

# International Internal Discussion Bulletin

Volume XX, Number 13

December 1984

\$1.75

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# Political Revolution or Democratic Reform — An Answer to Comrade John Steele

by J. Allio, C. Smuga, A. Wilkins

At the 1982 IEC meeting, Comrade John Steele presented a counter-report on Poland on behalf of the minority of the international leadership.

This document — published in IIDB No. 12 — polemicizes with the original version of the resolution presented by the majority, and gives some quotes that comrades do not know about, since the draft was amended in the course of discussion. A questionable method, to say the least, when you know that Comrade Steele submitted the written version of his report for publication in the IIDB more than a year after the resolution was adopted.

Most regrettable, however, is undoubtedly the fact that, rather than submit to a vote an alternative resolution on the tasks of building the International, the comrades of the minority confine themselves to a polemic on what they interpret as being the majority's deviations and its questioning of Trotsky's theory on the nature of the bureaucratically degenerated or deformed workers states.

In doing so, they attack chapter III of the resolution ("General Theoretical Lessons on the Political Revolution Based On the Polish Experience"), but tell us nothing about what our intervention should be in a movement that, while now clandestine, is nonetheless a massive movement mobilizing hundreds of thousands of activists of the dissolved trade union.

For our part, convinced that it is the comrades of the minority who are questioning our traditional approach to the political revolution, we will take up here the theoretical issues in debate in order to clarify what already appears in the resolution. But the discussion with the comrades of the minority cannot be limited to those points. What is at stake is our ability to translate our orientation into practice through systematic education of our comrades, through campaigns, and through our intervention in Poland itself.

Now, we are compelled to note that, after a period of enthusiasm for the Polish revolution that was reflected, up to the end of 1981, in a series of articles in *Intercontinental Press*, the comrades of the minority have become singularly quiet about the development of the political revolution in Poland. After 1983, we find hardly more than brief comments in *IP* at high points of the mobilization, and a few general articles harping on the necessity of defending the workers state. Very little on the extraordinary experience of Solidarnosc with regard to clandestine organization and struggle, on its discussions, or on the need to actively support the Polish workers' struggles.

Nowadays the comrades no longer hide their skepticism as to the fate of the political revolution. The problem here is not to contrast the pessimists to the optimists but to know whether or not we stand resolutely at the sides of the Polish proletariat in its battle against bureaucratic domination.

Much has already been said about the refusal of the SWP comrades, in the aftermath of the coup attempt, to participate in united solidarity actions on the pretext that that would be playing into the hands of the Social Democrats, and that it is necessary to defend the gains of the workers states against imperialism, and not just Solidarnosc. In his polemic with Comrades Clark,

Novack and Seigle, Comrade Mandel sufficiently explained how such sectarianism represented not only a fundamental questioning of our approach to the united front, but could only be understood by the Polish workers as an abstentionist attitude to their fight (see IIDB No. 3, May 1982).

The comrades of the North American minority refer to "continuity" to justify their position, claiming that this was also the position of the International at the time of the Soviet troops' invasion of Czechoslovakia. But Comrade Steve Bloom, one of the members of the SWP minority who has since been expelled from the party, set the facts straight in his report to the SWP plenum in February 1982: "Our program in 1968 was to encourage the genuine defense of the political revolution by the working class movement through the united front, and to focus our main attention clearly on the crimes of the Stalinists" (IIDB No. 2, May 1982). And the comrade recalled that the united demonstration our English comrades participated in in 1968 was aimed at the Soviet embassy, and that they spoke at it along with other organizations that do not defend the workers state.

But all of this goes back to a central problem: the questioning of the concept of permanent revolution by the comrades of the minority, and, in that context, of the political revolution (see Chapter I, points 2 and 3 of the report on building the international — IIDB No. 14).

## Political Revolution — Yes or No?

In rereading the *IP* articles covering the entire 1980-81 period and up to now, we note a clear change in the positions of the SWP. This change becomes particularly explicit after December 13, 1981 — the moment of truth for all who claimed to support the struggle of the Polish proletariat.

Up to the autumn of 1981, what most of the *IP* articles describe is a revolutionary process on which comrades do not place any prior limits, but rather see as a process of which the outcome can only be that of any proletarian revolution: "culminating in the transfer of power to the workers." In an April 1981 background article, Comrade David Frankel, the current editor of *IP*, based himself on Joe Hansen's authority to explain the extraordinary revolutionary dynamic, under a bureaucratic dictatorship, of any workers struggle apparently limited to one or another immediate or partial economic demand:

"The revolutionary challenge emerges so sharply because the workers cannot achieve economic equality without winning political democracy — and this means deposing bureaucracy. . . .

"Reforms are partial successes on the road to more definitive solutions of pressing problems. . . .

"If any of the demands of any of the stages be . . . fixed as an end in itself rather than a means to a higher goal, it appears as a reform. . . . It is only when the process is viewed as a whole — in its origin, its fundamental aims and final results — that it appears for what it really is, a revolution: an organic qualitative change in whatever structure is involved." (*IP*, Vol. 19, No. 14, pp. 378-79).

For his part, Comrade Frankel thought then that the political revolution "is not only a question of democratic rights and the



composition of government ministries and local authorities" but "a change in the way the entire country is run, from top to bottom." In many ways — not in all, of course — it resembles an anticapitalist social revolution. "Although the antibureaucratic revolution in Poland will not usher in new property relations as will the socialist revolution in France or the United States, it is a social revolution in virtually every other respect." (p. 378)

One of the major similarities between the antibureaucratic political revolution and the anticapitalist social revolution, Frankel pointed out, concerns the fate of the bureaucratic state machinery. To the key question: "Can the Polish regime be reformed?", the comrade then clearly replied that no reform and no democratic conquest by the masses is sufficient to win a decisive victory over the bureaucracy if the state apparatus remains in the latter's hands:

"Past experience shows that failure to dismantle this apparatus will result in the erosion and eventual nullification of most of the gains made by the workers. That was the case following the 1956 upsurge and again after 1970. . . .

"To break out of this, the workers have to do with the government what they have done with the trade unions — replace the bureaucratized structure with one that will enable them to exert direct control." [IP, April 20, 1981, p. 380]

One need only compare this position with the one that Comrade Steele puts forward now! Having said this, the positions developed by the SWP in 1981 on the outcome of the political revolution are far from being free of contradictions. On the one hand, the IP correspondents sent to Poland describe a revolutionary process that is deepening, in particular with the development of the movement for workers self-management. They report that "increasingly, [the workers] are seeing direct and democratic management by the workers themselves as the only viable solution to the country's economic crisis," [IP, Sept. 7, 1981, p. 872] and that they demand "to manage and not just co-manage or participate in the management." [IP, p. 878]

The same writers appeared optimistic about "the breadth of the revolutionary process taking place in Poland and the goals at stake." Nevertheless, at the same time, these same articles — a paragraph later — mentioned "the struggle for democratization of the workers state," and IP published without comment various interviews with leaders of Solidarnosc or KOR stating that "the revolution must limit itself." Moreover, the comrades of the minority, at the USec meeting in November 1981, explicitly rejected the idea that a situation of dual power existed in Poland.

### On the Concept of Dual Power

It was mainly after December 13 that the minority confirmed and systematized its positions regarding what it increasingly avoids calling a political revolution. In his report to the February 1982 plenum, Comrade Seigle declared:

"The fact is that there *was* no dual power in Poland, in the sense in which that term has been used by the Marxist movement. . . .

" . . . 'dual power' does not refer simply to the existence of powerful workers organizations. Rather, as it has been used by the Marxist movement, it refers to a particular form that the confrontation of class forces assumes when you have two counterposed poles of *governmental* power, two centers of governmental power, or two counterposed military forces that challenge each other. . . .

"Solidarity did not exercise any governmental power. It did not command any military force, not even workers self-defense organizations. It did not exercise control over the distribution of goods. . . .

"[There] were the workers councils, or the workers self-management committees. And the workers were able to force the bureaucracy, through its parliament, to grant a measure of legalized

existence, some legal status, to those committees. But this fact itself shows how far from dual power the situation was. When you have dual power, as in Russia between February and October 1917, the soviets don't derive their authority from the opposing center of governmental power. They draw their legal standing, their governmental authority, from their *own* strength, their own power. That was not the case in Poland. . . .

"What Solidarity had conquered before December 13-14 was far short of establishing the framework for a successful transfer of political power from the bureaucracy to the workers themselves. The majority of the Polish workers had not reached the conclusion that this was either necessary or possible. Under those circumstances, any attempt by the Solidarity leadership to suck an insurrection out of their thumbs, or to prepare for an armed showdown with the bureaucracy, would have been suicidal. It would have led to a bloodbath. It would have been a criminal adventure." (IIDB, No. 2 in 1982, pp. 28-29)

This analysis is extremely grave. It implies that there was no revolution in Poland since dual power is one of its basic elements, as Trotsky demonstrated. Comrade Seigle resorts to an "ideal type" of dual power which he compares to the situation in Poland in order to state that the latter did not correspond to this schema. He neglects to point out, however, that the most classic case of dual power — the one that existed in Russia — did not correspond to it either.

First, he dwells on the existence of "two centers of governmental power," without explaining that, in this type of situation, the term "governmental power" cannot be taken in its "normal" sense. Lenin said that in Russia there was a bourgeois government "that holds all the organs of power, and a parallel, complementary government, a 'controlling' government" represented by the Petrograd soviet of workers and soldiers deputies, "that does not hold the organs of state power but relies directly on the undisputed majority of the people." Exactly like Solidarity. Two opposite poles? Yes, but not necessarily in the sense Comrade Seigle ascribed to it. To Lenin, the Petrograd soviet did represent such an alternative pole, all the same: "it voluntarily hands state power to the bourgeoisie and to its provisional government, voluntarily gives way to the latter after having signed an agreement with it supporting it, and confines itself to the role of an observer. . . ." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 52-53 [French edition]) We might add that Solidarity, for its part, never signed "an agreement supporting it" with the bureaucratic government.

Second, it is true that the existence of a powerful workers organization does not in itself imply that there is dual power — but that is true in capitalist society. In a workers state under a bureaucratic dictatorship, on the other hand, it is sufficient. For then, dual power is not "a special form that the class confrontation takes," given the fact that it is not classes that are in conflict. In this type of state, the working class is the only fundamental class, and it is confronting not another class but a parasitic caste, that does not wield class power but rather usurps the power of the working class. This caste maintains a totalitarian dictatorship because it cannot coexist with a force such as a powerful workers organization. And when it is forced into such "coexistence," it means that it has lost a large part of its power and precisely that dual power exists. This is where the fundamental difference lies between the bourgeois regime and the bureaucratic dictatorship as to dual power.

Third, it is not true that there is dual power only when soviets or soviet-type organs exist. Trotsky clearly explained that it is not the form, but the political class content of an organization or institution that is decisive, and he opposed making a fetish out of soviets as a form. He said that if the Bolsheviks had not won a majority of the soviets, they would have relied on a different type of institution — the factory committees — to organize the armed insurrection. In Bolivia and Peru, it is the trade-union organiza-



tions that embody the alternative power.

Fourth, it is also not true that the Polish workers councils drew their power from the bureaucracy's governmental authority. Many of them were created "illegally," before the "law on workers self-management" was promulgated. Moreover, this law did not give them any power; on the contrary, it enabled the bureaucracy to "regulate" (read: smother) their real authority. Once the law was adopted, the workers councils did not function in accordance with the legal framework but according to the wishes of the workers, who — explicitly supported by Solidarity — decided to ignore the law whenever it did not suit them. For their part, the German factory councils formally existed on the basis of a law, but Trotsky stated: "Only anarchists can draw the conclusion from this that it is impermissible to exploit either the Weimar Constitution or the law on the factory councils. It is necessary to exploit the one as well as the other. But, in a revolutionary fashion. The factory councils are not what the law makes them, but what the workers make them." (*The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, p. 85)

This is the same way things must be seen in Poland. Trotsky also explained that it is necessary to distinguish between political dual power in the country and economic dual power in the factory: the two do not necessarily arise at the same time, nor are they necessarily embodied in the same organizations.

### The Reality of the Situation in Poland Before December 13

In Poland, the alternative power was embodied in Solidarity, which was never merely a trade union, even in its organizational forms, which were very different from those of a traditional trade union. It was a combination of a trade union and soviet-type organs. Solidarity's leadership body represented the country's second center of power. Objectively, that is what was happening. The fact that subjectively its leadership was not recognized as a counter power in no way invalidates that statement. The Russian soviets were not recognized either as alternative organs of power until the Bolsheviks won a majority within them. And yet, that is what they were, as Lenin and Trotsky clearly showed.

In Poland, the workers factory councils that exercised control over production were typical organs of dual economic power within the production units. In this they corresponded to the level of dual power Trotsky discussed in his theoretical writings on Germany. The bureaucracy's power ended where the sphere of decision-making of Solidarity and the movement for workers self-management, based on mass action, began. Anyone who was in Poland at that time was constantly aware that there was a shifting boundary — invisible but perceptible — dividing the country between two powers, which were of course contesting certain spheres of influence — not geographic but political. That a large number of Polish workers had illusions as to the possibility of perpetuating the unstable situation and forcing the bureaucracy to retreat a bit more without the latter resorting to force is rather clear. Otherwise we could not explain the success of Jaruzelski's coup attempt. But that they did not think it necessary to get rid of the bureaucracy once and for all is a different matter.

As attested by numerous *IP* articles prior to December 13, there no longer existed a *single* center of power in Poland. It was therefore obvious that the situation could not last and that a showdown was inevitable. Isn't it remarkable, therefore, for revolutionaries to assert that "it would have been suicidal to prepare (our emphasis) for an armed confrontation with the bureaucracy"? Comrade Seigle — not knowing that the last meeting of Solidarity's national leadership, held on the very night of the attempted coup, *had* indeed posed the question of power by deciding to launch a national referendum on workers and territorial self-management and on the forms of state power — went as far as to say that it was a "provocation" to have raised the slogan "All power to Solidarity," as some SWP comrades had done at a

demonstration on December 14. For various reasons, the content of that slogan is questionable. But a provocation *toward whom*?

Should we have applied this kind of reasoning to the Cuban or the Nicaraguan revolution, perchance? Should we apply it tomorrow to the Salvadoran revolution? The theorizations — developed mainly after the fact — of the minority comrades, to the effect that a dual power situation did not exist, go hand in hand with their silence on the fact that December 13 was a *political counterrevolution* (see the Mandel-Seigle polemic, *IIDB* No. 3). All of this barely hides a *turn* on the part of the international minority. The same E. Harsch who had described the revolutionary process at length in his articles wrote on December 28, 1981: "The . . . thrust of Solidarity's demands [was for] working people to gain *greater* control (our emphasis) over their society" in order to "*correct* (our emphasis) the abuses of the bureaucracy." In short — which the comrades had the decency not to say — to make reforms and not the revolution. This turn explains J. Steele's fervor to reject the bulk of the theoretical lessons we have drawn from the Polish revolution and the developments or updating we see in it of several aspects of our theoretical heritage.

### Reform or Destruction of the Bureaucratic State Apparatuses?

One of the major differences concerns the tasks of the political revolution vis-a-vis the bureaucratic apparatus of the workers state. For our part, we think that this task consists of destroying all of the police, military and civilian apparatuses in which the totalitarian bureaucratic power is concentrated and embodied. As our comrades of the Revolutionary Youth Movement of Czechoslovakia did in 1969, we proclaim that the road to socialism "will be through the destruction of the bureaucratic machine, the suppression of the bureaucracy as a social layer, and the establishment of a system of self-management." Our position provokes J. Steele, for two reasons.

First, in the guise of theoretical rigor, he tumbles into complete confusion over an elementary question, mixing up the destruction of the state apparatus (a Marxist concept) with the "destruction (demolishing, abolishing, crushing) of the state," a term he uses several times (and that expresses an anarchist idea). What he suggests — neither more nor less — is that we mean to destroy the workers state. For — he says, apparently basing himself on Trotsky — the workers state, like any other, is not merely a system of apparatuses and institutions but also an economic and social base. Precisely; the state is both. Now, in a workers state under bureaucratic domination, there is an antagonistic contradiction between the two.

Second, J. Steele rebukes us for viewing this task the same way as in a social revolution. The difference between an anti-capitalist social revolution and an antibureaucratic political revolution is that the former has two tasks to accomplish: destroy the existing state apparatus and expropriate the bourgeoisie, while the latter is limited to destroying the state apparatus; the bureaucracy not being a ruling class, there is no need to expropriate it in order to take away its power. This means that as far as the state apparatus is concerned, the tasks of both revolutions are identical, on the whole. This is so because in both cases, it involves ending the political domination over the working class, which still means destroying the instruments of that domination.

From this standpoint, there is no difference between the fact that the political domination is exerted by an exploiting class rather than a parasitic caste, since both impose their rule through a bureaucratic state machine. What distinguishes all revolutions, including political, from a reform — and what distinguishes all completed revolutions from an unfinished, interrupted (or "self-limited") revolution is that, in the first case, one acts in a revolutionary manner, by destroying the bureaucratic state machine,



while in the second case, one claims to transfer it from one side to another. To question this task, with regard to the political revolution, means giving up on the revolution and claiming to replace it with a democratic reform. Such is Steele's position, inasmuch as he refuses to admit that the task of the political revolution is to destroy the bureaucratic apparatus of the workers state. For him, the task is limited to merely "sweeping out the bureaucratic caste," to "getting rid of the current officers" of the army and so forth, while leaving intact the apparatuses of the bureaucratic state power and being satisfied to "democratize" them. To justify his giving up on the political revolution, he falls back on the dual, contradictory nature of the bureaucratic apparatuses of the workers state, which, on the one hand, oppress the working class and other social groups and, on the other hand, defend the workers state against imperialism. Steele thinks that the Polish workers should not destroy the state military apparatus because "the Polish army stands as one of the main weapons against the imperialist armies of the NATO forces." This army, like the other state apparatuses, he adds, "play a necessary role vis-a-vis the workers states, inadequately and with counterrevolutionary methods." To which we reply: no reactionary army can be a good defender of a progressive state. We do not want the workers states to be defended by their army in as disgraceful a manner as in the USSR in 1941.

When a military dictatorship topples in a capitalist country, the new bourgeois government generally promises to apply measures similar to those advocated by J. Steele: purging, democratizing and reorganizing the army. We know very well what the effects of such measures are, even when they are applied, and we refuse to engage in this type of demagoguery. In order for the political revolution to crush the counterrevolution taking shape within the military apparatus, it must thoroughly destroy the latter. We agree with Kuron and Modzelewski, who, while they were still revolutionary Marxists, wrote:

"In the system of workers democracy, the political police and the regular (standing) army cannot be maintained in any form. . . . To do this, it is not enough to change the officers: the regular army, like the political police, is by its very essence an instrument of the antipeople dictatorship. As long as it remains, a clique of generals can always raise themselves above any party or council. . . . In order to make it impossible to overthrow its democracy, the working class must be armed. This particularly concerns the workers in heavy industry, who would be organized everywhere into workers militias under the control of the system of councils." (*Lettre ouverte au Parti ouvrier polonais* (An Open Letter to the Polish Communist Party), Maspero, 1969, p. 71)

Win over the army's troops (and those of the militia); demolish their apparatus: this traditional task of all revolutions is one that the political revolution in Poland and other countries will have to face. "The workers and peasants," says J. Steele, "will get rid of the bureaucracy's hideous apparatus of secret police, political prisons and concentration camps." But how will they do this? By taking them over and "democratizing" them, or by destroying them? Were the workers of Poznan and Budapest, who took up arms and attacked the political police headquarters in 1956 trying to take hold of that dreadful apparatus and "democratize" it, or to thoroughly eliminate it? Yet, to a certain degree, the Stalinist political police also served to defend the workers state from the CIA.

