

TROTSKYIST BULLETIN

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Democratic Demands in the Political Revolution

International Executive Committee, January 1993

1. The LRCI has characterised the years since 1989 as being the period of the terminal crisis of Stalinism. In elaborating our programme of political revolution in the remaining degenerate workers' states, we should first review what we have argued in the course of the last three years as one after another political revolutionary crises have unfolded. The LRCI has much to be proud of in its record during these last years. Tendencies that identified the bureaucracy with the gains of the workers' state have put themselves on the wrong side of the barricades. We have recognised that the defence of the gains of the workers' states means above all else, raising the working class itself to a conscious attempt to defend those gains, while taking hold of, and extending, all democratic rights against the Stalinist dictatorship.

2. During the events of the past three years one aspect above all stands out. The working class in the degenerate workers' states and USSR had suffered a grave blow to its class consciousness as a result of decades of oppression at the hands of the Stalinist bureaucracy. As the iron grip of the Stalinist dictatorship loosened after 1985 it became more and more evident that forces opposed to the bureaucracy organised themselves in the name of "democracy". This democracy was—and remains—bourgeois democracy and consequently social restorationist, either consciously or objectively. But from the point of view of developing a system of revolutionary tactics we were forced to recognise that the forces of bourgeois democratic counter-revolution proved capable of mobilising the urban workers and petit-bourgeois intelligentsia around slogans of democratic rights, for the overthrow of the bureaucracy and the establishment of parliamentary republics.

3. The very real class contradictions between these various social forces remained subdued. Between November 1989 (fall of the Berlin wall) and August 1991 (attempted coup in the USSR) we were faced with growing mass mobilisations against the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy under conditions of extremely weak political differentiation between the forces mobilised. The task we undertook through our slogans was to assist the mass mobilisation to bring down the bureaucracy and simultaneously aid the separation and growth of a revolutionary vanguard in the proletariat; in short, to bring about the sharpest possible political differentiation within the ranks of the democracy movement between the separate or emerging classes.

4. The slogans we deployed embraced the rights of assembly and organisation, to strike, to arm, to dismantle the secret police. In pursuing these demands with the masses we found ourselves on several occasions alongside bourgeois and petit bourgeois restorationist forces. These repeated, if limited in scope, united fronts, were essential given that these forces stood at the head of the proletarian masses. These demands sought to extract or defend concessions wrought by struggle from a repressive Stalinist dictatorship that was still in power.

5. But these slogans were not sufficient and in the coming months and years they will prove to be insufficient again. Stalinism remains a ruling power in China, Mongolia, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and some Central Asian republics of the ex-USSR. Defensive united fronts for democratic rights do not provide a bridge between the consciousness of the masses who have been mobilised and the seizure of state power by the working class. For this we need political, governmental slogans. Of course, we have in our programme such slogans—soviets. This slogan is absolutely correct and must be constantly used in propaganda and agitation. We must propose (even take) practical steps that leads in the direction of such soviet-style bodies. But soviet-style slogans alone are not sufficient where even embryonic forms of workers' democracy are lacking but where bourgeois parliamentary slogans are finding great support among the masses. For this situation we must advance the slogan of a revolutionary constituent assembly (CA).

6. Trotsky acknowledged that Lenin, as early as 1918, had anticipated that a degeneration of the Soviet regime could occur to such a degree that slogans of a bourgeois parliamentary kind might well be essential under the dictatorship of the proletariat. That the decline and degeneration of the political consciousness of the workers might become so great as to cause the masses to be mobilised behind "democratic" forces. In these conditions the the Bolsheviks might need to use democratic slogans once more:

"At the seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party in March 1918, during the discussion of the party programme, Lenin carried on a decisive struggle against Bukharin, who considered that parliamentarism is done for, once and for all, that it is historically 'exhausted'. 'We must', Lenin retorted, 'write a new programme of the Soviet power, without renouncing the use of bourgeois parliamentarism. To believe that we will not

be thrown back is utopian . . . After every setback, if class forces inimical to us should push us to this old position, we shall proceed to what had been conquered by experience—to the soviet power . . .’

Lenin objected to a doctrinaire antiparlamentarism with regard to a country which had already gained the Soviet regime: we must not tie our hands beforehand, he taught Bukharin, for we may be pushed back to the once abandoned positions.” (*Writings 1932-33*, p301)

7. Ten years ago this is what Workers Power and the IWG wrote:

“Because the Stalinist bureaucracy has crushed the organs of proletarian power—the soviets—replacing them with a lifeless imitation of bourgeois democratic forms (parliament, elections by universal suffrage) the call for free elections, for multiplicity of parties, for the secret ballot, all find a powerful resonance in the masses themselves. Our programme is for proletarian soviet democracy with freedom for soviet parties, for all power to the soviets. The existence of a parliament with bourgeois (counter-revolutionary) parties in it would be a rallying point for counter-revolution.

Therefore, this demand is not ours. The democracy of the soviets, involving the workers, peasants, in executive as well as legislative power is superior from the outset to bourgeois democracy and is the only state form which allows for the construction of socialism. Should, nevertheless, the masses take up this slogan, should the workers’ councils—as in Hungary—espouse it, we would fight for the following measures to guard the proletarian dictatorship and expose in practice the reactionary essence of parliamentarism:

(i) fight to strengthen and centralise the soviets themselves into a national congress of soviets.

(ii) ensure that any elections to a parliamentary body were conducted under soviet control debarring any candidates actively seeking the overthrow of the workers’ and peasants’ power.

(iii) place before a ‘constituent’ parliament or assembly the project of a purely soviet republic.

(iv) seek, on the authority of the soviets, the dissolution of the assembly either when it had ratified soviet power, or should it fail to do so, disperse it as a tool of counter-revolution.” (*Degenerated Revolution*, pp82-83)

8. In the *Trotskyist Manifesto*, (TM) the founding Congress of the LRCI applied this method to the very beginnings of the political revolutionary earthquake: “We oppose the creation of bourgeois parliamentary institutions in workers’ states. They are elected by an atomised population who are incapable of holding their representatives to account. They cannot be an adequate expression of workers’ protests, let alone of their proletarian class dictatorship. These institutions serve the introduction of the market economic reforms of the bureaucracy and restorationist forces outside this caste. Parliamentary institutions will act as tribunes for the spreading of bourgeois propaganda and the organisation of counter-revolutionary elements. (. . .) Where the ruling bureaucracy attempts to stabilise its rule though the organisation of parliamentary elections we counterpose the proletarian democracy of workers’ councils. We fight for the formation of such councils as organs of struggle

against the bureaucracy and as the organs of democracy of a revolutionary workers’ state. (. . .) As the political revolutionary struggle sharpens, parliaments will prove themselves ever more clearly to be instruments of counter-revolution.” (TM, pp97-98). We also included a number of tactical demands to be applied in the event of parliamentary elections taking place.

Both the *Degenerated Revolution* and the *Trotskyist Manifesto* were right: parliaments are bourgeois forms, and would raise the danger of counter-revolutionary forces gaining the upper hand. However, whilst this is our starting point, it proved inadequate faced with the reality of events from 1989 onwards.

Firstly, both documents only considered two options: either bourgeois parliaments or workers’ councils. Although a rich set of tactics were put forward for what to do in the event of parliamentary elections, there was no consideration of the possibility of fighting for a constituent assembly. Part of the reason for this, especially in *The Degenerated Revolution*, was the tendency to identify the sovereign constituent assembly with a bourgeois parliament. This is incorrect.

Secondly, the reality of the period after 1989 was such that, because of the legacy of Stalinism, the masses insisted on mobilising initially around bourgeois democratic demands and, indeed, calling for bourgeois parliaments. What could we do in such circumstances? One alternative would have been to stick to the letter of the TM (“We oppose the creation of bourgeois parliamentary institutions in workers’ states.”). This would have condemned us to sectarian isolation, so we correctly applied and developed subsequent sections of the *Manifesto* on tactics to adopt where democratic illusions are strong, in order to limit the damage parliaments can do by circumscribing their powers, and making them as unstable a form of bourgeois rule as possible.

In essence this is the method we employed in 1989 in Germany before capitalist restoration or political unification. In November of that year, as the wall was breached, we said:

“In the streets of Leipzig and Berlin the demonstrations have raised the demand of free elections—for freedom of political parties . . . The tyranny, corruption and deceit of the existing system are so manifest to the masses that the defects of bourgeois democracy seem minor by comparison. But they are real nonetheless . . .

. . . If, however, the bureaucracy is obliged to call parliamentary elections then we call for the workers to call prior mass meetings to select their candidates and to hear the candidates of all the parties. They should demand annual elections and deputies who are recallable by their constituents. They should demand of all candidates a pledge to defend statified and planned property. By these means the fraud of bourgeois parliamentarism can be exposed, its dangers minimised and the principles of a system of workers’ councils fought for.” (14 November 1989 resolution of the International Secretariat).

9. This tactic was fine as far as it went, but it remained defensive and reactive. Our warnings about the deceit of parliamentarism and the need for workers’ councils would have been heeded all the more had we been more forthright in giving a clear revolutionary democratic form to the yearnings of the undifferentiated

mass movement, in such a way as to lead in the direction of a political differentiation. In the conditions of the time this meant tactically posing the question of *revolutionary* democracy on the terrain where the mass movement actually stood. We take no responsibility for the prior existence of bourgeois parliaments in the degenerated workers' states but we do take seriously the democratic illusions of the masses, which the proto-bourgeois forces seek to utilise to create such parliaments. The task of revolutionaries in this situation is to pose the demand for a revolutionary constituent assembly. This is not a normal bourgeois parliament (i.e. a legislative body, part of a division of powers within a bourgeois form of class rule), but rather a forum within which the conflicting classes of the nation meet and clash and debate out the class basis of the nation—its constitution. Lenin and the Bolsheviks were very clear after October 1917 that the elections and convocation of the assembly should go ahead to show and prove the treachery of the so-called democratic forces, even on the basis of soviet power. We should stand in the vanguard of this movement and demand such an assembly if the masses are in the grip of such illusions.

10. If any are still in doubt look at what we said in the summer of 1990 regarding Germany.

"Throughout November the mass movement spread. Instead of the generally reformist orientation of New Forum in September and early October, the mass movement was now more overtly opposed to the whole system. It was an anti-Stalinist, pro-democratic movement, spontaneously seeking revolutionary methods of achieving its goals."

The Round Table tried to delay and frustrate the ambitions of the masses for democracy. As a result it ruined the fortunes of all those who tied their fate to its success. Thus,

"... calls for a national referendum on 'reunification' raised by New Forum groups in the south, were decisively rejected by the New Forum leadership in Berlin, despite strikes to support the demand. This marked the beginning of the end for New Forum's leadership of the mass movement of the south and the steady transfer of support to the right, first to the SPD but eventually to the CDU and the DSU."

Hence it was the need for democracy and reunification that was at the centre of mass illusions. We acknowledged this when we said;

"It was the bringing forward of the elections [to March 1990] which demobilised the mass movement and signalled the end of the revolutionary crisis. With the electoral campaign the masses were satisfied that they had achieved their aim."

11. Correct as far as they go the demands in relation to the CA raised in the above documents in the years between 1983 and 1990 do not go far enough. The task in the concrete conditions that emerged after 1989 was and is for the LRCI to become the vanguard of the democratic struggle, in order to tear the weapon of political democracy out of the hands of the inconsistent (semi-bonapartist) bourgeois democrats. We must advance the slogan of the CA in order to outflank the restorationists who will try and monopolise democratic slogans while in

reality seeking to heavily restrict the powers of the parliament and surround it with bonapartist safeguards in case it falls too closely under the pressure of the masses.

Of course, any actual constituent assembly can be used by restorationist forces as a vehicle for furthering the formation of a stable bourgeois class and parliament and promoting the destruction of the workers' state's property relations. This is a serious risk. But as Trotsky said, the political revolution itself is a risk, in the sense that if it fails or stops half way it can deliver victory up to the enemy. An identical method has been used before most strikingly embodied in our position on the national question in the degenerate workers' states: "even where a separatist movement threatens to espouse social counter-revolution we continue to defend the right to state independence." (TM, p101). This method was applied in Lithuania where we supported their right to independence and defended them against the Kremlin tanks, despite the fact that the Saujudis leadership was openly counter-revolutionary.

If we apply the method of the TM to the sphere of political democracy it is clear that, in certain circumstances, we need to be prepared to raise the slogan of the constituent assembly whatever risks it may involve. This is in no way a betrayal of the revolutionary programme. Its main usefulness will be in precisely those circumstances where, if we do not place ourselves in the vanguard and give a proletarian answer to the struggle, then other—counter-revolutionary—forces will do so, as happened in Eastern Europe and the USSR after 1989.

We must be clear that there is no automatic relationship between political form and property relations. Just as it is conceivable that the fight for the constituent assembly could prove to be the only way to save what remains of the planned property relations, the absence of a parliament is in no way an obstacle to counter-revolution as the Chinese bureaucracy is currently proving. The "bourgeois" form of the bureaucratic dictatorship ("not qualitatively different from that of fascism"—Transitional Programme) is perfectly suitable for restoring capitalism. Leaving such political structures intact is no guarantee of the defence of planned property relations!

12. In conclusion, we should bring our use of the slogans of revolutionary democracy in the course of the political revolution into line with our consistent use of the slogans against national oppression in the degenerate workers' states. In particular, we should reserve the right to use the slogan of a revolutionary, sovereign Constituent Assembly in our programme of political revolution, to be advanced before the coming into existence of bourgeois parliamentary institutions on the foundations of a moribund workers' state. It should be used whenever the mass mobilisations against Stalinist dictatorship take place under clear bourgeois democratic restorationist counter-revolutionary leadership. It is even possible to combine the call for the convening of a Constituent Assembly with the call for "all power to the soviets" where soviet-type bodies exist. This would depend on a variety of concrete factors. We tie the call for and convocation and protection of a CA to the building of workers' committees, militias and councils that can guarantee that the Constituent Assembly can be a

weapon for the thorough destruction of the Stalinist dictatorship and prevent the consolidation of a proto-bourgeois bonapartist regime.

Nor is the slogan of the revolutionary Constituent Assembly confined entirely to situations of democratic, anti-Stalinist mass mobilisations. Where openly bourgeois restorationist forces have seized presidential and/or government powers and where these are involved in constitutional struggles with conservative bureaucratic forces (e.g. Russia today) both seeking to secure bonapartist powers for themselves, the slogan of a revolutionary CA can be an important weapon to show to the masses the anti-democratic corruption of both camps.

Also in Eastern Europe, where open bourgeois restorationist regimes are firmly in power, the CA slogan can retain some importance. For example, in the newly created states of the Czech Republic and in Slovakia, new constitutions have been adopted by governments and assemblies which were never elected to carry out this task. Both new constitutions contain chauvinist provisions aimed against minorities and have met some resistance from the population. We should say that the new constitutions are hostile to the workers and to the democratic rights of national minorities. They should be rejected and sovereign revolutionary constituent assemblies convened to draft new constitutions.

We do not conceive of this slogan as a strategy, nor as a step towards the creation of a "democratic" bourgeois republic. It is a tactic that we will use in certain circumstances. The Fourth International (International Centre of Reconstruction) led by Pierre Lambert calls for a Constituent Assembly as a step to the creation of a "democratic" republic, the class content of which is never explained.

The slogan is never linked to the independent workers' mobilisations and arming or to the fight for the creation of workers' councils, for the building of a revolutionary party, for the defence of planned property relations. This is what makes Lambert's use of the slogan reformist. Our use of the slogan is qualitatively different from that of the Lambertists.

13. In Cuba we should not use this slogan as yet. The masses' illusions are presently still focussed within the bonapartist institutions of the Castro clique; there is little by way of an anti-Castro urban democratic intelligentsia that promotes broad cross-class democratic illusions. For the present our slogans should concentrate upon the destruction of the bureaucratic network of spies and informers, of building committees of working class struggle against the bureaucracy.

Russia after the Congress of People's Deputies

International Executive Committee, January 1993

1. The December 1-15 1992 session of the Congress of Peoples Deputies marked another important turning point in the restoration process in Russia. Yeltsin and the bourgeois restorationist government suffered a serious defeat at the hands of a block between the Civic Union and the Russian Unity (Edinstvo) factions. This defeat led to Yeltsin's loss of overall control of the government, the loss of most of his Bonapartist powers, voted him one year ago by the same Congress and the establishment of an unstable duality of power with the parliamentary bodies. The project of drafting a new constitution and the holding of a referendum on it in the spring means that this struggle for power will continue throughout this period. Sharp turns, temporary compromises, resignations are likely in this period. This demonstrates two related facts of great importance for the strategy and tactics of revolutionaries. Firstly, that the decisive qualitative point in the restoration process has not been passed; Russia remains a degenerated workers' state albeit a moribund, disintegrating one. Secondly, despite the fact that the governments of both Yeltsin-Gaidar and Yeltsin-Chernomyrdin are bourgeois restorationist governments, the situation of dual power which opened in the USSR in March 1989 is not yet over. The polarities and the balance of this dual power has changed several times but it has not yet been resolved in favour of a unity between a bourgeois government and a state machine (special bodies of armed men) who unambiguously defend capitalist property relations.

2. Before the Congress both the western and the Russian media were predicting that Yeltsin intended to suspend the constitution and either postpone the Congress, or dissolve it, call new elections and meanwhile rule by decree. At the same time it was predicted that the "hardline majority" of the Congress would impeach Gaidar or even Yeltsin himself. It was considered certain that the Congress would strip him of the emergency powers that it voted him a year before and that it would force the dismissal of the government. Yet shortly before the Congress opened it was revealed that intensive negotiations had taken place between Yeltsin and his aides and the Civic Union headed by Arkady Volsky. The outlines of an agreement were reported which would assure Yeltsin and even Gaidar a majority at the Congress. The price for the Civic Union supporting Gaidar's continued premiership was a further transfer of important cabinet posts to them and a serious modification of economic policy in favour of the industrial managers and their military allies; that is, an end to threats to slash

credit, to force enterprises into bankruptcy, the stimulation of production.

3. The 15 days of the Congress of People's Deputies however saw this deal disintegrate. They saw an abortive "constitutional coup" by Yeltsin, a new compromise aimed at saving Gaidar but at the price of serious concessions by Yeltsin, the failure of this compromise on the floor of Congress and Yeltsin's surrender of the premiership to the Civic Union. They failure of both deals was the refusal of the deputies by large majorities to reappoint Gaidar. After the first such refusal Yeltsin attempted to use the bonapartist weapon of a plebiscite. By leading a walk-out of the Congress by his supporters he hoped to render it inquorate and thus give himself the constitutional pretext for a referendum on "who rules". But only a small number of deputies walked out (150) Worse, the ministers of Defence and Internal Security demonstratively remained in their seats and declared their "neutrality". They announced that they would not follow Yeltsin's orders if he tried to dissolve the Congress or the Supreme Soviet, called a referendum or tried to rule by decree. In addition, the President of the Constitutional Court, a Yeltsin ally, came out against him. The unenthusiastic response to his visits to factories and the pathetic turn-out of the demonstration called in his support made it clear that he would be unable to mobilise mass support in the streets for any strong measures. The top military leaders, including the Defence Minister General Grachkov, made it abundantly clear that they would not support or enforce any presidential coup.

4. The attack on Yeltsin by Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi was a heavy blow, since he is a politician who can claim an equally "democratic" mandate and he would automatically replace Yeltsin should Congress or the Constitutional Court impeach or suspend the President. Together this phalanx of opposition forced him back to the negotiating table. Here he conceded to parliament a veto (ratification) over the key ministries; Defence, Security, Interior and Foreign Affairs. He was also obliged to dismiss his principle advisor and the architect of his strategy at the Congress, State Secretary Gennady Burbulis. These heavy sacrifices seemed justified to save Gaidar and his "economic team". Yet this deal too collapsed. Either Volsky could not deliver the Civic Union's votes or he reneged on the deal. Volsky represents only one wing of the Civic Union's bloc of deputies which is divided into several sub-factions. Nikolai Travkin, the

head of Russia's largest political party, was opposed to the deals with Yeltsin and had himself conducted separate negotiations with the Russian Unity (Edinstvo) faction. It would appear that Congress Chairman, Ruslan Khasbulatov, was able to orchestrate a voting bloc made up of most if not all of the Civic Union, and the Russian Unity.

5. Russian Unity is a block between old-style Stalinists and ex-Stalinists who have become monarchists and proto fascists. But its social core is the remaining Stalinist faction of the bureaucracy. It opposes privatisation of industry and agriculture and openly calls for the restoration of central command planning. But its foremost demand is the restoration of a Great Russian State within the borders of the old Soviet Union. These bureaucrats still control vast regions of Russia at the administrative level, still head important industries and collective farms and, most importantly, they have powerful support in the army and the secret police. Their parliamentary fraction, with nearly one third of the Congress delegates, is closely linked and overlaps with the "banned" National Salvation Front. Its most prominent spokesperson is Sergei Baburin, himself a monarchist and Russian chauvinist. Russian Unity is linked outside of the parliamentary bodies to a series of neo-Stalinist parties (Russian Party of Communists, Russian Communist Workers Party etc) who in turn are in a block with the far right, (Zhirinovky's Nashi and Pamyat) in Trudovaya Rossiya. Within these Stalinist parties there is a growing anti-semitism and chauvinism, in short, the proto-fascist wing of Stalinism (the faction of Butenko in Trotsky's terminology).

But Russian Unity also has many links and overlaps with the Civic Union, that is, with the overtly state capitalist restorationists. Nevertheless, its central core and the force which gives it its overall character is the remaining forces of the Stalinist bureaucratic caste. It is rooted in the remains of the bureaucratically planned economy and the remains of bureaucratic-military state machine which defended it and today partially obstructs its final demolition.

6. Ruslan Khasbulatov, as the speaker of the parliamentary bodies, was able to orchestrate a block between the Stalinists and the slow-track state capitalists to oust Gaidar and check Yeltsin. When Yeltsin tried to break out of this parliamentary encirclement he faced rejection by nearly all the top echelons of the post-Soviet bureaucracy. Whilst the latter is divided it still rules as a social caste. The two largest factions could agree that it was vital to oust Gaidar and decisively reduce Yeltsin's bonapartist powers. They could agree for the time being to use parliamentary and constitutional means to do this. Of course, in the longer term neither are committed to constitutionalism or legality. The Congress proved a tremendous triumph for Khasbulatov who humbled Yeltsin twice in a matter of days and stripped him of most of his bonapartist powers. The Congress and the smaller sitting parliament, the Supreme Soviet, now have veto powers over the appointment of the key ministries and has in effect established a veto over the premiership itself. It has established constitutional control over the powers to call referenda or to call or postpone

regular elections. The agreement to hold a referendum on a new constitution in April will open a three to four month struggle within the government and between the government and Yeltsin. Yeltsin is now faces a fate similar to Gorbachev's, of being converted into a lame duck president.

7. Meanwhile, the fast-track, pro-IMF restorationist faction—the expression of the privatising sector of the bureaucracy and the newly emerging small capitalist class—has weakened and fissured. The "Democratic Russia" block of deputies has likewise fragmented. Yeltsin advisers and former radical democrats like Sergei Stankevich are calling on Yeltsin to form a "strong presidential power". He believes that a "liberal-reformist policy has never succeeded in Russia", that restoration will take twenty years at least and the present Federation borders "can and must be preserved". Anatoly Sobchak the mayor of St. Petersburg, now openly supports the Civic Union. The weakness of the radical restorationists is manifest in their pathetic votes in the Congress.

8. Behind these political developments lies the onset of an acute crisis for the entire restoration process. It has not only been slowed down. It has now stalled and even faces the possibility of roll-back. Why is this? Some bald statistics demonstrate the depth of this crisis; 70% of Russia's state enterprises are facing bankruptcy. Only 3.6% of industrial enterprises and 10% of commercial firms have yet been privatised. The present voucher sale only covers 10% of all enterprises. Production has fallen by 20-23% this year and inflation is running at 20% per month (30% for foodstuffs). Yet unemployment is still very low (442,000 for the entire Federation). Nominally, wages have only been raised by about half the rate of inflation but this obscures considerable unevenness. Many workers now earn from R4,000-8,000 but in large scale industrial plants this figure runs at about R14,000 and Kuzbass miners earn R45,000. The enterprise managers are repeatedly putting up industrial workers' wages, providing certain basic foodstuffs and other commodities by inter-enterprise barter and running up huge debts as a result. This is the objective basis for the relative absence of resistance over the past year. But it is also the reason that the state budget deficit is growing enormously.

9. The liberalisation of prices and the disintegration of central allocation on the one side and the mushrooming of inter-enterprise debt, on the other, are combining to produce a potential hyper-inflationary crisis. The contradiction between the two incompatible sides of the *de facto* economic policy being pursued by the divided economic regime must be resolved if this outcome is to be avoided. The freeing of prices in an economy 97% dominated by state monopolies means that the latter are "free" to raise prices whilst production is slumping, "contracts" are not met and workers stand idle in the factories. In turn managements' are "free" to raise wages and unable (because of still formidable legal restrictions) to dismiss workers even if they had any motivation to do so. In fact since they are not capitalist managers they have no motive to change the labour hoarding practices inherited from the old centralised plan. They can carry

on like this since the Central Bank is unwilling and unable to drive their enterprises into bankruptcy.

10. The Gaidar "shock treatment" proved unable to smash the direct links between firms along the old chain of supply inherited from the plan, and the old style exchange structures between the banks, the enterprises and the ministries. Gaidar has not been able to force the enterprise managers or the Russian Central Bank to follow his free market programme. There remains a ghostly survival of bureaucratic planning, in the form of ad hoc agreements between economic units despite the abolition of Gosplan (or rather its conversion into the Economics Ministry of the Russian Federation) and the Industrial ministries. Moreover, Gosnab (the state supply commission that actually allocated the planned resources) has still not been abolished. Gaidar had intended to abolish it in January. The Russian Central Bank, despite several attempts, has likewise not been brought under the control of Gaidar and has continued to print rubles and extend credit on a non-commercial basis.

11. These phenomena are reflected in the explosion of inter-enterprise credit over the year. Starting from about 100 billion roubles in January, it soared to 600 billion in April, and then to 3,000 billion in September! Gerashchenko, the chairman of the Central Bank, estimates that it will reach about 4,000 billion by the end of the year. One company puts off bankruptcy by running up debts with another, and the central bank goes on printing money. Under these conditions capitalism cannot be restored. But neither can the moribund bureaucratically planned economy be given its death blow. What the LRCI identified as the central phenomenon of capitalist restoration—making the law of value the dominant regulator of the economy—is still far from being achieved. Production for profit still does not dominate the Russian economy.

12. The reason for this successful resistance to the Gaidar programme by the industrial managers lies ultimately in the political situation in the Russian Federation. Whilst Gaidar's programme might be modelled on that of Kraus or Balcerowicz he does not have either the economic nor, more importantly, the political machinery to enforce it. Quite simply, neither the August 1991 events nor the December 1991 dissolution of the USSR, resolved the situation of dual power.

The dual power is not just a question of political divisions within the bureaucracy but reflects a split along class lines within the bureaucratic caste, although in an extremely mediated and indirect manner. At one pole stand those bureaucrats who are intertwined with the nascent capitalist class and directly linked to world imperialism. At the other pole are those bureaucrats who cling on to the remains of the centrally planned economy and have little or no hope of surviving its destruction. This duality is obscured and mediated by a huge intermediate "marsh" who seek to slow down the process, to retain their privileges and power and to transform themselves wherever and whenever possible into capitalists. These divisions are in turn reflected in the military and state bureaucracy, where in the end the conflict must be expressed and resolved.

Far from Yeltsin setting up a dictatorship, as some unbalanced Stalinophile "Trotskyists" claimed, an extremely weak bonapartism, pledged to restoration certainly, found itself obliged to manoeuvre and balance between those sections of the former bureaucracy who had already integrated themselves with a nascent capitalist class (co-operators, mafia) and the huge rump of the state, military and industrial bureaucracy who had not. This co-existence was possible because between the two extreme poles of those who opposed restoration in order to preserve their own power and those who were in favour of an immediate shock restoration, there existed a huge middle ground.

13. The great majority of the bureaucracy saw no alternative perspective to restoration. But at the same time they had absolutely had no intention of sacrificing themselves to this objective. They believed that they could transfer their privileges and power into ownership. They could become "industrialists" and "entrepreneurs" in more than name. Thus at first they entered on the fast track to restoration with Gaidar and Yeltsin. They did not mind the sacrifice of their old time opponents and oppressors within the bureaucracy—the central planning bureaucrats and the party officialdom. They were pleased to be rid of them. These industrial bureaucrats are far from opposed to capitalist restoration in principle. Indeed, they hope to transform themselves into large scale capitalists. But what they ignore on this front is that on the road to large scale capital "one capitalist kills many". For some to emerge as successful entrepreneurs most will have to go to the wall. Hence, there exists a historic contradiction between their aspirations and their practical fulfilment. This was not long in making itself felt. When Gaidar targeted the loss making enterprises he rapidly lost their support and a new faction began to consolidate.

14. From April 1992 onwards the growth of a "slow track", state capitalist faction proceeded apace. This faction used the parliamentary bodies to challenge the government's control of the economy and then of the state administration. Finally, in December 1992, it was revealed that Yeltsin and the restorationist project did not have the undivided allegiance of the armed forces and the secret police. As early as April the "Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs" and their allies in the Russian parliament were able to force Yeltsin to bring some of their representatives into the government. Repeated clashes between Gaidar and State Bank chairman Gerashchenko over credit and banking policy revealed the depth of the struggle between the industrial bureaucracy and the neo-liberal restorationists backed by the IMF. Gaidar failed to stabilise the Russian currency by the summer as he had promised and US, EC and Japanese capital showed a tardiness to invest in Russia on a large scale. Massive imperialist investment might perhaps have provided a partial substitute for the lack of a strong capitalist class able to carry out the restoration process or it might have stimulated the growth of such a class. But it proved both unwilling and unable to do this. Unwilling, given the lack of politically secure conditions to protect large scale investments and unable, given the crippling effects of a severe and pro-

longed world recession.

15. The Civic Union founded in June 1992 brings together industrial bureaucrats with high ranking state and military officials. Their common programme emphasises a strong Russian state, the "salvation of national industry" and a slower process of price liberalisation and privatisation. It also emphasises the importance of "social guarantees" to ensure stability during the transition process. They are the largest and most influential faction in the Russian parliament. About two thirds of all the local and regional Soviet deputies are members or supporters of the Civic Union. Unlike the Democrats they are a nationally organised force which can either make things happen—or stop them happening at all. The Civic Union has an alliance with the "Russian Federation of Independent Trade Unionists", the former state-run union. Together they present their economic programme as protecting the workers' jobs and wages. Civic Union political statements tend to talk of a "third way" between unbridled capitalism and old style command planning. In essence this is only a survival of the old nostrums of "market socialism" recast as a smoother transition to (state) capitalism, something Volsky describes deceitfully as a "system somewhere between socialism and capitalism". This programme shows a remarkable similarity to Gorbachev's "market socialism" or "social market economy". Rumours that the Gorbachev Foundation is funding the Civic Union are interesting in this light.

