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The Political Crisis and Perspectives for Revolutionary Struggle in Argentina

Draft resolution submitted to the next world congress by the IEC Majority Tendency

I. Historical Crisis of the System: From Peron to Onganía

1. Argentina has been convulsed by an economic, social and political crisis, which throughout numerous conjunctural ups and downs, goes back two decades and, in certain respects, dates as far back as the thirties.

In the framework of a capitalist system where, because of the imperialist grip, there was only distorted and unreliable growth, Peronism represented the most suitable political formula for the industrial bourgeoisie. In fact, General Perón's regime did help, to an important degree, to bolster the position of native capital vis-à-vis both the traditional conservative classes and foreign capital. By using a highly developed Bonapartist technique, he succeeded in establishing a relative equilibrium between the bourgeoisie and the exploited classes, a balance, which while in the last analysis guaranteeing the optimum functioning of the system in the given situation, assured real gains for the working class and other popular strata. By basing himself on mass support, Perón was able to bring about the social and political restructuring that made it possible to take advantage of the exceptional opportunities offered by the international situation at the time. But in order to win this support, he had to mobilize the working class, which won the greatest victories in its history (universal unionization, the development of the Comisiones Internas [Plant Committees], on-the-job rights, social-welfare laws, a marked rise in the standard of living, etc.). It is precisely because of this situation that Peronism still appears to be a viable short-term solution to some layers of the bourgeoisie and a hope for radical social and political change to very broad sectors of the popular masses.

The success of the Peronist formula was to a large extent owing to the situation that existed during the second world war; the urgent economic needs of the European capitalist countries in the immediate postwar period of reconstruction; and to a lesser extent, the economic boom resulting from the Korean war. As soon as this situation changed and as soon as the world market was no longer starved for certain agricultural products and capitalist competition was once again unleashed, Argentina's socio-economic balance was upset and a serious crisis loomed up. From the beginning of the fifties, Perón had to set his course toward "rationalization" and a quest for sources of imperialist capital. It was this sort

of policy that provoked serious tensions between his regime and sectors of the working class.

2. Perón's downfall, resulting from numerous and contradictory factors, opened a period of prolonged instability. The objective bases on which the Bonapartist regime rested, which guaranteed popular support for the policy of the industrial capitalists, no longer existed and the ruling classes were not able to come up with any formula that would offer the slightest stability. The industrial bourgeoisie was deeply shaken by the crisis and was unable to project any solutions; it had, moreover, to face a pitched battle with the working class, which although it was on the defensive was still able in the five years that followed Perón's overthrow to put up a very vigorous struggle. The army began to emerge as the guarantor assuring the maintenance and functioning of the system. But it itself came under the influence of different social and political pressures and failed to advance a common strategy. It hesitated to take direct charge of running the government, dividing into opposing tendencies.

Frondizi's regime was, when all was said and done, an ephemeral attempt to reestablish the dominance of the industrial bourgeoisie, based on the radicalized petty bourgeoisie and layers of the proletariat that remained faithful to the slogans of Peronism. The Frondizi regime failed because, on the one hand, it quickly came into open conflict with the masses, and on the other hand, it could not provide a solution for the economic impasse and thus promoted a comeback by the most conservative sectors of the ruling classes.

The industrial bourgeoisie demonstrated its intrinsic social and political weakness and had to rely on certain sectors of the army until the installation of the Illia regime—as transitory as Frondizi's—which more directly represented the interests of the rural bourgeoisie and layers of the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie. The only success scored by the ruling class was that starting in 1959-1960 the working class, hard hit by unemployment and a declining standard of living, began progressively to lose its dynamism and fighting spirit and entered into a stage of relative stagnation and demoralization, able only to wage sporadic and essentially defensive battles.

The Onganía regime, which came to power in 1966, brought the army to the forefront in the context of a situation relatively more favorable for stabilizing the country. The main goal of the new Bonapartist regime was to rationalize and modernize the economy, a policy which

suited primarily the interests of the most "modern" capitalist sectors more or less directly tied to imperialism. Furthermore, the job of the new government was made considerably easier by the relative passivity of the broad masses; the neutrality or even the favorable inclination of the majority of the union bureaucracy; and the attitude of the Peronist movement, which was, to say the least, equivocal for an entire period. A clear indication of the dictatorship's policy and the source of the social and political conflicts at the time were the measures restricting sugar production in the northern mills, the attempts to reorganize the railroads and the ports, and more rigorous control over the universities.

Onganía's Bonapartism, which operated in a completely different context from that of the Peronist variety, could promote the interests only of a very narrow minority. If Onganía was able to partially reactivate the economy and appreciably reduce the level of inflation, it was only by increasing the impoverishment of the proletariat as well as broad sectors of the petty bourgeoisie.

3. May 1969 marked a radical turning point. In Rosario, Córdoba and Tucumán the masses mobilized in the most gigantic movements Argentina had ever experienced. The Cordobazo was a major test of strength between workers and students and the military dictatorship. It was the outbreak of a new stage of impetuous upsurge that created a prerevolutionary situation by shattering the balances established in 1966. This rise took the form notably of repeated explosive mobilizations both in the traditional epicenters of the workers movement and in the less radicalized cities, of hard-fought battles in vanguard workers sectors as well as general strikes that involved greater numbers than ever before in Argentina and in Latin America (November 1970 and September 1971). In this context the class struggle began to give rise to armed struggle, and urban guerrilla warfare spread to all of the country's important centers. General Lanusse pointed to the importance of this struggle when he said: "We are confronting enemies different from the traditional type since they are now coming from the population of the country itself. This is why all services should join in a common struggle . . . I believe we are at war."

The bourgeoisie thus found itself faced with the need to reexamine its whole orientation. The question for the working class was how to take advantage of the new prerevolutionary crisis and the new explosive imbalances of the system in the context of a comprehensive anti-imperialist and anticapitalist strategy.

II. A Prerevolutionary Situation and the Contradictions of Neo-Peronism

4. Lacking a political leadership of the slightest solidity or homogeneity and faced with a conjuncturally unfavorable economic situation characterized by the reappearance of high rates of inflation, the ruling class had to cope with a powerful rise of the mass movement and with the audacious initiatives of the armed-struggle organizations. It has tried, by an improvised technique, to alternate the most brutal repression with demagogic populist and liberalistic blandishments. But it has not succeeded in blocking the periodic mass mobilizations, the radicalization of broad layers of the petty bourgeoisie, and the re-

vitalization of the student movement; nor has it succeeded in crushing the armed-struggle organizations.

It was in this context that Lanusse adopted the policy of the GAN (Gran Acuerdo Nacional—Great National Accord), which led to the elections in March of this year. In effect, adopting a solution involving increased repression, like the reactionary solution in Brazil, contained risks that were too great. In a situation in which one powerful mass mobilization follows another, and in which armed organizations exist that are already endowed with a wealth of experience, a gorilla coup could boomerang and precipitate a civil war whose outcome could not be predicted.

The GAN's goal in agreeing to a reintegration of Peronism in official political life was to establish an accord between Peronism and other traditional political currents (especially the Radicals) and to introduce a constitutional framework based on this compromise and on direct collaboration with the trade-union bureaucracy in order to insure the essential positions of power to the military. It was hoped that through this operation it would be possible to isolate and crush the vanguard, especially the armed vanguard.

5. In the context of an explosive, actually prerevolutionary situation, it turned out to be impossible for the architects of the GAN to carry out their operation the way they had intended.

Despite their fraudulent nature, the results of the March 11 elections clearly indicated that the wave of radicalization had attained an extraordinary scope, not only among the working masses but also among broad layers of the petty bourgeoisie. Peronism was able to return to power without being compelled to make compromises with other traditional political forces, and the military was thrown completely on the defensive.

Campana's May 25 presidential inauguration was marked by dramatic events that revealed the depth of the political crisis. Under the pressure of the masses, who mobilized vigorously with the active participation of armed-struggle organizations, the government leaders most clearly identified with the military dictatorship withdrew from the scene without being able to camouflage their defeat, the political prisoners were immediately freed without any discrimination whatsoever, and Allende and Dorticós were cheered, while Rogers was compelled to stay out of sight.

The change in leadership the bourgeoisie carried out by installing a Neo-Peronist regime threatened from the outset to be fraught with danger.

6. The question that is posed is what chance does the Argentine bourgeoisie have to successfully complete the operation launched with the GAN and developed further after the elections.

The present economic conditions are in no way analogous to the conditions that created a favorable context for the Peronist experience at the end of the second world war. Moreover, the new regime does not have the possibility of following the path Brazil has taken since 1964—first of all, because Neo-Peronism will not be able to force the working class to accept what the gorillas imposed on the Brazilian workers by extremely brutal and violent methods; and second, because there is not enough room in Latin America for two "sub-imperialisms," and

Brazil offers North American imperialism different guarantees than does Argentina for playing this role. An extensive upturn in the economy lasting a certain number of years thus appears impossible.

This does not mean that the bourgeoisie has no margin for maneuver. They are trying and will continue to try to alleviate the pressure from American imperialism by appealing to Western European capitalism, which is seeking new openings in its increasingly tight competition with the United States. This involves both the possibility of gaining new investments, which would permit the Argentine bourgeoisie to achieve some short-term results, and increased exports of some basic products such as meat. At the same time, Argentina can try the tack of reaching agreements with other Latin American countries that are interested in stopping Brazilian expansionism and have already joined together in the Andean pact. By these indirect means industry could assure itself, for a certain time and to a certain extent, expanded foreign outlets. Limited measures of nationalization could at the same time insure a partial rationalization of economic choices by strengthening, in the last analysis, the strongholds of Argentine capitalism as a whole. North American imperialism alone cannot sabotage the Neo-Peronist experiment, given the danger inherent in rapidly exhausting this solution when there is no concrete alternative whatsoever within the framework of the system. Finally, the new regime can reach useful agreements with the workers states, which are obviously interested in the developments under way in Argentina.

The essential condition for stabilization would still be a rationalization of the productive apparatus: namely, an intensification of the rate of exploitation that would hit the petty-bourgeois layers as well as the working class. But the ruling class could only attain this objective by stemming the rise of the masses, launching a full-scale counterattack, and crushing all capacity for opposition in the proletariat and popular strata. In practice, this would involve a new political turn and a break with the "democratic" framework. And there lies the bourgeoisie's fundamental contradiction at the present time.