What is true for the civilian and military apparatuses of the workers states is also true for the civilian apparatuses in which the bureaucracy's power is embodied and concentrated; this includes the principal institutions of the public administration, the judicial power, economic management, the ruling party, etc. The Polish revolution had begun to destroy the most varied civilian bureaucratic apparatuses. In the course of the struggle, the

workers who, at the outset, had wanted only to purge, control and democratize discovered more and more state apparatuses that were neither controllable nor reformable, and that had to be smashed, eliminated, dissolved, in short, destroyed. The experience of the political revolution itself will show which are the apparatuses that must be destroyed and which can be transformed. But there can be no doubt that in any thoroughgoing political revolution culminating in a decisive victory, there will be a huge number of existing state apparatuses that will have to be destroyed. Far from opposing this task of destruction, revolutionary Marxists have the duty to point out to the mass movement every nest of counterrevolution or of bureaucratic restoration that they are able to identify, and to make sure they are eradicated. That is the road to a decisive victory for the political revolution.

### On Socialization of the Means of Production

One of the most serious theoretical confusions J. Steele commits has to do with his rejection of the idea that the decisive victory of the political revolution will mean the beginning of the process of the state's extinction and true socialization of the means of production. A point of view he regards as "completely utopian, hence dangerous" and "not very far from anarcho-sindicalist and councilist ideas combatted by Lenin, Trotsky, and other Bolsheviks."

For revolutionary Marxists today, the theory of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky on the workers state remains perfectly valid: namely, that from the very beginning of its existence, it can only be a semistate, a state en route to extinction. If this is not true, we know what happens: a workers state that does not tend to wither away is a workers state that bureaucratically degenerates. It's an iron rule. "The state as a bureaucratic apparatus," Trotsky said, "begins to wither away from the first day of the proletarian dictatorship. Such is the road of the program, which has not been abrogated to this day." (*De la revolution*, p. 477) But for J. Steele, this program has indeed been abrogated. It has been, it's true — but by Stalin and his imitators. For our part, we reject such an abrogation, against which Trotsky was the first to protest.

It is not the extinction of the workers state but its strengthening that J. Steele advocates. For him, defense of the workers state against imperialism requires a strong state: we know this argument, repeated so often by Stalin and by all bureaucratic dictatorships. The revolutionary Marxist position on this question is clear: "The necessity of defending itself against external threats from the capitalist enemies," Trotsky stated, "is in itself entirely compatible with the weakening of state coercion within: the solidarity and conscious discipline of socialist society should produce the best results both on the battlefield and in the realm of production." (*Quatrieme Internationale*, No. 11, 1983, p. 119)

Contrary to the Stalinists, we think that the strength of the workers state, including its capacity to defend itself against imperialism, does not depend on the power of its apparatuses. It increases to the very extent that the special state apparatuses weaken, to the extent that the state is gradually absorbed by the self-managed society, into which it is dissolved, as Trotsky stated. This defensive capacity is strengthened as a growing number of management tasks are taken over by the workers themselves at all levels. Where the workers state is not en route to extinction, there is no gradual socialization of the state means of production either. We defend the state property against imperialism and against all attempts to restore private property and capitalism. But at the same time, we fight to transfer the management of that property from the bureaucratic state apparatuses, from the bureaucratic dictatorship, to the workers themselves, so that they can establish a collective, democratic management. That is why the Fourth International so warmly hailed the revolutionary actions of the Polish workers and their trade union, Solidarity,



which were aimed at establishing a system of workers self-management in the factories, the provinces and the entire state sector of the economy. That is why we always support the democratic formation, from below, of workers councils, and their coordination in any revolution, be it social or political, as well as the seizure of power, both economic and political, by those organs of workers self-management. That the power in the factories, in management of the economy, the state power should be the power of the workers and their freely elected, democratically centralized councils: such has been our motto since the Bolsheviks raised their slogan "All power to the soviets!"

It is incredible that Steele regards as a "far-fetched conclusion" our position that the Polish social movement had — and will have again during a new revolutionary upsurge — "the objective task of taking power and establishing a regime based on socialist property relations, council democracy, and self-management."

### **Are Workers in the Bureaucratized Workers States Exploited or Not?**

The linchpin of J. Steele's entire charge that the IEC's resolution on Poland is a "fundamental challenge to the Marxist foundations of the Fourth International" is the fact that we recognize the exploitation of the working class as a reality in the workers states under bureaucratic dictatorship. We will not polemicize with J. Steele's scandalous falsifications when he claims that the resolution attributes a purely legal and formal character to state property, whereas the text reiterates the traditional Marxist theory, stating: "transformation of the means of production expropriated from the bourgeoisie into state property is obviously a formal-juridical means of prime importance for the socialization of the means of production." J. Steele interprets: "State property, like capitalist property, turns out to be the social foundation of exploitation."

We never said anything of the kind. Like Trotsky, we fight implacably all who see in the Soviet workers state a new society of class exploitation. It is true that Marx, like Engels and Lenin, thought that exploitation would disappear with the abolition of private property. They did not foresee that the course of history might take a different route, for they did not foresee that the workers state would degenerate. Trotsky, for his part, went through the experience of that degeneration. Without giving in an inch to the various revisionists and detractors of Marxism, he wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed* about Stalin's Soviet Constitution: "When it declares that the exploitation of man by man has been abolished in the USSR, (it) states the opposite of the truth."

He emphasized that the bureaucratic power in that country had "created the conditions for a rebirth of exploitation in the most barbaric forms." Which was confirmed years later by the revelations concerning the barbaric exploitation of several million Soviet citizens condemned to forced labor in the concentration-camp system. With regard to the relations of production established by the October revolution, the resolution of the Second Congress of the International in 1948 stated: "Historically, these relations of production can only be decisively maintained and developed on the basis of workers control over production, of the deeper and deeper transformation of the proletariat from the object to the subject of the economy. The abolition of such workers control, the complete exclusion of the proletariat from all participation in planning, could only further alienate the given relations of production from those who guarantee an abolition of exploitation of man by man. In this sense, historical evolution has clearly changed direction in Russia."

In the same resolution, we read: "The bureaucracy possesses all the reactionary traits of the old ruling classes — parasitism, waste of the social surplus product, cruelty toward the oppressed, shameless exploitation of the producers — without pos-

sessing their progressive traits: the necessary historical function of introducing and defending an economic system superior from the standpoint of the division of labor and ownership of the means of production."

It is our duty to denounce the exploitation to which the working class is subjected by the bureaucracy, to be familiar with the methods and systems of that exploitation, to learn how to fight it. In the workers states, the ruling bureaucracy is not an exploiting class. Its political power is not rooted in the exploitation of man by man, unlike that of the bourgeoisie and every other ruling class of the past. But by the very fact that it usurps political power enabling it to control the basic means of production and the social surplus product, the bureaucracy keeps the workers under exploitation.

Unlike the bourgeoisie, which must not only be deprived of political power but also expropriated (its property eliminated), in order to abolish exploitation, it is sufficient to strip the bureaucracy of political power in order to end the exploitation of the working class. That is the whole difference between class exploitation and the exploitation created by the bureaucracy's political power. Under capitalism, the workers are politically oppressed because they are exploited. Under a bureaucratic dictatorship, the workers are exploited because they are politically oppressed. That is why we say that under bureaucratic rule, exploitation is not rooted in the contradictions of the process of production and that it is not inherent to the relations of production existing in the workers states. That is also why we say that exploitation disappears when a true socialization of the means of production develops.

Under a bureaucratic dictatorship, the question of working-class exploitation is posed at two levels, each of which corresponds to political tasks for revolutionaries and for the mass movement. The first level concerns the bureaucracy's control over the social surplus product. It is not only, or fundamentally, a matter of the fact that the bureaucracy appropriates part of this surplus product in order to satisfy its desires for material privileges. It uses this surplus, divides it according to its own interests — both its overall interests and the particular interests of the various sectors, factions, underlayers, cliques, etc. of its many apparatuses. The working class, whose labor produces that surplus, has no control over its use or division. The surplus, wrested from the working class, is essentially transformed into material means of rule for the bureaucracy. It is enough to note this elementary fact to recognize that the working class is exploited.

It is to be expected that J. Steele will answer, as is his habit, that the social surplus product is also used for the defense of the workers state, for example, and we agree with that. But even if we discovered (which is not a foregone conclusion) a single case in which that surplus was used for strict purposes of defending the workers state against imperialism, we would immediately realize that that share of the surplus is used irrationally from an economic standpoint, with a huge amount of waste, and, as far as defense is concerned, according to purely reactionary decisions that correspond to the very nature of the bureaucracy. Even in such a case, the bureaucracy's use of the fruits of working-class labor remains a form of exploitation.

The second level concerns excessive exploitation: the worker is subjected to a lengthening of the work day or a speed-up of work, without the increased muscular and nervous exhaustion being fully compensated. For anyone not directly familiar with the methods used to increase overwork in the factories of Poland, it is enough to read the book by the Hungarian dissident Haraszti on the individual piecework wage system that continues to predominate under the bureaucratic dictatorships. But we note similar excesses concerning other kinds of wages. In Poland, a drastic rise in the norms of labor output without a corresponding in-



crease in productivity has been one of the immediate causes for the outbreak of workers rebellions three times already — in June 1956, December 1970, and July-August 1980.

Given the extreme irregularity in the process of production — inherent to bureaucratic management — wages often fall below the value of the labor force during cyclical periods of work slow-down. They rise again during periods of “attack,” when an effort is made to “catch up with” the plan, but most of the time this does not offset the previous loss, for they do not even compensate the worker’s increased effort.

Moreover, what wage increase can reimburse workers for the destruction of their physical strength and intellectual capacities, given the inhuman working conditions that exist in many factories in Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe? Or for the contamination of the atmosphere, which is breaking world records in many industrial centers of these countries? Nowadays, the “economic reforms” in Poland, as in Rumania, the USSR, etc., are more and more boiling down to a policy of accumulation based on the growing exploitation of the working class in absolute terms. For Comrade Steele, this is perhaps a matter of details, compared with his sole concern, which is the defense of the workers states. For us, the defense of those states against imperialism cannot be separated from the defense of the working class against the bureaucracy of those same states. Defense against the absolute exploitation which is growing and becoming generalized under the bureaucratic dictatorship is now one of the main tasks of the Polish social movement. Many things depend on the capacity to provide that defense because without it, as Marx said, the working class “would certainly deprive itself of the possibility of undertaking one or another movement of greater scope.” In this case, that means again undertaking the political revolution.

Today, resist the growing exploitation; tomorrow, abolish exploitation by taking political power, and establishing collective, democratic management of the means of production and the fruits of labor. These are some of the major aspects of the program that we, as revolutionary Marxists, should put forward to the Polish workers and to underground Solidarity.

### **Holding Up Cuba As An Example To Polish Workers**

Imagine the shock of delegates to the congress of the French LCR, held on December 15-19, 1981, at hearing the representative of the SWP Political Bureau lengthily praise the Cuban leadership — defined as “Marxist, proletarian and revolutionary” — without saying a word about the fact that that leadership had just openly approved Jaruzelski’s coup attempt in the name of “defending socialism!”

We already had tolerable cause for concern — the word is mild — at the way in which the SWP in 1980-81 systematically minimized the problems by speaking of the Cuban leadership’s “wrong position.” But after December 13, we were absolutely dumbfounded! In a February 22, 1982 article patiently explaining to the Cubans that they were wrong to see Solidarity as a force threatening to restore capitalism, David Frankel again mentioned — though quickly glossing over it — the publication in *Granma* of articles supporting the state of emergency. But a week later, Comrade Seigle stated outright: “Fidel didn’t attack the imposition of martial law, nor did he attempt to justify it.” Further on, he explained that we should not criticize the Cubans but should discuss with them, “from the standpoint of being, ourselves, part of the same camp politically as the leadership of the Cuban revolution.” (*IIDB* No. 2, May 1982) To the point of glossing over the implications of Castro’s position, which justified a possible Soviet military intervention in Poland when he declared: “There is not the slightest question about the socialist camp’s right to save that country’s integrity and ensure that it survives and resists at all costs imperialism’s onslaught.” (*IP*,

February 22, 1982)

Comrades of the SWP minority, in a balance-sheet document after their expulsion, had to declare: “Concerning the struggles in Poland, the party had little by little adopted the line that what was at stake was defense of the workers state. This was accompanied by an apology for the Cuban CP’s position on Poland. The party abstractly explained that the Cubans took as their starting-point the defense of the workers states, even if their conclusions were wrong. The comrades of the minority replied that the battleground in Poland was determined by the real conflict between Solidarity and the Stalinist bureaucracy, and not by some mythical battle for or against nationalized property.”

Through holding up the Cuban leadership as an example, the comrades of the North American majority have been led quite simply to *forget* that, whatever its revolutionary attitude may be toward the process in Central America, that same leadership has adopted a *counterrevolutionary* attitude toward Poland. On several occasions, they have gone so far as to tell us that we should hold up Fidel Castro’s international policy to the Polish workers — at the very moment when Castro was awarding the Jose Marti order to Jaruzelski for “services rendered to the cause of socialism!” Of course, it is incumbent on us, as Comrade Steele says, “to explain to the Polish workers the role of Solidarity in the struggle against imperialism.” But isn’t it a bit thick to forever criticize Solidarity — as the comrades did after a certain period — for not understanding the importance of the anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples of Central America, while remaining nearly silent about the errors of the Cuban leadership, which has been in power for twenty-five years, and which *condemns* political revolutions as the work of imperialism?

### **A 180° Turn Vis-a-Vis Solidarity’s Leadership**

In their insistence on looking at the course of the world revolution through Fidel’s eyeglasses, the comrades of the international minority fall into insurmountable contradictions, and that is what explains their extraordinary 180° turn in their understanding of Solidarity’s leadership. In April 1981, Comrade Frankel wrote:

“The first and most basic test of any class-struggle leadership is that it rely on and advance the independent organization and mobilization of the working class and its allies. The leadership of Solidarity has certainly met this test. . . .

“As the struggle of the Polish workers and peasants continues, and as Solidarity tries to find allies on a world scale, it will look more and more to the battles of workers and peasants in other countries. Its own class base and the content of its demands drive it in that direction — in the direction of Marxism.” (*IP*, April 20, 1981, p. 382)

In her zeal to defend Solidarity’s leadership against all criticism, Susan Haig even wrote in July 1981:

“The Polish Solidarity leaders have stood up exceedingly well on the key political issues that put them to the test in the class struggle. So too have the Cubans on the key issues that test them. We should treat them both the same.” (*SWP DB*, July 1981, No. 18, p. 5)

At the time, the comrades of the international minority criticized our sectarianism toward the Solidarity leadership in the sense that, while hailing the fantastic development of the Polish political revolution, we also pointed out in our documents the movement’s strategic deficiencies and the more particular responsibilities in that respect of certain currents in its leadership. But, beginning in 1983, the tone of *IP* articles on the question — at present few and far between — changed radically. From then on, emphasis was placed on the weaknesses of Solidarity’s leadership — both before and after December 13 — its ignorance of international problems, and most particularly of the way the Cuban state operates, Cuba being constantly presented as the



shining example from which the Polish workers should take their inspiration (see *IP*, March 28, 1983).

In July 1983, during the Pope's visit to Poland, *IP* published an article dwelling on the Polish workers' illusions in the Catholic church — the only reason given to explain the size of the rallies — and totally ignoring the antibureaucratic nature of the demonstrations that took place at that time.

In April 1984, *IP* interpreted the "crucifix strike" as a pure illustration of the dominant influence of the Catholic church over the Polish workers, blaming this state of affairs on the "narrow political perspective of the Solidarity leadership" prior to December 13, 1981: "The leaders of Solidarity only rarely explained their demands within an explicitly prosocialist framework. . . . Many expressed illusions in the role of the imperialist governments and especially of the proimperialist union leaderships in the United States and Western Europe." And having neatly buried the clandestine resistance movement (on the eve of the demonstrations of May 1, 1984, which would, for the umpteenth time, unite tens of thousands of persons in a clash with the repressive forces), the article concluded that to defend the crucifixes "even in the name of opposing the bureaucracy's arbitrary and undemocratic methods of rule . . . can only serve to deepen the ideological confusion that persists among the working people in Poland and provide further openings for the imperialist campaign against the Polish workers state."

What conclusion can we draw from all of this, except that the comrades of the international minority place themselves — whether they wish it or not — in the camp of those who have "given up" on the political revolution, that they are "playing the

winners"? How can this turn be justified, if not fundamentally by the comrades' revisions of the concepts of permanent revolution and political revolution? Which leads them, in the name of theories about the epicenter of the world revolution, and based on a totally unilateral view of the struggle against imperialism, to gamble on the unconditional defense of the workers state at the expense of elementary solidarity with the clandestine movement of the Polish workers.

It is not a question of denying the difficulties that movement is going through, nor the deficiencies of its leaderships and the weaknesses of its programmatic orientation. For our part, we feel that we have largely dealt with these questions in the Polish *Inprekor*, the French *Inprekor*, and the English *International Viewpoint* both before and after December 13. But we viewed what was taking place in Poland as a revolution, while being critical and trying to put forward a program and perspectives for action that could enable the movement to move forward toward the conquest of power by the workers as a whole. That is why we have not buried Solidarity today. (There would be a great deal to say about the solidarity work concretely done by both sides, before Jaruzelski's coup and especially afterward.)

More than two years after the political counterrevolution — and whatever its deficiencies — the clandestine movement is a phenomenon never before seen in history in its duration and breadth. It testifies not only to the Polish workers' determination to continue the fight for the goals they set at Solidarity's First Congress, but also to the richness of their experiences during the eighteen months of the independent trade union's legal existence, and to the inevitability, in the long run, of new upsurges of the political revolution in Poland.



# Amendments to "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Poland"

By Klein, British section of the Fourth International;  
and Sandor and Verla, Revolutionary Communist League, France

## Introductory note

The spirit of the following amendments was expressed in the contribution "Poland: or How a Resolution That Poses No Problems Does Not Resolve Any" (IIDB, Vol XX, Number 5). We will not repeat the points made there.

In our opinion the amendments below would improve the text, but nonetheless:

a) the plan — which remains that of the initial resolution — is still confused;

b) a certain number of difficult points specific to Poland are underdeveloped (the Church, nationalism, the peasantry);

c) the section on tasks of the initial document must be made more precise. This is in the process of being rewritten.

The proposal in our amendments to delete certain sections of the initial document does not necessarily imply disagreement, but as we are adding points it seems better to eliminate unnecessarily repetitive passages, or those that are too conjunctural, to keep the text to a reasonable length.

Even as amended the text is still for "internal consumption". After the World Congress it should be carefully rewritten so that it can be translated into Polish, Russian, etc.

1. Page 4, first column, line 11: Delete from: "In none of the previous cases" . . . to "as they have this time."

2. Page 4, first column, line 20: Delete from "Nevertheless, the workers and leadership" . . . to . . . "political revolutions as a whole."

3. Page 4, first column, line 43: Delete from ". . . since they promoted" . . . to . . . "the social power of the workers."

4. Page 4, second column, point c) Replace with:

c) The economic and social transformation of Poland in the postwar period, made possible by the destruction of the landowning and capitalist classes whose power had strangled economic development in the interwar period, had greatly strengthened the social position of the working class and finally weakened the capacity of the bureaucracy to maintain its domination. By the beginning of the Gierek regime, the bureaucracy was no longer capable of maintaining its rule by the type of Totalitarian rule practiced in the Stalin period. The Gierek leadership had to seek to restore bureaucratic authority by pledging to the workers certain basic social rights and economic rights and by pledging that never again would it turn the guns of the Polish state against the workers. Throughout the 1970s, it desperately sought to carry through these pledges and to stabilise bureaucratic power in the face of pressure from below. It had to try to recruit hundreds of thousands of new workers into the Party, despite the fact that these workers in the big plants repeatedly showed their readiness to link up with the non-party workers in pressing for better conditions of life. As the regime's economic strategy collapsed, it tried in vain to renege on its pledges in 1976 and was immediately forced to back down in the face of a nation-wide assertion of a working class veto. Its half-baked efforts to victimise the leaders of the strikes in 1976 only aided the development of unofficial networks of trade unionism and political activism, which the regime did not feel strong enough to crush. In response to this pressure from the working class, the Gierek regime sought to maintain its control by utilising non-socialist ideologies such

as nationalism, quietist and authoritarian Catholicism, consumerism and corporatism in order to maintain its own monopoly over socialist ideological currents and thus prevent the workers from making sense of their own oppression and from generating an alternative road out of the crisis. Above all, the bureaucracy turned more and more after 1976 towards the Church hierarchy as a potential ally in ensuring the maintenance of stable rule.

