

International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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Contents

	Page
First Comments on Nahuel Moreno's 'The Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat,' by Ernest Mandel	3
Against the Draft Resolution on 'Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat,' by Yoshichi Sakai	20
Regarding the Secretariat's Document 'Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat,' by Sergio Domecq, LSR, Argentina	24
Democracy and Socialism, by C.D. Estrada	26
Regarding the Secretariat's Document 'Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat,' by Heredia, Argentina	34

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Page	Contents
3	First Comments on Michael Newman's 'The Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat', by Ernest Mandel
20	Towards the Draft Resolution on 'Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat', by Oshichi Sakai
24	Regarding the Secretariat's Document 'Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat', by Sergio Bonzon (SR Argentina)
26	'Democracy and Socialism', by Oshichi Sakai
34	Regarding the Secretariat's Document 'Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat', by Oshichi Sakai

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First Comments on Nahuel Moreno's 'The Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat'

By Ernest Mandel

Comrade Moreno has thought it wise to submit a 249-page book, entitled "The Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat," to the discussion preparing the Eleventh World Congress of the Fourth International. The procedure is highly irregular, antidemocratic, and contrary to the need to "proletarianize" the organization, about which Comrade Moreno is so emphatic. This book purports to be an answer to the draft resolution "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," which has been available to Fourth International militants for two years. Counterposing a book to the resolution a few months before the closing date of the pre-congress discussion means at least three things: asking for preferential treatment, for a privilege, since obviously no militant, leader, or even tendency, of the International has the material possibility to answer Comrade Moreno's book with a document anywhere near as long; seriously reducing the Bolshevik Faction's chances to get a hearing for its fundamental thesis; making it impossible for thousands of militants to examine, before the world congress, the most important contribution to the discussion on one of the important points on the agenda (since no one seriously believes they will read a 249-page book in so little time, or that serious debates of opposing views will be organized on this book in our sections), that is, dealing a blow to their democratic rights.

Like most of Comrade Moreno's writings, this text does not chiefly aim to convince the membership of the International and still less to elucidate a highly important theoretical and political question. Its essential aim is to homogenize and fanaticize the membership of his faction, within which it was studied and discussed for months before being submitted to the international discussion, all without the International leadership being able to have an answer to Comrade Moreno's arguments considered by the comrades of his faction. This also is a significant fact, not unrelated to Comrade Moreno's strange conception of the building of the revolutionary party, which he confuses with the building of a faction, and to his still stranger conception of the building of a workers state, which he identifies with its management by a minority faction of the proletariat.

In order to make up for the most serious damage created by the launching of Comrade Moreno's polemical book, we are presenting the first sketch of an answer concentrating on essential matters, and leaving aside the hundred political and theoretical errors present in Comrade Moreno's work. Should the opportunity and necessity arise, we reserve the right to complement this first short answer with a fuller and more detailed answer.

The essence of Comrade Moreno's book combines four elements:

1. Systematic deformations of the United Secretariat (USec) position, to the point of open slander and falsification.

2. A beginning revision of the Fourth International's program on the dictatorship of the proletariat, as it is

codified most notably in the Theses and programmatic resolutions of the first four congresses of the Communist International (CI), the *Transitional Program*, and Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky's fundamental theoretical works on the subject.

3. Political and theoretical concessions to the ideology of the workers bureaucracy, above all the Stalinist, Social Democratic, and syndical-nationalist ("nationalist trade unionist") of semicolonial countries.

4. A failure to understand certain important problems of the transitional period between capitalism and socialism, i.e., the historical epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

A careful examination of these component elements of Comrade Moreno's theses (we are tempted to say: his doctrine), which have the distinction of an undeniable internal cohesion, will enable us to define the main differences which separate Comrade Moreno's position from that of the majority of the Fourth International leadership on the key question of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its relation to workers democracy. These differences, it should be stated at the outset, do not concern the issues that Comrade Moreno would like us to believe.

1. A Systematic Deformation of the United Secretariat's Positions

The most striking aspect of Comrade Moreno's text is that a major part of its argumentation—a quick estimate would lead us to say about half—is based on a systematic and deliberate deformation of the positions it polemicalizes against. At times, this deformation takes a form so outrageous and slanderous that it borders on the grotesque, depriving its author of all credibility.

The most striking example of this deformation is provided by Comrade Moreno's contention that the USec resolution dodges the problems of insurrection and civil war. Comrade Moreno contends that the USec advocates the position of:

"... unfettered political freedom for Somoza, Pinochet, and the shah of Iran up until the day when they launch armed uprisings against the workers dictatorship, with no possibility of trying them for their past crimes." (Page 7. All our references are from the Spanish manuscript. We translated the Spanish text in French ourselves—EM.) [The English text is based on EM's French translation—Translator.]

Thus Chapter One is entitled "A Program of 'Unlimited Political Freedom' for the Shah or a Program to Overthrow Him Ruthlessly?" (on page 33, we even read that the USec should logically (!) struggle for "unconditionally freeing the Shah and his assassins from the prisons of the dictatorship of the proletariat").

In fact, the resolution "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" states unequivocally that freedom to organize for parties represented in the soviets,

without any *ideological* restriction, applies neither in an insurrectionary situation (when the dictatorship of the proletariat does not exist), nor in a civil war situation, but in a situation of consolidated workers power, after the complete expropriation and disarming of the bourgeoisie and other possessing classes. And it excludes from that provision of freedom all those who would carry out attempts to overthrow soviet power. It is patently obvious that this has nothing to do with the present situation of Chile, Nicaragua, or Iran, where unfortunately a dictatorship of the proletariat does not exist, let alone a seriously consolidated dictatorship of the proletariat.

If we wanted to play Comrade Moreno's polemical game, we could easily turn the argument against him and answer: In order to be able to use Somoza, Pinochet, and the shah of Iran as proofs of the revisionism of the USec, Comrade Moreno supposes that it is possible to expropriate and disarm the Nicaraguan, Chilean, and Iranian bourgeoisie; to destroy the bourgeois state apparatus, army, and police of these dictatorships; to establish soviet power in these countries; and to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat, without touching a single hair on the head of Somoza, Pinochet, and the shah of Iran. Moreover, he supposes that there will be thousands of workers in Nicaragua, Chile, and Iran stupid enough to elect these bloody tyrants to soviets, and that these hangmen will be content to live peacefully in these countries, under a regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat, without fear for their lives or safety, merely writing their "Memoirs" and making "ideological" counterproposals within the workers councils, without plotting to overthrow workers power. For only in the event all these provisions are realized would the USec resolution be "guilty" of granting them "freedom" (a freedom the workers of the countries concerned would have been foolish enough to grant them before the USec could, by electing them or their friends to the soviets).

Need we point out that all this has nothing to do, not even remotely, with the theses of the USec?

We witness another crude deformation of the USec positions when Comrade Moreno calmly writes that the USec: "would like to place the revolution and civil war under the provisions of a penal code" (p. 30). In fact, the USec resolution literally states the opposite. All the "juridical norms" we discuss—and we shall have occasion to return to their importance—apply neither to a revolutionary and insurrectionary situation, nor to a civil war situation, but in a situation of a consolidated dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus we are dealing with a clear-cut falsification of our positions.

Another entry in the list of crude deformations of the USec positions is Comrade Moreno's statement that:

"The USec majority adopts for the dictatorship of the proletariat the same program the Eurocommunists adopted for socialism and for the capitalist regime. We must be crystal-clear about this point" (p. 13).

And still more explicit:

"The USec committed a genuine theoretical, political, and historical crime when it foisted onto the dictatorship of the proletariat objectives and a program 90% similar to the Eurocommunist program and diametrically opposed to that of our teachers" (p. 6).

Yes, you read it correctly: a program 90% similar (that is, practically identical to) that of the Eurocommunists! In other words, according to Comrade Moreno, the question:

for or against the dictatorship of the proletariat; for or against the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus; for or against disarming and expropriating the bourgeoisie in a revolutionary crisis; for or against arming the proletariat; for or against the creation of a new type of state, a soviet state based on the self-organization of the proletariat; for or against gradualism, "the parliamentary and peaceful roads to socialism"; for or against radicalizing and generalizing mass mobilizations to the point of a showdown confrontation with the bourgeoisie; all this—that is, all that politically, strategically, theoretically, separates the Fourth International from the Eurocommunists, all that separates Leninists from reformists of all ilks—all this counts for nothing (or at most counts for a bare . . . 10%). No, what is decisive is pluralism of political parties, warnings that Leninists will be "ruthless" with "enemies of the dictatorship," including those within the proletariat, and the projection of decades of civil war. This is the land of fantasy.

Can anyone name a *single* socialist revolution that failed in any country where the urban proletariat constituted a majority of fighters, as a result of party pluralism? Haven't all these revolutions that failed, beginning with the German in 1918-19 and down to the Chilean and Portuguese, failed because of the betrayals perpetrated by their leaders—and the inadequate level of understanding of most workers—on the questions we just enumerated.

Isn't it obvious that on all these questions—that is, on 90% or even 95% of theoretical, political, strategic, tactical, concrete, questions that decide the fate of proletarian revolutions, or at least the outcome of ongoing struggles—there is an irreducible opposition, and not any "identity" or "similarity," between the positions of the USec of the Fourth International on the one hand, and those of the Eurocommunists on the other, despite Comrade Moreno's deceitful claims to the contrary?

For reasons that remain obscure, for the last several years Comrade Moreno has been bent upon stubbornly and slanderously attacking one particular member of the USec, Comrade Mandel. He launches another such attack in his "The Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat." He first accuses me at length—a whole chapter!—of claiming that Trotsky, as he approached the end of his life, had changed his position on some aspects of the problems we are presently discussing, and then states that no such change occurred. But here again we are dealing with a crude falsification.

Moreno himself indicates that I am referring to Trotsky's self-criticism on the question of the ban on factions in the Bolshevik Party, and to a possible self-criticism (only implicit) on the question of the ban on Soviet parties in 1921; but, having said this, he then proceeds . . . to change subjects. He tells us about the civil war, Kronstadt, Trotsky's positions in 1924, 1928, or 1930, the debate with Urbahns, and the need for the leading role of the revolutionary party in the revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But I never raised any of this. Moreno says nothing about what Trotsky wrote at the end of his life on the connections between the ban on other Soviet parties, the ban on factions within the Bolshevik Party, and the rise of the bureaucracy's totalitarian dictatorship. The fact is that on *these* specific questions, the position adopted by Trotsky after 1933-34 (which he had not defended before

these dates) was unambiguous. Four quotations will suffice.

In 1934, Trotsky wrote in an article entitled "If America Should Go Communist":

"With us the soviets have been bureaucratized as a result of the political monopoly of a single party, which has itself become a bureaucracy. This situation resulted from the exceptional difficulties of socialist pioneering in a poor and backward country." (*Writings of Leon Trotsky 1934-35*, New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971, p. 79.)

In 1936, in *Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky stated in more clear-cut fashion:

"The prohibition of oppositional parties brought after it the prohibition of factions. The prohibition of factions ended in a prohibition to think otherwise than the infallible leaders. The police-manufactured monolithism of the party resulted in a bureaucratic impunity which has become the source of all kinds of wantonness and corruption." (Trotsky, *Revolution Betrayed*, New York: Merit, 1965, pp. 104-105.)

In 1937, in *Bolshevism and Stalinism*, Trotsky says in an even more peremptory fashion:

"It is absolutely indisputable that the domination of a single party served as the juridical point of departure for the Stalinist totalitarian system." (Trotsky, *Bolshevism and Stalinism*, New York: Merit, 1970, p. 22.)

And finally, in 1939, in his article "Trotskyism and the PSOP," Trotsky clarifies and generalizes his thoughts on this issue:

"It is true that the Bolshevik Party forbade factions at the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921, a time of mortal danger. One can argue whether or not this was correct. The subsequent course of development has in any case proved that *this prohibition served as one of the starting points of the party's degeneration*. The bureaucracy presently made a bogey of the concept of 'faction,' so as not to permit the party either to think or breathe. Thus was formed the totalitarian regime which killed Bolshevism." (*Leon Trotsky on France*, New York: Monad Press, 1979, p. 231.) [Emphasis added.]

Then, a sharp warning:

"Whoever prohibits factions thereby liquidates party democracy and takes the first step toward a totalitarian regime." (Ibid., p. 228. Trotsky underlined the whole sentence.)

Of course, these quotations are always preceded or followed by a refutation of the theories according to which the one-party system, or the ban on factions in the Bolshevik Party, had caused the degeneration of the workers state. For a Marxist, a materialist, it is obvious that the ultimate cause lay in the backward state of the country, the relative weakness of the Russian proletariat, and the defeats of the world revolution, which left the revolution isolated in these backward conditions. But to these principal causes, Trotsky now adds the political measures adopted in 1920-21 as having facilitated the degeneration. This follows without any possible doubt from the four quotations we have just reproduced. For we must choose one of two possible interpretations. Either one thinks that between 1933 and 1940, Trotsky—suddenly become fatalist and "objectivist"—believed that there was no way to avoid facilitating the rise of a totalitarian regime in 1920-21. Or one rejects this thesis which contradicts his whole thought and the whole meaning of the Left

Opposition's struggle, which was based precisely on the possibility of counterposing to the course toward bureaucratic degeneration an alternative course that would avoid it. In which case, the self-criticism implicit in the first three quotations, and explicit in the last, is undeniable.

As to the slanderous falsification of my positions on the revolutionary crisis in Chile, which attributes to me the idea that the Chilean proletariat could have triumphed over the threat of Pinochet's coup by an entirely peaceful road by trusting (sic) the *Unidad Popular* government to "purge the army and eliminate the repressive apparatus" (p. 56), without a word (sic, again) on the necessity for an armed mobilization of the proletariat, by "peacefully" occupying factories and setting up industrial cordons (p. 57). This is too ridiculous to deserve an answer. One need merely refer to what I wrote on the subject in "In Defense of Leninism, In Defense of the Fourth International," or in the draft political resolution of the IMT for which I was the reporter at the Tenth World Congress. This kind of slanders are wont to boomerang against their author. Comrade Moreno had better change his approach.

We believe there is no point in continuing. Five examples are enough. A good part of Comrade Moreno's book is made up of polemics against positions which are not those of the USec resolution, that is to say, of perfectly useless polemics, wasting time and energy, and stylistic exercises for purely factional purposes. There is nothing "proletarian" or "Bolshevik" in such exercises. They contribute nothing to building a genuine revolutionary workers party.

2. A Beginning Revision of the Program of the Fourth International

The polemic becomes more serious—both in its avowed purpose and in objective significance—when it deals with key questions of the revolutionary Marxist program concerning the dictatorship of the proletariat. And here we are compelled to note that on these key questions Comrade Moreno is beginning to revise what is the program of the Fourth International, what was the program of the Third International under Lenin, and what was the tradition created by the fundamental theoretical writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin on the subject, above all Marx's *Civil War in France* and Lenin's *State and Revolution*.

Incidentally, it is no accident that, in a 250-page book on the dictatorship of the proletariat, Comrade Moreno does not once refer to the These of the First and Second Congresses of the CI on this question, or to the fundamental theoretical works we have just cited . . . except to make indirect criticisms of them, or even sometimes to attack them openly. For what the "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" resolution states in regard to program is continuous with these documents to the fullest extent, and 99 percent of it can be found in them. Comrade Moreno prefers conjunctural polemical articles or brochures to these programmatic documents, works written for specific circumstances, which can in no way supersede the closely considered theoretical formulations of the masters of revolutionary Marxism.

Let us the most striking and clearest example. The *Transitional Program*—which, it must be conceded, has a far more programmatic and important value than Comrade Trotsky's occasional polemic with this or that militant or revisionist ideologue—clearly states:

"The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly, and for freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of *Soviet democracy*. . . .

"Democratization of the soviets is impossible without the *legalization of soviet parties*. The workers and peasants themselves by their own free vote will indicate what parties they recognize as soviet parties." [Pathfinder, 1977, pp. 145-146.]

Comrade Moreno revises the Transitional Program when he gives to the phrase "freedom for soviet parties" the meaning of "freedom for parties that support the revolution" (p. 176, also see the same thesis on p. 123). For if this were so, the second sentence would lose a good part of its content. The workers (not to speak of the peasants) *would no longer be free* to elect the deputies of their choosing to the soviets. They would no longer have the right to elect Social-Democratic, Stalinist, Eurocommunist, Peronist, "Congress Party" in India, "PRI-ista" in Mexico, not to mention anarchist and many other types of deputies, if the parties to which these deputies were affiliated did not change their fundamental ideological attitude toward the revolution.

Comrade Moreno seeks shelter behind a preestablished defense line when he asserts that it will be the majority of soviet deputies who decide whether or not to legalize this or that party (p. 154, 156). We note that this is an unwarranted interpretation of the text of the program. The program does not say that the workers and peasants will decide by *majority vote* which parties will be legalized. It says clearly and sharply that they will *show* (the English version says: will indicate, which is even clearer!) by a free vote, by the act of electing this or that deputy belonging to this or that party, which parties are soviet parties.

But even if we accepted Comrade Moreno's unwarranted reinterpretation of the Transitional Program next, it would still fly in the face of his views. For if, by a huge misfortune, the majority of workers voted to legalize all these "ideologically counterrevolutionary" parties, Comrade Moreno, as pope of the neo-Bolshevik Church, supported by a secular arm which is not difficult to visualize, would indignantly reprimand them: "In my infinite wisdom, I, Moreno, forbid you to decide to legalize counterrevolutionary parties. And if you won't abide by me, I will baptize you counterrevolutionary yourselves, declare your soviets counterrevolutionary, dissolve them, and govern, if need be, against you," still relying on the secular arm, of course.

In other words, the *actual* subject of the polemic is not the grotesque question of the freedoms granted to Somoza, Pinochet, and the shah of Iran, nor even the quite marginal question of the ideological and political freedoms granted to big bourgeois and rich peasants (after expropriating and disarming them, and after the dictatorship of the proletariat is consolidated). No, the actual subject of the polemic is *the severe restrictions on workers democracy, on soviet democracy, on the political rights and freedoms of the working class*, implied in Comrade Moreno's "system."

Let us be clear. As Comrade Trotsky explained on several occasions, it is difficult to imagine a victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Britain, Germany, France, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, or India, unless a large section of the working class—which today still follows the

traditional leaderships (reformist, Stalinist, Eurocommunist, bourgeois-nationalist)—is *politically* won over, at least on decisive questions—those we enumerated above—to the revolutionary party.

But, first of all this does not necessarily imply that this majority of the proletariat will break on *all* questions with its traditional leadership, especially when this leadership has deep historic roots in the history of the given national proletariat, and is embodied in parties that have predominated among this proletariat for nearly half a century, or even a century. Next, the fact that a majority takes this position in now way signifies that large minorities will not continue to hold more backward positions.

We have said it time and again: it is absolutely utopian to suppose that immediately following the seizure of power, much less in the immediate aftermath of the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat (when there is no longer the immediate threat of an armed uprising by the bourgeoisie), there will no longer be 10,000 Labourite workers among the 25 million British proletarians; there will no longer be 10,000 Social Democratic workers in Germany; there will no longer be 10,000 Stalinist workers among the 3 million Portuguese proletarians; that there will no longer be 10,000 Eurocommunist workers in Italy; that there will no longer be 10,000 "laborite" workers in Brazil; 10,000 PRI-ista workers in Mexico; 10,000 Congressite workers in India, etc., etc. In reality we should increase these figures tenfold, or even a hundredfold or more in most of the countries mentioned.

Therefore the real question is whether the dictatorship of the proletariat implies severe restrictions on democratic freedoms *for millions of workers*, for an important segment of the proletariat. The question is what concrete forms of power (of government, of coercion, of violence) Comrade Moreno advocates not against the class enemy, but against large sections of his own class (should they be a minority, not to mention in the event they should become a majority).

The question is whether Lenin was grossly mistaken, and whether Marx was grossly mistaken, when they revised Comrade Moreno's doctrine, and stated that the dictatorship of the proletariat would not need a very powerful coercive apparatus since it would be the dictatorship of the immense majority over a tiny minority:

"It is still necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and crush its resistance. This was particularly necessary for the Commune; and one of the reasons of its defeat was that it did not do this with sufficient determination. But the organ of suppression is now the majority of the population, and not a minority, as was always the case under slavery, serfdom, and wage labour. And, once the majority of the people *itself* suppresses its oppressors, a 'special force' for suppression is *no longer necessary*. In this sense the state *begins to wither away*. Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, heads of a standing army), the majority can itself directly fulfill all these functions; and the more the discharge of the functions of state power devolves upon the people generally, the less need is there for the existence of this power." (V.I. Lenin, *State and Revolution*, New York: International Publishers, 1969, p. 37.)

Instead of this "revisionist" doctrine of Lenin and Marx, must we now establish as a programmatic rule that the dictatorship of the proletariat will need a powerful coercive

apparatus consisting of 55% of the population against 45%, including in industrialized countries, or better yet, of a minority of "conscious proletarians" (by definition those, and only those, who agree with Comrade Moreno on everything) against the majority of the population, including the majority of working people?

Comrade Moreno tries to wiggle out of this difficulty by making a subtle distinction between "the right to elect a deputy" (let us say, a Social Democrat) and the right of these deputies to organize themselves as a party. But in doing so, he entangles himself even more tightly in the web of his own contradictions. He is forced to recognize that "quasi-absolute" freedom of press—this is one of the rare instances where Comrade Moreno himself reflects the "pressure of the Western proletariat's democratic prejudices"—would be useful to the dictatorship of the proletariat:

"This quasi-absolute freedom of press and of opinion which the dictatorship of the proletariat should maintain is helpful in clarifying the strength of the different currents of opinion and seeing to it that the dictatorship is objectively informed of the existing problems, but it is conditioned by the most absolute monopoly of political power by the industrial working class and revolutionary masses. This means that freedom of the press, above all artistic and scientific, does not automatically imply freedom of organization and activity for all counterrevolutionary parties." (pp. 85-86.)

We will leave aside "secondary" problems such as that of determining whether freedom of the press in the epoch of transition can be "above all artistic and scientific" (Comrade Moreno seems to forget that eating comes before philosophizing, and that economic and social problems—not to mention political ones—will loom much larger for the broad masses than artistic and scientific problems). We will not bother either with the ridiculous formula "all" counterrevolutionary parties (no one is advocating freedom for the fascists; and it is quite likely that "counterrevolutionary parties" lacking traditional roots in the proletariat will elect no one to the soviets. The question of their freedom to organize will therefore not be posed in these terms.)

