inevitably lead to abstention from action.

6. This discussion should have been the opportunity to deal with the more concrete party-building problems the sections are facing. The discussion went in another direction. It might have been unavoidable, but nevertheless it is, to some extent, regrettable.

Here are two or three examples.

The experience of ARI in Peru was mentioned two or three times in the discussion. Many comrades must have a personal opinion on the balance sheet of that experience which posed a number of problems concerning electoral alliances, the activities of organizations identified with Trotskyism, and the preparation of our own sections.

At the last world congress, a large majority adopted a document on Latin America whose central line was the fight for class political independence and the question of a mass workers party. A precious experience is now underway in Brazil. But each country where the question arises will have to adopt a particular path and particular tactics. A more detailed examination of the concrete implementation of the line of the last world congress would probably have enabled us to place FOCEP and ARI in a clearer overall perspective and better resist destructive pressures.

Cde. Enrique raised a number of very important questions in another respect.

First concerning the "party of revolutionaries." We will have to continue this discussion to find out whether differences do exist on this topic and what they involve. The only way to move forward is to discuss concrete examples. The fact is, the concept of "revolutionaries" is very vague. Does it mean those who want to make a revolution and still advo-

cate the destruction of the bourgeois state? Such general definitions cannot lead to a concrete tactic for building the revolutionary party. In the best of cases, the project of a party of revolutionaries stands to remain at the stage of a non-sectarian, but abstract, declaration of intent; in the worst, it could lead to drafting a minimum program of the revolutionaries, something we witnessed in the International not so long ago.

By contrast, when the Spanish comrades open a concrete debate within the Communist Movement (MC), it is possible to see concretely what is at stake and discuss how we should proceed. The MC comrades have forwarded an honest contribution that doesn't get lost in day-to-day tactical issues, and speaks to the heart of the problem: transitional demands and the united front, violence and armed struggle (in relation to outlining a strategic hypothesis for the developed capitalist countries), the workers states and the International. We can begin by opening the most serious discussion on these questions. The continuation of the debate and the progress of joint activities will show whether, and on what issues, clear and explicit compromises are possible.

The comrade also states that he agrees on the need to distinguish between what belongs to the united front and what belongs to party-building, but adds that there are sometimes intermediate activities. This is true. It is the reason why we have such delicate and often confused problems with electoral fronts. But the temptation to maintain and stabilize such a front, for example with the OCT in France after 1978, would have set up a screen and an obstacle to the franker and more aggressive policy that brought us the 1980 fusion.

But, what the comrade is mainly concerned about is whether we shouldn't take initiatives in relation to building the International as such, in the same way that we pose party-building initiatives (regroupments, fusions) for our sections. It is possible to promote united action on this level through mass campaigns, as we did with the Vietnam campaign, as we are now doing with the Salvador campaign. We can look for opportunities to debate or compare notes around initiatives that we take, as we have in the past with the Brussels conference or the Paris Commune commemoration. But it is hard to visualize a stable, organized, international framework with other groups whose purpose would be neither mass united action, nor building an international organization, nor building common national sections.

7. All these discussions are necessary. We must resume and continue them. But in order to make this possible, everyone must contribute to the regular functioning of the International as such, to improving the information circulated in its press, to a better mutual understanding of our problems through an improved international educational system, and to better preparation of the meetings of its leading bodies. No central team can substitute in this respect for the input of section leaderships. And the more advanced among them have a special responsibility. Cde. Celso repeated several times that, in his opinion, the "turn to the Castro leadership" did not imply any particular organizational plan. Nobody wants to get entangled in accusations based on alleged intent. If the only organizational plan that we all share concretely today is building the Fourth International, then everybody, whatever their problems, must contribute more and better to its day-to-day functioning in the Bureau, as well as at USec meetings.

Building Revolutionary Youth Organisations in the Imperialist Countries

[The following resolution was adopted by the May 1982 meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International. The vote was: 22 for; 16 against; 3 abstentions; and 6 not voting. It is reprinted from *International Viewpoint*.]

1. In the last period, the Fourth International has made progress in party building in two fields.

o the beginning of the ability to seriously root our organizations in the working class and its organizational consequences in the turn to industry.

o starting to take up more generally the political importance of the youth in the class struggle and the organizational steps which have to be taken to relate to these young people through the building of revolutionary youth organizations.

This is a process of changing the FI and its sections in their fields of work, as a pre-requisite for their future tasks. These two organizational steps are not separate but interrelated.

The aim of the present document is to indicate how we should go forward in this process in the imperialist countries in regard to the question of youth.

THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN THE CLASS STRUGGLE

2. In the class struggle the decisive role is played by the working class leading its allies. Within that framework a crucial role is played by the youth from these layers. This is demonstrated not only by historical but by contemporary experience.

This crucial role played by the youth of the working class and oppressed is directly reflected in the building of the revolutionary party itself. Although a revolutionary party has more experienced forces in its leadership and cadre the majority of its membership will be young people. While of course precise analogies must not be made it is worth noting that the average age of the Bolshevik Party in 1917 was 23, the FSLN in Nicaragua in 1979 24, and the German Communist Party when it was a mass revolutionary party had an average age in its early 20s.

The new wave of politicisation in the imperialist countries also began in the 1960s with young people—particularly starting in solidarity with the colonial revolution. Following the May/June general strike in France this politicisation increasingly affected layers of the working class and greatly widened the range

of issues which it took up. In the colonial revolution, and in the movements of opposition inside the workers movement, a crucial role has been played by young people. These young people formed the backbone of the strengthening of the sections of the Fourth International since the late 1960s.

However, young people radicalize with great speed and have the ability to go in a very short time from lack of experience and campaigning on a single question to accepting a full revolutionary programme. Furthermore the pattern of radicalization of young people often differs in important aspects, and often has its own rhythms and forms compared to that of older layers. This creates the need for an additional different type of organization to the party to win the maximum number of young people to revolutionary politics, i.e. an organization without the same level of political experience and requirements as the party for initial membership and wide open to radicalising young people. Today the Fourth International has important openings to construct such revolutionary youth organizations in the imperialist countries.