16. Since the Congress the manoeuvres of Volsky and Chernomyrdin to remove the remaining members of the Gaidar team (the ministers of economics, privatisation, foreign trade and foreign affairs) have continued. Yeltsin has been forced to fly back from China to "restore order". Kozyrev, the Foreign Minister, has repeatedly tried to alarm the West about a return to old Soviet-style military and foreign policies (e.g. pro-Serbianism) if the "hardliners" oust him and the remnants of the Gaidar team. Yeltsin wants the west to intervene and "insist" on their retention in government. But the west, if alarmed, is cautious. Although Yeltsin managed by the end of 1992 to retain a number of key neo-liberal and pro-western ministers from the Gaidar cabinet a further transformation of the government in a more state-capitalist and nationalist direction in the coming months is not improbable. But even with a solid majority of ministers, will the Civic Union be able to carry out its programme?

Whatever short term successes they might have, largely as the result of their greater power within the old state system, they will face an acute budget crisis and an escalation of inflation, perhaps even hyper-inflation (from the present 30% to 50% per month). Their present programme, however, is an incoherent mishmash. It will have to resolve itself sooner or later in the direction either of neo liberalism or neo-Stalinism.

17. A Civic Union government, after the inevitable failure of its own programme, would eventually be driven either towards the programme of "Russian Unity" or towards that of "Democratic Russia". Either they will be forced into patching together as much as possible of the

old command economy or they will have to return to a policy of the privatisation or closure of unprofitable enterprises to save the state from bankruptcy. If they go down the neo-Stalinist path, the bloc of "industrialists" will split with those who see a future for themselves in a market economy returning to Yeltsin or whoever then represents restoration. If the new government, on the other hand, has to divide the state industrial sector into parts which must close and others which will be maintained this will equally split the bloc of "industrialists and entrepreneurs". The present strength of the Civic Union—the inclusion of virtually everyone who is opposed to the present economic course—will become its weakness. Its attempt to court the social support of the workers, its links with the official unions and the work collective councils, cannot survive any sharp turn to balancing the budget. When social provisions like food and energy supply, childcare, canteens, and the health service are axed, or when millions of workers lose their jobs, the continued passivity of the official as well as the "independent" trade unions and factory councils cannot be guaranteed. Everyone in Russia fears the numerically mighty working class, the biggest in the world, all the more so because of its very silence and inactivity up to now.

18. Beyond any attempt to carry out the Civic Union's programme (which itself would require the conversion of Yeltsin into a weak figurehead or more likely his resignation) lies another crisis and a fourfold alternative;

(a) a dictatorial state-capitalist restorationist regime. The renewal of Civic Union's project but under a strong bonapartism (eg Rutskoï). This could draw in elements from both the neo-liberal camp and the industrial bureaucratic camp and possibly elements of the neo-Stalinists. But it could take the form of a suspension of parliamentary politics and the fiction of "rising above" the competing camps.

(b) a return to a neo-liberal regime. But this time one with dictatorial teeth willing to enforce the massive assault on the working class and the defeated sections of the state and economic bureaucracy. It would have to be a military bonapartist regime because of the lack of a serious capitalist or petit-bourgeois class or a substantial pro-capitalist labour aristocracy capable of sustaining any sort of democratic regime. It is highly improbable that such a regime could come to power by a "cold stroke", that is, without civil war. Of course, such a regime would have the economic and perhaps military support of imperialism.

(c) a return to a neo-Stalinist regime. Because of the still transitional state of the economy and because of the continued dual power situation a reversion to a neo-Stalinist regime is not excluded. It could even occur with a degree of popular and indeed working class support if the chaos and disintegration of the failed Civic Union programme had aroused mass working class protest and resistance and if the working class had created no new or independent leaderships or mass democratic workers' organisations (trade unions, factory committees and soviets). In such conditions the Stalinists might even come to power relatively peacefully. But their regime would have to assume dictatorial powers in order to compel the disparate elements and layers of the planned

economy to obey the central command structures and to break resistance to its attempts to restore Great Russian domination of parts of the former USSR which were economically or strategically vital.

(d) the emergence of an independent working class alternative. The fight to reconstruct an economy directed by and for the producers and consumers needs state power to be put into the hands of democratic councils of the workers and collective farmers. The great problem undermining this progressive outcome is the terrible legacy of seventy years of Stalinist dictatorship: class atomisation, the lack of the educating influence of the parties and programmes, the lack of direct experience of the class struggle since 1945.

19. Russia is undergoing a centrifugal process. Some republics (like Tartaria and Chechen Ingush) want separation and some regions (Siberia) are demanding greater autonomy. There are around 25 million Russians in the non-Russian republics of the ex-USSR. Some of them are subject to national oppression and restrictions on their democratic rights. We are in favour of the right to self-determination of oppressed nations in a workers' state. But we do not advocate secession either of Russian minorities in non-Russian republics, nor of non-Russian minorities within the Russian federation, except in situations where the proletariat has expressed its definite will to secede.

20. The "independent" unions remain small and the state pseudo-unions remain bureaucratic apparatuses incapable of mobilising their members. The Independent Mineworkers Union organises one quarter of Russia's 200,000 underground miners. At its recent congress a spokesperson stated that "the union supports the president but not the current economic reforms". In 1991-92 the union was bought off by huge wage increases and tied to Yeltsin's restorationist policies by a corrupt leadership. The metal workers' union has also suffered a similar process.

Independent unions in the transport industry, rail, underground, and air traffic controllers have organised or threatened strikes. Nevertheless, the proletariat's general passivity over the last year has been a major advantage for the restorationists and reactionaries of all kinds. It has enabled them to conduct their Lilliputian squabbles uninterrupted by any sign of movement from the slumbering giant. Russia's parties and political life is conducted by an extraordinarily narrow stratum of bureaucrats and intellectuals. One should not, however, assume that this will continue when job security is concretely threatened and hyperinflation threatens the real wages of the workers in the decisive centres of production and transportation.

In these conditions it is possible that a whole spectrum of political tendencies that today are isolated from the masses and have little support could gain influence and leading roles in the workers' organisations. These would undoubtedly include various types of Stalinists, ex-Stalinists, social democrats, anarchists, populists, bourgeois democrats and nationalists. The crisis of leadership would be transformed into an active conflict of programmes and leadership cadres rather than the vacuum which it now is.

21. The political representation of the working class is even weaker than its trade union representation. Amongst the non-Stalinist forces that have any pretension to socialism and seek to become a class party of the proletariat, the Party of Labour (Partiia Truda—PT) is the largest. At its founding conference in October 1992 it had no more than 400 members. Its ideologists are intellectuals like Boris Kagarlitsky who founded the Socialist Party in 1990. It also includes the right wing of the Anarcho-Syndicalists. Its programme is no more than a left Social Democratic one. It explicitly "reject(s) the idea of a vanguard party" and declares that its project is to "form a broad party of Labour, a party movement constructed from below". As might be expected, its programme contains a host of evasions and ambiguous slogans especially on the question of property and the ownership and organisation of the means of production. Alongside supporting "workers' self-management" it calls for "the transformation of the state sector of our economy into a modern, efficient, decentralised social sector capable of leading our country out of economic crisis". The sleazy combination of opposed principles in order to appeal to opposed classes is clear from the central slogan on how to direct economic life; "for the democratic regulation of the economy as an indispensable condition for establishing civilised forms of the market". At the same time it calls for the defence of "the rights of consumers and independent national entrepreneurs". It is clear that this programme, which also calls for "integration into the world economy" is a pro-capitalist (but of course "anti-monopolist") one. In short it is a cowardly petit bourgeois programme unworthy of the Russian proletariat and its traditions. This "party of labour", despite its courtship of the Stalinist labour organisations (the official "unions"), has no real mass base amongst workers. It is an organisation of the intelligentsia and of municipal and parliamentary careerists. As such it is continuing its search for the masses via participation in the Congress of Left Wing Democratic Forces. The first such congress, held on 28 November, grouped the Partiia Truda with openly social democratic and openly Stalinist forces as well as the official unions. The Stalinists make up the big battalions in this front which is even more mealy mouthed and evasive in its slogans than the PT. However, whilst this congress is a congress heavily weighted to junior bureaucrats and careerists it could evolve in the direction of some sort of bourgeois workers' party if it intersected with an upsurge of working class resistance. But at the moment this Congress and the Partiia Truda are opportunistically close to the Civic Union and its key slogans.

22. The "Trotskyist" groups remain tiny propaganda societies, wracked by programmatic confusion and conflicting Stalinophobia (SWU) and Stalinophilia (Militant). Sheer lack of political experience, absence of workers' struggles and indeed isolation from a largely passive proletariat means that revolutionary tactics are a sealed book to them. They are sectarians and/or centrists in their own right as well as because of the influence of degenerate Trotskyism from the west. In conclusion, there exists as in Eastern Europe a deep crisis of leadership, or rather an absence of leadership which holds the working class back from independent class

politics. We are for the creation of a Leninist Trotskyist Party in all the states of the ex-USSR as an indispensable part of rebuilding this class consciousness. It is vital that the revolutionary programme of political revolution, focussed and indeed re-focussed to meet the changing tasks of the political revolution becomes the basis for winning individuals or whole organisations to unfalsified Trotskyism. The LRCP's action programme retains its full validity for the period ahead. But in one sphere our programme requires tactical development.

23. The crucial task for the working class in the struggles ahead is to overcome the crisis of leadership, using all the contradictions and divisions that the bureaucrats and bourgeois restorationists will encounter on the road to capitalism. Not the least of these is the question of democratic liberties. In the total absence at the moment of any soviet or proto-soviet bodies and the workers' confused memory of what the soviets of 1905 and 1917 actually were, it would be doctrinaire to simply counterpose the slogan of soviets to all the concrete manifestations of political life and conflict. All the bourgeois and bureaucratic factions use democratic slogans against one another but none of them dare measure their policies and their popularity even in the scales of formal (bourgeois) democracy. Baburin, Khasbulatov or Yeltsin are at best prepared to call plebiscites where the choice is limited to one or another undemocratic and anti-working class proposal. Even the most radical of the "democrats" suggested only a Constituent Assembly nominated equally by the parliament and the president. Revolutionaries must not be afraid to take up the weapon of revolutionary democratic demands and sharpen them in a class fashion against the would-be bourgeois exploiters and the Stalinist tyrants alike.

24. Against the plebiscites and referenda to rubber stamp pre-arranged constitutions or to bolster bonapartist Presidents we call not only for an active boycott but for the holding of elections, by universal, direct, secret and equal suffrage to a revolutionary sovereign Constituent Assembly. We do not advocate restrictions by the present bourgeois government on those parties are allowed to stand. We oppose the remaining bans and restrictions on the CPSU at a national or local level. We do call on the workers themselves to prevent the campaigns of fascist and anti-semitic parties and all those who advocate or organise pogroms against national minorities.

For all those who work we call for the ballot to be held in the workplace and in work time, after electoral meetings which allow workers to question the candidates, to hear as well as read their programmes. We call for all elected representatives to hold themselves responsible to mass meetings of their electors, whether in the factories or in geographical constituencies. We demand that these representatives be subject to the right of recall by such

mass electoral meetings. Only thus can the representatives be held to implementing the will of those who chose them. We are for workers' control of the media and the electoral process. We demand that the army, the police, the judiciary and the government submit themselves absolutely and unconditionally to the authority of the Constituent Assembly. In any Constituent Assembly we will be in favour of returning to the constitutional principles of Lenin and Trotsky and ceding power to a government of workers' councils.

25. During the elections we would argue that workers demand from all candidates where they stand on the questions of opposition to privatisation and the defence of the nationalised factories and farms; where they stand on workers' management and democratic workers' planning to solve the economic crisis; where they stand on democratic rights and freedoms, including the rights of the national minorities and on the recognition of the independence of the other CIS states; where they stand on the defence and improvement of the social welfare, health and public housing systems and on the rights of women, the youth and pensioners. Only candidates that pledge themselves to the defence of these historic and immediate gains or needs of the workers deserve the workers' votes. Revolutionaries would put forward in the debate on the nature of a future constitution the demand that it should explicitly defend the socialised means of production as paramount and recognise all political power as vested in local, regional and city soviets of workers' and farmers' deputies—a Soviet Republic. It should abolish the presidency and the vice-presidency and all elements of one person bonapartist rule. Last but not least, the constitution of a workers' council republic should offer free and voluntary federation to all the other CIS and Eastern European states where the workers re-establish their rule and kick out the restorationist governments that are plundering their countries in the interests of western imperialism.

26. We raise these demands not because the Constituent Assembly is an essential stage through which Russian workers must inevitably pass but because they are at present passing through a stage of semi-constitutional rule, semi-parliamentary and semi-bonapartist regimes.

The air is thick with threats to dissolve assemblies, impeach presidents and call plebiscites. The threat of bourgeois or bureaucratic bonapartist dictatorship looms beyond this phase. Workers must learn to measure parties and programmes and break all trust in bonapartist "strong men". Democratic demands allied to class demands and militant class struggle for them can shatter existing illusions and passivity and hasten the day when once more the Russian proletariat stands at the head of a world wide proletarian movement striving for a socialist world.

Patching up the new world order

International Executive Committee, January 1993.

1. The IS resolution on the international situation, adopted on 16 February 1992 argued as follows:

- The disintegration and collapse of the USSR and its East European satellites ended the post-war bi-polar system. The new period which has succeeded it will prove to be one of even greater instability. Rather than a "new world imperialist order it will be a new world revolutionary period. However such periods are marked not only by revolutions but by counterrevolutions. The failure of the terminal crisis of Stalinism to give rise to successful proletarian political revolutions determined that the first years of this new period have been marked by victories for counterrevolutionary forces worldwide.

- However these victories have been victories for the democratic counterrevolution. Nor have they meant that there are no victories for progressive forces, but these in turn have taken place under the banner of democratic freedoms. The stagnation and crisis of world capitalism does not provide the basis for a prolonged "democratic period". The temporarily triumphant ideology of free enterprise and parliamentary democracy will be undermined in the decade ahead. Spontaneous struggles against the new world order will erupt and provide the objective basis for renewing and transforming the labour and anti-imperialist movement. The condition for successfully achieving this is to develop the programme and the cadres of new parties and a new international and to root them in the mass struggles of the coming years.

- The political momentum achieved by the Cold War victory and the subsequent defeat of Iraq would see the US supervise further political settlements upon the semi-colonies. The institutions of inter-imperialist co-operation would survive and strengthen in the short term as they were refashioned to take on new responsibilities.

- The crisis of the leadership in the workers' movement was at a historic high and would worsen; consequently the workers' movement would not provide a great subjective challenge to bourgeois rule.

- But the world recession, and especially the continuing economic decline of the USA, would ensure that the US and imperialism generally, would lack the resources to capitalise upon its triumphs and institute a lasting stable order of exploitation. Reactionary nationalisms would destabilise the political scene. Growing inter-imperialist conflict would move to the surface as the difficulties refused to be resolved and as the economic situation deteriorated.

- Thus a new prolonged period of prosperity for imperialism was excluded short of a fundamental defeat inflicted upon the working class in the main metropolitan centres. Only this, taken together with the restora-

tion of capitalism in the East and China, could herald the opening up of a new phase of generalised expansion.

2. During the last ten months nothing has occurred which should lead us to revise any of the fundamentals of that analysis. In particular we can point to that fact, as we suggested, that in the CIS and eastern Europe we have seen a protracted and difficult restoration process and a severe slump in their economies. There is still no evidence of a Marshall Plan and continued limited assistance, especially for Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, is more likely. The severe social problems that restoration would cause for the masses would begin to strip away some of the illusions that the masses had in the democratic restorationists. We suggested that, as a result, while some of the former Stalinist parties would disappear, some, "although far from mobilising against the restorationists, can become poles of attraction for workers willing to fight against the consequences of the restoration process." We have seen this clearly in the defeat of Sąjūdis in Lithuania and the re-election of the ex-Stalinist leader as President.

In Russia the first fast track restorationist government of Yegor Gaidar ran into massive resistance from within the bureaucratic-managerial strata by the Autumn of 1992. A majority of the forces polarised around the Civic Union has established control of nearly all aspects of government except the ministries directly concerned with privatisation. Yeltsin's bonapartist powers have been severely restricted but not abolished. Thus a duality of power exists between the fast and the slow track restorationists which is likely to lead to sharp constitutional conflicts and resignations, if not coups. The decisive turning point of the restoration process has not been reached. On the contrary, the process has slowed down and could even go into reverse. Economic crisis will force a choice of fundamental direction. A neo-Stalinist restoration is not excluded. Everything remains to be fought for including the saving of the remains of the planned property relations. But it must be added that the subjective factor—the forces for a progressive proletarian solution—are very weak indeed.

The rise of national or ethnic conflicts shows no sign of abating and our judgement that "As with Yugoslavia real national interests of aspiring bourgeois forces may prove impervious to the pressure of multinational agencies of the new world order" has proven accurate. In Yugoslavia the intra-nationalist war produced all the reactionary consequences that the LRCI foresaw. The near genocidal "ethnic cleansing" of large areas inhabited by Bosnian Muslims has reduced them to the status of an oppressed community, obliging revolutionaries to take a

defencist position with regard to attacks upon them by their Serbian oppressors. The Greater Serbian expansionism in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the oppression of the Albanians in Kosovo is an arch-reactionary one which deserves no support.

3. The imposition of reactionary settlements upon national or anti-imperialist movements and on destabilising civil wars, continues but not without difficulty. We judged that the multilateral agencies of inter-imperialist co-operation against the Third World would hold firm and even strengthen. Clearly, in conflicts considered central to US imperialism the pressure is sustained. In South Africa, the ANC is even more likely to deliver a reactionary agreement. Whilst forces opposed to a settlement exist the most powerful are those trying to sabotage it for arch-reactionary reasons; namely, those within the state apparatus, the white racist far right and the Zulu-communalist Inkatha. Their objective is a partitioned South Africa. Their aim is to save the privileges and the plunder of the whites and the "homeland" leaders. After a long pause due to Israeli and US elections, the Palestine "peace process" is due to get underway again. Syria and Israel continue to shape up to do a deal; Jordan certainly will.

4. Yet it is also clear that in several arenas where the UN has been advanced by imperialism to impose settlements it is meeting obstacles in imposing order. The Balkans carnage is the most evident example. There is thus an important possibility of a US-led military intervention in the Balkans against Serbia in order to "stabilise" the region. Under these circumstances it will be necessary to fight for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of UN/US imperialist forces and for the defeat of these forces. Such an attack is probable unless the Serbian regime makes concessions and abandons the project of "cleansing" Kosovo or making claims to a part of Macedonia. There is a lower likelihood of a general Balkan war, but it remains a real possibility. The LRCI has to prepare its cadres and the working class to intervene if and when either of these sharp military turns occur. We must ensure that we combat the imperialist myths about the Balkans, and fully understand the revolutionary line and policy on war and anti-militarism. We must also be prepared to launch united front tactics in the anti-war movement to defend Serbia in case of imperialist attack.

In Angola the UN has difficulty making UNITA accept its electoral defeat. The situation in Somalia shows the UN to be impotent. In Kampuchea the Khmer Rouge are able to rubbish the peace accords that were agreed upon. In El Salvador the regionally brokered settlement has not achieved the complete disarming of the FMLN as quickly as the US would wish, but they are still inching towards their goal. The US and French intervention in Somalia under the UN banner constitutes a temporary re-colonisation whose aim is to restore a reliable semi-colonial regime. War-lordism based on tribal ethnic divisions is itself a product of imperialist exploitation and military and economic pressure.

These have made the creation of a stable national bourgeois state impossible. The Somali intervention is a "soft" trial run for the new gendarme role envisaged for the UN in the "new world order". As in Bosnia, despite its "humanitarian" claims, it must be opposed by all progressive forces.

In South America the impact of neo-liberal policies has caused considerable political instability. In Brazil Collor was the victim of an internal power struggle in the ruling class, although his removal spurred a revival of political confidence in the masses, while not reversing a series of heavy industrial defeats. Lula's Workers' Party is using the mood to strengthen its electoral position and role as loyal constitutional opposition, waiting for 1994 elections. In Nicaragua the FSLN's capitulation seems to know no bounds and the masses continue to suffer the consequences of, first, FSLN and then UNO attacks. For all the region's governments, deregulation, privatisation and the savaging of welfare provision continue to dominate their political and economic agenda.

5. In the next six to nine months the international situation will continue to be dominated by the effects of the world recession. In February we noted that this global recession was longer but shallower than the previous two. This is still the case. Output in US and UK is still not fallen as much as in 1980-82. We envisaged that Japan and Germany would slide into recession in 1992 and that this would synchronise the global recession as a result. It now appears that complete synchronisation may be avoided. There will be no slump (i.e. a sharp industrial contraction of 10% or more) or a collapse of the international financial system.

Germany's recession will deepen in the first half of 1993. The post-1990 boom, which reflected the new demand created in the former East Germany, has come to an end. Japan experienced a very bad first half of 1992. Profits of the car MNCs and consumer electronics MNCs (a third of all Japanese exports and a fifth of industrial output) have collapsed and recession is biting. The problem in Japan is not low industrial productivity as such or poor international competitiveness but a collapse of international markets. They are the victims of a classic crisis of overproduction. They were too productive. But Japan's crisis is not simply one of overproduction of consumer goods. Due to speculative over-investment in land and stocks in the late 1980s these values have crashed. This has hit company and bank values hard. This in turn has effected ability to lend and borrow for investment for machine goods. This has been the engine of Japan's growth. Traditionally high rates of capital investment will not be possible for at least the next year or two.

The USA and the UK will likely see a small cyclical upturn in 1993. The growth figures for the third quarter of 1992 in the USA suggest that the very low interest rates are finally having an effect. Yet growth in the USA will not be enough to cancel the effects of recession elsewhere in the OECD. In the USA the Republicans lost the elections because the impact of recession could not be overcome by ideological consequences of Cold War and Gulf victories. For the US bourgeoisie Reaganism's deregulatory, deficit-ballooning, debt-ridden domestic economic programme had become discredited and outworn. It produced social instability at home and competitive decline internationally. Consensus exists for new post neo-liberal, non-Keynesian programme of state intervention into the economy. This will involve a state-initiated programme of capital spending and Research and Development collaboration with MNCs—paid for by more taxation and welfare cuts.

The GATT trade talks will result in a workable compromise between the EC and the USA. But Gatt has

to be set against background of a huge rise in non-tariff protectionism elsewhere. Also any final agreement will not come anywhere near getting to grips with the problems of massive overcapacity and productivity in agricultural commodities. Despite the compromise settlement in Uruguay round, we have probably seen the last of the GATT trade rounds. Bi-lateral trade agreements, cartelisation of world markets between MNCs and a rise in non-tariff protectionism—all will increase. This will reinforce stagnatory tendencies.

The previous mechanisms for economic recovery are not available or have not been created by the course of the recession so far. In 1983 we had a unilateral US deflation which stimulated a German and Japanese recovery based on capturing US markets. This is not possible today since the US is a global debtor and saddled with huge deficits; it needs to boost its exports and run down its deficits. This requires a global offensive for markets by the US. In 1987/88 the recessionary effects of the October Crash of 1987 was offset by co-ordinated monetary policy measures in the three blocs. This averted recession by boosting credit and accelerated a speculative boom that collapsed after 1989. Today the US has historically low interest rates but consumer and corporate debt still is too large to allow credit expansion in the US to act as the engine of growth of the world economy. Meanwhile, the monetary policy of Germany moves in the opposite (pro-recessionary) direction and hampers global recovery. This recession has been accompanied by a sharp mark down in land and asset prices in many countries which further hampers industries ability to borrow for investment.

Clinton's election, the Delors budget proposals for the EC and Japan's October 1992 \$50bn government spending package all suggest that a capital spending programme may be emerging as a post neo-liberal state administered recovery programme. This would not be dependent on a consumer credit revival, it would not depend upon unilateral expansion of the US markets and thus boosting the exports of the EC and Japan. However, in order for it not to boost government deficits further (impossible for the US and difficult for EC given Maastricht) such a programme could only come via tax increases and this implies attacking consumption levels (through taxation and welfare spending cuts).

6. Inter-imperialist conflicts continue to be most apparent in relations between Europe and the USA. There has been little sign to date that longer term antagonisms between the USA and Japan are coming to the surface. There have been plenty of signs of economic discord between EC and USA (e.g. GATT) and even diplomatic disagreements (e.g. Balkans policy). In addition there have been signs that both blocs still entertain different strategic outlooks on capitalist restoration. The US concentrates its energies upon China and prefers a policy of "benign neglect" for the CIS and EE. Here its main intervention would be through surrogates like Turkey into the Central Asian republics.

7. The effects of economic restructuring over the next years on the three big blocs suggest that the greatest

disruption of the existing balance of class forces will be felt in Europe. The needs of integration and co-operation require a pan European capitalist project that in turn demands more frontal assaults on traditional gains of the working class in Europe—gains that are absent in Japan or the USA. The spring public sector strikes in Germany and the labour unrest in Italy in October are just two signs that considerable social unrest can be expected. Given that the fate of the restoration process from Cuba to China is bound up with the crisis of the CIS, and more specifically that of the Russian Federation; given the fact that the European Community is the most crisis wracked of the three nascent imperialist blocs and given the interlinkage of these crises, the next few years in Europe are certain to be stormy ones. Europe east and west is thus the key to the international situation since victories or defeats suffered here will have major repercussions in other continents.

8. In the context of an economic recession the USA's ambitious project of establishing a new world order to seal the defeat of Stalinism will continue to falter. The UN lacks the power to impose solutions without large assistance and political support from the USA. This will only be forthcoming when the US feels that its own strategic interests are served. At best it seems willing only to establish safe havens rather than a new world order.

This is its attitude to the Balkans, Somalia and Iraq. But even this commitment can produce further problems. For example, in the case of Iraq the US finds itself embroiled in a contradiction. The safe haven above the 36th Parallel has become a *de facto* state for the Iraqi Kurds. To maintain this the US relies upon Turkish support which is the USA's regional power. But this stance risks Syria and Iran behind Hussein.

9. In South America Peru's "Fujicoup", together with army rebellions in Venezuela and the state of emergency in Colombia, indicate that the disintegrative effect of neo-liberalism on society or continued guerrilla activity, will be met by more open military intervention into political life.

Throughout the region privatisation will continue to make progress in 1993 as investment continues its post-1990 recovery. But privatisation proceeds will continue to be used to pay the foreign debt. New investment leading to growth in productive employment will be very restricted (e.g. Venezuela) and unemployment will increase. Mounting poverty will be apparent as welfare provision declines still further.

In Cuba, Castro's bonapartism seems secure for the moment, as is suggested by his dumping of his Foreign Minister. The economic austerity is unabated and this will cause a gradual erosion in the regime's base of support. A full scale crisis of legitimacy will only occur rapidly if the economic effect of US blockade intensifies discontent and the ruling bloc loses its coherence in the face of it. This is unlikely to occur within the next year and we will more probably witness a longer lasting search for political compromise with sectors of Cuban expatriate capital.

Stop the annihilation of the Bosnian Muslims!

Resolution of the International Secretariat, 22 November 1992.

"State unity of the Balkan peninsula can be achieved from above, by expanding one Balkan state, which ever proves stronger, at the expense of the weaker ones—this is the road of wars of extermination and oppression of weak nations, a road that consolidates monarchism and militarism." (Trotsky, 1910)

1. These words, written only two years before the first Balkan war, are once again brought grimly to life as Yugoslav continues to disintegrate. The Stalinist or ex-Stalinist regimes of Tudjman, Milosevic and Izetbegovic have consciously stirred up nationalist hatred in an attempt to create independent capitalist states. They have succeeded to date in demobilising and confusing working class and popular opposition by rallying the "nations" behind chauvinism and militarism.
2. When the war between the two major republics of former Yugoslavia—Serbia and Croatia—swept across the borders into Bosnia-Herzegovina the bloody consequences were not difficult to predict. Since then about half of the republic's population (a total of two million) have been driven out of their homes. Thousands more have been killed and tens, if not hundreds of thousands, are threatened with starvation and death this winter.
3. In the early phase of the Bosnian war and especially with the siege of Sarajevo the imperialists (under German and Austrian pressure) took a half-hearted anti-Serbian stand. They imposed economic and diplomatic sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro and refused to recognise the "New Yugoslavia" formed by these republics. Until the summer of this year imperialist politicians considered out-right military intervention.
4. Collectively, however, imperialism could not unite around such a perspective. Whilst the Austrian and German imperialists were pushing in this direction, the US, Britain and France rejected such a strategy. In these countries it was left to the servants of the bourgeoisie—liberal journalists and social-democratic handwringers—to give full public vent to the "moral outrage" against "Serbian aggression". But their plea for full-scale intervention to protect human rights was cynically ignored, leaving the liberals confused and angry, stunned by the contrasting imperialist neglect of the plight of the Bosnians as compared with Kurds in Iraq.
5. The more "cool-headed" imperialist spokesmen like British Foreign Minister Hurd or US Chief of Staff Powell represented the decisive factions of the bourgeoisie. They clearly did not see capitalist restoration as best served by a high risk military intervention without clear war aims. Such an intervention would have required a large armed force to occupy a difficult terrain against well equipped and trained opponents determined upon a protracted guerilla war. German imperialism having achieved its main aims with the diplomatic recognition of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina by the UN, did not prove strong enough to force the other imperialist powers to go further and solicit military support for the newly recognised states.
6. The London Conference in August 1992 brought the warring factions to the Geneva negotiating table. The imperialists pointed to the power struggle between Milosevic and Panic/Cosic in Serbia as offering the best prospect of bringing the republic into line. Over night Panic became a respectable politician, although he had been denounced as a puppet of Milosevic before the start of the conference. Like Cosic, who drafted one of the first manifestos of Greater Serbian nationalism in the late 1980s, Panic is now a "reasonable, cultured and understanding man".
7. This shift in imperialism's strategy did not dampen the conflict in Bosnia. Rather, the Serb and Croat nationalists consolidated their positions and the Croat-Muslim alliance became ever more fragile, eventually breaking down at the end of October. By conquering Jaice the Serbs took another important step in stabilising their territorial gains. The self-appointed parliaments of the Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia now proclaim a union of these territories, formalising a common military alliance and introducing a common currency. This state shall be but a step towards a Greater Serbian state.
8. After the London Conference the Croatian forces turned against their former Muslim allies in Bosnia. The army of Croatians in Bosnia and Ustashi irregulars clashed with units of the Bosnian army around Novi Travnik and Vitez. In Poszar about 5,000 Muslims, a third of the town's population, was expelled by the Croat armed forces. In Mostar, capital of the self-proclaimed statelet of Herzeg-Bosne, Croatian tank corps surrounded the Bosnian army. The Croatian headquarters openly refused to recognise the authority and legitimacy of the Sarajevo government or the Bosnian defence forces.