7. According to the election results, Peronism was returned to power with a broader social base than in 1945-46. Above all, it is the attitude of broad layers of the petty bourgeoisie that has changed in Peronism's favor, a consequence of their growing radicalization. Today it is really these layers that represent Peronism's most militant base.

But the scope of the Peronist vote cannot conceal their enormous difficulties and contradictions.

First of all, the international situation has undergone a profound evolution in comparison to 1945. In particular, the victory of a socialist revolution in Cuba and the existence of an American workers state continue to impose an incomparably clearer dividing line on the Latin American class struggle. Second, the Argentine bourgeoisie itself has already experienced the limits (from its point of view) of Justicialism, and it is only as an extreme solution that it has once again paved the way for the Peronists to take power.

What about the attitude of the broad masses, which is ultimately decisive? Among the workers of the adult generations, the new rise of Peronism has been a func-

tion of the degradation of their living conditions and the crushing of their rights by the regimes installed in power after the fall of Perón. Among the younger layers Peronism appeared, almost mythically, as a radical, anti-imperialist solution, with anticapitalist tendencies. Neither one nor the other are disposed to rest content with demagogic statements, with measures that are more dramatic than real; nor are they likely to accept the consequences of an economic situation that constantly reduces their purchasing power, or to foot the bill for "national concord." In short, they have a much more critical attitude than the workers who carried Perón to power thirty years ago.

All this is reflected in the deep divisions of the Peronist movement, which exploded immediately following the electoral victory and led to violent confrontations, indeed veritable massacres.

Campora's stepping down a few weeks after he took power dramatically confirmed both the contradictions of Peronism and the difficulties the bourgeoisie is meeting in its attempt to restructure its political power and to gain even a relative stabilization.

We are thus left with the conclusion that the installation of a "constitutional" regime will only be an interlude that the ruling class will be forced to reconsider. The opening of an entire bourgeois-democratic stage—a stage in which the parties and the trade-unions would enjoy real freedom and autonomy and could build up their strength gradually—remains a totally improbable variant.

In this context, the main danger for the working class and the revolutionary movement is that the dynamism and combativity of the masses has only been expressed in sectoral struggles—struggles that are uncoordinated and likely to run out of steam or to end up with very limited results; or that lead to spontaneous explosions risking isolation and repression; or that, in any event, have no real results to show.

III. The Working Class, the Driving Force of the Revolution

8. The working class, the fundamental driving force of the revolution, has accumulated a great wealth of experience over the last thirty years. It has been the protagonist of an extraordinarily wide gamut of economic struggles extending from normal trade-union conflicts to factory occupations and kidnapping hostages, of political general strikes, vast mobilizations and abrupt semi-insurrectionary explosions, and hard-fought defensive battles; as well as of embryonic armed struggle initiatives going from the most elementary kinds of sabotage to the boldest forms of urban guerrilla warfare. It has built powerful trade unions, which despite their origins and the ideology they adopted, have been seen by the broadest masses as suitable instruments of class struggle and which in certain periods have accomplished the task of defending the immediate interests and elementary rights of the workers. The Argentine working class represents a relatively homogeneous social force with a tremendous specific weight in the political life of the country. When it mobilizes together with the wage workers in transport and in the services, it is capable on its own of paralyzing

all activity, as has been shown on several occasions by the most significant general strikes.

The contradiction of the Argentine workers movement lies in the fact that the proletariat has reached a high level of organization and carried out its most decisive political mobilizations under the hegemony of the Peronists, whose leadership reflected the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie. Perón—unlike the MNR leaders in Bolivia—fell before a split opened up between his movement and the masses. Moreover, his successors sought to roll back the gains the working class had made during the Justicialist era and to crack down on the trade-union organizations that more than ever seemed to be the best instruments of defense. Therefore, the myth of Perón has persisted. In the period immediately following his downfall, it even gained strength. And the influence of the Peronists in the trade-union and political spheres has continued to play a substantial role in the political struggle in the country.

At the beginning of the 1960s, important changes started to occur. From a structural point of view, the working class in the big cities in the interior, which was integrated into the modern industrial sectors, was acquiring an ever increasing specific weight. From the political standpoint, the mobilizations had their epicenter first in the Tucumán region. A very hard-fought battle was waged there, but since it was a defensive one in the strategic sense, it was condemned to run out of steam. Next the epicenter shifted to Córdoba, which unquestionably became the nerve center of social and political confrontation.

This development went hand in hand with the emergence of young strata of the working class that had not suffered the negative effects of stagnation and demoralization. A broad vanguard matured politically under the influence of the Cuban revolution and the armed struggles inspired in many countries by the Castroists. The crisis of the international Communist movement and the Sino-Soviet conflict also had repercussions in CP circles.

Thus, in the 1969 mobilizations in Córdoba and Rosario an important role fell to very militant workers who were not organized in the traditional workers movement. So, too, an ever clearer differentiation showed up in the unions, which was marked by phenomena of varying importance but all pointing in the same direction—increased radicalization of the regional leaderships, formation of the CGTA [the Confederación General del Trabajo de los Argentinos—a left trade-union formation led by Raimundo Ongaro], the development of antibureaucratic tendencies and of plant unions reflecting pressure from below. Moreover, the emergence of these plant unions also reflected the revolutionary aspirations of the politically advanced layers of the working class that decided to break with routinist practices and respond to the violence of the repressive apparatus by posing the problems of armed struggle in a short-term perspective and beginning to operate on this level. The example of the Tupamaros in Uruguay was an additional stimulus.

It would be incorrect to conclude that Peronism's political and ideological influence is only a throwback to the past. But the links between Peronism and broad working-class layers have become much less solid than in the past, and their adherence to Justicialism has become much more critical. There are important layers that have broken

with Peronism, especially in the decisive epicenters like the huge plants in Córdoba, where the Peronist bureaucrats have even lost hegemony in the trade-union arena. All this boils down to the fact that Peronism no longer controls the workers vanguard.

The Argentine working class therefore has been and remains the backbone of the revolutionary mobilizations, and its role will be decisive in the coming battles.

Its weakness still lies fundamentally in the fact that there is no nationwide organization that presents a political line that is independent of every bourgeois or petty-bourgeois leadership or tendency, that there is no revolutionary leadership capable of mapping out and implementing the strategic outlines of a struggle for overthrowing the government. But forces have matured that understand the need for struggling simultaneously against imperialism and capitalism, as well as the need for an overall strategy of armed struggle for seizing power.

9. The peasantry does not represent a major force, and its social and economic weight is tending to diminish even further. Moreover, the Argentine revolutionists have not developed a general analysis of the countryside in recent years, a failure that has not been without its consequences in formulating political positions. It is unquestionable in any case that the poor peasants, especially in certain regions in the north where they are closely linked to the workers, must be regarded as allies of the proletariat. Mobilizing these strata both in political battles and in the armed struggle is an imperative need that revolutionists cannot underestimate on the pretext of the specific social composition of the country and the overwhelming weight of the wage workers integrated into the urban economy.

A considerable role will be played by the petty bourgeoisie. In the 1940s, this social stratum was to a large extent the base of the anti-Peronist movements and organizations that stood objectively on conservative, if not outright reactionary ground. The petty bourgeoisie also have been affected by the growing strength of the monopolistic sectors, the progressive elimination of all freedoms and democratic rights by the military dictatorship, the repercussions of the Cuban revolution, and the situation of other countries on the continent. The result has been a growing radicalization of the petty bourgeoisie, along with the radicalization of the so-called marginal layers which fit into a category between the poorest workers and the most impoverished petty-bourgeoisie. It is these phenomena that explain the role played by petty-bourgeois elements in the struggles of recent years and in the armed-struggle organizations, as well as the influence Peronism has gained in these social strata.

The student movement itself—which cannot as such be characterized as petty-bourgeois—has reflected, and in large measure given expression to, this tendency. The significance of such an alliance between the working class and the radicalized petty-bourgeoisie was shown especially by the participation of petty-bourgeois layers in the great mobilizations of 1970-72, as well as the links established between the workers and students at the time of the revolutionary explosions in 1969. It is evident, moreover, that the favorable attitude on the part of the petty-bourgeoisie greatly facilitated the development of guerrilla warfare in the big urban concentrations.

IV. Permanent Revolution, Between the Army and the Mass Movement

10. In a situation marked by a structural crisis and revolutionary tensions such as exists in Argentina, the question of power, of overthrowing the capitalist system and establishing a workers' state is objectively posed. But no positive solution of this problem is possible without an adequate strategy of armed struggle and without a revolutionary party intervening to apply this strategy.

The basic orientation of the struggle flows first of all from the nature of the Argentine revolution. Revolutionary Marxists more than ever reject every conception based on the assumption of a democratic stage preparing the way for a socialist one. They reaffirm the concept of a permanent revolution, that is that the revolutionary process unfolding has an anticapitalist and socialist dynamic. All of the experiences of the last thirty years—in Argentina as well as in other Latin American countries—show that a revolution that stops on an "antioligarchic" and "anti-imperialist" plateau and does not attack the capitalist system as such inevitably reaches an impasse, is thrown back, and ends in defeat. In those countries where democratic tasks remain to be accomplished—and there are less of these in Argentina than in almost any other country on the continent—these tasks can only be achieved in the framework of a dynamic of permanent revolution under the hegemony of the proletariat.

It follows from this that we must reject any perspective of an alliance with the so-called national bourgeoisie or with any of its so-called progressive sectors. The workers and revolutionary movement must not, of course, fail to exploit the tactical advantages offered by the enemy's contradictions. In the case of a reactionary dictatorship, for example, it cannot exclude the possibility that bourgeois organizations or movements may take part in the opposition struggle. But this by no means implies that bourgeois layers or political formations can be considered allies from a revolutionary standpoint. Any hesitation or doubt in this matter would come down, in the last analysis, to questioning the concept of permanent revolution. Since the revolutionary dynamic tends to shatter not only the framework of the capitalist system as such, a confrontation with the bourgeoisie is inevitable and it is necessary to prepare for such an eventuality. The revolutionists' criticisms of the Chilean Unidad Popular and the Uruguayan Frente Amplio do not concern simply the method of the "democratic road." They are aimed also and above all at the nature of a strategy that involves maintaining the essential political and economic mechanisms of the system, and, on this basis, an alliance or compromise with the bourgeoisie or important sectors of it.