But Comrade Moreno does not seem to realize that "quasi-absolute" freedom of the press and of opinion (the formula is his own creation) implies in particular freedom to carry out propaganda through leaflets, newspapers, and pamphlets for the freedom of this or that organization, for the freedom of soviet deputies to organize themselves in political factions as they please, for the freedom to appeal to the workers to reverse the majority vote of a congress of soviets forbidding this or that faction of deputies to organize themselves as a party, etc., etc. . . .

Either Comrade Moreno is ready to accept this—and then all his "hard" and "principled" words about restrictions on legalized parties within the soviets are a lot of hot air, for it is absolutely certain that large segments of the proletariat will use *their* press and *their* freedom of opinion to win the legalization of their factions and parties; or Comrade Moreno believes that such a legalization is so disastrous for the dictatorship of the proletariat (we will see why further on) that he would have to severely restrict freedom of the press and of opinion, generalize preventive censorship, and bar millions of proletarians from access to printing presses and radio and television stations. Since many of these workers will push their "objectively counter-

revolutionary" impertinence to the point of answering "fiddlesticks" to the prohibitions of Comrade Moreno and his edicts, and of saying, publishing, and disseminating what they think of these prohibitions (which will be very hard for Comrade Moreno, let us gently warn him in advance), the famous "secular arm" will be needed again, that is, an enormous police apparatus to impose these restrictions on freedom *on the proletariat*.

What will be left of the "quasi-absolute freedom of the press and of opinion" under those conditions? What will be left of the workers' freedom to elect whomever they please to the soviets? What will remain of the power of the majority of the proletariat in freely elected soviets? It definitely cannot be by chance that Comrade Moreno concludes his book on this typically paternalistic (lest we use a harsher term) note:

"A Trotskyist (sic) revolutionary dictatorship . . . will bestow (sic, again) broad freedoms upon scientists and artists, as well as revolutionaries." (p. 253.)

Upon artists, scientists, and revolutionaries. But not upon the proletariat, at least its broad majority. We get the message.

Comrade Moreno's last line of retreat consists in saying: OK, new soviet parties that will arise under the dictatorship of the proletariat—as a last resort, so be it. But Trotsky never said this would imply the legalization of parties which existed before the revolution and whose counterrevolutionary nature has been clearly demonstrated in fact, such as Social Democrats, Stalinists, etc. . . . Moreno, for his part is for banning them (p. 123). The USec resolution "dodges" this issue (p. 15). Here again Comrade Moreno is mistaken. Trotsky did take a clear position in the matter:

"In the proletarian state the technical means of printing will be put at the disposal of groups of citizens in accordance with their real numerical importance. How is this to be done? [Well, Mister Hugenberg will have to restrict himself somewhat, along with the other capitalist monopolists who do business with the press. There is no way around it.] The Social-Democracy will obtain printing facilities corresponding to the number of its supporters." (Trotsky, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, "The United Front for Defense: A Letter to a Social-Democratic Worker (February 23, 1933)," Pathfinder, 1971, p. 368.—The sentences in brackets are translated from the French manuscript of this document, with the reference: Leo Trotsky, *Schriften uber Deutschland, Band II*, EVA, 1971, p. 471. Translator's note.)

The identical idea is put forward in the article on the United States quoted above and dating from 1934. Let us recall that under the Weimar Republic, Hugenberg, in addition to being the leading press baron, was the leader of a far-right political party allied to the Nazis. Yet even in his case, Trotsky didn't foresee banning his newspapers but merely restricting—radically, of course—his access to printing facilities in proportion to the number of members he would retain under the consolidated regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat! (Incidentally this shows how wrong Comrade Moreno is when he asserts [p. 87] that insofar as freedom of the press is concerned, we can base ourselves only on one article by Trotsky, that of 1938.)

Let us repeat it once again: None of this applies to a civil war situation, obviously, but to a consolidated dictatorship of the proletariat. When you are being shot at, you don't

allow the murderers to justify the crime. The most libertarian anarchists and Social Democrats did not support freedom of the press for the Falangists after July 1936 in Barcelona, to our knowledge.

But our debate is precisely not about these *exceptional* (the word reappears dozens of times in Trotsky's writings) conditions which call for exceptional measures. The real question is whether the *epoch* of transition from capitalism to socialism, that is, the *epoch* of the dictatorship of the proletariat, lasting half a century or even a century, is dominated by these "exceptional conditions," whether there are, to be explicit, "civil war conditions," today in the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, or the GDR, or whether *these conditions have not existed there for decades* and therefore, whether the restrictions on freedom of the press can in no way be explained by the necessities of "civil war" but by the bureaucracy's totalitarian dictatorship. On this issue Comrade Moreno's position blatantly revises Trotsky's, not to mention those of Marx and Lenin.

The dialectic of theory, of a system of ideas, is implacable. Whoever says A is almost irresistibly compelled to say B (one of the functions of democratic discussion inside a revolutionary organization is to make this compulsion less irresistible, to try to stop it in time. Whether this attempt succeeds or fails will be shown only by subsequent evolution). So Comrade Moreno is compelled to add to his initial revision of our program on soviet democracy, an initial revision of our program on the special nature of the workers state, that is, on the soviets themselves!

From *The Civil War in France* to the *Transitional Program*, by way of *State and Revolution* and the *Theses of the Founding Congress of the Communist International*, Marxists have stressed that the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be exercised through just any institutions. It can only be exercised by destroying the old bourgeois state machine (inherited in great part from semifeudal absolutism), and replacing it with a new type of state, a soviet state based in the self-organization of the masses and characterized by: the elected nature of all posts; the possibility of recalling those elected at the will of the electors; lowering the wages of elected officials to those of an average worker; regular rotation of elected officials; growing merger of legislative and executive functions (today, after sixty years of experience with proletarian revolutions, we would add three additional conditions: a drastic reduction of the workday; the drastic elimination of any monopoly of culture and access to centralized information; compulsory participation in all organs of power based on the delegation of an absolute majority of workers who have remained active in production).

This whole theory of soviets—for this is what we are dealing with—is by no means "prescriptive," arbitrary, or a mere temporary generalization of the (allegedly partly unsuccessful) experience of the Paris Commune and October revolution. It has deep-seated foundations, which have to do with the very nature of the proletariat, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the building of socialism, i.e., a classless society. We cannot repeat here all the aspects of this theory, which have been explained time and again by the classics of revolutionary Marxism. Nonetheless the conclusions of this theory are clear. *Owing to its social nature*, the proletariat can exercise power only through soviet-type institutions. There is no way historically to go from the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the instrument of the transition toward socialism (i.e., the elimination of

classes, which means elimination of the division of society into a class that produces and another class or *social layer* [caste] that monopolizes the administration of the social surplus with all that implies), except for the workers *themselves to exercise power and organize for that purpose*.

Even when the self-organization of workers is *difficult* because of the backwardness of the country, civil war, or foreign intervention, it remains an *immediate goal* that revolutionary Marxists seek to achieve to the fullest extent possible. Here is what Lenin wrote on the subject *in the midst of civil war*, in 1918:

"Our aim is to draw *the whole of the poor* into the practical work of administration, and all steps that are taken in this direction—the more varied they are, the better—should be carefully recorded, studied, systematised, tested by wider experience and embodied in law. Our aim is to ensure that *every* toiler, having finished his eight hours' 'task' in productive labor, shall perform state duties *without pay*; the transition to this is particularly difficult, but this transition alone can guarantee the final consolidation of socialism." (V.I. Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government," *Selected Works in Three Volumes*, Volume 2, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970, p. 674.)

When Lenin and Trotsky wrote otherwise in 1920-21, it was because the "exceptional" conditions had become "exceptionally exceptional": the Russian proletariat was reduced to a small percentage of the population in conditions of dreadful famine and exhaustion. Does Comrade Moreno believe that in the future, given the present (and foreseeable) state of the world revolution, this situation will recur, will even become the rule? Should we build our political orientation on these "exceptionally exceptional" conditions?

Moreover, Comrade Moreno thought it advisable to introduce an entire chapter (Chapter Five) in which he attacks our alleged "fetishization of soviets." And he "crowns" this attack on "fetishization of soviets" with a full-fledged attack on the "ultra-democratism of the Paris Commune," basing himself on two remarks Trotsky made in internal polemics of the French section (p. 140). In these documents, Trotsky pointed out the difference between soviets and a "municipality" of the Commune type, that is, expressed support for a *centralized soviet-type* workers power (which is not exactly in keeping with Trotsky's supposed reservations about "fetishization of the soviet form").

It is not very responsible to counterpose conjunctural polemics to programmatic documents. *All* the programmatic texts of the Third International under Lenin, and of the Fourth International under Trotsky, present soviets, and only soviets, as the organs of power of the future workers state. All the same, let us quote the text of the *Transitional Program*, which is positively unambiguous:

"How are the different demands and forms of struggle to be harmonized, even if only within the limits of one city? History has already answered this question: through *soviets*. These will unite the representatives of all the fighting groups. For this purpose, no one has yet proposed a different form of organization; indeed, it would hardly be possible to think up a better one. . . . All political currents of the proletariat can struggle for leadership of the soviets on the basis of the widest democracy. *The slogan of*

soviets, therefore, crowns the program of transitional demands.

"Soviets can arise only at the time when the mass movement enters into an openly revolutionary stage. From the first moment of their appearance the soviets, acting as a pivot around which millions of toilers are united in their struggle against the exploiters, become competitors and opponents of local authorities and then of the central government. If the factory committee creates a dual power in the factory, then the soviets initiate a period of dual power in the country.

"Dual power in its turn is the culminating point of the transitional period. Two regimes, the bourgeois and the proletarian, are irreconcilably opposed to each other. Conflict between them is inevitable. The fate of society depends on the outcome. Should the revolution be defeated, the fascist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie will follow. *In case of victory, the power of the soviets, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist reconstruction of society, will arise.*" (Our emphasis.)

The least one can say is that our program is at least as "fetishistic" about the question of soviets as the USec resolution!

What is the real content of the few polemics by Trotsky against "sovietist organizational fetishism" which Comrade Moreno quotes with such delight? The context amply confirms it: We are dealing solely with polemics against those who were fixated on *the name and not on the content*. A soviet need not be called a soviet to serve as a soviet. It may be called "factory committee," "militia committee," "united-front committee," "people's committee" (yes indeed!), even "trade-union committee" or "action committee." *But the content must be the same*: self-organization of the masses; election of delegates with the right of recall; centralization on a local, regional, and national scale; ability to unite the proletariat as a whole, etc. . . . Of course one can begin with forms of organization that do not correspond entirely to these criteria, and attempt to go further. But if one fails to go further, one will be left either with "soviets" bureaucratized from their inception, or imitation soviets doomed to vanish rapidly.

This was Trotsky's doctrine and he defended it fiercely in connection with the German revolution, the English general strike, the Chinese revolution, during the rise of fascism, during the prerevolutionary crisis in France in 1934-37, during the Spanish revolution, and in his projections for a socialist America. What are occasional polemics against organizational fetishism, compared with this unblemished continuity, which moreover led the centrists to accuse him of wishing "to export the soviet model and make it universal"? Nowhere in Trotsky's works can one find an attack on "soviet-type organizational fetishism" related not to a preinsurrectionary or insurrectionary situation, but to the problem of organizing the state institutions of a stabilized dictatorship of the proletariat.

But this is not at all Comrade Moreno's position. His initial programmatic revision on the question of soviets, beginning by tilting at the windmills of "organizational fetishism," moves far beyond it. He writes:

"We mean that the Fourth International should strive to discover organizations of this type, such as the armed militias of the Bolivian Workers Central (COB) in 1952, the People's Assembly of 1971, and the Peronist trade unions in 1956-57 were in their time, or as the Workers Commissions (CCOO) could become in Spain. It would be a crime

if, as a result of the USec's fetishization of soviets, the Fourth International, because of the tradition in each country and the destructive influence of the mass opportunist parties, instead of basing itself on these organizations which the reality of the class struggle has given us, should seek to replace them with unreal soviets. It is quite possible that in many countries soviet-type bodies will develop only after the seizure of power by the revolutionary party, and that, as we have shown, these same soviet-type bodies will be subject to the ebb and flow of the revolutionary process following the seizure of power" (p. 163).

All this culminates in a clear and definite conclusion:

"That is to say, the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat *during the next decades* will be synonymous not with soviet organizations, but with the revolutionary dictatorship of the Trotskyist or near-Trotskyist parties" (ibid—our emphasis).

This quotation is the best possible codification of Comrade Moreno's revisionism concerning the dictatorship of the proletariat—in relation to the whole revolutionary Marxist tradition and our program!

Once again, we are not concerned with *words*, but with the substance, the content. If the point is to state that it was possible to use the COB workers militias as a point of departure and transform them into genuine soviets (even under another name), no one will find fault in the assertion. But the list of organizations referred to by Comrade Moreno is extraordinarily heterogeneous, and this confirms that the polemic does not deal with form (or name), but with content. We had a striking confirmation of this during the USec discussion on the Iranian revolution when a particularly audacious representative of the Bolshevik Faction added . . . Khomeini's committees to the list given by Comrade Moreno.

No one can seriously maintain that the Bolivian People's Assembly of 1971, or the Peronist trade unions of 1956-57, were organs of self-organization of the whole proletariat, or could rapidly become so (not to mention the Spanish CCOO). The People's Assembly was not even elected; it was appointed and totally controlled by bureaucrats who collaborated with a wing of the bourgeois army. Nor had the Peronist bureaucracy of 1956-57 changed its character, achieved the political independence of the proletariat, and broken its ties with the bourgeoisie, to our knowledge.

Underlying Comrade Moreno's theory is that Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, and the Third and Fourth Internationals were mistaken when they conceived the dictatorship of the proletariat as the self-organization of the proletariat. No, says Moreno. The revolutionary party wins power by mobilizing the masses *without necessarily permitting them to democratically organize themselves in order to wield power*. To achieve this mobilization, it relies on anything within its reach: trade unions, assemblies more or less appointed from above, appointed committees, and even class-collaborationist organizations conceived as such and controlled by a clergy. *What matters is the manipulation of the masses, not their self-organization: This is the key idea of Comrade Moreno.* It has a precise social nature and origin. All Trotskyists will recognize it without difficulty.

It is no wonder then that Comrade Moreno combines his skepticism toward soviet organization with an ultra-opportunist attitude toward *the institutions of the*

bourgeois-democratic state. He calmly foresees—under certain conditions, of course—that it will be perfectly possible “to combine bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy” (p. 94), especially under conditions of “struggle against fascism or of threats of reactionary coups.” A perfect recipe to bring future revolutions to the same defeats as in Germany in 1918 and 1920, Spain in 1936, and Chile in 1973, when the centrists used the same arguments under the same circumstances against the “ultraleftists” who said that the proletariat could not conquer power without destroying the bourgeois state institutions and replacing them with the centralized power of the soviets, of the committees they were creating.

Whoever said B, must say C. Comrade Moreno no longer even conceals his revisionism. *State and Revolution* is a book to be dumped as rubbish. At bottom, it is a “Mandelian” work, replete with “bourgeois-democratic prejudices.” It must be replaced with:

“... what Lenin and Trotsky wrote after the Russian Revolution, when their theorizations (sic) had to take the changes imposed by reality into account. The USec fails to consider the extent to which the October Revolution enriched (sic, again) the Marxist theory of the state and revolution” (p. 107, see a similar passage on p. 223).

And still more sharply:

“All (sic) the victorious proletarian revolutions and dictatorships of our century have been revolutions and dictatorships of a single party, never of trade unions, soviets, factory committees, or peasant committees. That is they never were dictatorships of all the workers and all the toilers, but always of a minority organized like iron, which obtained the support or the more or less active neutrality of the majority” (p. 113).

Here revisionism bursts forth unabashedly. Everything asserted by Marx, Lenin, the First Congress of CI, and the *Transitional Program*—which while written in 1938, supposedly does not take into account the “lessons of the October Revolution”—is petty-bourgeois liberal twaddle. The “real” theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat has now been formulated by Comrade Moreno, the real “Lenin of our time.”

However, Comrade Moreno’s generalization, far from being “realistic” in contrast to the supposedly “prescriptive” theories of the USec, far from being “concrete” and “dialectical,” is simply false because it contains at least four grave errors.

First, it falsifies the history of the October revolution, which did indeed culminate for a period in a dictatorship exercised by democratically elected soviets that represented the immense majority of toilers in Russia.

Next, it ignores the fact that, after a short transition, the exercise of power by a single party in Russia gave way to a *political counterrevolution*, a Thermidor, whose victory Trotsky ultimately dated in 1923-24.

Furthermore it tends to generalize (and therefore to present as inevitable) the fact that the power is exercised by the bureaucracy, that is, *based on the political expropriation of the proletariat*. For, with the exception of the Cuban revolution, “all the victorious proletarian revolutions of our century” to which Comrade Moreno refers were led from their inception by a privileged bureaucracy intent on excluding the proletariat from the exercise of political power and self-organization. Comrade Moreno should answer the question: *will this “general law” remain in force in the future?* Will future revolutions also be led by

profoundly bureaucratized parties? If so, what becomes of the famous leading role of the Fourth International? If not, how can conclusions be drawn from what Tito, Mao, and Ho Chi Minh did about what might happen in terms of soviet-type organization under a Leninist proletarian leadership?

Finally, Comrade Moreno forgets that all these victorious proletarian revolutions to which he refers occurred in backward countries where the proletariat represented a (sometimes tiny) minority of the population, with a low level of cultural development and technical skill.

Can we extend the conclusions that can be drawn from these special and exceptional experiences to proletarian revolutions in the immediate sense of the term, i.e., revolutions that will take place in countries where the urban proletariat is already the majority, if not the overwhelming majority of the population (countries that are by no means limited to capitalist Europe, but include North America, Australia, Japan, the semi-industrialized countries of Latin America, and several semicolonial countries of Asia)? No, of course not. What is involved here is not any kind of enrichment of Marxism, but misleading generalization that impoverishes Marxism. This is not merely the opinion of the “revisionist” USec. It is also the opinion of Comrade Trotsky:

“It must not be thought that the dictatorship of the proletariat is necessarily connected with the methods of Red terror which we had to apply in Russia. We were the pioneers. Covered with crime, the Russian possessing classes did not believe that the new regime would last. The bourgeoisie of Europe and America supported the Russian counterrevolution. Under these conditions, one could hold on only at the cost of terrific exertion and the implacable punishment of our class enemies. *The victory of the proletariat in Germany would have quite a different character. The German bourgeoisie, having lost the power, would no longer have any hope of retaking it.* The alliance of Soviet Germany with Soviet Russia would multiply, not twofold but tenfold, the strength of the two countries. *In all the rest of Europe, the position of the bourgeoisie is so compromised that it is not very likely that it would be able to get its armies to march against proletarian Germany.* To be sure, the civil war would inevitable: there are enough fascists for that. But the German proletariat, armed with state power and having the Soviet Union behind it, would soon bring about the atomization of fascism by drawing to its side substantial sections of the petty bourgeoisie. *The dictatorship of the proletariat in Germany would have incomparably more mild and more civilized forms than the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia.*” (*The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, “The United Front for Defense: Letter to a Social-Democratic Worker [February 23, 1933],” Pathfinder, 1971, p. 365. Our emphasis.)

And in a similar vein:

“However, the American communist revolution will be insignificant compared to the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, in terms of your national wealth and population, no matter how great its comparative cost. That is because civil war of a revolutionary nature isn’t fought by the handful of men at the top—the 5 or 10 percent who own nine-tenths of American wealth; this handful could recruit its counterrevolutionary armies only from among the lower middle classes. Even so, the revolution could easily attract them to its banner by showing that support of the

soviets alone offers them the prospect of salvation. . . .

"There is no reason why these groups should counterpose determined resistance to the revolution; they have nothing to lose, providing, of course, that the revolutionary leaders adopt a farsighted and moderate policy toward them. . . .

"The same method would be used to draw small businesses and industries into the national organization of industry. By soviet control of raw materials, credits and quotas of orders, these secondary industries could be kept solvent until they were gradually and without compulsion sucked into the socialized business system.

"Without compulsion! The American soviets would not need to resort to the drastic measures that circumstances have often imposed upon the Russians. In the United States, through the science of publicity and advertising, you have means for winning the support of your middle class that were beyond the reach of the soviets of backward Russia with its vast majority of pauperized and illiterate peasants. . . .

"Within a few weeks or months of the establishment of the American soviets, Pan-Americanism would be a political reality.

"The governments of Central and South America would be pulled into your federation like iron filings to a magnet. So would Canada. The popular movements in these countries would be so strong that they would force this great unifying process within a short period and at insignificant costs." (*Writings of Leon Trotsky 1934-35*, New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971, p. 74. Our emphasis.)

And about Spain in 1936, although it was substantially less industrialized, and its proletariat was three times smaller than the proletariat of the Spanish state today—not to mention that of France, Italy, Germany, Britain, or the United States—Trotsky wrote just as categorically:

"At the present time, while this is being written [two weeks after the civil war broke out], the civil war in Spain has not yet terminated. The workers of the entire world feverishly await news of the victory of the Spanish proletariat. . . .

"From a purely military point of view, the Spanish revolution is much weaker than its enemy. Its strength lies in its ability to rouse the great masses to action. *It can even take the army away from its reactionary officers.* To accomplish this, it is only necessary to seriously and courageously advance the program of the socialist revolution.

"It is necessary to proclaim that, from now on, the land, factories, and shops will pass from the hands of the capitalists into the hands of the people. It is necessary to move at once toward the realization of this program in those provinces where the workers are in power. *The fascist army could not resist the influence of such a program for twenty-four hours; the soldiers would tie their officers hand and foot and turn them over to the nearest headquarters of the workers' militia.*" (*The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)*, "The Lesson of Spain, July 30, 1936," New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973, pp. 234-35. Our emphasis.)

Many other passages in Trotsky's writings on Spain emphasize that a victory in the civil war was possible in a short period of time (a few weeks or a few months) and would not have entailed any possibility for large-scale international military intervention on the part of world imperialism.

We see that Comrade Moreno's "generalizations" drawn

from the experience of the Russian, Yugoslav, Chinese, and Vietnamese civil wars ignore the *special and exceptional* conditions of these civil wars: the backwardness of these countries, the extreme weakness of the proletariat, and, except in Russia, the bureaucratic and politically opportunist nature of the leaderships of the proletarian camp.

However, in today's capitalist world there remain only a few big countries where the proletariat is a relatively small minority of the active population: India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Nigeria, and perhaps Egypt. In all the other big countries—including the semicolonial ones—the proletariat is already either a very big minority of the active population (at least twice as large as it was in Russia in 1917), the majority, or—in the imperialist countries—the overwhelming majority of the population. To believe that under these conditions, and under a Bolshevik, Trotskyist leadership to boot, civil wars must again take place over years and even decades (sic—see Comrade Moreno's book p. 52-53), with the kinds of repression and restrictions on socialist democracy that such wars imply, is to completely revise the teachings of Marx, Lenin, and especially Trotsky on the subject.