9. As the Croat nationalists moved against their former ally their Serb counterparts made progress in consolidating their military conquests. Both these forces have struck some kind of agreement to divide Bosnia. The Croat forces were reported as pulling back from the defence of Jaice deliberately and thereby decisively weakening the town's defence. On the other hand, the Serbs removed their forces from the garrisons near Dubrovnik, handing over these territories to the Croats. Diplomatic activity between Zagreb and Belgrade has grown considerably since the London conference in late summer. On 21 October Cosic and Tadjman agreed to exchange regular liaison officers between each other and to reopen the Belgrade-Zagreb highway.

10. The war in Bosnia began as a reactionary war on all sides in which it was impossible for any socialist to support any side. All three forces sought to enforce a reactionary nationalist settlement on minorities that had no wish to be incorporated. This applied equally to the Bosnian Muslims. Their leader's aim was to preserve the unity of the Bosnian state in an alliance with the Croat nationalists, backed by imperialism. The latter actively supported this by extending diplomatic recognition to the republic. Such a unitary state, embracing the Serb minority against their wishes, would have threatened them with national oppression. In the first months of the Bosnian war such a development was not excluded, but the shift of imperialism's strategy over the summer and its impact on the policy of the Croatian government turned it into an illusion. The illusions have been crushed. Now the people that looked to Izetbegovic are betrayed and the war has been transformed into a reactionary war of annihilation against the Muslim people of Bosnia.

11. The aims of Izetbegovic and his Muslim party of Democratic Action remain as reactionary and utopian as ever. Any success by them in creating a capitalist Bosnian statelet would threaten the Serbs with national oppression. Their strategy of seeking out imperialist political, economic and military aid to achieve this ultimately led to the start of the war itself. But the course of the war has led to the destruction and ethnic dispersal of the Muslim people at the combined hands of Croats and Serbs and so the character of the Muslim's struggle changed into a war of justified resistance against ethnic annihilation. Therefore, revolutionaries critically support the defensive struggle of the Muslim Bosnians against the policy of ethnic cleansing from the Serb and Croat side. We call for the defeat of Croat and Serb forces at the hands of Bosnian Muslims and their progressive allies within the other communities. For revolutionary or working class forces on the ground this may well require agreements for joint action against Serb or Croat nationalist and fascist aggressors. Our aim in the defence of the Bosnian Muslims remains to establish a multi-ethnic Bosnian state. Previously, this was best pursued by a tactic of generalised defeatism and a fight for joint multi-ethnic resistance against pogromists of all stripes. Now it requires the ability of the Muslims to remain an integral part of what is left of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Previously, we supported the defence of all ethnic groups against pogroms and forcible removal from their homes and

villages. Now we fight for the establishment of military control of all the traditional Muslim areas within Bosnia-Herzegovina by Muslim forces—our aim remaining to establish multi-ethnic workers' and peasants' councils.

12. At present we do not support the demand of the Muslim population of Bosnia-Herzegovina to establish their own state, since they do not form an identifiable majority in a continuous compact area—a necessary precondition for their ability to form their own state. Indeed, we seek to prevent this outcome at present since the reactionary goal of the Croat and Serb forces is precisely to herd the Muslim population into a restricted territory.

Undoubtedly, the progress of the war and the experience of oppression at the hands of Serb and Croat forces presents the possibility that the Muslim population will become an identifiable oppressed group in a compact area. In such circumstances we would recognise in their striving for self-determination the right to set up their own state.

13. This war has been characterised throughout by outright cynicism by imperialism towards the Muslims. Faced with the break up of the Croatian-Muslim alliance, the imperialists remained silent. No embargo against Croatia is being prepared. On the contrary, pointing at the Cosic-Tadjman agreement the UN and the EC claimed that "considerable progress has been made". The German imperialist "peace-mongers" make it clear that they will not take any action against their friends in Zagreb. All the hypocrisy of the imperialists is now revealed. Now all their anti-war, humanitarian rhetoric is exposed for what it is—a cover for their own economic, political and diplomatic interests. Clearly, the imperialists will adopt resolutions which condemn the attack on Muslim towns and communities by the Croat army. They will send some more "monitors". The UN and the EC may be able to "negotiate" a divided buffer state for the Bosnian Muslims, but they will not prevent the ethnic carve up of Bosnia. The UN, spurred by France, may set up "safe havens" as a lesser evil to an even bigger refugee "problem" throughout Europe, rather than motivated by any greater concern for the Muslims. But they would only do this as a way of sealing the results of the Serbian war so as not to get involved in an ongoing clash with the Serbs.

14. Whatever aims their official leaders may or may not have, in the given circumstances it is excluded that the Muslims can militarily succeed in establishing a unitary Bosnian state. Their real prospect is either to retain control over small Muslim statelets or cantons politically and economically completely dependent on the neighbouring states, or to be completely forced into the position of an oppressed national minority inside a Greater Serbia. Common military action with the Muslim forces must not extend to political support for the official Muslim leaders and their reactionary and pro-capitalist aims. We do not share nor support the territorial ambitions of many of their leaders to force the Serbian and Croat nationalities into a unified capitalist state of Bosnia-Herzegovina threatening them in turn with national oppression. We are clearly opposed to an

alternative form of cantonalisation which is more favourable for the Muslims, not speak of any Muslim variety of "ethnic cleansing" which some far right and Islamic fundamentalist-led units may try to carry out. Itezbegovic's more recent proposals to divide Bosnia into eight to ten non-ethnically defined cantons with a high degree of self-government will not help him out of the mess he has brought his people into even though such a divided mini-Muslim state could satisfy the "moderate" reactionary regimes of the Muslim world who now pose as the "defenders of the Bosnians". The hundreds of thousands of Muslim refugees can also provide a fertile ground for the agitation and recruitment of fundamentalist forces and easily lead to a protracted small scale civil war.

15. But this reactionary potential must not blind the working class in former Yugoslavia to the fact that the Muslim people is now fighting for nothing less than its existence. That is what pre-dominates in their struggle at present. It must be supported by the working class movement internationally in order to stop atrocities, mass deportations or forced "assimilation" of the Muslims by Serbian and Croat forces in Bosnia. We favour unconditional military aid to the Bosnian Muslims to carry this out while resisting all attempts by imperialist or Islamic states to exert control over the conduct of the Bosnian resistance. We call on trade unions and socialist organisations to take direct action to prevent military supplies getting to Serb and Croat forces. We demand an end to the stepped-up imperialist blockade of Serbia.

16. The way forward for the Bosnian Muslim South Slavs does not lie in an ethnically Muslim-based state (or "safe haven"). It would be a dependant mini-state at best, or, in a bigger version, a state oppressing its Croat or Serb minority. Such a "solution"—which would require in the first instance massive imperialist military support—would only lead to further national tensions, not to building a bridge between the nationalities. We must challenge the influence of nationalist and pro-capitalist restorationist forces amongst this people and prevent Islamic fundamentalist forces, which are clearly a minority now, from gaining further influence. Such a development would only worsen an already disastrous situation and further poison feelings. As the LRCI recognised at the beginning of the nationalist war in Bosnia, a progressive solution to the crisis is not possible by the means of separation or secession. This remains true today. It proves the importance and necessity of the strategy of permanent revolution. There can be no progressive outcome, no lasting and non oppressive solution for the national tensions brought into this intermixed country by Stalinist and nationalist restorationist misleaders, short of a proletarian revolutionary one. This means the creation of multi-national workers' republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a step towards a socialist federation of the Balkans.

17. While the composition of defence militias against the Serb and Croat attacks may be predominantly Muslim at the moment, revolutionaries will fight to bring in as many of the other peoples as possible in order to lay the basis for a real multi-national defense against the

warmongers and pogromists of all sides. As the case of Sarajevo shows, a microcosm of the intermixed character of Bosnia, the workers of all ethnic groups are threatened with death, starvation and oppression by the chauvinists. Separation along national lines would clearly weaken the immediate and long term interests of all sides.

18. Such a course can equally demonstrate to the workers and peasants in the Serb and Croat controlled territories as in the whole of former Yugoslavia, that there exists an alternative to the disastrous chauvinist policies of Tudjman, Milosevic and their lackeys. It would help the rank and file soldiers in the army of the Bosnian Serb nationalists and in the puppet state of Herzeg-Bosne see who the real enemy is and who is his real ally. It would help to break the control of the rank and file by the nationalist and chauvinist officers. Then these warmongers and the criminal, semi-fascist and fascist leaders of the various irregulars will find justice for their deeds—justice exercised by workers' tribunals, ropes and trees. We demand the immediate withdrawal of all armed forces of the Croat or Serb state and the irregulars from these countries as well as the so-called peace-keeping forces of the UN. The UN bluehelmets already assist the ethnic partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina by providing security for Muslims driven from their villages. When the imperialists finally and officially agree to an ethnic cantonalisation of the republic then the UN troops will play an important role in securing this against any multi-ethnic resistance which might emerge.

19. The solution of the Bosnian crisis is inevitably connected to the development of the class struggle in the rest of Yugoslavia, in Serbia, Croatia, Kossovo and Macedonia. In its attempt to retain its grip on power the Serbian bureaucrats around Milosevic will clearly not allow the nationally oppressed Kossovo Albanians any form of autonomy, not to speak of secession from Serbia. Similarly, the other national minorities in Serbia—Hungarians, Croats, Romanies and Muslims are oppressed and disadvantaged by Greater Serb chauvinism and treated as second class citizens. There have been attempts at "ethnic cleansing" in the Serb heartlands.

20. The years of national oppression and the seizure of power by the Milosevic clique has poisoned relations between the Albanians and the Serbs in particular. Kossovo is ruled by a Serb puppet administration and under the iron grip of the Serb police and military. The Stalinist regime has made absolutely clear that it will not let Kossovo go at any price. Even Panic, the most moderate politician both of the government or the "democratic" opposition on this question, repeatedly rules out recognising the right of self-determination, including secession of the Albanians—about 90% of the republics population. Panic's proposal to divide Kossovo between a Serbian ruled part and another part which might go independent would equally lead to mass deportations and ethnic cleansing.

21. This has strengthened the bourgeois restorationist secessionist forces in Kossovo. The leading political force of the Kossovo Albanians, the Democratic Alliance (claim-

ing 700,000 members, led by Rugova), stands for a neutral, demilitarized, independent and democratic republic of Kosovo which shall guarantee the rights of its minorities. To its right many forces have emerged who pose the question of Kossovian self-determination more radically, that is, as unification with Albania and with Albanian majority districts in Macedonia.

22. Whilst revolutionaries do not favour the creation of small states and the break up of larger entities, they are clearly opposed to the Serbian Stalinists, Clericals and nationalists' brutal policy and ambitions to forcibly keep the Albanians within Serbia. We unconditionally support the struggle of the Kossovo Albanians against Serb national oppression. But we do not give any support for the political aims of the restorationist leaderships of the Albanians. We fight for self-determination to take the form of a workers' and peasants' council republic of Kosovo. In short, we combine the struggle for self-determination with the defence of the planned property relations and the creation of a healthy workers' state based on factory councils and a workers' militia.

23. To support the democratic rights of the Kossovo Albanians and all other national minorities is an elementary duty of every class conscious working class militant in Serbia. Only on the basis of boldly and unconditionally recognising and fighting for the democratic rights of these nationalities can the hatred between them be overcome. But unlike the Kossovo Albanians the other minorities do not live in clearly defined geographical areas or do not constitute a majority in them. A separate territorial solution to their fight against national oppression is therefore not possible. But we defend their democratic rights and oppose any form of discrimination whatsoever at work, at school or in public life.

24. The question of Kosovo also demonstrates the reactionary nature of the Serb bourgeois nationalist opposition (Serbian Renewal, Monarchists, Church) and the open bourgeois restorationists in the Panic-government. All of them have refused to champion national self-determination for Kosovo outright. Some, like the Church and the Monarchists, even criticised Milosevic for being to "soft" on the Albanians, allowing them to "degrade holy Serbian soil". Whilst the working class must make as much use as possible of the power struggle between Milosevic and Panic/Cosic and the "democratic" opposition and the constant crisis and instability of the Serbian regime, they cannot give any political support to one side. This struggle represents the fight between a wing of the bureaucracy which favours a state capitalist transition to capitalism (Milosevic) and another which favours a more fast track leap to capitalism. Both sides have clear bonapartist ambitions and are totally anti-working class. Milosevic proves this beyond any doubt with his actions, the war in Bosnia and his alliance with the Chetnik fascists.

25. His support, however, is waning. Not because of his dismissal of bourgeois democracy, but because the protracted war has considerably exhausted the Serb economy, caused hyper-inflation, a dramatic decline in living standards and international isolation. This has

complicated the process of capitalist restoration rather than helped it. Therefore, there are increasing signs in the Serb national institutions, the SPS and even the army that they want Milosevic to back down or be replaced by some form of coalition around Panic-Cosic. Furthermore, the war effort itself is unpopular amongst many Serbs. The 200,000 young men have left the country to avoid conscription shows this clearly.

26. Nevertheless, Kosovo could be Milosevic's last desperate strike, in particular because this could undermine the "official" opposition who are all committed to an anti-Albanian course. For the Balkan people, however, this could unleash a war and a human tragedy many times more costly than the nationalist butchery in Bosnia. Civil war in Kosovo would eventually involve Albania and the Macedonian Albanians in the war, thereby drawing Macedonia itself into the battle. The spread of the war would probably not stop at that stage, dragging in Bulgaria and Greece, old Balkan states with longstanding territorial ambitions on Macedonia. Such a development could encourage Croatia in the north to take the military offensive against a Serb state occupied with war in its southern frontiers.

27. The Macedonian republic could face a similar fate as the Muslims in Bosnia and the Albanians in the Kosovo. Until today, the republic is not recognised internationally because of Greece's reactionary denial of the very existence of a Macedonian people and despite the fact that the Macedonian government has repeatedly made clear that it has no territorial claims on Greece whatsoever. Revolutionaries openly reject that nationalist and chauvinist policy. We demand the recognition of the Macedonian state while fighting against the reintroduction of capitalism in the country.

28. Macedonia has its own national tensions internally, principally between the Macedonians and the Albanian minority which totals about 400,000 (about 21% of the population). The antagonisms have grown considerably between 1990 and 1991 when Macedonia was ruled by Stalinist bureaucrats allied to Milosevic. These tensions have diminished over the last year when a government was formed incorporating representatives of the Albanian minority and a programme for education in the Albanian language was adopted. This, however, does not alter the fact, that Albanians are still extremely under-represented in higher education and in the higher spheres of administration and management. Additionally, there are also influential nationalist forces amongst the Macedonians who are openly anti-Albanian and who can easily grow in influence in case of a civil war in Kosovo, looking for support on the Serbian or Bulgarian side. We are opposed to any denial of the Albanian minority's right to self-determination. Revolutionaries support their right to secede and unify with the Kosovo and/or Albania if they wish to so and fight for it to take the form of a workers' state.

29. Whilst the exact military alliances in such a war, the degree to which imperialism will seek to limit it, are difficult to predict it clearly would be a reactionary nightmare, a war reflecting the ambitions of the nascent (or in

the case of Greece and Turkey already existing) Balkan bourgeoisies. It would threaten the smaller nations and nationalities with pogroms, destruction of whole communities and decades of severe national oppression. Victories achieved in such wars would not bring peace to the Balkans, but only lay the foundation for future conflicts.

30. To prevent such a spread of the conflict and to put an end to the nationalist war, the policy of "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia, the oppression of other nationalities by the Serb and Croat regime, the pogromists in the self-proclaimed governments of Herzeg-Bosne and the Serb republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the working class of these countries must support the just struggle of the oppressed nationalities and combine this with the struggle to overthrow the reactionary regimes in Belgrade and Zagreb. In order to achieve this revolutionaries have to combine the struggle against capitalist restoration with the struggle for working class power based on workers' and peasants' councils and a workers' militia. Immediately, this means fighting for the most immediate economic demands of the workers and small peasants alongside the defence and extension of the democratic gains made or conceded by the regimes.

31. Only such a state—the dictatorship of the proletariat in alliance with the poor peasants—could hope to overcome the national hatred of the Balkan peoples and thereby stimulate the political and social revolution in the other Balkan states. It would be a major blow to nationalism of any kind. It would open the road to a Socialist Federation of the Balkans. To achieve such a goal it is necessary to break the workers and peasant of all nations from their current reformist, liberal or nationalist leaderships. The building of an international working class vanguard party as an integral part of a new revolutionary-communist international is an indispensable tool for breaking the toiling masses away from their misleaders and leading them in the struggle for working class power. The working class in the imperialist countries throughout Europe must aid and promote this process. The workers, peasants and nationally oppressed must receive a clear message: it is the working class throughout Europe who supports you, who helps you, not the capitalists.

32. The European labour movements must fight the immigration controls of "their" bourgeoisies. Faced with the effects of the nationalist war and the restoration process—a process their policies promoted—they are now refusing to help the millions who are suffering. John Major, one of the most blatant hypocrites, takes in only a few thousand refugees from among the displaced millions.

The French government of self-styled super-Europeans closes its borders to refugees. Austria has mobilised border troops in order to stop the "uncontrollable influx" of the starving and homeless. The right wing populist racist Haider and his FPÖ are using this for their "Austria first" campaign to stop immigration and start mass deportations of foreigners. And the German government is making its contribution to the racist and chauvinist scandal by deporting Serb deserters who are not supposed to be threatened with political oppression.

33. In this situation the official labour, social-democrat and Stalinist party and trade union leaders are promoting this policy in government or advertise themselves as a "constructive" opposition. The German SPD has recently agreed to restrict the Asylum rights granted in the constitution, actively backing state racism to "undermine the far right". Some of these forces or minority currents within the labour movement have verbally opposed such moves. But we want to see deeds not just good-sounding phrases. On national and EC-level, the workers' movement—with the official leaders if possible, without them when necessary—must start a European wide campaign against all immigration controls. The European trade union leaders must get off their knees to co-ordinate and lead such a fight for the right of entry, for state assistance, for decent housing provision. All must be allowed to stay as long as they want and be granted full citizen rights. The working class must defend the refugees against racist and fascist attacks by building a workers' united front against fascism.

34. The EC is spending billions a year subsidising farmers right to profit from the production of food nobody buys, but it does not want to spend a penny for hundreds of thousands of refugees and homeless. Aid without strings must be given to the Bosnian Muslims and all refugees or homeless. We call on the workers' organisations to campaign for this and control such aid if given. The workers' movement must also fight any attempts at outright imperialist intervention to 'sort' out the Balkan crisis. Historically, this has always led to wars, a rise of national antagonisms to help imperialism's economic and political interests. There is no reason to believe that it will be different this time.

- Against imperialist intervention!
- No to UN/EC-sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro!
- No to UN or EC 'peacekeeping' forces in Bosnia, Croatia and elsewhere!
- The European and international working class must build links with independent proletarian organisations in former Yugoslavia!

Cuba, Castro and Capitalism

Resolution of the International Secretariat, 2 March 1993

1. The Cuban revolution marked a turning point in twentieth century Latin American History. It not only ousted a pro-US dictatorship but led on to the overthrow of capitalism for the first time in the Western hemisphere. Castro's success gave birth to a host of similar guerrilla movements throughout the region and injected new "revolutionary" life into Stalinism. Over the next thirty years Cuba's achievements in eradicating illiteracy, providing good quality health care for the population and a high level of basic diet made it a beacon to anti-imperialists throughout the continent, and indeed throughout the "third world". It also influenced hundreds of thousands of leftists in North America and Europe to identify closely with Cuba and build active solidarity networks.

2. Many of these radicals believed that Cuba differed fundamentally in its nature from the Stalinist states in Eastern Europe. Yet it was precisely these states which Cuba relied upon for material assistance, aid that made possible the many social welfare achievements of the Cuban state. The radical fellow-travellers nevertheless argued that Castro had made a genuine anti-imperialist revolution, unlike the patently non-revolutionary, apparatchiks of the eastern bloc. The Cuban people identified with the regime and its ideology in a way that was unthinkable in the east. Whilst they were willing to concede that Cuba did not have a perfect human rights record nor did it have genuine institutions for democratic protest and accountability Castro supporters argued that the Cuban state and the Cuban Communist Party (CCP) were as democratic and popular as one could expect in an isolated, backward country which was subject to political and economic blockade from the world's strongest imperialist power.

3. Many anti-imperialist militants throughout LA considered the collapse of "socialism" in Eastern Europe and the USSR a blow primarily because it was a source however self-seeking and unreliable, of military-financial support for anti-imperialist struggle. But they believe that the downfall of the Castro regime would be the ultimate catastrophe, a fatal blow to such struggles. They believe it would blight the prospects of anti-imperialist and socialist advance in the whole region for the foreseeable future. Fearing the impact of this blow some of Cuba's more fairweather supporters have already begun to distance themselves from the Castro regime. The downfall of Castro could further damage their tarnished political reputation, for so long built on uncritical

praise of it as a model. Others with greater reason fear that Castro might use his political dictatorship and personal bonapartist role to further erode and even destroy the anti-capitalist economic foundations of the Cuban workers' state as he adjusts himself to his new capitalist partners in Europe and LA. In contrast to all the illusions and indeed the disillusion of the Cuba's radical fellow travellers, only genuine Trotskyism can explain the true nature of Castroism and the Cuban degenerate workers' state. Only Trotskyists can advance a programme that even in the present difficult conditions can avert the undoubted disaster that capitalist restoration would represent.

4. The origins of modern day Cuba lie in a genuine anti-imperialist revolution. But its first result was the creation of a popular front government of petit-bourgeois leaders from the July 26th Movement and the anti-Batista bourgeoisie. The pressure of the the landowners and Cuban bourgeois upon this government led at first to openly anti-working class actions by Castro as he resisted the just economic aspirations of the people for better wages and more land. However during 1960 as the pressure of US imperialism upon the new regime intensified and rendered impossible Castro's "humanist" or "olive green" revolution, the utopian "third way" of petit-bourgeois nationalism collapsed. Rather than submit to the attacks of the USA Castro turned to Khrushchev and the USSR which was seeking a foothold in the Americas for entirely military-strategic reasons. Castro took the opportunity offered to avoid destruction at the hands of the North Americans. In fact he metamorphosed into a Stalinist, leaned upon the Kremlin's economic and military assistance, and fused the J26M with the old Cuban Stalinist party inside the country. Cuba wrapped itself step by step in all the stifling ideological garments of Stalinism.

5. In this way capitalism was bureaucratically liquidated and the bourgeoisie thrown out of the country. But the masses participated in this only under the military and bureaucratic control of the J26M and its Stalinist party allies who were throughout this period fusing into a new bureaucratic ruling caste. Certainly the masses enthusiastically took part in the expropriation of capitalist property, especially the huge investments of the North American imperialists but every single initiative and indeed the entire process remained under tight bureaucratic-military control. Thus the Cuban overthrow of capitalism was not part of a continuous (or permanent)

revolutionary struggle of the masses. It arose not from the unbroken dynamic of the Cuban class struggle itself but was the result of a turn by the bureaucratic military caste who already headed a bonapartist regime, towards the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Kremlin and its local agents. In this sense the anti-capitalist stage of the Cuban revolution was not a genuine mass revolutionary movement. For this reason it created no organs of workers power, and workers democracy (soviets). For all its connections with a popular anti-dictatorship, national, anti-imperialist revolution, it had the character of a bureaucratic counterrevolutionary overthrow which politically expropriated the workers, blocked the path to real socialist construction, and impeded the spread of proletarian revolution to the entire continent. The participation of the masses, their self activity was restricted to orchestrated mass mobilisations, to bureaucratically controlled militias, to the literacy, agricultural and industrial production drives. The Castro regime for all its anti-imperialist and guerilla revolutionary credentials rested on the suppression of all its working class rivals (including the Cuban Trotskyists), on a secret police apparatus, on purges and expulsions. In short, the Castro-Guevara regime was from the moment that Cuba became a workers' state a Stalinist one. The Cuban workers' state was born with an inherited bureaucratically degenerated character. If its father was Castroite petty-bourgeois nationalism with a deeply caudillo-ist (bonapartist) character, then its mother was the Russian degenerated workers' state. The latter gave it a model of police dictatorship, monolithic Stalinist party, bureaucratic command planning and the reactionary policy of "building socialism in one country" and all that means in terms of sabotaging and misleading the world revolution.

The real content of Cuban "internationalism"

6. Due to the social reforms and because of Fidel's immense prestige as leader of an anti-imperialist political revolution Castroism was able to appear to millions as a genuinely revolutionary and even a peculiarly internationalist variety of Stalinism. In the 1960s this reputation was reinforced due to a five year relative estrangement from the Kremlin and from the most reformist of the Latin American Communist Parties. The Castro regime's espousal of guerrilla warfare against pro-US dictatorships boosted Cuba's revolutionary image. This was also a period when Castro criticised the Kremlin and its brazenly reformist stooges in Latin America, but without ever breaking definitively with them. In the 1970s Cuban army and medical support to Brezhnev's expansion of Soviet influence in Africa added a further false revolutionary glamour to the Castroite version of Stalinism.

7. Yet Cuba, when faced with any genuine revolutionary struggle for power by the masses, systematically advised and exerted the strongest pressure for the preservation of capitalism (Chile 1973, Nicaragua 1979 etc). In short, it acted against the transformation of the anti-imperialist into the proletarian revolution and against its expansion throughout the continent, and thus against

the only real way that the Cuban workers' state could survive in the long run. Castro has systematically sabotaged Cuba's links to the class struggle in Latin America and the Caribbean and beyond in favour of a subservient junior role as the Soviet bureaucracy's "hired gun" in the third world. Sometimes the struggles that Cuban troops supported were indeed progressive vis á vis imperialism and its stooges (e.g. the MPLA in Angola), sometimes it supported reactionary regimes and their wars, (e.g. Mengistu's Ethiopia against its oppressed nationalities). But always its purposes were to aid the Soviet bureaucracy and its own manoeuvrings within the framework of so-called peaceful co-existence. In Southern Africa Cuban troops obediently withdrew as the Kremlin sought a compromise with apartheid South Africa. In relation to the class struggle in these countries and throughout the semi-colonial world against imperialism Castroite Cuba has not played a qualitatively different role to that of the Kremlin itself. Thus measured by the main criterion of Marxism—revolutionary internationalism—Castroism is a thoroughly counter-revolutionary force.

From a one crop economy to the "socialism of joint ventures"

8. The bankruptcy of Stalinist bureaucratic central planning is as obvious in Cuba as in all the other degenerate workers' states. In some respects it is worse. Castro and Brezhnev did not even succeed in substantially industrialising Cuba thus enabling it to escape from the overwhelming dependence on sugar inherited from imperialism. In reality its market and trade dependency was simply shifted from the USA to the USSR and Comecon. All the worst features of Stalinist planning— inadequate quantities of low quality consumer goods— were reproduced or imported from Eastern Europe. The initiative and creativity of the Cuban workers were stifled by their lack of any influence or control over the goals and implementation of the plan. The current economic crisis was not purely a function of the post-1990 withdrawal of aid from the USSR. Between 1986 and 1991 the economy suffered from steeply declining falls in productivity and per capita output fell as a result; average wages stagnated and house construction virtually ceased. In short, long before the collapse of the USSR, Cuban bureaucratic planning exhibited all the same defects as the older, more mature regimes in the east.

9. The cutting off of Soviet exchange of oil for sugar and the tightening of the US economic blockade pushed the economy into a sharp crisis. Cuba's national income has shrunk by as much as 50% in the last three years. Per capita income fell around 6% in 1990 and again the following year. The collapse of its main source of foreign exchange reserves (re-exported Soviet oil) has crippled Cuba's ability to import much needed supplies. In 1989 some \$8.14 bn was spent on imports, but in 1992 this was down to \$2.2 bn. No aspect of economic life is untouched by this. Shortage of petroleum has hit industry hard. One Japanese estimate in the second half of 1991 suggested that industry was operating at about 40% capacity. But by the end of 1992 "as much as 80% of the country's industry is now idle" (LAEB, November 1992). The annual sugar harvest has been depressed as a con-

sequence of the lack of oil for the machinery and the lack of money to purchase much needed fertilisers and spare parts inflicts further damage.

10. Naturally, the effect on the masses' standard of living has been dramatic. In 1992 bus and train services were slashed by about 40%, more than half the buses are idle. Everywhere Chinese bicycles are appearing to fill the gap. Electricity cuts are increasing from around 3 hours a day to six or more. The food situation worsens every month. No one starves but rationing is spreading to more goods. Cubans can only afford to buy four eggs a week, one chicken a month and three grammes of bread a day. Rice and beans are too in short supply while soap, medicines and many vegetables are hardly obtainable.

11. The Castro bureaucracy has responded to the economic crisis in a two-fold manner. The rectification campaign—a cynical manoeuvre used in the later 1980s to terrorise the bureaucracy by a limited mobilisation of the masses around an “anti-bureaucratic” campaign—has been supplemented by appeals for more and more voluntarist solutions, evoking the memory of Che Guevara and his early 1960s proposals for work brigades and replacing material incentives with moral ones. In recent harvests some 100,000 “volunteers” have left the towns to help get in the crops. Each citizen is urged to cultivate every available plot of land for vegetables. On the other hand, Castro has discovered a new way to “build socialism”, in reality an utterly anti-socialist solution to the island's difficulties. At the the Fourth Havana International Fair in November 1991, Castro entertained representatives of over 700 companies from 27 countries and assured them: “Cuba offers the widest possible opening to foreign capital . . . we offer greater facilities for the repatriation of capital than any other country . . . we will be the best of partners and allies.”

12. Castro has decided to court imperialist multinationals for joint ventures, starting with tourism and pharmaceuticals. He shamelessly offers up the “cheap” skilled labour of Cuban workers for exploitation by foreign multinationals. Castro has extolled the virtues of his country over other rivals such as Chile, Taiwan, Hong Kong and North Korea: a good infrastructure, very low wages, the absence of the right to strike, excellent port facilities, strategic location. The attractions for multinational capital are indeed real and it is the bitterest of ironies that the gains of the Cuban people should be marketed as advantages for foreign capitalists. The low wage economy exists alongside uniquely (for LA) high literacy levels and good health of the labouring population. The costs of such non-wage aspects of the labour force have been borne by the Cuban state and imperialist capital intends to exploit these factors to the full.

13. By early 1992 there were sixty functioning joint-ventures with foreign capital and another 100 in the process of creation. While tourism is in the advance guard of such capital penetration, Castro hopes to extend such ventures to all aspects of the Cuban economy. To further reassure the imperialists Castro changed the constitution in July 1992. The National Assembly's changes entailed: permission for the transfer of state

property to foreign individuals and enterprises; the creation of autonomous enterprises, regulated but not managed by the state; and permission to import or export without prior government clearance. As Granma said of these changes, “There should be no worry about profits because the necessary legal guarantees exist for their realisation.” The joint ventures have absolute freedom to appoint their board of directors and managers, to fix prices, decide on sales plans, determine the size of its staff and adopt an accounting system that suits its needs. So enticing are these guarantees that many firms in Mexico, which act as sources of cheap supplies to the US market are exporting parts of their textile production process to Cuba to use the cheap labour and then re-export to Mexico. In this way Cuba becomes a cheap labour zone for a cheap labour country!