11. In Argentina, the strategy of armed struggle, which the Ninth Congress could only outline in a very general way, fitted into a context where a prerevolutionary situation was developing, the class struggle was reaching the stage of armed confrontations, and embryonic forms of civil war were taking form. On the other hand, the bourgeoisie had not exhausted all its margin for maneuver. The imperialists and the bourgeoisies of other

countries on the continent were ready to intervene politically and, in the last analysis, even militarily to prevent the birth of a second workers state in Latin America. No revolutionary party existed with a decisive influence over the masses that could in the short run channel the social explosions that were occurring and building up in the direction of a struggle for power. It was in this context that the revolutionary Marxists said that unleashing armed struggle is a task belonging specifically to the vanguard. It must take the initiative, while putting the emphasis from the start on those forms of armed struggle that make it possible to establish or strengthen ties with major strata of the masses. At the same time, they outlined a perspective of armed struggle developing through ups and downs and multiple variants for a prolonged period.

It was imperative, particularly after the 1969 turn, to prepare for armed struggle in the short run, and the revolutionary Marxists emphasized this quite clearly, reaffirming the necessity of avoiding the isolation of the armed-struggle organizations from the masses, as well as avoiding all *foquista* or spontanéist, insurrectionalist deviations.

At the same time, it was necessary to intervene in the mass movement to exploit every legal or semilegal opportunity, and to use every instrument the masses have traditionally considered worthwhile, as well as those that naturally appear in the course of mobilizations at different stages of an acute social conflict and in prerevolutionary situations. More concretely, this involved activity in the trade unions, a persistent struggle against the decaying bureaucracy, and initiatives to stimulate the polarization and the maturation of vanguard layers of the working class around a platform that effectively corresponds to the needs of the struggles and their generalization within the framework of a political struggle against the dictatorship. It also involves systematic activity to support and encourage the formation of democratic rank-and-file bodies that are the product of the need, felt particularly strongly by the most dynamic layers of the working class, to keep from being cooped-up in routine functioning of the bureaucratized structures, to express their aspirations in a more immediate and effective way, to make their wishes felt more strongly, and to provide a broader united base for struggle.

12. In the period that opened with the installation of the Neo-Peronist regime, the central task of revolutionaries is to win a mass base, even if only in a few epicenters of the class struggle. This goal can only be attained if the revolutionary organization wins over or influences those vanguard cadres who have played a leading role in the struggles dating from the first Cordobazo (May 1969).

Each successful effort by the revolutionary organization in this regard will help strengthen the mass movement as a whole, thus deepening the crisis of the system, stimulating the political maturation of broad layers of workers and laborers, as well as their emancipation from the influence the bourgeoisie continues to exercise over them through the intermediary of Peronist ideology. At the same time, effective integration in the mass movement will assure the revolutionary organization more favorable conditions for facing the inevitable tests of strength and

for confronting with increased effectiveness a new stage in which clandestine action and armed struggle once again becomes a priority.

The application of such an orientation rigorously implies the following:

(a) a systematic struggle around the entire program of revolutionary Marxism. Any eventual adaptation to the level attained by the masses or by broad layers of the masses will only superficially resolve the problem of establishing links with the masses. It would inevitably lead to a tailendist orientation devoid of a revolutionary perspective and method.

(b) a constant battle to demystify Peronism and the nature of the regime resulting from the March 11 elections; this implies at the same time a definition of the prerevolutionary character of the period, of the nature of the revolutionary process in Argentina, and of the objectives of the struggle for power.

(c) a demystification of all parliamentary illusions. It is necessary to systematically emphasize the precariousness of the "democratic" interlude and the inevitability of armed confrontations. This means in practice that the revolutionary organization must not give up its specialized underground apparatus; even during the "democratic" interlude it should consider forms of armed struggle to counteract repressive actions against the mass movements or the revolutionary vanguard.

Revolutionaries will not hesitate to engage in struggles for even the most modest immediate demands. In particular, they will stimulate struggles for higher wages, for the rights of workers in the plants, against layoffs and repression on the part of the bosses, and for elementary demands (not only in the factories but also in impoverished neighborhoods).

They will, however, have to emphasize transitional demands in order to stimulate the anticapitalist dynamic of the struggles. In the context of a prerevolutionary crisis, such demands go beyond the level of propaganda and become the object of campaigns and of political agitation.

Two examples: To combat the erosion of buying power, which for many years has had catastrophic effects on the Argentine proletariat, it will be necessary to advance the slogan of a sliding scale of wages, under the control of the workers and the popular masses. And in their struggle to expropriate the imperialists' holdings, it will be necessary to fight for nationalization without compensation and under workers' control, thus avoiding confusion between the position of bourgeois supporters of "rationalized" nationalizations and the program of the revolutionary movement.

Revolutionaries will have to exploit the more favorable conditions for their struggle to renew and restructure the trade unions. They will organize or stimulate anti-bureaucratic tendencies in the rank and file with the perspective of a nationwide class-struggle movement, thus avoiding any identification with oppositional tendencies that are themselves bureaucratic. At the same time, they will urge the formation of democratic rank-and-file bodies, the instruments, in the fullest sense of the word, for revolutionary mobilization, instruments capable of becoming transformed into embryos of alternative power.

Finally, a campaign will have to be mounted around the slogan of a workers and popular government. The social content of this formulation is a government in which the representatives of the ruling classes would be excluded, a government that would be made up of representatives of the proletariat and of the layers of poor peasants and radicalized petty bourgeois who are the sole allies the working class can count on. The formulation of a workers and popular government will be explicitly counterposed to every formulation that deliberately blurs over the question of specific class content and implies an alliance between the bourgeoisie and the exploited classes.

13. At the present stage, political action among the masses has priority, and every armed-struggle initiative must be subordinated to this need. This does not imply any perspective of disarming. It means that the problem of the struggle against repression and against the eventual attempts to carry out a military coup must be posed on the level of the masses. In other words, the specialized detachments of the vanguard will be ready to intervene to insure the defense of the mass movements, but the fundamental orientation will be to stimulate workers' self-defense (self-defense squads, militias).

V. Critical Balance Sheet of the Argentine Trotskyist Movement

14. The Argentine Trotskyist movement developed under very special conditions. An Argentine section was recognized unanimously by the Third World Congress in 1951. The choice in favor of the Posadas tendency was determined fundamentally on political grounds. The Moreno tendency was characterized at the time by a completely false analysis of the Peronist regime and by a sectarian attitude toward the mass movement led by the Peronists. During the period of the split, the Moreno group established ties with the International Committee but on several occasions took positions that were not shared by the other members of the IC and which provoked violent polemics, especially in Latin America. It was not by chance that this group did not participate in the Reunification Congress and only joined the united International two years later. Both before and after the reunification, it expressed positions on crucial questions (the attitude to be taken to the Peronist movement, the possible role of the middle classes, the policy of alliances, the evaluation of the 1938 Transitional Program, the characterization of the Chinese CP leadership and the cultural revolution, etc.) that differed sharply from those of the International as a whole. As for the Posadas group, starting in 1957 it began to develop the aberrant political and methodological conceptions that led it to the 1961 split and made it the most grotesque and most irresponsible of all the sects that fraudulently claimed to be Trotskyist while remaining outside the International. From eminently dogmatic and adventurist positions, it passed progressively to ultrarightist ones, capitulating to the Kremlin and the leaderships of the pro-Soviet CPs. The lack of relations between the international center and the new Argentine leadership even after it joined—as well as the methods

of the Argentine leadership at the time—prevented the necessary political and theoretical discussion between the International and the Argentine Trotskyists as well as the assimilation of new cadres (especially after the fusion between the former Moreno group and the FRIP, which gave rise to the PRT). The consequence was that the Argentine section continued to express ideas, to adopt a methodology and to use a terminology that had no equivalent in any other section of the International.

All these facts must be recalled, because they indicate the origin of a series of positions expressed by the PRT leadership (an incorrect evaluation of Maoism and in particular of the theoretical scope of Mao's concept of people's war; an apologetic evaluation of Castroism; a centrist, eclectic concept of building the International; an opportunist concept of the struggle against the bureaucracy in the degenerated workers states, symbolized by their support to the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Kremlin's armed forces, etc.). These positions were in contradiction with essential concepts and analyses of the Fourth International and in the long run, insofar as those who held these positions did not come to revise them radically (in fact they limited themselves to a timid differentiation with respect to the Maoist bureaucracy), a break became inevitable.

A self-criticism is necessary in this regard. Immediately after the Ninth World Congress, a frank discussion should have been initiated with the Argentine comrades on all the political and theoretical differences; we should not have limited ourselves to popularizing the courageous actions of the ERP without at the same time raising the problems that existed. The international leadership's failure to do this unquestionably eased the way for those currents in the PRT who were opposed to Trotskyism and the Fourth International.

15. Before and after the Ninth World Congress, the PRT experienced grave crises that led to serious splits and reflected the difficulties it had both in defining its strategy, and then in translating into practice the strategy it had adopted.

Shortly after the [PRT's] Fifth Congress (July 1970) it initiated its actions through the intermediary of the ERP. It succeeded in instilling its militants with a fighting spirit and it was thus prepared to systematically and effectively launch a struggle of considerable dimensions. In the space of a few months, the ERP appeared to be the most dynamic of the armed-struggle organizations, winning broad sympathy in proletarian and popular strata and becoming a real factor in the country's political struggle.

The PRT-ERP's actions were formulated within the framework of urban guerrilla warfare developed roughly along the following lines: (a) actions aimed at accumulating financial resources; (b) actions aimed at acquiring arms, medicine, and medical equipment, etc.; (c) actions for confiscating food, clothing, etc., and distributing it in poor neighborhoods, aimed at winning the sympathy of the most deprived layers of the population; (d) actions linked to mass mobilizations; (e) actions to punish the hangmen of the dictatorship, who were well-known and hated for their crimes.

Certain actions in particular (the armed intervention

at FIAT, participation of ERP teams at the second Cordobazo in February-March 1971) attained the highest level of armed struggle in Latin America since the Cuban revolution, in so far as they went in the direction of integrating armed struggle into the concrete dynamic of the mass struggle. Significant episodes (especially during the mobilizations in Córdoba in 1971) were, moreover, a refutation of the opportunist argument that armed actions of the type carried out by the ERP are neither understood nor approved of by the working class and lead to the isolation of the vanguards. To the contrary, under the conditions of an upsurge and a prerevolutionary crisis, the existence and intervention of armed detachments of the vanguard strengthen the mass mobilizations and increase their combativity.