5. Page 5, first column, line 39: Delete from: "The bureaucratic regime only decided" . . . to . . . "in order to break the strike." Replace with:

For most of this period, the bureaucratic regime was thrown into a desperate defensive battle simply to preserve its central apparatuses of repression and administration intact. It was absolutely incapable of preventing the gigantic growth and organisational consolidation of the popular movement and during this period of growth, the bureaucracy's main efforts were directed to preventing the huge energy of this movement from flooding the PZPR and throwing up currents within the PZPR that could have ripped whole parts of that apparatus out of bureaucratic control onto the side of and under the *discipline* of the working class movement. It was only after this had been successfully achieved by the Emergency Party Congress and after the effects of the huge economic crisis had begun to sap the energy of the broad mass of the population, that the bureaucracy was able to pass over to the offensive against Solidarnosc, secure in the knowledge that the Solidarnosc leadership was fully committed to avoiding an insurrectionary confrontation with the regime. And it was necessary for Solidarnosc and the workers' movement to be differentiated — as was the case in December 1981 — before the bureaucracy could risk its military strike against the popular movement, a strike that the leadership around Jaruzelski had long been preparing.

6. Page 5, first column, line 55: Add after "The social composition of the mass movement was": organisationally

7. Page 5, second column, line 43: After ". . . the system of rationing of essential products" delete "significantly".

8. Page 6, second column, line 41: Add new point 6 bis:

The argument of the Soviet tanks was the ideological base of self-limitation; the idea being that any attempt to take power would inevitably bring about a bloody defeat. The fact that this argument provided a pretext for those who for social and political reasons wanted the self-paralysis of the movement does not mean that revolutionary Marxists do not have to reply carefully to this point: this idea was widely held in Poland (and in other "people's democracies") and is still widely held today. What good would be a victory against Jaruzelski's Polish tanks, that could only be temporary, when it would only bring the Soviet tanks which would do worse?

The reply is as follows:

1. The self-limitation strategy is destined to fail: it disregards the laws of all revolutions. Continuing strong mobilisation of the workers is indispensable to prevent a counter-revolution. But the mobilisation of the working class could only continue in the long term if it led to practical results, and significant practical results inevitably imply overthrowing the bureaucracy and taking power. (Obviously our criticism of the self-limiting strategy does not mean a refusal to use any compromise or manoeuvre to gain



time.)

2. But would not any attempt to take power have been adventurist given the Soviet tanks?

There is no way of definitely avoiding a Soviet intervention. However, we have to act in such a way that, if the gentlemen of the Kremlin decide to do so, the adventure will be for them.

In certain conditions Soviet intervention could boomerang back on the Soviet bureaucracy itself and confront it with the following alternative: to either allow the political revolution to develop in Poland with all the medium-term risks that could imply for it; or to intervene militarily with the immediate danger of seeing its army — and those of the Warsaw pact — disintegrate under the blows of a proletarian revolution in action. All the actions of the mass movement's leadership must be directed towards this end: the creation of the national and international conditions in which a Soviet intervention would be the signal for an extension of the antibureaucratic revolution and thus a defeat for the Kremlin.

This implies that at the national level everything should be subordinated to keeping up and developing the activity of the working class, and a clear programme for this with three functions:

a) to open up a concrete perspective for the development and unification of the activity of the masses in the logic of the Transitional Programme;

b) to give an understandable and attractive image of the Polish revolution to the workers (and soldiers) of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw pact countries;

c) affirm the support for the Polish revolution for the workers of the capitalist and Third World countries, thus creating a greater risk of international isolation of the Kremlin should it intervene, and stimulating solidarity with Poland.

These would be the elements of such a programme;

#### 1. On the internal front

- The number 1 task was the centralisation and transformation of the selfmanagement bodies that emerged into effective bodies of dual power responding to the needs of the masses (in production, distribution and self defence). Such a transformation would have to result in the calling of an extraordinary congress of Solidarnosc that would legitimise a provisional revolutionary government, proclaim the Polish self-managed (socialist? people's?) republic, and would, without even one day's delay, decree:

- that management of all enterprises should pass into the hands of the workers councils to be immediately elected;

- the rapid summoning of the first congress of workers councils, to which Solidarnosc would confide all power over the economy and internal and international security;

- the summoning afterwards of a parliament (constituent assembly) that would hold all power in other fields;

- the immediate legalisation of all political parties and associations;

- the legalisation of all democratic freedoms and the abolition of censorship;

- the abolition of all articles in the penal code that make it possible to limit these freedoms;

- the dissolution of the political police;

- the immediate disarming of the police and all units of the army whose soldiers do not pass to the side of the revolution and elect their own committees and command; general distribution of arms to the workers;

- free public services and housing (abolition of rent)

- the 30-hour week (5 x 6)

- a price-reduction of 75 percent for basic goods

- the introduction of rationing for these goods (minimum quantity guaranteed for all) organised by neighbourhood committees;

- the reduction of all salaries to a maximum of twice the wage of a skilled worker; the elimination of all special shops;

- a guarantee for all small farmers of free access to fertiliser and agricultural machinery;

- the reduction of military and administrative state budgets by 75 percent.

#### 2. On the international front

- immediate appeal to the Soviet government, armies and workers, under the heading "Long live the friendship of the Soviet and Polish peoples", saying, in essence:

- the Polish people have achieved a government of workers and farmers of their choice — these are the measures that it took immediately (1);

- the Polish people would like to keep its military and political alliance with the USSR and is ready to stay within the Warsaw Pact, on condition that the sovereignty of Poland and the other member states is guaranteed, and that there is not interference in the internal affairs of the country, that the new government is recognised, and that the USSR and its allies establish normal diplomatic relations with it. If these conditions are met, the revolutionary government will guarantee the security of the USSR's communications with East Germany and the Soviet forces that use these lines of communication;

- in the case of any intervention of the Soviet government or armed forces against the revolutionary government that the Polish people has freely chosen, and thus against the Polish nation and sovereignty, the government will organise sabotage, harassment, permanent insecurity, psychological warfare and the desertion of Soviet troops until they withdraw from the country, and sovereignty is fully and completely restored.

- condemnation of Greater Russian chauvinism and support for the struggle for national independence of the Soviet nations dominated by Russia, and condemnation of anti-Russian propaganda in the Polish press, as well as nationalist ideology.

- A unilateral proclamation by Poland that it renounces all nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

- An appeal to all the governments of Europe to do the same, and create a nuclear-free Europe from Portugal to Poland.

- A call for a congress of all the European peace movements at Warsaw, in order to discuss with the government and the Polish mass movement on how to mobilise the maximum of forces in order to impose a nuclear-free Europe.

- The proclamation by Poland of the immediate and unilateral suspension of all payment of the foreign debt. A break with the IMF. An appeal to all the "non-aligned" peoples and governments to do the same. The calling of a conference in Warsaw of governments and (or) peoples of the third world to discuss the joint and collective cancellation of the foreign debt, and a renegotiation of conditions for international trade on an exchange basis (counting units not linked to the currency of any imperialist or great power).

- An appeal to all the trade unions of Europe to join in a common struggle with the Polish people to extend the 30-hour week throughout Europe. A proposal by the Polish government to help in creating a million jobs in Western Europe through the conclusion of bilateral trade agreements between certain sectors of industry in the countries of capitalist Europe, Yugoslavia and Poland. A proposal to draw up, under the auspices and control of the trade unions, a plan to re-establish full employment in Europe, on the basis of satisfying the people's needs, as felt in Europe and the third world.

- To call, within two months, a congress of the international struggle against repression, the limitation of democratic and trade-union rights; denouncing the terror and tortures of fifty third world countries, and organising solidarity with Chile, Uruguay, Salvador, Guatemala, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan,



Ireland etc., and allowing the resistance movements from these countries to wage broad campaigns in Poland.

Obviously, this programme is not that of Solidarnosc. The task of the revolutionary Marxist nucleus in Poland, had it existed, would have been to fight within Solidarnosc, in a completely non-sectarian way, for this to become its programme. Because it did not respond in this way to the threat of Soviet tanks, the Solidarnosc leadership could only spread illusions on the possibility of a conflictive but long-term coexistence between the bureaucracy and the mass movement.

9. Page, 7 first column, line 55: insert new point after point 8 and renumber accordingly:

8. A heavy responsibility for the defeat of Solidarnosc must be borne by the leaders of the reform current within the Communist Party, figures such as Fiszbach and the leaders of the horizontal movement within PZPR. These figures had the confidence of hundreds of thousands of worker members of the PZPR, who threw themselves into the construction of Solidarnosc and made a massive contribution to its organisational growth. In every revolutionary crisis of the bureaucratic system, it is inevitable that substantial sectors of the rank and file of the Communist Party will play a major role in the mass movement and figures will appear within the Party apparatus giving expression to the demands of the popular movement.

So it was in Poland, with currents like Fiszbach calling for Communists to not simply support the existence of Solidarnosc but to base themselves on this real mass movement of the workers. The Fiszbach current was far in advance of the programmatic positions of the Dubcek leadership in Czechoslovakia in 1968, but its bankruptcy and complicity in the defeat of the working class movement lay in its refusal to challenge the organisational principles of Stalinism within the PZPR and construct an organised public faction capable of rallying the entire socialist current within the Polish working class around a programme for the transition to socialist democracy and democratic working class power. Instead of taking such a road, the Fiszbachs within the PZPR operated purely within the organisational framework of the Party and were terrified of splitting the party, the only principled course for members of Communist Parties in the political revolution.

If the reform communists had taken such a road — the road taken in practice by more than a million worker communists, the entire course of the workers' movement would have been transformed. The influence of the Catholic hierarchy — always complicit with the bureaucracy in opposing socialist, emancipatory currents within the working class — would have been massively reduced, and the question of political power would have been posed in an entirely new way. In addition, the impact of the Polish revolution upon the workers of the surrounding countries would have been totally transformed, as they would have been able to see through the screen of deception of the bureaucratic regimes that the Polish working class was on the road to democratic working class power, and not on the road of Catholic, nationalist reaction.

9. The utter failure of the reform communists to generate a new Polish socialist force, was, of course, not an accident. It was linked to the entire policy of the Gierek regime and of other bureaucratic regimes in Eastern Europe in the period following the crushing of the Prague Spring. The Czechoslovak events had taught the Kremlin bureaucracy the extreme dangers to its rule from non-Stalinist currents of socialist and Marxist thought within the Communist Parties and working classes of Eastern Europe, and had encouraged them to foster the spread of non-socialist ideologies of a quietist or authoritarian kind as a means of stabilising their rule in Eastern Europe. This policy meant that the Polish workers, able to see from their own everyday experience, how mendacious and corrupt was the official ideology of

the regime, had no alternative socialist tradition to which to turn. They nevertheless demonstrated in a way without parallel in the history of the European working class, the radical democratic and socialist logic of the working class in action during the Solidarnosc period. Solidarnosc itself, as the organised, unitary expression of the Polish working people, was an expression in embryo of a new type of socialist state power. But at the same time, the ideological development of the movement lagged far behind its practical development.

This contradiction is evident in the Programme adopted by the Solidarnosc Congress in the autumn of 1981. Reflecting the realities of the movement itself, the programme defends a new type of popular democracy and popular sovereignty, going way beyond the system of bureaucratic state power in the West as well as the East. But at the same time, the programme does not clearly spell out the economic hinge of this new state power and it does not link its establishment in Poland with the development of world politics, indicating the elements in the surrounding world with which the Polish workers must unite.

This contradiction between the practical thrust of the Polish workers and their political consciousness has been seized upon both by Stalinists and by the Social Democratic apparatuses in the West, terrified of the revolutionary logic of the Polish workers, to try to argue that Solidarnosc was either a dark force of chaos in the heart of Europe, or to argue that it was a tool in the hands of Cold War forces in the Vatican and the USA. Let such people name one single demand of the organised Polish workers' movement that was anti-working class or anti-democratic. Throughout the entire period of Solidarnosc's legal existence the entire popular movement was submitted to the huge pressure of the interests of the working class. (only after the suppression of the movement could rightist, anti-socialist currents, liberated from the gigantic pressure of the organised workers, come forward and articulate pro-capitalist programmes).

On the other hand, it would be foolish to deny that the pressure of the Catholic hierarchy and of petty bourgeois layers within the intelligentsia, exerted a powerful negative influence on the advance of the workers' movement, acting as a brake upon its political development and ideological horizons. Indeed, by spreading nationalist illusions in the Polish state apparatus (especially the army) and by opposing those, whether in the KOR or in other socialist and democratic currents, who sought to raise questions of democratic and working class power, such currents contributed to the defeat of Solidarnosc.

10. Page 7, second column, line 34: Delete from "Despite all pressures" . . . to . . . "not weakened let alone destroyed." (end of point 9)

11. Page 8, second column, line 61: Delete from "On the other hand, the fundamental weakness" . . . to . . . "carry through its political counter-revolution." (Page 9, first column, line 6). Replace with:

On the other hand, the fundamental weakness of the Polish revolution was that vanguard of the Polish workers could not find the practical path for rallying the mass of people behind it in a transition to a workers' government based upon new organs of working class power. With every month that passed, as the economic crisis deepened and the solution of the immediate practical problems of the masses in everyday economic life became more pressing, the vanguard of the working class became more and more convinced that the regime would have to be removed in order to tackle these problems. Purely local institutions of self-management could provide no solution to this problem. But the vanguard could not re-organise the movement around a programme of transitional demands for wresting the levers of political power from the bureaucracy in order to tackle the most pressing problems of the masses. Elements of such a programme appeared in the resolutions of the Solidarnosc Congress — as in the objec-



tive of taking control of the food rationing system. But as whole the Congress tended to combine maximalist rhetoric with proposals for compromises that would maintain the subordinating of the masses to the bureaucratic order.

The key transitional objective of the movement would have been for a national council of elected delegates from the factories and the villages to assume full control over the economic life of the country in order to revive the economy and protect the vital daily needs of the masses. In the event of this demand being rejected the working class movement would have had to impose it upon the country through an active general strike, while simultaneously assuring, through fraternisation with the armed forces and measures to break the counter-revolutionary efforts of the ZOMO and political police.

Without such a leadership of the masses to resolve the economic crisis, it became inevitable that the movement would split and sections of the masses would come to view Solidarnosc as weak and incapable of resolving the crisis, thus moving into retreat and enhancing the authority of the armed forces.

12. Page 9, second column, line 13: Delete: "This is the reason, along with the fact that labour power partially retains a commodity character, that the workers needs a trade union."

13. Page 9, second column, line 60: Delete: 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 organisation of work (tempus, ways of measuring work, etc). Replace with:

The role of independent trade unions operating within a bureaucratised workers' state is of course different from their role in a democratic workers' state. In the former case, where the workers are bereft of a democratic state power, political parties and self-management organs any type of self-organization — including free trade unions — tends inevitably to assume a role that goes far beyond trade unionism; it becomes the instrument through which the working people seek to resolve all their problems. Nevertheless the organizational separation between managerial tasks and the defense of workers in their work becomes soon necessary.

In conditions of genuine democratic workers' power, the basic function of the trade union becomes more clearly a defensive one of protecting the mass of workers against decisions of their own leaders which they consider to conflict with their sectional interests. While the governmental organs represent the workers as a class on a regional and national level, the trade unions are vital to reflect the differences within the working class produced by its division into various trades and branches, differences that can too easily be overlooked both by self-management and governmental bodies. Thus trade unions, even if they have their word to say on different choices of production and conditions of work, must not take any responsibility in the decision-making, in order to keep their full independence to struggle against eventual negative consequences of such choices.

14. Page 10, first column, line 16: Delete from "The transformation into state property" . . . to . . . "does not in fact belong to anyone." Replace with:

The bureaucratic caste can derive enormous privileges from its managerial responsibilities — but not those of a real owner. This is the deepseated reason why it produces, whatever the cost and the enormous waste of the means of production. Even the introduction of "profit" criteria into the evaluation of the results and the payment for them does not mean that the share of profits eventually distributed can be transformed into capital. The workers in these countries never think that the means of production "belong" to the bureaucrats. Official propaganda on social ownership is obviously not enough to explain this fact, which is rooted in the reality of property that in the end "belongs to no one".

This belief is widely held in European countries.

The transformation into state property of the means of production expropriated from the bourgeoisie by non-capitalist social forces is by no means simply a formal and juridical act, but a qualitative transformation of the entire basis of the state, breaking the productive forces from the grip of the capitalists and landlords and making possible economic growth unfettered by the logic of capitalist profit and private rent. But in the same way that in the workers' state power can be exercised either by the workers or the bureaucracy, the power to manage the means of production may be controlled by the bureaucracy or by the sovereign decisions of the working people. And this last issue is what decided whether the means of production is authentically socialised.

In other words, there is a double trap to avoid. The first is to not take into account the real socio-economic content of planning in the context of state ownership of the means of production, and to see this as purely an administrative fiction. It should be defined to what point the bureaucratic gangrene has eaten away the socio-economic effectiveness of the plan. This should be the subject of a concrete analysis at every stage in each country. In no case can one identify the "Polish model" of the end of the 1970s with the planning conditions in any other Eastern country.

The other danger is to identify state ownership of the means of production with real socialisation, in other words, to not understand the obstacles to planning by a state power that is external to the workers.

The key point of transformation from state ownership to real socialisation of the means of production is in the transformation of this state power itself. Such a conception is opposed to those who would eliminate any economic function of the state in the transition to socialism. On the contrary, it implies tasks of socialisation of the state itself — or its withering away.

15. Page 10, first column 38: Delete: "But the experience of the Polish revolution, especially that of the self-management movement that developed under the leadership of Solidarnosc, helps to clarify the point at which the socialisation of the *major* means of production *begins*."

16. Page 10, first column, line 48: Delete: "This is precisely the view which gained currency in the Solidarnosc mass movement."

17. Page 10, second column, line 14: Add: This does not mean that revolutionary marxists regard the adoption of market mechanisms as something to be opposed on principle: for us the question of principle is only opposition to the introduction to the *capitalist* market. In certain fields, non-capitalist market relations are inevitable in the transition to socialism. What, however, we do insist upon is the fact that there will always be tensions between market relations and the egalitarian social values of the working class, and the political vanguard of the working class must always ensure that in handling these tensions, the will of the majority of the working people must be respected. Thus in August 1980, the 21 demands of the Gdansk Commune very emphatically supported the principle of rationing — against the principle of free prices, and this expression of popular will should have been respected unconditionally by the Solidarnosc leadership and its advisers in drawing up plans for tackling the economic crisis.

18. Page 10, second column, line 15: Delete "However", continue "The close connection. . . ."

19. Page 11, second column, line 16: Add: At the same time, the development of working class consciousness is not at all a one-sided process of the transition from 'illusions' to 'realism'. It is a dialectical movement, in which the illusions of the first phase in the possibilities of success through reforms also contain an indispensable positive aspect: a confidence in the capacity of the mass strength of the workers to force



through the reforms. And as the workers come to grasp through experience that it is impossible to gain the necessary reforms from the bureaucratic regime, it is indispensable that they at the same time, see the emergence of a new, alternative programme, method of struggle and organised leadership which they have confidence in as a force capable of leading the country out of its crisis. If the workers lose their faith in reformism without at the same time gaining faith in their own capacity under a new leadership and a new policy to resolve the crisis, then their loss of illusions in reformism will at the same time produce loss of confidence in their own capacity to transform conditions in the country. This is another great lesson of the Polish revolution.

During the 16 months of Solidarnosc's legal existence, the millions upon millions of the Polish workers passed through the gigantic process of collective experience and collective struggle to grasp the methods of resolving the country's crisis. The Búd-goszcz crisis of March 1981 for many Polish workers was the moment at which they realised that hopes of a solution to the crisis through gradual reforms from above forced through by pressure from below was an illusion. In the months that followed, the vanguard of the working class struggled painfully and courageously to find the alternative policy, methods of struggle and leadership to embark upon a new course. The Solidarnosc Congress indicated the extent of their achievement, indicating that the vanguard of the movement, concentrated in many of the regional leaderships in the main working class centres, was seeking to map out a path through the crisis (via a revolutionary syndicalist solution in which Solidarnosc itself would assume state power within a self-managed republic). But the congress also showed that this vanguard had not succeeded either in conquering a decisive majority of opinion within the movement (see the results of the leadership election) against the trend that still favoured a negotiated solution to the crisis, or in mapping out a political path to rally the masses behind it for the conquest of power — a transitional programme.