14. Castro's policy is an attempt to emulate the Chinese bureaucracy's pro-capitalist policies; namely, to open up areas of the workforce to ruthless exploitation while retaining an iron grip on political power and thereby reap some of the benefits of the process. However, there are important differences with China which makes the copying of Deng Xiaoping's policy even more utopian and reactionary than it is in China. The huge peasant majority makes China a country that can feed itself, while it can offer up large sections of the urban working class to renewed capitalist exploitation. The bureaucracy rests for support on this large peasant mass against the workers. In Cuba, an overwhelmingly proletarian and urbanised country, the dependence on imported foodstuffs is great and mass social hardship exists at precisely the time when the masses are being offered up to the multinationals for exploitation. The sense of grievance is heightened by the growth of “tourist apartheid”, a function of the massive explosion of tourist joint ventures, especially in Valadero. Special shops, exclusive beaches, a growth in prostitution, all add to the alienation of the Cuban people. Moreover, this opening up to the market, to imperialist multinationals exists alongside an absolute absence of petty proprietorship amongst the Cuban people themselves. Private family enterprises apart from small private farms supplying the state are strictly forbidden. Propaganda which stresses that the market brings great benefits but that these benefits must be restricted to foreigners both highlights the hypocrisy of the Castro regime and creates resentment. Two further differences between China and Cuba lie in the fact that the Chinese bureaucracy enjoys the goodwill of US imperialism and can rely upon a proven repressive apparatus. Castro—possibly— has the latter but his apparatus of repression has yet to be put to the test of handing out Tiananmen-style bloody repression against the inevitable mass protests to come.

Castro and the course of the counter-revolution

15. During the fourth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party (CCP) in October 1991 an important shift towards capitalism was announced by Castro when he called for private investments. In order to justify this change of line Castro and the CCP are in the process of redefining the ideological make-up of the CCP. This

involves self-criticism of their earlier dependence upon Moscow. The new official orthodoxy is that Cuba should have pursued a more independent, nationalist line of development. This distancing is designed to make Castro more acceptable to the new potential investors from the west and prepare the ground for a "national" and "Cuban" road to capitalism. At the Congress, while the CCP reaffirmed its Stalinised Marxist-Leninist doctrine it also emphasised that this needed to be supplemented by the "thoughts" of José Martí. It is increasingly common to hear that the CCP considers itself nearer to the thoughts of Martí and Antonio Maceo (leaders of the bourgeois-democratic movement for Cuban independence) than to Marx and Lenin. "With the end of the Soviet Union, the revolution rescues its Cubanity, and returns to being nearer to José Martí than to Lenin" is now a common refrain. Martí was a Cuban poet who died immediately after his return to Cuba from his 15 year exile in the USA. Martí wanted to create a Cuban capitalist state and collaborated with several Latin American oligarchical regimes and even Washington itself to achieve this end. In Cuba all the politicians (from Castro through to the US financed TV Martí) claim that they are the legitimate inheritors of the mantle of this independence leader. While Martí should be honoured as an (inconsistent) anti-imperialist fighter, it should be remembered that he was a member of the exploiting class and his ideas and doctrines are totally incompatible with those of proletarian revolution.

16. Castro himself in 1959/60 struggled to preserve Cuban capitalism and even to win the friendship and support of US imperialism. It is quite possible that despite his present slogans—"socialism or death"—Castro may, whilst still posing as the embodiment of Cuban and Latin American dignity against the North American oppressor, undertake a systematic break up and surrender of the planned economy. He may use his undoubted prestige to hand over to former CCP bureaucrats, sections of the Miami bourgeoisie, other Latin American capitalists and to European and Japanese multinationals the gains of the Cuban workers. Nothing in the politics of Castroism prevents this. Already Castro acts as the harbinger of Cuban capitalism, prepares the ground for it, using his influence to gain general acceptance for the idea that capital penetration is legitimate and inevitable. To date, therefore, his economic policy operates in the manner of Gorbachev after 1985. But Gorbachev's policy developed under the pressure of powerful forces within the bureaucracy on either side of him; the conservative rump of the Stalinist hardline planners on the one side, and the open capitalist restorationists on the other. It is difficult to observe these forces in Cuba today, but Castro's seeming total control over the apparatus suggests that his policies are unrestrained by any need to placate a powerful camp of bureaucratic planners committed at all costs to the preservation of bureaucratic workers' state. More likely, Castro himself represents the last clinging onto the property forms of a degenerate workers' state. His alternatives are limited and time is running out. Either he will try to carry out a Chinese style implementation of capitalism, or like Gorbachev he will fall under the contradictions of a trying to maintain half-way-house solution and thus give

way to a more open advocate of capitalism. The latter course is more likely *unless there is a rapid intervention of the Cuban masses.*

17. The US administration show no sign of allowing Castro himself to undertake the transition to capitalism even if he were prepared to do so. His very existence is a reminder to the Latin American masses of the possibility of a successful revolutionary overthrow of a US backed puppet dictatorship. They fear that he would prevaricate and temporise over the kind of shock therapy measures that a Cuban semi-colonial capitalism would be subject to, including the dismantling of most of its social welfare system. His presence is a personal link with the revolution which would be unacceptable to many who suffered at his hands after 1959 and now reside in Miami. Castro's present policies are thus likely to increase the social hardship of the people while legitimising the idea of market forces; but they will not prove sufficient to create such an influx of capital as would stimulate significant economic growth. Nevertheless these measures will suggest the promise of such growth if only Castro and the hostility he provokes amongst the gusanos (literally, "worms", those who have fled Cuba for the USA) and the US administration were to be removed.

18. Those who politically defend Castro as the embodiment of the Cuban revolution are thus making a catastrophic mistake. Either he will himself lead the restoration process or, as is more likely, his present incoherent and repressive clinging to Stalinism will alienate ever broader sections of the youth, of the intellectuals and eventually the working class itself, leading to a social explosion. In the absence of political forces committed to defending the workers gains, an absence that is a direct result of Castro's dictatorial suppression of all criticism it is likely that the political forces most able to rush in and fill the vacuum will be various shades of the Miami counter-revolution. It is important to insist at all times to Cuban workers that Castro is preparing a catastrophe and that the only way to avoid it is to make a second revolution. Yet, although we work to bring about a proletarian political revolution against Castro we do not agitate at present around the slogan "Down with Castro". In today's conditions in Cuba where there is no proletarian alternative to him as yet it could only serve to help the capitalist reactionaries.

The Nature of the Cuban Opposition

19. In Cuba no other party except the CCP is allowed to operate and within the party no opposition to Castro's clique is allowed. Over the last years Castro has eliminated two oppositional groupings to him. Ochoa was a very prestigious military leader and was linked with a "hard-line" faction. At the fourth Congress of the CCP (October 1991) there was a confrontation between the "reformists" and the hard-liners". The former group were headed by Carlos Aldana. He was the rising star of the CCP and as head of international relations and ideology chief was the third highest leader in the CCP after Fidel and Raul Castro. He demanded that the CCP abandon "internationalism" and emphasise the "national charac-

ter" of the Cuban party, that it drop its official atheism, and, while avoiding a multi-party system, that it should allow private property in tourism, some services and also introduce some independent media. He advocated more integration into the IMF controlled world market and a move away from agro-exports towards promoting capitalist investments in new technologies. After the Congress Aldana went further and argued for "allowing small farmers to sell their own produce and introduce limited free enterprise by Cuban tradesmen." Castro opposed the latter proposals and although some of Aldana's ideas were accepted by the fourth Congress Castro was afraid of making concessions to the opposition under pressure. So Castro clipped Aldana's wings. He was arrested and detained for three months without explanation and then at the third Plenum of the CCP he was expelled from the party. In the wake of this episode Castro appointed figures such as Carlos Lague (as chief of the authoritarian market programme) and Roberto Robeira (a bureaucrat for over 40 years who controls the Communist Youth and is charged with "protecting" them from imperialist propaganda). Aldana himself was replaced as head of foreign affairs by José Ramón Balaguer, former ambassador to Moscow and fiercely loyal Castroite. At the same time Castro purged the head of the Americas section of the international relations department, Manuel Piñeiro Losada, with the purpose of facilitating a more positive approach to the reactionary regimes in the region. Castro cannot allow any independently minded figure within the bureaucracy to have the spotlight focussed on him. Castro accused all his opponents of corruption but did not allow the workers to verify the truth of these accusations or give them a democratic trial.

20. Inside Cuba the non-CCP opposition forces are not large and those that exist gravitate around "human rights" activists. Elizardo Sánchez is the President of the Cuban commission of human rights and a leader of the "social democratic current". This movement openly attacks the US blockade and calls for the defence of the Cuban revolution although they aspire to a social democratic peaceful transition to multi-party democracy. The AFL-CIO and the catholic CLAT trade union federations promote the idea of "free" trade unions inside Cuba. The latter federation promote themselves as the union that defends workers against "marxist authoritarianism" and neo-liberalism alike. In August 1992 the leader of the newly created Unión General de Trabajadores de Cuba was arrested.

21. Inside the Miami bourgeoisie there are two main forces. The "radicals" are organised by the Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF), led by the multi-millionaire Mas Canosa. This group has strong ties with the old Reagan-Bush administration, sponsored the Torricelli Act and the blockade. They have close links with Yeltsin in Moscow. The CANF is backed by the majority of the Cuban capitalist exile community and seeks the overthrow of Castro and the restitution of all their property lost after 1959. The "moderates" in the exile community are represented by the Cuban Democratic Platform and led by Carlos Alberto Montaner. A construction businessman he favours opening a dialogue with Castro and

a peaceful transition to capitalism. This sentiment is growing inside the Cuban-American community with two out of three favouring a dialogue with Castro. In part this is because many in the Cuban community in Miami want to spare their relations inside Cuba from the consequences of a bloody civil war.

Solidarity with the Cuban people

22. The US administration has imposed sanctions with the aim of forcing Cuba to make more concessions. The EC, Canada, Japan and most LA countries appear to be friendly. Various "liberal" forces inside the USA argue that the best way to destroy the Cuban workers' state is to pour a lot of money and investment into the country. The aim of this strategy is to avoid a "Haiti" scenario in which in which poverty and social unrest could lead to another enormous refugee problem for the USA. Rather, they seek to use Mexican diplomacy to "bring Cuba home", to try and arrange Cuban membership of the IMF and World Bank, to get Cuba to privatise its state assets, and even allocate billions of US dollars over the next five years to "reconstruct" Cuba. But even some reactionary conservative forces inside the USA argue for an end to the embargo. The Cuban Democracy Act, it is argued, is depriving US business of a 11 million strong market, is allowing the other imperialist powers to steal a march on the US and is only helping Castro to gain support for his anti-Yanki rhetoric. Under this combined pressure the Clinton administration could change its policy. In the 1992 Presidential elections Clinton supported the "Torricelli Act" (i.e. Cuban Democracy Act) in order to gain votes from Cuban-Americans. But now in power Clinton has appointed several members of the Inter-American Dialogue (a group in favour of a partial lifting of the blockade) to his cabinet. Castro places his hopes for an end to isolation on exploiting the self-interest of US bourgeoisie and privileges contact with organisations such as "Pastors for Peace" (a US protestant organisation that collects food for Cuba) above contact with labour movement abroad.

23. On 25 November 1992 the UN voted for a resolution to end the blockade. Only two countries supported the USA while 59 voted against them. Castro considered this a great victory but the the blockade continues. Castro insists on fighting the blockade by capitulating to any reactionary regime that could be cajoled into voting against the US and encourage the latter to conciliate with Castro. Thus, Castro now recognises Granada's government (the one the USA imposed over the bodies of the defeated NJM regime) in order to try and get Cuba accepted into the Caribbean Tourist Organisation. Castro strives to enter Caricom which is a semi-colonial free trade zone with close links with the USA and they have succeeded in getting observer status. Cuba has entered ECOSOC and have appealed to be allowed to re-join the GATT. All pro-imperialist forces press Cuba to abandon any reference to "exporting the revolution". They ceaselessly advise Castro that the way to end Cuba's isolation is to try and restore friendly diplomatic relations with the most reactionary regimes rather than appealing to the masses to foment revolution. Castro is even courting

some elements of the US bourgeoisie with the argument that he is the best person suited to pressurise various LA guerrilla and left Stalinist forces to come to terms with the militarised democracies and hand over their weapons to them.

24. In reality the only way to destroy the imperialist blockade and avoid capitalist restoration is precisely by appealing to the workers of the world. Castro is doing the opposite. Yet only by supporting the revolutionary and anti-imperialist struggles of the Carribean, of Central and South America and beyond will it be possible to break the stranglehold of Washington and the IMF. Only thus can it be demonstrated that the interests of revolutionary struggle worldwide and the interests of Cuba are identical. The Cuban people will only rally to the programme of political revolution if Trotskyists can show the way to combat and break up the hostile forces seeking to strangle Cuba. Military intervention is extremely unlikely at the moment. The US prefers the slow death of economic and diplomatic strangulation. Some of the European imperialists and Latin American bourgeois regimes, whilst not agreeing with the US policy of strangulation, are not prepared to defy the USA. It is up to the labour movements across the world and especially in the USA, to protest, to prove on the streets and in the unions that there is no national consensus for the anti-Cuban policies of the White House.

25. We do not favour the policy of self-financed work brigades from Europe to Cuba to provide voluntary labour to slow the process of economic decline. These are emergency measures of the bureaucracy, controlled by the bureaucracy and do not allow any form of democratic debate and discussion with Cuban workers themselves. We demand the overthrow of the Cuban Democracy Act which bans US firms from trading with Cuba and seeks to prevent its people visiting the island. We demand an unconditional removal of US troops from Guantanamo base; committees open to labour movement delegations should be built that seek to build protests and demonstrations outside US embassies across the world.

Castro's police dictatorship and how to overthrow it

26. Castro's supporters maintain that the Cuban workers do not suffer from the same kind of bureaucratic police dictatorship as workers in the eastern bloc. This is a lie. Castro crippled and suffocated the revolutionary consciousness and initiative of the Cuban proletariat, depriving it of the institutions of working class political power (soviets) and even of elementary organs of economic self-organisation and defence, (trade unions and factory councils). It did this by exercising an increasingly vicious police dictatorship over the proletariat, by crushing all other working class political parties and currents, thereby atomising the proletariat and prostrating it before the obscene cult of the *lider maximo*. Thus the Castroites stifled the living force of the Cuban revolution. Events in Russia and Eastern Europe since 1989 are a severe warning of exactly how counter-revolutionary this process is since it obscures and cripples the proletariat's consciousness of itself as the real creator

and defender of its own historic conquests and opens the passive and disorganised masses to illusions in the invincibility of the market economy and the superiority of bourgeois parliamentarism.

27. In Cuba it would be foolish naivety to believe that the Cuban workers are more attached to the defence of the workers' state than the workers in the east. Revolutionaries should not confuse the remaining anti-imperialist (in reality Cuban nationalist) sentiments of the Cuban population (natural due to years of "Yankee" blockade) with a "socialist" consciousness. There is every reason to believe that the Cuban workers cherish their social welfare provisions and will resist their destruction. This is not identical with the defence of planned property relations, state ownership of industry, and the monopoly of foreign trade. It is not at all clear that the link has been made in the minds of the masses between the revolutionary transformation of this trinity and the defence of their social gains. Indeed, the most seductive voices of counter-revolution will seek to persuade the Cuban people that capitalism and social welfare provision are possible even in Latin America. They will argue that in the absence of Soviet largesse, only capital imports can hope to provide the resources for the clinics, schools, nurseries etc. Faced with a constantly deteriorating economic situation under Castro and refused the chance of taking control of their own destiny, more and more Cubans will be open to this argument.

28. The Castroite political regime—where it not for its basis in social ownership and planning—would not be preferable to other anti-imperialist bonapartist regimes that Latin America has experienced (Peron, Valasco). We do not support this political regime in any way. We defend only and exclusively the social/economic conquests of the Cuban proletariat. Nevertheless we will strive with all our might to prevent Castro being overthrown by the imperialists or the Cuban emigré bourgeoisie and replaced by a regime which will do their bidding. We will fight in Cuba and beyond for a united front with the Castroites against these forces. In the event of an external attack or an internal uprising by counter-revolutionary forces we pledge ourselves in advance to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Cuban bureaucracy. In these circumstances we would subordinate, in tactical terms, the overthrow of the bureaucracy to the immediate need to defend Cuba against the greater evil of an imperialist occupation. We will fully support all military and repressive measures taken directly against these forces.

29. But we do deny the Castroites right to extend repression to those forces that are not actively colluding with US imperialism and the exiled bourgeoisie. Nor do we grant Castro the right to define who is or is not counter-revolutionary. We will not support the continuation and intensification of repression aimed against the working class or for that matter against confused "democratic currents", human rights activists etc that have no direct organised links with the Gusanos or the CIA. We call here and now for the ending of the leading role of the PCC, and the abrogation of all its special state functions, its monopoly of power, the authority of its cells in the factory and in the barracks. We call for the handing over

of all its property, special shops, facilities and houses to workers' committees. We call for the immediate dissolution of the secret police, and the Rapid Response Brigades, for democratic elections of officers in the militia, and the army, and for the transformation of them into an armed mass workers' militia. We call for freedom to form political parties for all except counter-revolutionary insurrectionists and first and foremost for legality for a revolutionary communist (Trotskyist) party which alone can lead the working class in a successful defence of the workers' state against US imperialism. We will not renounce the struggle for political revolution now on the grounds that a political revolution might weaken the workers' state since political revolution is the only strategic block to restoration.

30. The Trotskyists seek to make this mass revolutionary overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy as peaceful as possible. It is conceivable that sectors of the CCP and even segments of the bureaucracy will rally to the banner of workers' democracy and revolutionary resistance to imperialism and capitalist restoration. Civil strife clearly gives the imperialists and their agents the opportunity to intervene. Nevertheless, it is most likely that the bureaucracy will resort to measures of civil war in defence of its political monopoly and social privileges and the proletarian vanguard must not flinch from all the measures necessary to break their resistance.

For political revolution!

31. We must seek to rally the Cuban masses to the banner of political revolution by appealing to their best traditions of anti-imperialism which Castro and his regime are betraying. We call for no secret deals with the *dialogos* (i.e. the conciliatorist wing of the *gusanos*). We demand no secret diplomacy and that all negotiations and suggestions effecting the fate of the Cuban people are put to democratic debate and ratification by the Cuban people. We call for absolute intransigence on refusing to hand back property nationalised in the post-1960 period. Once expropriated always expropriated; the houses, the estates and the factories must remain under Cuban state ownership under workers' management. No restitution of property to the Miami bourgeoisie!

32. The first priority of the state should be to guarantee the health service and food provisions for the population. The shortage of food is not just something that has been created by the imperialist blockade; it is also a misfortune brought about by the bureaucracy. To be short of bananas on occasions on a tropical island is a function of bureaucratic planning. The maintenance of privileges for the bureaucracy and for tourists deprives the masses of important basic products. At the start of 1992 Castro announced food subsidy cuts of 300-400 million pesos a year and introduced the first food price rises for 30 years. Castro, speaking like a capitalist, said that "Higher food prices were necessary to stimulate production". This way of spurring productivity was adopted in place of a revolutionary method of introducing proletarian democracy and equality. No sacrifices for the Cuban people without an end to privileges for the elite! A revolutionary govern-

ment could introduce rationing on condition that it be done democratically and controlled by committees of producers and consumers. The concessions granted to imperialist capital and the privileges long held by the Cuban Stalinist bureaucrats must be ended. End tourist apartheid! Open access for Cubans to all the hotels, beaches and facilities given over the tourists, to be paid for in pesos.

33. Workers should be in control of all industries and the whole economy. All the accounts of the administration of the economy should be opened up to workers' inspection. The managers should be elected and recallable by workers assemblies and the planned economy should be placed under workers' democracy; only the workers should decide, how, what, and how much to produce and to distribute. Only the workers should decide on wage levels, labour allocation and what sacrifices are unavoidable. We must defend full employment and oppose all sackings. We must fight for the right to establish unions and popular organisations independent of the bureaucracy and the imperialists. The Cuban workers must have the right to strike to pursue these goals.

34. Down with the bureaucracy. The Cuban workers' state is weighed down by a privileged and parasitic caste which needs to be abolished. No special shops, put them under the control of workers' committees. From time to time it has been revealed that Cuban CP leaders are linked with narco-traffickers, black marketeers and corruption and are enriching themselves. Castro's own policies encourage these developments. Corruption was only brought to light by the Ochoa case. It was certainly not rooted out by his execution. There must be workers' inspection of all property and holdings of the bureaucrats. Workers tribunals should investigate and condemn the corruption, the black market and the newly enriched as well as all those who have tortured anti-imperialist fighters.

35. In relation to other Latin American women Cuban women have a important advantages in respect of access to jobs, health, maternity rights, child care etc. Nevertheless, Cuban society has not overcome Latin American *machismo*. A Cuban woman has never become a central figure in the regime. Castroism glorifies the conception of a "socialist family" derived from the authoritarian Stalinist school of thought that proclaims the eternity of the oppressive nuclear family. Gay and lesbian oppression in Cuba is amongst the worst in the region. The Cuban regime considers homosexuality to be a "deviation" that should be rejected and prevented. A significant proportion of the Cubans that left in 1980 were gays and lesbians. The Castro bureaucracy has reacted to the AIDS pandemic with a typically repressive policy. The creation of detention camps for HIV-positive people and AIDS sufferers and the continued repression of homosexuals is sure indicator of the reactionary nature of the regime. This repressive measure will do nothing to halt the spread of HIV and adds to the catalogue of complaints against Castro and the bureaucratic caste. The camps must be immediately closed and the necessary appropriate health care offered to all AIDS sufferers

either in their homes or in hospitals. Cuba must demand international aid with our strings to organise a massive programme of free condom distribution and for the development of free, confidential HIV testing. The arrival of AIDS in Cuba is a tragedy, not a shameful event. It can only be satisfactorily fought by the greatest political, sexual and medical openness and honesty. Down with all legal restrictions on sexuality! Close all the AIDS camps! For workers' control over the health service.

36. The Cuban proletariat desperately needs the oxygen of democratic liberties; freedom of the press, of assembly, of the formation of new democratic trade unions or the transformation of the old by ousting the bureaucrats and electing leaders freely. Above all it needs the freedom to create political parties, first and foremost a revolutionary Trotskyist party. Contrary to Stalinist mythology a one party state and even the banning of bourgeois parties is not itself a principle of the proletarian dictatorship. We demand the abolition of the one ruling party. We demand the cessation of all repression against dissidents inside the CCP. We are against the policies of Aldana or Ochoa but we also condemn the way in which the Stalinist apparatus carries out Stalin-style purges, even if on a smaller scale.

37. The banning of actively counter-revolutionary parties is justified and necessary now by the economic, and potentially military, war the Miami bourgeoisie and Washington is waging against the workers' state. Thus it is necessary to restrict "democratic" rights for them; for example, neither they nor anybody must be able to buy access to or control of the media, the press radio and TV. Our aim here is not to prevent the masses hearing the "arguments" of the pro-capitalist forces. Indeed, the Cuban Stalinists' attempts to do this are doomed to utter failure in the world of electronic communications and satellites. Worse, since the PCC suppresses any criticism of their political oppression and economic bungling they thereby unwittingly give the bourgeoisie and imperialists a monopoly of criticism. Thus when economic crisis and hardship eventually become unendurable the masses will turn to the only critical alternative they know about.

38. We need a truly free, truly democratic media under workers' management and control. Some "views" will indeed be suppressed; incitement to insurrection against the workers' state, to racism or chauvinism. But generally and to a far larger degree than in bourgeois society the workers can and must allow divergent, and hostile views to be expressed and contradicted. The revolutionary proletariat, when it has conquered power, will—subject to elementary measures of protection against counter-revolutionary activity—accord to all those who observe the laws of its state fuller democratic rights than any bourgeois state in history. It will do so in its own interests, to educate itself in the exercise of power and socialist construction and also to get to know its enemies and expose their purposes to the widest masses.

39. Such proletarian democracy is part of the dictatorship of the proletariat against the campaigns, machinations and attacks of the bourgeois counter-revolution. Towards the latter the proletarian power will not allow

itself to be restrained by any law when it comes to taking the necessary measures. As the bourgeoisie always does when its rule is directly threatened so must the proletariat strike mercilessly at the conspirators and the coup-makers. Thus proletarian democratic rights extended to the overwhelming majority combined with proletarian dictatorial measures aimed with deadly accuracy at the agents of imperialism can prevent the latter gaining a serious social base in Cuba. Only a revolutionary workers' and peasants' government can direct this combined policy.

40. Under a revolutionary workers' government we would aim to break the stranglehold of internal stagnation and external blockade and strangulation we would make a revolutionary appeal to the proletariat of the Latin American, semi-colonial and imperialist countries' workers to aid Cuba, not only—and not mainly—by the limited economic resources they could send themselves but by a massive and militant campaign to force their governments to abandon and break the US blockade and to open up trade and aid links with Cuba. But a regime of workers' democracy would at one stroke deprive the US and other bourgeoisie's agents in the labour movement of a powerful weapon for deceiving their own proletariats (the dictatorial nature of the regime which neither Stalinist nor pseudo-Trotskyists apologists can really cover up. The central axis of the policy of a revolutionary workers' government would be to break from the reactionary policy of "socialism in one country" It would set out to aid every anti-imperialist struggle and would lend its full support the class struggle worldwide. It would for example aid the popular masses of Haiti to overthrow the military regime which oppresses them and allows imperialism to super-exploit them. It would make Cuba the fortress of a new revolutionary international and work for an early ending of its isolation by the spread of revolution beyond its shores.

41. A revolutionary workers' government's economic policy would centre on re-vivifying the planned economy by drawing up a democratic workers' plan, an emergency one or two year plan, designed to cut back bureaucracy and privilege, to remedy the inefficiency and waste that flows from the exclusion of the workers themselves from decision making, the strict prioritisation of economic and social need, and indeed of social life and recreation for Cuban workers and their families.

42. The Castroite abolition of petty proprietors, often at the same time abolished the production and distribution of goods and services that the bureaucratic state economy was quite unable to provide. Within the framework of the preservation of state ownership of all large scale industry, the land, the banking system and the maintenance of a state monopoly of foreign trade certain concessions should be made to small scale private enterprise. The victorious revolutionary proletariat need not fear the legalisation of small scale private ownership or co-operatives in the spheres of retail trade, cafes bars and restaurants, artisan production, taxis etc and some intensive areas of agriculture and horticulture too. By this means the "black market" can be differentiated between real speculators and criminals and petty-bourgeois. The lat-

ter can be won and retained as allies of the proletariat even for an extensive period, indeed until planned socialised production itself starts to produce more abundant, better quality goods/utilities in these spheres too and where consequently petty commodity production will die out. Of course, the workers' state will defend workers' rights, wage rates etc in this sector and control speculation and prices. In agriculture workers' management of large scale state farms should be the norm and in other areas genuine democratic co-operatives (though without the right to alienate land) will be the norm. A systematic switch from sugar to other crops and to livestock is both essential for the Cuban consumer and for trade.

43. Naturally, not a few Stalinists in Cuba and "friends of the Cuban revolution" have decided that the events of the last three years have cruelly exposed the folly of integrating Cuba into the orbit of the Comecon workers' states economy as a monoculture. It is argued that there must be a return to the teachings of Che, of voluntarism, of moral not material incentives for labour. This is the economics of disaster in anything but the shortest of terms for such a weak and one-sidedly developed economy as that of Cuba. Only a policy of controlled integration into the world trading system, seeking to exploit the divisions within the imperialist camp, provides a rational holding measure until the international revolution can make progress. A revolutionary workers' government would not rule out or cancel all joint-ventures with foreign or multinational capital. All those against the interests of the planned economy would be expropriated. Given Cuba's location and resources isolation and autarky is not an option even if it were part of the revolutionary programme of the transition period, which it is not. However, any co-operation with imperialist or semi-colonial capital in Cuba must not be at the expense of the workers' rights to organise or to fight for decent wages and conditions in these enterprises. The monopoly of foreign trade must not be seen as a rigid barrier to capital but as an active guardian of planned property and at the same time an interventionist instrument for getting the best possible deals out of the still capitalist world economy. A workers' democracy would continue to welcome tourism but would not ghettoise it or restrict the facilities it brings to non-Cubans.

44. Likewise, and more importantly, such a government would actively seek capitalist participation in productive industry, especially in the most modern high-technology sectors. Whilst clearly the reasons for capitalist investment would be to make profits, probably at a higher rate than elsewhere, the workers' state could not and would not restrict trade union rights and workplace democracy in these companies in the interests of multinational capital. Last but not least, there is the question of Cuba's international debt; a revolutionary government would immediately stop all payments. The Cuban workers are not responsible for the mismanagement of the bureaucracy. It would call on the governments of the semi-colonial countries to follow its lead and renounce the debt. It would call for a united front with the workers, peasants and urban poor of these countries to fight for this against the IMF and the World Bank. It would appeal to the labour movements of the imperialist coun-

tries to obstruct and fight against the savage measures that the IMF/WB and all the imperialist agencies would launch against it. We cannot predict in advance the successes that might be achieved or the compromises that might be forced upon us but a real clarion call against the world devourers of New York, Tokyo, and the City of London would meet an enthusiastic response in all those countries where IMF austerity packages are driving the masses into desperate misery.

45. Whether the masses of Cuba can be spared the economic collapse and the horrors of capitalist restoration that the workers of the former USSR and Eastern Europe are now enduring depends entirely on how quickly the political revolutionary crisis breaks out and how speedily the Cuban proletariat will be able to construct a revolutionary leadership. If the Castroite bureaucracy prolongs the economic disintegration of the planned economy, if Cuban workers passively witness the degeneration and collapse of their social gains, then their hopes may turn to the relief that the ending of the blockade and the introduction of a market economy might bring. Likewise, if in its death throes the Castroite bureaucracy resorts to bloody repression against popular protests called forth by economic hardship the masses may be caught in the net of bourgeois democratic illusions, like the workers of Eastern Europe. "Free parliamentary elections" rather than the creation of the organs of an unknown workers' democracy may be seen by the masses as the only road to freedom.

46. We must be clear that the parliamentary regime and the market economy will not bring the Cuban workers real political freedom let alone social emancipation. Our key task is to facilitate the creation of a workers' council democracy through the creation of workers' councils. These will come into being through struggle. We fight to establish strike committees, and co-ordinate their activity. We also favour committees to monitor and administer the distribution of food, of workers' control committees over the media and the workplaces. We fight for workers militia independent from the regime and completely subordinated to the rank and file workers' assemblies. In the army the soldiers should have the right to join anti-capitalist and anti-Stalinist parties, to build unions and to have the right to strike. The officer corps should be elected and recallable and the hierarchical structure based on privileges for repressive officers must be abolished. This is the strategic line of our programme of political revolution and the end to which all our tactics are oriented.