From a more general point of view, the balance sheet of the period of armed struggle from 1969 to 1972 indicates that the organizations that carried out this struggle won an audience among the masses that permitted them, among other things, to play an important role in the mobilizations of May 1973. And furthermore, while it is true that since the first Cordobazo the mobilization of the masses has been the decisive element in the defeat of the dictatorship, the guerrillas' battles nonetheless helped deepen the crisis of the regime, to bar the door to any attempt toward a "Brazilian" turn, to smash the first attempt at the GAN. At the same time they served as a factor in the political maturation of the vanguard.

16. Despite the favorable objective conditions and the prestige won by the ERP's audacious actions, the PRT did not succeed in establishing firm links with important sectors of the masses. Moreover the political content of the guerrilla struggle itself receded, especially after the Sylvester affair, their activities generally being dictated more by the need to defend or liberate their members or by logistic needs, than by an overall political plan. In other words, the PRT was not capable of fully exploiting the potential of the period—in terms of the given relationship of forces—in order to build a revolutionary Marxist party with mass influence. This is the result of the incorrect strategic orientation and overall concepts of the leadership team represented by Comrade Santucho.

Even before the 1968 split the party had drawn the conclusion, apparently unanimously, that it was necessary to put the question of armed struggle on the agenda. The analysis of the situation at that time—relative stagnation of the workers movement, acute social conflicts in the Tucumán region, existence of a guerrilla nucleus in Bolivia—had suggested the perspective of armed struggle in the form of guerrilla warfare based for a period in the north. The Fourth Congress [of the PRT] held prior to the Ninth World Congress, set forth a harsh polemic on the need to concretize the orientation for armed struggle (the minority represented by Moreno had in the meantime quit the organization), affirming a concept that tried to avoid the opposite dangers of *foquista* adventurism and insurrectionalist spontanéism. On the basis of technical and above all social and political considerations (having in fact a relatively static conception of the tendencies that were ripening in the country), the Fourth Congress gave priority to rural guerrilla warfare. The maintenance of this perspective, even after the Cordobazo, had no

practical implication, but it was at the origin of the new crisis that shook the party during the first part of 1970 and led to the departure or expulsion of the majority of the members of the Central Committee. The Fifth Congress marked a decisive step in the founding of the ERP: correcting in part the orientation of the previous congress, the Fifth Congress outlined a combination of rural and urban guerrilla warfare.

But these corrections, carried out in an empirical fashion, proved to be insufficient and failed to avoid a series of grave errors and distortions.

First of all, the development of the revolutionary struggle had been projected along lines analogous with the experiences of the Chinese revolution and the Vietnamese revolution, thus ignoring or minimizing essential differences (including the social composition of the respective countries, the existence of a party with influence over the broad masses even before the outbreak of the revolutionary war, the paralysis of the ruling classes for international as well as domestic reasons, etc.). Second, a schematic analysis continually blurred the essential distinction between the tendency toward civil war and the first stages of armed confrontation on the one hand, and revolutionary war in the full sense of the word on the other. Finally, building the ERP was seen essentially as resulting from the initiatives it took itself through the actions of its members; consequently, its military strategy was outlined without any direct correlation with the evolution of the political situation.

Another consequence was that it was quite late before the party understood the turn in the situation. Above all it was unable to rapidly and accurately assess the new priorities in its orientation (a weakness experienced by, among other things, its complete default when confronted with the tactical problems posed by the elections of last March). In fact, in the second part of 1971 and in 1972 it succumbed to a militarist deviation and ignored the need for forms of armed struggle increasingly linked with the mass movement (self-defense squads, etc.), which were nonetheless objectively possible.

Insofar as political concepts are concerned, the PRT took positions that were incorrect or at least equivocal in relation to important problems. It used completely opportunist formulations in an Executive Committee resolution when it characterized as strategic allies the ENA [Encuentro Nacional de los Argentinos — National Forum for Argentines] (including the Argentine Communist Party), petty-bourgeois formations, and even bourgeois sectors. It gave the first indications of a rightist orientation when last July it expressed an inclination to support an electoral bloc between the trade-union leader Tosco and the "progressive" bourgeois Alfonsín. It revealed its theoretical weakness when it expressed its agreement with the electoral policy of the Tupamaros, who supported a bloc of the [Uruguayan] Communist Party and the Socialist Party with bourgeois parties under the leadership of General Seregni.

In its practice as well as in its documents and publications, the PRT has shown, moreover, that it has not assimilated the method of transitional demands. This is why it combines, as it has in the past, positions that are correct in principle, but expressed in an essentially propa-

gandistic form (for example, when confronting the Neo-Peronist regime) with a minimalist platform for the working class and the other popular strata. This is a particularly serious error in a prerevolutionary situation, an error moreover that prevented them from adequately understanding the real significance of rank-and-file committees, the potential elements of dual power. All this alternates with sectarian attitudes (for example, the pretention of imposing the PRT's own concept of revolutionary war in trade-union platforms) and bureaucratic practices in interventions on the level of the mass movement.

Finally, underground conditions could for a certain time explain restrictions on the thorough application of the norms of internal democracy. But the PRT leadership used clandestinity as a pretext for limiting the circulation of political ideas, and particularly of critical positions. They adopted increasingly bureaucratic methods, appropriating excessive powers for themselves and introducing norms that are foreign to a Leninist organization. To deal the opposition harder blows, they came close to making a theoretical caricature of the idea of the class struggle within the party. Although the PRT leadership itself had announced the opening of the preparatory period for the congress, as soon as important sectors of the party began to raise questions about the political line, method, and relations with the International, the leadership quickly ended the debate by administrative measures that provoked splits. Even more significantly, the Santucho leadership prevented the members from learning about documents critical of the PRT that were written by members of the leadership of the International. And once the polemics began to deal with questions more directly related to the situation in Argentina, the Santucho leadership bureaucratically decided to break with the International, presenting not only the upcoming congress but also the Central Committee with an accomplished fact.

17. The world congress must draw up a balance sheet of the group recognized by the Ninth Congress as a sympathizing organization. It can only be a negative one.

First of all, the *La Verdad* group has applied a line opposed to the one adopted by the Ninth Congress. It has developed a policy opposed to that of the Argentine section of the International, from which it has taken its distance at crucial moments. It has conceived of its relationship with the International in a factional way. In its press, it has publicly attacked other Latin American sections as well as leaders of the International by name, whose guilt was that they defended the orientations set by the World Congress. In the second place, *La Verdad* has adopted clearly opportunist attitudes, showing thereby that it has not overcome the traditional failings of the Moreno group. This grouping, which went from sectarian positions in 1951 to a line of merging opportunistically into the Peronist movement at the time of *Palabra Obrera*, which oscillated between making conservative and bookish criticisms of Guevarism and giving unconditional support to Inti Peredo's guerrillas, even advocating a strict adherence to the discipline of OLAS, and which bore the main responsibility for the split in 1968, has confirmed its fundamental lack of comprehension of the needs of armed struggle in the present stage of the class struggle in Argentina. It was quick to seek electoral registration

when even the ultra-opportunist Communist party of Argentina hesitated to accept these conditions, and thereby objectively gave a left cover to the dictatorship's insidious maneuver.

Finally, within an electoralist perspective it concluded a political and organizational fusion with the Coral faction of the Argentine Socialist Party, a party that has never had any influence of the slightest importance in the working class. It was in the name of this party that it participated in the election campaign and recruited new members to the PST, using methods that have nothing to do with the correct methods of Trotskyist organizations. It confronted Peronism with a combination of purely propagandistic positions and completely opportunist postures (i.e., the demand for including 80 percent workers' candidates on the FREJULI [Frente Justicialista de Liberación—Social Justice Front for Liberation] slate; the reply to Campora's invitation implying an explicit offer of collaboration, etc.). In its daily practice, the PST interprets party-building in a tailendist and opportunist way. It equivocates—not only at the present stage but even in

its programmatic formulations—on the question of armed struggle. At the time of the Uruguayan elections, the Moreno tendency confirmed its rightist tendencies by supporting the Frente Amplio, led by the bourgeois Seregni.

18. Over the last twenty years Argentina has been the scene of the broadest mobilizations of the working class in Latin America. Vanguard elements have developed there on the basis of manifold experiences, both national and international, and there are many militants who consider themselves revolutionary Marxists. The formation of a revolutionary party with a mass base is on the agenda, and the Fourth International must consider it one of its priorities to build a section that will break with the distortions and weaknesses of the Trotskyist movement of the past, rigorously defend all the concepts of revolutionary Marxism, and draw the political and organizational conclusions that correspond to the pressing needs of the period.

September 5, 1973

Lessons of Uruguay

By Carlos Rossi and A. Toussaint

The Uruguayan PRT, which was established in close relationship with the Argentine PRT-La Verdad, claims to be a revolutionary Marxist organization and identifies (rarely, it is true) with the Fourth International. It is linked with the international minority which, against the formal protests of the majority, forced its participation (as an "adjunct" to the Argentine delegation of the PRT-La Verdad) in the recent meeting of the International Executive Committee in December 1972.

The PRT-U took part in the November 1971 elections in Uruguay in the ranks of the "Broad Front" (Frente Amplio). What is the political meaning of this participation? In a letter to the PRT-U dated January 28, 1972, Comrade Hansen emphasized the similarity between the Broad Front and the "classical" Popular Fronts. According to Comrade Hansen "the essence of the program and electoral platform (of the Broad Front) was pure class collaborationism" and "the leadership was placed in the hands of bourgeois elements, loyally and energetically supported by the Stalinists, trained since 1935 in the school of popular frontism."

The PRT-U at first tried to deny that the Broad Front was a Popular Front, by using some quotes from Trotsky taken out of context, and by claiming that Popular Fronts exist only in advanced capitalist countries. However, in August 1972, in their organ *Tendencia Revolucionaria*, they were obliged to recognize that "today we can say that the Broad Front is in fact only a Popular Front" (*Tendencia Revolucionaria*, August 14, 1972, p. 3). This in no way prevented this same organ, *Tendencia Revolucionaria*, from carrying a subtitle: "Internal Bulletin (sic!) of the 1968 slate of the Broad Front." Has a revolutionary Marxist group ever been seen to title its central organ "internal bulletin of a Popular Front slate"? In fact, the newspaper *Tendencia Revolucionaria* continued to carry this ridiculous subtitle until December 1972, that is, *five months* after the PRT-U's "discovery" that the Broad Front was "in fact only a Popular Front."