As a result, while all sections of the workers movement had by and large lost their illusions in the strategy of reformism, different wings of the movement drew, in practice, widely different conclusions from this new awareness: for some it led to retreat and despair in the possibility of victory, while for others it led to an attempt to take power, even without the formal consent and adherence of the authoritative bodies of the movement on a national scale.

20. Page 11, second column, line 46: Replace: "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 of occupation strikes. We are referring to the active strike that was called for" by:

"The transition from objective maturity to the subjective maturity for the seizure of power would have been marked by an increasing attachment of the working class to the preparation for a higher form of occupation strikes: active strikes that were called for" (continue as text).

21. Page 12, second column, line 14 of Section IV: Delete: "on December 13, far from having exhausted its dynamic and entering a downward trend, the revolution was still gathering momentum."

22. Page 13, first column, line 38: Delete from: "19. The tactic used by the mass movement" . . . to . . . "a relationship of forces unfavourable for the mass movement." Replace with:

Solidarnosc was prepared to effectively resist, let alone defeat a general counter-revolutionary coup. December 13 was a moment of truth which revealed a relationship of forces unfavourable for the mass movement, and following the decapitating of its leadership, the vanguard in most cases adopted a tactic of passive resistance and progressive retreat. This contributed decisively to

the vanguard's subsequent ability to continue the struggle. At the same time, the consequence of the December defeat was to destroy the organisational links between the hundreds of thousands of the active resistance movement and the broad millions of working people. It also gravely disorganised the links between the activists, which took many months to re-establish national networks.

23. Page 13, first column, line 54: Retain sentence starting "Wherever the union leaders. . .". Delete from: "This was particularly the case. . ." to the end of point 19.

24. Page 13, second column, line 16: Delete: Point 20 down to page 14, first column, line 8. Replace with:

20. During the first three years of underground resistance, the vanguard of the Polish working class has struggled to maintain and rebuild Solidarnosc's unity and its links with the mass of workers in an effort to reverse the December 13th defeat and restore the movement's open existence. This struggle continues in the face of terrible repression of the vanguard and of a series of political manoeuvres by the Jaruzelski regime, the most notable of which has been its successful effort to enlist the support of the Church hierarchy against the working class vanguard. This manoeuvre, which the workers' vanguard has not been able to defeat, has greatly contributed to the regime's success in preventing the underground movement from again rallying the population for a renewed mass challenge to the government. In addition, the depth of the economic crisis has forced very large parts of the population to expend increasing amounts of their energy on the individual struggle for existence.

The hopes of the working class vanguard in the early stages of the period of clandestinity, were that it would be possible to rally the masses of the underground movement in a general strike to throw off the yoke of martial law. Although this perspective could not be realised, the most advanced and class conscious sections of the working class still adhere to this perspective, combining it with efforts to defend the rights of workers in their work-places, raising immediate and partial demands attuned to local conditions.

Retain from: "The underground press that has grown up" to the end of point 20. Then add:

As time has passed, and the prospect of a short-term reversal of the tide of events has receded, the resistance movement has more and more had to face the task of preparing for a long struggle over a whole historical period for resolving the crisis of Polish society and in consequence they have started to debate fundamental questions of political programme, questions which were not posed within the movement during Solidarnosc's period of legal existence. This debate, which must be rooted in a balance-sheet of all the lessons of the experience of Solidarnosc, is a vital task for the Polish workers' vanguard. But it is a task that must be carried through in the closest connection with the continued practical struggle to defend the daily needs of the mass of working people through the existing trade union structures of the underground. This practical struggle must remain one in which all workers, irrespective of their ideological standpoint must be able to participate — the economic and social struggle of the working class requires complete unity in action of the class. And only insofar as this mass activity of the workers' vanguard can continue will it be possible for the process of political differentiation and debate to bring positive advance for the workers' vanguard, laying the basis for a future open challenge to the counter-revolutionary regime, again opening a path towards political revolution and a democratic workers' state.

25. Page 14, first column, line 38: Delete: points 21, 22, 23, 24, down to page 16, second column, line 13; chapter V entitled: The international impact of the Polish events.



# Text on the Building of the Fourth International

## Submitted by the Tendency for the Unity of the Fourth International

Adopted by the Tendency at its General Assembly Oct. 27-28, 1984

We consider that Segur's report ["Report on the Present Stage of Building the International" adopted by the United Secretariat. *IIDB* Vol. XX, No. 4, July 1984], which is being submitted for a vote (without the appendices), does not constitute a true resolution on party-building. Rather it is a polemical text that takes up a large number of old and new debates within the International.

We have neither the necessary information nor the ambition as a tendency to draft a resolution on the building of the Fourth International. It is up to the USec, according to us, to propose one.

Not being able to propose amendments to this report, we are presenting for a vote a document that does not constitute a counter-resolution but which defends on certain questions a point of view that stands on the gains made by the 11th World Congress.

### I. The objectives and results of the 11th World Congress

The gains of the 11th World Congress codified the numerical and organizational progress of the Fourth International in the period beginning in 1968.

In this period, in which objective conditions have been favorable to our development, our International experienced serious difficulties which began to be overcome by the preparation, the method, and the gains of the 11th World Congress. The political differences which arose at the 9th and 10th World Congresses on the building of revolutionary parties in Latin America and Europe had given rise to a serious confrontation of tendencies and of factions, of which the culmination was the 10th World Congress.

With the preparation of the theses of the 11th World Congress and the dissolution of the LTF [Leninist-Trotskyist Faction] and the IMT [International Majority Tendency], the whole Fourth International demonstrated its capacity to overcome past differences, to progress, to correct errors, and to turn the sections toward party-building tasks in this direction. One could say that the 11th World Congress has been the best period in the recent history of our International.

The strength of the 11th World Congress resides in its method: the same method which permitted the reunification of 1963: i.e. to build on the programmatic and theoretical gains of the International in order to go forward, to unify the International around tasks drawn from an analysis of the new problems posed, and the definition of a mass orientation for the sections — without the precondition of drawing up a balance sheet of past disputes.

The four principal documents adopted at the 11th World Congress (the resolution on the international situation, resolution on the building of the sections in Europe, resolution on the building of sections in Latin America, resolution on women), as well as the document on Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, which will definitely be submitted to a vote at the 12th World Congress, constitute progress for the International. They provide a principled core of documents to which the sections, five years later, can still refer for party-building even though it is necessary to enrich them and bring them up to date.

At that moment one can say that a unique occasion presented itself to overcome not only the faction fight in the International

but also the division in the entire Trotskyist movement, and to permit on the basis of the theses of the 11th World Congress a leap forward in the building of the International.

This is an entirely different method from that of the splitters, who do not seek political debate but rather place obstacles in the way of a debate by multiplying the organizational preconditions for beginning a discussion.

The split in the International that occurred two months before the 11th World Congress, under the pretext of differences that had suddenly emerged over the Nicaraguan revolution, was totally unjustified and criminal in that it shattered this dynamic. The split struck a severe blow to the building of the Fourth International — notably in Latin America — and it resulted in a still greater dispersion of Trotskyist organizations.

The responsibility for this split lies entirely with the Bolshevik Faction (led within the Fourth International by Moreno) and the leaders of the OCRFI [Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, led by Pierre Lambert], who preferred a short-term maneuver to the fundamental interests of the Fourth International.

In order to overcome this new crisis the 11th World Congress was correct to reaffirm in a noteworthy declaration that "Even under the impact of the present split, we will not modify our course in favor of the reunification of the Trotskyist movement."

Indeed, it is by holding firm to the positions adopted by the 11th World Congress that we will again make progress. And this we will do by upholding our programmatic and theoretical documents — not by abandoning our gains on the theory of permanent revolution, on the workers' and farmers' governments, or on political revolution. Nor will we move forward by revising the Marxist position on the class nature of the state — be it the state in the Soviet Union or in Nicaragua. We will advance by charting an orientation toward the masses for our sections and by turning them toward their tasks.

There is no shortcut to be had by turning toward the Castroist current. There is no shortcut to be had in the immediate unification with centrist groups, without having first taken substantial steps forward in our mass work and in the clarification of the fundamental points of our program. Nor can there be a shortcut through a precipitous fusion with the scattered segments of the Trotskyist movement in the absence of an agreement on tasks and party-functioning.

There are objective conditions — those of the period opened up in 1968 — which continue to be favorable to our development. It is possible to overcome our subjective weaknesses and to go beyond the situation in which we have been since 1979 in order to progress anew. This crisis of our International is not fatal. It can be surmounted if we defend and put into practice that which the majority of the International agreed to at the 11th World Congress.

### II. An Orientation toward the Unity and Independence of the Working Class

#### 1) To rely on our programmatic and theoretical conquests

We must base ourselves on the documents of the 11th World



Congress. This means that we must develop an orientation based on the interests of the working class as a whole in order to address the broad masses. And this we must do by standing on the best of the historic experience of the workers' movement.

It is this experience of several dozens of years that is concentrated in the Trotskyist program. And although it is necessary to always enrich it — in particular with the lessons that we draw from the Nicaraguan revolution and the struggle of Solidarnosc — we must conserve its coherence as well.

It is with our programmatic acquisitions that we must approach new problems that are posed by the class struggle. We must reaffirm the relevance of the proletarian revolution, our opposition to any abandoning of political independence by the workers' political organizations, and the relevance of political revolution in the bureaucratized workers' states. The theory of permanent revolution provides a coherent base for our program, for our strategy of workers' unity, for our tasks in the three sectors of the world revolution (revolution in the imperialist countries, revolution in the dependent countries, political revolution in the bureaucratized workers' states).

Only the theory of the permanent revolution allows us to understand the leading role of the proletariat and the place of democratic tasks in forging the unity of all oppressed layers and exploited classes around it [the working class] in all three sectors.

We must also use the acquisitions of the previous discussions within the International, and in particular — for the present debate leading up to the 12th World Congress — the contribution on the question of the workers' and farmers' governments by our movement. The contribution of Joseph Hansen, the now-deceased leader of the SWP, on this question allows us to understand, above all, the developments of the Cuban, Algerian, and Nicaraguan revolutions.

While preserving the coherence of the Marxist view of the state, we integrate into these revolutionary developments the analysis of an unstable situation wherein the new state structure is under construction with the workers' and farmers' government yet the old economic infrastructure remains in place. In accordance with Trotsky's explanations on the class nature of the state, the analysis of Joe Hansen takes into account the gap in time between the seizure of power, on the one hand, and the eventual establishment (counter example of Algeria) of a workers' state, on the other.

## **2) To orient to the entire working class, the tactic of the workers' united front**

The theses of the 11th World Congress, breaking with the errors of the 9th and 10th World Congresses, affirmed the necessity of orienting toward the entire working class in order to link up to it and to develop its forward motion toward class unity and independence — not centering our intervention on any so-called vanguard.

The tactic advocated by the theses of the 11th World Congress and which is still necessary today in order to link ourselves to the working class and to expose, in action, the majority reformist leaderships, is to start from immediate demands — the democratic aspirations of the mass of workers — in order to mobilize them, unite them, and force their majority leaderships to break with the policy of class collaboration.

We call upon the majority leaderships to break with class-collaborationist politics because even though they have lost to a significant degree the confidence of the workers, the workers do not have any other political instrument available to them — and this objective factor is determinant.

The general perspective of organizing the entire working class in opposition to the bourgeoisie and to confront the aspiration of the workers to the policies of their leaders can be implemented in many different ways, according to the particular situation in each

country (the relationship of forces between the reformist parties and the masses, the level of activity of the proletariat). The formulation of a governmental slogan can be the most effective way of demonstrating to the workers that their traditional leaderships refuse to carry out their responsibilities and question the capitalist order.

This is the formulation which the Transitional Program puts forward as the political solution to the struggles of the working class. It states, "Of all the parties and organizations which base themselves on the workers and peasants and speak in their name, we demand that they break politically from the bourgeoisie and enter upon the road of struggle for the workers' and farmers' government. On this road we promise them full support against capitalist reaction. At the same time, we indefatigably develop agitation around those transitional demands which should, in our opinion, form the program of the workers' and farmers' government."

## **3) The tactic of the mass workers' [labor] party**

The merit of the 11th World Congress is that it corrected the orientation carried out in Latin America during the preceding 10 years. Having recognized the error of the guerrillaist tactic, that congress produced the most positive balance-sheet for the International of the past six years. It permitted the application of the tactic of building mass workers' parties based on the organizations of the masses. The construction of the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT), with its 50,000 members and 400,000 organized contacts, is an extraordinary success; one in which the International has fully participated.

It is all the more paradoxical and regrettable that the orientation of the 11th World Congress — an orientation which has been confirmed in practice and which apparently is not contested within the International today — is not confirmed in the documents before the 12th World Congress.

This tactic had been outlined by Leon Trotsky for the United States [discussion with SWP leaders on the labor party slogan and tactic]. The tactic of the workers' united front responds to a situation where the workers' movement is divided among various competing political parties. The tactic of the mass workers' party is therefore the response that flows from our combat for the unity and independence of the working class at a time when the class does not possess any significant political expression of its own, even though it is organized in trade unions and mass organizations of workers and peasants.

This tactic, moreover, has a validity beyond Brazil. It can be applied in all those countries where the workers' movement is not structured by Stalinist or social-democratic parties, but where the mass movement is organized — even though often under bourgeois leadership.

The mass workers' party that we will loyally build is open to all the debates and political currents within the workers' movement. It is the expression of the interests of the proletariat without an ossified bureaucracy being able to oppose its own interests to it. At the same time, because we are convinced that our program offers the only true expression of the interests of the working class as a whole in all of its dimensions, we consider that, as a result of experience and debate, our program will become the program of the mass workers' party.

The political tactic of the mass workers' party has nothing to do with the so-called Stalinist or social-democratic mass parties. It is not a bureaucratic party. It can be compared to the parties which arose in the early stages of the organized workers' movement. It is a party which learns to walk by walking, without the risk of becoming satellites to any bureaucracy. This is why its errors can be corrected. Within the mass workers' party, we advocate the freest democratic discussion, reforms (and not the overthrow of the leaderships — this is our attitude toward the Brazi-



lian Workers' Party (PT) led by I. Lula.

#### 4) Mass campaigns

One of the gains of the 11th World Congress was the importance it placed for the building of our International on the campaigns carried out by the sections and by the International as a whole. The campaign around the issues of abortion and contraception is an illustration of this.

Campaigns of this sort are a high point in our activity. They allow us, even though we are a small minority in the workers' movement, to concentrate our efforts on specific objectives, thus enabling us to organize around us forces much larger than our own.

In this manner, it is possible to organize campaigns around immediate demands and democratic demands or around the theme of solidarity, which would respond to an urgent situation and would permit a large unity to be forged. Because of their impact, the campaigns define the profile of our organizations.

Priority must be given to campaigns around the big political issues of the day. Clearly defined objectives must be drawn up. The opportunities for carrying out these campaigns will vary from country to country. These objectives demand central campaigns — for example around elections, a time when the big political questions of political power and the need to break with the bourgeoisie are posed.

Each one of our campaigns must combine our party-building objectives and our propaganda tasks with the political objectives for the mass movement in order that we can derive the greatest organizational profit from the political impact of the campaigns. Our press, too, must highlight the activity of the International and of the sections.

##### *Against intervention in Central America*

The risks of an open U.S. military intervention in Central America are very real. They reflect the very real dangers posed to imperialism by the developments in this region.

We must organize our solidarity activity in the united framework of the "Central America committees." We must seek to advance within these committees the need to carry out major campaigns, if possible united campaigns, around particularly important dates and events. International solidarity campaigns against all forms of U.S. intervention must be our major priority internationally.

In addition to conducting the ongoing solidarity work of material, financial, health, cultural, and work brigade assistance, these campaigns must draw in the trade unions and, with greatest unity possible, agitate against Reagan's imperialist policies.

In our own propaganda we must draw the link between Reagan's policies of violation of human rights and of the right to self-determination with his aggressive policies of militarization, his policies of exporting U.S. imperialism's economic crisis, and his policies of starvation of the underdeveloped countries. We must also popularize the progress made by the Central American revolutions and present our analysis of the situation in those countries as well as the activity of our comrades in the field in those countries. In this manner we will present the best profile of the International in our approach to the Sandinist leadership.

##### *Against imperialist militarization*

Another one of our priorities must be the struggle against imperialist militarization. We focus our antiwar activity primarily against imperialism — mainly U.S. imperialism, which seeks to assert its absolute hegemony worldwide. Imperialism is the cause of wars, the creator of markets of substitution, and the organizer of interventions against revolutionary struggles. In the same way that it must suppress democratic rights, so too must imperialism increase its militarist policies. It is for this reason

that the arms race cannot be stopped by negotiations on disarmament.

At the same time, we advocate a mass antiwar movement. Our activity must use the events resulting from Reagan's policies, or the initiatives taken in the framework of the mass antiwar movement, to promote centralized campaigns of the International against the deployment of missiles, against NATO, against the neutron bomb and nuclear weapons, for the withdrawal of imperialist troops from the regions where they have intervened (Central America, Grenada and the Caribbean, the Middle East, Africa). In particular, against all imperialist aggression, we unconditionally support the peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial nations.

Moreover, even though we recognize the right of the workers' states — albeit bureaucratic — to develop their own weapons, even nuclear weapons, as a means of dissuasion against imperialism, we are opposed to the military policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy and therefore support the independent antiwar movements that have emerged in the Eastern European countries. We believe that the workers' states should undertake spectacular initiatives toward reducing their arsenal of weapons as well as prioritize the mobilization of the masses to oppose war.

##### *Campaigns of solidarity with the struggles*

Our organization must fully make use of its international character to make its weight felt in the interaction of the struggles from one country to another. Solidarity with ongoing mass struggles plays a not negligible role in helping secure their victory. Our activity must be a lever to promote solidarity within the trade unions and the democratic mass organizations.

Solidarity popularizes the struggle and its exemplary role, which in turn helps deepen the extent of the solidarity. Finally, by seriously carrying out our solidarity responsibilities, we will strengthen our own organizations. By doing our work correctly, the road will be paved for future solidarity campaigns.

We should promote international solidarity campaigns at the decisive junctures of the class struggle. It can be to support a strike with a particularly decisive political content (the metalworkers in Germany, the strike of the British coal miners). It can be to support democratic rights in the face of an escalation of repression or a military intervention, to demand the release of political prisoners, or to defend a revolution as in the case of Central America. This activity will permit our sections to increase their presence and credibility.

##### *Campaigns around democratic demands*

The workers' movement is the first to be concerned about the restrictions on democratic rights and by the divisions stemming from the inequalities among different layers of society. But the defense of democratic rights is such that it can mobilize large layers of society behind the proletariat — including sectors of the bourgeoisie — against the bourgeois institutions responsible for the repression, the oppression, the inequalities, and the restriction of rights. In this manner, we turn the defense of democratic rights against the bourgeois state — with the condition that we do not confuse their defense with the defense of the bourgeois democratic institutions.

The broadest mobilizations permit the proletariat to rally behind it all the oppressed layers at the expense of the bourgeoisie, whose institutions are being put into question. From this analysis of the social forces, the political theory of permanent revolution concludes that only the proletariat is capable of fully providing a solution to the democratic demands.

The defense of the rights of women, youth, immigrant workers, lesbians and gays, oppressed national minorities, and the struggles against racism, militarization, and for free public education, as well as the struggles for political rights, universal suf-



frage, and the tasks of national liberation must all converge — along with the demands of the poor peasants and the workers — into a political solution: the solution of a workers' government.

International campaigns are possible on this terrain — particularly around the issues of free birth control and abortion, the rights of immigrant workers, and opposition to imperialist war.

#### *Our intervention in the unions and the turn*

In the class struggle, the large industrial concentrations occupy a strategic role, on the one hand, because of their decisive weight in the economy (they are the nerve centers of production), and on the other hand, because they concentrate large masses of workers and their traditions and organizational capacities. The increased weight of the proletariat in the three sectors of the world revolution; the increased trend toward urban mass mobilizations, particularly after the massive rural exodus to the cities in the semi-industrialized countries during the last 25 years . . . all underscore the necessity to concentrate our efforts toward implanting ourselves in industry.