47. However, both the consciousness and the activity of the Cuban masses does not correspond to our programme. We have to intervene in a situation in which the contradictory illusions in both Castro and bourgeois democracy tend to predominate in the masses. As in Eastern Europe, we must help the workers to cut through their bourgeois democratic illusions without at the same time sharing them or bolstering them. One way to do this is to patiently explain the fake nature of bourgeois democracy and the disastrous consequences of the restoration of capitalism. But in the absence of a fully fledged system of workers' councils we also need to relate our programme

to the current consciousness of the masses, to find a cutting edge which will enable us to take steps towards the establishment of a workers' council democracy. At the current stage this means demanding elections to a sovereign revolutionary National Assembly. Cuba's workers must not let the capitalist economy and the bourgeois parliamentary or presidential regime be imposed on them behind their backs. Elections to the National Assembly took place on 24 February 1993. As in previous elections only one list of approved candidates was allowed to be voted upon. But as a result of new reforms around 35% of the candidates for the assembly were nominated by the municipal assemblies while the rest were approved directly by Castro.

48. We reject this anti-democratic procedure. Like the whole process of popular consultation the reform was designed to allow the letting off of steam by the masses, allow the bureaucracy to identify pressures and grievances building up and thereby defuse or repress them. Meanwhile, political power—before and after the electoral reform—remains firmly in the hands of the bureaucracy. Without abandoning for one moment the urgent necessity of building workers' councils in the period running up to the Assembly elections Cuban workers should have demanded elections to a sovereign revolutionary National Assembly. In February and in any future elections the Assembly should be elected by universal, equal, secret and direct suffrage by all those over sixteen and others below this age in full time work. The only Cuban citizens recognised as such with the right to vote should be those who have uninterrupted residence in Cuba. Anyone who has the right to vote should be allowed to stand for election. Mass election meetings must be held in every constituency and in the factories, the offices and the farms at which the candidates can be cross-examined by the masses on the full implications of their platforms. The new, revolutionary assembly must be allowed to completely overhaul the Constitution that Castro modifies to suit the needs of private capital, yet preserves from the pressure of the Cuban people! We

demand democratic elections to all public posts. We demand that NA representatives should be obliged to report back to mass meetings of their electors during the life of the NA and certainly before a final vote on a new constitution. They should be instantly recallable and replaceable by majority vote at these meetings. All the functionaries and members of the government and NA should received no more than a skilled worker. A new, revolutionary NA must express the will of the people and above all the overwhelming majority of the people the urban and rural workers.

49. A revolutionary party would fight in the election campaign and in the Assembly itself to prove that only a democracy of workers' councils of recallable delegates and a democratically planned economy can be the basis of a free Cuba, free of imperialist domination and free of exploitation and poverty. Only an Assembly that accepted such a line, the preservation of their past gains and the guaranteeing of a new political freedom for the workers, could be called a revolutionary body. It is also possible that the majority in the assembly may be opposed to the fundamental interests of the proletariat. If this proves to be the case then the revolutionary party will have to lead a remorseless struggle to sweep it away and replace it with a congress of the delegates of the workers' organisations.

50. The Trotskyists, for over half a century the victims of Stalinist as well as bourgeois persecutions have defended and developed the only programme that can save the historic gains of the first generation of workers' states which underwent bureaucratisation or were created in a bureaucratic form. This is the programme of proletarian political revolution and the only leadership that can carry it out is that of a Trotskyist party of the working class vanguard. Its creation must be amongst the first steps of the developing revolutionary crisis. Its victory would signal the creation of a new revolutionary international to whose banner the proletariat of the entire globe will eventually rally.

France: The Working Class and the "Re-constitution of the Left"

Editorial from *Pouvoir Ouvrier* 23, Spring 1993

THE RUN-UP to the parliamentary elections and the new balance of forces likely to result from them reveal the situation in the working class as a whole. The two big workers' parties appear doomed to decline and electoral defeat.

The Socialist Party (PS), worn out by 12 years in power in the service of big capital, shaken by repeated scandals (Rainbow Warrior, corrupt financial dealings, HIV-contaminated blood) has lost its sense of purpose and direction and can no longer rally young people or workers.

As for the Communist Party (PCF), still marked by its Stalinist and its bureaucratic internal régime, it is unable to maintain any healthy relationship with the bulk of the working class. Despite its verbal opposition to the government, it has not dared to support censure motions, even when the situation demanded it. The PCF shares responsibility for the austerity policies which have been pursued for 12 years in the name of restoring competitiveness.

This "distancing" of the working class from the PS and PCF does not yet form a radical break with the ossified reformism of these parties. Far from it. To be sure, an important section of the workers will abstain in the elections, for the want of anything better. But others will squander their votes in backing the Greens or *Génération Ecologie*. Still others will vote frankly for the right.

After 12 years in power, the defeat of Mitterrandism is clear. What is more, no real alternative is emerging within the working class. Worse, the level of workers' struggles continues to fall, even whilst the attacks on jobs and wages multiply. This particularly worrying situation obliges revolutionaries to put forward a clear analysis and a clear programmatic response.

The various "recomposition" projects

Faced with the obvious problems of the workers' movement and its political representation, different tendencies advocate a "reconstitution" of the left (LCR, French section of the USFI), or again a "reverse Congress of Tours" (ex-Defence Minister J-P Chevènement), with a "new programme". (The Congress of Tours marked the creation of the French CP in 1920).

Unfortunately, none of these projects addresses the tasks of the moment. Disoriented by the collapse of Stalinism both East and West, debilitated by the "dirty work" of the PS and PCF, neither of these tendencies can offer the workers an adequate response.

The first party to show signs of recomposition mania was the PCF. The "opening-up" which followed Gorbachev's coming to power encouraged various "reform" tendencies within the western communist parties.

In 1987-88 the *Rénovateurs* around Juquin tried to create a new organisation, without breaking with the PCF's reformism. They tried to ride on the wave of the 1986 student movement but the "Juquin dynamic" soon lost its speed and its supporters either dropped out of politics or buried themselves in the Greens or the PSU, a small left reformist organisation.

Today, others tendencies are following the same road, using the same method. The "Refondateurs", like the *Rénovateurs* of yesteryear, are primarily composed of local councillors and other elected representatives. Their project, which marks a definite break with the politics of the PCF, remains within the reformist framework and has as its main objective holding onto the support of the electorate, and thus onto office.

This project, like that of their predecessors, leads nowhere. Basing itself firmly on the electoral terrain, they will neither succeed in mobilising the workers nor in breaking with reformism.

Though in a different register, the same goes for the "Refondations" grouping which brings together former leaders of the PCF (Fiterman, Wasserman) and others (LCR, "left" Christians...) and wants to be a focus for the "recomposition" of the left.

More open, because less tied to the electoral apparatus of the PCF, its members have more serious traditions and political differences, even if they are united by reformism or by the refusal to politically fight it. This is hardly propitious for a genuine "refounding" of revolutionary traditions.

In the PS the situation is scarcely different. The desire for fundamental change comes from the wear and tear of the Mitterrand years rather than from the collapse of Stalinism, but the uselessness of the responses put forward is much the same. Here too, electoral calculations prevail.

The Citizens' Movement, launched last August by Chevènement is standing not standing a full slate of candidates in the parliamentary elections in March. This is certainly due to Chevènement's desire to chose the moment to split from the PS, and thus to prepare his candidature for the Presidency in 1995.

Despite its pretensions, this movement in no way represents a break with the method of the PS. In a certain way, its strong nationalism—going as far as to court "left" Gaullists—and its strategy of class-collabo-

ration with "progressive" sections of the bourgeoisie represents the reformist dream of the PS and the PCF in its purest form. Even the famous refusal of Chevènement to support the Gulf War was motivated by the defence of French imperialist interests in the region, and not by any wish to oppose imperialist policy.

The Socialist Left, led by Dray, Mélenchon and Lienemann still does not have the courage to make clear its true opinions of the PS and its future. Many of its members undoubtedly want to leave, but the leaders seem more "shrewd" and prefer not to force matters.

The fundamental contradiction of the Socialist Left is that of all reformism. Orienting itself basically towards parliamentary "power", it finds itself trapped by "responsibilities" and "realism". Thus Lienemann, Secretary of State for Housing in the Bérégovoy government, did not hesitate to defend the roundup of homeless Malians who were camping in Vincennes in the name of "humanitarian action".

The first French "socialist" to carry on in this fashion was Millerand when he became a Minister in the Third Republic. The Socialist Left merely repeats history but this time as a minor farce.

The importance of this political and debate goes beyond the arena of the main political parties. The recently-announced split announced in the student union UNEF-ID is significant in this respect. Added to the politicking which mirrors the internal life of the PS are the problems of building a union movement confronted with a "socialist" government.

At the Reconstitution Ball the LCR plays the wallflower. Having missed its "rendezvous with history" in May '68, it has for 20 years awaited its Prince Charming in the form of the "recomposition of the workers movement". It thought it had found it in Juquin, but once more it was soon disappointed. Today, weakened and despairing because of its long wait, it proposes the creation of a "non-strategically delimited party", whilst Jacques Kergoat, one of its old relatives, plays matchmaker in the pages of the magazine *Politis*.

Based on the "fact" that there has been a "change of epoch" Kergoat tries to demonstrate the vitality of what he calls "the new reformism", which is basically no different from the old type. Faced with the disorientation caused by the collapse of the Stalinist "model", Kergoat and the LCR have only one answer: "there is no other choice than to aim build a new force drawing together all those who sincerely want to fight for the transformation of society without necessarily having to agree on reform or revolution."

En December 1992, the LCR took the first steps towards such an organisation, signing an "agreement for change on the left", an electoral platform signed by all the forces of the "Recomposition", from Claude Poperen to Alain Krivine by way of Guy Hermier and Gilbert Wasserman. This document offers no open criticism of the Socialist Party, of government action or of the trade union bureaucrats. It does not openly oppose the Maastricht treaty. It wants to leave intact the political and economic control exercised by the bourgeoisie over society. Far from being able to mobilise workers, it is nothing more than a reformist compromise, a project which masks real differences and which dreams—without reason—of winning a large number of votes.

There can be little doubt that this project will face the same destiny as the Mouvement Action et Egalité launched by Harlem Desir (SOS-Racisme leader) in the autumn of 1992. Less than six months after its birth its founders buried it (to the great displeasure of those who had left the LCR to join it) due to a lack of members, in order to join Génération Ecologie (a new ecology party initially set up with Socialist Party support but which is beginning to show its independence) where all this fine crew finds itself side by side with Lionel Stoleru, former bourgeois minister, and Brice Lalonde (former minister in a PS government) who is already proclaiming his wish to be part of a "tripartite" cohabitation involving Mitterrand and the parliamentary right.

As is shown in our article in this issue on the journal *La Commune* launched by the Trotskyists in 1935, there can be no short cut in building the party. Harlem Desir's attempt was bankrupt, as will be tomorrow that of the LCR and Kergoat, because they lack two necessary elements for the rapid growth of a new workers' party: a significant movement of workers and youth fighting the bosses and the government, and a clear programmatic response to unite and guide these masses.

The crisis of leadership in the working class

The drop in the union vote in the December 1992 industrial tribunal elections reveals the decline in trade union membership and a certain loss of confidence in the unions as useful instruments for the majority of the working class.

Worse still, the bureaucratic gangsterism which led in the CFDT union confederation to the departure of the unlamented Kaspar, and in the FEN education confederation to a split hatched by the leadership, have done nothing to reassure workers about the health of the unions.

It was the activity of these same unions which in large measure started the rout of the Mitterrand years. Following on the defeat of the steel workers in 1979-80, Mitterrand's victory and the election of a PS-PCF government led all the unions to defend "their" government rather than the interests of the workers.

When, in 1983, the Mauroy government did a U-turn in economic policy and introduced an austerity programme, it found faithful allies in the guise of the union leaders who, without exception, continued to hold back struggles and to support government policy. The result was wholly profitable for the bosses.

The temporary recovery of French capitalism in the middle of the '80s is explained by the productivity gains made at the expense of hundreds of thousands of redundancies and the uninterrupted lowering of wages. Reformism, by fooling the workers, made them pay for the bosses' profit crisis. In the same way, these attacks and the response of the workers' leaders led directly to the rise of racism in general and of the National Front in particular.

The toll is heavy, and it is the working class, the youth and the immigrants who have to bear the brunt of it.

The retreat produced by that period continues today, due to the absence of an alternative leadership and the fact that the PS still constitutes a workers' party capable

of influencing the workers even if in an increasingly attenuated way. Each time there are attacks which meet no organised and effective response, this lack weighs more and more on the consciousness, the activity and the confidence of workers.

As PS leader Jospin cynically stated recently: "One day, posthumously, we will have the Wall Street prize. And on our tombstone will read: '1981-93. In honour of the Socialist government, signed, the grateful bosses.'" "

This situation shows why the workers do not need a party which does not resolve the fundamental choice between reform and revolution. At present the attacks are led by the reformists in government, aided by their allies in the union bureaucracies. Tomorrow, faced with a probable right-wing cohabitation government, these same reformists will back the inevitable movements of resistance to recover their support... in the run-up to the 1995 Presidential election.

Avoiding taking a position in favour of reform or revolution, avoiding drawing up a balance sheet of 12 years of reformism in power and of class collaboration, is in fact the best way to repeat reformism's mistakes. Instead of preparing a way out of the present impasse, this policy only locks us into the hold of the reformists, political and trade union, stalinist and social-democrat.

Once more the question of programme

Every day there are new attacks on the workers, and, in some cases, there is an attempt to fight back. In order to defend workers' interests effectively there must be an understanding of the balance of forces and of what is at stake.

The response of the CGT trade union federation in January 1993 to the threat of layoffs by Potain, a heavy crane factory (274 redundancies among 1500 employees), is very telling. Instead of organising the workers to fight against attacks on their jobs, instead of appealing for workers' solidarity in the region, the CGT, together with the CFDT and the management union confederation CFE-CGC, proposed a reduction in the working day with a corresponding reduction of wages going up to 6.5%!

The reason is simple, as stated by a CGT trade union representative: they advocated this retreat "to conserve the human skills and to guarantee the industrial future of the company which would not recover from further reductions in jobs" (Le Monde 20.1.93). How would the "new" reformism so dear to Kergoat respond to this dilemma?

Faced with the proposal to launch a strike or an occupation the union leaders would no doubt reply that they would be in favour of this, but that the workers "are not ready". But if morale is low, if combativity is lacking, resignation will not improve the situation.

Neither passivity in the face of attacks nor bureaucratic leftism can solve this situation. Patient explanation, the organisation of solidarity, open and dynamic workers' democracy and united workers' action are the only adequate means.

Reasons for struggle and, generally speaking, combativity are not lacking. With regard to jobs, all the large companies have undergone savage attacks: 16,000

jobs cut in Michelin between 1991 and 1992, 2,249 jobs at Renault, 5,200 jobs at SNCF. In 1992 there were a total of 540,000 redundancies!

But these threats were not all received in the same fashion as at Potain. In the Société Générale bank the workers repeatedly struck against redundancies. The same thing happened at Chaussou-Creil, seriously affected by the recession in the car industry (1104 redundancies announced in January 1993). The all-out strike in the factory shows that resistance can be organised and that it is the only way for workers.

However, despite the existence of a strike committee, at time of writing, after a week on strike, the movement is limiting itself to various stunts (blocking the railway lines, demonstrations in Paris, protests during the launch of the Peugeot 306 etc). Such actions, useful as they are, are less effective than extending the movement to the Peugeot and Renault factories, which are also affected by the crisis in the car industry. The workers of these different companies are subject to the same threats. We need a united fightback!

What perspective?

In workers' struggles, as in questions of "general" politics, programme comes first. How can we mobilise workers to fight redundancies? How can we convince them to take action if they are afraid of losing everything?

There are two solutions: accept the bosses logic (like the union leaders at Potain), or put forward revolutionary politics, seek to defend the workers, to mobilise them and to put the real power of decision in their hands.

An essential part of such a mobilisation would be precisely the joint struggle of reformist and revolutionary workers. Far from being sectarians, we think that the united action of our class is fundamental for its future. Faced with attacks we must have a working-class response.

To succeed there must be mass organisations based on workers' democracy and armed with a programme of struggle, determined to fight to the end to defend the interests of workers, equipped with a leadership that is able and resolved to do it.

- For 1,500 francs pay rise for everyone! Against all wage freezes. Immediate consolidation of all bonuses. Reject all "performance" or productivity systems. Equal pay for equal work! A minimum wage of 7,500 francs!

- Immediate occupation of every company threatening closure. Complete ban on overtime in every company threatening redundancies! For work sharing, without loss of pay and with the creation of new jobs, under workers' control. For the immediate introduction of the 35-hour week without loss of pay. The minimum wage for every unemployed worker for as long as they are out of work.

- For the right to paid training leading to a real job. For the abolition of the CES and other fake training schemes. For a national education system which serves the working class, free courses with a decent grant for every student. For the abolition of private education.

- For 100% unionisation; the unions must belong to the workers! Build a rank and file movement in the

unions to make them really serve the workers. For sovereign democratic general meetings able to call and run strikes and occupations. Every strike must be unlimited, active and immediately extended to the whole sector. Defence of every strike by pickets. For the election at a general meeting of a recallable strike committee. For the extension of the movement to the whole sector, for the sending of pickets to other enterprises to extend the movement.

This choice sums up the whole crisis of leadership of the working class. At present it is reformism, in its trade union and political guises, which stands at the head of the workers' movement, with the consequences we have seen.

Building an organisation which deliberately seeks to erase the difference between these two roads can only worsen the confusion and, at the end of the day, put off the hour of destruction of the capitalist system.

Workers, youth and immigrants do not need an organisation which doesn't know which way is up. They need a party able to mobilise them to organise the offensive against the bosses and to build links between the different sectors.

At the moment, there is no such organisation in France. Its absence makes itself cruelly felt each day. The probable arrival of the right-wing in government will accentuate this situation, and, as in 1986-88, the workers will probably start to fight back. If such a fight-back emerges, the worst outcome would be that the movement was channelled towards electoral outcomes and support for a presidential candidate.

The working class do not need a regenerated PS, or PCF. We need to break with a method and a politics which have hampered the class struggle for decades and which will continue as long as revolutionaries do not succeed in mobilising the mass of the workers.

This task, the one the Bolsheviks set themselves, is also ours. In this sense, there is only one "refoundation" which can serve workers' interests workers: the refoundation of a revolutionary party and of a revolutionary communist international.

A New Epoch?

Yes, times have changed. Everywhere in the world the collapse of Stalinism has profoundly shaken up the relation of forces, including within the working class.

Today, hundreds of thousands of workers understand what the Trotskyists have been saying for almost 60 years: the Stalinist model has nothing to do with socialism, nor with genuine human liberation.

To this must be added, especially in France, the deception wrought by the social-democratic project and 12 years of faithful management of the capitalist system by Mitterrand.

But the current political crisis which affects both what is left of the degenerate workers' states, and the western working class, is not the only fact which characterises the present situation.

Despite the boasting of the bourgeoisie and of their journalist lackeys, there is as yet no real sign of international recovery. The world capitalist economy is sunk in the depths of a recession. And all round the world it is

now clear that the restoration of capitalism in the East will not be a new Eldorado.

Only by attacking workers' gains in the west or by imposing ever-more barbarous conditions of exploitation on the semi-colonial world can the imperialist countries hope to repeat the post-war boom

It is this conjunction of economic crisis and political vacuum within the working class that gives the present situation its potential.

We are clearly living in the imperialist epoch, the epoch of wars and revolutions. The events which have unfolded in the last four years have shown this perfectly. We have entered a world historic revolutionary period during which all the relationships resulting from the end of the Second World War have been broken and destroyed.

From all the evidence, the first years of this new period have a negative, destructive, reactionary and even counter-revolutionary character. But the present and future battles offer us the possibility of mobilising the masses, of uniting with them, of implanting ourselves amongst them.

The only condition is that we do not lose our political bearings: the analysis of the period and the revolutionary programme. For it is such a programme, such an intervention, that the workers need. This is not the moment to slacken the fight. The present situation obliges us to struggle all the more, so high are the stakes.

How should we vote in March 1993?

In the March 1993 parliamentary elections, in the absence of revolutionary candidates, we call on workers to vote for the PCF in the first round, and in the second for the best-placed PS or PCF candidates. This tactic is explained by the support still given by the mass of workers to the PS and PCF.

We have no confidence in the ability of these parties to defend the interests of the workers, but the majority of the working class does not agree with us.

The break with the PS and the PCF will have to be made in struggle, by pitching the programme of struggle against the programme of reform. That will require that the reformists be once more be put to the test of action.

In opposition the reformists can say what they like. They can make all sorts of promises. They can try to regain their purity. Better that such braggarts are in power, or in the case of the PCF, getting the maximum vote.

In that way the contradictions between their actions and their words can be perceived differently by the working class.

Yes, we have already had the opportunity to see them in power. But the revolutionaries haven't been able to offer the working class an alternative programme which it could test in the class struggle against the reformist government.

We do not suggest that voting for the PS or the PCF will lead to a "lesser evil" than the politics of the right. In a certain respect the experience of the left in power can be even worse for the workers.

As the last 12 years show, defeats suffered without a fight are worse than those inflicted after a struggle.

We do not call for a vote for candidates who do not enjoy mass support, even for organisations which claim to be Trotskyist.

There will be no genuinely revolutionary candidate; lacking the mass support which could put them to the test, supporting centrist candidates or left-reformists would create illusions in them or their programme.

"Vote as left as possible", as is proposed by certain organisations, suggests that the elections can change something, and that the strengthening of centrist or left-reformist organisations will help the working class in one way or another. This is not our position. We prefer to maintain our tactic with regard to the PCF and PS voters who still represent the great majority of the workers.

Finally, in the election period, one of the elementary tasks of all workers, whether they intend to vote or not, will be to make sure of the maximum mobilisation against the Front National.

Even if support for the FN is currently declining, it represents a terrible threat for the workers. It is trying to use its electoral campaign to strengthen its project of building a mass party of fascism on a fundamentally racist base.

No "democratic rights" for these fascists! Every time they mobilise, every time they come onto the street, it is up to workers, immigrants and youth to organise a mass fightback to sweep away this fascist scum once and for all.

The Future of JCR Egalité; Centrist Confusion or Revolutionary Clarity?

Translated from Pouvoir Ouvrier No 23, Spring 1993

A little over a year ago, the ninth Congress of the Jeunesses Communistes Révolutionnaires (JCR [Revolutionary Communist Youth]) resulted in a split between JCR Egalité [Equality] and JCR Autre Chose [Something Else]. JCR Egalité moved rapidly to the left and sought to anchor themselves in the method and politics of Lenin and Trotsky and to break with the leadership of the organisation from which they had emerged, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR).

The LCR majority was so disturbed by this trajectory that in November 1992 they severed all organisational and political links with their 150-strong youth group.

In a short article in Rouge, the LCR explained that JCR Egalité was "seeking to build a small political party which was in competition with the LCR and in opposition to it". JCR Egalité was putting forward a "sectarian and dogmatic" programme and "LCR members who were also in the JCR Egalité would have to choose between two conflicting allegiances".¹

The JCR Egalité leadership replied that the LCR's perspective of burying itself inside a new reformist party for the sake of "regroupment" was responsible for any split. "From the moment the LCR leadership implicitly abandoned the task of building a revolutionary organisation, there was an objective contradiction between the existence of the JCR as a youth organisation struggling to develop the Trotskyist programme on their own territory".²

Refusing to "choose" between the LCR and the JCR Egalité as the LCR leadership demanded, the National Committee of the JCR reaffirmed that "it considered the JCR the youth organisation of the LCR in political solidarity with it".

This position was highly contradictory. The JCR Egalité continued to be "in political solidarity" with the LCR, despite the fact that their politics were clearly rejected by the entire LCR leadership and that a large majority had voted in favour of an organisational split.

They recognised that the LCR wanted to give up building a revolutionary organisation but drew no conclusions from this dereliction of duty.

What is the nature of the LCR? Were we dealing with an aberration which could be corrected or was this mistake the logical conclusion of the history and method of the LCR and its international organisation, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International?

These questions require a clear answer because, quite clearly, for the JCR Egalité, the LCR with which it is "in political solidarity" is not the same organisation as the one which has just expelled them. What sort of organisation were they supporting before their expulsion? They don't say. This is less the product of their determination and confidence in their own politics than of their confused and uncertain political method.

The nature of JCR Egalité

The current leadership of the JCR Egalité are ex-LCR members who broke from the Matti tendency a year ago.

The politics of the Matti tendency are strongly influenced by Lambertism, combining superficial "orthodoxy" with profound opportunism (deafening calls to build the Fourth International while at the same time refusing to fight for workers' revolution, allowing "democratic revolution" to take its place, opportunism in relation to SOS Racisme³).

It is because they were a left-wing split from the Matti tendency that the JCR Egalité won over the majority of the youth. But the comrades of the JCR Egalité have never made public the reasons for their split, and l'Egalité (their journal) has never justified its left turn.

We consider the political rupture to have been progressive but incomplete. The comrades have put forward a number of valid criticisms of Matti's politics (on the "democratic revolution", for example) but in their practice they have failed to consummate their split. Nor have they resolved their political differences.

Today, in the face of pressure from the LCR, it seems that history is repeating itself. This is the second time they have split and the second time they have failed to draw a balance sheet.

The split with the LCR did lead to a certain amount of political acrobatics. The bureaucratic threats made by the LCR had the desired effect on a minority of members. A few left the JCR in the weeks that followed the split. Some disappeared without a trace; others believed that they should "do as the grown-ups said" out of loyalty to the LCR. But the overwhelming majority held firm and the organisation is continuing to build itself.

But problems are coming to the fore for the JCR Egalité. What will be the nature of this organisation?

Will it be "sectarian and dogmatic" as the LCR claims, or will it "develop the Trotskyist programme" as it promised to do?

If we examine the JCR Egalité's two principal projects for the end of 1992 and the beginning of 1993, their election manifesto and their campaign for a general strike, we find a discouraging response to these questions from the leadership. The JCR Egalité's future is still far from assured.

Confusion over the state

Last summer the JCR Egalité announced that it would stand candidates in the parliamentary elections in March 1993 and launched an appeal for 50,000 francs.⁴ Sadly, the manifesto they produced is totally inadequate. It puts forward opportunist positions on key questions of revolutionary politics such as the nature of the bourgeois state, transitional demands and the basis on which revolutionaries participate in elections.

The manifesto's headline slogan is "The only way forward is to attack the capitalists". The demands it goes on to make include "a major house-building programme", "nationalisation under workers' control (without compensation) of the commanding heights of the economy" and the "expropriation of the bosses who block reforms". The JCR Egalité also calls for a "rupture with the EC", "a state monopoly on foreign trade" and the setting up of "workers' and people's government, i.e. a government of the workers by themselves".

We agree with most of these demands⁵; we do not, however, think that they add up to a revolutionary platform.

The most striking omission from it is any reference to the bourgeois state. The manifesto avoids giving a clear answer to the question of whether the capitalist state can be used to put into effect anti-capitalist policies.

The manifesto refers to "the bosses who block reforms" but doesn't explain what this means, nor what should be done about it apart from expropriation. What is the significance of this "blocking"?

The JCR know as well as we do that in the face of thorough-going "reform", the bosses will use their army to defend private property. Revolutionaries must therefore explain why it is necessary to destroy the bourgeois state and its armed forces and to that end must put forward transitional demands capable of mobilising the masses (set up councils in the army, creating workers' militias to defend picket lines and the immigrant community etc.).

Yet on this question which constitutes one of the main differences between revolutionary politics and reformism the JCR says nothing. The word "revolution" doesn't even appear once in the manifesto and the only slogan raised in relation to the state is: "For a purge and a root and branch re-organisation of the police". Hardly the destruction of the bourgeois state. The manifesto of the JCR is completely utopian. Are the police not part of the bourgeois state? Can we trust "good" cops (who the JCR presumably thinks are sufficiently numerous to make a purge of the bad ones worth while) to obey a new workers' government in its revolutionary work?

And what are we to make of the JCR's silence on the

question of the army? Is it too in need of a "purge"? Or does the JCR think we can trust it implicitly? We are sure that the comrades don't think that but they have decided not to mention the fact. Why?

The manifesto is a thousand miles away from the politics put forward by the Communist International. The theses adopted at the 2nd Congress in July 1920 state: "Bourgeois parliaments are one of the most important apparatuses of the bourgeois state machine and, like the bourgeois state in general cannot be won over to the side of the proletariat. The task of the proletariat is to shatter the bourgeois state machine, destroying it and its parliamentary institutions, whether republican or constitutional-monarchical."⁶

Moreover, for the International, a communist election campaign must aim to "mobilise the masses around the slogans of proletarian revolution". This not what the JCR is doing.

Hiding their politics?

The JCR's manifesto fails to address the question of how the masses can be won to revolutionary politics. The comrades do say at the end of their document that "politics and government at the service of the oppressed cannot be imposed by elections."

Fine as far it goes, but, once again, the JCR only goes half way. If the parliamentary road is inadequate, what road is the right one? Undoubtedly the comrades have an answer - workers' councils etc. - but, yet again, they don't spell it out. Why not? So as not to "scare" people? In order to "relate better to current concerns"? But the first characteristic of all revolutionary politics is to say what is. Which is not what this manifesto does. Key issues are brushed under the carpet. This is not permissible for revolutionaries.

The demands raised in relation to the state exhibit the same fundamental shortcoming. In spite of their claim that they want "to develop the Trotskyist programme", the comrades only call for profound reform of the bourgeois state: "Liquidate the anti-democratic institutions of the 5th Republic!" (meaning the senate, the constitutional council and the presidency), "For a single parliamentary assembly, elected by proportional representation". They appear never to have heard of workers' democracy.

True, Trotsky raised the call for a single assembly and the abolition of the presidency in his "Programme of Action for France" in 1934. But he did so as part of an open struggle to destroy the bourgeois regime and he sought to have these democratic reforms carried out through the self-organisation of the working class.

Naturally there's no mention of that in the JCR manifesto. For them, such reforms are only . . . well, reforms. They need not have any apparent revolutionary content.

With this for a record, the JCR show quite a nerve in producing a critique of the Socialist Left's call for struggle "for a 6th Republic" ("A new red herring")⁷. Nowhere do they suggest that it is necessary to fight for anything other than the reform of the bourgeois republic (whatever its number).

This method is the method of Lambert and Matti. It attempts to invest democratic demands with a revolu-

tionary significance they do not have. Even the most revolutionary demand is doomed to extinction if it fails to find expression in the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class. This is no less true of purely bourgeois demands such as those raised by the JCR Egalité in relation to the French state.

The comrades' errors not only rob their propaganda of its revolutionary edge. They throw into relief political affinities between the JCR Egalité and centrist tendencies.