Let us add that the Spanish proletariat won its great victories of July 1936 under conditions of extreme pluralism of parties and currents, unlimited freedom of the press and media, and the participation of a big bourgeois party, the *Esquerra Catalan*, in the militia committees (i.e., in the emerging soviets). Power in the committees and factories was in the hands of the workers, not any single party. These conquests were lost certainly not because of that pluralism and existence of many rank-and-file authorities and powers (it is the Stalinist theory that says this!), but because of the counterrevolutionary policy of the workers' leaderships.

To be sure, a Bolshevik-type revolutionary party was needed to centralize workers power and rapidly smash the counterrevolution. But a party deserving of that name, in the concrete conditions in Spain in 1936, far from restricting democracy in the committees and direct democracy in relation to what it was in 1936, *would have considerably extended it.* It would have refrained from "banning" the PSOE and CP (which would have been reduced to an insignificant minority had the revolutionary leadership followed a correct policy, as Trotsky explained time and again), not to mention the CNT-FAI or the POUM. The concrete experience of the Spanish revolution flies in the face of Comrade Moreno's revisionist schema.

3. Serious Theoretical Concessions to the Bureaucracy

Comrade Moreno's book is strewn with theoretical concessions to the bureaucracy, concessions that combine with the beginnings of a programmatic revision to chart a particularly disturbing course for the all-out battle the Bolshevik Faction has launched against "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

This is already apparent in the vocabulary. Aside from a few exceptions, Comrade Moreno jumbles workers states and bureaucratized workers states, i.e., states where the proletariat wields power in the political and immediate sense of the term, and states where it has been dispossessed of this power by a privileged bureaucratic caste (or where

it never wielded this power), as though this distinction was only an absolutely minor aspect of the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

And even when he discusses the insufficient amount of socialist democracy in certain workers states, he does so in truly shocking terms for a Trotskyist. What else can one say of the following passage:

"The Chinese workers revolution, although led by the bureaucracy, meant a colossal expansion of 'proletarian democracy,' not only by comparison with Chiang's regime but also with the most advanced bourgeois democracies, which are based on the totalitarian, barbarian exploitation of oppressed nationalities and colonial peoples. The proletariat is organized in trade unions and the peasants in communes, which are legal and include millions of workers. . . . The same applies in connection with paper supplies, printing presses, radios, and meeting halls. Previously they were in the hands of the bourgeoisie and imperialism; now they are in the hands of the working class (sic) and peasantry, even though controlled (sic, again) by the bureaucracy" (p. 73).

And even more broadly (this time explicitly including the Stalinist totalitarian dictatorship):

"One of the most important tasks of Trotskyism is precisely to educate the world working class in the recognition of the existing proletarian dictatorships, in the demonstration that they are much more democratic (sic) than any imperialist democracy, about the inevitability (sic, again) of counterrevolutionary wars by the capitalist and imperialist countries against the workers states, and about the defense of the latter" (p. 197).

This could be taken straight out of any pamphlet making an apology of Stalinism or Maoism: by the very nationalization of the means of production, particularly the nationalization of printing presses and radio and television stations, "proletarian democracy" undergoes a colossal expansion, *whether or not the real* proletariat (or its immense majority) has *real* access to the printing presses, etc. . . . To utter such things is to deny in practice the totalitarian dictatorship of the bureaucracy and the political expropriation of the Soviet and Chinese proletariat. To demand that the Fourth International repeat such lies to the world proletariat means transforming it into a Stalinist propaganda agency, and erasing fifty years of merciless struggle against bureaucratic dictatorship.

To compare the nonexistent "proletarian democracy" in the bureaucratized workers states with the restrictions and decay of bourgeois democracy is again to imitate one of the classical sophistries of Stalinist propaganda. We are perfectly familiar with the largely formal (not entirely formal, though) character of democratic freedoms under the system of capitalist exploitation, imperialist superexploitation, and private property. But *the relentless struggle of the working class* has wrung from the bourgeoisie "embryos of proletarian democracy" within the bourgeois state. These embryos are called the powerful trade-union, political, and cultural organizations of the proletariat, having their own headquarters, printshops, and newspapers. Far from being "formal," these freedoms and gains are weapons against the bourgeoisie for which thousands of workers gave their lives. *And from the standpoint of these gains and freedoms of the proletariat*, there is a retrogression, not progress, in the USSR today.

Let us take two examples: first, trade-union organiza-

tion. Comrade Moreno seems unaware that *for more than a decade*, during and after the Cultural Revolution, *there were no longer any trade unions at all* in the People's Republic (PR) of China. They have only just been reorganized in the last few years. He seems unaware that, at the height of the Cultural Revolution, there was a mass demonstration in Shanghai by "the surplus commune labor force" to protest against their being "leased" to the factories at starvation wages, far below the officially existing norms. The demonstration, moreover, was repressed harshly. He seems unaware that in Poland, again quite recently, the mere fact of being on strike automatically meant expulsion from the trade union and dismissal, without even any right to unemployment compensation. He seems unaware that for decades the Soviet trade unions were satisfied with establishing a generalized piecework system, blind obedience to the manager's orders, and a "battle for production" without regard to the workers' health and safety, that is, even in violation of the officially existing legislation. The situation has improved slightly since then, but the role of the trade union has not fundamentally changed.

Will Comrade Moreno have the dismal courage to state that from the standpoint of the right and powers of the trade unions, "proletarian democracy" is "much more advanced" in the USSR and the PR of China than in countries where the proletariat possesses powerful trade-union organizations independent of the bourgeois state and the bourgeoisie?

Next, the example of the press. Comrade Trotsky expressed his views on the subject very clearly. He wrote in *Revolution Betrayed*:

"To be sure, the new charter 'guarantees' to the citizens the so-called 'freedoms' of speech, press, assemblage and street processions. But each of these guarantees has the form either of a heavy muzzle or of shackles upon the hands and feet. Freedom of the press means a continuation of the fierce advance-censorship whose chains are held by the Secretariat of a Central Committee whom nobody has elected." (New York: Merit, 1965, p. 262.)

Is Comrade Moreno unaware that 99 percent of Soviet and Chinese workers have no access to any printing press? Is he unaware that the mere fact of publishing a leaflet, not to mention a newspaper, to condemn an injustice done to some member of the proletariat, to condemn piecework, to demand implementation of the work safety rules or more equality of incomes, leads to arrest, being sentenced to forced labor for "anti-Soviet agitation," or even internment in a mental hospital? Will he dare to claim that, from the standpoint of being able to defend *their own class interest* through the media, the Soviet and Chinese workers enjoy much more proletarian freedom than workers in countries where powerful proletarian organizations independent of the bourgeois state and bourgeoisie still exist? Does the possibility for Comrade Moreno's freedom to publish his book in many languages—which is not a right granted by the imperialist bourgeoisie, but a gain won from the capitalist class by the tenacious struggle of millions of workers, at the cost of enormous sacrifices—exist in the USSR and the PR of China?

The proletariat in the bureaucratized workers states is keenly aware of its political expropriation by the totalitarian bureaucracy—let there be no mistake about that "*Political expropriation*" means *loss of political rights and*

powers. It revolts against this expropriation. It is preparing to redress the situation by means of a political revolution. In trying to transform the Fourth International into a propaganda machine apologizing for the bureaucratic dictatorship, Comrade Moreno not only cuts it off from the proletariat of the bureaucratized workers states. Should he succeed—which is fortunately unlikely—he would end up with a deep division between the proletariat struggling for the socialist revolution and the proletariat struggling for the political revolution. On the contrary, the Fourth International's position helps to maintain and strengthen the unity of the world proletariat, the unity of the worldwide workers struggle, which can only culminate in the exercise of power by democratically elected soviets in all countries.

Stalin and the Soviet bureaucracy put forward two fundamental theories to support the strengthening in practice of the repressive apparatus *against the workers and peasants* of their own country, which had nonetheless already "built socialism," that is, to justify the maintenance and strengthening of the dictatorship of the bureaucracy. The first consisted of the imperialist encirclement and permanent threats of war. The second was the theory that "the class struggle sharpens" (implying that capitalist restoration becomes a major danger) as the building of socialism, and indeed communism, goes forward.

And now here is Comrade Moreno making flagrant concessions to these theories . . . while attributing them to Trotsky! According to him, not only is a counterrevolutionary war of intervention by imperialism inevitable in each case of victory for the revolution, but it is also necessary to conclude that this danger increases as the victorious revolution is extended internationally, as the number of workers states increases.

We are obviously dealing with an enormous underestimation of the possibilities for solidarity and international extension provided by victorious socialist revolutions and a colossal overestimation of the degree of control that the imperialist bourgeoisie has over the population of its own country. Comrade Moreno seems to have learned nothing from the antiwar movement in the United States, or from the political consequences that it entailed. He does not understand the tremendous appeal that a genuinely internationalist revolutionary leadership heading a workers state in an industrialized country would have for the world proletariat. At bottom he is skeptical about the world revolution.

Yet Comrade Trotsky had explicitly stated the opposite: "If the Spanish revolution had been victorious, it would have given a strong impetus to the revolutionary movement in France and other countries. In that case, we could have confidently hoped that the victorious socialist movement would succeed in preventing the imperialist war by making it pointless, futile." (Translated into English from French manuscript of this document, with reference: Trotsky, *La Révolution Espagnole*, Editions de Minuit 1975, p. 338.)

"By anticipation it is possible to establish the following law: The more countries in which the capitalist system is broken, the weaker will be the resistance offered by the ruling classes in other countries, the less sharp a character the socialist revolution will assume, the less violent forms the proletarian dictatorship will have, the shorter it will be. . . .

"Socialism would have no value if it should not bring with it, not only the juridical inviolability but also the full safeguarding of all the interests of the human personality. Mankind would not tolerate a totalitarian abomination of the Kremlin pattern." (*Writings of Leon Trotsky 1939-40*, New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973, pp. 155-56.)

Comrade Moreno quotes from the latter text by Trotsky (while omitting the final passage). Since then, however, the number of countries where capitalism has been smashed has increased from 1 to 16. The USec resolution is centered on the hypothesis that this figure will further increase in the not-too-distant future, and will include for the first time some countries with a proletariat qualitatively more powerful than that of the USSR in 1917, China in 1949, or Cuba in 1960. But even while quoting this text, Comrade Moreno has the nerve to draw an opposite conclusion from Trotsky's: longer civil wars; a harsher and more violent dictatorship; nothing but snickers about juridical inviolability; inevitability of imperialist wars of intervention on a large scale. Up to the present, Posadas had the dismal monopoly on this kind of "Trotskyism" (including that of the inevitable worldwide nuclear war). Isn't our "new Lenin" more like a "new Posadas"?

To be sure, as long as imperialism survives in a major country, it will never resign itself to the existence of workers states. It will always strive to undermine their socioeconomic structure. It will organize counterrevolutionary political subversion. It will continue to arm itself in an attempt to reintroduce the capitalist rule through military aggression. But there is an enormous difference between these historic goals of social class in decline and what it can achieve in practice—determined, for instance, by the relationship of forces on a world scale, by the trends of worldwide revolution (and counterrevolution), and by the domestic situation in the imperialist countries themselves. Comrade Moreno breathes not a word about any of this. He reduces everything solely to the permanent military threat that imperialism brings to bear on the workers states. In doing so, he revises the Trotskyist theory that without a major defeat of the world proletariat, a worldwide nuclear war is, if not impossible, at least highly unlikely.

His approach to the economic side of the problem is even worse. It yields the following blunders:

"The danger of counterrevolution does not derive from restorationist sentiments, but from the domination(?) of the world economy by imperialism. . . . We should have a terrible fear of the grave danger represented by the enormous right-wing bourgeois tendencies produced by economic development under the dictatorship of the proletariat in these conditions. It is a question of an inevitable (sic) process, of growing contradictions, given the existence of the national boundaries of the bureaucratized workers states, imperialism's superiority in the world economy, and, up to the present, the relative backwardness of the workers states. This means that economic development produces strong capitalistic tendencies" (pp. 62-63).

"Trotsky established the following law: the more the economy develops, the stronger the restorationist danger will be; imperialism will try to bring the workers states back into its orbit through trade, investments, and the black market. The Carter plan is in the process of doing so" (p. 65).

Trotsky explained that the weak USSR of the 1920s

might be led toward capitalism precisely because of the development of the productive forces, if it remained isolated. He explained that Britain had more interdependence vis-à-vis the world market than India or a backward country. But Trotsky never drew the conclusion from this that there could be a "cold" restoration of capitalism solely through the medium of trade. (In that case, what would be the meaning of the formula "workers state, though degenerated" if this state did not oppose a restoration, if it did not first have to be overthrown by a social counterrevolution in order to restore capitalism?) Still less did Trotsky formulate the absurd theory that the more the economy develops, *whatever the level that this development reaches*, the greater is the danger of restoration.

In 1926, the USSR represented barely 5% of world production. In 1940, it already represented 15%. Was the restorationist danger greater in 1941 than in 1926? History has already answered that question. Despite the misdeeds of the Stalinist dictatorship, the much more powerful industry of the USSR was able to use more tanks, cannons, and planes against the Nazis than they themselves could produce. Moreover, Trotsky had predicted this. Therefore—and because of the fierce and heroic resistance of the Soviet proletariat once the barbaric character of fascism was understood, as well as the rise of the international revolution although limited and deformed—the USSR was able to win, not lose the war against Nazi imperialism.

Today all of the bureaucratized workers states already represent more than 35% of world industrial production. Can one seriously claim that the danger of capitalist restoration is stronger in these states than in 1919, 1927, 1932, or even 1941? What is the general direction of the evolution of the relationship of forces? Is imperialism stronger or weaker than it was in 1941? Stronger or weaker than in 1956? Should a greatly deteriorated relationship of forces for imperialism increase the danger of a restoration of capitalism in the USSR?

But our entire resolution is not concerned with a "stable" situation. It concerns *the possibility of extending the proletarian revolution to key countries in the coming years*. We read earlier what Trotsky wrote in 1933 about the consequences of a victory of the proletarian revolution in Germany at that time (and with the weak USSR of that time). Will Comrade Moreno seriously contend that victory of the proletarian revolution in France, Italy, Brazil, or indeed throughout capitalist Europe, "would increase the restorationist danger in the USSR as a function of the development of the productive forces"? In fact, each new victory of the revolution in an important country would bring us to the threshold of a situation where the capitalist economy would fall below 50% of worldwide industrial production, where it would even be outdone in the area of labor productivity with respect to a key number of goods sold on the world market. How could it maintain its "domination" in those conditions?

Comrade Moreno's skepticism about the world revolution is equaled only by his skepticism about the political revolution, about the proletariat of the bureaucratized workers states, which nicely complements his skepticism about soviets. *Comrade Moreno managed the feat of writing 249 pages on the topic of socialist democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat without devoting more than*

a few lines to the political revolution. Where he sees the huge successes of the "Carter plan," we see instead the enormous possibilities for political revolution, provided the Soviet proletariat overcomes its depoliticization. But precisely to that end, the creation of one or more "dictatorships of the proletariat" according to our "programmatic norms" would play a decisive role. This connection has obviously escaped our great dialectician.

En route, Comrade Moreno makes another sizable ideological concessions to the Stalinist bureaucracy, which has always claimed that in the debate between the advocates of "socialism in one country" and the supporters of the "theory of the permanent revolution," the latter wanted to subordinate the USSR's industrial, economic, social, and cultural development to the needs of the world revolution. Comrade Moreno now upholds Stalin, by boldly stating that there will be two phases in the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat: an initial one, where everything must be subordinated to the struggle for world revolution, and a second, *beginning only after the victory of the world revolution*, when the building of socialism will merely *begin*.

This is a caricatural falsification of the theories of Trotsky and the Left Opposition, once again lifted straight out of the Stalinist textbooks. Comrade Moreno has forgotten that *at the same time* that Trotsky opposed the theory of socialism in one country, he advocated an *accelerated and planned industrialization* of the Soviet economy. Was this only for military purposes, or in order to advance on the road to socialism? Did the Stalin-Trotsky debate have to do with the need to *begin* the building of socialism in one country, or with the possibility of *fully completing* it? How can the workers state defend itself without strengthening the social and economic position of the proletariat? How would this be possible without advancing on the road to socialism? The dialectic between the strengthening of the weight of the proletariat domestically and internationally—and vice versa, its national and international defeats—remains a mystery for Comrade Moreno, as it was for the most naïve apologists for the bureaucracy (the more cynical ones were interested only in dachas, and in the monopoly of power guaranteeing the dachas, not in ideas).

The most serious conclusion—a true "objectivist" justification of the bureaucratic dictatorship—is that, due to imperialism's survival, dictatorship, i.e., coercion, *must increase* in all the workers states, whether bureaucratized or not. According to Comrade Moreno, for the whole present historical stage, including for victorious revolutions in new countries, there is:

"a law that can be counteracted, but not annulled: throughout entire present stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the final showdown with imperialism, in which national boundaries will continue to exist, the strengthening of the workers dictatorship and the proletarian state is *inevitable*." (p. 212. Our emphasis.)

To dot the "i's, Comrade Moreno adds:

"As a consequence (of imperialist domination on a world scale), the working class also suffers direct oppression, *as the price of the need to defend the workers state*. . . . In this stage, the survival of bourgeois norms of distribution is linked to an oppression based on political, functional, reasons. . . ." (p. 221.)

Moreno is not making an apology for Stalinism, not he. He is only saying that even if there is a "revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat" and not a "bureaucratic dictatorship of the proletariat," the oppression of the proletariat will continue, because it has objective roots . . . in the capitalist encirclement, Trotsky=Stalin: the theory is common among bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, and Social Democratic "Sovietologists." Here comes an unforeseen ally to bolster their camp.

Is it really difficult to refute these absurdities? Why should the necessity of defending the USSR against the imperialist military threat imply an inevitable oppression of the proletariat? Because the proletariat must produce a surplus in order to maintain a powerful army? But even if we set aside political considerations—why was it not necessary to oppress the proletariat in 1918-19, why was it ready to sacrifice for the defense of the revolution without major coercion, although it was infinitely weaker and smaller than today?—the argument does not hold up from an economic or social standpoint. Because the strengthening of "bourgeois norms of distribution" (sic, p. 63), the strengthening of inequality, do not depend mainly on what is deducted from current production for military purposes, but on the scope of total production, on the scope of what remains available for distribution, and on the way in which it is distributed. The USSR today (not to mention a victorious revolution in Western Europe, or in countries like Brazil or Argentina) is ten times richer than in 1927 or 1933. Even with a very expensive regular army, the workers' standard of living could be equal to that of Italian or British workers. The reason it is not is the wastefulness and privileges of the bureaucracy, not the capitalist encirclement. These privileges can be maintained only through a political monopoly, i.e., a dictatorship of the bureaucracy. Herein, and not in the "necessities of defending the state" or the survival of imperialism, lie 99% of the immediate causes of the oppression that Soviet workers suffer from and the growth in social inequality. By sweeping that oppression away, the political revolution will increase both the capacity of the workers state to defend itself against imperialism, and the wealth currently produced, which will permit a radical increase in equality. The continuing oppression and heightened inequality, by discrediting socialism, by demoralizing and depoliticizing the working class, undermine, in turn, this defense. Yet another aspect of the "dialectic" that our master dialectician has missed.

In the same vein is the theory that: "an unequal distribution that increases in equality as production increases is inevitable" (p. 63).

This is nothing more or less than an "objectivist" justification of the inevitability of bureaucratic degeneration—even for future revolutions. For if inequality increases with the development of the productive forces, the number of police and their powers—that is, the power of the bureaucracy—will also increase.

Behind such logic there can only lie the Stalinist theory of the "ever-growing needs" of the toiling population, itself plagiarized from the defenders of capitalism who wanted to demonstrate the impossibility of socialism (the withering away of commercial exchange categories) through an ever-lasting scarcity.

Once this nonsense is rejected, there is no "economic logic" that makes inequality in the distribution of watches

"inevitable" when their production has risen from 2 million to 30 million per year (as was the case in the USSR). The increase in inequality in the USSR under these conditions is by no means "inevitable"; it is attributable to the bureaucratic caste's material interests. When that caste is eliminated by a political revolution, equality will be able to take giant strides forward.

It is now easier to understand the chain of arguments that seek to justify the real chains binding the Soviet proletariat. The capitalist encirclement is equated with the *threat* of counterrevolutionary wars, without taking into account the rise of the world revolution. A *potential* civil war is in turn equated with *actual* civil war, without taking into account either the social relationship of forces or the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This completes the sleight of hand: coercion against a section, indeed a majority, of the proletariat is presented as inevitable during half a century, nay, a century. For the proletariat is much too "underdeveloped" to defend itself against its allegedly all-powerful enemies.

Nothing better displays Comrade Moreno's skepticism about the Soviet proletariat (equal to that of the bureaucrats of the 1920s) than the passage where he describes the scenario for the possible restoration of capitalism in the USSR. We had written that it was unlikely that the workers, having taken over the factories, would return them to the capitalists under the influence of "counterrevolutionary propaganda." "You think the capitalists are more stupid than they are." Comrade Moreno answers. "They won't raise the slogan, 'Return the factories to the bosses!' They will raise the slogan, 'The factories to the workers!' This means the destruction of state ownership, competition between workers' cooperatives, which will bring us back to capitalism" (p. 62).

We might think the bosses are more stupid than they are, but Comrade Moreno is decidedly taking the workers for imbeciles. "The factories to the workers" is a slogan that has already been heard. It was raised by the Yugoslav CP in 1950. At that time Stalin and the Stalinists stated, as Moreno does today, that it would lead to the reestablishment of capitalism. Thirty years of history belie that slander.

We have severely criticized and will continue to criticize the hybrid combination of workers self-management with "market socialism" on the one hand, and the one-party system (that is, the absence of political power wielded directly by the Yugoslav working class) on the other hand. But to believe that workers who have experienced a considerable expansion of their rights and powers within the factories—Yugoslavia is the only country in the world where the workers can fire the managers, rather than the managers the workers—will facilitate a restoration of capitalism rather than opposing it with greater lucidity than in the workers states where they are more oppressed, is really to seriously underestimate their class consciousness and intelligence!

It is because Comrade Moreno is skeptical, at bottom, about the capacity of the proletariat to defend its own gains and its state against imperialism that he devotes an entire chapter of his book to "The Two Proletarian Dictatorships: the Bureaucratic-Reformist and the Revolutionary" (p. 187), without a single mention of the fact that the former is the result of a political defeat of the proletariat,

of the victory of a political counterrevolution. If within the capitalist encirclement, and regardless of the relationship of forces, regardless even of the victories of the world revolution, "objective conditions make oppression necessary," then this political counterrevolution—that is, Stalinism—is only a variant of an "iron necessity," that is, it is all one could hope to preserve, under the circumstances. A sorry "Trotskyism" indeed!