The shift of the center of gravity of the youth radicalization toward the young workers — in response to the economic crisis of imperialism and to the austerity policies of the bourgeoisie — put us in a favorable position to readjust our arena of intervention.

We must conduct our mass work along two axes: the mass intervention of the party and the mass trade union intervention. The party's mass intervention depends essentially on the political issues at stake in a given situation; issues around which we must organize centralized political campaigns, attempting to incorporate these campaigns into our work in industry.

Our mass trade union work requires that we build important industrial fractions and that we work out and put into practice a specific orientation for each branch of industry in the sections of the International.

This mass intervention, the political formation and education of our members and sympathizers, and the building of youth organizations should permit us to stabilize our newly hired members in industry and to recruit workers.

Our turn to industry is above all the application of an orientation which addresses itself to the large masses of working people. It therefore requires that we adopt a series of long-term measures in our functioning — our implantation and attention to the large concentration of industrial workers and measures to recruit and educate new members — and in our party-building methods and tasks.

We must be present in all the mass workers' trade unions. In countries where there are many trade union federations, we prioritize our intervention into those which have a greater numerical and political importance in the country — not those which have a certain type of leaderships. We should be there with the masses of workers. We do not abandon them to their reactionary leaders.

As Trotskyists we must fight for a single, united trade union federation. We know all too well that the division into various unions weakens the fight against the boss. Moreover, this division allows the trade union bureaucracies greater room for maneuver to practice their policies of class collaboration and to refuse to meet their responsibilities for the defense of the workers' demands.

We are unconditionally for a single, united federation, whatever the form the fusion or reunification of the trade unions may take. But at the same time, we will fight for the united federation to be a class struggle instrument. We will fight for it to consistently defend the interests of the workers; to become a mass organization; to be open to all political or ideological currents; to be democratic in its internal functioning; to carry out the will of the majority; to be independent of all parties, governments, and states; and to be self-thinking and self-acting.

We are for a genuine federation of different industrial unions that would respect the autonomy of the union locals, the notion of federalism, and the right to form tendencies and caucuses.

In countries where you don't have a united trade union federation, and in order to permit the mobilization of the entire working class and to move toward the creation of such a federation, we will fight for united actions by all the trade unions, regardless of the nature of their leaderships — be they revolutionary, Stalinist, social-democratic, radical nationalist, or bourgeois (populist, Christian-democrat, or liberal).

Union building — up to and including a united federation of labor — is a necessary strategic objective to achieve the unity of the working class. For revolutionary militants, the trade unions are a privileged and decisive arena for our mass intervention; an arena where we can gain the confidence of the workers.

Being union activists and builders means building the union as an organization that the masses of workers can come to see as their own — that defends their interests and is truly democratic. In fact it is we who criticize the trade union bureaucracy for harming the mass character of the unions, for not defending the interests of the entire working class, for playing into the hands of the bosses or other forces alien to the workers, and for disrespecting the will of the majority of the workers.

The development of mass movements in opposition to the policies of the union misleaders, as expressed in the recent struggles in Italy over wages or in Great Britain over job stability, demonstrates that there are great opportunities today for truly developing this opposition movement on the basis of the demands and the struggles of the workers. The dividing line between the bureaucratic leaderships and the class-struggle trade-unionists does not stem from agreement or opposition to the so-called "anti-capitalist solutions to the crisis." Rather it is a dividing line between those who are ready to struggle to the end for their just demands, and those who are opposed to this strategy.

In this sense, too, the definition of an orientation for the unity and independence of the working class is decisive.

### **III. The strategy for building the Fourth International**

#### **1) The building of one section of the Fourth International in every country:**

Building the Fourth International as the programmatic nucleus of the World Party of Socialist Revolution is to assure its presence in every country, whatever the form adopted for its intervention.

The Fourth International has a world program. It must defend its internationalist conceptions and its program for the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist democracy in every country, including in the ongoing revolutions; in the workers' states, such as Cuba, where it does not consider it necessary to call for political revolution; and with greater reason in the bureaucratized workers' states, such as Vietnam, where it does call for political revolution.

It is for this reason that in differing conditions and under necessarily different forms, the Fourth International must seek to build a section and only one section in every country.

It is not a question of proclaiming a section; the building of a section does not necessarily require the creation of an independent organization (for example in Nicaragua). Political repression can impede all independent public expression for a certain period of time (Poland, Vietnam), but it is indispensable to have as a *goal* the building of a section. And for this it is necessary to bring together, whatever the form chosen, the revolutionary militants who are in agreement with our program in order to influence events in the correct direction. In the case of the ongoing revolutions we can play a role in the evolution of the leaderships



who we consider to be revolutionary.

What we must carry out in Poland, for example, in extremely difficult conditions (due to the repression and to the legacy of Stalinism and its conception of the revolutionary party), we should be capable of carrying out in Nicaragua, where the conditions for debate and the democratic guarantees are extremely favorable for presenting our ideas. At minimum it is necessary to distribute our press and to begin to regroup the revolutionary militants who are in agreement with our program, whatever the tactical form this may take.

The balance sheet of the International's party building in Nicaragua over the past five years is negative — particularly when you take into account the very favorable conditions that have existed with the development of the revolution and democracy in that country.

## **2) Our attitude toward the Castroist current and toward the FSLN**

After the victory of the Cuban revolution, we witnessed the emergence of revolutionary leaderships which came to play a decisive role in the conduction of the revolutions in Nicaragua, Grenada, and El Salvador.

These leaderships begin the struggle in the terrain of the intransigent combat for national, anti-imperialist liberation, and, as they advance in this struggle are confronted with the necessity of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. They have benefited from the existence of the Cuban workers' state and were able to draw some lessons from this first experience. Given their origins in the Castroist current, they are marked by the limitations of that current.

At the same time, while we have to learn from the Sandinist leadership, we also have a contribution to make to the struggle underway in Nicaragua as everywhere else. Our program concentrates the entire historic experience of the working class and as such it is an indispensable internationalist program because it is impossible for there to be socialism in one country in Nicaragua or anywhere else.

The struggle to demonstrate the effectiveness of our program is indispensable. It will find a favorable echo within organizations that have not finished their process of evolution — be it in Nicaragua or El Salvador.

Having stated this, and given the existing differences with the Sandinista leadership and the weakness of our forces, it would not be realistic to set ourselves the goal of building a common International with the Sandinista leadership.

The process of bureaucratization in Cuba does not allow us to speak of a positive evolution of the Castroist current. On the contrary. But nor can we say that it has bureaucratically degenerated and that it is lost for the revolution. The struggle to rectify this leadership is necessary and the existence of a section of the Fourth International is the indispensable medium to accomplish this.

Carrying out the fight for our program cannot be done if we move backwards and abandon one of its essential components: the building of the International on the basis of what exists today. There can be no programmatic continuity without organizational expression.

We must therefore regroup the Trotskyists in one section of the International, in Nicaragua and elsewhere. The tactics to be implemented (in the FSLN, publicly, or both) should be a topic for discussion. It will have to take into account the prestige the FSLN has acquired in the course of the revolution. Our support for the Nicaraguan revolution and its leadership is total and enthusiastic. Such revolutionists of action are a hope for the socialist future. The building of the World Party cannot ignore them.

## **3) Maintain the struggle for the reunification of the Trotskyist movement**

This is a question that is still current. This is so because the dispersion of the Trotskyist forces has increased since the last World Congress — with the tremendous losses and wasted opportunities this represented in Latin America (for example in Peru) as a result of the split policies of the Moreno and Lambert leaderships. The losses for our world movement today are the result of the new crisis in the International with the debate with the majority of the SWP leadership and the unjustified exclusion of the minorities in the SWP.

We start from the premise that no split is justified in the absence of decisive tests in the class struggle. This was the judgment of the 11th World Congress in the aftermath of the split in 1979.

This does not mean, however, that a fusion is on the agenda with such French organizations as the PCI [the Lambertist organization] or Lutte Ouvriere [Workers' Struggle, the sister organization of Spark]. In order to build a viable organization it is not enough to be in agreement with the general program of the FI. A prerequisite to any fusion is a common political orientation around concrete tasks as well a common understanding of party functioning, i.e. democratic centralism.

The reunification of the Trotskyist organizations in the framework of the Fourth International can only result from a long and hard political struggle — as has been the case in all the advances in the building of the Fourth International (struggle for the creation of the FI in 1938, struggle for the reunification of 1963). This must begin with the quest for common actions, and the organization of debates with these organizations. The steps taken along this path must be measured and cautious. But the will to maintain this orientation must be upheld, whatever the difficulties.

Today, for example, it is possible to propose united actions with the PCI against imperialist intervention in Central America and to fully discuss with them the Nicaraguan revolution, given the considerable and positive evolution of their positions on this question. We should do this with Lutte Ouvriere as well, even if their positions on Nicaragua are much more distant from those of the Fourth International.

Whatever the result of this struggle, it is certain that if it is waged consistently, it will reinforce the authority of the Fourth International as a democratic international organization which is capable, because of its method and functioning, to bring together in action tens of thousands of revolutionists — even if serious differences remain among them.

The fight for the reunification of the Trotskyist movement is inextricably linked to the development of democracy in the international. Only internal democracy — the respect of the right to form tendencies and factions — can permit us to overcome our differences, to avoid splits and exclusions, and to move forward in the regroupment of Trotskyist organizations in the framework of the Fourth International.

## **4) Centrist currents: reform for fusion**

Outside of the Trotskyist movement we are confronted with a series of revolutionary currents whose origins may or may not be Trotskyist and who have not bureaucratically degenerated, as well as others who come out of splits from the Stalinist or social-democratic parties and are susceptible of evolving in practice and program through experience and debate.

Many of these organizations represent a political force comparable to that of sections of the Fourth International. The tactical objective of fusing with our sections is therefore a real one.

This is the case of centrist organizations such as the British SWP, toward whom we said at the 11th World Congress that we



should wage a specific political orientation.

For currents which have emerged from splits with bureaucratic leaderships we must be careful to make a distinction between a genuine split with the bureaucracy (even at the material and organizational level), and a split between two factions of the bureaucracy. We know, for example, that the split by various Stalino-Maoist organizations with the Maoist bureaucracy provoked a deep crisis in their ranks, with certain currents gravitating toward another bureaucratic leadership (Soviet Stalinist, Albanese, or social-democratic) and others moving toward independent centrism.

It is for this reason as well that our international solidarity work must allow us to debate with currents, for example, like those resulting from the splits and crisis within the Filipino Communist Party. These debates and the evolution of their practice will permit us to judge if it is possible to rectify such currents.

Because our program is the only one that provides answers to the burning problems of the day, it is the responsibility of the International that its sections propose to the various revolutionary centrist organizations that they test an agreement in practice around the current political tasks, which could result in a common organization on the basis of program and democratic centralism.

We must condition any fusion on a clear political and programmatic agreement on the need to build the Fourth International as the programmatic nucleus of the World Party of Socialist Revolution. This, in fact, is the key issue involved here: Any fusion which breaks from our programmatic continuity can only wind up in further splits.

##### **5) The functioning of the International**

Because of its orientation, its campaigns, its party-building tactics, and its internal functioning, the Fourth International must function as a genuine, united International.

We must strive to strengthen the recognition of the International and the authority of its leadership. The two go hand in hand. And this is a struggle to reestablish the respect for the unity of the International so that our organizational principles can take on a real material force and expression.

The International must tend in the direction of democratic centralism. As stated in the statutes of the FI, it is not a case of taking disciplinary administrative measures to settle the differences and problems, but to do everything to educate about the need to respect the unity and centralism of the International by the national leaderships. The development of internal democracy is therefore necessary to reinforce the authority of the leadership of the International.

In order to accomplish this, a leadership that functions properly is needed. However, the fact is that between the 11th and 12th World Congresses, the International Executive Committee

(IEC), the international leadership elected by the World Congress, met only twice. Only twice in five years!

It is thus legitimate to say that the IEC is not the real leadership of the International. In fact, it is the USec, the USec Bureau, and the meetings of the Political Bureaus of the sections that have filled the role assigned to the IEC.

The USec itself has very infrequent meetings and delegates a great number of its daily tasks to the USec Bureau, a body which does not even exist according to our statutes but which nonetheless has been the actual leadership of the International since the 11th World Congress.

A genuinely elected and recognized leadership in the International, i.e. a true IEC, would meet twice a year. This is the necessary condition for the IEC to take charge of its orientation, the political debates in the International, and its own functioning. Indeed the IEC must master its finances, elect its full-time staff, lead and take responsibility for the publications of the International (which is not the case today.) The current functioning of the staff and of the editorial committees of the International press are unknown by the IEC, and by the leaderships of the sections (the Central Committees). The functioning of these bodies is based exclusively on cooptation.

It is necessary to have a real United Secretariat — the executive body of the IEC, the day-to-day leadership of the International between IEC meetings — which would be responsible to the IEC.

Also, because the International leadership must promote and organize the internal political life of the FI, it is essential that the political line adopted by the World Congress and the IECs be accomplished by regular balance sheets of our activity. This is the only guarantee that future debates can benefit from the accumulated experience of the past.

In order to build the International and make its presence felt, it is necessary to strengthen the International center. We reject the notion of turning into a "federation of national sections" [in French, "Internationale des sections"], which would be a simple coordinating body of independent sections. We seek to build an international organization based on an international program. Let us therefore recruit and educate militants to an International party.

The delay in organizing the World Congress discussion and the so-called disinterest of the members of the International in this discussion is the direct result of the poor functioning of the current International leadership.

The absence or lack of information by members and leaderships of sections explains this delay. This accounts for the difficulties in trying to capsule five years worth of discussion in two months . . .

A more democratic and open functioning of the International is necessary to strengthen the authority of the international leadership and the unity of the entire Fourth International.



# Amendments to United Secretariat "Draft Resolution on the Central America Revolution"

Submitted by the Tendency for the Unity of the Fourth International

[Amendments adopted by the General Assembly of the Tendency, October 28, 1984]

## First Amendment: A Workers and Farmers Government in Nicaragua

Page 9, columns one and two: (all page references are to *International Internal Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. XX, Number 8, October 1984). The following replaces all of Chapter III, point 1 on the Nicaraguan revolution. Delete all references in the rest of the resolution to the existence of a workers state in Nicaragua today.

On July 19, 1979, the combination of popular insurrection and the offensive of the revolutionary forces under the leadership of the FSLN, put an end to the imperialist-backed Somozaist dictatorship.

The insurrection destroyed the National Guard, which was super-imposed almost entirely on the Somozaist State. In effect, the FSLN held the reins of power. The essential part of the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie was destroyed and a revolutionary army was built.

A period of class confrontations was opened then which kept deepening, and which would undergo a *qualitative leap* in favor of the workers and peasants in April and particularly in November, when the representatives of the bourgeoisie quit the Council of State. This departure marked the culmination of a crisis at the governmental and institutional level in which the bourgeoisie confronted the FSLN.

To try to win the anti-Somozaist bourgeoisie to the project of "national reconstruction," and to obtain credits from the imperialists, the FSLN had, at the beginning, made substantial concessions to the bourgeoisie: recognition of the role of the private sector with which it made agreements on the price of products, on wage increases. . . . These compromises were translated onto the political level through the existence of a "Junta of National Reconstruction," in which leaders of the FSLN and important representatives of the bourgeoisie existed side by side. For the FSLN's part, it was not a matter of a "trick," but rather a policy whose objective was to maintain a collaboration with the anti-Somozaist bourgeoisie for a certain period of time. No more than the government of Urrutia in Cuba in 1959, the junta was not a workers and peasants government, but a coalition government with the bourgeoisie.

This coalition was extremely unstable; during the first four months of 1980, tensions between the classes grew. The economy was still in the hands of the bourgeoisie, the needs of the plan were sabotaged; and the mobilization of the workers and peasants was progressing.

The government, soon after the first months of the victory, nationalized the banks, the insurance companies, and natural resources; in the first period, only the goods of Somoza and his clan had been expropriated. In the course of the revolution, peasants went beyond the initial program of the INRA, extending their land occupations to properties which did not belong to the Somoza clan. And the workers extended their strikes, occupations, and control to enterprises where the non-Somozaist capitalists were committing sabotage or decapitalization.

In February 1980, a massive march of workers and peasants in Managua demanded that all of their land occupations be legalized. In March, several thousand workers marched by the CST headquarters at the government center to demand the confiscation of enterprises which the workers had been assigned to watch. On its side, the bourgeoisie engaged in a campaign against the "hegemonism" of the FSLN and for respect of private property. It relaunched its main political formation, the MDN, and looked for a test of force around the calling of a Council of State for May.

It quickly developed that the policy of national union clashed with the demands of the class struggle, and that the hour of decision approached.

On March 2, the FSLN promulgated the "law of decapitalization," which imposed heavy sanctions on capitalist economic sabotage. On March 3, all lands which had been occupied for several months were expropriated with indemnities. The FSLN did not hesitate. It assured itself a majority of the Council of State through the mass organizations.

Chamorro and Robelo, the two representatives of the bourgeoisie, resigned in April. The test of force turned in favor of the FSLN, which strengthened its positions; nevertheless, the decisive rupture had not yet taken place. The bourgeoisie sent representatives to the Council of State, and the FSLN named two other representatives of the bourgeoisie to the Junta, A. Cruz and R.C. Rivas. It reaffirmed its respect of the "mixed economy," and, on April 28, announced a "law of protection" which legally sanctioned the newly seized properties and the confiscations.

However, the problem was not resolved. The FSLN strived to push forward the mass mobilizations. The ATC and the CST underwent an impressive and quick growth. The literacy campaign was accomplished and the agrarian reform was pursued. The FSLN prepared the mobilizations against reaction by strengthening the popular militias. On July 19, an extension of the agrarian reform to uncultivated lands was announced. Conflicts multiplied.

It is in this context, marked by a class polarization in Nicaragua and throughout Central America after the advance of the Salvadoran revolution and the election of Reagan, that, on November 12, the split in the Council of State occurs. The COSEP and the four main bourgeois parties leave the Council of State. On November 17, Jorge Salazar Arguelo, an important representative of the private sector, was killed just before he was going to be arrested for plotting.

The bourgeoisie made no mistake; it was understood that a qualitative step had been taken. Confronted with the mass movement, the placing of its interests in jeopardy, and the growing involvement of the FSLN on the side of the Salvadoran revolution, the bourgeoisie realized that the FSLN was taking a confrontational stance and was preparing mobilizations against reaction.

The break with the bourgeoisie was consummated. The American threat of suspension of 75 million dollars in loans was raised. Standard Fruit decided to stop its activities in Nicaragua.



In January [1981], A. Cruz was sent as ambassador to Washington and the Junta was reduced from 5 to 3 members.

The coalition government with the bourgeoisie had seen its day. *Since then, there existed a workers and peasants government, which affirmed its independence vis a vis the bourgeoisie — a qualitatively different regime than one of coalition.* This qualitative leap was marked by changes in the composition of the government and equally by the radical measures and the mass mobilizations supporting these measures.

*Since then, the revolution has deepened.* At the beginning of 1981, new land and factory occupations occurred. The peasants organized themselves in order to confront the increasingly more numerous attacks of the "contras." On July 19, 1981, the FSLN announced a new decree of confiscation of properties abandoned for six months or "decapitalized." Fifteen factories and lands for 100,000 peasants were confiscated. Since that point, the FSLN has continued to regularly distribute lands to the peasants in the regions where the "contras" are most active as a *political weapon* against the reactionaries.

In a parallel manner, imperialism has increased its military aggression, its support to the "contras," in order to try to weaken and then to reverse power in Nicaragua. The bourgeoisie is more and more openly arrayed behind the "contras" who they are, in any case, financing and organizing. The bourgeoisie has lost political power, and it has even suffered inroads on its power to make economic decisions.

*But it still conserves its possession of the basic means of production,* with 60 percent of the industrial production and large agricultural production (notably in cotton), the decisive sectors for the Nicaraguan economy which depend principally on its agricultural surplus for its exports and its development. It retains a degree of power within the society that allows it to act against the existing regime (use of the weapon of economic sabotage, helping the contras, control of the main daily *La Prensa* . . .). This power is situated in the ownership of the basic means of production which it still possesses. The stakes in the current situation are for the FSLN to definitively break with the power of the bourgeoisie to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the Cuban leadership did in the autumn of 1960 in expropriating the decisive sectors of the economy.