3. The question of constructing revolutionary youth organizations is inseparably connected with the question of building the revolutionary party. Once a youth organization is created, this does not relieve the party of one of its sectors of work. On the contrary it increases the responsibilities of the party. For the first time the problems posed by the existence of the youth organization begin to be confronted practically. None of the major problems confronted by the youth organization can be solved simply by that organization itself but they are above all problems which must be confronted by the party. All the errors and weaknesses of the party will reappear in the youth organization in an even larger form than in the section of the Fourth International itself.

A youth organization is only possible with a major allocation of resources to it from the party, and if it is seen as one of the priorities of the section. *Adoption of this document therefore indicates*

that the Fourth International considers that a high priority today should be given by its sections in the imperialist countries to building revolutionary youth organizations.

BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY TODAY

4. Strategy and tactics in building the revolutionary party and youth organizations are not timeless but must be derived from the objective situation and tasks confronting the working class. We may summarize these briefly in the present period as follows.

i. The situation which is developing today is decisively one of an *international* crisis of capitalism, imperialism and Stalinism. This is shown dramatically in the revolutionary struggles in Central America and the Caribbean, in Poland and in the anti-missiles and anti-nuclear weapons movement. This increasingly direct international crisis must be built into our perspectives in every country and is fundamental in building both the Fourth International and national parties.

ii. Within this framework the *economic* offensive of the bourgeoisie will deepen and widen. The first generalized post war recession of 1975, and the second of 1979-81, are only the first stage in a deepening crisis. A continual and intensified attack to impose 'austerity' policies, and weaken and destroy the organizations of the most important sections of the working class, will be more and more necessary for capitalism.

iii. There is a permanent general social crisis of capitalism—and also in a different form one affecting the bureaucratized workers states. This hits with particularly great severity against the most oppressed layers of society—women, blacks, young people—but its effects strike the working class as a whole.

iv. The outcome of all these struggles inside the imperialist countries will be long and difficult. We are only just at the beginning of the great struggles which will take place in the imperialist centres. Only the strongest forces on either side can hope to gain victory in this struggle. Neither can do so without developing the strongest possible all-round political stra-

tegy and without using the strongest social forces available to them. This means the bourgeois state and reaction on the one side and the industrial proletariat and its organizations on the other. It is this political framework, and the social conclusions that flow from it, which determine the tasks in building the revolutionary party. As an aspect of this it also determines tasks in building the revolutionary youth organization.

5. It is often the case historically that a new wave of radicalisation starts outside the core of the working class among students, white-collar, and intellectual layers. This was the case in the 1960s with the movements of solidarity with the colonial revolution. The dynamic, however, is for this radicalisation to increasingly touch the most decisive layers of the industrial working class and for this to become increasingly the backbone of the struggle on *all* political questions.

Within this framework of an intensification of political crises and developments the present international situation therefore also sees an increasing tendency for the working class to play, conjuncturally as well as historically, a more and more leading role in the class struggle. This has been the increasing trend inside the imperialist countries since the May-June 1968 general strike in France. From this flows the chief organizational task of the Fourth International in this period, with tactical implications flowing from it, the turn to base itself inside the industrial working class. This includes the need to transfer forces into industry so as to gain a majority of our members inside the industrial working class.

From this political situation and its social dynamic flows the type of parties which we have to build. *Parties socially based inside the working class but capable of taking up all the issues of the class struggle.*

6. While the new radicalization has already penetrated into the industrial working class this necessarily continues to be extremely uneven. The defeats imposed by Stalinism, the long post war capitalist boom, the continuing weight of the reformist apparatuses, mean that the masses, and even most of the older organizing cadres of the working class in the capitalist states, continue in all except a few countries, to have reformist illusions. These will only be overcome through a whole series of massive struggles on a scale far greater than those we have already seen.

The dynamic of the class struggle, however, necessarily drives towards an increasing conflict between the orientation of the masses and those of the reformist leaderships. This poses the task of the

construction of the revolutionary party, of a class struggle left wing. This process, however, is one of a prolonged period of the class struggle and we are only just at its beginning today.

7. This process of working class radicalization and differentiation inside the workers movement does not take place in a gradual or even manner. It develops abruptly around particular issues, layers or specific struggles. Furthermore, it is fundamentally uneven by age. Contemporary and historical experience confirms once again that young workers are the layer which moves decisively to take up the issues of the class struggle and to reject the line of the reformist leaderships.

This shows precisely the decisive layer for building revolutionary parties today. The revolutionary organizations of the Fourth International will recruit individual experienced worker militants of 30 or over, and each such member is of tremendous importance, but there will not be in the next period large-scale gains from this layer. The overwhelming numbers of those who can and will be won to a revolutionary organization in the next period are much younger—starting in their mid-teens and going up to 30. *Building parties socially implanted in the working class capable of taking up all the issues of the class struggle means above all today orienting to the recruitment of young workers.* It is recruiting these layers, educating them in the workers movement, creating a class struggle left wing, that is the basic perspective on which the sections of the FI must base themselves today.

8. It is from this point of view of the dynamics of radicalization and recomposition inside the working class that it is possible to understand the present tasks of building the revolutionary party and youth organization. It means the party concentrating and orienting its work, and especially in the factories, *towards the young workers.* This is in the perspective of two processes reflecting the same underlying development.

i. There is the continual process, accelerating in the future, of young workers coming forward to recompose the rank and file leaderships of the working class in its everyday struggles. This is an inevitable product of the deepening and intensification of the clashes between the classes.