A Failure to Understand the Objective Function of Proletarian Democracy

At the root of all these revisions and serious errors of Comrade Moreno's, there lies a fundamental theoretical weakness: a failure to understand the function, the objective role, of proletarian democracy in the class struggle, in the socialist revolution, and in the building of socialism.

Paradoxically, Comrade Moreno transfers to the proletariat what he began by defining as characteristic of the bourgeois conception of democracy: the difference between "democracy for the class" and "democracy for individuals." Drive out instinct, and it returns with a vengeance. *In reality Comrade Moreno is putting forward a bourgeois conception of proletarian democracy.*

"When we speak of working-class freedoms, we distinguish two levels: that of the working class as a whole within society, and that of the workers as individuals within their class. These two levels are not the same; their relation is dialectical, and they are often in contradiction with one other" (p. 68).

In reality, the connection between "freedom in society" and "freedom within the class" is *structurally distinct* for the bourgeoisie, and for the proletariat. Bourgeois individualism—and its conception of individual freedoms—is based on private property and competition (that is why it declines sharply in the epoch of monopoly capitalism). Equality between the buyer and seller of commodities is sufficient for the bourgeoisie because it more or less automatically reproduces the relations of production and exploitation on which the reign of capitalism is founded—except at times of very great crises, especially revolutionary crises. Beyond this, democracy among the bourgeoisie is supposed to arbitrate interbourgeois conflicts (that is, those arising from competition) and to crystallize the "common interest" of the bourgeoisie against its enemies (above all the proletariat, but earlier, against the nobility, and often against a foreign competitor).

The situation of the proletariat is entirely different. It begins from a state of atomization and dispersal which is reinforced and not eliminated by poverty, unemployment, and the laws of the market. To defend itself it must be able to *organize*: an individual worker counts for nothing against an individual boss. But the organization of the working class is never the *automatic* result of economic development. It requires a *conscious effort*. Thus freedom of organization, the most elementary of working-class freedoms against the class enemy, has as a precondition *freedom of association among workers*; one cannot exist without the other (otherwise, the fascist trade union with 100% membership would be the best instrument for the class struggle).

On the way to establishing unity—not to mention the achievement of class consciousness—the working class not

only has to overcome the atomization caused by poverty, unemployment, and competition. It must also overcome variations in interest, attitude, tradition—and in the last analysis, its different levels of consciousness are at least partly determined by these variations—between different sectors of the working class: skilled and unskilled; trades having a long skilled tradition (printing) and trades that have become skilled more recently; pioneers and latecomers in the area of trade-union organization; residents of big proletarian concentrations and recent arrivals from the countryside; "native-born" and immigrants; men and women; adults and youth, etc., etc.

We therefore understand that the real contradiction is not between the "freedom of the class against big business" and the "*individual* freedom of members of the class," but the conflict between the *class* interest taken as a whole and the interests of certain sectors (which is even truer on a world scale than it is in each country taken separately). And we understand that a *free association* of these different sectors of the working class is an absolute precondition for the *effective winning of class unity*.

If any sector, even a majority, tried to impose any coercion on large *sectors* (the question of imposing discipline on *individuals* has nothing to do with this), the only result would be that these sectors would perpetuate the *division of the working class*, would make real unification of it impossible, not to mention unification within stable and consolidated organizations. *The result would be a general weakening of the working class vis-à-vis the class enemy*. Far from being a "luxury" subordinated to the "needs of the class struggle," *proletarian democracy is an indispensable precondition to achieving greater effectiveness in the class struggle*.

What is true from the standpoint of mere organizational unity of the working class against the bourgeoisie is all the more so from the standpoint of working out tactics, strategies, and effective methods and forms of struggle against the capitalist. The working class does not have innate scientific knowledge. Unfortunately, it won't be gotten from Comrade Moreno, with his probureaucratic revisionism. The revolutionary Marxist method and program are an enormous contribution. But they don't have a ready-made answer for everything, otherwise a parrot would be the best Marxist and the best revolutionary.

Moreover, the assimilation of the revolutionary Marxist method and program by thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, nay millions, of wage-earners is an extremely difficult and complex process, determined not only by the heterogeneity of the working class and the profusion of currents and ideological traditions that have marked its awakening and its organizational tradition in different countries, but also by the discontinuity in activity (and therefore in experience) of different layers of the proletariat.

Again, any attempt to impose the "correct line" through hierarchical channels, administrative decision, or coercion can only lead to freezing the ideological, political, and organizational divisions and fragmentations, that is, to *weakening the proletariat in face of the bourgeoisie*.

The matter is further complicated by the appearance within the workers movement of a privileged workers bureaucracy, acting as a transmission belt for bourgeois ideological influences, materially interested, to different degrees, in maintaining the social status quo, as a function

of its very material privileges. Almost all the mass organizations are headed by such a bureaucracy, as are the bureaucratized workers states.

Now, Comrade Moreno admits that these bureaucracies are "corrupt and counterrevolutionary" (p. 184). To say that they are "corrupt and counterrevolutionary" implies that they have a tendency to betray most struggles initiated by the bulk of their members, let alone those of the proletariat as a whole. Yet to challenge the power of these bureaucracies and dislodge them from their leadership positions, proletarian democracy is essential. Thus, *it is indispensable to make the existing proletarian organizations—including the existing workers states, and the armies of these states—into effective instruments of struggle against capitalism and imperialism.* It is precisely this standpoint that has completely disappeared from Comrade Moreno's argument.

What is true in the process of the current class struggle and of the world socialist revolution applies in the same way to the process of building socialism, or, if you will, to the administration of the economy, the state, and all the other social spheres under the dictatorship of the proletariat. If some Bible existed in which ready-made answers could be found to all questions concerning the choices to be made at each moment, internationally and nationally, in all these different areas, this might not be the case. But such a Bible doesn't exist and, with all due respect, neither Comrade Moreno nor his faction are about to write one.

Under the circumstances there are only two possibilities: either some minority—whether "bureaucratic" or "revolutionary"—usurps the right to make these choices in place of the proletariat as a whole. We don't say that this is "immoral," "too harsh," "not in accordance with our nice norms." *We say that it is ineffective*, that it weakens the proletariat and its dictatorship vis-à-vis the class enemy, that it increases the magnitude of errors, wastefulness, costs, and *useless sacrifices* imposed on the proletariat and its allies, that it delays the final victory over the enemy and hampers the building of socialism. Once more, proletarian democracy is a precondition for an effective class struggle against the bourgeoisie and imperialism, for an effective struggle to build socialism.

We thus abide entirely by the "prehistoric definition" (Moreno dixit, pp. 181-82) that dictatorship of the proletariat equals proletarian democracy, not, we repeat, because it corresponds to our "norms," but *for reasons of effectiveness.* If Comrade Moreno disagrees, he should prove the contrary, not simply state it on the basis of historical experience (p. 211), which is precisely the experience of the ruling bureaucracies (unless the revisionism is pushed to the point of proclaiming the bureaucratization of any workers organizations and workers states as inevitable). When he states (p. 107, 182) that Trotsky later revised that definition, he is not telling the truth. Here is what Trotsky wrote *eighteen years after the October revolution* on this question:

"Far worse, however, is the following idea: 'This dictatorship of the proletariat . . . must be loosened and progressively transformed into proletarian democracy as socialist construction goes forward.' Two profound principled errors are contained in these few lines. They *counterpose* the dictatorship of the proletariat to proletarian democracy. But *the dictatorship of the proletariat, by its very essence, can and must be the highest flowering of*

socialist democracy. To carry out a great social revolution, the proletariat needs the highest concentration of all its forces and all its capacities. It is precisely in order to overcome its enemies that it is organized democratically. The dictatorship, according to Lenin, must 'teach every cook to lead the state.' The sword of the dictatorship is aimed at the class enemies: *the basis of the dictatorship consists of proletarian democracy.*" (Translated from French manuscript of this document with reference: L. Trotsky, "Encore Une Fois Ou Va la France?," 3/28/1935, in *OEuvres* 5, p. 206-7. Emphasis added.)

Comrade Moreno pushes confusion to the point of writing: "The Chinese proletariat also needs formal liberties such as freedom of the press, opinion, and assembly" (p. 74).

Marxists call these freedoms "formal" under capitalism because of the existence of private property, bourgeois domination, and the huge economic and social inequality, which means that a millionaire has one hundred thousand times more opportunities to *really exercise* the "freedom" to publish a newspaper than an individual worker (freedom of press is not *entirely* formal under capitalism, because ten thousand or a hundred thousand workers *together* can buy printshops and publish big newspapers, as long as that *real freedom* is not taken away from them by a more brutal system of bourgeois dictatorship).

But in the P.R. of China, private ownership, including of printshops and meeting halls, has been abolished. In fact, the Chinese proletariat must conquer—through political revolution and on the road thereto—*the real*, and not formal, freedom to freely express its opinion on all the big questions of international, economic, social, and cultural policy, etc. Far from being "formal" or "second-rate," that freedom is a precondition for a more effective administration of the Chinese workers state against its internal and external enemies. It is an essential condition for consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat in China.

Once again, Comrade Moreno may believe the contrary. But then he should prove it. He hardly does so in his book. It is his major weakness, along with the systematic use of slanderous falsifications of the positions against which he polemicizes.

We base our argument on two examples. Comrade Moreno likes to refer to the trade unions. But the essential connection between trade-union freedom against the bosses and freedom for the "individual members of the trade union" is not at all on the level where Comrade Moreno seeks to place it, among strikebreakers and infiltrated individual agents of the boxes.

If a balance sheet is made of the big strikes *worldwide*—and not just in Western Europe!—for the last sixty years, we will easily find that for *one* strike lost owing to the action of unorganized "strikebreakers" or "bosses' infiltration," there have been *one hundred* strikes either lost, diverted from their initial goals, or prevented from broadening out and using the potential working-class militancy to the fullest on account of the trade-union bureaucracy. *The worst strikebreakers, in a historical sense, are the bureaucratic leaders themselves.* But it is impossible to fight them effectively without the conquest and most jealous defense of the broadest democracy within the trade union, and the broadest proletarian democracy in the factories. Compared to this primary task, putting a stop to unorganized, individual, or occasional strikebreakers is absolutely secondary. All organized workers with the least

bit of experience know perfectly well how to overcome this problem without the slightest restriction on proletarian democracy.

We have just witnessed a massive and significant spectacle with Pope John Paul II's tour of Poland. Let us leave aside the agreement obviously made in advance between the Polish bureaucracy and the Vatican, and the interest that the bureaucracy has in directing political opposition toward Catholic channels rather than socialist and communist oppositional channels. Let us also leave aside the national and cultural features of Poland, which partly—but only partly—explain why the ideological influence of the Catholic religion and clergy persisted more strongly in this country than in any other country of Eastern Europe.

The fact remains that, thirty years after the overthrow of capitalism in that country, and, to use Comrade Moreno's language, after the establishment of the "bureaucratic dictatorship of the proletariat," millions of people (workers, peasants, intellectuals, youth) turned out for the Catholic church, in a mobilization whose *political* aspect could not have eluded anyone. We ask Comrade Moreno: what is the fundamental cause of this sad phenomenon? The capitalist encirclement? The Carter offensive? We do not believe that they account for 10% of the scope of this phenomenon. We believe it is fundamentally owing to the demoralizing effects, both objective and subjective, of the bureaucratic dictatorship.

If the bureaucracy had not handed the clergy the gift of being the only legal semioppositional organization; if it had not systematically substituted the formation of a chauvinist and nationalist mentality, traditionally embodied in the clergy, for an emphasis on the class struggle in pre-1939 Poland; if it had not banned the traditional parties and currents of the proletariat and petty bourgeoisie (many of which were and have remained strongly anticlerical); if it had not banned strikes and allowed the clergy to appear as the only legal force defending penalized strikers; if it had permitted a democratic and intense political life, *including a legal Catholic party*, which would then have been *compelled* to take a stand on *all* social questions—and some of its positions, as in regard to abortion, the management of enterprises, and the establishment of food prices, would have been very unpopular among working men and women, we may be sure—then we do not say that the influence of the Catholic church would have disappeared in Poland, but we are convinced that it would have been *qualitatively* less than it is today.

Again, Comrade Moreno may disagree with these two opinions. But he must demonstrate, not categorically state, the theory that restrictions on socialist democracy are inevitable owing to "the capitalist encirclement" or the "infiltration of the class enemy." The bureaucracy gladly identifies itself with the organization (and where capitalism has been overthrown, with the state). It considers in principle that all who criticize it, who question its management, who demand that there be a stop to its arbitrary power (including, and especially, its arbitrary judicial power) and its wastefulness, "objectively" work for the enemy, if they are not "enemy agents." Does Comrade Moreno approve of this reasoning? If not, then what is the point of all his tirades about the necessary restrictions on socialist, i.e., proletarian, democracy, as a result of the

"objective difficulties"? Why does he reject the identity between dictatorship of the proletariat and proletarian democracy, which comes straight from Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky?

5. The Political Substance of the Debate

But while Comrade Moreno's ideas are more systematically dangerous and revisionist than one may think at first sight, their political function is different from what their author states (whether or not he is conscious of this function is of lesser importance).

In reality, the debate is not between supporters of a "revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat" and of a "soft dictatorship of the proletariat," nay, "semireformist." The debate is focused on a very different issue.

For the authors of the resolution "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," this resolution has a precise function: *to facilitate the victory of the proletarian revolution, that is, the establishment of real (albeit "soft," according to Comrade Moreno's dogmas) soviet power in a number of key countries of the world, in the coming years.* We have an iron faith in this possibility, not only in capitalist Europe, but in some bureaucratized workers states and some major semi-industrialized semicolonial countries.

Our entire approach is based on this perspective and function. We base ourselves on the real experience, not of civil wars in backward countries, but of proletarian revolutions (that is, those "carried" by the urban proletariat, including the beginnings of political revolution as in Hungary and Czechoslovakia) which actually took place in the last sixty years. And we note that not a single one of these revolutions failed on the issue of "hardness," or "party pluralism," or "rejection of violence," but on the issues that we discuss in great detail in the USec resolution.

If the majority of the proletariat can be won to these conceptions, the next proletarian revolutions will win, the bourgeois state will be destroyed, soviet power will triumph. If it is not won to this program—by a revolutionary party and a revolutionary International, of course—then the revolutions will be defeated as in Germany, Spain, and Chile.

Comrade Moreno approaches the problem in a diametrically opposite way. For him, the causes of the defeats of past proletarian revolutions were objective, not subjective. They do not lie in the treacherous policy of the leaderships, in retaining hegemony within the proletariat, or in the insufficient level of proletarian class consciousness, or in the failure to understand the necessity of smashing the bourgeois state. They lie in the role of a "labor aristocracy on a world scale" played by the proletariat of the industrialized countries. As long as there has been no catastrophic worsening of the living conditions of this proletariat, it will be impossible to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in these countries.

Are we exaggerating? Judge for yourself:

"... capitalism in its highest stage, that of imperialism, has succeeded in aristocratizing large sectors of the working class in the imperialist countries and in maintaining a strong middle class there. . . . *This division in the workers' ranks is the social cause of all the other phenomena.*" (p. 218. Our emphasis.)

However, this "aristocratized" working class has risen up more than once in great anticapitalist battles: the German and Austrian revolutionary battles in 1918-19, 1920, 1923, 1927; the obviously anticapitalist strikes in Italy in 1919, 1920, 1945-48, 1969; the general strike in Britain in 1926; the French general strikes in 1936 and 1968; the Spanish revolution of 1934-37, and the revolutionary upsurge (including *political* general strikes on the regional level) in 1975-76; the Portuguese revolution of 1974-75, and the list goes on. We have always believed, that despite its "aristocratic corruption," the proletariat of these countries had demonstrated on these occasions its instinctive tendency to reorganize society on a socialist basis, and that *only the subjective factor* (the betrayal of the bureaucratic apparatuses, the weakness of the revolutionary leadership, the inadequacy of its level of consciousness) had prevented the victory of these revolutions. This is the meaning of the Transitional Program's formula: "The historical crisis of humankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership."

Comrade Moreno now says: No, the working class of the imperialist countries is itself to blame. It is corrupted by imperialism and does not want a revolution. "*The existence of imperialism means that the entire dynamic of the world revolution has changed*" (p. 220). And this dynamic will not return to the "right course" unless the living conditions of the Western proletariat deteriorate in a catastrophic way:

"As long as European workers are not struck by a brutal economic crisis, unemployment, 100% to 150% yearly inflation, the appearance of fascist gangs, and Bonapartist and fascist coups, bourgeois-democratic illusions will not be shattered. No one, nothing will be able to destroy them" (pp. 92-93).

This is a drastic change in the position that Comrade Moreno and his Bolshevik Tendency set forth barely two years ago, in its first platform, focused on the imminence of the proletarian revolution in Europe, at a time when there was neither stark poverty, a 100% to 150% inflation rate, nor Bonapartist or fascist coups. But Comrade Moreno has accustomed us to this kind of impressionist 180-degree turnabouts in the space of a few years: first against concentration on work within the mass Peronist movement, then total entryism within that movement; first for unconditional obedience to the guerrilla commandos, then violent attacks on "guerrillism," which should be dragged before "people's tribunals"; first support to the counterrevolutionary offensive of Mário Soares in Portugal in May-June 1975, then a violent attack on that offensive (followed by a call for a Soares government without specifying either program or a united front with the PCP!). We can bet a few spectacular events will suffice for Comrade Moreno to again change his position on the chances of proletarian revolution in Europe.

But let us retain the coherence of his present position. Given the strength of the European workers movement; given the working class's capacity for resistance; given that the employers' offensive has won only a few percentage points of gains over several years (rapidly neutralized by working-class counteroffensives); given the competitive position of European imperialists on the world market; given the successive waves of multifaceted social and political crises, it is obvious that the "objective preconditions" for the European proletariat to become "ripe" for

the dictatorship of the proletariat will require one or more decades.

Until then, no dictatorship of the proletariat is on the agenda.

And Comrade Moreno does not hesitate to speculate about what will happen "*if the world revolution does not advance* or if it advances objectively by national victories that remain frozen within national boundaries (p. 213). This was "the tendency of the last sixty years." Prudently, Comrade Moreno does not comment on the future tendency. But implicitly, he continues to believe that imperialism will continue to dominate in all its strongholds (p. 220) in the coming decades, which means that the proletarian revolution is impossible *for objective reasons* in the imperialist countries.

In other words: For Comrade Moreno the entire discussion at present is not *intended to arm the Fourth International for a real political struggle now under way or about to begin in a relatively foreseeable future*. It is merely intended to keep the program intact while waiting for better days. This is the "refrigerationist" conception of the program as opposed to a functional conception of it (with refrigeration, moreover, producing a good deal of revisionist rot, as we have shown).

Let us imagine the meeting of, let's say, the coordinating body of the Setúbal workers commissions in 1975 (the closest point to a pre-soviet-type organization reached by the Portuguese revolution). Comrade Moreno solemnly rises and states: "Comrades, we must fight for the revolutionary and violent dictatorship of the proletariat. But, please, without any illusions. As soon as you have won it, West German paratroopers, the Spanish army, the American expeditionary corps, or an expeditionary corps of the Warsaw Pact armies will attack you. You must prepare for years of civil war and international war, millions of deaths, unbounded sacrifices and poverty, worse than those of the Russians, the Chinese, and the Vietnamese." Muted applause (and snickers) from the Social Democrats and Stalinists. The outcome of the vote is determined in advance (it is true that Comrade Moreno cares little for votes, which are phenomena typical of "petty-bourgeois individualism" and "bourgeois-democratic illusions" in a revolutionary period).

In fact, during all the proletarian revolutions that have occurred up to now, the impossibility of avoiding bloody counterrevolutionary wars through international solidarity and the extension of the revolution was the main argument of the reformist opponents of the seizure of power by the proletariat and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was the main argument of the Mensheviks in Russia before October. It was the main argument used by the German Social Democracy in 1918-19. It was the main argument used by the Austrian Socialists in 1919. It was the main argument used by the Spanish Socialists and Stalinists (not without some help from the Anarchist leaders) in 1936-37. Comrade Moreno finds himself in very strange company, to say the least.

This is why his accusation against us of making concessions to the "democratic prejudices" of the European proletariat (or rather, to the more and more clear rise in antibureaucratic consciousness on the part of the proletariat in *all* the big industrial centers of the world, whether in Barcelona or Turin, Detroit or San Francisco, Córdoba or São Paulo, Osaka or Bombay, Prague or Leningrad) seems

more like a compliment to us. All the same, for a revolutionist, it is better to lead a proletarian revolution to victory and to the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat, albeit at the price of "concessions to the democratic prejudices of the workers," than to remain skeptical about the possibility of revolution, about the

revolutionary potential of the proletariat, and the power of the soviets, to be satisfied with defending "programmatic purity" under capitalism, and to make one small further contribution to the defeat of possible revolutions.

June 15, 1979

Against the Draft Resolution on 'Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat'

By Yoshichi Sakai

1. In discussing revolutionary democracy, it is very important to maintain a strict class perspective. Full-fledged democracy can only be realized more or less satisfactorily in any given country within the overall perspective of the class struggle internationally, of the proletarian permanent revolution in the full sense. In the workers states, in the imperialist countries, and in the semi-colonial countries as well, the fight for workers and peasants democracy is an integral part of the overall proletarian struggle for permanent revolution; the former is impossible except as an organic part of the latter.

This vital point is not clearly expressed, however, in the United Secretariat draft resolution on "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."¹ [Footnotes have been added, and appear at end of contribution.]

First of all, the concept itself of "democracy" or "socialist democracy" is not clear in the draft resolution.

Among the things we think of as "democratic" tasks are the national liberation of an oppressed people from the political and economic domination of an oppressor nation, national independence of an oppressed people from an oppressor state, national unification of a people who have been forcibly divided, the elimination of racial discrimination with a mixed population, comprehensive agrarian reform, destruction of the old family system which is oppressive to women and children in particular, etc. All of these are bourgeois democratic tasks. Democracy *per se* is a bourgeois concept.

Because all these democratic tasks are bourgeois, are they therefore excluded from the concept of "socialist democracy"? Is socialist democracy simply a regime that takes the form of workers and peasants councils, and assures unlimited freedom of opinion, speech, press, association, assembly, demonstration, strike, sabotage, and so on in the framework of an economy dominated by the nationalized and planned sector?

Even if that were the case, how would it be possible for the Fourth International to discuss "socialist democracy" without looking at the question of democracy in general in relation to and under the dictatorship of the proletariat?