*It would be false to talk, at this point, of a workers' state in Nicaragua, insofar as the property relations have not been overturned.*

In effect, to determine the class content of a state, and not only characterize this or that political regime, the socio-economic factors, in the Marxist tradition, remain decisive.

The government acts in defense of the interests of the workers and peasants, and a new state apparatus is being built. On the other hand, there is the maintenance of private property in the basic means of production. This temporary contradiction can only be resolved in favor of the class which won the revolution through the transformation of the economy and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The "mixed economy" can not be a lasting principle of the revolution; by prolonging it, this situation could allow — *as unlikely as it now appears* — a regression. Nothing has been played out in a definitive manner.

As A. Robelo said, "The fist is not yet completely closed." The final word has not yet been spoken as to whether it will be a success for imperialism and a setback or defeat for the workers and peasants government, or the establishment of a workers' state, the second free territory in the Americas after Cuba.

The Sandinistas have demonstrated their capacity to rely on the mass movement to counter the capitalist offensives. Every test of strength is combined with a strengthening of the revolutionary positions. The imperialist escalation can only bring closer the impending confrontation and lead the Sandinistas to overcome this obstacle.

## Second Amendment: On the Mixed Economy

*Page 11, column one, replace the beginning of point 2 up to the small letter "a" (from "The 'mixed economy' . . ." through ". . . the state becomes an economic force") with the following:*

In fact, the system of the "mixed economy" shows itself more and more incapable of responding to the needs of the development of social programs and the preservation and extension of the material conquests of the revolution, as well as the needs of a war economy.

With 60 percent of industrial production, the basic agricultural export production, the bourgeoisie retains a power around which it exerts pressures, using the weapon of sabotage, of economic disorganization. The law of the market continues to impose its law, including partially on the nationalized or cooperative sector. Rationalization of a democratic plan becomes impossible insofar as the state controls only 20 to 30 percent of production. The utilization of state credits cannot be entirely controlled (in agriculture, 40 percent of state credits go to the private, large landholding sector). Speculation by the bourgeoisie over primary materials leads to shortages of these materials for the cooperative manufacturing facilities which depend on them. The loopholes left open in foreign trade, of which the state controls 75 percent, but not totally, allows important speculation to develop in the sector of products which are not basic products controlled by the state, involving a big increase in fiscal and financial deficits and a reproduction of speculative capital. The "informal" sector in Managua is growing (merchants who gain their living from the black market and the growing number of hoarders who can make more money through that than by wage labor).

Certainly, the black market and the difficulties in stocking goods flow above all from the situation of poverty in which any dominated country finds itself, not to mention the imperialist blockade. But the situation is still aggravated by the conscious organization of the bourgeoisie to sabotage the existing supply of goods, and they can do this thanks to their economic positions, with the goal of stirring discontent against the government in various sectors of the population.

The Sandinista leaders are conscious of this. But they are wrong to let themselves think that the mixed economy can be a strategy, that it can resolve the problems posed to the Sandinista revolution, as the Sandinista or Cuban leaders explain in their declarations:

"It is not a short term maneuver, but our strategic approach. The strategic approach of the FSLN is to maintain a mixed economy and political pluralism." (Thomas Borge, March 16, 1981, *Intercontinental Press*).

"It is not necessary to expropriate the means of production. In reality, what we expropriate is the surplus. . . . We believe that rather than being a problem for the revolution, it is a vital necessity for the revolution. *Unity in order to confront imperialism is vital.* That is why our economic program for 1980 and 1981 included such elements of unity." (J. Wheelock, March 1981, *Intercontinental Press*).

As long as the bourgeoisie succeeds in preserving the basis of its economic power — ownership of the means of production — it will not fail to use its national and, above all, international possibilities, its enormous international support, to sap the authority of the regime and to try to divide it.

In the same way, the "mixed economy" as a strategy can nourish false theorizations, as in the declaration of Cuban Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez:

"Socialism will be a reality in a number of countries of Latin America . . . but it is evident that there will be no countries of Latin America where socialism will be an immediate reality. . . . It is not possible to build a socialist economy in Nicaragua because the level of its economic base is not sufficiently developed. In Cuba, we had a more developed working class which support-



ed the revolution. . . . The Nicaraguans themselves propose an open society in which they will have a private sector in agriculture, industry, and commerce. They are not going toward Cuban-style socialism. We do not believe that the Cuban model must be exported elsewhere in Central America or in the rest of the world." (January 11, 1984 *San Francisco Chronicle*).

Of course, we do not judge the Cuban or the Nicaraguan leaders by their *words*, but by their actions; of course, it is not a matter of fixing an abstract calendar, or of forcing the rhythms — a revolution does not progress by decrees — its leadership must rely on the mobilization of the masses, must nourish them and develop them to destroy any obstacles, to go toward socialism.

But our position must not suffer from any ambiguity: the mixed economy, i.e. when the capitalists still retain the key sectors of the economy, is an *obstacle*. At certain moments, a revolutionary leadership may not be able to overcome this obstacle; it can be obliged to accommodate itself to this obstacle for a certain period. But it is an error to pretend that this situation is a good situation and that it can last indefinitely.

On the *economic* and *political* level, there is an advantage for the future of the revolution that this period be brief, that it is gotten out of as quickly as possible.

On the *economic level*, because the "mixed economy" does not allow a complete liberation from dependence vis a vis imperialism, it detours a part of the resources from being used according to the needs of a planned economy, and keeps a brake on the development of the productive forces necessary to the task of reconstruction.

The Sandinistas recognize the limits with which they are confronted. In April 1984, Bayardo Arce explained, "When we elaborated this [initial] project [of the FSLN], we had only the statistics left by Somoza. We had incomplete information about the national reality. . . . To cite only one example, we believed the Somozaists owned 50 percent of Nicaragua. We thought that, with what we had confiscated, we would have enough to respond to popular demands. . . . We had to make some adjustments."

On the *political plane*, because popular adherence to the revolution — that of the peasantry, middle layers, and also that of the proletariat — is not fixed capital, it is not won once and for all: In the long term, the masses mobilize to defend their *material acquisitions*. It is not the same thing to fight for an increase in production if the enterprise belongs to a capitalist as it would be if it belonged to the workers. It is not the same thing to fight for a good cotton crop if the fields belong to the bourgeoisie who speculate or sabotage, as it would be if they belonged to those who till the land. It is not the same thing to support a war effort and sacrifices, if during this time, "from behind," the bourgeoisie can aggravate the lack of supplies.

In the present situation, to set the maintenance of a mixed economy as an objective can become a brake on the full development of the military, economic and political potential of the revolution, at the same time as it leaves a material base of support inside Nicaragua for the "contras."

The satisfaction of social needs, the advancement and the defense of the conquests of the revolution, independence vis-a-vis imperialism, and military defense of the revolution require breaking with the framework of the mixed economy and establishing collective ownership of the means of production.

### Third Amendment: On the Elections

Page 14, column one. Replace nothing. Add the following between the paragraph ending ". . . the imperative of arming the people," and the paragraph beginning "Both the political orientation of the FSLN . . ."

In the concrete case of Nicaragua, the holding of free elections to a constituent assembly was a particularly important measure for strengthening popular identification with the revolutionary

process. 93 percent of the population was registered to vote, despite the military situation and the call for a boycott by the opposition. Having lived for decades under the boot of pro-imperialist dictatorships, the Nicaraguan masses had never experienced general elections to a constituent assembly before 1979. Since 1979, the bourgeoisie used the absence of elections as part of its campaign against the "legitimacy" of the power that had resulted from the insurrection . . . and were able to find a certain support based on the illusions that existed in certain sectors of the masses in a democracy in the form of general elections. The FSLN was able to turn this weapon against the bourgeoisie, demonstrating its isolation and reliance on the contra army to recover its power.

We do not make it into a question of absolute principle. Such a "stage" may not be necessary. But, in the case of Nicaragua, coming out of a dictatorship and not yet wielding instruments of centralized workers' democracy where the masses can decide broad orientations, the holding of free elections, accompanied by the existence of a plurality of parties, freedom to demonstrate and to organize, and free speech for all currents, including bourgeois currents, except those who fight the revolution arms in hand, are measures which can only facilitate the mobilization of the masses and the raising of their consciousness. It facilitated the understanding that workers' democracy is superior to bourgeois democracy, that it does not restrain liberty, but extends it. The constitution which comes out of this assembly remains an open question.

(continue here with the text of the USec resolution)

### Fourth Amendment: On Workers Democracy

Page 14, column two. Replace the first three paragraphs of point "b)" (from "The major advantage of the FSLN . . ." through *conscious of these problems.*) with the following:

One of the characteristics of the revolutionary process in Nicaragua is the importance and the development of mass organizations, superior to those which developed in the Cuban revolution, for example; this is due, at the same time, to the depth of the mass mobilization to fight the dictatorship and to struggle against the reactionaries as well as the decision of the FSLN to develop these mass organizations to confront the bourgeois counterrevolution step-by-step.

Until now, the type of relations between the Sandinista leadership (the 9 commanders) and these mass organizations has remained on the level of consultation. The right to vote at 16 years of age, the laws in favor of women, and the measures demanded by the ATC or the CST are examples in which the FSLN has accepted the propositions of the mass organizations. But the mass organizations do not have the power of decision at the level of the big national options.

Five years after July 19, the workers and peasants face a more and more difficult situation:

— Imperialist aggression requires a greater and greater mobilization of the masses.

— The economic cost of the war (arms, destruction, disorganization of production) tends to jeopardize the *material progress* registered by the masses since July 19.

The goal of the economic and military aggression of imperialism is to try, in the long run, to demoralize a section of the masses and to turn the least conscious elements against the revolutionary process.

The FSLN's trump card will be to increasingly rely on the organization and the consciousness of the masses, in their capacity for judgment, even as their economic and social conquests are jeopardized by the war.

Confronted by a war which imposes losses in human life and restrictions, active participation in decisions, the living experience of the practice of *the exercise of power*, is the decisive condition for the development of the mass mobilizations. Restrictive



measures can only be accepted by the masses if they are conscious of having made the decisions themselves.

The passage to a stage of direct workers' democracy can be decisive. This happens through:

— Democracy within the mass organizations (elections and revocability of leaders in the CDS's, but also within the people's military forces, the militias).

— Powers of decision for the mass organizations which allow workers control to advance. In the face of speculation, the power of sanction should be given to the CDS's, and also participation in the decisions of the ministry of domestic commerce. Powers of decision and the right of veto in the workers organizations in the agricultural and industrial enterprises should be given. This is not currently permitted by the standing structures of participation, where the final power of decision rests in the hands of the administrator or the boss.

— The structuring of a national assembly of the mass organizations which would advance toward a real power for the masses and their organizations, and which is indispensable for a democratically-centralized national plan.

We cannot respond to this question as the FSLN does when it claims that an assembly is not necessary: "The mass organizations will be represented in the national assembly since their leaders will be elected on the FSLN slates," nor by the slogan: "The FSLN is the highest form of organization of the masses," which leaves little room for the existence of democratic organs independent of the party.

The advance of the Nicaraguan revolution toward the forms of workers democracy is the best manner of assuring the defense of the revolution, laying the political base for a workers' state, and developing the mass mobilizations against the bourgeois counterrevolution. It is indispensable to struggle, at the same time, against the phenomena of bureaucratization inherent in any situation of scarcity.

Moreover, the development of forms of workers' democracy superior to those which exist in the current workers' states, would favor the broadening of international solidarity and the extension of the revolution in Central America and beyond — throughout the world — through the echo that it would create in the entire workers' movement.

#### **Fifth Amendment: Build the Fourth International in Every Country of the World: Build the Fourth International in Nicaragua**

*Page 15, column two. Delete nothing. Add the following at the end of chapter on Nicaragua, before Chapter IV on "The Salvadoran Revolution."*

The future of the revolution depends on a series of factors: the victory or defeat of the revolution in El Salvador, the attitude of imperialism, the extension or isolation of the revolution, and, of course, the attitude of the subjective factor which leads the revolution, the Sandinista leadership.

Our duty is to do everything we can to influence this situation.

First, in continuing and strengthening our militant and unconditional support of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions; in mobilizing all of our forces against the danger of imperialist intervention in Central America.

And if we have things to learn from the Sandinistas, confronted with the crucial problems of the transition to socialism, *we have to also put forward* the essential elements of our program as a contribution — small, but decisive — to the revolutionary struggle underway in Nicaragua. It is not a question of mistrust or of sectarianism with respect to the FSLN, but the contrary. Our program is a synthesis of several dozen years of experience of revolution in the three sectors of the world revolution. Our proposals should be known and defended in Nicaragua, itself. The revolution there is faced with problems on which we

have positions: the question of class independence vis-a-vis the bourgeoisie; the defense of our policy for the socialist revolution in Latin America, as set forth by the last world congress; the defense of our program for revolution in the advanced capitalist countries and for political revolution in the workers' states; the defense of the necessity of a world party of socialist revolution, because no more in Nicaragua than elsewhere, socialism in one country is not possible; the defense of our conception of socialist democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The reaffirmation of our positions can not only be done simply from a theoretical point of view, but we must likewise respond step-by-step to the problems which are posed in the Nicaraguan revolution.

We aim to regroup the partisans of our program, of the Fourth International, that is to say, to build a section of the Fourth International in Nicaragua. The tactical modalities to be followed (inside the FSLN, outside, or both at once), must be made the object of a discussion in the leading bodies of our International which should obviously take into account the prestige acquired in the struggle and the mass audience of the FSLN.

But it is necessary to stress:

— The multi-party situation in Nicaragua which exists and already allows the expression of different currents of the workers' movement.

— The active intervention of the Stalinists and ultralefts who show the possibility for the appearance of political currents in Nicaragua. The basis and the form of intervention of these currents is obviously not a model for us. But it demonstrates the fact that, five years after [the revolution], we are not present, even obliquely through a magazine, to respond to the demands and to the thirst for knowledge of many Nicaraguan cadres and militants.

— The availability of many cadres of the FSLN, their openness to debate, the need, for many of them to find a frame of reference outside of Stalinism and Social-Democracy.

Our support to the revolution and its leadership is complete and enthusiastic. Such revolutionaries of action are a hope for the future of socialism; the building of the world party of revolution cannot ignore them. For that, the Fourth International must exist in Nicaragua.

#### **Sixth Amendment: On the Analysis of the Revolutionary Leaderships in Central America**

*Page 7, column two. Replace the first three paragraphs of point 5, up to small letter "a)" (from "The dynamic of this revolution . . ." to " . . . some major common features.") with the following:*

After the Cuban revolution, we have seen revolutionary organizations arise which have been led to play a decisive role in the leading of revolutions in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Grenada. Partially under the pressure of the masses, and in part guiding them, these leaderships find the road toward proletarian revolution, as the Cuban leadership did 25 years ago.

They begin the battle on the terrain of intransigent struggle for national and anti-imperialist liberation, and carrying this fight through to the end, are confronted by the necessity of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

They have benefited from the existence of the Cuban workers' state, and have drawn lessons from this first experience. Coming from the Castroist current, for the most part, they are marked in different ways by the framework of the theoretical understanding of this current, including its limitations (campism, policy of alliances, weaknesses on workers' democracy . . .).

But they each have their own experience, and their own lessons taken from the concrete struggle. In Nicaragua, the strategy put into effect by the FSLN had been infinitely more elaborated than that of the July 26 movement. The general strike and the



mass mobilizations played a decisive role in the fall of Somoza. In El Salvador, the political maturity of a number of organizations of the FMLN is notable; nevertheless, the conquest of power is confronted by difficulties one hundred times more important than in Cuba in 1958, and poses problems that are much more difficult to resolve.

These leaderships are not homogeneous, as the FSLN showed before 1979 and as the FMLN demonstrates today.

We must characterize these revolutionary leaderships as centrist.

Such a characterization does not affect our attitude vis-a-vis the Central American revolution and its leaderships at all: unconditional defense against imperialism and the bourgeois counter-revolution. But we carry a judgment on these leadership based on the *actions* that they carry out with respect to the decisive test of the revolution which is unfolding before our eyes.

### Two Amendments to the Central America Resolution on El Salvador

- 1) On the government of broad participation
- 2) On the building of sections
- 1) *Delete* the following passages on page 22 of the resolution:

- Second column, third full paragraph, last sentence: "The GAP platform can have this sort of effect . . . problem of mass work in the towns."

- Second full paragraph from bottom, last sentence, "On the contrary, it is a lever to broaden once again the FMLN-FDR influence among these layers . . . overall political proposal."

- Following paragraph, last sentence: "Such formulations might just be a question of tactics . . . proposals made at the UN."

- Page 23, top of column one, first sentence of first full paragraph: "In the concrete world of the civil war in El Salvador . . . it can produce confusion."

Instead of this last sentence, following the phrase "before the establishment of the power of the workers, peasants, and their allies," *insert the following amendment*:

Our position is without ambiguity. In reducing the demands of the masses to the needs of an alliance with bourgeois sectors, in leaving open the possibility of an accord with sectors of the army, the policy of the government of broad participation is incorrect with respect to carrying out the struggle to overthrow the

dictatorship.

Combining the military offensive, the organization of the mass movement in the cities, and the organization of the peasants in the liberated zones is the main lesson of the Nicaraguan revolution for fighting the dictatorship.

Instead of allowing the FMLN to recover its influence in the mass movement and to win the leadership of it away from the UPD, this policy [the GAP] offers no perspective for relying on the aspirations of the masses, their desire for peace, and the workers and peasants demands, which are both opposed to the dictatorship.

This policy sows confusion among the masses and the fighters by obscuring the perspective of overthrowing the regime for an intermediary stage before the taking of power.

To make such a negative judgment on the program of the gap does not mean that we judge the FMLN and its organizations incapable of carrying through the struggle to overthrow the regime, but that this can only be done despite this program. Neither does it mean a modification of our policy in the movement for building international solidarity with El Salvador. It must be constituted on the basis of "No US intervention in El Salvador." We build a united and non-exclusionary front with all forces regardless of their position on the program of the GAP.

That has nothing in common either with the right of the Salvadoran fighters to open or pursue negotiations, which can be raised as a tactic in the struggle against the regime.

- 2) *Delete* the next to last paragraph on page 23: "Developing a united process at the level of the mass movement . . . the present needs of the revolution."

*Replace with:*

From this point of view, the organizations issued from the crisis of the FPL must take their place within the FMLN. The Salvadoran revolutionary situation and the division of the forces of the vanguard make necessary the building of a revolutionary party regrouping all of the forces which effectively struggle for the overthrow of the regime on the basis of the demands of the masses and their organizations and which break with the Stalinist conceptions of revolution by stages, based on a strategic alliance with the bourgeoisie in the "first phase of the revolution."

In this process, the Fourth International regroupes the partisans of its program. It will defend the orientation of this resolution in the ongoing debates in the Salvadoran revolutionary movement. It would regroup those who turn toward it and would work to build a section in El Salvador.



# Three Amendments to the "Theses on the International Situation" (United Secretariat draft resolution)

Submitted by the Tendency for the Unity of the Fourth International

Amendments adopted by the General Assembly of the Tendency, October 28, 1984.

## First Amendment

*In Section I, "The Overall World Situation," at the end of point 4 (page 3, column 2, of IIDB Vol. XIX, No. 4, December 1983) add:*

The success of the imperialist counteroffensive has been limited by the persistence of working-class combativity. Despite several years of capitalist crisis, and in spite of some significant assaults, the resistance offered by the working class has enabled it to preserve its organic strength. This makes the point reaffirmed by the Eleventh World Congress very clear: worker combativity was not a conjunctural phenomenon, a post-1968 straw fire, but is a feature of the political period. We are still in the same period that opened in 1968.

## Second Amendment

*In Section II, "The Crisis in the Imperialist Countries," remove everything in point 10 (beginning on page 6, column 1) just up to the paragraph which ends "sharp turns in the situation remain on the agenda in a whole series of countries" (page 7, column 2) and replace it with the text below:*

In face of the crisis, the bourgeoisie had no choice but to make the workers pay the price.