This development in the factories and unions is paralleled by similar processes outside, with different forms, in which young and particularly oppressed layers are forced to engage in serious struggles to defend even limited rights, to force back deprivation of their minimum social needs and oppression by the state, etc. This also brings to the fore young

militants in the struggles and movements of blacks, women, oppressed nationalities, and other layers.

ii. Periodically movements based primarily on young people outflank altogether the reformist leaderships. The youth rebellions in Britain in summer 1981, the struggles over housing in West Germany in 1980, represent the extreme examples of this development.

Often, however, a 'united front' with sections of the reformists can be imposed by the weight of the social forces involved and we fight for this. But even within this development the youth represent by far the most active component and dynamic force and one that can often tend to take on specific forms of organization within the general movement. This was the case, for example, with the big actions of the Anti-Nazi League in Britain in 1977-79 and is generally the case with the movement against remilitarisation and nuclear weapons, as well as in solidarity with Central America, in the imperialist countries today.

It is in this process of recomposition of the workers movement and working class leadership that the question of building the revolutionary youth organization is posed from two key angles.

The first is to intervene in and gain from the process whereby significant layers of young people move to outflank, come into conflict with, and break from the reformist leaderships.

The second is as a tactic in the construction of the revolutionary party.

These two are tied together by the basic dynamic of the class struggle and pattern of radicalization.

9. This process means understanding that the youth tend to radicalize even more than any other section of society around *the most burning political questions.* They are more willing to engage in political action, because they are less influenced or controlled than other layers by the apparatuses of the reformist bureaucracies or the institutions of the bourgeois state. It is this which gives the possibility to take the most burning political questions directly into the working class via the young workers and recruit from this layer. This also helps to create a real force for intervening in the differentiations inside the reformist organizations—an effective intervention towards which cannot be achieved simply by propaganda but only if we have a real *organization* for this work. It is these tasks which form the basis for building revolutionary parties today and within which framework building youth organizations must be posed.

THE NEED FOR A
REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH
ORGANIZATION

10. Within the framework of constructing the revolutionary party the task of building youth organizations in political solidarity with sections of the Fourth International is an important part of tactics for achieving this goal. It is not sufficient to rely only on direct recruitment to the party—although of course many people will be directly recruited to the sections. The youth organization helps answer two questions simultaneously. Firstly, it reaches wider layers of youth and organizes them in big struggles on youth and working-class issues. Secondly, it is a field of recruitment for the party of the best militant youth.

The developments of radicalization in the last period have posed the question of the construction of youth organizations with an increased importance and in a new context. In the mid and late 1960s, youth organizations supported by the Fourth International existed in North America and in France with the JCR, and there was a movement in that direction in Italy. They however did not exist in the majority of Western European countries.

This policy was changed at the Ninth World Congress and a general decision taken to build youth organizations. This decision however only had a short period of application in the majority of European countries. The old sections of the International in general were fused with the youth organizations to create qualitatively new organizations of the Fourth International.

It is only in the later 1970s that a number of FI sections in Western Europe started from their own initiatives to build independent youth organizations. This trend is correctly being more and more taken up today.

Results available from the different countries strongly confirm that this represents a correct orientation for building organizations of the Fourth International today.

The general strategic need for youth organizations therefore today comes together with the conjunctural possibilities to show that the sections of the Fourth International in the imperialist countries should put as one of their key priorities at the present the building of independent youth organizations.

11. This importance is confirmed by experience of attempting other solutions than building organizationally independent youth organizations. Where these do not exist, and there is simply a 'youth sector' of the party, major problems are encountered. When the organizational orientation of the party is no longer almost exclusively to youth, as it was in the late 1960s, and when the party starts to do work in the labour movement as its center of gravity, there is a serious danger of youth work becoming margin-

alized in the party. It creates difficulties not only to centralize and lead youth work, but as well to be in the position to grasp new opportunities of youth radicalization.

The inadequacy of a youth sector of the party will become more and more obvious as the party turns to industry. All evidence shows that the turn to industry and the building of youth organizations are totally linked. A turn to industry not accompanied by the building of youth organizations will not succeed in utilizing the possibilities for party building which exist. Building a youth organization among working-class youth is however impossible without the turn to industry of the parties themselves.

12. In the framework of the political tasks of the sections, the building of revolutionary youth organizations has two decisive aspects—to take action and educate militants, and as a tactic in party building.

i. The youth organization and action and education of militants.

a. A youth organization which is organizationally independent of the party but politically in solidarity can attract radicalizing young people, workers and those in the education system who have not yet made up their minds about joining a revolutionary party or adopted a perspective of becoming lifetime revolutionaries, but who are willing and ready to participate in a broad range of political actions taken through their own organization and together with the revolutionary party and its members.

b. Youth, precisely because it is young, because it has not known the defeats, the disillusion of the past, is more combative, more ready to fight, than older layers. It therefore needs an organization which corresponds to this instinctive readiness to fight.

c. The youth organization is above all an organization for action, for struggle. The best way to learn Marxism is not by learning by heart books on the history of the workers movement but by engaging in struggle. People learn through action. Youth must have the right to make its own mistakes because it is only through taking initiatives and responsibilities, through determining its own tactics, that they can become real cadres.

ii. The youth organization is a party building tactic.

The tasks outlined of a youth organization in no way cut across, but interrelate with, the fact that one of the chief aims is to recruit from it to the revolutionary party.

Obviously it would be possible to reach certain numbers of very militant youth and try to recruit them directly to the party through consistent contact work. But the sections are faced with

another situation. It is not a relatively few individual young people who are open to new ideas, ready to fight, disgusted with capitalist society and wanting to change it. There is a relatively large phenomenon of radicalization among youth and this provides the possibility of winning significant layers of youth to revolutionary Marxism and to the party. This requires a different organizational answer than simple 'contact work'. If the party takes the initiative to build an independent youth organization, with a real organizational independence, including on occasion contrary to the party, this is precisely because it is the only form of organization which can correspond to the needs of young people.