Now, we know that the rejection of class collaborationism in general and the Popular Front in particular has always been one of the unshakeable foundations of the Trotskyist movement, and the main reason for its break with a series of centrist groups (the POUM, etc.). How can the comrades of the minority, who claim to be orthodox Trotskyists, admit to their ranks and impose on a meeting of the IEC a group that for more than a year adhered to a Popular Front whose "program and electoral platform was pure class collaborationism" (as Hansen said)?

It is true that beginning in December 1971 Comrade Hansen criticized the policy of the PRT-U, in particular the fact that it had accepted the discipline of the Broad Front by heading its "workers' slate" with the *bourgeois*

candidates Serigni, Crottogini, and Villar. However, in the document "Argentina and Bolivia — The Balance Sheet" we find this ambiguous formula: "It will be recalled that Hansen solidarized with the objectives of the Uruguayan comrades who entered the Frente Amplio (Broad Front) in order to fight from within for independent political action and in opposition to running bourgeois candidates. He criticized the continuation of this tactical course once the leaders of the Frente Amplio imposed as a requirement for participating in the formation the inclusion of the names of the top bourgeois candidates on the slates of all the tendencies." (*Argentina and Bolivia — The Balance Sheet*, IIDB, Vol. X, No. 1 in 1973, p. 37)

The poor old POUM also entered the Popular Front in 1936 "to fight from within for independent political action and in opposition to bourgeois parties" . . . Must we then revise the traditional principles of Trotskyism and allow participation in Popular Fronts with their "pure class-collaborationist" program, as long as it is to "fight from within"? According to the passage cited from the document "Argentina and Bolivia — The Balance Sheet," the only problem would have been the presence of bourgeois candidates at the head of the PRT-U's "workers" slate. But would everything have been in order if these candidates had not been at the head, but *somewhere else* on a bourgeois slate *in the same Popular Front* with the PRT-U? Apparently we don't mind being in a front with the bourgeoisie, a front whose program is class-collaborationist, as long as the bourgeoisie lets us have a "socialist" and "workers" corner for ourselves.

Let us emphasize that the document "Argentina and Bolivia — The Balance Sheet," presented in December 1972, says not a word about the participation of the PRT-U in the Broad Front during 1972, particularly after August 1972 when the PRT-U itself recognized that this electoral and parliamentary bloc had a Popular Front character.

In June 1973 Uruguay experienced a far-right military coup directly patterned on the Brazilian model. With the complicity of the reactionary President Bordaberry, Parliament was dissolved and the workers movement brutally repressed. How did the PRT-U prepare the Uruguayan workers for this development in the situation, made inevitable by the very growth of the mass movement in Uruguay?

Here is a "prophetic" quotation from *Tendencia Revolucionaria* ("internal bulletin of the 1968 slate of the Broad Front"), dated November 6, 1972: "Despite the fact that there are some putschist sectors of minor importance, we believe that the majority of the army is exerting pressure to participate in a 'nationalist' government that would preserve the classical bourgeois institutions so as not to introduce factors that would provoke the growth of the workers movement. . . . The most probable tendency is

therefore that the government's populist course will be accentuated and that the constitutional regime will for the moment be maintained." (*Tendencia Revolucionaria*, No. 44, p. 2)

In a document drawn up at the end of 1972, the PRTU repeats the offense:

"We must now conclude by defining what tendency we foresee as most probable. We believe that the perspective is for the strengthening of the left-nationalist sectors and, so far as the government is concerned, for increased populist measures while maintaining the bourgeois institutions. In a word: we believe that there is a tendency toward a democratic opening with nationalist characteristics on the Peruvian model, but maintaining the institutions for the time being." (*Revista de América*, No. 10, March-April 1973, p. 33)

In February the Uruguayan army threatens a coup, issuing proclamations with a pseudo-nationalist verbiage, but ends up conciliating with Bordaberry. *Tendencia Revolucionaria* proudly states: "For months, our paper was the *only one* in the workers and revolutionary press of our country that fought the specter of a fascist coup and called tirelessly for permanent mobilization of the workers and people in support of their demands. WE HELD THAT THE MOST PROBABLE VARIANT, GIVEN THE INSTABILITY OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION, WAS A 'NATIONALIST' MILITARY SOLUTION, SUGGESTED BY THE PERUVIAN MODEL." (*Tendencia Revolucionaria*, February 20, 1973, No. 46, p. 2. Emphasis in original.) Four months later the far-right, repressive, reactionary "Brazilian-style" military coup took place. The PRT-U therefore has the doubtful glory of having been the *only* workers and revolutionary group not to have prepared the Uruguayan proletariat for this eventuality.

Moreover, this was not an incidental error, or an error unique to the Uruguayan PRT. In the May 23-30, 1973, issue of *Avanzada Socialista*, the organ of the Argentine PST, we read the following prophetic passage:

"The recent frictions between the armed forces and the Congress could give the impression that Uruguay is on the verge of a coup d'état. The military's demand that the government lift the immunity of Senator Erro, of the Broad Front, so that he can be arrested and charged with involvement with the Tupamaros guerrillas, aroused the opposition of all the politicians who do not want to abandon their role as leaders of the country. President Bordaberry for his part continues to play a role of appearing to give way to pressures from the military, but fundamentally he is trying to prevent a coup that would suppress the parliamentary system.

"However, there is no blood flowing in the streets. It seems that the military is satisfied with Erro's political verdict, and the possibility of a coup has declined. These facts indicate that the Uruguayan bourgeoisie supports the parliamentary system for the time being. . . .

". . . The Uruguayan labor movement, for its part, is continuing its offensive. . . ."

Thus, *four weeks* before the coup, the main component of the international minority was stating that the perspective of a coup d'état was declining and that the Uruguayan bourgeoisie remained committed to the parliamentary system in the face of a mass upsurge that increasingly escaped

the control of the Stalinist leadership. If it is possible to judge the tree by its fruits, the minority line in Latin America can be judged and condemned in the light of the Uruguayan affair.

That is not all: in its document at the end of 1972, the PRT-U even went so far as to compare the government of Bordaberry—this ultrareactionary landlord, admirer of the Brazilian gorillas and mortal enemy of the workers movement—with the Allende government in Chile! According to the PRT-U, "the present government is responsive to the same process under way throughout Latin America, with Velasco in Peru, Allende in Chile, Torres in Bolivia, or Torrijos in Panama, except that Bordaberry is not the representative of the new "developmentalist" sectors, but of the old national bourgeoisie based on the big cattle ranches." (*Revista de América*, No. 10, March-April 1973, p. 29)

The PRT-U's lack of foresight in relation to the future events as they were developing was not a chance occurrence: it flows from their strategic perspective on Latin America, which is largely shared by the minority tendency throughout the continent. This perspective holds that:

1. In the present stage of profound neo-imperialist penetration and growth of the mass movement, there is a continental trend on the part of the Latin American bourgeoisie toward regimes of the Peruvian type" (*Revista de América*, p. 33).

For the PRT-U the frictions between the "national" bourgeoisies and imperialism "become more intense each time." (*Ibid.* p. 32) Which leads it to another conclusion: "In order to oppose Yankee imperialist penetration, the national bourgeoisies must necessarily base themselves on the masses, and this obliges them to formulate policies that include certain concessions to the masses." (*Tendencia Revolucionaria*, No. 44, Nov. 6, 1972, p. 2)

The bizarre characterization of the Bordaberry regime and the "clarifications" of the PRT-U are only a clumsy attempt to apply this general perspective to Uruguay. We need not emphasize that after the events in Bolivia, Uruguay, and Chile, this perspective appears to be not very "general."

2. From this overall pressure toward an increase in the number of national-populist regimes there flows a strategy of gradual accumulation of forces and relatively peaceful growth of the mass movement, in the tranquil context of a "democratic opening." In such a context one can limit oneself (as does the PRT-U) to propaganda, electoral activity, and trade-union work.

We can therefore conclude that the policy of the PRT-U in 1971-73 contributed, within the modest proportions of its influence, to politically disarming the masses for the confrontation that was coming. This policy helped to lull them with illusions, and in no way prepared them for armed confrontation with the state apparatus.

What were the PRT-U's proposals at the time of the military putsch of June 1973? According to *Avanzada Socialista* the PRT-U proposed, in a leaflet distributed to striking workers who were occupying their factories:

1. that they "establish the closest coordination between the different firms;"

2. that they "go out into the neighborhoods, win their support, and bring their neighbors into the tasks of the strike."

Conclusion: "In this way we will succeed in consolidating the strike and bring about its victory" (*Avanzada Socialista*, No. 68, July 18-25, 1973, p. 4). Nothing about workers self-defense, not a word about the arming of the proletariat, no mention of workers militias! We are not even dealing here with the discussion between the majority and minority in the International, about insurrection and prolonged war, guerrilla warfare and militias, etc. . . . The question is purely and simply never considered. The issue that distinguishes Leninism from Social Democracy —how to destroy the military apparatus of the bourgeois state—is glossed over altogether.

The brother party of the PRT-U, the Argentine PST, at least tried to produce a reply. Let us examine it, for it is indicative of the way in which this organization conceives of "military strategy":

1. "If the revolution of the Uruguayan workers was not victorious, it is for precise reasons: it would have sufficed if a network of militants well-organized as picket squads had contacted the different factories and informed the workers of the troop movements by the repressive forces. . . ." (*Avanzada Socialista*, No. 66, July 4-11, 1973) This would have been a good thing, of course, but obviously insufficient: once the factories were occupied and informed of the movements of the repressive forces, what then?

2. The article replies: "It would have been necessary to surround each factory with flammable materials and pose the capitalists with the dilemma that repression would mean the destruction of the factory." Did the Chilean capitalists hesitate to bomb the Sumar factory (and many others) to crush the workers? The capitalists prefer to destroy *all the factories* rather than lose power, because they know very well that with state power they can rebuild the factories, but if the proletariat is victorious, everything will be lost, both the power and the factories . . . One must be an Economist of pre-1903 vintage to believe that the

bourgeoisie can be beaten at the level of the factories rather than by destroying the politico-military apparatus of the bourgeoisie at the level of state power.