In this situation, the requirements and program of big capital are supported through right-wing bourgeois tendencies (Thatcher, Reagan, Kohl, Tanaka, Nakasone).

In order to come out of the crisis in a way favorable to it, the bourgeoisie must impose austerity on the workers and break the resistance of the workers' movement. In order to accomplish this, the bourgeoisie has embarked on a social and political offensive of vast proportions: obviously, an offensive against employment and buying power, but also threats against all manner of social programs, a readiness to reprivatize nationalized sectors, attacks on the public sector and public schools, promotion of racist propaganda and the establishment of anti-immigrant policies, attacks against the employment of women workers, and the promulgation of an ideological offensive around super-reactionary ideas.

This type of program has begun to be substantially implemented in countries where the right is in power (United States, Britain, West Germany), but is also pursued in a more partial way in countries where workers' parties are in the government (France, Spain, Greece). For the bourgeoisie, this is not a "maximum" program, but a solution which *must* be imposed if it is to overcome the crisis to its advantage.

This offensive has had some initial results: in the first place, a considerable rise in the level of unemployment. It should be noted that unemployment, which struck first in the most vulnerable layers of the working class, is now hitting the industrial battalions of the class. The other result of the offensive has been an erosion of buying power (especially in Europe).

The bourgeois offensive has been greatly aided by the stance of the traditional leaderships of the workers' movement: complicit passivity in face of the capitalist objectives; when in gov-

ernment, compliance with the needs of the bourgeoisie; division and competition when confronted with workers' mobilizations. The Social Democrats and Stalinists have gone all out to prevent or mislead mobilizations and to thwart an all-out response to the bourgeois attacks.

Today Mitterrand, Gonzales and Papandreou are lined up behind the project of the capitalists and are thus preparing the return of the right, just as Callaghan and Schmidt earlier laid the groundwork for Thatcher and Kohl. The Social Democrat Craxi serves as a prop for the Christian Democracy. Trade-union and political divisions in Belgium blocked the mobilization of the civil servants and thus handed the government a reprieve. In Italy, the Stalinist leadership of the Communist Party, yesterday's champion of the "historic compromise," have joined with the Christian Democracy in a campaign of denunciation and fierce division against the Socialist Party in order to better derail the struggle of the factory councils. The policies of these leaderships has enabled the bourgeoisie to deliver serious blows to the working class. These significant partial defeats must be taken into account.

However, the main point should not be lost sight of: these blows fall far short of what the bourgeoisie needs. Overall, the bourgeoisie has not succeeded in reversing the relationship of forces that arose out of 1968.

In Europe, the end of 1983 and 1984 were marked by some very significant workers' actions: the general strike of Belgian government workers, unprecedented since 1961; the struggle of the Italian factory delegates, which had the support of the masses of workers despite the trade-union divisions and the disunity of the Communist and Socialist parties; the mobilizations in Portugal against the austerity policy; the development in France of strikes in the automobile and steel sectors in particular; the mobilization of the German workers for the 35 hour work week. Even in a country like Great Britain, where the workers have suffered substantial reversals, the long strike of the coal miners is testimony to the capacity for struggle retained by this working class. Though it has seen some hard times, the British workers' movement is far from dead and buried.

Overall, the bourgeoisie is nowhere near attaining its objectives. It has run up against a substantial working-class combativity, which makes itself felt despite the policies of the traditional leaderships of the workers' movement.

As well, neither the stagnation or temporary cool-down of the strike wave, nor the conspicuous depoliticization of the youth, nor the ideological offensive of the right and extreme right justify any impressionistic conclusions about the overall situation. *European capitalism today is not going to surmount its crisis by heaping successive defeats on a non-combative working class.*

We must hold to an absolute conviction that revolutionary explosions are in the making. Sections of the Fourth International must become the heralds of this certainty in face of demoralized centrists and leftists who are now deserting the militant activity



they came into at the end of the 1960s and the early 1970s, and in front of the workers who are eager to beat back unemployment and protect their wages.

From this point of view, the electoral victories of Mitterrand, Gonzales and Papandreou must be seen above all as a deformed expression of the basic social relationship of forces.

These electoral victories are far from accidental. They express the continuance of a relationship of forces favorable to the working class, despite the capitalist attacks and the betrayal of the bureaucracies, who have done their utmost to maintain the stability of the bourgeois regimes (the post-Franco transition and the Moncloa Pact on Spain, bottling up of struggles and then divisions in France).

The establishment of Socialist governments (Spain, Greece) or coalition governments of the popular-front type (France) represent political defeats for the bourgeoisie.

To be sure, all these governments are implementing the bourgeois austerity policy. Not a single one can escape the demands of big capital. Socialist and Communist ministers are attacking the workers' buying power, implementing capitalist "industrial restructuring," and attacking immigrants.

Nevertheless, the bourgeoisie is dissatisfied with this situation, and is seeking to oust these parties from government as rapidly as possible. Not because they think that Gonzales, Mitterrand, Papandreou or Fiterman are too revolutionary, but because their presence in government is proof of a relationship of forces that is an obstacle to implementing their plans. The diligence of the Social Democrats and Stalinists in defending the bourgeois order and implementing austerity policies contradicts the aspirations of the workers who elected them to government. For that reason, the right-wing conservative majorities led by Thatcher and Kohl cannot be placed on the same plane or compared to the governmental majorities of the workers parties led by Mitterrand, Gonzales, etc. The existence of these majorities express a relationship of forces favorable to the workers and must be defended against attacks from the right. They must be utilized by the workers to insist that their parties satisfy their demands.

The attacks of the bourgeoisie heighten the contradiction between the political practice of the leaderships of the workers' movement and the aspirations of the workers, making for a worsening of the crisis of the traditional leaderships of the working class.

— The Communist parties are undergoing the most serious crisis in their history, one which is particularly acute in southern Europe, where they have a substantial base. The most outstanding case is that of the Spanish Communist Party, the pillar of "Eurocommunism," which is in the throes of a downright crisis of decomposition. But the substantial loss of influence suffered by the French Communist Party should also be noted. These parties, even those that draped themselves in a "Eurocommunist" image, are paying for the increasingly widespread rejection of Stalinism by the workers, a phenomenon which became even more pronounced after the coup d'état in Poland. They are paying the price for their policy of upholding the capitalist order (historic compromise in Italy, the Moncloa Pact in Spain, division followed by participation in the austerity policy in France). In the final sense, there is no solution to this crisis. These parties can experience conjunctural come-backs linked to changes in the political situation, but basically things are going to get worse. Their crisis is part and parcel of the generalized crisis of Stalinism.

However, there can be no illusions about the end of these parties as mass parties without the emergence of a revolutionary alternative that is seen as credible by the workers they influence.

— Social Democracy has benefited from the crisis of the

Communist parties and has made important "breakthroughs" in Southern Europe (Portugal, France, Spain, Italy, Greece). However, these electoral successes have generally not been accompanied by any significant numerical growth, particularly from within the working class. Moreover, these parties are shot through with new contradictions, even though these do not crystallize into organized currents. This is true in countries where these parties have come into government (for example, the debates on public education in France and Spain) as well as in those countries where they have suffered electoral defeats (e.g., debates in the German Social Democracy on the missiles issue).

Nonetheless, it must be noted that, with the exception of the British Labor party, the crisis of the traditional workers' parties has not yet been accompanied by the emergence of organized tendencies, whether left reformist or centrist. The weak implantation of revolutionaries is one of the factors weighing against this development. But this is what we must prepare for and work toward. Though they are in crisis, these parties still have influence over the vast majority of the working class. The mass of workers still turn to them for the satisfaction of their demands, because they continue to represent the only credible vehicle. From this point of view, we must reject any notion of constructing a revolutionary alternative that bypasses these parties. The tactic of the workers' united front remains at the center of our political strategy.

The trade-union movement has been weakened in several countries, especially in Spain and France. This is a negative phenomenon which facilitates the attacks of the bourgeoisie. It is a result of the policy of the leaderships — their passivity in face of the capitalist objectives and the divisions among them.

While there has been a drop in trade-union membership in some countries, other factors cannot be overlooked:

a) This trend is far from universal. It is not the case in the small north European countries, and is almost negligible in West Germany.

b) In most countries, it is not at all proportional to the level of unemployment. That is, it is qualitatively different from the weakening of the trade unions that occurred during the 1929-34 depression.

c) It is a very contradictory phenomenon, since the decline in trade-union membership can occur at the same time as vote totals in national elections (Spain) and worker combativity on a factory, industry or citywide level do not diminish.

This trend also manifests a distancing of the workers from the bureaucracies, as shown by the switch-overs in trade-union affiliation (France). As well, numerically weakened unions still retain an important capacity for mobilization when a unified and effective initiative is undertaken.

All this is seen in the emergence of trade-union oppositions which, on immediate questions, can rapidly take on a mass character because they are in step with the aspirations of the mass of workers (example of Italy).

The emergence of these oppositions is a decisive element in overcoming the crisis of leadership of the workers' movement and building revolutionary parties based in the class.

A situation favorable to the building of revolutionary workers' parties exists under conditions where the traditional organizations of the workers' movement — the social democratic SPs and sometimes the Stalinist CPs — are elected to government by the workers, forcing the bourgeoisie to seek their services.

For the past several years there has been a rapid decline, if not a complete collapse, of the various centrist groups that arose after May 1968. Since conditions are still favorable for revolutionaries, these defeats reveal the subjective weakness of these groups, their ignorance of the relationship of the masses to the traditional organizations, and their inability to carry out a correct



policy of workers' united front.

That is why the Trotskyist organizations, above all sections of the Fourth International, can and must play their full role. By advancing a correct revolutionary strategy, it is possible throughout Europe to build parties with several thousand members able to benefit from the weakness of the bourgeoisie and expose the CP and SP leaderships in practice in the eyes of the broad masses of workers who follow them for lack of a revolutionary alternative.

### Third Amendment

In Section VI, "Our Tasks, replace point 41, pages 20 and 21, with the text below:

#### 41. The axes of a revolutionary strategy

1) Despite its repeated attempts and the exigencies of inter-imperialist rivalry, the European bourgeoisie does not have the means to a short-term reversal of the relationship of forces established over the years by the European proletariat.

In face of the increasing role played by Social Democracy and the equally counterrevolutionary activity of the Stalinists, the central task for revolutionaries is to appeal to the millions of workers influenced by the large reformist parties, dialogue with them, and propose mass actions enabling them to test the role of their leaders and to move into opposition.

Revolutionaries, Trotskyists, sections of the Fourth International are not looking to isolate themselves, to settle for a vanguard image, or to foster spectacular but isolated actions. They are not seeking private discussions within small intellectual circles. They do not make a priority of "unity among revolutionaries" and are not concerned with winning "hegemony" over circles which have already "figured out" what Stalinism and Social Democracy is all about to the detriment of the broad masses. No, their discussion, propaganda and agitation is sharply focused on the broad mass of the working class as it actually is. Revolutionaries seek to link up with the millions of workers who still look to the Socialist and Communist parties through concrete actions and mobilizations around slogans that concern the broad masses and not slogans which arouse the sympathy of only a small minority.

This is the axis. This is the lesson of the bankruptcy of the leftists and centrists in the ten years following May 1968 — the need to be linked to the majority of the class, to its organizations, and to formulate central political slogans and demands that correspond to the objective needs of the broad masses. To defend until victory demands that the reformists drop after the initial skirmishes, to show in practice that it is only we who are acting in a consistent way to win the demands formulated by the workers themselves.

The united front encapsulates this method of action. It means struggling on the basis of immediate demands, for the defense of gains, with clear and precise central political slogans, while tirelessly appealing to the SP and CP leaderships and to the unions they influence with simple slogans resting on the need for unity and action to put them forward. This is the best way to demolish the counterrevolutionary bureaucracies of the SP and CP, one which is far more effective than leftist denunciations. This is the best way to build revolutionary parties implemented in the heart of the working class and to place on the agenda the question of workers' unity, the revolutionary crisis and the government of workers' councils.

2) Beginning from the actual demands of the workers, formulate slogans which express objective needs of the broad masses:

— For the defense of buying power, cost of living escalators and the sliding scale of wages. Under the pressure of the crisis as justified by the capitalists, the reformist leaderships universally refuse to stand firm on this terrain. Contrary to them, it is necessary to see the struggle through, not cede an inch, and defend the

standard of living of all workers, utilizing all the means of proletarian struggle.

— For the defense of employment. Here as well the traitorous leaderships are making one concession after the other, at times themselves architecting policies that correspond to the needs of the bosses. To counter them by saying no to all layoffs and demanding that when the CP and SP are the majority that they vote laws prohibiting layoffs is a basic stance that enables Trotskyists to gain a broad hearing.

— For democratic rights. At a time when the ultraliberal reactionaries are brazenly interceding for the elite, for selection, competition and profit and are opposing public services and social security in the name of freedom as against the "welfare state," we must launch an all-out battle for democracy and freedom, which neither the SP nor the CP will wage. It is we who seek to extend democracy to its highest expression, which will be a government of the workers liberated through self-action. We are the best democrats, the best feminists, and the best defenders of national minorities. We do not cede an inch of ground to the give-backs of the liberals. While the Stalinists are tainted by their past and present crimes against the workers, the Trotskyists were the first to oppose Stalinism and have authority in the defense of democratic rights. Workers will listen to us on this matter.

3) Unity is the deepest aspiration of the workers. Every worker wants unity against the boss. This is a natural and permanent axis around which to oppose the reformist policies of class collaboration or division.

Genuine workers' unity can only come about through opposition to the bosses. All alliances with the employers are divisive. Calling for workers' unity is a strategic line against the bourgeoisie and its reformist agents.

The overall political situation in Europe impels our sections to make a priority of advancing the tactic of the workers' united front: both in the ranks and from the top, by appealing to the leaderships of the major parties, by addressing all the leading bodies of these parties and the unions they influence, by basing ourselves on partial but successful initiatives involving the broadest sectors with the constant goal of deepening the mobilization and, in case it is blocked, pursuing the same course and giving practical education to the Socialist and Communist workers we have influenced. This policy does not sow illusions in one or another of the major counterrevolutionary apparatuses. Neither the Socialist nor Communist parties are "reformable." But there is a long road ahead to the millions of workers who still have illusions on this score. This poses a choice of orientation for our sections in the advanced capitalist countries in Europe in terms of building genuinely revolutionary mass workers' parties.

We are for trade-union unity in action, for a single, democratic trade-union federation, as against the bureaucrats who combine division with class collaboration.

We are in favor of workers' unity, unity of the workers' parties, starting with the majority workers' parties, the SP and CP. We demand that their leaderships break with the bourgeoisie.

4) The general perspective of raising the political level of the working class in face of the bourgeoisie and of exposing the bureaucratic leaderships of the CPs and SPs can take a number of concrete forms, depending on the situation in a given country, the relations between these parties and the masses, and the level of activity of the proletariat. These forms include a call to reject all bourgeois parties (even the small bourgeois groups that refer to themselves as "on the left"), a call for a class vote for the workers' parties, a call for independence of the trade-union leaderships from the government; a call for a CP-SP government without bourgeois ministers or for a labor government or an SPD government that breaks with the bourgeoisie. In various ways, we take action with the workers to force the Social Democrats



and Stalinist leaderships to shoulder their responsibilities so that they will be exposed by their refusal to respond to the workers' demands.

We are careful not to blame the masses of workers, by saying to them: "Mobilize, it's your fault, be more aware, start moving, struggle, fight." This type of verbiage is not what is needed to remove the political obstacles currently blocking struggles. The main obstacle is not the insufficient maturity of the workers, but the stranglehold and treason of their leaderships. This must be stressed in every possible way. It is the obstacle which cannot be bypassed or ignored. All our efforts on both the propaganda and agitational levels must be aimed at pointing this out and bringing it to an end. The formulation of a precise governmental slogan is often the most effective way of demonstrating to workers the refusal of the SP and CP leaderships to challenge the capitalist order.

Building sections of the Fourth International as nuclei of mass workers' parties means to throw off all ultraleftist pressures, all sectarianism, and audaciously identify our organizations with the mass of the proletariat in these countries at its actual level. All our sections must be deeply based in the workers' trade-unions, with a priority on the industrial proletariat. Our work must be conceived in a methodical, patient and long-term manner, even though jolts and social explosions can enable us to take big forward strides. Groups of 200 can appear as 2,000 and groups of 2,000 can seem to be 20,000 — and become 10 or 20,000! — if we attempt to coordinate ourselves and strike at the same objectives through major, extended, popular campaigns within the working class. The main task of our sections today is to know how to select such campaigns, how to wage them and see them through to the end.

— For the defense of immigrant rights: the right to residency, employment, and full civil rights (the right to vote).

— For the defense of the rights of youth: the right to free public, secular education, cultural and democratic rights, the right to refuse military service and war.

— For the defense of women's rights: for their civil rights, for equal pay and job opportunities, the right to contraception and abortion (see the resolution on women adopted by the Eleventh World Congress).

— For the defense of humanity against the imperialist war-makers, against the arms race, and for the unilateral disarmament of the imperialist countries.

#### 6) Electoral campaigns

A sound method of party-building is to take advantage of all opportunities to run in elections as parties of the Fourth International and to fully participate in the debates and the voting in countries where electoral battles are an important terrain of class confrontation.

We have to be visible as independent parties, whatever our initial forces might be. We have a program to defend, and no non-Trotskyist organization provides the basic and overall explanation of the world situation that we do. It is everywhere necessary to state that we are communists and democrats, that we are communists and anti-Stalinists of the first order, that we are communists and feminists, that we are communists in favor of the rights of national minorities, that we are communists in favor of democracy and trade-union unity. From Nicaragua to France, from Spain to the United States, from Greece to Portugal, from Sweden to Germany and Japan — every election is a good way to make ourselves heard.

But we cannot confine ourselves to this sort of propaganda. During an election campaign, we have to know how to hammer at a theme, to put forward one or two appropriate main slogans which in a given situation are capable of actually affecting the outcome of the vote. Through our effectiveness, our know-how,

and our correct agitation we will win a hearing from the masses of workers and attract at least some of them to our overall propaganda.

#### 7) Trade-union intervention

The big workers' struggles of the past several years in Europe have demonstrated that the unions are still a key organizational framework for the working class. In all the broad mobilizations the workers have seized upon the instrument of the trade union, as was shown in Belgium, Italy, Great Britain.

While it is correct to note a development of mistrust of the union leaderships expressed through a tendency toward de-unionization primarily in countries where the workers' parties are in government and the union leaderships are clearly seen as accomplices, if not direct agents of austerity policies, it is equally correct to underscore the basic trend in the situation: trade unions continue to be the main vehicle for workers' mobilizations.

During these struggles, genuine mass trade-union oppositions have emerged which contest for control of the unions against the traditional leaderships in order to restore the unions to their real purpose: the intransigent defense of the workers' demands.

It is equally true that these oppositions are not constituted on the basis of an alternative theoretical program, but around basic demands: wages (Italy), jobs (Great Britain). The line of division between the old leaderships and the class-struggle unionists is not drawn around "anticapitalist solutions" to the crisis, but is between those who are ready to go to battle to win demands and those who are not.

That is why intervention in the trade unions is a priority for sections of the International.

We are in favor of a single trade-union federation: "One working class — one trade union." But not a union that is bureaucratic or tied to the state. We are for mass, democratic, independent trade-unionism that defends the interests of all sectors of the working class and seeks to unity the class and lead it against the bosses.

We do not ignore a single day-to-day workers' struggle. We will gain recognition through our action in the factories in defense of wages, for the improvement of working conditions, against layoffs. The first duty of Trotskyists who seek to win a hearing for the full program of the Fourth International is to fight to defend health and safety, secure mutual aid, win salary increases, demand holidays, vacations, a shortening of the work week with no loss in pay, fight against all excesses of the hierarchy, defend the dignity of the workers, stop every layoff, and defend social gains of all kinds.

Being politically active in a factory, implementing *our* politics, often adds up to defending in a better way and to the finish basic demands that have been abandoned by the powerful trade-union bureaucracies under a variety of pretexts. By taking up the legitimate demands of the workers themselves, it is easier to successfully expose the real policies of the bureaucracies and demonstrate that they do not seek the overthrow of the established bourgeois order, but rather its preservation.