In the Soviet Union there have been numerous protests, campaigns, and movements by national minorities against the oppression they face. There is also "the domination of Eastern Europe by the Kremlin"²—that is, the undemocratic relations between the Soviet Union and the other workers states of Eastern Europe. What solutions do the various Eurocommunist parties offer to the democratic tasks posed in these workers states? What solutions

does the Fourth International offer?

In relation to Indochina, the United Secretariat declared that:

"It must be stated that the interests of the working masses of Indochina are bound up with the establishment of growing cooperation on all levels—economic, military, and political—among Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. . . .

"However, such cooperation cannot be imposed. The federative structures it requires can only arise out of the revolutionary mobilization of the Indochinese masses, with strict respect for the rights of minorities to decide for themselves. Because of this, the struggle for internationalism is closely connected to the fight to establish genuine socialist democracy in Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos, to institute a government of workers and farmers councils in the Socialist United States of Indochina."³

Does this mean that the United Secretariat's advice to the oppressed nationalities of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe would simply be to "fight to establish genuine socialist democracy" in those countries and "to institute a government of workers and farmers councils" in the Socialist United States of Eastern Europe? While these slogans may be correct so far as they go, such a position would be misleading and illogical unless it were unequivocally based on a much broader regional perspective of the Socialist United States of Europe as a whole, as part of the world socialist revolution.

We cannot understand why the draft resolution should apply the method it does to this question. Is it that the United Secretariat plans to write additional documents in the future to take up the various other democratic questions in relation to and under the dictatorship of the proletariat?

2. In addition, the question of the class nature of democracy is not posed in a straightforward and consistent way in the draft resolution.

It seems very peculiar to see that in the entire, long text of the draft resolution, there is not a single reference to the imperialist nature of the bourgeois democracies in the United States, Canada, the Western European countries, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. The draft remains at the level of discussing democracy in general. This is the very thing for which Lenin criticized Kautsky so severely.

The draft states:

"Marx and Lenin's whole critique of the limitations [*sic*] of bourgeois democracy is based on the fact that private property and capitalist exploitation (i.e., social and economic inequality), coupled with the specific class structure

of bourgeois society (atomization and alienation of the working class, legislation defending private property, function of the repressive apparatus, etc.), result in the violent *restriction* of the practical application of democratic rights and the practical enjoyment of democratic freedoms by the big majority of the toiling masses, even in the most democratic bourgeois regimes.”⁴

But in our understanding, Lenin took up the question of democracy precisely in the imperialist stage of capitalism, and he therefore analyzed the specifically imperialist nature of bourgeois democracy and the specifically progressive nature of the democratic demands of oppressed peoples. The democratic regime in the United States, for example, is a typical imperialist democracy, based on Washington’s worldwide system of exploitation and its giant military power. Similarly, the bourgeois democracies in Western Europe and the Asia-Pacific region are based on neo-colonial oppression and backed by the counterrevolutionary military force of U.S. imperialism.

The paragraph quoted above continues:

“The logical conclusion flowing from this critique is that workers democracy must be superior to bourgeois democracy not only in the economic and social sphere—not only in the right to work, to security of existence, to free education, to leisure time, etc., which are obviously very important—but also in the scope and extent of the enjoyment of democratic rights by the workers and all layers of toilers in the political and social sphere. To grant a single party, so-called mass organizations, or “professional associations” (like writers associations) controlled exclusively by that party a monopoly on access to printing presses, radio, television, and other mass media, to assembly halls, etc., would, in fact, *restrict and not extend* the democratic rights of the proletariat compared to those enjoyed under bourgeois democracy.”⁵

Is the draft resolution intended to apply only to the industrially advanced countries? If not, it should recognize the difference between the imperialist countries and colonial or semicolonial countries precisely on the question of democracy. Imperialist democracy implies the lack or suppression of democracy in the colonial world. There was no bourgeois democracy in Asian countries such as China, Vietnam, or North Korea before they became workers states. Democracy in those countries has been “extended”—qualitatively so—through their liberation.

We would ask the authors of the draft resolution: which are more democratic—those “totalitarian” Asian workers states or the “most democratic” bourgeois democracies of the imperialist world? Certainly we stand for the establishment of workers democracy in those workers states, although we recognize the objective social and political problems that exist in those countries. But as Leninists, as Trotskyists, we must recognize unequivocally the qualitative expansion of democracy in those countries. That must be the class basis on which we oppose the bourgeois democracy of the imperialists. The national and democratic liberation of oppressed peoples through the establishment of workers states is an integral part of the overall proletarian struggle against imperialist, bourgeois democracy—including the sorts of bourgeois democracy advocated by the proimperialist Social Democrats and the “Eurocommunist” reformists.

This is a basic tenet of Leninism. Why is it completely left out of the draft resolution? Or were the authors of the

draft only interested in moaning about how their struggle for pure and genuine democracy among the workers of the imperialist countries is complicated by the lack of democracy in the former colonies that have since become workers states?

We recall that the resolution on capitalist Europe adopted at the Tenth World Congress⁶ failed to characterize the Western European states as imperialist. This was quite correctly criticized by Comrade Moreno at the time. In addition, the draft resolution on capitalist Europe drawn up by the former International Majority Tendency⁷ takes up the question of bourgeois democracy in Western Europe, but it is notable from a methodological point of view that it takes up the question only in relation to the bureaucratically degenerated workers states of Eastern Europe, and never within the specific imperialist or neo-imperialist framework of “capitalist Europe” as an ally of U.S. imperialism.

We need to explicitly characterize the bourgeois democracies as imperialist or neo-imperialist in order to fight from a proletarian class standpoint against the democracies in the imperialist countries, to defend the workers states, and to help advance the colonial revolution and the political revolution in the workers states.

The draft resolution on socialist democracy asserts:

“Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfill all these functions, and the more the functions of a state power are performed by the people as a whole, the less need there is for the existence of this power.” (‘State and Revolution,’ *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 419-420.) Thus, the dictatorship of the proletariat is nothing other than a workers democracy.”⁸

The quotation from Lenin here is correct, but how can the United Secretariat draw the conclusion spelled out in the second sentence? For years now there have been a number of “non-democratic” workers states. How can the draft resolution declare that “the dictatorship of the proletariat is nothing other than a workers democracy”? Does this mean that the dictatorship of the proletariat does not exist in the bureaucratized workers states today? Recall how Trotsky polemicized against Burnham and Shachtman on the question of the Soviet Union and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the late 1930s. The authors of the draft resolution seem to have forgotten our fundamental class criteria regarding the dictatorship of the proletariat and workers states.

3. Continuing its analysis within a framework of democracy in general, the draft resolution asserts that:

“If the revolutionary Marxists leave the slightest impression, either through their propaganda or through their practice, that under the dictatorship of the proletariat the political freedoms of the workers will be narrower than under bourgeois democracy—including the freedom to criticize the government, to have opposition parties and an opposition press—then the struggle to overcome the panders of parliamentary illusions will be incommensurably more difficult, if not condemned to defeat.”⁹

We would hasten to warn that if, in a situation of crisis such as occurred on the eve of the Second World War, those revolutionary Marxists were to show even the slightest hesitation in defending the existing workers states from imperialism “for the sake of democracy,” they would be

categorically condemned to defeat in the face of a capitalist counterrevolution.

Do the authors of the draft resolution exclude the possibility that bourgeois democracy itself might someday come to an impasse, leading to a counterrevolution of the fascist type? Do they see no possibility of a bloody civil war in capitalist Europe in the future?

In any case, the essential question is on what class basis do we fight for democracy, both nationally and internationally.

4. The draft resolution states that:

"From a Marxist, i.e., historical-materialist point of view, the basic causes of the political expropriation of the Soviet proletariat were material and socioeconomic, not ideological or programmatic. The general poverty and backwardness of Russia and the relative numerical and cultural weakness of the proletariat made the long-term exercise of power by the proletariat impossible if the Russian revolution remained isolated; that was the consensus not only among the Bolsheviks in 1917-18, but among all tendencies claiming to be Marxist. The catastrophic decline of the productive forces in Russia as a result of the first world war, the civil war, foreign imperialist military intervention, sabotage by probourgeois technicians, etc. led to conditions of scarcity that fostered a growth of special privileges. The same factors led to a qualitative weakening of the already small proletariat. In addition, large portions of the political vanguard of the class, those best qualified to exercise power, died in the civil war or left the factories to be incorporated massively into the Red Army and the state apparatus.

"After the beginning of the New Economic Policy a certain economic upturn began, but massive unemployment and continuous disappointment caused by the retreats and defeats of the world revolution nurtured political passivity and a general decline of mass political activity, extending to the soviets. The working class was thus unable to stem the growth of a materially privileged layer, which, in order to maintain its rule, increasingly restricted democratic rights and destroyed the soviets and the Bolshevik Party itself (while using its name for its own purposes). These are the main causes of the usurpation by a bureaucracy of the exercise of direct power and for the gradual merger of the party apparatus, the state apparatus, and the apparatus of economic managers into a privileged bureaucratic caste."¹⁰

As an explanation of the political degeneration of the first workers state as an objective process, this is generally correct. But the draft resolution then goes on to conclude that:

"The main causes of all these processes were objective, material, economic, and social. They must be sought in the social infrastructure of Soviet society, not in its political superstructure and certainly not in a particular concept of the party."¹¹

This is not Marxist historical materialism; it is vulgar "materialist determinism" à la Kautsky. How can the authors of the draft resolution ignore the active role of consciousness? They should learn from our outstanding Marxist theoretician, Comrade Ernest Mandel, about the dialectical interaction between existence and consciousness. If Mandel is not persuasive enough for them they should go directly to Trotsky:

"The proletariat grows and becomes stronger with the

growth of capitalism. In this sense the development of capitalism is also the development of the proletariat towards dictatorship. But the day and the hour when power will pass into the hands of the working class depends directly not upon the level attained by the productive forces but upon relations in the class struggle, upon the international situation, and, finally, upon a number of subjective factors: the traditions, the initiative and the readiness to fight of the workers."¹²

In regard to the state, the political superstructure, Trotsky wrote:

"The State is not an end in itself, but is a tremendous means for organizing, disorganizing and reorganizing social relations. It can be a powerful lever for revolution or a tool for organized stagnation, depending on the hands that control it."¹³

This has nothing in common with a vulgar, objectivist "materialist determinism."

If "the main causes" of the bureaucratic degeneration of the first workers state "must be sought in the social infrastructure of Soviet society, not in its superstructure and certainly not in a particular concept of the party," then how can the Fourth International wage a convincing fight for proletarian democracy, or workers and peasants democracy, in the socio-economically backward workers states in Asia? Who is to decide which of the Asian workers states have a sufficiently developed social infrastructure to permit the establishment of proletarian democracy? What about Laos or Kampuchea?

It is certainly true that the "continuous disappointment [of the Soviet working masses] caused by the retreats and defeats of the world revolution" played a very important role in the defeat of the left opposition in the 1920s. But isn't this a phenomenon in the political "superstructure" of Soviet society rather than its "social infrastructure"?

In addition, the process of ideological crystallization of bonapartist bureaucratic elements around the new program of socialism in one country also played an important and active role in the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union. And this political and ideological process occurring within the superstructure of Soviet society in turn played a decisive role in the retreats and defeats of the world revolution. Finally, in the 1930s, the bonapartist Stalinist bureaucracy consolidated its own consciously thermidorian or "counterrevolutionary" regime in the workers state.

This entire process, with its terrible negative consequences for the first workers state and for the world revolution as a whole, was marked by the interaction of existence and consciousness, of the "social infrastructure" of Soviet society and its "political superstructure." In the final analysis, the thermidorian degeneration of the first workers state was not inevitable because of socio-economic or material factors. It became inevitable only because of a political factor, a superstructural phenomenon on the international level—namely, that the international workers movement of the 1920s and 1930s was unable to overcome the treacherous leadership of the Stalinists in Moscow.

The draft resolution ignores one of the central elements of the theory of permanent revolution, and thus could easily lead to a denial of the essential role of political leadership in the working-class movement.

In our view, to grasp the theory of permanent revolution in its full sense, including the dynamic interaction be-

tween existence and consciousness, three essential factors must be taken into consideration both on a national and international scale. These are: (1) the given socio-economic conditions, (2) the existing relationship of forces between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and (3) the prevailing type and level of consciousness of the proletariat, as expressed through its political organizations.

5. On the more practical questions of democracy, and on the question of socialism in one country or permanent revolution, the draft resolution fails to present the fundamental Bolshevik-Leninist position that the fight for proletarian democracy is totally incompatible with the narrow nationalist positions of the various bonapartist bureaucracies, as expressed ideologically in their theory of socialism in one country, and practiced internationally through their conservative and gradualist foreign policies which rely on their own military forces and on maintenance of the international status quo.

The draft resolution was apparently written for the sole purpose of appealing to the reformist illusions of the European workers movement. It is criminally misleading and demagogic.

In considering the question of democracy and our class perspective in Europe, we must go back to what Trotsky taught us. To the political rule of the imperialist bourgeoisie in capitalist Europe, Trotsky counterposed workers democracy, which would also be in the interests of the oppressed peasants and national minorities. To the thermidorian rule of the bonapartist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, he counterposed workers democracy, a workers and peasants alliance, and respect for the interests of the oppressed national minorities.

At the same time, to the oppressive imperialist "nation-states" and the reformist capitulation of the Social Democratic parties to them, as well as to the thermidorian "state-philosophy" of socialism in one country and the narrow nationalist foreign policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy, Trotsky counterposed the *Socialist United States of Europe* as the only unifying perspective for the struggles in both capitalist Europe and the Soviet Union.

Trotsky stressed again and again that the imperialist "nation-states" were the central source of oppression in general, and of the suppression of democracy in Europe in particular. He emphasized that only by uniting the productive forces under an international plan could the practical infrastructural basis be laid for full-fledged democracy for the workers and peasants of Europe. Our movement's *national and democratic program* in Europe was nothing other than the international proletarian struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe.

What does the draft resolution have to say about our democratic program for Europe today? Most of the draft consists of a discussion of democracy in general. It never takes up such questions as the fight against the bonapartist philosophy of socialism in one country and the conservative, nationalist foreign policies of the bureaucracies—i.e., the struggle for workers and peasants democracy in the workers states. Nor does it take up the fight against the political and military alliance among the imperialist bourgeoisies in the United States and Western Europe.

We are strongly convinced that here in East Asia, the struggle against the political and military alliance of Japan and the United States throughout the region will help spur on the struggle for proletarian democracy in the

Asian workers states and the Soviet Union. This point was made in my "Letter to an IMT Comrade" (which was presented to the United Secretariat in 1976 but has not been published in the IIDB so far). Here I would like to stress just one point.

In our opinion, the political and military alliance between the imperialist bourgeoisies of the United States and Western Europe constitutes the fundamental base on which the neo-imperialist European democracies stand. If the neo-imperialist Atlantic alliance were ever plunged into a real crisis, there would be absolutely no margin for bourgeois democracy in Europe. The Western European proletariat would face three possible prospects: a victorious proletarian revolution, which would fight to link up with the political revolution in Eastern Europe; a counterrevolution of the genuine fascist type; or another Soviet military intervention such as occurred at the end of the Second World War.

In view of this, we tend to conclude that the line of the draft resolution could only serve to prepare another defeat for the European proletariat.

6. There are other points in the draft resolution which we hope to discuss in the future. We insist, however, that the general framework of the resolution is wrong from beginning to end. It would be dangerous even to attempt a discussion of the various secondary and tactical questions within the non-Leninist, non-Trotskyist framework of the draft resolution.

March 23, 1978

1. *Inprecor*, July 7, 1977, or *Intercontinental Press*, July 25, 1977.
2. This is the formulation used in the January 16, 1978 United Secretariat statement, "The Border 'War' Between Hanoi and Pnompenh," *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, February 6, 1978, p. 130.
3. *Ibid.*
4. "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," *Intercontinental Press*, July 25, 1977, p. 867.
5. *Ibid.*
6. "Theses on the Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," *Intercontinental Press*, December 23, 1974, p. 1817.
7. "Draft Theses on the Tactics of the Fourth International in Capitalist Europe," submitted by Aubin, Claudio, Duret, Fourier, Frey, Georges, Ghulam, Jones, Kurt, Otto, Roman, Walter, and Werner. IIDB Vol. XIII, No. 3, November 1976.
8. "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," *Intercontinental Press*, July 25, 1977, p. 864.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 868.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 866.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *The Permanent Revolution & Results and Prospects* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974), p. 62.
13. *Ibid.*

Regarding the Secretariat's Document 'Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat'

By Sergio Domecq, LSR, Argentina

The first question that we have to ask is what new contribution did the comrades of the United Secretariat make by adopting and disseminating such a general statement of principles so hurriedly?

Any veteran Trotskyist would have thought that this document was simply a presentation of our strategy for taking power to build a socialist society in transition to communism. But when we start to read it we find clear evidence that this is a new attempt to revise—and it is nothing less than that—our central strategy, since it is pointed out that these theses were adopted by the Secretariat and are to be submitted to the discussion for the Eleventh World Congress, where they will be discussed and voted on. In reading this document some might think that it is only an enriched version of our previous position based on advances in "technology, computers, etc."

But if it is an enrichment and it still has to be adopted by a congress, that means that this enrichment involves a modification of the previous position, and therefore, constitutes a revision,

Now, if this represents a revision of our strategy for taking power, and it was such an urgent matter, should not a discussion of it have been organized and a special congress of the Fourth International called?

We must be aware that if we are considering a revision of our fundamental strategy, any other discussion, no matter how important in its own right it may be, becomes totally secondary. When a revision of our central strategic objective is proposed, any other differences there may be among sections of the International fade into the background, since sectors that have conflicting views in other respects may have to unite on the basis of agreement on the central question. Moreover, sectors or individuals who were in agreement on any number of questions can find themselves on opposing sides when different strategies for taking power are being proposed. Therefore, it is essential that we discuss and agree first on the fundamental strategy on which the unity of the party itself was based. Because if there could be anything that could really justify a split in the Fourth International it would be differences about the strategy for taking power. It may be that we are all in agreement and that there will be no split in the International, but it is also possible that we may not be in agreement and that there will be major splits. It is also possible that in the discussion we may overcome differences that have been widened because of a lack of adequate explanation. But in any case, this question is the first one that we must resolve, especially since this proposal for a revision is not being made by a comrade who has just come into the International but by the Secretariat, which was apparently in agreement on this, and included such veteran comrades as Pierre Frank, Mandel, and Hansen.

The Innovations in the Document "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat"

At first reading this document would seem to be a simple presentation of our classical conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It would seem to be an explanation of the dialectical relationship between the dictatorship of the proletariat and workers democracy. It would seem to deal with the question of the lack of democracy for the workers. It would seem to be a restatement of the Leninist principle of democracy for all soviet parties, for all those who accept the dictatorship of the workers councils and building socialism, and dictatorship for those who are opposed to these objectives. It would seem to be reaffirming yet again that in a society where there are several classes there can be democracy for only one class, that there can be no democracy for the entire society, no matter how attractive the forms given to the dictatorship of those who hold the power. But if this were the case, the comrades of the United Secretariat would not be submitting this document for a vote in the upcoming congress, since it would be nothing more than a statement of the theoretical heritage of the Fourth International. Therefore, we would venture to say that the tremendous confusion that appears in this document is the result of an attempt to reconcile our traditional position with revisionist ones. On the one hand, it seems as if it is referring to a society in which there was no longer a bourgeoisie but only isolated individuals who wanted the restoration of capitalism, but on the other hand, it talks about a residue of the bourgeoisie. And it grants these vestiges of the bourgeoisie the right to organize, so long as they pledge not to resort to violence against the regime that is building socialism.

Throughout the document, there is a lot of play on the fact that under Stalinism there is no democracy for the workers. But after a lot of acrobatics, it ends up proposing democracy for the bourgeoisie. I think that this is the nub of the question—a revision of the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. After the first stage of taking power and liquidating the most important sectors of the bourgeoisie, the dictatorship of the proletariat is supposed to change its character completely and become a democratic government for the workers and the vestiges of the bourgeoisie. This is either a revision that will lead toward the Social Democratization of the Fourth International, or else it is the height of hypocrisy, since it would mean offering democracy for the bourgeoisie when this class no longer existed. This is either a revision or a maneuver to avoid frightening certain sectors that fear the toughness of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

However, the question of such a maneuver does not

concern me. What concerns me is the dynamic established by this proposal, the fact that it leads toward taking more and more distance not only from the dictatorship of the proletariat but even from the concept of the seizure of power by means of proletarian revolution. Because while today we may propose democracy for the bourgeoisie, after the seizure of power we might propose to decide what we are going to do through a broad constituent assembly that would be democratic for all classes. And in subsequent congresses we might reach the conclusion that if we can talk things over democratically with the bourgeoisie after taking power, why can't we propose to take power by the democratic road. Of course, none of this is said in the document. And any such proposal would bring a flood of condemnations. But all that I am doing is warning about the tendency that could be established by starting to propose democracy not just for the proletariat but for the bourgeoisie as well. The Eurocommunist parties did not come to their present positions overnight, nor did the Social Democracy. Of course, in the document there are paragraphs that reject such a conception and such a tendency. But there are also several paragraphs that develop a revision of the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. And after the dike is breached that separates the dictatorship of the proletariat from democracy for the various social classes, who can foresee today how far this will go, when the Fourth International begins to fill up with new comrades coming into a party so democratic that it would allow the bourgeoisie to organize, although of course this would be after we take power and expropriate part of the bourgeoisie. It's obvious of course that nowhere can all the owners be instantaneously expropriated.

The PRT El Combatiente developed out of the old Trotskyist organization (which Barnes says represented traditional Trotskyism in Argentina). Subsequently, it carried out the line of the Ninth Congress document for Latin America. Today, the leaders and the membership of this organization support the policy of the USSR! Of course, some have left the organization. Other Trotskyists (a few) died fighting guerrilla war, but the majority of the Trotskyists were thrown out of the PRT. And what is worse, the Fourth International did not defend them. Moreover, the source of the deviations of the PRT should not be sought only in its guerrillaist policy, but also in its stageist positions which have ended up on the same ground as Dimitroff, and in the programmatic lines of the Morenista group and some elements in the international itself.

The least that could be said about this document is that it is a tremendous mishmash that could lead to all sorts of deviations. And two or three years from now anyone could say that they had a different interpretation of it. Because the way that it is written offers room for a lot of things. The same thing could happen in the case of this document as happened with the Ninth Congress resolution on Latin America. Two years after this resolution was adopted, one of the leading members of the International, Comrade Mandel, had a totally different interpretation of it (see the document signed by Germain and Martin Noeller). Of course, later Mandel must have realized that he was mistaken once again because he not only accepted the self-criticism that was made on this question but, I think, was one of those who took the lead in carrying out this important task.