3. But this is not all. The third proposition of the Argentine PST offers a miracle-solution: "For the Uruguayan revolution to have had a possibility of being victorious, it would have been necessary to speak to the 40,000 Uruguayan soldiers (who are paid starvation wages) in the same terms the workers used when they addressed the troops during the partial insurrection of Córdoba (the Cordobazo): 'Soldier, brother, do not shoot.'" Speaking to the soldiers is an excellent, even indispensable tactic, but unfortunately by itself it has never led to victory over a bourgeois army. In October 1917, did Lenin only speak to the soldiers or did he organize an *armed Red Guard*? To defeat the White armies, did Trotsky limit himself to making appeals to the White troops, or did he build a *Red Army*? (Not to speak of the experience of the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban revolutions. . .). The article by the Argentine PST *does not say a word* about the arming of the proletariat. But substituting an emotional appeal to "brother soldiers instead of preparing for the inevitable violent confrontation with the armed bands of Capital, doesn't this article tend toward a peculiar version of the "peaceful road to socialism"?

We venture to hope that not all comrades who identify with the international minority share the conceptions of the PRT-U and the PST. However, these conceptions show where the logic of some minority positions can lead.

What Lenin wrote for the Comintern in 1920 applies more than ever for the Fourth International: "Of course, the mistakes of Left doctrinairism in communism is at present a thousand times less dangerous and less significant than that of right doctrinairism (i.e., social chauvinism and Kautskyism. . . ." ("Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder," *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 103)

September 1973

Introduction to the Discussion on Workers' Struggles in Capitalist Europe

**Report by Livio Maitan presented to the April 28-29, 1973,
meeting of European Political Bureaus**

1) The rise of workers' struggles in capitalist Europe over the last few years has to be seen in the political context analyzed in the European perspectives document adopted by the IEC [IIDB Vol. IX, No. 5], the essential points of which are:

a) The prolonged boom in the capitalist economy is over. Even in countries where the recession has been followed by a conjunctural upturn, rates of growth have slowed appreciably. The stimulants to the post-war period of economic growth are now exhausted or slowing down, and have not been replaced by others of comparable effect.

b) Conjunctural difficulties have reinforced the tendency toward increasingly sharp competition and a growing concentration of capital. The conflicts between the U. S. and Europe, between the U. S. and Japan, and within the Common Market itself are dramatic evidence of the contradictions in the system on a world scale.

c) The bourgeoisie needs, much more than in the previous period, to control the movement of wages and reduce levels of employment, but it is forced to carry out these operations in the context of a general change in the relationship of forces in favor of the working class. For one thing, economic growth in the period of the prolonged boom increased the specific social weight of the proletariat. For another, "neo-capitalist" society has not only proved unable to satisfy the "new" needs stimulated by its own consumer ideology, but has also been incapable of meeting the most elementary and "traditional" needs of broad layers of the working population. At the same time workers have been faced with increasingly intolerable conditions and have been pushed to the limits physically and mentally both by the organization of work in the factory and by living conditions in general (irrational urban development, transport crisis, deteriorating housing situation, etc.). Without understanding this last factor in particular, it is difficult to explain the apparently sudden revolt of certain layers of workers and the widespread opposition to the way work is organized.

As the European perspectives document points out, the inescapable conclusion is that capitalist relations of production are more than ever in dramatic contradiction with the potential of the productive forces, and with the most basic demands of even the most disjointed kind of economic development, and with a level of social organization that can effectively confront and resolve the enormous problems posed on a world scale. The crisis of capitalist society also stems from the fact that this is in-

creasingly clearly recognized not only by very broad layers of the working class, but also by growing sectors of the so-called middle classes and even sectors of the ruling class, which in certain countries in particular are in disarray, and even seriously demoralized.

2) The breadth and extent of workers' struggles in recent years is summed up in the following three points: a) they are generalized throughout the continent; b) strikes and struggles of all kinds mobilize or tend to mobilize the whole or the great majority of the working class and wage-earners, uniting workers in the most modern and most backward factories, in the most economically and politically advanced areas and the most backward ones, linking broad layers of technicians and workers involved in production, services, and administration, with agricultural workers and sectors of small and middle peasants, who are only partially shielded by protectionist structures set up for political reasons; c) struggles tend to last longer and to become broader, though not in strict accordance with conjunctural ups and downs.

A central point in our analysis is that these tendencies are operative throughout capitalist Europe. It goes without saying that they do not always operate everywhere at the same time and in the same form: after 1968 there were genuine explosions of a generalized nature in some countries, and in others only an indication of things to come (to mention only the two extremes within a wide range of variants). This unevenness has contradictory consequences: it moderates the explosive nature of the situation at any given moment (relative equilibrium in some countries can coexist with a revolutionary crisis in others); but at the same time it results in prolonged instability (new countries entering into crisis can pick up the baton for others entering a period of partial downturn or regaining their strength).

The perspective on which we must base our orientation is one of the continuation and, in general, acceleration of the social and political crisis that began in 1968. There will be a tendency for confrontations to take place more and more directly between the two major classes, to decide whether there will be an upturn in the rate of profit or a rise in wages; wage controls or the right of the working class to struggle at every turn to defend its interests and satisfy its needs; the restoration or maintenance of the bosses' authority in the factory, or the development of workers' democracy; intensification of the rate of exploitation or reduction of hours with workers' control over speed of work, the size of the work force, etc.

3) On the basis of five years' experience it is now possible to sketch the various forms in which the social crisis, whose origins and features are outlined above, has expressed itself or will tend to express itself. In general the possibilities, which may appear in distinct or combined form, are the following:

a) a concentrated explosion on a national scale, producing a revolutionary or prerevolutionary situation (May '68 in France); b) massive, prolonged mobilizations of the working class and working masses, with strikes by key sections, and regional and national strikes, leading to a prerevolutionary crisis or very deep social and political crises (Italy 1969-1973); c) trials of strength at a national level or moves in that direction (Britain 1972, Denmark 1973); d) very militant mobilizations by decisive layers of the working class, or by its socially and politically advanced sectors (Spain, France, Italy); e) limited initial experiences that nonetheless potentially involve the characteristic features of the period (West Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands).

There is also a whole range of demands and aims. But even after May 1968 in France and the 1969 upsurge in Italy, it was possible to grasp common themes, determined by parallel socio-economic tendencies. In the light of recent experiences, these themes may well be summarized as follows: a) wage claims with the primary significance of a rejection of wage controls; b) egalitarian demands aiming to reduce the existing differentiation in the working class and between factory workers and office workers; c) an increasingly open, conscious challenge to the organization of work imposed by the bosses at the present stage of the development of capitalism; d) a reduction of hours without wage cuts, and an increase in paid holidays; e) a struggle against the generalized rise in prices.

The forms of struggle that have been adopted represent an attempt by the masses or broad layers of workers to satisfy the new needs of the period of social and political crisis. They have meant a profound renewal and revitalization of the methods used by the workers' movement in the most dynamic stages of its historical battle. They have most often been imposed from below, either by the initiative of vanguard layers or sectors, or by pressure on the bureaucratic apparatus. They have ranged from militant strikes breaking with the routine of staying at home or holding dull parades, and have been characterized by aggressive demonstrations in the factories, militant picket lines, and actions to prevent any activity, even of a purely administrative nature—to genuine factory occupations. There has also been frequent use of such tactics as rotating strikes, striking in departments at the nerve-center of the factory to paralyze the whole of it, slowdowns initiated by the workers, blocking the shipment of goods, etc. At the same time the workers have often understood the need to overcome the limitations of a purely internal struggle and to make their fight the axis of a more general political awakening and confrontation (with big demonstrations through the main streets of cities, the blocking of roads, railways, and administrative buildings, etc.).

Such dynamic movements could not express themselves solely through "normal" or "traditional" organizational

forms. Here again workers in struggle have been forced, even if only empirically, to satisfy the new requirements of the period by drawing on the best traditions of proletarian democracy. Strike committees and the like have often sprung up with the aim of filling the void left by the apparatuses, to operate parallel to them or even take over their functions; organizational forms that had deteriorated have been revived (Britain, Spain) and others have sprung up as a more direct, living expression of the mobilized masses (Italy). At the highest levels of struggle, notably in 1969 in Italy, these committees tended toward the embryonic elements of dual power in the factories.

4) The social and political crisis following 1968 has shaken the hegemony of the great bureaucratic apparatuses to its foundations, with the contradictions between the masses and the apparatus, and within the apparatus itself, exploding or simply ripening (depending on the particular situation). The most significant developments have appeared, and probably will appear for a whole period, in the trade unions, which today, even more than in the past, are an essential instrument for the maintenance of reformist or neoreformist hegemony over the proletariat.

The attitudes the bureaucratic leaderships and apparatuses have adopted in recent years, or will be pushed into adopting as crisis situations develop, can only be explained in the light of the divergent and contradictory character of their needs. They have to defend their key position in the equilibrium of the bourgeois democratic regime. This means constantly looking for an agreement or compromise with the decisive layers of the bourgeoisie; but it also means opposing any attempt to establish a fascist state or a military dictatorship of a more or less open kind. Finally, the primordial need of the bureaucracy is not to harm its relationship with the masses; which means that it must be or appear to be capable of defending their immediate interests, however partially.

The long boom moreover marked out the reformist or neo-reformist bureaucracy as an essentially conservative force, more concerned with maintaining the status quo or at the most with encouraging gradual reforms than in bringing about important structural changes. After the abrupt turn in the situation, the bureaucracy has therefore openly tried to prevent the explosion of workers' struggles, and impede their generalization as far as possible. It has resolutely opposed both the new forms of struggle and the organs of proletarian democracy springing up.

But in a context of social and political crisis, such methods can in the best cases give only limited, transitory results. This is why the bureaucrats have to alternate and combine different methods. They may go so far as to "take over" the most advanced demands, associate themselves with struggles launched by initiatives outside their control or against their wishes, and even promote general mobilizations of a traditional kind or at least more easily controlled by the central apparatuses in order to engulf partial movements which are going beyond their control. Lastly they may even co-opt the new organisms by integrating them into the apparatus as a means of partially extending and renewing it (the prime example being the evolution of the Italian delegate councils).