We will win an open hearing as trade-union leaders to the degree that our day-to-day activity exemplifies our general propaganda. We link the development of mass trade-union currents in opposition to the bureaucracy and our own progress as a political organization acting openly with a full program. Our goal is to build fighting tendencies in the unions: tendencies that assert the will to *build* the union, recruit to it, strengthen it against the bosses in an intransigent way, guard its complete organizational independence, and take up the key demands put forward by the workers. These tendencies (or embryonic tendencies, or "committees for a tendency," etc.) function democratically and insist on total democracy in the union as a *tool* for building the union. These



tendencies are action-oriented, not mere talk shops. They avoid becoming a ghetto for "cadres" or "theoreticians" in isolation from the ranks of the union. They are sincerely striving to transform the union structures and do not stand for any marginalization from them.

#### 8) *Intervention in the SP and CP*

Every rise in the mass movement up to now has confirmed the weight of traditional organizations like the Socialist parties and the Communist parties. This is the only meaningful, decisive reason for concentrating our efforts in the direction of the masses of Socialist and Communist workers and those they influence: the fact that these parties (or one of them) are in the *majority*.

We cannot get around this fact, nor ignore it. We cannot dream about building a movement or a workers' party in isolation from the workers' movement as it actually exists.

Rather, when the SP or CP are in the majority, the hold of their leaderships over the masses remains to be broken. (Otherwise, the "workers' party" becomes a small centrist group, marginal at best.) To do this, our sections must consecrate the bulk of their forces to independent activity. However, the systematic development of entrust work is also a necessity.

That is, our sections decide to invest an appropriate number of cadres in work inside the SP and CP in order to better address the members and leaders who inevitably have questions in face of the repeated betrayals of the bureaucratic leaderships.

This work must be stimulated and planned by the leaderships of our sections. It must be done boldly and audaciously, since the SPs and CPs are truly in crises and are undergoing numerous internal debates. This activity must be conducted as openly as possible, not with the aim of burrowing into obscurity, but of prompting discussion, arguing policy, and convincing the majority of our class when it is led by these parties. This is frequently possible today. Such "internal" activity can only foster the development of an independent party, focus its attention on the main body of workers and avoid its giving priority to ephemeral leftist "vanguards," a trap into which we have sometimes fallen.

#### 9) *Regarding centrists on the one hand, Trotskyists on the other*

A) Building our parties will naturally be accomplished through regroupment and fusion, and not merely through linear growth.

Consequently, we must pay attention to the various groups that call themselves revolutionaries and that, in fact, waver between reformism and revolution for want of a theory, a concrete program and an International.

Seeking unity in action with these groups at the same time as debate is necessary and useful. To propose fusion or standing forms of cooperation whenever possible is an excellent practice. While seeking maximum clarification on the basic points of our program, it is also appropriate to make certain compromises on immediate, concrete questions, provided they lead to progress on the level of mass action.

But we must guard against a terrible error for which we have paid a price many times: downplaying the role and activity of our sections as such in favor of a so-called "revolutionary front," which is a type of ongoing compromise among groups whose theories and practice are counterposed. Such "revolutionary fronts" do not facilitate unity, but are a detriment to it. Instead of strengthening our sections, they cause them to lose independence. Such "revolutionary unity" often plays a substitutionist, ultraleftist role in opposition to the united front. Confrontation in the narrow framework of the different groups supercedes genuine mass work aimed at the majority of the working class. Thus such fronts inevitably fall apart and demoralize the membership.

Nothing convinces militants and centrist groups more than involvement in mass action in a genuine united front framework.

"Small united fronts" or "partial united fronts" are all too often counterposed to real unity of the class as a whole. They evolve into caricatures and lead to isolation, when they don't become another full-fledged cause of division.

It is clearly necessary to act in a nonsectarian manner; in no case are we content with turning inward and giving lessons in theory. But we think it is more effective to do common *work* in a mass setting, particularly in the trade unions, rather than setting up "representative gatherings," "discussions," and "assemblies" strictly among revolutionaries. Our sections have to be consolidated and prove themselves, which is the way that we will clarify the hesitations of the centrist organizations. There is no shortcut to party building through the expedient of bringing together diverse revolutionary groups.

B) The problem and process are nearly the same in regard to the organizations that make up the Trotskyist movement. These organizations are numerous, splintered, and often very sectarian toward one another. But they have to be looked at differently when they are in agreement on one point: the desire to build the Fourth International, adherence to the Transitional Program.

This basic point must be fully and totally grasped. We propose a perspective of fusion to these organizations by virtue of the agreement they claim to have with the Transitional Program and the necessity for the Fourth International.

The best way to establish the present authority of the United Secretariat is through its stated goal of gathering all Trotskyists together within the Fourth International. There are nearly five billion people and only several tens of thousands of Trotskyists. Who would have a serious attitude toward a United Secretariat that delights in excommunicating or ignoring 30 to 40 percent of those who also claim to be building the Fourth International, however genuine their claims might be.

To declare that we favor reunification of the Trotskyist movement is to affirm a goal, not to resolve the actual problem. It is necessary, but not sufficient. It is a hope and not a reality. It is an outlook which does not settle all the tactical mediations. But it is necessary to begin with such a statement.

Just as with the centrist organizations, it is then necessary to seek out unity in action, common mass work, the workers' united front. There are no shortcuts here, either. We have seen how the efforts made on the eve of the Eleventh World Congress were sabotaged by Moreno and Lambert, followed by their respective parties. We saw how the split of 1979 had a pernicious effect on the *entire* Trotskyist movement, with no exceptions, as well as on our International. We saw what this defeat led to in our ranks, with members and currents seeking other solutions and other shortcuts.

But we were correct to reaffirm by unanimous vote at the Eleventh World Congress, after the split, that this split would not stop our ongoing struggle to reunify the Trotskyist movement. This campaign must be extended, renewed and strengthened. It must be waged with the authority of the United Secretariat and that of our sections confronting the existence of two or three (if not more) Trotskyist groups — sometimes, as in France, even more numerous.

#### 10) *Proletarianize and build authoritative leaderships*

The Eleventh World Congress decided to proletarianize our International and our sections. It is necessary to ratify this decision and continue to carry it out.

This is not an administrative question, an abrupt, radical and authoritarian "turn." This is an affirmed and resolute orientation that must be carried out in a step-by-step, determined way.

We must be clear: we seek to implant ourselves in the key sectors of the working class, meaning in industry, in steel, chemicals, but also in transportation and communications. The working class is constituted by a sphere that produces value as well as



by a sphere that *reproduces* value. We seek to unify all its components in common struggle. We strive to win influential union positions both in traditional industries as well as in communications, which is necessary to those industries.

We do not want our militants and leaders to be cut off from the masses, but to be products of their movement, their activity, at the center of the major struggles of the workers' movement today — against layoffs, for wages, and for defense of social gains. That is what is meant by proletarianization: implanting our best cadres, rooting them in the life of their class and its organizations. That means building trade-union fractions, "branches" by sector, and publishing mass agitational *workers'* newspapers and magazines. On the organizational level, it means giving absolute priority to education and democracy.

A priority on education because it is necessary to develop worker internationalists. Militants who are eager to read about, learn and understand not only the class struggle of their own country, but that of the entire world, not only their own epoch, but the lessons of the great workers' revolutions. Leaderships of sections and of the International must play a conscious role: circulating information, increasing exchanges of experience, ideas and contact, and organizing the most democratic possible discussions.

A priority on democracy because the workers' movement has

too often been marked by the foul legacy of Stalinism. There are too many lingering reservations and caricatures about how Leninist organizations and democratic centralism function. Living Leninism is the pursuit of democracy within the workers' movement. As our Transitional Program states, it is "complete freedom of discussion, total unity in action." It is clearly necessary to combat all examples of so-called "revolutionary leaderships" which function on the basis of secrecy, cooptation, excommunication and purges, and which impose "centralism" in discussions. Trotskyists have historically paid a heavy enough price in the fight against such deviations, even if, as we know, they have not been spared of them in their own midst. The most thorough democracy is required because it is the sole means of enabling workers themselves to become part of authentic leaderships of revolutionary parties. Democracy is effectiveness and proletarianization; it is the opposite of manipulative leadership. Democracy is a respect for the vote, the practice of regular balance sheets, the collective sharing of tasks, and the setting up of leaderships that are loyally inclusive of minorities.

Through education, and with democracy, real political leaderships can be built, ones that are rich in experience and continuity, theoretically solid, genuinely concerned with mass work and preoccupied with training worker militants who in turn are able to take their place.

## The Stakes in the Central America Discussion

### Statement Adopted by Convention Majority Socialist Action (U.S.A.)

Some of the most dramatic and important events for revolutionaries today are occurring in Central America. In Nicaragua, a revolutionary government has taken power and has taken steps which run counter to the interests of imperialism and the native ruling classes and which have sparked the sharp antagonism of these reactionary forces, who understand the real threat presented by this revolutionary process — the potential for the complete expropriation of bourgeois economic interests.

The revolutionaries leading these events represent the growth and development of the Castroist current. The roots and ideology of that current can be traced back to the Cuban revolution and its impact throughout Latin America.

Despite the important achievements in action of this current in the Central American revolution, we must also acknowledge that the weaknesses of Castroism can be seen within these struggles. These weaknesses take the form of theoretical and programmatic gaps and errors (for example on the nature of Stalinism or the role of the neocolonial bourgeoisie) which result from the specific historical conditions in which the Cuban revolution took place.

The class in Nicaragua between the masses led by the FSLN, on the one hand, and the old ruling classes and their supporters, on the other, is becoming sharper and sharper. It has reached the stage of a major armed invasion by counterrevolutionaries backed by U.S. imperialism. A decisive showdown is shaping up that must end either in the overthrow of the still dominant economic power of the bourgeoisie (the overturn of the Nicaraguan bourgeois state) and the creation of a workers' state resting on nationalized property, or in defeat for the revolution.

This is the question of permanent revolution as it has always been understood by the world Trotskyist movement. In the age of

imperialism there can be no road to national liberation except through a process of proletarian revolution — of socialist revolution.

The revolution taking place in Central America is, and will on an increasing scale, have an extraordinary impact on the coming American and world socialist revolution. Our internal discussion in Socialist Action takes place within the framework of unconditional support to the revolutionary workers and peasants and their organizational expressions in Central America. We are unconditionally in support of a military victory by the FMLN in El Salvador and by the FSLN in Nicaragua against the internal and external forces of world capitalism and its most virulent and potent agency, U.S. imperialism. And, of course, we support every forward step by the Sandinista revolutionary government against capitalist power and toward the dictatorship of the proletariat in Nicaragua.

But we must begin with an important fact in our approach to the leading forces in the Central American revolution. *They do not constitute a single monolith.* The largest and most influential component, it is true, is made up of forces that have modeled themselves politically on the profoundly revolutionary *practice* of the Castroist leaders of the Cuban revolution. These revolutionists of action, therefore, encourage the greatest optimism regarding the outcome of the current stage in the world struggle for workers' power and socialism.

But it is no less true that worming their way within the ranks of the revolutionists of action in Central America are the traditional representatives of political betrayal in the shape of the Stalinist and Social Democratic class-collaborationist currents; vigorously working to contain the revolution within capitalist limits. Al-



though a small minority within the revolutionary camp, the Stalinist and Social Democratic influence is amplified with the considerable assistance of the Stalinist bureaucracy at the helm of the Soviet state — not to mention the Social Democratic agencies of capitalist governments in Western Europe and the Americas.

These counterrevolutionary forces have recently succeeded in driving the Salvadoran FMLN to the right with the adoption of the new "peace plan," the Government of Broad Participation (GAP). But even so, our optimism is bolstered by new evidence of growing resistance to this program within the FMLN and among revolutionary forces who have been undemocratically excluded from the FMLN.

Ruben Zamora, a principal leader of the FDR (the conservative political arm of the FMLN), has been compelled to defend the "GAP" against mounting opposition within the fighting forces of the revolution in El Salvador. Zamora clearly establishes the *strategic* — not tactical — character of the "GAP" in an interview reprinted in the Oct. 29, 1984, issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.

We would do a terrible disservice to the revolution were we to be silent regarding the ideological struggle that has erupted within the El Salvadoran revolutionary movement. We would make the biggest mistake if we were to adapt ourselves passively to the political line of the revolutionary forces in Central America today — particularly those who are advocating the "GAP." On the contrary, we have an *obligation* to participate in this ideological struggle. As Leon Trotsky noted, "One does not demonstrate one's friendship for a revolutionary organization in a difficult situation by closing one's eyes to its mistakes and the dangers arising from them."

This was the cardinal error made by the Barnes' leadership of the SWP. Some of us warned, during the 1981 pre-convention and convention discussion, that the SWP was in danger of following the logic of their adaptation to Castroism and would ultimately be led to break with Trotskyism, the Permanent Revolution, the Transitional Program, and with the Fourth International. We are not happy that this fear has been to a great extent confirmed by the subsequent evolution of the SWP, which began a shocking *two days* after the August 1981 convention.

While we are confident that the Fourth International, unlike the SWP in the grip of the Barnes faction, is completely capable of regaining its balance, the United Secretariat (USec) majority is showing evidence of a similar course toward adaptation. Two of the most recent USec majority resolutions, "The Report on the Present Stage of Building the International" and "The Central American Revolution," show evidence of a dangerous trend toward rationalizing and adapting to erroneous strategic conceptions held by the currently dominant wings of the revolutionary forces in Central America and the Caribbean.

1) The USec majority resolutions defend the GAP on "tactical" grounds. In its resolution, "The Central American Revolution," the USec majority states:

The objective [of the "GAP"] is to give this movement, starting from its reality, a *dynamic* of political confrontation with the practical policies of the present government. To do this it has to be offered an overall perspective which links democratic, anti-imperialist, and immediate economic demands. That is the way to throw off balance the leaderships of the popular organizations who want to subordinate the activity of the masses to the needs of the regime. [And the USec authors conclude]: *The "GAP" platform can have this sort of effect.* (emphasis added) (page 22, *IIDB*, Vol XX, No. 8)

The USec majority, however, dismisses the fact that the FDR/FMLN "peace plan" proposes to achieve these demands by a coalition government "in which no single sector will have control" and backed by an army resulting from the fusion of the FMLN forces and a purged Salvadoran army.

The NC majority reaffirms the right of the Salvadoran revolutionists to negotiate with Duarte or whomever. But as Trotskyists,

we cannot give political support to a program that calls for the merger of the two armies and that clearly commits itself to the preservation of capitalism in El Salvador.

2) The USec resolutions *reverse* their previous positions and now support programmatic, electoral and governmental alliances with so-called minor bourgeois forces on the ground that the worker and peasant components have "hegemony." In footnote four to the USec resolution on Central America (*ibid.* page 25) the USec majority states its support for the FSLN policy of alliances with the bourgeoisie in the National Patriotic Front (FPN) on the ground that "its actions were incorrectly grasped (problem of hegemony) and were not situated in the context of the battle for 'national unity against Somoza' in the sense understood by the FSLN."

3) The USec resolutions — overturning the historic position of the FI — support participation in multi-class formations organized on a capitalist *programmatic* foundation, for the alleged purpose of gaining a better hearing and "... to help determine whether it becomes a reformist front that holds back the mass movement or a revolutionary front that pushes the process forward." (Hugo Blanco, "Left Unity and 'Sendero Luminoso'"; *Intercontinental Press*, March 19, 1984) This policy of the Blanco-led majority of the Peruvian PRT in joining the Izquierda Unida popular front-type electoral alliance has been *endorsed* by the USec majority resolutions.

4) The USec resolutions overturn their own analyses of the phases of the Nicaraguan revolution which had up to the adoption of the new positions — for five years — correctly maintained that the revolution had yet to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. a workers' state. This momentous revision of the USec's previous analyses is offered without pretense of a serious explanation except in the same footnote cited above.

The previous FI resolutions called for the completion of the agrarian reform, the establishment of soviet forms of workers' rule, workers' control, and the resolution of the "mixed economy," i.e. the overthrow of the partially dismantled capitalist state. By reversing its positions, the FI is now rationalizing the non-completion of these tasks on the ground that the workers' state existed in Nicaragua from the outset. This method, at the very least, throws into question the applicability of the Transitional Program to the Central American revolution. If adopted, the new USec majority positions would obviate the reason for the existence of sections of the FI in Central America.

5) And again in the same footnote, the USec majority overthrows its theoretical analysis of the Algerian Ben Bella government as a workers' and farmers' government (but not yet the workers' state). They reject the "... validity of this characterization which combines workers' and peasants' government and capitalist state." And in so doing they also reject the FI's analysis of the Cuban revolution. All of this in a one-paragraph footnote!

We believe these mistakes can be corrected and the USec majority stopped from following their logic to its ultimate conclusion. Toward this end, we wish to point to the theoretical questions at the root of the currently widening dispute. A frank and sharply clear statement of the problem is indispensable. False diplomacy that gets in the way of clarifying differences is harmful and would be a major departure from our tradition of comradely but uncompromising political argument.

### The Roots of the Widening Dispute in SA and the FI

Our discussion has revealed a vast confusion concerning basic programmatic positions within Socialist Action and our world movement, the Fourth International. It concerns, among other things, a confusion between the workers' united front and the anti-imperialist united front, on one side, and the popular front on the other.

The workers' united front is based on unity for objectively anti-capitalist action by mass workers' organizations. It must not



rule out the right of each component to advocate its full program and the right to mutual criticism at the same time that united anti-capitalist action is organized and carried out. The aim of the united front is to unite in action mass organizations led by contending political currents. The united front, therefore, can only be set into motion on the basis of one, or at most a few issues. To achieve a broader-based anti-capitalist *programmatic* coalition is unrealistic. The more issues included as the basis for common *action* the less is the possibility for politically divided mass organizations to unite.

The anti-imperialist united front is the application of the united front to underdeveloped countries where the tasks of the democratic revolution have pressing urgency and thus does not exclude alliances with capitalists. But such alliances must be restricted exclusively for the purpose of carrying out joint action for *specific and limited aims*. It should go without saying that a sharp programmatic and organizational differentiation is essential between the workers and their momentary bourgeois allies.

Neither the workers' united front nor the anti-imperialist united front can be based on a program that includes the defense of capitalist property rights. This is a class-collaborationist programmatic alliance — better known in the hands of counterrevolutionary Stalinists and Social Democrats as the popular front.

Nowhere in the historic programmatic positions adopted by the American or world Trotskyist movement is there even a hint that support or participation in an electoral coalition or programmatic alliance or governmental formation that includes the bourgeoisie is within the bounds of *principle* — even with “insignificant representatives” or “shadows” of the bourgeoisie. The principle of working class political independence has been affirmed and reaffirmed on numerous occasions in programmatic documents like the Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution and in shelves of writing on this question by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky — to name only the most prominent.

The Third International under Lenin and Trotsky first advanced the tactic of the anti-imperialist united front:

Just as in the West the slogan of the workers' united front has helped and is helping to expose the social democrats' sell-out of proletarian interests, so the slogan of the anti-imperialist united front will help to expose the vacillations of the various bourgeois national groups. . . .

. . . The colonial revolution can triumph and defend its gains only if accompanied by a proletarian revolution in the advanced countries.” (*Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Communist International*. Pages 415-416)

Nowhere in these “Theses,” nor in any writings by Lenin and Trotsky, nor in any line documents of the SWP of the FI (until now), however, is there any statement that a *programmatic* alliance with any sector of the bourgeoisie is permissible in a colonial or semi-colonial country. On the contrary, the same principle of working-class political independence from the bourgeoisie (in this case the national bourgeoisie) applies with equal force in this arena of the world class struggle. Limited unity in action with sectors of the national bourgeoisie against imperialism is permissible, but always under separate programmatic banners — never under the banner of the class enemy.

In reaffirming our historic position on class alliances, we also reaffirm the theoretical conquests currently being challenged regarding the workers' and farmers' government as a transitional slogan in the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat; and as a theoretical link explaining the transition from capitalism to the workers' state. We stand on the general line defended in “Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution” by Joseph Hansen which is an outstanding example of the application and refinement of the theory of permanent revolution, and which clearly establishes the revolutionary Marxist criteria for determining the class character of the state now challenged by the USec majority and the NC minority.