Today here in Sweden we are already feeling the effects of this document on proletarian democracy. Faced with preparations for a demonstration to condemn the Russian intervention in Czechoslovakia, a sector of the KAF sent us out to demonstrate alongside the Maoists and the bourgeois parties. And that was not all, when this position was corrected, we found that sections of the party still held to it stubbornly. It is alarming that some of the members of an organization belonging to the Fourth International have this position and still more alarming that some of them are in the leadership of a section. And this attitude is fully endorsed by the document in question. Since it is for democracy in general for everyone in the workers states, including those sectors that want to go back to capitalism, why shouldn't we join in a common front with sections of the bourgeoisie that are also fighting for democracy for everyone in the workers states and against the bureaucratic dictatorships in those states. On this point we are going to find ourselves in agreement with the Maoists and the Social Democrats. Well, even the Eurocommunists have not dared to go this far, even though they dropped the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat. So, although out of other motives, we will find ourselves standing to their right.

The Classical Interpretation of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The classical interpretation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, since I am unable to see what changes have been brought about by the televising of congresses and the existence of computers, is that since it is not possible to liquidate the entire class of owners (and not just the exploiters) at the instant of the taking of power by the proletariat, the workers organized in their councils, soviets, or whatever they are called, will establish a political dictatorship over all those sections of society that do not accept the government of these soviets or the building of a socialist society in transition to communism.

This political dictatorship means that only those who accept the holding of power by the workers and agree that they should continue to hold it can organize themselves in various political tendencies based on tactical differences about how to build the socialist society. Those who oppose this because they want to restore the capitalist system will not be permitted any opportunity to organize themselves, since this would only lead to these organizations preparing to stage a counterrevolution in given conditions. I cannot think that procapitalist tendencies are going to organize themselves for a well-behaved discussion in which we can defeat them ideologically. Only the naïve could entertain such a notion.

We will use the dictatorship of the proletariat in the way we have been taught to do so by Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky, to smash the bourgeoisie—to liquidate the bourgeoisie as a social class. And we will maintain this dictatorship as long as a single owner remains on the face of the earth. Of course, we will have to try to convince the nonexploiter owners by showing them that the proletariat will be better than they are. But as long as they remain owners, they can be won to the counterrevolution when the workers state faces difficult situations, which arise essentially because of the existence of world imperialism. The assistance that the imperialists can give the vestiges of the

bourgeoisie, with whom in certain moments the nonexploiter owners may ally themselves, is not merely ideological.

In the case of the bureaucratized workers states, what this document proposes is also dangerous, since if those sectors that want to restore capitalism get a chance to organize themselves, they can pull behind them sections of the proletariat that have suffered oppression at the hands of the bureaucracy. And, with the aid of imperialism, these restorationist sectors could in given moments carry out a counterrevolution. So, while it is true that the dictatorship of the proletariat begins to wither away from the moment of its establishment, since it is the government of the majority it is less oppressive, and as the process of eliminating the nonproletarian sectors advances it, more and more withers away, but at the same time it becomes more powerful because it becomes the government of more and more people.

Since building socialism in a single country is impossible, the disappearance of the dictatorship of the proletariat is inconceivable so long as world imperialism exists. This has nothing to do with the bureaucratic dictatorship of privileged strata that oppress the proletariat. It depends essentially on the capacities and the power of the proletariat and not on the way in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is implemented. The only way the dictatorship of the proletariat can be exercised by the workers is if there are soviets. It is true that a highly conscious party nucleus can in certain moments counterbalance the weakness of proletarian bodies of the soviet type. However, it can do so only temporarily, because if these bodies do not regain their vitality there is no possibility of replacing them simply with the power of ideas.

Our defense of the dictatorship of the proletariat does not mean that at certain times, out of some objective need in the process, we will not permit sectors outside the soviets to express themselves in one way or another. But this will be the exception rather than the rule. Moreover, this will be a concrete question to be resolved when the time comes. But the general rule remains our classic

conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is very well expressed in the final paragraph of the document and which we cite below:

"In the light of all these failures, the program of the Fourth International on the dictatorship of the proletariat, direct working class rule through elected workers councils and plurality of soviet parties emerges as the only coherent and serious alternative to the twin revisions of Marxism advanced by Social Democratic reformism and Stalinist codification of monopoly rule by a usurping bureaucratic caste."

Here it says very clearly "plurality of soviet parties." From this no one can deduce that "freedom of political organization (parties—S.D.) should be granted all those, including probourgeois elements, who in actual practice respect the constitution of the workers state, i.e., are not engaged in violent actions to overthrow workers power and collective property," as the document says on page 13, column 2 of *Inprecor*. [*IP*, July 25, 1977, p. 871.] It is clear that when you talk about more than one soviet party this means the legal right to organize of all those who are for the soviet system and for building a socialist society, which is what this system is established for. Those elements referred to on page 13 are not soviet parties. They are probourgeois parties that want to restore the capitalist system. Of course, as a safeguard the comrades stipulate that such bourgeois parties constituted by the vestiges of the bourgeoisie must pledge that they will not resort to any violence against the system in the workers state. They will have to declare that they are only organizing as a hobby. Or are they going to be so stupid as to try to regain power through elections?

I call on the Secretariat to make clear what its position really is. Is it the traditional Bolshevik conception expressed in the last paragraph of the document? Or is it the notion that has been surreptitiously introduced into this document under the pretext of explaining the aspect of democracy for the workers?

July 7, 1978

Democracy and Socialism

By C.D. Estrada

I. A Poorly Formulated Debate

The United Secretariat resolution on socialist democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat opens up a very important discussion for the Fourth International. A political crisis is ripening in the workers states. After the strikes in Poland, dissidents are expressing their views everywhere all the time. The bureaucratic dictatorships do not know how to respond. They are no longer in a position to silence the challenging voices.

This is very important from the standpoint of the

proletariat. It directly concerns our reason for being. The Fourth International exists because, on the way to communism, after the overthrow of capitalism, new obstacles have been created for the proletariat in the transitional society. Our task is to organize the proletariat to continue the struggle for communism. The political crisis in the workers states opens the way for the intervention of the proletariat. Therefore we must be adequately prepared.

The dictatorship of the bureaucracy is criticized every-

where. The great majority of the known dissidents attack the dictatorship from a purely democratic point of view. For them, the dictatorship is simply bad. Anything that disturbs the struggle for democracy is a diversion. Only a great democratic assembly can overturn the dictatorship in the workers states. The discussion over program should be laid aside because it is divisive. This is the classical idealist position that counterposes democracy in general to dictatorship in general.

We do not underestimate the question of democracy. Because we seek to understand it, we see its social basis, and these social foundations are what we seek to destroy. "Destruction of state power is the aim set by all socialists. . . . Genuine democracy, i.e., liberty and equality, is unrealisable unless this aim is achieved. But its practical achievement is possible only through Soviet, or proletarian, democracy, for by enlisting the mass organisations of the working people in constant and unfailing participation in the administration of the state, it immediately begins to prepare the complete withering away of any state."¹

This thesis by Lenin expresses very well the dual aspect that democracy has for us. It is a goal, since equality and human freedom will be attained only under communism, after the complete extinction of the state. For now, in the form of proletarian democracy, it is a means to organize the workers in the struggle for power.

The bureaucratic dictatorship results from the conflict of social interests in the transitional society. It is not the product of satanic minds hidden between the walls in the Kremlin. The terroristic and bloody form of the bureaucratic dictatorship under Stalin no longer exists today. However, in fifteen widely varying countries, the social organization is the same. The political structure of these countries is remarkably similar. In each, a single party rules. In none do the workers have the right of political expression, the right to present demands, or to strike. In none is there freedom to discuss ideas or freedom of the press. In each, the trade unions are under the thumb of the party and the police.

The more deeprooted social relations are the same in each. The remuneration of labor is widely unequal in each. It is the upper layers of functionaries of the state and party, the technicians, the specialists of all kinds, the journalists, the professors, the writers, and the officers in the armed forces who are at the top of the income pyramid. In each country, the manual workers, the operatives and the peasants are at the bottom of the income pyramid.

It is therefore the social structure that determines the nature of the dictatorship. If these social relations are not destroyed, the dictatorship will reproduce itself forever, as in Poland under Gomułka and Gierk and as in China after the Cultural Revolution. To destroy the base of the reactionary interests that generate the bureaucratic dictatorship in the workers states, the proletariat must take power. The power of the proletariat could not take any other form than revolutionary dictatorship. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not a form of government whose purpose is only to overturn capitalist private property; it must also combat the entire inheritance of capitalism, which weighs down on the transitional society and impedes the construction of socialism. To achieve it, it is necessary to build the revolutionary party of the proletariat, with the program of political revolution.

We are in solidarity with the victims of political persecution and bureaucratic repression. It is important to understand them, but we are not obliged to follow them. It is significant that while the dissidents generally reduce their whole program to democratic rights, all the great popular movements, such as the Polish strikes, without exception have raised the questions of social privileges, improvement of living standards of the workers, independence for the unions from the state and the party, and the right of the workers to control the management of the factories and the state.

In certain cases, as in Hungary and China, the workers appealed to the proletarians of the world to overthrow capitalism. The petty-bourgeois democratic dissidents do not understand the struggle of the proletariat, but we have no right to ignore them.

The Fourth International must maintain its independence of analysis and political initiative. Our social base is the workers. We are above all concerned with their problems. We work to help them organize. Along the way, we can make agreements with petty-bourgeois dissidents. But we do not bend to their point of view. For us, the question of workers' democracy is very important, but it is not the root of the problem. As always, we attack the material, social basis of the political situation.

The United Secretariat resolution says: "The main problem facing the working class in these countries is the dictatorial control of economic and social life by a privileged bureaucratic caste." The International has not always defended this position. The main problem from our standpoint is the existence of these privileges that give rise to the bureaucratic dictatorship. In saying that the main problem is the dictatorship, the United Secretariat is taken in by the democratic dissidents and led to discussing how much democracy there will be under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The question, properly posed, is what to do to attain the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Our difference with the United Secretariat resolution is not on the extension of democratic rights under the dictatorship of the proletariat; we say that the dictatorship of the proletariat exists nowhere and that we should discuss how to attain it. What value is there today in discussing whether bourgeois parties will have the right to sit in the soviets or to apply their program? Posed in these terms, it is a purely democratic discussion, in which we abstract the social reality and the reality of social struggles.

The coming social struggles will determine the forms of proletarian democracy. For the moment, the Fourth International fights for the dictatorship of the proletariat and for the program of political revolution. Our objectives are quite clear: It is necessary to organize the working class around this program. The political crisis in the workers states shows that the conditions are favorable. We need to discuss the program and the means for organizing the proletariat.

While we may agree with certain points of the democratic program of the United Secretariat resolution, we do not agree on its way of approaching the question. For that reason we are presenting draft theses on the political revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and socialist democracy for the discussion prior to the Eleventh World Congress.

II. Draft Theses on the Political Revolution, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and Socialist Democracy

1. The bureaucratic dictatorship is becoming more and more insupportable and intolerable to the people. It is the political expression of a society burdened by contradictions—the society of transition to socialism—in which state property in the means of production coexists with the bourgeois norms of distribution. This situation is the inheritance of capitalism prolonged beyond the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. The development of the productive forces and the progress of the world revolution make these contradictions increasingly insupportable.

The workers states exist in a world divided between rich and poor nations, with per capita differences in revenues of the inhabitants going from five thousand dollars (Germany) to fifty dollars (Laos). They were established in societies that were previously organized by capitalism. The elimination of private property in the means of production does not in and of itself eliminate the income difference among the wage-earners. Thus there are persons who earn twenty times what a worker earns for the same number of hours of work.

Trotsky deplores the results of "Payment 'according to work'—in reality, payment to the advantage of 'intellectual' at the expense of physical, and especially, unskilled work."² The old prejudices tied to the division of labor remain. Culture continues to be the monopoly of a group that defends its prerogatives, which have a price on the labor market. The state apparatus has been completely restructured, but the functionaries continue to appoint each other, set their own salaries, make decisions without popular control, and cannot be removed from their positions.

2. Capitalist society has all these inequalities plus class inequality. The bourgeoisie enjoys the authority resulting from private property. The privileged layers of the workers states have nothing comparable. Their privileges are based on a bourgeois tradition that no longer has a foundation in the property relations. All have the same social status: they are all wage-earners. Why do some have the right to receive more than the others?

These social layers are heterogeneous. They have nothing comparable to capitalist property to unite them in opposition to the masses of workers and peasants. Any political discussion or public debate will immediately pose the problem of the arbitrariness of privileges in the workers state. As soon as the workers have the opportunity to meet together, the injustice of privileges is posed and they look for a way to eliminate them.

Such a society can only be maintained through a dictatorship aimed at preventing all political life in the factories, the neighborhoods, the mines, the army, the countryside, and among young people.

3. The bloody dictatorship of Stalin crushed the proletarian vanguard that had overturned capitalism in Russia. The character of Stalin's dictatorship derived from the fact that the Soviet revolution, under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, was not limited to overturning capitalism but took thoroughgoing socialist measures such as the maximum wage, the right to recall functionaries, and the full power of the soviets. Isolated in a poor country, the soviet revolution was unable to keep all its gains. To assure the

survival of the workers state, the Bolsheviks had to make concessions, which they considered temporary provisions.

Among these were the setting of privileged salaries for specialists, the reestablishment of ranks in the army and the appointment of functionaries. They had to outlaw the other parties, one after the other, as a result of their collaboration with the class enemy and the foreign military intervention. The old society regained ground within the workers state. It reestablished the hierarchy and the power of the state apparatus with its honors, its medals, diplomas, and academies. It was incompatible with Bolshevik power.

The role of Stalin was to crush the Bolsheviks so as to establish in their place a ferocious dictatorship with the mission of imposing on the whole society a partial return to the old social order. The merciless persecution of the Left Opposition shows that the privileges reestablished in the workers state could not coexist with a revolutionary tendency, even one in opposition. But capitalism was never reestablished in the USSR. Soviet society is still a classless one in which all the inhabitants live from wages.

Despite Stalin's crimes, the USSR obtained remarkable successes in the economic and military fields. These achievements retained their authority among a large part of the proletariat in the capitalist countries and colonial peoples. Soviet society proved that it could exist and that it is more efficient than capitalism. But Stalin succeeded in breaking up the independent political organization of the proletariat for a whole epoch.

4. The new workers states never had a proletarian leadership. In Yugoslavia, China, and Vietnam, Communist leadership trained in the Stalin school overturned capitalism under special conditions. They created workers states in which socialist relations never existed. In Cuba, a petty-bourgeois non-communist leadership took power and proceeded to expropriate capitalism.

All these leadership have one thing in common: Unlike the Bolsheviks, they have no proletarian program. They represent the general interests of the wage workers against capitalism, but they adapted to the privileges inherited from capitalism as if they were a natural phenomenon. The workers supported these revolutions but were always excluded from political life. The relatively benign character of these dictatorships is explained by the fact that they did not have to play a counterrevolutionary role comparable to Stalin's. But their social nature prevents them from encouraging any real democratic activity on the part of the masses.

Political parties are banned in each of these countries, there is no freedom of the press, there is no right to strike, and the workers have no right to form unions independent of the state. In each case a transitional society defends its privileges, banning all forms of political life. Only the proletariat is capable of taking the lead for the necessary changes to go from this postcapitalist society to socialism. The form of government for this task is the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

5. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the only means by which to take away from the privileged layers in the transitional society the power to block the progress to socialism. Proletarian democracy can only be installed to uproot the social foundations of the bureaucratic dictatorship: Remuneration of labor according to bourgeois norms "by a social process that goes on behind the backs of the

producers; these proportions therefore appear to the producers to have been handed down by tradition."³ Any democratic movement that does not solve the problem of socialist norms of distribution—equal wage for equal numbers of hours of labor—is condemned to defeat. If the workers do not abolish the bourgeois mode of remuneration of labor, the bureaucratic dictatorship will always be reproduced, as the experiences of Poland and China show.

To overturn the dictatorship of bureaucracy and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, a proletarian party is needed. To construct the proletarian party, a program of political revolution is needed. The workers will always distrust petty-bourgeois democrats who demand freedoms without saying what they plan to do with these freedoms. The proletariat can only organize itself around the socialist program. Without a socialist program for political revolution, there cannot be democratic freedom in the workers states. The socialist program includes the conquest of democratic freedoms in order to overturn the privileges inherited from capitalism, but it is not a democratic program: It is a social program. Looking beyond the petty-bourgeois dissidents in the workers states, the general strikes in Poland prove that the conditions for such a program exist.

6. The first condition of struggle for socialism in the transitional society is unconditional solidarity of the workers in the workers states with the revolutionary struggles in the capitalist countries. The existence of a capitalist system dominating two-thirds of humanity is the main point of support of the privileged layers and the bureaucratic dictatorship in the workers states.

The social character of any opposition movement in the transitional states is defined by its attitude toward the anti-imperialist and anticapitalist struggle. To imagine that capitalism can in any way help win forms of democracy in the workers states is not a procapitalist dream or illusion, but a form of support to all repression against the working class, both in the capitalist countries and in the workers states. The present form of the Trotskyist slogan of unconditional defense of the workers state is the priority of the struggle against capitalism.

Capitalism is the main ally of the bureaucracy against the proletariat. The fact that it still exists, alongside the workers states, is the most important obstacle to the blossoming of socialism.

Any political struggle inside workers states is subordinated to unconditional support to any anticapitalist revolution in the rest of the world. The proletariat must denounce the procapitalist international policy of the bureaucracy, the accords between capitalism and the bureaucracy reached on the backs of the workers, such as the Helsinki agreements, and appeal to the workers in the capitalist countries to take common action against capitalism and its allies in the workers states. The alliance between the workers in the workers states and in the capitalist countries is the strongest lever that exists for overturning the privileges inherited from capitalism in the workers states, and consequently for overturning the dictatorship of the bureaucracy as well.

7. The struggle for socialism in each workers state is impossible separate from the development of the poorest countries to attain the same level of development as the richest countries in a politically realistic period of time: for example, two generations, or fifty years. But the standard

of living of the workers does not depend on industrial development. The proletariat in power in any workers state must immediately propose equalization of the remuneration of labor in these countries. There can be no egalitarian and democratic socialist relations in a country surrounded by inequality everywhere. If the proletariat takes power and does not immediately attack national inequalities, it leaves standing the most hateful privileges inherited from capitalism, which will inevitably turn back against it.

The proletarian program means first of all equal exchange among all countries. These exchanges must be made according to the value of the products measured in hours of labor, no longer by prices calculated according to the wages prevailing in each country. It also includes joint planning for all natural and industrial resources of all the workers states; accelerated industrialization of the poor countries; a higher rate of growth for the latter in relation to that in the richest countries. All products and all workers of all countries should be part of a single planned system of production.

It is inadmissible that eight hours of labor by a German worker be paid at thirty times the rate received by a Kampuchean worker. Eight hours of labor have the same value everywhere; they represent the same individual effort by the producers. There will be no socialism, and as a result no proletarian democracy, as long as this monstrous inequality is considered "natural." The retrenchment of the workers states behind national boundaries inherited from capitalism is bound to maintain this state of affairs to the benefit of the privileged sectors in each country.

The richest workers states compensate for unequal exchanges through forms of economic aid to the poor countries that only accentuate the political dependence of the latter on the others. There cannot be socialist international relations without elimination of all forms of political dependence of some nations on others.

8. Unequal exchange is also the rule within each workers state. To the extent that prices are calculated on the basis of wages, the branches with the largest numbers of privileged technicians exchange lesser values compared with what they receive from other branches. Exchange is thus favorable to industry compared with agriculture; to heavy industry compared with consumer industry; to the city compared with the countryside; to intellectuals compared with manual laborers.

These inequalities arise from the individual appropriation of professional training received by each person in society. It is a "natural" law under capitalism. Under socialism, it is the society to which "belong the fruits, the greater values produced by compound labor. The worker himself has no claim to extra pay."⁴

The return to unequal remuneration of the same amount of labor time, such as was established by the Paris Commune and in the Soviet Union after the revolution, cannot be achieved without a very deepgoing social struggle, a veritable revolution, which will leave little room for democracy. It is nevertheless the condition for going from the dictatorship of the bureaucracy to proletarian democracy. This implies a period of dictatorship of the proletariat in which the workers will be unable to renounce the use of violence to impose their socialist norm of distribution.

9. For the most advanced section of the proletariat to win the support of the majority, the fight for socialism requires formation of a revolutionary party of the proletariat and the democratic functioning of workers' councils. It is quite naive to believe that the privileged layers of wage earners will accept this workers' democracy without resistance. Democratic intellectual dissidents are appearing everywhere now.

The development of the productive forces, especially in the most advanced countries (Czechoslovakia, Germany, Poland, Hungary, and the USSR) runs up against a social form of organization that hinders progress. Everyone is dissatisfied. The managers of industry want more freedom to administer the factories; teachers complain about the party bureaucracy's control; journalists and writers want the right to be able to write what they think; the intellectual elite thinks it has a right to a say in how things are done. (Medvedev expresses this admirably.) The workers want unions that are independent of the state and party and they want the right to strike.

Everyone is dissatisfied, but not in the same way. The bureaucratic dictatorship is a Bonapartist dictatorship wielded by the party apparatus (as Trotsky explained) to arbitrate conflicts for the sake of preserving privileges. This type of government is bad for everyone. Everyone is kept out of decision making. The party rules in the name of society—since it represents precisely the reactionary aspects of society—but it also represents the interests of all wage-earners in preventing the reestablishment of capitalism. Therefore, in spite of general discontent, it has a social base of support.

It would be absurd to think that for fifty-five years, in fifteen countries, for one and a third billion people, the dictatorships could survive if they were only the expression of a camarilla of individuals in political bureaus against the rest of society. The single party plays its Bonapartist game by maneuvering among opposing interests, playing one social layer off against another, always defending the bourgeois mode of distribution in the transitional society. The struggle of the proletariat is against these forms of distribution. It will meet ferocious resistance not only from the bureaucracy, but from all the privileged layers in the transitional society.

Numerous individuals, originating from intellectual layers, will fight alongside the proletariat, especially because privileged layers in the workers states do not constitute a class, and their social discipline is much less than that of the bourgeoisie. But many of those who raise their voices in defense of pure democracy today will be with the single-party apparatus to combat the proletariat in the fight for socialism.

10. The proletariat needs democratic freedoms to organize, to build its revolutionary party, to form unions that are independent of the state, to present demands, to go on strike, and to have its own press. It has the right to maneuver and make all the necessary compromises to win the right of expression. It is perfectly legitimate to join forces with democratic dissidents against repression and in favor of the right of political parties to function.