All these operations at once provoke and require differen-

tiation among the bureaucracy, both vertically (among different levels of the apparatus) and horizontally (with the formation of what may be termed tendencies more or less reflected also in the leadership). Such differentiation seems to stem from the diversity of the pressures on the apparatuses—how they stand in relation to the masses, and from overall political ties and orientations. It would be a most serious mistake—and one that all ultralefts fall into—to regard the bureaucracy as a single conservative bloc, doomed always to the same reflexes and constantly moving to the right. Even the most ossified and reactionary apparatuses, those most integrated into the system, cannot be free of the powerful influences of a situation of deep social and political crisis: they have engaged and will continue to engage in the most sudden and unexpected maneuvers in the effort not to lose their hold over the mass movement.

5) It flows from the analysis of the European perspectives document, schematically summarized here, that the strategic objective is to prolong for as long as possible the present period, characterized as it is by explosive struggles and constant instability; to deepen the crisis of the system by consolidating a relationship of forces which is increasingly favorable to the working class; and to allow the working class to enter the inevitable decisive confrontations with a real chance of success. From a subjective point of view this requires the maturing of quite broad vanguard layers and a considerable accumulation of cadres by the revolutionary organizations.

Given the diversity of the pace at which the objective situation develops, and the particular nature of the historical and political conditions at the outset, this central task must be articulated according to the conditions of the different countries or categories of countries. It presupposes a pinpoint analysis of the different situations that must be constantly brought up to date. It is nonetheless already possible to stress a few very general criteria and outline fairly specific orientations.

In countries where the working class has not yet emerged from a long period of stagnation or is only just beginning to do so (Austria, Netherlands), the revolutionary vanguard will have to develop or exploit any initiative that may help to break the status quo, even if such a move is initiated in a marginal or backward sector and has spontanéist or some other deviations. But in countries where a generalized trial of strength or extremely broad, prolonged struggles have already taken place (France, Italy, even Britain and Spain) there must be no underestimation of the dangers of a partial or general exhaustion of the movement, of the isolation of the most committed, advanced sectors, or of the exhaustion of the vanguards. This means that mobilizations or struggles should not be encouraged where they do not appear to have a concrete outcome or are not likely to advance the politicization of workers engaged in them (it is especially important to stress this when confronted by ultraleft currents which tend to indiscriminately exalt "workers' autonomy" or any "initiative from below," turning an overall strategic conception into an abstraction). It also means not encouraging national or regional mobilizations of an essentially token kind, which have no future or at best will be used to serve the political maneuvers of the reformists.

It must be a priority to develop:

a) struggles in one sector or firm but of a general importance, either because of the importance of the sector or because of the exemplary character of the demands, making them important contributions to the maturing of the movement as a whole (Pirelli in Italy; Seat in Spain, Cockerill-Ougrée in Belgium, Renault in France, etc.);

b) struggles of important industrial categories that are decisive in the development of the relationship of forces and can therefore take on the character of a major political confrontation (the metal-workers' struggle in Italy, the miners struggle in Britain);

c) nationwide struggles resulting from prior broad mobilizations and representing an all-out trial of strength. The most advanced form is the unlimited general strike. The events of May '68 in France, the confrontation of spring 1973 in Denmark and the tendency toward a general strike in England in the course of recent months indicate that such an orientation has an objective foundation in real possibilities.

The platforms to be advanced by revolutionaries must be oriented along the following lines:

a) rejection of wage controls in any form and at every level. This means rejection of any plans for governmental or administrative control of wages, any subordination to the plans of the bosses for the firm or sector, or any attempt to restrict struggles for national collective agreements as well as struggles for secondary agreements on the level of the firm or sector;

b) egalitarian demands (equal increases for all, or inversely proportional increases), the elimination of differences between factory and office workers, the elimination of regional differentiation, the abolition of all discrimination against female labor, equality both of wages and of trade-union rights for all foreign workers;

c) the fixing of a national minimum wage, with the aim of not allowing a rift between the highly concentrated and best-organized categories and the broad layers of workers in more vulnerable positions who are often obliged to accept wages well below the average.

In a period when industrial concentration and increasingly stringent "rationalizations" are increasingly on the order of the day, the defense of jobs and the struggle against so-called technological unemployment are a priority. Revolutionaries must launch campaigns for the sliding scale of hours, for the demand for a general decrease in hours without loss of pay (more precise demands must take account of existing conditions, which remain heterogeneous even within the Common Market).

There must also be campaigns to counteract the results of the growing inflationary tendencies, based on the demand for a sliding scale of wages. We must struggle for a sliding scale for all workers—including those with deferred incomes—to ensure complete and rapid compensation for the deterioration in the purchasing power of the wage-earners.

In a period characterized by a global crisis of the system, where prerevolutionary situations have appeared or may appear, the problematic of workers' control, a central axis of the transitional program, emerges from the domain of theoretical discussion and propagandistic campaigns to become an essential element for mobilization and political agitation.

The demand of workers' control will be put forward by revolutionaries especially in relation to struggles against the existing organization of labor, in struggles for control over the speed of work, the size of the work force, working conditions, etc. It will also be put forward in specific cases of factory occupations or mobilizations that temporarily pose the question of management or decision-making by the workers. It will also be put forward in campaigns for the sliding scale of wages, with the demand for control by workers and technicians, in their capacity as consumers, over the calculation of net costs and the working out of indexes, and over the real movement of prices, against all attempts at speculation.

6) As for the instruments for mobilizing and organizing the mass movement, revolutionary Marxists will at the same time fight all bureaucratic maneuvers that attempt to channel the movement back into the hardened, traditional structures; and all ultraleft rejection of the trade unions as such. They will patiently and stubbornly explain the complementary role of different instruments of struggle and organization, their dialectic in general, and their specific combination at a particular stage.

This means that revolutionaries will work in the trade unions, even where they are most conservative and bureaucratized, rejecting any perspective of building small self-styled red or revolutionary minority unions. It also means that especially when there are sudden upsurges, and certainly in prerevolutionary periods, they will work for the formation of organs of proletarian democracy that are not identified with the trade-union structures, conducting this struggle even in the most democratic and radical trade unions. The best variant would be the election of workers delegates and the creation of councils of delegates elected directly at the workplace, independently of the political and trade-union organizations, and subject to instant recall. These bodies—not to be confused with strike committees, which have a more specific purpose—must develop the anticapitalist political content of all the struggles, introducing potential elements of dual power.

The building of antibureaucratic trade-union tendencies must be one of the main axes of the intervention of revolutionaries. The aim of such tendencies will be to make the trade union fulfill its specific role in the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat to overthrow capitalism. They will oppose the reformist or neoreformist idea that because trade unions cannot limit themselves to advancing only immediate economic demands, they must put forward a strategy for rationalization and "democratization" of the system, in the context of a more favorable redistribution of national income for the working class, without eliminating profit, the driving force of any capitalist economy.

Where organs of proletarian democracy develop distinct from the trade unions, militants in the trade-union tendency will have to operate on both levels, just as the bureaucrats will, although with diametrically opposed objectives (to nullify rather than strengthen councils and committees, re-absorb and not extend the embryos of dual power).

7) One of the basic features of the post-1968 period is the formation of new workers' vanguards, conducting an objectively anticapitalist and antibureaucratic struggle, and becoming progressively more conscious of the meaning

and aim of their struggle. The maturing and consolidation of these vanguards is a difficult and contradictory process, sometimes advancing slowly or even experiencing setbacks, sometimes taking spectacular leaps forward (following on especially significant experiences). It is nonetheless a *decisive* step in the process of building the revolutionary party, and represents a qualitative leap in the concretization of a revolutionary strategy. It is therefore a task of prime importance for our movement to win these layers to our orientation, our methodology, our political theory, and our general conceptions.

This vanguard already exists on a European scale. It accounts for barely a few dozen workers, perhaps less, in countries which have not yet decisively entered the stage of radicalization, but is numbered in thousands and even tens of thousands in countries that have experienced a deeper, more explosive crisis (the country with the most considerable accumulation so far being probably Italy).

We must avoid any "sociologistic" deviation in defining these layers. It is true that the organization of modern firms and the decline of old trades, with the emergence of basically homogeneous layers of workers (fictitious, "politically" motivated classifications aside), have greatly helped to homogenize the working class socially and aided its unification in action. It is also true that for a period the political differentiation among the proletariat corresponded to the differentiation between, on the one hand, workers who were in the old-established trades or who were more highly skilled—workers who were more tied to the traditional organizations, most of whose cadres they supplied; and, on the other hand, the production line workers lacking any particular skill and more likely to express their combativity outside existing trade-union and political structures.

But over and above any specific integration in the socio-economic fabric and even over and above the general cultural level, what is decisive in the last analysis is and will be the political experience that develops in the struggle. One of the errors to be avoided is that of confusing workers inspired by sentiments of revolt—possibly in the front line of strikes and confrontations, but politically unformed and given to sudden retreats as well as rapid advances—with revolutionary workers who have acquired an overall political consciousness and are able to work systematically, independently of conjunctural ups and downs.

The priority must be the workers who have emerged in the struggles of recent years, who are not handicapped by the burdens of a past experience of routine, of adaptation, exhaustion, and demoralization. It is perhaps too early to draw clear conclusions, but in our view the first layers of workers who will come to the revolutionary party and may already be close to our organizations will be mostly if not almost exclusively workers who have not had the experience of the traditional parties or have gone through it very rapidly in the recent period. One of the consequences is that it will be very difficult to win worker militants who are already complete political cadres, organizers of their class, at the moment they join. We will be able to win workers who can play such a role partially, but who after joining the organization will have to develop not only their general theoretical and

political education, but also their training as cadre who can intervene effectively in the mass movement, influence it, and carry out the tasks of leadership.

It is precisely in the course of the historical turn taking place that we can fully appreciate the ravages wrought by the long domination of the workers' movement by the ultra-opportunist social democracy and neoreformist Stalinism. Among the masses, revolutionary continuity has been almost totally broken: this is what makes the task of re-building revolutionary cadre so arduous, despite the favorable evolution of objective conditions.

The work of rebuilding cannot be carried out without a fierce struggle against every kind of deviation and deformation threatening and affecting the new vanguards. This means a struggle against ultraleft sectarianism, which negates the role of the trade unions and even looks askance at the new organs of proletarian democracy. It means a struggle against the temptations of anarcho-syndicalism and revolutionary syndicalism, which ignore or minimize the overall political dimensions of the confrontations between the basic classes, glossing over the cardinal problem of power—tendencies that have reappeared even in countries where there has been a great politicization of the workers' movement and the trade unions. It means a struggle against centrist aberrations running the gamut from the fundamental centrism that is the real content of the orientations of many ultraleft groups to the chameleon centrism, often dressed up with maximalist demagoguery, in some currents in the bureaucracy (the Trento wing of the Italian metal workers, some groups in the CFDT, etc.).