A methodological error

At the root of the JCR's equivocation is their poor understanding of the nature of transitional demands. We agree with the vast majority of the demands made by the JCR. Our disagreements relate not to any particular slogan but to the fact that the slogans raised are not tied to proletarian forms of organisation. This makes the whole manifesto ambiguous. The manifesto's most striking error is its failure to explain anywhere that it is the working class that will determine whether the JCR's demands will be carried out or not and it is the working class that must mobilise around them. Because of this omission, the JCR's list of demands sounds like a programme of legislation for a government rather than an action programme for the mobilisation of the workers. This is a long way from the politics of Trotsky and the Communist International.

Even on day-to-day issues the comrades fail to make their meaning clear and sow confusion. The manifesto doesn't contain a word about Le Pen and the rise of fascism.

There is talk of the "millionaire demagogue Le Pen". But Le Pen is not Ross Perot! He is not, first and foremost, a "millionaire demagogue", he's a fascist! And, as the comrades know well, fascism has to be nipped in the bud. The fascists have to be prevented from marching and the FN should be refused "democratic rights".

The manifesto passes over this fundamental question in silence. Comrades, what is your position? Perhaps you really do think, as you did in January 1992, that those who believe "the hour of direct, physical confrontation with the far right is upon us and from today we should build anti-fascist committees" are mistaken. But if so, how do you explain your actions at Caen and your slogans during the anti-Le Pen demonstration in Paris on the 18 March 1993 ("No Zenith for the fascists")? Once again, where all should be clear, we meet only ambiguity.

What do we say, broadly? Should we set ourselves up as "candidates of proletarian dictatorship" as the LCR of old did? Of course not. But revolutionaries who stand for election to parliaments have to explain the nature of those parliaments. They have to explain the nature of the bourgeois state, how it will be used against the workers' who "have a go at the capitalists". (Witness Chile!) They need to put forward slogans that will mobilise workers into forms of self-organisation and lead to the establishment of workers' councils.

The fact that the JCR has failed to draw this fundamental lesson of revolutionary politics suggests that their break with their centrist origins is incomplete and that they have a long way to go yet.

The general strike: ultra-leftism hides opportunism

In November 1992 L'Egalité called for a general strike. Pointing to the "No" vote in the Maastricht referendum, the truck-drivers' and small farmers' actions and the "Euro-strike" organised by the rail unions, the JCR argued that the chance was there to "see off austerity packages, political corruption and the government itself".⁸

The comrades characterised this strike in a contradictory way. The government rejects the workers' demands, they say, which - to us - suggests that it is in a strong position - strong enough to implement an austerity program which has not been met by any concerted workers' action for years.

A red herring, say JCR Egalité. There may have been an appearance of inaction, but the dialecticians of JCR Egalité have grasped the underlying reality: "In a context characterised by the government's fierce hostility to every demand by the workers and its extreme weakness, the general strike is the only sure way to answer the burning questions of the moment".

In other words, even though the working class doesn't look like it can win small, sectional victories - or even begin to struggle towards winning them - the matter would be sorted out by one concerted heave.

The poverty of this position leaps from the page. If you can't win minor battles, what chance has a general strike got? Instead of calling for concrete actions, the comrades of the JCR-Egalité stake their all on an event which is as remote from the present as it could possibly be.

They can declare "what today's struggles lack are co-ordination and conscious extension"⁹ all they like: what today's struggles lack is struggle! The number of strikes has plummeted since the early 80s. The workers' movement is clearly in retreat as a result of the attacks launched by the various Mitterrand administrations and the complicity of the union bureaucracies.

How could such a movement for "co-ordination and extension" be built, around what demands and through what forms of organisation? What about the current leaderships? The comrades decline to raise these essential questions anywhere, thereby revealing the true nature of their call for a general strike. It's just wind.

What general strike?

We disagree with the comrades' understanding of the immediate utility of the general strike slogan today in France.

According to Trotsky, "The general strike, as every Marxist knows, is one of the most revolutionary methods of struggle. The general strike is not possible except at a time when the class struggle rises above particular and craft demands, and extends over all occupational and district divisions, and wipes away the lines between the trade unions and the parties, between legality and illegality and mobilises the majority of the proletariat in an active opposition to the bourgeoisie and the state."¹⁰

For Trotsky, therefore, the call for a general strike was a response to a generalised attack on the class as a

whole which can only be rebutted by such means. This is very sensible. For a general strike to take place, workers must say to their comrades: "This attack must be stopped, the only way to do so is for us all to strike together."

What's more, because it "poses the question of power", workers must develop the means to manage their own strikes and open the way to the building of workers' councils - action committees must be set up. That is the only way to avoid a parliamentary "solution" to the inevitable crisis.

But as we saw with regard to their election manifesto, such Trotskyism is absent from their position. The comrades of the JCR Egalité appear to understand the transitional method only in the abstract and not at all in concrete application to workers' struggles.

Therefore to the general strike slogan, we say: A general strike around what demands? To prevent which attack? We do not deny the existence of real attacks against the working class, but if a general strike is to have the slightest chance of success, those attacks need to be pinpointed.

For example, in the Autumn our British comrades in Workers' Power fought for a general strike against 100,000 sackings in mining and related industries. The right to work was under renewed attack and the government was out to finish off the miners and copper fasten the victory of the government in the Great Strike of 1984-85.¹¹

They also demanded that the TUC organise strikes immediately. If it refused, workers should organise them through action committees.

A general strike was objectively necessary if the government was to be forced into a climb down. Which made it possible to raise the call for a general strike. Mass movement in the face of this attack also opened up the opportunity to take action.

Our comrades got unions to pass resolutions calling directly for a general strike and for the organisation of workplace assemblies aimed at setting up committees of action to co-ordinate and lead the strike locally.

They didn't present the general strike as a substitute for partial, sectional struggles as the Socialist Workers' Party did and as the JCR Egalité is doing now. They explained that the best way to support the miners and others threatened with job losses was to go on strike immediately in defence of higher wage claims.

In this way our comrades gave a clear answer to a clear attack. They provided workers with the political and organisational means to defend themselves and develop the struggle to answer "the question of power". These politics, this method, are quite foreign to the JCR Egalité. But they correspond to those put forward by Trotsky during the 1930s.

A gift to the bureaucracy

The mere fact that their petition for a general strike went into print reveals the weaknesses of the comrades' method. Yet again, the comrades' reflex was to dredge up a slogan from the Lambertist box of tricks. "To defend jobs, salaries and state education", they say, "UNIONS MUST PREPARE FOR A GENERAL STRIKE" before going on to ask their readers to sign up. Such a petition

could only play into the hands of the bureaucrats, the majority of whom at least are strong on talk but weak on action.

What sort of "preparation" does a general strike require? Are we talking about concrete steps (organising meetings, resolutions to trade union organisations etc.)? If so, why not say so? In fact, the comrades' petition for "preparation", far from putting pressure on the bureaucracy, actually provides them with yet another platform for holiday speechifying.

They mean what Lambert meant by "preparation". Their petition, like Lambert's in years gone by, will provide left cover for the bureaucrats, who can get down to "preparing" for a general strike ad infinitum without taking any political responsibility for building one. This might not be the intention of the comrades' petition but it is its effect.

What future for the JCR Egalité?

We characterised the emergence of the JCR Egalité "as one of the most important developments on the left in over a decade"¹². Its evolution remains incomplete but presents worrying signs. Their new independence gave the JCR Egalité the chance to codify their differences with the centrist method and politics of the LCR and the USFI. But the methodological errors we have highlighted in our last article and in letters and discussions with JCR Egalité leaders and members continue and are getting worse.

The crystallisation of the JCR Egalité around a programme which they adopted, de facto, a year ago, may lead to a tremendous waste of potential, bringing young Trotskyists into an impasse. Without a correct understanding of revolutionary programme, the JCR will not be able to train youth, nor to mobilise and intervene in the working class, nor to develop a clear perspective. In short, and it is a prediction we take no pleasure in making, they will go down to defeat.

We hope to persuade the JCR Egalité to change direction and to complete their break with the methods of the past and adopt a new set of politics. Our programme and criticisms are not put forward as ultimatums: we want to discuss them, to deepen them through the comrades' experience and, in the event of reaching agreement, to build a common organisation. The comrades of the JCR Egalité will have to act. They must understand how limited their break from the LCR has been, as well as the nature of what remains to be done. This is the only way to escape the centrist confusion which mars their politics today.

The Origin of the LCR's Errors

The current turn by the LCR towards the building of a "non-strategically limited" party is by no means its first. Time and again the LCR has been tempted to abandon its independence along with its revolutionary political vision in order to bury itself inside another organisation.

From 1953 to 1968 the vast majority of activists in what was to become the LCR worked inside the French Communist Party in a semi-clandestine manner.

May 68 forced them to come out.

From the mid 1970s the LCR threw itself into "reconstructing the labour movement". During the 1980s it advocated the construction of an "alternative" (1985), then of a "workers' party" (1986) only to hail the so-called "Juquin dynamic" in 1988. The LCR's current orientation towards various forms of "reconstruction" inside the Socialist Party and the Communist Party is simply the continuation of that perspective.

It wasn't the LCR leadership who pioneered this method. It was devised and instigated by the LCR's international organisation, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI). We have shown elsewhere what a terrible price it has exacted in other countries. The USFI's centrism, like the centrism of most organisations claiming to be Trotskyist, is rooted in the centrism which took hold of the Fourth International from the early 1950s.

The whole International - including those who later opposed the line - adopted a perspective which led to the blurring of differences between revolutionary politics, centrism, reformism and petit-bourgeois nationalism. Deep entry inside the PCF is an example of the method of party-building and of political adaptationism which came to characterise all sections of the International.

If the comrades of JCR Egalité wish to break from the LCR's politics, they must examine closely the history of their own international organisation. If they wish to be true to the struggle they have taken up, they need to break from that history.

Footnotes

- 1 Rouge 3.12.92
- 2 L'Egalité, December 1992, p2
- 3 See our article on the USFI in PO 20
- 4 L'Egalité 17, December 1992, p2
- 5 We disagree with the comrades' use of the workers' government slogan. See our article, "Whither JCR Egalité" in PO 22, Autumn 1992.
- 6 Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Comintern (London, 1980, p 100)
- 7 L'Egalité 17, December 1992, p3
- 8 L'Egalité 16, November 1992, p6
- 9 L'Egalité 17, December 1992, p6
- 10 Leon Trotsky On France, p93.
- 11 See our article on the strike in PO 7, Summer 1985
- 12 PO 22 Autumn 1992, p15, translated in Trotskyist Bulletin No.2 (November 1992)

The Stalinophile School of Falsification; the ASt replies to its sectarian critics

DURING THE WINTER of 1990/91—the ICL (Spartacists) supported the “Red-Brown” bloc mobilisations in Moscow. This shameful episode was another stage in their dragging the name of Trotskyism through the mud. It was first exposed by the LRCI and for this reason the ICL has been desperately searching for a tit-for-tat “scandal” with which to smear their accusers. It claims to have found one—a demonstration against imperialist aggression and nationalist war in former Yugoslavia and against the racist immigration policy of the Austrian state. This demonstration was jointly organised in July 1992 by the Austrian section of the LRCI, the Gruppe ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt, and the bourgeois nationalist Serbian Rebirth.

The context of this initiative was the imposition of an imperialist blockade directed at Serbia and Montenegro, and mounting pressure from the German and Austrian imperialists on their allies in Washington, London and Paris to launch a full scale military attack on the ex-Yugoslav degenerated workers’ state. In addition, the Austrian government announced measures to close the frontiers against refugees from former Yugoslavia. Sections of the Austrian press together with Jörg Haider’s Freedom Party were whipping up hysteria against new immigrants as well as Serbian workers long resident there.

The call for this demonstration was the only attempt in Austria by any working class organisation to achieve a joint action with the former Yugoslav immigrant community for progressive aims. The ASt and the LRCI have reason to be proud of the fact that they were the ones to take the initiative. Equally, it is a matter of shame that the other “Trotskyist” organisations and the Austrian Stalinist party refused to take to the streets on this issue, using sectarian excuses to cover up a grossly opportunist and politically craven refusal to confront Austrian chauvinism. If there is any question of a scandal this is where it lay. Yet the ICL turns precisely to these “informants” and their self seeking cover-up polemics for dirt to fling at the LRCI.

The absolutely principled character of this demonstration can be seen at a number of levels: the slogans on which it was called; the permissibility of a demonstration alongside the political forces which accepted this basis; the ASt’s political attitude to its temporary block partners; and its reactions to the breakdown of this temporary united front.

First, let us look at the following political slogans on which the demonstration was based;

Bush, Kohl, Mock: Hands off Serbia!

No UN blockade! No military intervention!

Back organisations who fight against nationalist war!

No to racism against the peoples of the Balkans!

Hunger and freedom know no frontiers— asylum rights for all war refugees!

Withdraw the racist visa restrictions for Serbs!”

These were the slogans on which we sought to build a demonstration aimed at uniting the Austrian left with the the political and community organisations of the immigrants from former Yugoslavia, especially the Serb’s, who were the main targets of harassment. In the event the Austrian left refused to participate in such a demonstration. The only organisation that did respond positively was the bourgeois nationalist Serb Rebirth, an Austrian satellite of the Vuk Drascovic’s Serbian Renewal movement. We have and had no reason to cover up the class and political character of Drascovic or his Austrian followers. Drascovic is first and foremost a Serbian nationalist. His general attitude to the Albanians of Kosovo, to Croats, Bosnian Muslim’s etc has been and will be that of a Serbian chauvinist. He wishes passionately to restore not only capitalism but the Serbian monarchy in the person of Prince Alexander. Drascovic is a religious mystic and his party militia has fought and is fighting in the reactionary nationalist wars in former Yugoslavia. Additionally, he has repeatedly appealed to imperialism to intervene and he has backed their stooge Milan Panic against Slobodan Milosevic. Last, but not least, his party militia has sometimes acted in a thuggish manner to cow anti-Milosevic demonstrators in Belgrade.

Nevertheless, he and his party are not, by any marxist definition, fascists. Despite the fact that they lay claim to continuity with the pre second world war monarchy and with Mihailovic’s Chetniks rather than with Tito’s partisans, today they are constitutional monarchists who have been, inconsistently, the major social force opposing Milosevic’s expansionist war in Bosnia. The real fascist party in Serbia is Seselj’s Serbian Liberal Party and its Chetnik militia. These fascists do not oppose the Stalinist Milosevic but are in a block with him. The Serbian Renewal Movement, on the other hand, has participated both before and after the start of the Bosnian war in demonstrations in Belgrade and elsewhere against the war. That was why their Austrian offshoot was willing to accept the slogan of opposition to nationalist war. Incidentally, despite Drascovic’s bad record on this they also accepted opposition to imperialist intervention. The Austrian Serb Rebirth is clearly a bourgeois organisation, though its members are mainly Serb immigrant workers. But it is in no sense a fascist organisation. In our view there is nothing unprincipled in including openly bourgeois forces in such a tactical alliance for limited and clearly defined aims and actions, as long as the interests and aims of the proletariat are not in any way subordinated to those of the bourgeois force.

Clearly, to have to form a united front solely with an organisation that on all fundamental issues we have nothing whatever in common was hardly a desirable outcome. But where there were no other organisations which were willing to unite with us for one demonstration, where all other Serbian organisations supported the foul nationalist war against the other national communities waged by Milosevic and Sesselj and where the Austrian left refused to participate, we had no alternative.

Our critics' excuses and subsequent polemics hinge on the claim that we necessarily made some sort of concession to the Serb Rebirth. Where is such subordination to be found in the demands that the demonstration was built upon? Nowhere! It's not accidental that most of the various centrist and reformist critics of the ASt have not dared criticise the basis of the mobilisation itself! Only the RKL did so by insisting that united fronts were only permissible with organisations who already openly reject capitalist restoration. Conveniently, *no such organisation exists!* Thus the whole anti-war rhetoric of the RKL ends in shameful inactivity and the effective rejection of all common action with Serb, Croat or Bosnian Muslim organisations.

Ironically, the RKL and its international discussion club, the Liaison Committee, have now found out that a common position if not common action with Serbian nationalists is possible. Not with those who temporarily opposed the nationalist butchery in Bosnia—but with those who defend Sesselj Milosevic's attacks against the Bosnian Muslims! Their reason is that Serbia is a workers' state, indeed the only workers' state in Europe.

Of course, for these muddleheads the political dictatorship of a Stalinist bureaucracy (in this case in coalition with a fascist party) equals a workers' state. For us, Serbia—and indeed all the other former Yugoslav republics—remain workers' states, albeit in their death agony despite, not because of their foul political regimes.

They remain workers' states because these regimes have not yet succeeded in overthrowing the remains of the planned and statified economies and introducing the domination of the law of value. Thus, in a conflict between any of these states and imperialism we would support whichever of them resisted imperialism. But the present Bosnian war does not, despite the ineffective UNO presence, have this character yet. It has developed, as we predicted, into an expansionist national chauvinist war for the partition of Bosnia between Serbia and Croatia. Anyone who supports the Serbs in *this* war is an accomplice of genocide. The RKL have thus found their own "Red-Brown block" to support. Only, unlike the one in Moscow, this one not only threatens genocide it is doing its very best to carry it out!

The other implacable critics of the ASt's anti-war actions are the Austrian USFI section. These are the ICL's main witnesses for the prosecution. These USFI paragons of the class line do not oppose the UN presence in Bosnia and a part of the organisation has publicly supported imperialist sanctions against Serbia in their paper!

So much for the nature of the original initiative. Now let us turn to the actual carrying out of the united front, the actual demonstration. Where do we find a capitulation to monarchism? As in all united front actions there is a risk that the "partner" breaks the agreements and

tries to turn it into a demonstration for its own aims. This possibility can only be excluded by forming united fronts with oneself as the ICL does time and time again; that is, by emptying the united front of all meaning in a Third Period manner.

Nevertheless, what did happen is that the end of the demonstration witnessed a reactionary outburst. The Serb Renewal allowed a Chetnik figure to speak from the platform and a Serb speaker of the ASt was nearly beaten up by this fascist scum.

Out of this episode the ICL construct their charges. Let us refute them in turn, these typical products of the Stalinophile School of Falsification.

First, the demonstration was not a "united front with Great Serbian monarchists and fascists", as the ICL claims. The Chetnik fascist offal turned up at the demo and at the end of it tried to attack one of our speakers. At no point was the ASt in any sort of united front with them. They—unlike the Serb Rebirth—at no point shared the objectives of the demonstration.

True, the ASt was not able to physically eject them from the demonstration; yet to call this a "united front" would be the same as to say that anybody would be in a "united front" with clerical proto-fascists if Iranian Hezzbollah activists had turned up at a demonstration against the Gulf war. Should we have fled from the demonstration merely so that malicious by-standers like the RKL or the USFI did not have any pretext to accuse us of being in a block with the Chetnik's? No! We are not such wretched cowards.

Secondly, contrary to the USFI's claims the outpouring of Chetnik support for the Serbian war efforts, together with the carrying of pictures of Mihailovic, were not dominant features of the beginning of the demonstration. There were, indeed, pictures of Mihailovic present at the start—five as a matter of fact—but also, and in far larger numbers, there were banners against imperialist intervention, against the racist immigration policy of the Austrian state and banners bearing slogans against the nationalist war.

In short, the different components of the demonstration had their own distinctive positions. But the principled slogans of the march itself predominated and the ASt clearly put forward its own full internationalist position, as we shall see. Apart from the pictures, the USFI comes up with another piece of "evidence" for its accusations against the ASt: there were 250 Serbs—but only 10 Austrian leftists on the march! The implication is clear: a Serb is *ipso facto* a reactionary nationalist; an Austrian, a left progressive.

This is not only a chauvinist inuendo but is also factually wrong. There were more than 1,000, mainly Serb, demonstrators and they were not all nationalists. This became clear not only from the positive response the ASt's anti-nationalist propaganda received, but also in the fact that, together with the ASt, one third of the demonstrators left the demo when the Chetnik speaker was handed the microphone at the end of the rally!

Thirdly, and even more interesting than these glaring contradictions, is the fact that none of the ASt's opponents cite the ASt's comrades' speeches or the leaflets and papers issued both in German and Serbo-Croat on the demonstration. This, despite the fact that the ICL must have had all these materials in their hand by the

time they wrote their polemic. Instead of proving our political adaptation to Serb chauvinism or fascism by quoting the ASt's propaganda, the ICL prefers to "evidence" it by quotes from . . . the USFI's Austrian paper! The USFI's account, as quoted by the ICL, states:

"He (the ASt speaker at the demo) tried to avoid confronting his 'bloc partner' in the fight against military intervention and hardly addressed a single concrete question of the war in former Yugoslavia. There was not even any mention of Croats, Albanians and Kosovo."

Let's look at the ASt's speech itself (published for all to read in *ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt* Nr. 47, September 1992). After explaining the objectives of imperialism and of the Austrian bourgeoisie in particular, denouncing its racism, the ASt speaker moved on to attack the nationalist and restorationist leaders of the Yugoslav masses:

"But the imperialists have a strong ally in the Balkans: nationalism. The poison of nationalism splits the peoples and weakens them against imperialism. The anti-fascist liberation struggle against Nazi Germany demonstrated what heroic deeds the peoples can do, if they struggle in unity and not separately against the occupiers. But today imperialism has better cards, because Itzetbegovic forces the Muslim's to follow a policy of Islamic fundamentalism; because Tudjiman tries to unify the Croat workers and peasants with slogans of hatred against everything Serb; because Milosevic and Seselje have dragged the Serb toilers into war and chauvinist hatred. This nationalism is a tragedy for the Serb people. How shall the Kosovo Albanians be won for a common struggle against imperialism, if the Serb nationalists oppress and plunder their country? How shall the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina be won to anti-imperialism by chauvinist policies? If the Serb worker wants to overcome imperialism's threat, he must reach out his hand to his Croat, Macedonian and Albanian brother. He must break with nationalism! This is the only way to triumph over the US, German and Austrian imperialist threat.

The experience of the last months shows that the nationalist leaders are only anti-imperialists in words. But in deeds they are capitulators and assistants to Bush and Carrington. Babic, Haradziz, Karadic, they all accommodate to UN troops. And Milosevic will be next.

Nationalism itself has led the workers and peasants into the misery of a destructive and reactionary war. But this war is not an accident. It is the result of the conscious policy of the former Stalinist bureaucrats, Izetbegovic, Milosevic and Seselje. For 40 years these bureaucrats have led the country into economic ruin and dependence. Now, faced with the bankruptcy of this, they try to save their skins and privileges by restoring capitalism. For this aim, they are prepared to destroy all the gains of post-capitalist Yugoslavia. But they know the misery and poverty which the market economy brings. Therefore, they need nationalism and they need the war.

Yet the workers and peasants must stop this war before the whole country is destroyed. Against the pogroms and deportations we need joint Serb, Croat and Muslim militias to smash the chauvinist warmongers. There can only be peace on the Balkans if solidarity, real socialism and peace govern the relations between the peoples—not nationalism, capitalist exploitation and

war. This can only be achieved by a voluntary federation of socialist workers' republics of the Balkans. But this will be an illusion as long as Milosevic, Tudjiman and Izetbegovic remain in power. Only if the workers unite and take the power out of the hands of the bureaucrats and newly rich capitalists can this dream of a society of real justice be realised. Down with nationalist war! Doleza nacionalistickomratu!"

In the leaflet handed out on the demonstration headed "Workers, soldiers: Down with the Milosevic bureaucracy! Take the power in your own hands" we wrote this;

"Why have the Serb toilers and soldiers not rebelled against the war yet? Because all other parties have equally betrayed them. In 1990 the braggard Vuk Draskovic tried to be even more nationalist than Milosevic, before he, like many times before, changed his mind again. What worker would trust this Court Jester of Prince Alexander? Since the war began, the SPO (Serbian Renewal, Draskovic's organisation) has changed its position every month. One time it was for, then it was against, the war—without any clear line. Only reactionary rhetoric like the pro-imperialist proposals and the participation of the party's militia, the "Serbian Guard" in the fighting in Slavonia, remained constant. And there is one question where SPO and SPS (Socialist Party of Serbia) agree: Serbia must be capitalist, the gains of the workers' state must be destroyed." (*ArbeiterInnenstandpunkt*, Nr. 46, p. 2, June 1992)

No single concrete question mentioned? No mention of the Albanians? No criticism of Draskovic? The USFI's "witness" obviously had neither ears to hear or eyes to read. Boundless factional malice and perhaps a little bit of shame at their own inactivity was quite sufficient to produce this piece of fiction. The ICL, of course, could not be bothered to investigate its sources.

In addition to this speech and the leaflet a member of the ASt gave a another speech at the end of the March in Serbo-Croat in which he said;

"The nationalists have always played their dirty games with the lives of the people. Remember the Second World War, when the Chetniks and Ustachi collaborated with the fascist occupation against the people's liberation war . . . don't allow the nationalists to use the struggles of the past for their aims . . . our internal enemies are the rulers of all the republics, but also most of the so-called democratic opposition."

Obviously, it was making these trenchant criticisms of Great Serbian Chauvinism, the raising of the banner of working class internationalism which provoked the attack by the Chetnik fascists. Quite probably, it was our principled criticism of Draskovic that resulted in the Serb Rebirth giving only minimal support to us at that point.

Naturally, we do not claim that the demonstration was a great tactical success. The way it ended, on the contrary, did serious damage to our attempt to mount an effective demonstration in defence of Serbian workers in Austria, against imperialist intervention, and against the reactionary nationalist war in Bosnia. But the ASt's slogans and propaganda, its tactics and its response both to the Chetnik fascists and the Serb Rebirth were entirely principled. They showed, moreover, an appetite for an active internationalist intervention that our kerbside critics can scarcely imagine, let alone demonstrate. •

The International Trotskyist Opposition: no answer to the crisis of the USFI

THE EXISTENCE OF an International Trotskyist Opposition (ITO) within the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI) must appear encouraging to those members of the USFI who have watched for years as their leaders steadily abandoned more and more Trotskyist and Leninist positions. The disorientation and disintegration of the USFI reveal the need for a struggle to win the best elements to Trotskyism and away from the adaptation to, or dissolution into, various left Stalinist, reformist and Maoist organisations or petit bourgeois movements.

What does the ITO offer to militants within the USFI who want to reverse this abandonment of Trotskyism? In 1992 the grouping was launched following the coming together of a number of oppositional tendencies. Some of these, like the comrades of the Faction for a Trotskyist International, have been distinct, organised oppositions for many years. Others, such as the French comrades, had recently moved to the left.

Already the ITO has attracted interest around the world, as the collapse of Stalinism reveals the depth of the bankruptcy of the USFI leadership. At one level, the launch of the ITO clearly corresponded to a felt need amongst the best militants of the USFI.

But the answer provided by the ITO to the crisis of the USFI is insufficient, both polemically and programatically. At its founding conference it adopted a "Declaration of Principles" which it will use in its tendency struggle within the USFI. Although the document ranges from the historic necessity of socialism to the need for a world party of the proletariat it is not, as claimed in the "Draft declaration of tasks of the ITO" adopted at the same meeting, "a programme . . . for the political regeneration and organisational reconstruction of the Fourth International".

From principles to adaptation

The ITO's founding document is precisely a "Declaration of Principles". The differences with the programmatic documents of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky are striking. The ITO deliberately advances positions that are vague and empty of programmatic content. Most of them are deliberately so anodyne and abstract that virtually any self-respecting "Trotskyist" could agree with them. After all, who could oppose "the aim of the Trotskyist party is to win hegemony over the masses in action", a criticism of "socialism in one country" or the call for "unification on the programmatic bases of Bolshevism of the forces of

the vanguard of the proletariat"? But despite this carefully crafted catalogue of truisms there are a number of positions which reveal a systematic streak of opportunism.

The Declaration argues for the building of non-proletarian mass movements of the oppressed and exploited, "mobilising not only the proletariat but also the non-proletarian oppressed and middle layers". It argues that revolutionaries "must fight against the petty-bourgeois (or sometimes bourgeois) leaderships of these movements, struggling for proletarian leadership of the non-proletarian mass movements."

Whilst this is better than the equivalent section in previous versions of the document (partly as a result of our polemics) it is still flawed and mistaken.

We agree that oppression of women, lesbians and gay men, youth etc exists in all classes, and that petit bourgeois and even bourgeois elements will be drawn into struggle around their oppression, but we do not draw the same conclusions as the Declaration. The ITO documents says that "They (non-proletarian mass movements - WP) are therefore continually brought into conflict with the capitalist class and its state."

This is an adaptation to petit bourgeois "movementism", to the idea that such movements - be they the peace movements of the early 1980s or the women's movement of the 1970s - are "objectively anti-capitalist" or have an "anti-capitalist dynamic".

Bourgeois and petit bourgeois women, or other oppressed sectors, while facing real oppression under capitalism, do not have the same interests as proletarian and poor peasant women in emancipation through working class revolution. Their interests are not solely, nor primarily, determined by their oppression, but rather by their relationship to production, by their class position.

Of course the best of the oppressed individuals within the bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie may be ideologically convinced of the need to struggle for socialism to overcome oppression. But this is not the same as arguing that their struggle against oppression will automatically bring them into conflict with capitalism in the state.

That this is not an isolated "poor formulation" but part of a wrong method is shown by the section on the "anti-imperialist united front". The comrades reject the "revisionist" idea that "it is possible to establish anti-imperialist united fronts with the national bourgeoisie of an oppressed country", arguing that only petit-bourgeois national parties or organizations can be partners in such a front. The only kinds of agreement which are permitted with the national bourgeoisie are "limited practical agree-

ments". But surely, comrades, that is a united front!

The ITO clearly suggest that something other than "limited practical agreements" are possible with "petit-bourgeois national parties", in the name of the "anti-imperialist united front". This is opportunism masquerading as orthodoxy. Call them what you will: the only kinds of agreements which are possible with forces of other classes are precisely "limited practical agreements". Anything else - such as an electoral bloc or a common organisation - will inevitably lead to a confusion of banners, to an opportunist adaptation of the revolutionary programme to that of the alien class forces.

As with the section on oppression, the comrades around the FTI have changed their formulations over the years in reaction to our criticisms. But the fundamental methodological error resists all re-drafting, for the simple reason that this is what the comrades believe. Their cross-class "movementism" in the imperialist countries goes hand in hand with leaving the door open to an unprincipled "united front" in anti-imperialist struggles.

Denunciation is not enough

Oppositionists within the USFI will agree with the ITO on the need to resolve the political crisis in the Fourth International, which according to them includes two elements: "political revisionism and organisational dispersion". To rally people within and outside of the USFI (the ITO directs its appeal to the whole "world Trotskyist movement") it is necessary to explain exactly what the errors of the existing USFI leadership are and have been, how these can be understood in relationship to the degeneration of the revolutionary tradition of the FI, and what would have been the correct positions to have fought for in key events of the class struggle.

This approach is important not for reasons of "revolutionary purity" or in order to insult the USFI leadership, but because without a clear diagnosis of the errors, the necessary prescription for regenerating Trotskyism cannot be determined.

Many oppositionists within the FI, and certainly many opposing groups who claim adherence to Trotskyism, will agree that the USFI is indeed marked by political revisionism and organisational dispersion. Many will also agree with the ITO when it states, "The problem is that for decades the leadership of the FI, in part for subjective, in part for objective reasons, has not been able to build the International and strengthen it politically and organisationally enough so that it could become a mass Fourth International", and that there is a need to launch "a struggle against the deepening revisionism of the majority leadership of the USFI".