But democracy for its own sake does not solve the problems. Proletarian democracy is opposed to bourgeois democracy not because it is broader, but because it has the opposite aims. Proletarian democracy is aimed at allowing the workers to build socialism. Bourgeois democracy is

against socialism. Agreements are possible with the defenders of bourgeois-democratic ideology on two conditions: (a) that they do not represent any confusion between us and the other opposition forces as far as program is concerned; (b) that the democratic rights demanded be useful to the struggle for socialism. The party of the proletariat will oppose by every means the reestablishment of any form of bourgeois parliamentarism, private property in the press, separation of legislative power and executive power, any increase in the power of factory managers, high functionaries, etc.

The framework of proletarian democracy is the workers' councils, where the workers organize themselves to solve problems and designate their representatives in national bodies. All tendencies have a right to representation. The proletariat has nothing to learn from anyone on the democratic functioning of its representative bodies. The first thing the workers do, once they meet by themselves, is to let everyone speak, to discuss all ideas. That is the life of the workers' councils, the only functioning that makes it possible to combat the ideological influence of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie in a thoroughgoing way.

As long as the representatives of tendencies opposed to socialism do not conspire against state property in the means of production, or against the application of revolutionary measures of the workers' councils, none of them have any need to fear restrictions on democratic rights within these councils. Rather, it is the petty-bourgeois democrats who will have to learn to discuss honestly, not to prevent the others from speaking, and to submit to the majority decisions.

11. The proletariat demands freedom for all political prisoners and people imprisoned for crimes of opinion. No one should be persecuted for his or her ideas. Not only should the victims of the repression of ideas be freed, but all trials of opponents of the dictatorship should be reviewed. Under the pretext of crimes against the state, and even against common law, the bureaucracy has persecuted, imprisoned, and executed tens of thousands of dissidents, most of them revolutionaries.

Political discussions can no longer be settled by imprisonment. All trials will be reviewed. The workers' councils will commit themselves to assuring that the defense is independent and that trials are public. All collective responsibility will be eliminated, along with retroactive justice. The bureaucratic tribunals, based on the deplorable model of bourgeois tribunals, will be replaced by popular tribunals in which representatives elected by the workers will be responsible for the sentencing.

12. All functionaries, persons with positions in the state, the economy, judiciary, the army, and the police will be elected by workers' councils. All the workers will have access to all functions. Functionaries will not be able to receive a salary greater than that of a worker. All bonuses, indemnities, and costs of representation will be eliminated. Corruption will be severely punished. The councils will have constant control of those they elect. The latter will have to account for their missions at any time the council asks. The councils will see that the posts of responsibility are filled by the greatest number of citizens by rotation.

13. The division of labor continues to exist after the disappearance of a class-divided society, just as it has in the past in the history of the formation of the first class societies. The division of labor will only disappear when

all men and women can perform any task, not following social constraints but following their own will. That will be communist society, the highest stage of socialism.

We are not yet at this stage. But even now it is necessary to prevent the division of labor from being the source of material privileges for certain workers over others. The remuneration of labor exclusively according to hours of labor is only a temporary solution that would work only by means of violence if all the workers were not able to develop their own abilities to carry out all kinds of labor.

The role of the dictatorship of the proletariat, after the elimination of private property in the means of production, is to ensure that the social conditions allowing private appropriation of professional training are eliminated in the shortest possible time. Cultural and technical education should be available to everyone, for all ages, on an equal basis. This requires a substantial decrease in the workday and the substitution of universities by a public teaching service.

Those who hold a monopoly of general knowledge will generally resist the spread of knowledge to all the workers. But the workers will only be able to really do without the arrogant intellectuals of the bourgeoisie strain when they have surpassed them in knowledge.

14. As long as consumer goods are distributed according to hours of labor, inequality among workers will not be eliminated, because people are all different. Alongside the socialist market of the means of consumption must develop the consumer sector offered by the state in the form of public services. Thus, alongside the post office, telephones, health, radio, television, education, libraries, water, and electricity, it will be necessary to develop other public services and make them all available free of charge: stage presentations, vacations, food in canteens, and, especially, common public transportation and housing are sectors that could function as public services immediately.

Most of these services are now furnished by the state below cost in the workers states. Rationing in housing has been considerably alleviated, though the number of housing units is far from satisfying needs. The distribution of housing to the workers according to their needs should be ensured by the workers' councils well in advance of the attainment of abundance. The consumption sector offered in the form of public services prepares the transition to communism by not limiting the satisfaction of needs to the labor time of each person, but by taking personal or family situations into consideration.

15. The transitional society has realized considerable progress in comparison with capitalism in the area of the family, women, and youth. It nevertheless remains halfway between capitalism and socialism. Most of the social prejudices and constraints subsist. Contrary to the interests of society, the bureaucrats' government encourages the purchase of houses, the individual furnishing of apartments, and the possession of automobiles by individuals. The hierarchical organization of society causes the individual automobile and the *dacha* to appear as elements of prestige.

The situation of women is not as bad as under capitalism, but they continue to play a secondary role in the family. Equal wages for equal work is far from being attained for the sexes, as is women's access to all positions of responsibility under conditions of equality with men. The struggle of women and young people, as well as of retired people, for equality of social rights, for the consider-

ation of their specific problems by society, is a factor pushing forward the struggle for socialism. It is impossible to combat economic privileges while maintaining the privileges of men, adults, and active persons over women, young people, and older and sick persons. The revolutionary party should encourage struggles of all these social sectors as an inseparable part of the fight for socialism. Every organizational form that can help defend the interests of women, youth, and older persons should be welcomed with respect and be given a place in the socialist state organization.

16. The political revolution, and even before it the mere political organization of the proletariat in a few workers states, will have a gigantic effect on the struggles of workers in the capitalist countries. The proletariat in the capitalist countries is confused and politically stymied because it is unable to clearly see the road to follow after overthrowing capitalism. The ideological influence of the Social Democracy, the Communist Parties, and bourgeois nationalism in the poor countries is mainly a result of the lack of political life among the workers in the workers states and the fact that the program for political revolution has not yet taken shape in the eyes of the workers. The Fourth International's activity in the capitalist countries cannot be a substitute for experience acquired through struggle. Any working-class activity in a workers state, such as Poland, wins the attention of the workers in the capitalist countries and increases their political self-confidence.

The fight for the program of political revolution plays a vital role in countering the influence of the Social Democrats, Communist Parties, and bourgeois nationalists on the working class. In order to overthrow capitalism through a proletarian revolution, it will be necessary to have previously broken the direct or indirect ideological influence of the bourgeoisie over the majority of workers. A political revolution, or even the beginnings of activity by the working class in the workers states, will represent an enormous change in the relationship of forces in the working class of the capitalist countries.

Any revolutionary or pre-revolutionary situation in a capitalist country will depend on the political clarity of the working-class vanguard concerning the political tasks following the seizure of power. If the Fourth International were to give the slightest impression through its propaganda or practical conduct that it was not able to organize the struggle against privileges inherited from capitalism after the seizure of power, that the workers will have to submit to the social domination of the intellectual layers—then the fight to break the ideological grip of all the forces in the workers' movement that preach democratic and parliamentary illusions would be infinitely more difficult, if not completely doomed to failure. Any hesitation or ambiguity on the part of the revolutionary vanguard would only help the servants of the liberal bourgeoisie to divide the working class and divert an important section of the workers into defending bourgeois democracy on the pretext that overthrowing capitalism does not open the way to socialism.

III. The Materialist Basis of Proletarian Democracy

The general program of political revolution is the basic weapon to organize a proletarian party that can fight the bureaucratic dictatorship. Obviously, the general program

is not sufficient. It cannot solve all problems. Only constant activity supported by the party, struggling in the concrete conditions of every workers state, can transform the general socialist program into a concrete program of struggle for proletarian power through transitional slogans adapted to concrete situations.

It is necessary to build the proletarian party that is responsible for waging the struggle against the bureaucratic dictatorship in the workers states. But this is not just any struggle. The proletariat can only organize itself to leave the transitional society behind and establish the socialist society.

The Marxist program for the transitional society is the point of departure for the workers' struggle against the bureaucratic dictatorship. This is true for the present workers states and so also for every new workers state, even if established in one of the former colonial countries or in Europe.

The nature of the transitional society is determined by the legacy of capitalism. It will appear everywhere, although in different conditions. In the absence of the organized political force of the proletarian party, the transitional society will always and everywhere have a tendency to reproduce the Bonapartist dictatorship of the single party. It is idealist to think that workers' democracy can exist in a transitional society without a proletarian party and without a program. Any political regime other than the dictatorship of the proletariat will have a tendency to defend and perpetuate the privileges inherited from capitalism.

If the workers, in the revolutionary uprising that precedes the overturn of capitalism, have built organs of power, but have no program to organize the society after the seizure of power, if they have no Marxist party that links the socialist objectives with the anticapitalist tasks, these organs of power will not last long. The privileged social layers among the wage-earners will need to destroy any proletarian organ of control.

In the absence of a party, the workers cannot maintain their councils, their instruments of power, for very long. The first task in fighting for workers' democracy is to pose the question of the party. The proletarian party cannot be organized without a program. Forty years after the foundation of the Fourth International, in a completely different world situation, we must present the Trotskyist program for the transitional society.

Outside of this task, the struggle against the bureaucracy in the workers states will continue to waver between the confusion of the petty-bourgeois idealist democratic notions and the counterrevolutionary pressure of imperialism. The democratic campaign now waged by a certain number of dissident intellectuals in the workers states is doomed to defeat.

It might have been dangerous at another time, when the workers states were weaker and capitalism stronger. In present conditions, the reestablishment of capitalism through an internal counterrevolution is practically excluded. But when a petty-bourgeois democratic campaign is launched, it will be the most reactionary forces in the workers states that will profit from it. If there is a fight for freedom in general, but not the right to strike, it will be the factory managers who will benefit. If rights are demanded for all parties but no program is presented to organize the party of the proletariat, it will be the representatives of

bourgeois ideas who will benefit.

Liberty in general always ends up meaning freedom for the factory managers who want to escape the constraints of the plan, want to fix prices, decide how profits will be utilized, and set wages in such a way as to divide the workers. In the absence of a proletarian party, freedom of the press can only serve organized ideological currents: bourgeois, religious, social-democratic currents, etc. The proletariat has nothing to gain from this kind of democracy. It will not defend it.

In the absence of a Marxist party representing the interests of the proletariat, all democratic reforms launched in the workers states have ended up failing to gain the workers' support, since they have nothing to gain from discussions among different privileged layers. The workers will only intervene in favor of their own program. The single-party bureaucracy exploits this situation presenting itself as the best guardian of the socialist gains against the abuses of the high functionaries, against corruption, against the arrogance of the intellectuals, against the complicity of some of the petty-bourgeois democrats with imperialism.

The petty-bourgeois democratic movement in the workers states is not a reactionary movement in general, but to the degree that it is not aimed at expressing the interests of the proletariat, it is unable to offer a political alternative to the dictatorship of the bureaucracy. The workers might hate the party bureaucracy, but they cannot support a movement without a program, and even less can they support the actions of the other democrats, who do have a program: a reactionary anticommunist one.

We defend the struggle for democratic rights in the workers states. But what rights? To do what? Democratic rights are conditioned by their political content. The rights of some conflict with the rights of others. This is the point of departure of the materialist analysis. Marxist have never said that in the dictatorship of the proletariat we will have all the bourgeois freedoms and some others as well.

The idea that the dictatorship of the proletariat will be at least as democratic as the most democratic bourgeois regime is foreign to Marxism. There will be no free enterprise. The high functionaries will not have the freedom to decide for themselves. The workers' elected representatives will not be able to contradict the will of the electors. On the contrary, the electors will have the right to recall them at any time. Freedom of the press based on private property in newspapers and publishing houses will be rigorously prohibited. The state apparatus will not have the freedom to send the army and police against the people.

These are very severe constraints, imposed by the workers on the privileged layers under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The workers know by experience that there will be no freedom for them without restricting the freedom of others. The idealistic notion of freedom for everyone in a society divided by contradictions is a petty-bourgeois notion that, when put in practice, always expresses itself in the most sinister forms of reactionary repression.

The workers have every reason to distrust the petty-bourgeois democrats. To win the confidence of the proletariat, we must say things clearly, without too much concern for the feelings of our democratic opponents. This does not mean scorning them, or scorning alliances that we may

make with them.

The United Secretariat resolution states that the bourgeois parties should have every right to meet, function, and defend their program under the dictatorship of the proletariat. A little further on, the same resolution explains that the bourgeois parties will nevertheless not have the right to apply their program: "Obviously, any workers state must defend itself against attempts at open overthrow and open violation of its basic laws. In a workers democracy the constitution and the penal code will forbid private appropriation of the means of production or private hiring of labor, just as the constitution and penal codes under bourgeois rule forbid individual infringement on the rights of private property."⁵

Apparently, workers' democracy must copy the hypocritical forms of bourgeois democracy: We say that we assure freedom to our class enemies, but we prevent them from putting their ideas in practice. This gross imitation of the forms of bourgeois democracy has nothing in common with proletarian democracy.

Freedom of political parties in the dictatorship of the proletariat is conditioned by the need to publicly debate all ideas that the workers may express. The majority of society cannot be won to the socialist program without discussion and without the workers going through their own political experience. We cannot say how much democracy there will be under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The best guarantee of the democratic character of the dictatorship of the proletariat is in its program. Whoever wants to fight for socialism, as defined in the program, needs democratic forms of discussion and decision making.

The degree of freedom will depend on concrete situations. But we do not ask the workers to believe us. We appeal to the workers to take control of society. How would they do that without a democratic life in the workers' councils? How would they do it without a wide circulation of ideas? Restrictions on proletarian democratic freedoms will always be the expression of the weakness of the workers—as in the USSR during the civil war. We think that the proletariat is much stronger today and that proletarian democracy can be much broader.

From this standpoint, it is not excluded that parties with bourgeois ideas will be able to express themselves in the workers' councils. But we do not make this point a question of program. We always condition democratic rights on the program of socialism.

This dependence of democratic slogans on the program of permanent revolution—to overthrow capitalism and destroy its social heritage in the transitional society—does not imply that proletarian democracy is impossible while social contradictions remain. Just the opposite. To combat social privileges, the workers need a democratic system. The dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary because of the existence of a transitional society between capitalism and socialism. It carries within itself the principle of its

own destruction. The application of the program of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leaving behind of the transitional society, means the beginning of the withering away of the state, and with it, all forms of dictatorship, including the most democratic.

However, the historic experience of the last sixty years shows that the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat are even more complicated than the Bolsheviks thought. The division of the world into rich, industrially developed countries and poor countries emerging from colonial exploitation is a source of gigantic contradictions. It is much more difficult to reduce the division of labor, the opposition between manual labor and intellectual labor, than Marxists of the first half of the twentieth century thought. The survival of capitalism in part of the world was prolonged much longer than Trotsky predicted in 1938. These problems are the central concerns of the proletariat, though it has no way to say it. It is useless to speculate on the forms of proletarian democracy without answering these questions.

Any other way of posing the problem of proletarian democracy only subordinates the political initiative of the proletariat to concerns that are foreign to the struggle for socialism. It amounts to the partial or total abandonment of the program of political revolution, the material basis for proletarian democracy. It amounts to subordinating the fight to build the party of the proletariat in the workers states to the defense of abstract freedoms. Whether we like it or not, it contributes to maintaining the bureaucratic dictatorship.

The great task of the proletariat in this epoch is to define the passage from the transitional society to socialism. We have every reason to remain faithful to the principles established by Leon Trotsky to define the founding program of the Fourth International. But we cannot rest on the ideas of 1938. Here is the task of the Fourth International for the coming period.

August 1977

Footnotes

1. Lenin, "Theses on and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," first congress of the Communist International, *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), Vol. 28, pp. 466-67.
2. Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), p. 259.
3. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1 (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 135.
4. Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), p. 279.
5. United Secretariat resolution, "Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," *Intercontinental Press*, July 25, 1977, p. 871.

Regarding the Secretariat's Document 'Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat'

By Heredia, Argentina

It is high time that our International opened discussion and took a position on one of the most complex and difficult problems that must be confronted by the vanguard of the working class, the revolutionary activists. This problem is socialist democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is complicated today by a number of new factors. We now have the historical experience of sixty years of the life of the first workers state. We have the formation of new workers states after the Second World War. We have the experience of Cuba and Vietnam. And most of all, we must deal with the transformations in the social composition of the working class and the implications of this for the workers' level of cultural and political experience and for the relations among the classes. This phenomenon, which we have agreed to call the third technological revolution, has not always been deeply enough analyzed. We have not always thought deeply enough about the effects of this revolution on those countries where the economy is state run and planned. Nor have we always thought deeply enough about the dialectical interaction between this kind of society and those societies where capitalist forms have survived and developed. We have not always fully considered the effects of this on the social and international division of labor, or the new forms of penetration and interdependence, and other such questions.

The scientific and technological advances that have been made, the development of the forms of production, which have coexisted either with a usurper bureaucratic caste in the degenerated or deformed workers states, or with forms of private property, have given rise to growing independent movements of broad sectors of the exploited and oppressed whose political level and dynamism were quite unanticipated. These include the women's liberation movement, the struggle of the youth, and the mobilization of sectors that were previously marginal, such as intellectual workers and defenders of the environment. These movements have been demanding rights and raising slogans, advancing programs of a new type that have very profound implications for the new society that we Marxists are fighting to build. These implications must be understood and developed to the fullest extent.

What effects have these phenomena had on the life of the working class? What sort of dialectical relationship now exists between men and women workers, between older and younger workers, between manual and intellectual workers, technicians, and scientists? How do these new tendencies operate in relation to the vanguard, or vanguards, of the working class, to the masses as a whole? What effect does this have with respect to those bodies thrown up by the masses? Is the relationship between class, party, and leadership the same today as it was in Lenin and Trotsky's time? Is it justified to say that the relationship of the party or parties of the vanguard to the masses today is the same as it was in 1917, or that the

relationship of the party or parties to the state is the same? Will the structure of the party be the same as it was then? Will today's democratic centralism be the same as it was in the past? I think that it will not. So, I take my stand firmly with those who maintain that "A" is not equal to "A."

It is for these reasons that this resolution of the United Secretariat is so important. It has much broader implications than just taking a position on a concrete, conjunctural, or tactical question. If the discussion is limited to the "measure" of democracy to be granted under the dictatorship of the proletariat, although I do not want to minimize the importance of this question, this debate would either be unproductive or too narrow. On the other hand, if the discussion is directed toward achieving a better understanding of the dynamic of the profound transformations we see today and their implications for the program, policy, and organization of the Fourth International, of the need for a reassessment of our experience and the experience of the revolutionary Marxist vanguard, of the vanguard of the working class, and of the masses as a whole in the sixty years after the establishment of the first social system based on a state-run and planned economy, this debate, with the contribution of all the cadres, can lead to a great leap forward in the struggle of our party to play a vanguard role in carrying out the tasks of building socialism.

So, this is the way I understand the question and why I have responded to the call of the United Secretariat. In doing so, I am not only exercising my right to express my ideas but more fundamentally I am assuming my responsibility as a member of the movement to take part in formulating the policies of the party.

Ratification or Rectification, Updating or Revision?

I firmly and unqualifiedly support the resolution of the United Secretariat. I wholeheartedly support the principle that the democratic acquisitions and rights in transitional societies should be more advanced than, or at least equal to, the guarantees the masses enjoy in capitalist society. I totally oppose placing any restriction for ideological reasons on the right to organize as well as any persecution of people for ideological motives. I declare my full support for the principle of the right to have more than one party and my opposition to any position that overtly or covertly involves paternalism or substituting for the working class, its various strata, or the tendencies that exist within it. I declare my full support for the principle of separation between the state and the party or parties, and between the state and the unions. I oppose any professional army having a monopoly on the bearing of arms. I believe that there should be workers and peasants militias, although this does not mean that I fail to recognize the need for professional and scientific preparation to carry out both

offensive and defensive operations in the present context of latent international civil war. I am against any party or parties having a monopoly on the right to make decisions for the working class about what is most suited to its historical or concrete interests. I am against all state secrecy and for open diplomacy under the control of the people. In short, to repeat, I believe that the masses should achieve democratic rights superior in both form and content to those that they have been able to achieve in the most advanced class societies.

However, my support for these principles, set forth in the resolution, does not mean that I agree totally with it. In my opinion, it suffers from omissions, which may or may not be deliberate. For example, it fails to characterize Cuba as a deformed workers state and therefore to propose a program of political revolution. These omissions must be rectified. In my opinion, it might be useful for the United Secretariat to form a commission to review the discussion and on the basis of this prepare a more complete and balanced document. I will take up later some problems that either were omitted or were not developed in a balanced enough way in this resolution.

However, first it is necessary to point up some aspects. Is this resolution a *mere confirmation* of our traditional policy? Is it the classical Bolshevik-Leninist position? Isn't it a reassessment or a rectification, or to conform to the terminology that is in fashion in France, *an updating*?

I think that in fact it does represent a positive and necessary *rectification*, and I hail this step.

So, it should be said clearly what this resolution represents. Moreover, the material bases and the political reasons that have led us to this position should be clearly set forth. Otherwise, it would appear that what this resolution says is and was always the traditional position of the Fourth International, of the Left Opposition, and of the Bolshevik Leninists, and this would not be a serious approach. No doubt, without a lot of exegesis, we could find a great many bases in the works of Marx and Engels, in Lenin's *State and Revolution*, and above all in the great works that came out of Trotsky's struggle against the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state and of the Bolshevik Party, for defending the thesis that this is the traditional position. But it would probably take the opponents of this thesis less effort to find quotations to prove that we are lining up with the hypocritical democratic formulas of the petty bourgeoisie, and there would be no lack of persons who would see in this a Luxemburgian, or even Prudonian or Kautskian tendency.

The sort of "orthodox" who are never lacking would point an accusing finger, accusing us of capitulation to petty-bourgeois fetishism of democracy, some would certainly see in this the influence of "Eurocommunism," a scratch that could lead to gangrene, the beginning of an abandonment of the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat. As always, making any non-traditional political definition, taking any new position, involves struggles and internal realignments, resistance, and friction. What we have to be concerned about is making sure that the discussion does not get trapped in sterile scholasticism. We have to make sure that it moves forward in the formulation and definition of the program for this stage.

And the program for this stage is not the same one that the Bolsheviks had in 1917, nor identical to theirs, or to our traditional program. But in saying that the program

for today must be different, I do not mean that it should conflict with our past programs. The program for today must be a rectification that includes what went before. When we revise a program, that does not mean that we are abandoning it but that we are affirming its vitality, adjusting it to the needs arising from material changes and to the lessons of historical experience.