Within this framework a youth organization not only educates young people for the class struggle but also to become members of the revolutionary party.

a. The youth organization operates in the direct sense of education, learning Marxism and its principles, and what constitutes our program. We explain to all the youth who are disgusted with this society that it is only under the flag of revolutionary socialism that we can end its evils.

b. The youth organization is a school of education because its solidarity with the party gives to the youth the opportunity to meet, work together, learn from its members, i.e., trained cadres devoted to the cause of their class, professional revolutionaries. This does not overturn the organizational autonomy of the youth organization but indicates its political relation to the party.

c. We are building definite political organizations of young people and not 'movements'. This necessity for a clear political profile, programme, and structures means also that we fight for such youth organizations even where they contain other forces, to be in political solidarity with the sections of the Fourth International and the International itself.

d. From the above flows the correct conceptualization of the difference between the youth organization and the party.

In order to play its role of political vanguard in the struggle the revolutionary party, against the pressures of capitalist society, requires of its members a definite level of understanding and activity far higher than a reformist party, an understanding of the basic programmatic positions of Marxism and their application. All of this takes some time to absorb. The party therefore guards its 'frontiers' carefully.

The youth organization is, however, an organization of a different type. A youth organization must be able to reach out to a wide layer of young people who

are rebelling against several aspects of capitalist society but who do not yet necessarily understand all the ways these are related. This explanation of the whole nature of capitalism and all the strategy for how to fight it is a task inside the youth organization and not a precondition for membership. In the words of the founding congress of the Fourth International, "The youth organization...in deciding for itself its actions in line with its program, in taking the task of educating the toiling youth on that program, poses no conditions for joining other than a general agreement, even of sentiment, with the goals pursued by the Fourth International and its methods of struggle. It is the expression of the instinctive revolt of young workers against super-exploitation, of the young peasants chained to the land, of the young intellectuals, of millions of declassed young unemployed, and is the expression of their enthusiastic support for the revolution. In that sense it is an organization wider than the party."

The distinction youth organization/party therefore should not be seen chiefly as one of age but of *different type of organizations*.

A CAMPAIGNING YOUTH ORGANIZATION

13. It is not possible to separate the building of a revolutionary youth organization from the building of a revolutionary party. It is the strategy for building the party that is the framework in which the youth organization operates. Indeed, considerations in building the party show up most dramatically inside the youth organizations.

Our tasks and priorities in building the revolutionary party flow from the fact that increasingly *central political questions*, national and international, will dominate the situation. Above all, the party will be built up by means of centralized political campaigns on the most central issues of the day. This is reflected, as a political and not merely an organizational, concept of building a *campaigning party*.

Naturally in certain sectors, factories, etc., sections of the Fourth International may assume positions of leadership which force them to give answers on all questions. Indeed the very uneven development of the situation, and of the sections of the FI, means they may of course have specific *tactics* in different sectors. However, it is false to conceive of building parties 'sector by sector'—particularly in terms of taking up the issues specific to that sector of work.

14. This aspect of political campaigns in building revolutionary parties

applies with particular force to youth organizations. At the centre of the work and building of youth organizations must be political campaigns.

The central political issues confronting society today—war, direct and indirect effects of militarisation, austerity, suppression of democratic rights—touch *all* layers of the youth. It is therefore increasingly possible and necessary, for both our youth organizations and sections, to carry out campaigns aimed at all these layers of youth and in particular at young workers. Where we have established sections and youth organizations which are only in the process of making the turn to industry, this can express itself in a sense in a double turn—of the sections towards the youth, including utilizing already acquired working class implantations for this, and a turn of the youth organizations towards the young workers. Where our organizations are strongly making the turn to industry, this comes together in the common priority orientation for building the party of an orientation to the young workers.

This type of campaigning work must be carried out together with permanent activity in certain mass structures which organize the youth (trade unions, youth sections of unions, student unions, etc.). Such work of course demands specific tactics. However, such work must take as its starting point the political struggle in society as a whole and not issues conceived of as 'internal' to these structures.

Finally, this centrality of political campaigns in building youth organizations reflects the fact that young people, even more than older people, are oriented to action. Even more directly than with the 'adult' party, a high level of activity gained through campaigns, is decisive in building the youth organization.

15. The nature of the crisis facing society, the tasks in constructing a revolutionary party, and the objective needs of young people determine the types of campaign which our sections and youth organizations should prioritize. These campaigns must correspond to the objectively most central and important questions of the class struggle—austerity, militarism, division of the workers movement, anti-imperialist struggle, racism, etc. Naturally the tactics and particular emphasis of the youth organization may have different forms compared to those of the party, but the essential themes of the political situation to which the two organizations respond must be essentially common.

The differences in activity between the party and the youth organization are differences in tactics and specific empha-

sis at particular points in time (e.g., the LCR in France campaigning most centrally on the 35 hour week during the latter part of 1981, and the JCR on reduction of military service to six months). These differences flow essentially from the differences in patterns of radicalization of young people, compared to that of older layers, already discussed. *But both organizations must be campaigning on different aspects of the most central political questions confronting society.*

16. These general questions of the character of youth organizations are reflected also in its launching—a state several of our sections are still going through. There is of course no exact blueprint for starting to build a revolutionary youth organization. Precise tactics have to be decided upon in light of the concrete situations in each country where the work is started. Nevertheless, there are basic patterns for starting the work which flow from general considerations and reflect the concrete experience of most sections. Two are crucial.

The first is the launching of a youth paper. This really only becomes effective when it is a *national* paper.

The second is the establishing of groups (circles) in particular around the paper.

It is in general this combination of national paper and local groups i.e., a first accumulation of cadres, that creates the organizational framework around which the youth organization can be built.

Linked to these organizational steps, however, there are in general two key *political* preconditions to actually launch the organization.