But will all the oppositionists - or even all the members of the ITO - agree on which particular positions, interventions or perspectives and on which bit of the leadership over the years were revisionist? Was it the belief that the 1979 Nicaraguan revolution installed some kind of "workers' government"? Was it the entry into the British Labour Party and the attempted creation of a class struggle left wing with left reformist forces? Was it the support for and attempted fusion with ex-Communist Party members around Pierre Juquin in France? Was it the description of Cuba as a workers'

state, not degenerate but merely needing some reforms? Or was it the USFI position on the USSR in the Gorbachev years which called for a "deeper glasnost"? Or the total adaptation to Solidarnosc, including its pro-imperialist leadership? Or all of the above?

And if the USFI leadership(s) were wrong over, for example Nicaragua, what was the revolutionary position? Could revolutionaries have given any support to, or even entered the Sandinista government? Or in Poland how should revolutionaries have intervened around the mass movement led by Solidarnosc, and where would we have stood when Jaruzelski sent the troops in? Where would revolutionary Trotskyists have placed their forces during the August Coup in the Soviet Union?

Our purpose in raising these questions is not to go through the last 30 years of international class struggle and present the line of the LRCI alongside a critique of the USFI, but to point out that there are many different issues on which the USFI leadership has taken wrong positions, and also many interpretations of the "revolutionary" position. In the process of defeating the ideas and actions of the revisionist leadership of the USFI it is necessary to be precise in identifying errors and in providing alternative positions.

If all that was needed was a denunciation of the revisionism of the USFI leadership, then almost the whole of the left that has any adherence to Trotskyism, including a majority of the USFI, would join the ITO. Rectifying the errors and building "a mass Fourth International" on a revolutionary basis requires a serious accounting with the errors of the past, an understanding of the process of degeneration of the FI.

No criticism from the ITO

The "principles" put forward by the ITO contain neither a rounded critique of the USFI's leadership or practice, nor any positions on the key issues that have divided those who regard themselves as Trotskyists over the past three decades. Without such clarity the "Declaration of Principles" remains an ineffectual statement of broad principles which fails to arm revolutionaries. The ITO's only criticisms of the USFI leadership are the following:

"The International majority has for some time been progressively abandoning the perspective of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Now, in face of the fall of the Stalinist regimes and under pressure from the reformist leaderships - for example, the Lula leadership in the Brazilian Workers Party (PT) - it is abandoning the concept of the Leninist party as the essential political instrument of the proletariat in the struggle for socialism. This political break with Leninism, is reflected organisationally both in the dissolution of sections and, in those sections that remain, in an organisational regime in which the leaders do as they please and the members do as they please".

"For a long time, there has been a tendency in the USFI to lose sight of the general value of the method (of the Transitional Programme - WP) as a system of intervention in the class struggle. There is a tendency to consider transitional demands simply as the 'most radical' demands that can be used when it is necessary to

have a higher political profile. There is also a tendency to forget the general methodological importance of using transitional demands as a form of agitation, where the objective situation and our forces allow it. . . We also have to reject a method that has marked the policy of the USFI in the past, that is, the pretension that we can seize on one 'anti-capitalist demand' that has a unique and central value for our action in the class struggle."

"For fifty years the Trotskyist movement has been under massive pressure from the Stalinists and reformists, and sections of it have adapted to the Stalinist conception of the united front as a policy of mixing banners, and even to the transformation of the united front into a popular front with directly bourgeois forces. In many cases, the small size of the Trotskyist organisations has intensified that pressure, as the organisation's independent agitation has seemed so weak as to be ineffective. Often the adaptation has taken the form of turning the united front into an abstract general principle to which the organisation's independent propaganda is sacrificed. A Trotskyist rejection of mixing banners is then characterised as 'sectarian'. The Fourth International must make a decisive break from this adaptation and return to the Leninist policy of the united front as an agreement on concrete practical action, within which the participants put out their own propaganda and agitation."

These timid criticisms of the leadership of the FI are broadly correct, so far as they go, but they hardly form a convincing or rounded analysis of decades of vacillation and misleadership.

Nor are any examples of these crimes presented, as if making specific rather than general criticisms would cause offence - or reveal differences.

Even more striking is the fact that the "declaration" contains whole sections on the working class and permanent revolution, the need for independent revolutionary parties in all countries, the need for a democratic centralist international, the revolutionary struggle in the trade unions, centrism, the anti-imperialist united front, the workers' government, oppression, the national question, the deformed workers' states and war, and in each of these contains no critique of the disastrous centrist policies of the USFI!

Take the section on oppression, for example. The ITO makes a general statement about the necessity for the proletariat and its party to be a "tribune of the people" and champion the struggle of all the oppressed and exploited.

Who could disagree? It goes on to argue for mass movements of the oppressed, including the statement "(Trotskyists) must fight against the petty-bourgeois (or sometimes bourgeois) leaderships of these movements, struggling for proletarian leadership of the non-proletarian mass movements".

It also calls for the creation of revolutionary caucuses where movements of the oppressed are under opportunist leaderships. There is not a word of criticism of the USFI's practice on oppression!

There is no recognition that the USFI has taken key positions within the leadership of cross-class movements and used their positions to hound Trotskyists not only for organising "caucuses" but for daring to argue revolutionary class politics within these movements.

The USFI leadership in Britain, for example, adapted to the petit bourgeois feminists all along on theory, organisation and politics. They became the hatchet women of the feminists, denouncing revolutionaries for the crime of fighting against the petit bourgeois leaderships and struggling for proletarian leadership.

How to fight against "Trotskyist" centrism

Perhaps the ITO consider that the positive principles they advocate are sufficient, or that they form a clever "hidden polemic" by arguing abstract positions that the USFI has clearly rejected in practice. If this is the idea behind the document's method it is an inadequate, even dishonest, way of building an opposition. To rectify mistakes requires that they are identified, understood and the correct alternative debated out and agreed upon.

The USFI is a centrist organisation and has been since its inception in 1963. Composed of a reunification of most of the elements of the 1953 split in the Fourth International, the USFI has never broken with the centrism which marked the FI from 1951 onwards. It shares this characteristic with virtually all the various "Trotskyist" organisations which, through the many subsequent splits and fusions, have retained the fundamental centrist errors of this initial degeneration. We have written on this elsewhere, particularly in our book *The Death Agony of the Fourth International and the Tasks of Trotskyists Today* (Workers Power & Irish Workers Group, 1983). Before the errors of the present and recent FI leadership can be corrected, an understanding and agreement on the origins of this centrism within the FI is necessary.

To group together a new leadership capable of defeating the revisionists requires clarity of understanding of the degeneration of the FI, a sharp critique of the present leadership and a programme which deals with the necessary strategy and tactics in the class struggle at the moment. But the Declaration fails on all three counts. It neither provides a coherent critique of the USFI leadership, nor an evaluation of the degeneration of the FI nor, whilst purporting to be a programme, does it provide a guide to action in the current class struggle. It does state a number of "principles" of Trotskyism, but does not give them the level of detailed content necessary for the discussion of concrete situations.

A bit of history

The driving force behind the ITO is what used to be the Faction for a Trotskyist International, led by Franco Grisolia of the Italian section of the USFI. The method used by the ITO in its founding documents is that used by the comrades of the FTI to build their organisation over nearly 15 years. Indeed, not only the method is the same: the very document adopted by the ITO is an amended version of one first put forward in 1980!

At the end of 1979 the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee (TILC) was formed. It included within it the British Workers Socialist League (WSL), led by Alan Thornett (now in the USFI), the Bolshevik Leninist Group (GBL, later the LOR) of Italy, plus the RWL of the

USA and the TAF of Denmark. As well as adopting the original version of the ITO "Declaration of Principles", the TILC adopted a document called "The Transitional Programme in today's class struggle". It explicitly confined itself to revolutionary principles without any discussion of their tactical application. We were observers at the founding conference of the TILC, and we explained that this was a method of building an international tendency which would inevitably cover over real political differences, and would sooner or later lead to a split.

Three years later, we were proved right. The TILC's founding documents, like those of the ITO, contained a formally correct position on any war between a semi-colony and imperialism, namely defeatism for the imperialist country and defence with regard to the semi-colony. But at the first concrete test, the member organisations took different positions on the outbreak of war between Argentina and Britain over the Malvinas.

The abstract principles failed to help when it was revealed that the British section, having a different understanding not of general principles but of the specifics of, in this case, the "right to self determination" of colonial settlers, decided that this was the decisive feature. The British section took a defeatist position on both sides, whilst their comrades in the other sections correctly stood on the other side in the conflict and defended Argentina against imperialist aggression. The TILC split.

The non-Thornett TILC groupings subsequently set up the International Trotskyist Committee (ITC) with sections inside and outside of the USFI which in turn split; those inside the USFI (principally in Italy and Denmark) created the Faction for a Trotskyist International (FTI) which gained some more support (e.g. France). The FTI then helped to set up the ITO.

The ins and outs of all these splits are largely of interest only to archivists, but what is of fundamental importance is to understand why this method of regroupment is so wrong. For those who look to the ITO as a step forward in the USFI it is important to recognise how unstable and ultimately impotent tendencies built on such a basis are.

The problem with the ITO

The ITO is being built on the basis of broad agreement on principles which serve to cover up real differences of analysis, perspective and programme amongst its members. In addition, it is not clear in its critique of the USFI leadership.

The section of the document on the crisis of leadership defines as centrist organisations whose positions vacillate between reformism and Trotskyism, have not in general developed overt consistent counter-revolutionary activity, and with their opportunist policies constitute "a supplementary obstacle to the proletarian revolution".

That definition fits the USFI very well, even according to the relatively mild critique in the Declaration. Yet the comrades stop short of applying the label to the organisation that they are seeking to reform. Why? This has long been the method of those within the USFI who seek to reform it from within. They regard it as having a leadership making serious errors, but not requiring the name

centrist as this would perhaps frighten off USFI members from supporting the opposition and may even get them expelled from the USFI.

But regrouping a revolutionary vanguard to rescue revolutionary politics from the revisionism of the USFI and the other large FI fragments is a serious and urgent task. The Declaration itself suggests that the crisis of humanity is "in elemental form the crisis of the Fourth International". Diplomacy, leading to a refusal to label the leadership centrist will only serve to confuse, not clarify. The "crisis of humanity" will continue.

Mandel is not about to read the ITO Declaration, recognise his errors and turn the USFI into a healthy International. He needs to be exposed as a misleader, as do all the other USFI leaders, majority and minority, for their role in miseducating thousands of young militants, and squandering opportunities for the working class and oppressed.

The reluctance to call the USFI centrist is not just a diplomatic nicety. It is based on a wrong understanding of revolutionary regroupment as outlined above, but also on a false idea about the fate of the FI and of Trotskyism.

The Declaration explicitly argues that the USFI is only a fragment of the FI, and argues "the need to develop the struggle for the political regeneration and organisational reconstruction of the Fourth International in all the trends of the world Trotskyist movement".

This "FI" is clearly not the USFI, or it could not exist "in all trends of the world Trotskyist movement". What is it then? Is it a programme which all the different fragments agree upon? Clearly not, since they all argue vociferously about what is wrong with the others. Is it the tradition of the revolutionary struggle against Stalinism in the 1930s? Partly, but to be of any practical use in today's class struggle, the political lessons of 60 years ago need to be applied clearly and concretely. And that leads us back to the political differences which separate the myriad tendencies which claim to be Trotskyist.

Ernest Mandel thinks that the FI exists. He also thinks he leads it. Gerry Healy thought the same thing. Pierre Lambert and Nahuel Moreno did too. So too did Anibal Ramos and Michel Varga. There has hardly been a shortage over the years of groups claiming to be "the" FI. But no matter how crazy some of their ideas may have been, at least their versions of "the FI" were rooted in concrete reality: their own groups.

The FTI/ITO idea that the FI exists as a set of ideas, somewhere in the heads of scattered groups of Trotskyists across the six continents is a nonsensical myth, a metaphysical comforter for all those looking for an excuse not to break politically with one of its fragments.

The world Trotskyist movement, referred to at other times as "the world family of Trotskyism", is a similar vague claim that there is something common to those whose centrism originates in the degeneration of the FI that distinguishes them from centrists from reformist or Stalinist traditions. Again this creates illusions in some kind of "special" form of centrism, and leads to the conclusion that revolutionary regeneration will necessarily occur through some regroupment of these dissident Trotskyist siblings. Indeed, the ITC/FTI used to peddle this kind of argument to explain that the USFI itself was a particularly healthy form of "centrism sui generis" as they called it.

We reject this argument. The centrism of groups that have their origins in the FI can be as right wing and disastrous for the working class as centrists of any origin. Revolutionaries need to make this clear, not promote the illusion that the USFI, or the LIT or any other "Fourth International" are a more progressive kind of centrism. A decisive break needs to be made from both their organisations and politics to win militants to revolutionary Trotskyism. Where there are numbers of disaffected members a faction fight within the USFI is absolutely correct and necessary. But such a struggle must lead to a break with the existing USFI, recognising this will not be a process of steady reform but rather one of forcing a split with the inveterate centrist leaders.

In or out of the USFI?

What are the ITO's perspectives? The Opposition's documents are deliberately vague. The "organizational resolution" argues that their intervention in the USFI "will culminate in the struggle around the Fourteenth World Congress". This clearly suggests that their work within the USFI could be over in 2 to 3 years.

But if this is the case - and this accusation has been used in factional attacks against ITO members, notably those around the JCR-Egalité in France by the majority of the USFI - why does the ITO refuse to clearly characterise itself as a faction?

In the history of Marxism, Leninism and Trotskyism the terms faction and tendency have quite distinct meanings. A faction is a group of oppositionists who have a distinct platform from the leadership and are trying to replace the existing leadership. Trotsky's struggle inside the CPSU and the Comintern in the late twenties and early thirties was a factional one. A tendency on the other hand is organised to change particular policies of the organisation, not overthrow a bankrupt leadership. Which is it to be?

The draft organisational resolution of the ITO explicitly states that it is a tendency. Its aims are "to conduct a tendency struggle in the USFI against the revisionist and liquidationist line of the International majority". Does this mean that the comrades are agreed that the line can be changed without changing the leadership? If this is the case, it seems strange that one of the founding organisations of the ITO, indeed the originator of the call for the ITO, was the Faction for a Trotskyist International. As an open faction it was fighting to change the leadership.

A Consciously Opportunist Method?

It appears as if the members of the FTI have changed their position and agreed that a factional struggle is not necessary and a tendency will do. Or perhaps they just dropped the term factional in order to win broader support. This is no way to defeat revisionism inside the USFI or any other organisation. It is a refusal to take seriously and fight for the positions you believe in, and instead replace them with a diplomatic compromise to win wider influence but at the expense of fighting for your programme against the established leadership.

This is the fundamental method that the ex-TILC, ex-ITC and now ex-FTI members have been using for nearly 15 years. In addition to compromising over whether they need a factional or a tendency struggle, they are always keen to compromise on political positions rather than risk losing partners in their tendency. The vague statement of principles will appeal to many people but glosses over many real differences that exist among those that sign up to join the tendency.

A new revolutionary leadership, true to the positions of Lenin, Trotsky, the first four congresses of the Comintern and the founding documents of the FI, needs to be forged through common agreement on the principles, strategy and tactics of the class struggle. With agreement on programme, including key tactics, a new leadership can be built within the working class through practical intervention and defeating the centrist, reformist and nationalist alternative leaderships.

The TILC-ITC-FTI tradition has always rejected the idea that revolutionary regroupment needs to be on the basis of agreement on tactics as well as strategy and principles, arguing that tactics are somehow less fundamental. This is a serious error leading to the kind of compromise positions we see in the declaration.

This is clearest when we look at the key question of the last few years: the collapse of Stalinism. Not surprisingly, the Declaration says very little about the programme of revolutionaries in this situation. There are of course broad statements on the transitional nature of the economies and states, the need to defend social property and the call for a political revolution "of a special type".

But the international workers' movement has been thrown into disarray by the wave of political revolutionary crises which have swept Eastern Europe since 1989. The growth of democratic struggles in these states, the mass revolutionary uprisings against Stalinist repression in some of the states, and the ability of pro-imperialist and nationalist leaderships to come to the head of these movements, leading them to counter-revolution - all these developments have been testing the principles, strategies and tactics of all sectors of the labour movement, including self proclaimed Trotskyists. This has been the most important development of recent years, and if revolutionaries fail to analyse it correctly and develop the correct strategies they will be unable to build the mass international that the ITO claim to want.

The August coup in the USSR in 1991 was a key event. One wing of the bureaucracy staged a coup, and was resisted by another wing of the bureaucracy. Events like this in the midst of political and economic turmoil can be the spark for revolutions, counter-revolutions and the rapid development of political forces through struggle. Revolutionary internationalists must put forward a position on such events, we cannot throw up our hands and say - it's a long way away and we are not sure what to say.

But the "declaration" says nothing. Perhaps they forgot? No, they did not forget since it was a point for discussion amongst those coming together to form the tendency. The reason it is missing is because the people within the ITO disagree. On the one hand the Grisolia supporters have a position of "we would have supported the coup if only the masses had supported it", believing

that it represented some kind of defence of the USSR against restorationists. Others argued for opposition to the coup and defence of the democratic gains made in the previous six years.

Staying silent on such an issue does not resolve the problem. It guarantees that the farce of the TILC's collapse in the face of the war will be repeated. Were the August coup to happen tomorrow, the ITO would be completely split. It would either be reduced to silence or would see its different components putting forward positions which would, literally, put them on opposite sides of the barricades! And they deliberately chose not to confront this difference! This is hardly the mark of a serious revolutionary opposition. The ITO consciously sacrificed political clarity in the name of short-term organisational expediency.

Confronting such differences in an attempt to reach common agreement on programme can lead to the development of positions, to the welding together of a leadership around a common programme based on living struggles, to establishing a solid basis for revolutionary regroupment.

Why do we think that key tactics are so important? Having correct tactics for a strike, a campaign, a demonstration, a war, or a revolution will determine not only who will win, assuming your tactics are adopted, but will also demonstrate the correctness of revolutionary principles and strategy to workers in struggle. Tactics are not divorced or secondary issues, they are the focusing of and implementation of programme, and they are fundamental to winning leadership within the working class.

The wrong positions of centrist leaderships are often on tactical questions, but frequently signify an underlying methodological difference on points of strategy. Glossing over tactical differences will, in reality, also cover up differences over strategy. This is clearly the case with regard to the August coup and the ITO.

The development of an international opposition which claims to advance a revolutionary critique of the USFI is

of great importance. The USFI continues to organise thousands of militants around the world, many of them subjective revolutionaries, increasingly revolted by the opportunism of their leaderships.

The USFI majority leadership is aware of this, and at the moment the ITO is the subject of their factional attentions.

Yet the ITO does not represent a revolutionary alternative for critical members of the USFI. Over 15 years, the method employed by its founders has proved their inability to forge a new programme and a new organisation. The potential represented by those who have recently been attracted to the banner of the ITO will be wasted if the old method, which led to the shipwreck of the TILC and the wasted years of the ITC, is repeated.

Building a group around positions which are designed to cover up real political differences can hardly lead to a thoroughgoing fight for political clarification against the USFI leadership. If we can detect the political differences between the various components of the ITO from outside the USFI, you can be sure that the USFI majority will be able to do at least as much. The political differences concealed by the ITO will explode to the surface at the first real test of the international class struggle. Rather than being part of the answer to the "crisis of the Fourth International", the leaders of the ITO are confirming their status as part of the problem.

We do not simply address a call to the comrades of the ITO to join the LRCL. Those of you who consider that we are right on any or all of these points but who think that your leaderships can be won over should raise your criticisms within your national sections and win your comrades away from their current method. The key task is to apply the method of Trotsky's Transitional Programme to today's class struggle and to fight for international revolutionary regroupment on a clear programmatic basis, devoid of diplomatic "no-go" areas and evasive centrist abstractions. That was Trotsky's method in the 1930s; it should be our method today.

A Critical Vote For The Workers' Parties' Candidates! Don't Vote For Bourgeois Candidates!

Down with Fujimori and his Democratic Constituent Congress!

Poder Obrero (Peru) leaflet for the municipal elections, 27 January 1993.

The official candidate for the country's foremost office of mayor (Lima), Pablo Gutierrez, has just resigned. This was long expected and came as no surprise. But at the same time it prefigures further problems for the ruling party.

The government party, that up until a short time ago boasted of having 80% of the popular support, barely obtained 38% of the actual vote for the Democratic Constituent Congress (CCD) in November. Moreover, this does not take into account the hundreds of thousands of people that for various reasons didn't go out to vote. And today, for the municipal elections, it has already acknowledged its defeat throughout the country. The fact that the Nueva Mayoría-Cambio 90 alliance has only put forward official candidates in 6 regional capitals (Tumbes, Cajamarca, Huanuco, Lima, Huancavelica and Tacna) is a reasonable enough indication of the fact that things are not going well in government circles. If we add to this the recent resignation of their Lima candidate, Pablo Gutierrez, we have what we could call the start of an unstoppable decline. In effect, in the main regional capitals such as Arequipa, Cuzco, Puno, Trujillo, Iquitos, Ayacucho, Fujimori's party has not dared put forward candidates since they consider their defeat to be inevitable.

What, then, is happening to the government that, despite its initial successes, today cannot sustain its position in the opinion polls? In Latin America governing bourgeois democrats usually suffer an erosion of support after three or four years in office. This is basically due to the endemic crisis of our region and the instability and turmoil it creates. But *Fujimorismo*, after less than 3 years in power and despite a number of relative successes—in economic matters, in its struggle against subversion, and against the democratic political opposition—today starts to show the first symptoms of decomposition.

This is nothing but a simple reflection of the tremendous crisis of the world capitalist system that makes the consolidation of stable bourgeois democratic governments extremely difficult. In spite of high inflation last year we had one of the worst slumps of the last 15 years. The terrible recession has no equal during the last few years. Fujimori, the loyal servant of the IMF, the big banks and international consortiums implemented their austerity programme in a savage fashion. He didn't promote any policy of social compensation and this, in its turn, meant that Peru had one of the highest rates of malnutrition and infant mortality in the world. The rates of truancy, illiteracy, unemployment and violence are also amongst

the highest in the world.

Because of this it is no accident that, today, Fujimori is starting to feel the first effects of the withering away of his support. However, this must not be taken to mean the defeat of the current that he personified, namely, *independentism*. If that were so, then today the "independent" candidates wouldn't be fighting for the office of mayor of Lima.

Of nearly 50 candidates for this post, the great majority—though not all—have one thing in common—privatisation. To a greater or lesser degree, disguised or not, all the candidates have argued for the need to privatise services. The candidate of Plataforma Democrática, Michel Azcueta, speaking on the problem of rubbish collection says that all the candidates would agree to deal with it by seeking the participation of private companies. The candidate of the PUM, Aída García Naranjo, equally says that she will promote the participation of private companies in large-scale (as opposed to small-scale) transportation, thereby overcoming the current business-managerial fragmentation. The candidate of the United Left, Barrera Bazán, has made a similar proposal.

Not only this. They are also in favour of "seeking" the support of foreign capital, recognising payment of the foreign debt, "negotiating" the conditions of assimilation, etc. We shouldn't forget, in this respect, that the political organisations of Azcueta, Barrera Bazán and "Mocha" García are the ones that are directly responsible for the brutal attacks of Fujimori against the workers and Peruvian people since it was they who voted for Fujimori in the 1990 elections. Moreover, they took part in his government as advisers and ministers, and by being in the first cabinet were authors of the criminal shock of 8 August 1990.

On the other side, Sendero Luminoso (SL) have called for an armed blockade of the Central Highway on election day. They have begun a rolling campaign of intimidation, killing local council candidates in some provinces (forcing many of them to spend the night in police stations for protection) and in Lima, and killing policemen by their usual attacks on public and private places. If we believe that these elections won't really address the concerns of the working class nor of the most oppressed sectors, then the only thing that SL do by their actions is push these sectors into giving support to the government in its fight against subversion.

We don't believe that the election of any of the candidates can solve the problems of Lima or of any part of the country—these are structural problems. However, as

Marxists, we think that we must participate in every battlefield. We mustn't give the bourgeoisie and their parties any opportunity to close down the forums we use for agitation, propaganda, denunciation and struggle. The election of one particular list of candidates, one perhaps more radical than another, will not solve the immense problems of the city. It will only serve increasingly to tame the masses through the limited participation of organisations that claim to represent the aspirations of the majority, and that attempt to reform this present state through small efforts at local self-government. However, today, the masses are in favour of participating in the elections even though the candidates that are standing are not dear to their hearts nor do they represent the legitimate aspirations and decisions taken in neighbourhood councils or rank and file assemblies. In these one should demand the formation of a broad and united working class slate of candidates that would reflect the decisions and hopes of these assemblies.

Given the impossibility of forming a working class slate uniting all the organisations of the barrios, neighbourhoods, mothers' clubs, milk clubs, trade unions, federations along with parties of the left that have a base in the working class, Poder Obrero calls on the working class, on the poor and middle sectors of the peasantry, on the urban petit-bourgeoisie, on the progressive youth, on the thousands of unemployed and under-employed to give their critical vote only to those candidates of the workers' and reformists' parties (from within the United Left) and the PUM.

We demand that these left slates fight for the following programme:

- In the face of the transport problem, to fight for the nationalisation of the big means of transport under the control and supervision of the workers so as to avoid embezzlement of funds, mis-management and corruption and thus make possible a better service for the users. The state must guarantee a fair rate of pay to the workers as well as adequate working conditions. The small and medium-sized means of transport must be transformed into cooperatives, supported both technically and financially by the state. Nationalisation and centralisation of production in a planned economy is the only path to a radical reform of the urban transport system and the opening of new ones (trains, terminals, cycle-paths, etc.).
- Faced with the problem of rubbish, this must be solved through *people's self-organisation*. The people's

assemblies will have to organise collection squads to clean the parks as well as public areas.

- In the face of the problem of water and lighting we must demand that both SEDAPAL and ELECTROLIMA are put under workers' control and accountable to the people's organisations. These must fight and demand from the state the introduction of water, drainage and lighting services.

- In the face of the problem of health, we must struggle to place the IPSS under the control of the workers and that the private clinics as well as the pharmaceutical companies are nationalised and put under workers' control in such a way that allows for the production of medicines that people need and that can extend and improve the infrastructure of the health services for the poorest.

- In the face of the housing problem, we struggle for urban reform. We demand the expropriation of the large estates and mansions of the bourgeoisie in order to put a roof over the heads of the poorest people. Rents must not exceed 10% of wages.

- In the face of the acute problem of hunger, we must fight to force the state to provide a balanced diet for everyone and undertake the free distribution of food-stuffs for all the unemployed, men, women, children and old folk that live below the poverty line. Labour organisations, peasant and shanty-town settlers' organisations, as well as milk clubs and communal eating places must control the production, distribution, and marketing of basic necessary food products.

- In the face of the severe problem of unemployment, a massive plan of public works under the control of the labour and people's organisations must be financed by higher taxes on the rich and by not paying the foreign debt.

- Faced with the problem of poor working conditions, we demand that the local councils exercise control over the working conditions in all manufacturing enterprises and other work places in their region. Workplaces must be able to show they are equipped with adequate facilities for health, hygiene and comfort: water, baths, lockers, cloakrooms, etc.

- In the face of the problem of neighbourhood organisation, the open councils and the people's assemblies must be the highest bodies of neighbourhood government. These must be massive and representative of the organisations of the barrios, the trade unions, the peasants, the people of Peru, etc. The mayors must be subject to the inspection and control of these bodies.

Selections from Poder Obrero (Peru)

November 1992

The Alan Garcia Case

ONCE THE FILM-cum-circus show of Guzmán's trial has been exhausted the dictatorship will go off looking to set up another spectacular with the trial of Garcia. It's indisputable that the ex-president is corrupt. The APRA government (1985-90) turned the country upside down and ransacked it. It won't be difficult to prove that Alan Garcia is implicated in the BCCI case, as well as the juicy sale of mirages and many other deals. Some of his cronies like Zanatti, García Salvatecci and Morales Bermudez are proven thieves.

What is interesting to note is that the only people the dictator wants to put on trial are those that form the opposition. The corrupt Elías Larosa, with dirty hands from the fraudulent project of the Canto Grande prison, now acts as the legal adviser to the regime. Fujimori turns a blind eye to the thousands of shady deals of those who today endorse his new neo-liberal model.

Fujimori himself has never been able to explain his cheating on his tax payments in shady property deals, nor the illegal acquisition of his "Pampa Bonita" estate. When his wife informed on the President's brothers for getting involved in illegal transactions regarding Japanese donations, Fujimori silenced her and then launched the coup. The principal adviser to the government, Montesinos, has been reported to the police for defending drug traffickers.

In the USA itself a number of generals around Fujimori have been reported to the police for being links in the drug trafficking chain. The greatest robbery that we

Peruvians have suffered in the last few decades is what this dictator has done regarding our wages, our social gains and our rights and freedoms.

This *de jure* power controlled by a *de facto* regime and this highly corrupt dictator that has violated all the legal norms has got no more authority than have the crooks of APRA. With García's trial all the neo-liberals hope to wipe out the main representative of bourgeois populism. The military-cum-police-dictator has no authority to pass sentence on any leader of the opposition.

Fujimori hasn't just to try García but also Belaunde and the previous military dictator for the way in which they ransacked the country. The main charge that workers level against all of these is of having expropriated the living standards of the great majority of people and of having carried out so many massacres. But our trial of these figures will not take place in any bourgeois court but by the workers themselves when we make our socialist revolution. García, in particular, has his hands stained with the murder of 300 prisoners.

We are opposed to yet another judicial farce and dictatorial revenge over Fujimori's opponents. We want García and the rest to be put on trial and severely punished. But we demand that in order for there to be a proper trial the process must be taken out of the hands of the anti-constitutional regime; the judges must be democratically elected and a unrestricted investigation of all public bodies— under the control of workers' and people's organisations—gets underway.

For Workers' Candidates in the Municipal Elections

THE DICTATOR ARBITRARILY decided to postpone the local elections for three months. The new extension given for the registration of electoral lists threatens to once again delay the timetable. A further move could well be that the new pro-Fujimori Congress (CCD) decides on yet another postponement. Fujimori wants to avoid not doing very well in the council elections and he needs to win time and keep his friend, the chatterbox Belmont, busy. The opposition thinks it is in better shape for the municipal elections. For them these elections are less anti-democratic than those for the CCD and in which they can present a programme and well known candidates throughout the country.

For the position of mayor of Lima the names of various "independent" rightists have been pushed forward. The authoritarian Vizcarra and Cáceres compete over who can be the toughest in combating the

subversives and street sellers. The inefficient and big-mouthed Belmont hasn't fulfilled his promise of getting rid of the great rubbish mounds in Lima, in the midst of which we survive. He only shows off a few sports facilities and road improvements whilst at the time he increases his corrupt local taxes and the city operates in a rubbish tip, and with a chaotic transport system.