By the nature of this contribution I cannot take up such absorbing questions as Kronstadt or the resolution to ban all other parties as well as tendencies within the party that was passed by the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin and with the approval of Trotsky. However, I cannot ignore the precondition for this resolution or its consequences. Its pernicious precondition was the existence of a one-party system. We are all familiar with the exceptional conditions in which these measures were taken. We all know as well that they were intended to be exceptional and temporary. We cannot replay history to see if other measures would have led to other results. But there is no doubt that in this emergency the party substituted itself for the class. And for this a very high cost had to be paid. We cannot fail to take note of the fact that both Lenin and Trotsky, to cite the most outstanding leaders of the time, publicly acknowledged that they had underestimated the social and political scope of the bureaucratization and the dangers it represented. It is sufficient to mention Trotsky's attitude on the union question or on the question of the state's monopoly control. Likewise, I could mention the last testament of Lenin, where, faced with the advance of Stalin and the bureaucracy, he called on the party to reorganize the Central Committee but failed to say anything about appealing to the workers vanguard, the masses, or their tendencies or parties, and he failed to call for the rescinding of the resolution banning tendencies and parties.

It will be replied that in view of the international isolation of the Russian revolution, the demoralization and exhaustion of the working class, in view of its numerical smallness and submersion in the masses of backward peasants, of its low cultural level, that there was no other way. Perhaps so. But sixty years have passed since that time! The Soviet proletariat has solved the problem of hunger and unemployment, and it has become the great majority of the population and unquestionably has a high technical, cultural, and scientific level. The USSR is no longer an impoverished country but has become recognized by the world as a "superpower." And, except in very backward countries—leaving aside the law of uneven and combined development and the permanent revolution—the proletariat today finds itself in far better material conditions than those that existed in the USSR in 1917. The problem is to determine *today* in the concrete material conditions that exist *today* what position revolutionary Marxists should take with respect to democratic rights and guarantees in the fight to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and in the program for the political revolution.

On the other hand, it is impossible to avoid noting one simple fact. Not a single revolution has triumphed without very broad participation by the masses, in which they have been able to develop all their initiative, with a confrontation of ideas, tendencies, and parties. Not a single revolution has triumphed over a one-party system. In every victorious revolution, various tendencies or parties coexisted in the revolutionary struggle, under the

hegemony of one party or a united front. And, as a general rule, it has been in the first days of the revolutionary victory that the masses have won and genuinely exercised broad and deep democratic gains. This was true in the first years of the October revolution, and it was also the more recent experience of the Cuban revolution.

But it is also true that no victorious revolution to this day has succeeded in maintaining and developing a multiparty system and the democratic rights won by the masses in their revolutionary assault on power. In every case, when the revolutionary crisis has ended and power consolidated a single-party system has been established. This has been the case also in Cuba.

And in all the workers states, without exception, including Cuba, the existence of parties and tendencies has been banned; and the rights that the masses won in the revolution and which were one of the goals of the revolution have been cut back. Moreover, in every one of these countries, likewise without exception, a caste or political team exercises power in the name of the workers, in the name of socialism.

We may agree or disagree about the correctness of the measure the Bolsheviks took in banning parties and tendencies. But no one could deny that the time in which such resolutions were adopted was objectively an exceptional one and that the pressures were intense. Lenin and Trotsky, who were the main leaders, explained this brilliantly. But did the same sort of situation exist in Cuba, or in Poland, in Czechoslovakia, or in Hungary, for example? Of course, in every revolutionary crisis, exceptional situations arise, and the establishment of a new society based on a state-run and planned economy creates very serious problems. But we must ask ourselves whether the material conditions that existed in the USSR in the early years and which explain the bureaucratic degeneration that took place can be equated with those that existed at the time of the formation of the East European workers states, as well as the workers states in China, Cuba, and Vietnam.

I think that they cannot, that today no exceptional situation can justify cutting back the most advanced democratic acquisitions in any case in any of the workers states. The only reason for the cutting back of these rights is the bureaucratic degeneration or deformation of these states. And in the sixty years in which societies based on a state-run and planned economy have existed, we can say now without hesitation, that the disregard that has been shown for the historic democratic gains has not served to strengthen and develop the dictatorship of the proletariat, the transitional society. Instead this attitude has served to weaken it, to promote degeneration, to sustain and promote the growth of the monstrous privileges of a caste that has usurped political power from the workers in order to hold back and undermine the worldwide development of the socialist revolution, thereby prolonging the death agony of capitalism.

The Democratic Gains of the Masses and Bourgeois-Democratic Institutions

For the sake of brevity, I will refer the reader to the arguments presented by Comrade Sandor in articles published in Nos. 279, 280, and 281 of *Rouge* and in the series "Stalinism and Democratic Rights in East Europe." I would also stress that when I talk about unrestricted

democratic rights, I am referring to societies based on the expropriation of capitalist property and on planning, which is the *material basis for beginning to achieve equality.*

And even at the risk of becoming redundant, I must once again make a distinction between the democratic gains of the masses and the formal recognition of these gains by bourgeois-democratic institutions. In the latter case, these declarations, rights, and guarantees are a swindle since this comes in the context of defending the property of a few on the basis of expropriating the others. Thus property emerges as the "real power" which is exercised by those who own it. And this culminates in the universal obfuscation of universal "suffrage." The separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary, the guarantees of "due process" (which are partially included in the resolution of the United Secretariat) are simply the height of hypocrisy in view of the real power held by forces behind the scenes. The democrats, Social Democrats, and reformists pledge loyalty to these principles, since they are loyal to this concealed structure that rules the world. Our position is totally different. But the democratic gains of the masses cannot be confused with the recognition of these gains by bourgeois-democratic institutions, since the bourgeois-democratic revolution cannot be attributed exclusively to the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois revolution could not come into existence without creating its opposite. There were definite aspects of permanent revolution in the bourgeois-democratic revolution. (See Daniel Guerin's *Class Struggle Under the First Republic.*) On the other hand, no Marxist can question the economic and social progress that the bourgeois-democratic revolution represented for the masses. The acquisition of important and indisputable rights had a great importance in raising the social and cultural level of the peoples. In this respect we should note especially the right to form unions and to strike. It cost the workers centuries of struggle to win, consolidate, and extend many of the acquisitions that they enjoy today, and these struggles and gains are an essential part of human progress. When the crisis of the capitalist system is sharpening, the denial and subordination of these gains becomes the essential condition for the survival of the system. To attribute these gains to the capitalist system or to its ideology means idealizing bourgeois rule.

Without ignoring the dual character of the usurping bureaucracy that Trotsky analyzed, to maintain that the denial or restriction of democratic rights by this bureaucracy serves the needs of defending state-run and planned ownership against capitalist plotting is also an idealization of the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy cannot exist without the workers state, and so it has to defend it. Its fate is bound up with the fate of the workers state, but in no way is the fate of the workers state bound up with that of the bureaucracy. It is true that the capitalists plot against the bureaucracy, but this is not always the case. Both the capitalists and the bureaucracy, have united, now unite, and will unite in the future in a holy alliance against the masses, against the revolution. Capitalism owes it prolonged life to the bureaucracy, and the bureaucracy consolidates its domination over the revolutionary masses with the collaboration of capitalism. In my opinion, it is necessary to reaffirm this dialectical relationship today in order to define our program on this question.

Where does the idea come from that the denial of

democratic rights is designed to fight capitalism, to strengthen the workers state? Where does the idea come from that the capitalists have an interest in defending democratic rights? Isn't it clear today, sixty years after the October revolution, that the bureaucracy is only the secondary enemy of capitalism, an enemy that it can make an accommodation with in order to survive the attacks of its *main* enemy, which is the working class when it fully exercises its capacities as a class?

The reformists equate the democratic acquisitions of the masses with the existence of functioning bourgeois institutions (parliament, separation of powers, etc.). We maintain, as the United Secretariat resolution reiterates, that real exercise of these rights requires not only the elimination of private ownership but the existence of fully functioning organs through which the masses exercise power (soviets). In line with this, the democratic acquisitions of the masses are not the same and cannot be equated with the simple consolidation and extension of what has been won within the capitalist framework of society or within the formulations and system of bourgeois "justice." When the material base changes, the juridical superstructure changes. Once this change takes place, other rights come into existence, and Marxists have defined this body of rights as "socialist democracy." Only for the purposes of presentation, of popularization, can we speak of "democratic rights," since the rights that exist in transitional society are not the same as those that exist under bourgeois democracy. However, in the period of transition many of the bases of bourgeois justice persist, and as a result many of the manifestations of both sorts of democratic rights become mixed up. In my opinion, in the debate as well, these two concepts often get mixed up. The question is not whether the dictatorship of the proletariat is more or less flexible, grants more or less rights to oppositionists and bourgeois ideologues, grants a greater or lesser share of democracy. The dictatorship of the proletariat establishes another kind of right. This is not a quantitative change but a qualitative one. And this qualitative change comes from the elimination of ownership and the state, of bourgeois institutions. In my opinion, it would be good, if in the resolution we are discussing a brief section were included in order to clarify this point and forestall any misinterpretations.

Without losing sight of the fact that the resolution is intended to answer one of the big questions being discussed now, that is, the right to form tendencies and more than one party, I think that it would be much more balanced if we included sections on other problems that have a vital and pressing importance in the workers states. For example, something should be said about the right to strike and to form unions, the relationship between the unions and the state; on economic equality and the wage differential; on rank in the army, on the organization of soldiers; on the rights of women, abortion, divorce, the rights of mothers; on youth, on the organization of culture; on the structure and functioning of the universities; on the privileges of intellectuals and their material base; about science and the independence of art; on the national question and the problem of freedom of religion; and so forth.

In the light of the strikes in Poland and now in Rumania, shouldn't there be a special section on union organization and the right to strike, as well as one on the

right to organize more than one party, tendency and union federation? Do we today hold the position on these questions that Trotsky did in 1921? What is our position on the problem debated by Trotsky and Tomski? We should explain this not from a historical standpoint but with respect to the present social relations, for today. In my opinion, we should support the fullest right to strike in state-run industry without any restrictions or any administrative trammels. We must reaffirm the need for real independence of the union federations from the workers state and for the workers to have the right to join the unions of their choice, etc.

If we included these questions, as well as the demands that have been put on the agenda by the independent movements such as the women's liberation movement, the youth movement, and others, I think that this resolution would correspond better to our present understanding of "socialist democracy."

Included in Point 7 of the resolution are the bourgeois-democratic guarantees related to trial procedures, as well as the right of "due process." But it seems to leave aside the question of what judicial bodies will implement this, although it does talk about the election of judges. It does not explain that the courts should be people's courts. However, it is necessary to distinguish between the election of judges and people's courts. These are different things. Likewise, the definition of guilt, wrongs, responsibility, and improper procedure are different in the capitalist world and in a workers state. The Marxist conceptions of crime, the criminal, and punishment are also different than those formulated by bourgeois society. These concepts must be placed in the context of our understanding of the transitional society under the dictatorship of the proletariat, which we see as the first phase of the development of this society. They should not be seen from the standpoint of the bourgeois structure of the bureaucratically-degenerated workers state. In other words, do we defend the program of transition from capitalism to socialism? Or are we beginning to put forward a new program for transition from the bureaucratized workers states to an unbureaucratized workers state? There can be no question but that the former position is the right one. This position reaffirms the correctness of the conclusion that a political revolution is needed in all the workers states that exist today without exception.

The Bureaucratized Workers State, the Deformed Workers States

Revolutionary Marxists owe to Trotsky, Preobrazhensky, and the Left Opposition their understanding of the laws that govern the functioning and structure of the workers state, the scientific explanation of the causes of its bureaucratic degeneration, the explanation of the nature of the bureaucracy and of the disintegration of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the party, as well as the formulation of the program for political revolution. At the end of the 1940s, the Fourth International characterized the "people's democracies" in East Europe and China as *bureaucratically degenerated workers states*. In so doing, it made an undeniable contribution to the understanding of our age. This specific definition was not based on the degree of decay of the bureaucratic formation but on the origin of this formation. A half century has passed since

the Left Opposition in the USSR made its formulations, and three decades since the rise of the workers states in East Europe. Moreover victorious new revolutions in Cuba and Vietnam have created new workers states that are as deformed as the older ones in the key aspects. In these new workers states there is no full flowering of "socialist democracy." The structure and functioning of the state are deformed. There are no bodies through which the masses could organize themselves or make decisions and carry them out on the various levels of their self-organization and socialist self-management. I do not want to say that there are no distinctions between the sorts of social differentiation and bureaucratic privileges that exist in the USSR, and China, Cuba or Vietnam or between the different sorts of relationships that exist between the bureaucratic leaderships and the masses. But it is incontrovertible that in all the workers states irritating social differences show up based on the use of the surplus product of labor. And in no workers state does "socialist democracy" exist. In all of them, the principle of *one-party rule* has been imposed by repressive means, by police methods. Tendencies and factions are expressly banned in the ruling parties. In all these states there is a fusion between the party and the state. In all of them, professional armies have been formed that function according to the old patterns, with ranks and a hierarchy. The independence of science and art has been abolished. The democratic gains of the masses have been cutback. The organs of self-organization of the masses have been abolished or institutionalized as apparatuses of the state, under the control of the "party." The bourgeois concept of the family has been established. People's courts have been replaced. Secret diplomacy has been reestablished. In short, the apparatus of a state standing above the masses and in opposition to them has been restored. And in doing this, they have turned to the bourgeois principles of organizing a "state of the entire people" based on universal suffrage.

It is true that every victorious revolution has had to carry out expropriations, bring the means of production under state administration, and introduce planning. It is also true that to the extent that capitalist property was expropriated, put under state administration, and planning was begun, the productive forces have begun to develop at rates that were not thought possible before. This demonstrates the superiority of collective ownership over a system based on private property. But it is also true that when this development has taken place and a certain stability has been achieved, the masses have been politically expropriated. The leading role has been taken from them by the bureaucracy of the state, the party, the army, or by leadership elites (if the term bureaucrats is found to be distasteful when applied to leaderships that have unquestionable prestige and an attitude of revolutionary self-sacrifice). There is no doubt either that these bureaucracies, which owe their existence to planned and state-run noncapitalist society, have to resort to the arsenal of bourgeois law, and hierarchical and vertical society in order to structure the state. A few give the orders and make the decisions, all the others work and obey.

This bureaucratic caste, set apart from the rest of the society, is the product of a socialist revolution that has been choked off, contained, and interrupted. It lacks the specific features of a class. Its existence is bound up with the combination of collective ownership and bourgeois

norms in the state structure, in the relations between the cities and countryside, between manual and intellectual workers, the fatherland, the home, nations, frontiers, laws, judges, courts, crime and criminals, punishment and prisons, etc.—as well as psychiatric hospitals.

The prolonged existence of this phenomenon, its persistence for fifty years since the formation of the Left Opposition, thirty years since the characterization of the first bureaucratic deformed workers states, and the recent formation of new workers states with the same features, requires that the Fourth International consider this development in this resolution and update its program for political revolution.

The formulation by Trotsky and the Left Opposition of the laws that govern transitional societies provides the essential bases for understanding this phenomenon. But it is also undeniable that its existence has been prolonged beyond expectations and that this has given rise to new phenomena to which we should give concrete answers. It is no longer sufficient to say that the explanation of all this is the isolation of the proletariat submerged in a peasant world, the enormous economic and social backwardness of czarist Russia, the defeat of the world revolution, the exhaustion of a weak and backward proletariat, and the elimination—in fact, the physical extermination—of a revolutionary vanguard. It is no longer enough to say that the structure of the bureaucratically deformed workers states in East Europe is the result of the role of the Red Army as an occupation force and the structural assimilation of these states to the USSR. The Red Army did not go into China, nor Vietnam, or Cuba, or North Korea. Nor is it sufficient to refer to the Stalinist tradition of the Communist parties that led these transformations. The leadership in Cuba was far from being a Communist Party, and still the same phenomenon has appeared there. The USSR today is an industrial superpower. The working class is the majority in society and has attained a high level of skills. There is a weak modern peasantry that has nothing in common with the old muzhiks and the old kulaks. The capitalist system has been overthrown in modern capitalist countries such as Czechoslovakia and East Germany. By updating these questions, the resolution would reach a higher level of understanding and greater breadth.

In the revolutionary Marxist camp, voices are being raised in favor of a "reassessment of the USSR." Michel Pablo, who leads some of these sectors, characterizes the bureaucracy as "a sort of class." Reviving the polemics of 1939, he proposes to characterize the USSR not as a bureaucratically deformed workers state but as a "bureaucratic state," progressive with respect to the backward countries and capitalism, and reactionary with respect to proletarian revolution and socialist self-management. The expropriation, stratification, and planning of the economy by this "sort of class" has supposedly given rise to a new and curious kind of "Asiatic mode of production." So, this new kind of society would fit into a space between capitalism and socialism. It would be unserious to try to sum up Michel Pablo's thinking in such a thumbnail sketch. That would run the risk of distorting it or making a mockery of it. And by the nature of these notes and the necessary and logical limitation of this article, I cannot go into a long argument here. I just cite this as an example of the need to take the bull by the horns.

But it would be a mistake to think that in this respect we have said everything that needs to be said, and that our movement is immune to such pressures. From a different standpoint, some who pretend to be rigorous materialists, propose characterizing the bureaucracy as a necessary and inevitable evil. They say that it is the consequence of the persistence of the laws of capitalist society in the transitional society, of the social and international division of labor, of the division between manual and intellectual workers, of the privileges the rich countries gain in their relations with the poor countries. It is true that such material bases for bureaucracy exist and they continually generate bureaucratic tendencies. This occurs not just in the workers states. In big and little parties, and even in small groups, among the politically and culturally educated cadres, "intellectual privilege" can develop. Sometimes differences develop in the relationship between parties in the imperialist centers and in the colonies or backward countries. Sometimes the older comrades display a paternalistic attitude toward the youth. Sometimes male comrades adopt such an attitude toward female comrades, and so on. But in my opinion, a big distinction must be made between understanding the material basis of bureaucracy and the consciousness of the need to combat it, on the one hand; and, on the other, saying that as long as such material bases exist there is going to be bureaucracy and that this is inevitable so long as these bases have not been eliminated. In fact, those who support this view are led to make theoretical generalizations about bureaucracy being a necessary evil and to justify it, since it is supposed to result from the material bases inherited from the capitalist system. Given the fact that such material bases for bureaucracy do exist and can be expected to continue to exist for a long period, the concrete program of "socialist democracy" is relegated to the Greek Calends. Raising it is made dependent on success in the struggle for "economic equality."

It is true that, with the partial exception of Czechoslovakia and East Germany, the socialist revolution has not developed in the advanced capitalist countries, and that economic and cultural backwardness has been and remains an important factor promoting bureaucratic and substitutionist tendencies. But we must be very cautious about estimating how long the laws of capitalist economy will survive in the advanced countries side by side with the laws of the "socialist economy," and these laws that in turn depend on the world market. In other words, even with the development and consolidation of proletarian revolution in one or several imperialist centers, the period of transition could be long. Such delay in completing the transitional stage could result from the persistence of the laws of the capitalist economy for material reasons, as well as from the survival of the "bourgeois ideology" of the "reification of man." The inequalities between the "rich" countries and the "poor" ones, the "educational" inequalities between manual workers and technical and scientific workers, and the inequalities in relations between men and women will not be eliminated by a stroke of the pen with the mere establishment of the "workers state" and of a planned and state-run economy, no matter how advanced the productive forces.

So, must we resign ourselves to the rule, for a period of a duration difficult to determine, of a bureaucracy? "Economic equality" cannot be achieved by "political volunta-

ism." The profound economic, social, and political transformations necessary to achieve economic equality may take a long period to be realized. Is political expropriation of the masses by a bureaucracy going to be the necessary consequence of this? Isn't such bureaucracy the main obstacle to achieving "economic equality" in a shorter time? In my opinion, such statements are incorrect and mechanical. They confuse *historical determinism* and *historical fatalism*. And such a confusion leads finally to underestimating the furious political struggle that the bureaucracy has had to wage and is still waging, based on these material conditions, to impose its rule and politically defeat the workers, a struggle in which it allies itself with world imperialism. Such an attitude would lead us to conclude that the struggle waged by the Left Opposition was utopian, since the victory of the bureaucracy was inevitable, and we would wind up underestimating the role of the subjective factor in the phenomenon of bureaucracy. Therefore, there is a need to "readjust" our program of "socialist democracy." And this has undeniable practical consequences for our task of organizing opposition and political revolution in the degenerated or bureaucratically deformed workers states, and that is why this resolution is so important.

If the material bases that made possible the political expropriation of the masses by the bureaucracy have been altered, as I pointed out, how has the bureaucratic system been able to survive and incorporate new revolutions such as the ones in Cuba and Vietnam? I think that it is essential that the Eleventh World Congress make some progress in dealing with this problem. By the nature of this contribution, I was not able to develop this theme here. But it is unquestionable that we revolutionary Marxists have underestimated the political and social consequences of the relationship established in the post-war period between the bureaucracy and imperialism and their interrelation and complementary character as counterrevolutionary forces. Nor can we ignore the importance of the weakness of our International, not just our organizational but our political weakness, in making it possible for this alliance to be tightened. It is sufficient to note our slowness in understanding and correctly characterizing the deformed workers states in East Europe and China and our failure to understand the dialectic of the mass movements in the colonial countries in the postwar period. A delay or resistance as regards understanding and therefore organizing the opposition movements *today* in the workers states could be fatal to the perspectives of our International and thus for the prospects in the near future of a working-class political revolution. Schematic answers to this problem, as to any problem, are not sufficient.

The so-called third technological revolution has prolonged the crisis of capitalism. But peaceable coexistence, the bureaucracy, has played a decisive role in enabling the bourgeoisie to take advantage of this technological revolution. The existence of the bureaucracy has a vital strategic importance for the bourgeois leaderships, which today are trying to overcome the generalized crisis of the capitalist system. Only the political revolution can eliminate this strategic base.

Comrade Mandel has analyzed the three aspects of Eurocommunism in Issue No. 5, New Series of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*. I refer the reader to this analysis. I would only point up the fact that this contradictory

objective phenomenon cannot be separated from the existence of the Left Opposition, of the silent but determined opposition to the bureaucracy by the working class of the workers states and of the entire world, from the existence and struggle of the Fourth International and of the revolutionary Marxist movement in general.

Beneath the surface of the process of decentralization

with respect to the Kremlin going on in important Communist mass movements, there is a molecular tendency toward the recentralization of revolutionary Marxists in a mass International. The updating of our program, along the lines advanced in this resolution, will enable us to move forward in organizing this underlying tendency.

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