The first is that the newly emerging organization's members must be able to project, and themselves have, a sense of political identity with a national organization. This requires firstly, key central political campaigns as already discussed, carried out on the national scale, and types of national events—rallies, nationwide meetings, etc. These begin to give the youth involved the sense of really belonging to an organization.

Secondly, the organization has to have and discuss a programme. This is crucial in creating a political homogeneity out of young people attracted out of different campaigns and with diverse experiences. It is in this process that the youth organization so to speak chooses its flag, and its cadres begin to get a sense of the organization's historic political identity—in this case the Fourth International.

Finally, the actual launching of the youth organization must be built as a major initiative of the organization and of the party as a whole.

THE REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH ORGANIZATION AND THE TURN TO INDUSTRY

17. The building of a revolutionary youth organization, while a permanent, long-term goal of the revolutionary party, acquires different forms and different priorities at different phases of the class struggle and the development of the revolutionary organizations.

Today, considering the objective tasks confronting our sections, the turn to industry, and our necessities in building the party, we can see clearly our priorities in building the youth organization. We are building a youth organization which is open to and aimed at all layers of youth, whatever their social origin, who accept its programme. However, there are key priorities within that framework. *Our parties and youth organizations today have above all to be oriented towards young workers.* To grasp this we must analyse the general conditions of building the revolutionary party and the building of the youth organization in the present period.

18. Since the Second World War, capitalism in the imperialist countries has undergone important social transformations which touch in a major way upon the situation of youth. The most important of these, deriving from the need of capitalism for a more trained labour force and a massive expansion of the state sector, is a massive expansion of the education system and the clear incorporation of new layers into the labour movement (outside of the United States where this is more limited).

This incorporation of new white-collar and public sector layers into the labour movement is a permanent and important strengthening of it. Student layers also have not only an increased numerical weight but, because they incorporate a far wider social range of destinations than previously, will not become again the essentially rightwing elitist political force which existed prior to World War II.

These social transformations however, while altering the quantitative elements in the working class, do not alter what constitute qualitatively the most decisive forces of the class struggle. It remains the central bourgeois state and its political apparatuses on the one side, and the strongest sections of the working class on the other, that alone have the weight to really polarize and lead the other social layers. This becomes increasingly true as the class struggle intensifies and social forces polarize.

This does not mean that these layers of youth in the education system do not engage in struggle anymore but they do so increasingly as *part* of more general political struggles whose leading

forces are often elsewhere. At the same time, the depth of the economic, social, and political crisis forces the radicalization increasingly into the core of the working class. This pattern of development of the class struggle and the working class, and the tasks in building our organizations which flow from it, is reflected inside the changed pattern of youth radicalization itself in the last few years.

19. This new pattern of youth radicalization is of course uneven and differs in its precise forms from country to country. Its general trend however is very clear.

Although there continues to be a radicalization in most countries among certain layers of students, the youth radicalization is today no longer *led* by these layers. This is a key change which has to be noted since the 1960s and the last major experience of most sections in building youth organizations. It brings to the fore the point that the majority of the youth is not only an ally but also a *com-ponent part* of the working class.

20. The broadened social composition of the youth radicalization is not however by itself the only reason, or sufficient, to understand why it is primarily to industrial young workers the Fourth International turns as the most decisive layer. In no country are the majority of young people in industry. On the contrary, in some cases those in industry form quite a small minority of young people.

However, the importance of a layer is not decided simply or even primarily by its numbers but by its social and political weight. To take extremes, the millions of old age pensioners in a country like Britain do not have even remotely the same weight in the class struggle as 250,000 miners. It is social weight, capacity for struggle and organization, which is decisive. This is why, for example, that it is the struggle, or lack of it, of the industrial working class in Europe which has been decisive in determining the class relationship of forces in that continent since 1968. This is why it is the industrial working class, and above all the young workers, which is the decisive layer in building the party and, within this framework, the guiding axis in building youth organizations.

This naturally does not mean that our youth organizations should or will be built only among young industrial workers. A large part of young people will always be in the education system, in job training, in layers outside the industrial working class, and our organizations are open to all those who accept its program. We are building a broad, open, youth organization which will therefore have many layers of young people in it and not a 'small party of youth'. Nevertheless,

this does not alter the fact that the *decisive* layer we aim to win over is young industrial workers and that, to embody this as with the party itself, special and particular measures must be taken to ensure that this is achieved.

21. Although all experience shows that at least in the countries in which the class struggle is most developed there are important possibilities today to build a revolutionary youth organization among working class youth, these opportunities will not be taken advantage of simply spontaneously. Furthermore, this is particularly the case given the social composition of our sections as they *start* the turn to industry. Experience in a number of countries shows that a campaigning youth organization can fairly readily attract young workers around it. Without conscious measures, however, we will retreat back into those layers which were the traditional base of our sections.

Experience shows that conscious steps therefore have to be taken to maintain, or turn around, the social composition of the organization. Every organization left to spontaneous developments recruits in its own image socially—a student based organization spontaneously recruits students, a white-collar based organization recruits white-collar workers, etc. In order to reach out to working-class youth an organization has to take *specific* measures—allocation of comrades, from other sectors of work, to do work among or directed towards working-class youth, comrades moving into industry and industrial areas where there are important concentrations of workers, etc.

This therefore provides the basic combination through which we have to build up our youth organizations today: central political campaigns that can touch all layers of the youth; specific organizational measures to take these campaigns into, and gain from, the young workers. It is on this basis that we will build youth organizations.

ORGANIZING THE YOUTH ORGANIZATION IN THE TURN TO INDUSTRY

22. In aiming to win layers of young industrial workers, the decisive role in the youth organization, as in all other questions, is played by the party. In the revolutionary party it is the question of whether the leadership makes and leads the turn which will decide whether the policy will be carried out or not. In relation to the youth organization, it is above all the party as a whole, as well as its elected bodies, which constitutes the leadership of the organization. Whether the youth organization will succeed in orienting itself towards young workers will depend upon whether the party as a whole, and the party members inside the

youth organization, succeed in this task.