Azcueta and the bourgeois MDI have created the Plataforma Democrática together with well known rightists like Grados Bertorini or Guido Pennano. This new bourgeois coalition tries to capture the votes of the bourgeois-democratic opposition, of the APRA (to which it offers to complete the farcial electric train project) and the left. Azcueta has nothing to do with the workers' movement anymore. He feels he's got more in common with the king of his native Spain. He accuses Belmont of not failing to lead the counter-insurgency struggle.

The PUM, the PCP and the UNIR, instead of trying to promote their own candidate who identifies with the workers, are trying to tempt the grand bourgeois, Mohme, into being their candidate for the local elections. We call on these parties to break with this banker and apologist for privatisations, the external debt payments and of increased repression.

The workers must be opposed to every one of these candidates from the ruling class. They must demand that the unions, the CGTP and the CUS, the communal dining rooms, the milk and mother clubs, the associations of the new village and shanty town dwellers, and the workers parties—that they altogether put forward a united slate of working class candidates in every district and province.

The posts of mayor must be subordinated to the popular assemblies and the councils must be the principal authority in their constituencies. We should be op-

posed to all betrayers and with that the army will clear off out of the barrios. We should promote urban patrols autonomous of the state and the guerillas must be subordinated to the popular assemblies. We should be opposed to the assassinations carried out by SL against popular leaders and we should demand that the guerrilla groups renounce their provocative antics and subordinate themselves to the people's assemblies.

We demand that the state distributes free food provisions and water in the shanty towns most affected by the Fujimori recession. In order to provide water, light, drainage, health facilities and roads we need a massive programme of public works under the control of workers' and neighbourhood organisations.

This would create employment for tens of thousands of the unemployed and should be financed by a tax increase on the rich and by refusing payment of the external debt.

The Closure of Mutual Aid and Cooperative Societies

THERE IS a wave of closures amongst mutual aid and cooperative societies in the savings and finance sector. The Banco CCC, the financial company Peruinvest, the Mutual Perú (said to be "number one"), the CRC, the Mutual del Puerto, etc. have all gone bankrupt.

The latest one to suspend its operations is the Mutual Tacna. Hundreds of thousands of savers have been left ruined. Even though the banking authorities formally guarantee the compensation for account holders in these banks, the thousands that trusted the mutual aid and cooperative societies are left without protection.

These last institutions, by offering their savers better rates of interest and better access to loans were those that soaked up the savings of the poorest sectors. Hundreds of thousands of travelling workers, peasants, shanty town dwellers, housewives and workers have seen themselves robbed of years and decades of effort.

Thousands of wage earners were obliged by the government to leave their workplaces to allow them to go into liquidation. If they trusted to the outcome of the liquidation of these institutions they have ended up with sweet nothing.

Various factors come into play to cause a closure. It could be the tremendous corruption of their directors or the sly tricks of the millionaires that haven't repaid the lucrative loans.

In both cases many people associated with the government are implicated. One fundamental factor is the political economy of Fujimori-Bolofia. Paradoxically, Peru is suffering from one of the worst recessions and

also one of the highest levels of interest rates in the world.

For example, the financial company CLAE gets US dollars at four or five times the rate that it would in the USA itself. With production falling and a market that is forever contracting it is difficult for companies to pay off their loans at such high rates of interest.

It is the bourgeoisie and the dictator that are directly responsible for these bankruptcies and the looting of hundreds of thousands of savers. Because of this they must take full responsibility.

We demand that the state is forced to give back all the money to the savers. The savers and the workers in these credit institutions must have access to the accounts and investigate and supervise all the directors of these institutions. The bankrupt banks, mutual aid societies and cooperatives must be expropriated under the control of their workers and savers.

The bankruptcies of all these institutions illustrates the very worst of a financial system that is held in various private hands and how progressive it is for the state to expropriate and monopolise the whole system.

The thousands of savers that are organising themselves all over Peru must press home their grievances through marches and the direct action of the masses.

They must coordinate with the unions in an organisation that has a United Command for Struggle and a United Centre so that they can raise a list of demands of the people's and workers' movement together with a plan of struggle leading to the general strike.

The struggle of the mining proletariat and the neo-liberal hurricane

Translated from *Poder Obrero* (Bolivia), February, 1993

THE POLICY OF the government is to privatise the economy of the country. Because of this it does not, and will not, accept any alternative plans that the workers put forward which fly in the face of their policy. If up to now the workers' movement has resisted and avoided privatisation it is due to the solid actions they have undertaken such as the seizure of the San José or Tasna mines and the marches to La Paz.

The FSTMB [the miners' union] and its leaders propose "alternative plans" or "delegate administrations" that are destined to fail and that only divert, disorientate, weaken and waste the time of the workers in their struggle. The alternative plan of workers' self-management consists of transferring the administration of COMIBOL [state mining company] into the hands of the FSTMB for a set period of time. This new administration would be in charge of finding capital investment to regenerate the state mining sector. The administration would modify the present worker-employer relationship: state-employed workers would become FSTMB-employed workers.

The proletarian nature of the most combative union sector would be lost, which, in turn, would mortally wound the proletarian hegemony of the COB [the united trade union confederation in Bolivia]. All "self-managing" and "co-managing" workers are doomed to defeat in a market economy in a capitalist country. In order to get out of the economic crisis the proletariat would need to take over the whole economy. That is to say, it would need to control the banks, the economics ministry, external trade, etc.

This will only be possible with the seizure of political power on the part of the workers led by their own political party. Therefore, all self-management measures, whatever their colouration, can only lead to a complete economic breakdown. In order to overcome the crisis the workers would have to super-exploit themselves and take on casual workers who they would in turn exploit. The self-managing businesses would have to compete against each other and to set production at a maximum which would mean refusing to respect stoppages and strikes organised by their unions.

The "delegate administration", which emerged in the city of Oruro under the leadership of the COD [the regional organisation of the COB] in an attempt to find an alternative to privatisation, proposed that the administration of COMIBOL mines (in this case of San José) pass into the hands of regional bodies like the Civic

Committee, the University, and the trade union of that sector. This would not lose the worker-employer relationship between COMIBOL and the workers and the state would re-invest capital in the businesses in order to regenerate them economically. This "delegate administration" conserves the present worker-employer relation. However, it extends worker self-management and other bourgeois and petit-bourgeois relationships under the umbrella of bodies such as the Civic Committees. All this would run up against the same insurmountable obstacles inside the capitalist system. The alternative plans can be put forward by the workers to its own government and not to the bourgeois government. To raise the alternative plans with the class enemy represents nothing but a betrayal of the working class. These plans can only tie the workers to bad bourgeois administrations and involve them in self-exploitation.

Both plans were rejected by the government given that its crystal clear intention was the implementation of a neo-liberal privatisation policy no matter what the cost.

The miners of San José, disorientated by their leaders with their alternative plans and negotiations about the payment of wages and food stores, resisted throughout 1992 in the face of great pressure and the government's privatisation offensive. However, this resistance suffered from a constant weakening. Around 150 out of 500 workers have abandoned the struggle.

This weakening, and one ought to repeat, is due to the deceitful and disorientating policy of their union leaders. After having fought for workers' self-management during the first half of 1992 they have gone over to fight for the delegate administration. During the whole of last year the workers heroically resisted the attack of the government despite their disorientating and feeble leaders.

Face with a negative and discouraging outcome the miners of San José now seek to settle for better social benefits than the workers had before. However, the struggle isn't lost. The only thing, at this moment, that can save the state mining companies from privatisation or closure is the seizure of the mines within the framework of national and regional mobilisations.

In the Santa Fé mine the workforce has been cut. Out of the 170 that used to be there, there are now 100. The miners of Bolívar, disorientated by their official leaders, just hope to keep their jobs whether the company is

privatised or not. If a future private company sacked the workers only then would they react against privatisation. This tactic is collaborationist and false inasmuch as the class enemy has taken into consideration this possibility and is prepared for this moment. Today the workers of Bolivar aren't producing anything and some, encouraged by a management which aims to dismantle the mine, are just passing the time doing absolutely nothing. COMIBOL cancels their wages. The same thing is happening at Ingenio Machacamara where some workers keep an eye on the plant while the great majority enjoy a kind of paid holiday. This is the general situation that all the nationalised mines find themselves in with the exception of a few such as Huanuni. But these aren't outside the privatisation plan.

Only by seizing the mines and imposing workers' control over production and marketing can workers prevent the privatisation or closure of the mines. The state must invest in its companies in order to reactivate them. And to finance it we demand the end of payments on the astronomical foreign debt. It is the bourgeoisie that has administered the state and COMIBOL. *The*

workers must not collaborate with the bourgeois state through the drawing up of alternative plans.

In the face of the closure of state-owned companies we must seize them and demand that the government invests in order to reactivate them under collective workers' control. We must also demand the opening of the books. In this way we can demonstrate that the workers are not the cause of the crisis. Rank and file assemblies can decide what we do with the corrupt officials that have embedded themselves in the ranks of the workers and in the boardrooms.

Collective workers' control is a transitory step. It would last a short time under a capitalist state. It indicates that workers will not collaborate with the bourgeoisie, prevents privatisation and, more, directs the struggle towards an entirely new system—that is to say, towards socialism.

- Long live class independence!
- Fight privatisation!
- Occupy the mines!
- Impose collective workers' control!

Down with Yeltsin's coup!

Resolution of the International Secretariat, 23 March 1993

Boris Yeltsin is attempting to carry out his third *coup d'état* in less than two years. The first came immediately in the wake of the failed coup of Yannaev and Pugo in August 1991. Then Yeltsin outlawed the CPSU and consolidated his hold on the state apparatus, the army and the police. The second coup, in December 1991, dissolved the USSR and removed Gorbachev. Now Yeltsin wants to destroy the rival power of the Congress and the Supreme Soviet. As long as this alternative power exists it will obstruct his programme of mass privatisation of industry and agriculture, it will impede the emergence of the mass unemployment and factory closures that Yeltsin knows are necessary if Russia is to go back to capitalism.

Inside Russia, Yeltsin acts for the western multinationals, for the still small and semi-criminal capitalist class and for those fractions of the bureaucracy who are content to share the spoils with them and act as their agents. That is what the programme of shock therapy and neo-liberalism represents. That is why for Washington and London it is vital to support Yeltsin as he is their best hope of imposing a strong, friendly and fast capitalist restorationist regime. That is why the international stock markets fell as soon as it seemed that Yeltsin might not survive. He is their best chance of avoiding the disintegration of Russia.

For this reason Clinton, the Group of Seven and the EC strongly support Yeltsin's authoritarian actions in attacking the Russian parliament despite the fact that in the past they have constantly criticised their enemies for being undemocratic (Japan, for the moment, is less enthusiastic because Yeltsin has refused to return the Kurile islands). Germany is particularly afraid because they own most of the western capital invested in Russia and because Russia's problems could spill over into Germany's Eastern European backyard. Without a pro-imperialist Russia in central Asia all imperialist powers fear the spread of anti-western islamic fundamentalism. The spectre of a civil war with different sides having nuclear weapons terrifies imperialism because it could destabilise the whole planet and also could open the door to the development of strong anti-restorationist and working class forces.

The overthrow of Yeltsin would assist progressive struggles around the world since it would be a blow against imperialism. The latter's policies in the Balkans, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and beyond have been enormously aided by first Gorbachev and then Yeltsin's subservience. Clinton is attempting a more aggressive interventionist approach in foreign politics and needs to protect Yeltsin as part of a common plan to "pacify" the Balkans, the Middle East and the Horn of Africa.

Of course, Yeltsin's enemies are no friends of progress. Rutskoi and Khasbulatov do not differ with Yeltsin on the fundamental question of capitalist restoration but only on the tempo and method of restoration as well as who is to be the main beneficiary of the process. Khasbulatov and Rutskoi represent the majority of the old managerial and administrative bureaucracy which is not willing to go bankrupt in the service of Wall Street. Their "patriotism" is that of a would-be capitalist class, indeed a would-be imperialist class. They emphasise the maintenance of large scale industrial concerns firmly in Russian hands, the survival of a large and unified Russian state and the restoration of its hegemony over the other CIS republics. They stress the importance of maintaining the strength of the former Soviet army to carry out these objectives. This reactionary project, despite the fact that it alarms and enrages western imperialism in the short term, is not one that Russian workers can or should support.

The Stalinist rump

The second element in the opposition to Yeltsin is made up of the rump of the old Stalinist bureaucracy. This faction is represented in parliament by Russian Unity—a bloc of Stalinist, ultra nationalist and fascist deputies—whose main spokesperson is Baburin. The Stalinist layer aspire to a return to the oppressor state of the Stalin-to-Brezhnev era. Whilst they call for the restoration of bureaucratic central command planning they do so solely because this is the only economic basis they know upon which to support a totalitarian bureaucratic dictatorship. The utterly counter-revolutionary nature of their programme stems from the fact that it is impossible to restore the old bureaucratic plan in such a way that the productive forces could advance. In fact, such a totalitarian dictatorship would alienate still further, if that was possible, Russia's workers and its intelligentsia from the goal of socialism. Last but not least, Stalinist retrenchment would mean war with the nationalities of the former USSR, a prospect that would make the present conflict in the Balkans pale into insignificance. Utterly unable to defend the planned economy as the basis for workers' democracy, international revolution and socialist construction, these Stalinist forces overlap with and shade into varieties of Great Russian chauvinism, anti-semitism and outright fascism.

Yeltsin, Khasbulatov and Baburin; this trinity of reaction can offer nothing to the workers and collective farmers, the intelligentsia and the minority nationalities of

the Russian Federation. But does this mean that the working class should remain passive by-standers in the conflict that has erupted between Yeltsin and the parliamentary bodies? Not at all. The working class must establish its absolute political independence from these forces of darkness. But at the same time it must utilise their conflict to defend its own democratic space, its own ability to organise and mobilise. It must prevent the establishment of a dictatorship by any of them. Yeltsin is now the one that is trying to gather a sufficiently concentrated force to make the qualitative leap from a moribund central command planned economy to a market economy open to imperialist super-exploitation. He must be stopped as soon as possible or the consequences will make the present catastrophic economic conditions look like a boom. Russian workers must mobilise all their forces to smash Yeltsin's grab for total power.

Stop Yeltsin in his tracks

Just as Russian workers should have opposed both Yannaev and Pugo's August 1991 coup and Yeltsin's previous coups, so now they should oppose Tsar Boris' latest measures. They should reject and defy all his illegal decrees. They should actively obstruct the carrying out of his rigged plebiscite by which he aims to give the President extraordinary powers. Yeltsin and his programme are at the moment *the main enemy* of the Russian workers. The working class must take control of the streets, create militias and councils of action in the course of organising a general strike. The workers organisations should form local anti-coup strike committees and from these elect a pan-Russian assembly made up of recallable and accountable delegates from the localities. This is the only progressive way to crush the coup attempt. Revolutionaries should organise joint actions with various forces opposed to the Yeltsin coup. The working class should intervene to bring about his downfall without in any way supporting the replacement of Yeltsin by a Civic Union, or Russian Unity regime, whether this be a presidential or parliamentary one. Whilst our main slogan now is *Down with Yeltsin!* We must also be clear that we also say *No to a grab for power by Rutskoi, Khasbulatov or Baburin!* Our immediate, positive democratic slogan beyond the smashing of Yeltsin's coup must be *for immediate elections to a revolutionary constituent assembly!* Beyond this, the only real and lasting solution to the crisis of Russia and its disintegrating economy, to its paralysing conflict between the executive and the legislature, and to the threat of national and civil war, is the establishment of working class political power by a regime of democratically elected workers' councils.

The roots of the crisis

As a result of his previous bonapartist coups during 1991 Yeltsin gained far-reaching, but not dictatorial powers. With them he began the demolition of the crisis-ridden planned economy and opened Russia up to capitalism and the world market. But Yeltsin's power was hemmed in by constitutional restraints. These were simply the

legal expression of continued divisions within the ranks of the formerly unified ruling bureaucracy. The dethroned "hardline" Stalinist faction, much reduced in numbers, had lost control of all the central organs of power. But it retained power in certain regions and represented a powerful opposition current within the armed forces. In this sense it remained a bureaucratic caste which ruled Russia though without the old fused party and state structure. There was no ruling bourgeoisie although there was a government which served the imperialists and the weak and embryonic Russian bourgeoisie. The majority of this caste supported Yeltsin and his bourgeois government but only through the parliamentary structures which did not give this government anything approaching unlimited powers.

In January 1992 Yeltsin and Yegor Gaidar's government introduced sweeping price liberalisation and applied "shock therapy" to the economy. Yet by May 1992 the restoration process had begun to meet serious resistance. The resistance came from those who only six months before had supported Yeltsin's blows against the party and the enfeebled Gorbachev. The majority of the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet began to delay and frustrate all those measures which threatened the managerial strata in industry—measures which promised mass bankruptcies, and mass unemployment. They used their control over the Central Bank to continue to extend credits to enterprises which were formally bankrupt. This led to wages and prices chasing one another upwards in a spiral of near hyperinflationary proportions.

The great majority of Congress deputies had no objection in principle to the restoration of capitalism. They were, and are, sincere in their expressions of support for a market economy. But this market economy had to include *all of them*. It had to preserve their power and privileges and to convert them into property rights. And because of the vulnerable social position of the managerial caste, with no big bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie or landowning peasantry to support them, it seeks to carry out this transfer without arousing the resistance of the multi-millioned proletariat. This project was and is an utter utopia. The only road to real capitalism in Russia lies through the bankruptcy and closure of at least 60% of Russia's factories, through the creation of millions upon millions of unemployed. It is not a process that can be carried out whilst preserving social peace even in the unlikely event that it could be carried out without open civil war. The experience of the countries of Eastern Europe confirms this.

The December 1992 session of the Congress of People's Deputies inflicted a serious defeat on Yeltsin. He was forced to dismiss some of his closest advisers and replace Gaidar with Chernomyrdin, a member of Civic Union. The Congress refused to extend Yeltsin's emergency powers and reserved the right to cancel his decrees. It refused to give him or his government control over the Central Bank. Moreover, the military declared their neutrality in the conflict between the executive and the legislature. The president of the Constitutional Court, Valery Zorkin, refused to recognise any unilateral acts by the President aimed at the Congress.

Yeltsin returned to the attack in March 1993, trying to bulldoze the emergency session of the Congress into

recognising a new division of powers, one which was favourable to a "strong" presidency. He tried to establish control of the Central Bank and gain support for a referendum that would endorse his guidelines for a new constitution. The Congress rejected all these measures. It even reneged on the one concession it had made in December; namely, that there should be a referendum in April on a jointly agreed question which would aim to establish which branch of the state was supreme—the executive or legislature. In addition, Congress refused to grant legal recognition to presidential decrees. In other words, Congress pushed to the limit the mutual powerlessness of the two powers which confront one another in Russia.

Yeltsin strikes back

Yeltsin's "bloodless coup" is his reply. He hopes that a national plebiscite—a vote of confidence in himself—will give him the authority to rule by decree and to change the constitution with or without prior elections to a new Congress. Khasbulatov and the Supreme Soviet have responded by declaring his actions unconstitutional. They have been joined in this stance by Vice-President Rutskoi and Zorkin. Yeltsin's weakness has been evidenced by the fact that he was obliged once more to recognise the neutrality of the armed forces. He was also unable to dissolve the Supreme Soviet, to arrest his enemies or at first to deny them access to the media. Thus his coup is not merely bloodless but potentially toothless as well. It is also far from clear that the leaders of the provinces and autonomous regions of the huge Russian Federation will recognise Yeltsin's decrees over the next month. If these authorities will not organise his plebiscite then Yeltsin's coup will have proved a blank shot. It is he who will fall. His most likely replacement would be Rutskoi and power would most likely pass to the "centre", the Civic Union.

At the same time the counter-strokes of Khasbulatov have not immediately isolated or toppled Yeltsin. The failure of the Constitutional Court to recommend Yeltsin's impeachment, Khasbulatov's genuine fear that the special session of Congress might not produce a two-thirds majority to do this—all indicate the fact that the real basis of the state machine, the "special bodies of armed men" and the ruling bureaucracy in the regions, are far from united or decided on whom to support. A period of intense struggle lies ahead. The armed forces have to maintain a formal neutrality because below the surface, behind the anxious personal support given to Yeltsin by Pavel Grachev, the army is dividing into camps. This division reflects wider divisions in society, but not necessarily in the proportions which these have in civil society or in the parliament. Yeltsin accuses the hardliners of organising armed groups, of political agitation aimed at a coup within the Moscow garrison. Grachev warns of civil war if the army is dragged into politics. Yeltsin himself tries to turn the Kremlin troops into a praetorian guard. The potential for civil war is real and growing.

The present struggle is a desperate attempt to resolve the chronic split in the state power which has been afflicting the Russian Federation since 1989. But in reality it has demonstrated the impotence of either side

to ruthlessly settle accounts with the other. The present situation is one of *dual powerlessness*. It demonstrates that as a result Russia remains a degenerated workers' state—one in a condition of collapse but which requires further strong, decisive measures to bring about capitalist restoration. Yeltsin and his circle of ultra-restorationist advisers want to resolve this intolerable duality of power in their favour. The Russian Unity faction, equally desperate to restore the former USSR or "Great Russia", unambiguously seek to destroy Yeltsin. They want a strong centralised power economically, militarily and territorially. Between them stands the large but extremely heterogeneous Civic Union. Some of them support Yeltsin's coup just as long as it does not go too far. Others oppose it as long as this does not lead to civil war. The majority desperately do not want to make a choice. They want to achieve reconciliation between the contending sides. If Yeltsin and the presidential power were to collapse utterly then they would face the task of trying to carry out their own utopian economic programme; *state capitalist* restoration with reduced or non-existent imperialist support and with the Stalinist-Nationalist-Fascist block biting at their heels like hungry wolves. The Civic Union want to continue to play off a much weakened Yeltsin against a controlled Russian Unity. But this evasive shifting policy cannot provide a stable solution to the mounting economic crisis.

The crisis would still remain

Hyperinflation, a huge budget deficit, a withdrawal of imperialist aid and credits would rapidly force them to make fundamental decisions. Either they would have to adopt the very measures over which they brought down Gaidar or they would have to roll the restoration process backwards and restore key elements of the central command economy; administrative prices and the central allocation of material resources. To do either *decisively* will split Civic Union as a parliamentary bloc. Thus, to carry through such a programme they too will need to create a strong man, an arbiter; in short, a bonapartist presidency. At the moment Rutskoi is clearly the best candidate for this role because of his popular election and his support within the army. But if they took this course all Khasbulatov's talk of parliamentarism and constitutionality would come to nothing. This talk today is not entirely a cynical deception as Yeltsin and the western media think. With the destruction of the CPSU and the alienation of the Stalinist minority the bulk of the bureaucracy had no other way of aggregating and focussing their power—real enough at enterprise or city and regional level—except the huge and unwieldy Congress. This body has become a sort of "Estates General of the Bureaucracy". Such a body is incapable of ruling yet it can veto the measures of the openly bourgeois-restorationist executive.

Another reason restraining all sides in the conflict is the fear of accelerating the break up of the Russian Federation. If they take their conflict onto the streets or onto the battlefield they realise that this would rapidly lead a Yugoslav-isation of the Federation. The response of the Russian regions to Yeltsin's coup is very mixed. In those cities like St. Petersburg or Gorki where the priva-

tisation process is reasonably well advanced and in regions like Belgorod, Yaroslavl, Kalingrad, Novosibirsk and Kuban the local governments support Yeltsin. In the majority of the regions and the 16 Russian republics, from Karelia to Yakutia, where the old bureaucracy rules, there is opposition. In areas like Tartaria and Tuva where Yeltsin has refused autonomy or independence the nationalists are against giving dictatorial powers to Yeltsin. Georgia's Shevarnadze is one of the firmest Yeltsin supporters because he needs his backing to crush the rebellion of the Abkhaz population.

In comparison with other bonapartists Yeltsin is weaker. In Poland Walesa was successful because he had serious support inside the working class and was backed by the influential church and the already heavily purged army. In Peru Fujimori has been successful because the parliament, the left and the guerrillas were strongly discredited and he appeared as the only strong man that could put end to hyper-inflation, economic decline and "terrorism".

But Yeltsin does not have the undivided support of the army and his previous popularity is now considerably eroded. Against this background Yeltsin has three major hurdles to clear in the next weeks. First, he must get the majority of Russia's regions and cities to recognise his decrees. Secondly, he must get them to actually conduct his plebiscite. Thirdly, he must then get a clear majority of the electorate to vote and secure a majority of these votes for a "strong" presidency.

The Congress opposition could halt this process either through the Constitutional Court ruling it illegal and persuading the majority of the state and regional bodies to refuse to recognise it, or the Congress of People's Deputies could impeach the President. In deciding the outcome the role of the military will eventually prove decisive. Which of the two powers will they recognise as paramount? Whose decrees or laws will they implement?

An independent course of action

It is not in the interests of the working class that any of the three factions should consolidate their hold on power or, rather, it is vital that the working class shakes off the enforced paralysis of seventy years and adopts an *independent* class line. At the moment the immediate necessity is to defeat Yeltsin's bid for total power, a power which he will use to take decisive steps to restore capitalism. This will mean closed factories, shops and offices, mass unemployment and IMF enslavement of Russia. Equally, we must defend the democratic rights established over the past years.

These rights are not disembodied but established in laws, constitutions and elected assemblies. In themselves they are rotten, half-hearted concessions admixed with grossly undemocratic elements. But to the extent that they act as temporary obstacles to the restorationists they must be defended like *ad hoc* barricades. We must defend, therefore, the parliamentary bodies against any moves by Yeltsin to disperse them. We must repulse all Yeltsin's attacks on the freedom of the media to criticise him. We must organise the defiance of all his decrees—on land privatisation and on taking over the Central Bank in order to enforce bankruptcies and closures.

From the first move of Yeltsin we were in favour of meeting it with a general strike, mass street demonstrations and fraternising with the soldiers and militia. This remains the only progressive way to defeat him.

On the issue of the constitution we must oppose any strengthening of the presidential and executive powers. We must oppose the attempt to manoeuvre into place a constitution which establishes private ownership of land, industry, transport and distribution. We must equally oppose a constitution that creates a parliamentary system with deputies elected only every four or five years and not answerable or recallable by their constituents.

We must oppose a parliamentary system which ignores the workplace which alone can be an effective collective basis for such answerability. In short, we need a system like the original *soviets* of 1905 and 1917, bodies which united legislative and executive functions and can thus reduce bureaucracy to a minimum.

Yeltsin, Khasbulatov, Rutskoi and Baburin talk of democracy and consulting the people when it suits them; that is, when they can rig the question of a referendum or present the masses with an already decided constitution. There is one consistently democratic way to test all the fake credentials of these politicians: the immediate calling of nationwide elections to a revolutionary Constituent Assembly. Let them, let everyone put their proposals and programmes to the people. The delegates to an All-Russian Constituent Assembly should be obliged to present their programmes to the electors in their places of work at specially convened meetings.

Workers in the factories and on the collective farms should consider voting only for those candidates that pledge to hold themselves accountable to and recallable by such meetings of their constituents. The sessions of the Constituent Assembly must be televised and open to observation by delegations from the factories and farms. The Constituent Assembly must receive and hear delegations from the workplaces, the trade unions and community organisations. Before any voting on the final draft of the constitution the delegates must all return to their constituencies and consult their electorates in mass meetings.

There is no guarantee that a Constituent Assembly, even one elected in the most democratic fashion with no prior restrictions, will take decisions in the interests of the workers and collective farmers. Such guarantees only lie in the strong and democratic organisation of the working class itself. But it is certain that all the other ways put forward both by Yeltsin and his opponents are destined to be against these interests. Relying on "strongmen", parliamentary windbags, and faceless bureaucrats will not advance the political development of the Russian workers one iota.

Another source of undemocratic interference is that of Clinton and the European Community. Since the strongest support for Yeltsin's coup comes from outside the country Moscow and Washington are preparing a hasty summit between Yeltsin and Clinton to bolster the former's campaign for the plebiscite. In the full glare of publicity the imperialists will offer aid and assistance on condition that their puppet Yeltsin retains and increases his power.

We should demand an end to all this massive bribery and corruption, this organised subversion of all that

remains of the Russian workers' state. The workers of the entire former Soviet Union and the world should demand that there be no interference by imperialism in Russia. They should make demonstrations against the imperialist embassies and call for the expropriation of imperialist investments. All debts and deals with the US, the EC, the World Bank and the IMF should be cancelled or renounced forthwith.

Russia's workers must take measures to ensure that Clinton's dollars or Kohl's deutchmarks are not allowed to buy them a result in any parliamentary elections. No candidate or party must be allowed to stand who is in receipt of imperialist or mafia dollars. State funds and facilities should be allocated according to popular support.

The armed forces must have the fullest democratic rights to discuss, to question the candidates and to take a full part in political life. The rank and file soldiers must not be the tool of the Yeltsin or Rutskoi supporters in the high command or be dragged into the conspiracies of the Stalinists or fascists in the officer corps.

To prevent the soldiers becoming helpless tools of a reactionary coup or a reactionary civil war they must elect democratic soldiers committees in every barracks and base. Officers and commanders at every level must be elected. A militia of workers must be armed and trained. Only thus can two sorts of restoration—each equally ruinous for the workers—be prevented; the restoration of capitalism or the restoration of a Stalinist dictatorship.

But all attempts to prevent these reactionary plots will fail unless the working class escapes the passivity and atomisation which three quarters of a century of Stalinist tyranny condemned it to. The working class must shake off the pro-capitalist new bureaucrats like the leadership of the Independent Mineworkers Federa-

tion who have backed Yeltsin's coup. They have threatened to strike in Yeltsin's support. This would be a totally reactionary strike since its content would be to defend the privileges that Yeltsin has given them over and against the mass of workers and to push the country faster to capitalism by authoritarian means.

For that reason any such strike must be given no support whatsoever. At the same time the dead hand of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions stifles working class initiative and action. Revolutionaries should demand that they mobilise their organisations to defend democratic rights against Yeltsin and against anyone else.

But the starting point for creating a new, independent class movement of the Russian proletariat is twofold. Firstly, we need a revolutionary party based on an action programme of political revolution. This revolution must overthrow Yeltsin or his successor, replacing the present presidential and parliamentary regime with the rule of workers' councils. It must preserve state ownership of the means of production and create on this basis a democratically planned economy under workers' control.

The revolutionary workers' government must pursue a policy of international revolution, creating a federation of all workers' states resisting restoration. Such a party of the political revolution. A Leninist-Trotskyist party must fight for a rebuilding of the workers' movement from the base upwards, from the works' collectives.

Factory councils must be elected with recallable delegates to prevent all bureaucratisation and corruption. These councils must combine on a city and regional basis. Only in this way can real soviets be rebuilt, soviets which are not parliamentary talkshops but real fighting bodies. Only thus can Yeltsin or his replacements be overthrown and working class power be established in Russia.