This latter point is of considerable importance as an extremely dangerous situation will result if one section of the party is carrying through the turn to industry and another is building the youth organization in quite different layers. What will then happen is that relations between the party and the youth organization will become strained to the utmost.

This also requires that the turn is an *organized* process. As with the section, a situation where the turn is left as an individual responsibility of comrades will not work. This involves special measures inside the youth organization itself and clear links between the youth organization and the section.

23. Naturally there are significant differences in practice between the turn of the party and the turn of the youth organization. A large part of young people will always be in the education and training system, there are legal limits on the age at which young people can commence work, etc. Some of these layers are very important and working class in composition—for example, in France there are 600,000 young people in technical colleges of whom 80 percent go to the working class. Given that there continues to be a significant radicalization among students and in high schools, a youth organization must be built which has a presence in these layers of youth, i.e., they must be organizations of the whole of youth. However, this does not alter the fact that our aim is a clear priority to working-class youth and to gain a big majority of our organizations in the working-class youth with the existing social composition of the sections, specific measures must be taken in regard to this. Each country requires a specific combination of these but general steps can be indicated.

i. Above all, the building of the youth organization and the turn to industry must be seen as part of an integrated perspective of building the party. They are not different tasks, but different *tactics* in the same task of building up a party *implanted* in the working class and capable of taking up all the key political issues of the class struggle. This means the sections and the youth organizations must have specific tactics and organizational forms, but the same political issues must be confronted and campaigned on, in different ways, by both. It also means they must be built essentially in the same layer—inside the working class. Young people, in the section and the youth organization, can play an important role in leading the turn to industry. However, if these youth are to be recruited to the organization, and if young workers recruited are to be maintained in the organization, then the party itself must be making the turn to industry.

ii. The party members in the youth organization must be participating in the turn to industry. A major crisis of leadership will develop if the party makes the turn to industry, but the youth organization is left to build essentially among students and high school layers. In that case, the youth organization will be peripheral to the thinking and concerns of the party, no serious attention will be given to it, and a crisis of leadership will develop.

iii. As with the party, and in links between the two, the turn must be an organized process. This involves special measures inside the youth organization and in the structures (e.g. jobs committees) leading the turn in the party. Special measures such as conferences of young workers or those prepared to make the turn may be useful in the youth organization. A situation where the turn is left as an individual responsibility of comrades will not work.

24. The situation inside the reformist youth organizations shows great unevenness from country to country and no general tactical orientation can be adopted. The following trends, however, can be noted:

-In those European countries in which there were mass Communist Parties, the youth organization of the Social Democracy had, for a long period, been moribund, and no significant field for work existed. In these countries, there are not today important openings in the youth organizations of the reformist parties. The building of open independent youth organizations is the crucial task.

-The situation is more complicated in those states where mass social-democratic parties dominate the workers movement. The youth organizations of these parties were also greatly weakened by the upsurge leading to and surrounding 1968. However, in most countries, they continued to maintain at least a minimum of forces and therefore an ability to rebuild themselves to some degree in the period of crisis of the centrist left from the 1970s onwards. There is still a qualitatively different relation of forces between the independent revolutionary and centrist forces and the reformist youth organizations than existed prior to 1968 but the latter continue to be of significance and have undergone a certain revival in some cases. This poses in a new way the question of systematic work directed towards or inside these organizations.

This is particularly clear in Britain where the youth radicalization of the 1960s was less broad in its scope than in some other Western European countries and where the Labour Party enjoys historically an unchallenged hegemonic position within the working class. Here a de-

finite revival of the Labour Party Young Socialists occurred from the 1970s onwards. This today is an important field of intervention for revolutionary Marxists in Britain.

In West Germany the weight of the centrist organizations created out of the youth radicalization was greater than in Britain. It is the phenomenon of the 'alternative lists' in West Germany which today attracts young people primarily. However, the youth organizations of the SPD, in particular the Falken, possess in certain areas significant forces of radical young people. Work by revolutionary Marxists inside this organization on a locally decided basis is one of the tasks of youth work in West Germany today.

In other countries, attention must be paid to developments inside the reformist youth organizations. A prolonged crisis hitting young layers of the working class in some countries leads to an increased participation in the reformist youth organizations.

25. In the framework of our general orientation towards the young workers two specific areas stand out as posing particular tasks and problems.

i. In certain countries, our youth organizations can make a priority of work directed towards immigrant workers. Experience in a number of Western European countries indicates that, as one would expect, the youth form the most combative layer of immigrant workers. The youth organization in some countries where legality is not the decisive question (e.g. Britain) can be a particularly suited instrument for intervening in this layer. This is specific from country to country. It must be judged concretely in each case.

ii. Work to support movements in the army. There is an experience of this in a number of countries. This has undergone a revival around the question of struggle against missiles and nuclear weapons (Holland) and demand for reduction of military service (France).

26. The building of a revolutionary youth organization gives particularly important opportunities for recruiting young women to the revolutionary movement. As with every oppressed layer, it is when they are young that women will become most easily involved in organized struggle against capitalist society and its effects on them.

In every country there are major specific laws reinforcing the repressive role of the family and to repress youth sexually—for example in Britain the laws forbidding all sexual relations under the age of 16, in France abortion rights are forbidden to young women under 18. Young women are systematically deprived of rights to training for jobs, for educational opportunities, and other needs to develop for themselves their lives. It is not only young women but

also young men who feel concerned and can be mobilized on issues of women's oppression—and also young women radicalized around these issues can be won to rapidly expand their politicization to a challenge around all aspects of capitalism.

This means immense opportunities not only for recruiting young women but also building up real cadres and leaders among young women. For example, in France the proportion of women in the youth organization in 1980 was 40 percent compared to less than 25 percent in the LCR. In Revolution Youth in Britain, 45 percent of the National Committee and 50 percent of the Political Committee elected after the 1980 conference were women.

This recruitment of young women is important not merely in itself but for the whole future of our organizations. It gives the possibility to train a whole layer of women cadre and leaders for the organization. In cases where crises or negative developments in the sections have led to a major loss of women from the organization, youth work is by far the most important means for redeveloping the work on women's liberation of the organization and winning a layer of women members.

27. It is within this overall framework that the Fourth International's work among students is posed today. These continue to face increasingly sharp attacks due to the economic crisis, lack of jobs upon ending their studies, and the general economic, social, and political contradictions facing society. Layers of students will therefore continue to be propelled into action both around the more narrowly conceived interests of students and more importantly around all the big social and political, national and international issues of the day.

However, compared to the period of the late 1960s, students are more conscious of the unfavorable relation of forces which exists between them as a social group and the bourgeoisie. This means they look more to political organizations based on the labour movement and working class for leadership and linking up to the mass organizations and the movements of women and oppressed for struggle. Students are in general less inclined to launch struggles by themselves and more dependent on the political dynamic of struggles waged by the labour movement than at the time of the radicalization of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

This situation naturally means revolutionaries participating in all struggles of students and within the education sector giving particular emphasis to high schools, technical schools, and trade schools, but integrating these in our overall political work.

Except in the very initial period of

disruption as we make the turn to industry, this does not imply that we are orienting away from political work aimed at students. On the contrary, with a political line and campaigns taking up the key political issues of society and an organization based inside the labour movement and industrial working class, we will in fact be a more attractive organization to revolutionary-minded students in the big class battles which are coming. If, on the contrary, we do not succeed in building real working class organizations, then in addition to general political orientation the actual attractive power of the organizations of the Fourth International for students will decrease. An organization implanted among young workers and the labour movement will on the contrary, be increasingly attractive to students and over the longer term our ability to recruit students will increase.

PARTY/YOUTH ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONS

28. Overwhelmingly, the single most decisive element in all aspects of building and functioning of the revolutionary youth organizations is the positions and attitude taken to it by the party. These above all of course are based on all the *political* aspects discussed previously, and the correctness of the line taken by the party in each concrete situation, but also have, flowing from these, certain significant organizational aspects which can aid or hinder the resolution of the political questions and tasks. These will of course differ greatly in different situations, stage of building of the two organizations, etc. but certain general questions are posed.

i. The attitude of party members to the youth is of key importance and should not be underestimated. The party must maintain the principles of organizational independence and right to take their own decisions for the youth organization as the best tools for education. 'The young worker needs leadership from the party. But this should not be leadership by command. When at every step coercion is substituted for persuasion, the breath of life disappears from the organization, and with it, the people'. (The Bolshevik Leninists and the Youth Organization). This must be translated into organizational measures otherwise it amounts to only calling on 'good will' of comrades within the party.

ii. The relations between the youth organization and the party must above all be transparent and open. Even the most vigorous open *political* intervention by the party is better than any form of back stairs manoeuvring, cliquist relations, two standards in the transmission of information, etc. Young people are not fragile.

They are quite capable of withstanding and enormously developing from strong criticism, their own mistakes, differences, and so on provided it is genuinely designed to convince and not to destroy or manipulate. It is the latter which will breed the deadly disease of cynicism, the antithesis of young people, and lose forces and weaken or wreck organizations. It is this which must provide the basic point in all party/youth relations from formal aspects right down to tone and personal manner of conduct.

iii. The most crucial of all is that the organizational independence of the youth organization must be *real* and not fictional or formal.

This means that the party has the right to attempt to *persuade* the youth organization to adopt a certain course by political argument. It has no right to impose a line on the youth organization. The latter is in all matters self governing. 'The congress of the youth organization is sovereign. In the case of political divergences between the youth organization and the party, the latter cannot bureaucratically impose its politics on the youth organization. In such a case, the task of the leadership of the party is to appeal to the militants of the youth to show them in what way their positions are false and to lead them to change their positions by their free decisions.' (The Bolshevik Leninists and the Revolutionary Youth Organization).

iv. Most important of all for practical party/youth relations, in particular given the real organizational independence of the youth, is that the section must put major resources into *in practice* building the youth organization. If the party is seen as the decisive force really practically aiding, both in political line and activity, the building of the youth organization this can lay the basis for correct party/youth relations. If, on the contrary, the party is *not* seriously building the youth organization then this will inevitably be perceived by the members of the youth organization. Under such conditions, moods and currents opposed to the party, showing themselves in developments such as opposition to affiliation of the youth organization to the section, will inevitably arise.

v. In this framework, links between the party and youth should be between the organizations as such and not be individualized ones. A system which relies on the fact that members of the youth organization are also members of the section, and that individual leaders of the youth organization are also members of leading bodies of the section, is not adequate. This means steps such as representatives of the youth organization attending Central Committee and Political

Committee of the sections with voice or voice and vote, official observers from the party at leadership meetings of the youth organization, etc. Similar measures should be applied at levels such as branches, town leaderships, jobs committees, and other structures where it is suitable.

vi. This question of clarity also determines the question of discipline of party members inside the youth organization. It must be quite clear that the members of the party are under its discipline in all fields of work—including the youth organization. However, at the same time this formal aspect of discipline should be utilized to the minimum possible extent—in the sense every time it has to be used, which will occur, it is a defeat.

vii. The youth organization should be closely linked to the party in the question of the turn to industry and work in the unions. Naturally there are particular concerns of the youth organization. In general it is necessary to have a system where there are clear representatives of the youth organization in the party jobs committees in the areas. Similarly it may not generally be useful for the youth organization to have its own separate trade union fractions, but trade union fractions should be held jointly or, where more appropriate, comrades from the youth organizations should be invited to the trade union fractions of the party.

viii. The organizational independence of the youth organization from the party must be a *real* one. This means that while there will of course, particularly in the initial stage, be material aid from the party to the youth organization, the latter must, right from the beginning, have real independence, to educate a real cadre and leadership, clearly have its own finances, control over its journals, creating the resources for its own full timers, etc.

The chief support the party should be giving to the youth organizations is its militants *building* the youth organization in their activity, selling its journals, building its meetings, etc., and not in the form of centralized subsidies, full timers, etc. There will always be an element of the latter but it should be kept small if the youth organization is to have its own real internal equilibrium.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK

29. The eventual organizational aim of our youth work is to create a Revolutionary Youth International. We are however today a long way from this goal

and much more limited steps in that final eventual perspective are what are posed today. The most important of these at present are:

i. Increasing internal activity, and education, on the question of youth work and youth organizations.

This must be undertaken chiefly in the national sections but can be significantly aided by the International through international meetings, centrally published material, and above all by adopting a new international resolution on the question, with the debate preceding it at the IEC and World Congress.

ii. Systematic international work towards young people and youth organizations.

Internationalist traditions among young people are one of the strongest, most progressive, and most important parts of their politicisation. This developed even under the Second International, was extended during the First World War—which most of the youth organizations of the Socialist Parties opposed, and was continued with the Youth Communist International.

Today there are important openings in this field. The organizations leading the revolutionary struggles in Central America, and where they exist their youth organizations, are extremely open to contact with revolutionary youth organizations—in some cases more directly than with our sections. Youth organizations which attempted made good contact with developments in Poland. Given the prominent role played by young people in all movements of revolt, extending our work and contacts in this field is one of the most important areas of work of the youth organizations of the Fourth International.

iii. Regular international youth meetings of the Fourth International. Taking into account the restraining elements such as finances, experience indicates that such international meetings should be regular and carefully prepared in advance so as to limit the element of exchange of simply national experiences actually in the meeting and having the maximum of international discussion.

iv. Coordination through the Bureau of the United Secretariat. It is unrealistic at the present stage to believe that the coordination of the youth work can be carried on by the youth organizations themselves. For the foreseeable future youth work must continue to be coordinated through the international centre and Bureau of the United Secretariat.

THE NECESSITY TODAY OF A CENTRALISED PRIORITY OF WORK AGAINST WAR AND IMPERIALIST MILITARISM

30. A revolutionary youth organization is based on a programme of struggle against all aspects of human exploitation and oppression. It must develop propaganda work against racism and the oppression of women, against national oppression, against all denials of democratic rights. The youth organizations in solidarity with the Fourth International have the same fundamental programme. The key issues of this in each situation must be transformed into central political campaigns of the organization. These priorities must of course be decided in the light of concrete conditions which prevail. Certain of the important of these however flow from the *international* political situation and around these we can and must develop centralised international coordination of work and initiatives.

In the present situation the decisive axis along which such work must be developed is that of the campaign against imperialist militarism and against imperialist intervention in Central America. This corresponds to a key objective necessity—the military drive is together with austerity one of the two chief axes of the imperialist counter-offensive—and to the state of our forces. It should be the priority of work of our youth organizations in imperialist countries today.

The sections and youth organizations in each country will of course have other priorities in addition.

The precise axes of struggle against imperialist war and militarism will of course change in different situations and different countries (e.g. for solidarity with El Salvador, for unilateral disarmament in Britain, against joining NATO in Spain, against the draft in the USA) but the basic themes are dictated by the nature of the imperialist policy.

The aim of the present imperialist drive is not a military attack on the Soviet Union or the Chinese workers states—although the Cuban and Vietnamese states do today face military threats. *The United States and its allies are above all carrying out and preparing themselves for a counter-offensive against the colonial revolution.* At the same time they are building up a military superiority against the Soviet Union which they can use to threaten or prevent the latter giving physical and military aid to unfolding revolutionary processes. The key direction of work and initiatives which must be taken up are twofold—and of course interconnected.

i. Direct solidarity with colonial struggles threatened or attacked by imperialism. This includes, in particular, general solidarity with El Salvador, Nica-

ragua, Grenada, Cuba, Vietnam, but also struggle against French imperialism in Africa, generalised solidarity with Southern Africa, against the British occupation of the North or Ireland, etc. Given the generalised nature of the imperialist counter-offensive and the continuing struggles in the colonial revolution there is a certainty of new developments and needs for solidarity in this field and our sections, and the International as a whole, must be prepared both for sudden, rapid, and further long-term campaigns in these fields.

ii. Direct struggle against militarism inside the imperialist countries. This in particular includes struggles against nuclear weapons (USA, Britain, France), deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles and the Neutron bomb (West Germany, Holland, Belgium, Britain, France, etc.), against conscription or for reduction of military service (USA, France). In

particular we should aim to link this struggle to the one against austerity around slogans, themes, and campaigns of the type, 'Jobs not Bombs', demanding abolition, or as a partial step, elimination of specific elements (Trident programme in Britain, seventh nuclear submarine in France, MX missiles, etc.) of military expenditures, and a mass programme of public expenditure to create jobs and improve social conditions; we can campaign for full civil and political rights in the armed forces, etc.

In terms of immediate ways to internally centralise these campaigns there are not, both for objective and subjective (material resources) reasons, major coordinated initiatives that can be taken. However, certain immediate steps can be undertaken: i) Placing struggle against militarism regularly on the agenda of international youth meetings. ii) Ex-

change of information and press articles, common leaflets, etc. organized centrally, internationally, and bilaterally. iii) Organization bilaterally of exchange of speakers, messages of solidarity, etc. At a later stage it may be possible to take bolder initiatives (international meetings, campaigns, etc. against militarism). But we should start now with what is practical and will help to homogenise our work and increase consciousness, including internationally, on these questions.

By these means we can take up key objective tasks, stimulate our youth work, and by giving an international profile somewhat increase the attractiveness of our national youth organizations, and use it as a way also of increasing the international links and consolidation between our sections and youth organizations. ■