8) The most difficult problem, as well as the most urgent one, is to define the organizational forms of our intervention. This is necessary, however, in order to guarantee that our general orientation and our distinctive platform will be translated into practical work. The difficulty stems from the great number of factors involved, ranging from tactical problems that are often complex to conjunctural tendencies and the relationship of forces in the given situation.

From the standpoint of method, we must first of all determine the overall objective necessities. Then we must specify to what extent these can be satisfied given the specific conditions of this stage, while always keeping in mind the general direction in which we are trying to move. If this is forgotten, we could ultimately suffer a setback even after some temporary successes.

A revolutionary party that has crossed the threshold of a minimum accumulation of forces and is thereby capable of acting as a real political factor among layers of the mass movement, must expand its activity: a) through the intervention of its own factory cells, the backbone of its organization, capable of operating systematically as overall political bodies; b) through the organization and initiative of a trade-union tendency based on the analysis, platform, and methods of struggle advocated by the organization, even if it must in form remain open to other currents of the revolutionary movement; c) through the organization of a revolutionary tendency (in much the same way as a trade-union tendency) in the organs of proletarian democracy, (which are at least potential elements of dual power) in periods when the building of such bodies is on the agenda.

Objectively, all our difficulties and contradictions flow, in the last analysis, from the fact that even in the most favorable circumstances the rise of workers struggles has not reached the level of a generalized political and trade-union differentiation in the broad layers of the masses, still less the stage of appearance of organs of dual power or of their large-scale development. Subjectively, our difficulties stem from the fact that nowhere have our sections been able to complete the indispensable process of primitive accumulation. As a result, the problem of our intervention in structures of proletarian democracy has not been concretely posed, or has been posed only in exceptional cases (and without a sufficiently clear distinction with respect to trade-union intervention as such). It has not been possible to take systematic initiatives toward the organization of trade-union tendencies and, in almost all cases, it has been impossible to construct factory cells. This situation will not improve noticeably in the near future.

However, in the present period it is already necessary and possible to act, or to act more systematically and effectively, in the two following areas:

a) active participation in the main struggles. This involves constant intervention and work even during the incubation and preparation of these struggles. In this area we must know how to apply our methods, how to concretize our problematic, in other words, how to succeed in establishing links among the working-class vanguards and layers of the masses. This presupposes that we make specific conjunctural analyses so that we can grasp in time the scope of mobilizations that are developing, as well as their likely dynamic, and thus indicate in advance the objectives that correspond to the needs of the workers, and outline the most adequate forms of struggle.

b) overall political intervention in which we always express our whole revolutionary problematic. However, if we are to avoid the danger of falling into an ultimately unproductive routine, going around in circles (in the event that our forces are so limited as to make it difficult to participate adequately in struggles), political intervention must above all be concentrated on moments when national or international events are in the lime-light, and on periods—such as pauses in struggles or immediately after their conclusion—during which some layers of workers and particularly the vanguard are stimulated to reflect more critically upon the experience they have just gone through and to look for explanations that go beyond the events in their own factory or industrial branch. Every favorable situation for developing national campaigns based on objectives corresponding to the needs of a given stage must be exploited (for example, the campaign of the Italian comrades in recent months around the steelworkers' struggle).

The combination of action in the union or by the union with intervention from outside must be a norm that is rigorously applied. Combining these is a concrete precondition for avoiding the risk—regardless of formulations that are correct in the abstract—of slipping into opportunist adaptation to the practices of the bureaucratized unions, or, in the opposite case, of sliding toward antiunion positions that are typical of both the old and the new ultraleftism. Concretely, the work of building a tendency in the trade unions should not be conceived in isolation from external intervention carried out through

the appropriate forms. This also applies in cases where positions we may win in the unions permit us to play a decisive role in a given context or in the course of a definite struggle.

Given the present stage of development of our sections — that is, given the impossibility of effectively implementing the required solutions that we will have to try to implement in the future as we build the party and develop our influence in the working class — we must:

a) with respect to the organization of our members, form cells composed of worker comrades in a given factory or region plus "outside" comrades;

b) with respect to the organizational forms of intervention, form mixed bodies including worker comrades from a given factory or region, "outside" comrades and workers (eventually "outside" elements, too) who share our platform and methods of intervention and, at least in this area, differentiate themselves from both the traditional organizations and far-left groups.

In cases where it proves impossible to form a cell of the organization, we must find other, more empirical solu-

tions for carrying out the overriding tasks of our general political intervention.

9) Within the framework of the present relationship of forces between the vanguard elements and the bureaucracy, it is impossible for us to play a decisive role in the necessary coordination of struggles on a continental scale. It is obvious that for a whole period to come, the traditional organizations will be the ones to take initiatives in this domain, and in fact they have taken some steps, though cautiously.

Our task must be: a) to carry out systematic propaganda on the necessity for coordination, especially in struggles against the multinational corporations; b) to pressure the unions to operate along these lines (for example, through such proposals as our May Day appeal); c) to devote special attention to the situation in sectors where multinational struggles are most likely to materialize in the next period; d) to take initiatives that are likely to mobilize the European vanguard and important far-left currents.

The Arab Revolution: Its Problems, Present State and Perspectives

By Jaber (Lebanon), Sami (Iraq), and Vergeat

The Arab revolution has played an important role in the last two waves of the colonial revolution. Toward the end of the 1950s, the Algerian revolution stood in the vanguard of the struggles for national independence and culminated several years later in a process of social radicalization that for a time approached the Cuban model; and at the end of the 1960s, in the new upsurge of the world revolution, the Palestinian Resistance established itself as a front-line of anti-imperialist struggles.

But each time, the advance of struggles in one region masked the absence of a global strategy. In the cases of Algeria and Palestine, there was a tendency to forget the whole of which they formed a part. The imperialists and their Arab clients had a substantial interest in encouraging this diversion; the duty of revolutionists was to combat it. The Fourth International has not shirked this task. In every instance, it has put the struggles of sectors in their real context—the Arab revolution as a whole.

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In the historic sense, the Arab revolution has an importance far exceeding that of its regional components. It is itself an integral part of the revolutionary movement of the Eastern peoples. Besides its intrinsic importance—resulting from the more than a hundred million human beings involved and from the role of the Arab region as an energy reservoir and source of financial resources for the imperialist West—the Arab revolution has had a considerable carry-over into other areas. For geographical and cultural reasons mainly (such as Islam), an interchange has taken place with large portions of Asia, Africa, and even Europe (through the immigrant workers in particular).

This importance of the Arab revolution is commensurate with the tasks confronting it, of which the major one undoubtedly is abolishing imperialist control over the Arab region, winning real and complete liberation of the Arab nation.

I. The Arab Revolution and Permanent Revolution

1. Well before the discovery of oil, the Arab region was coveted by the imperialists because of its exceptional strategic position as a bridge linking the West, the Orient, and Black Africa; as well as for its own riches. The second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the

twentieth witnessed the gradual conquest of the Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire by the European colonial powers, with France and Great Britain setting the pace. From Algeria, France extended its empire to Morocco and Tunisia, while British imperialism consolidated its influence in the Valley of the Nile and established itself in the southern part of the Arabian peninsula, thereby assuring its route to India. The accords following the first world war divided the Mashriq [the Near East] among the two European powers in the form of colonial mandates. In this way, the classical colonialist territorial partition of the region was completed.

The second world war upset all these arrangements. The Arab colonies or semicolonies won their independence one after another in a process that culminated in the Algerian war of liberation, leaving under a British protectorate a few territories on the Arabian peninsula, which have since won their independence. In the Arab countries as elsewhere, one form of imperialist domination came to an end, but others persisted. Certain imperialist powers were pushed out here and there. Another moved in in force, sometimes playing an anticolonialist card—American imperialism, the principal victor in the second world war.

Today, besides the presence of imperialist capital, three forms of imperialist domination appear in the Arab region:

— "Indirect" domination through economic dependence. Imperialism has restricted most of the Arab economies to the role of exporters of one, or virtually one, agricultural or mining product (oil, cotton, etc.). These countries find themselves dependent on the world capitalist market, which can strangle them totally, above all when the marketing is controlled by a cartel, as is the case for oil. Their only margin for maneuver comes from interimperialist competition. They can exchange one imperialist for another, *especially when the new one is more powerful.*

— Quasi-direct military-political domination. This is the case of the puppet monarchies and emirates, whose military apparatus is tightly controlled by the imperialists and which can maintain themselves only on the basis of imperialist support. (This goes most of all for the oil-producing regions on the Arab-Persian Gulf.)

— Colonial-type domination in the case of the Zionist state of Israel, which occupies a territory whose original Arab inhabitants were driven out for the purposes of establishing a military bastion to defend the interests of imperialism. The main function of this bastion was to guard the Suez Canal and the rest of the Mashriq, containing the advance of the anti-imperialist movement. The

garrison is made up of the masses of Jewish workers recruited internationally and planted in Palestine by the deceptive and eminently reactionary Zionist scheme.

2. Western imperialism is at the root of the fragmentation of the Arab region. Historically the Ottoman Empire reunited under the same authority all the territories Arabized by the Islamic conquest (except Morocco and the southern part of the Arabian peninsula). This reunification strengthened the objective bases for the development of an Arab nation. Added to a common language and culture was a history fashioned by the same occupier, and thus the consciousness of a common future. What was lacking was a class that could represent this national aspiration—the *economic basis for a nation*—in the absence of its crucible par excellence, the national market. Certain nationalist manifestations did appear early in the nineteenth century. But these were often more regional than Arab, reflecting the rejection of Ottoman domination by those elements that found it particularly oppressive—hounded tribal or semifeudal authorities, intellectuals, and Christians.

In dividing up the region between them, the British and French imperialists erected frontiers blocking the formation of an Arab national consciousness. Moreover, they encouraged various regional, ethnic, or religious particularisms in accordance with the well-known watchword of "divide and rule." But at the same time aiding the penetration of capitalism in the Arab countries by undermining the old precapitalist autarchy of the agricultural regions and developing the cities and means of communication that favored the growth of urban strata, the imperialists laid the material foundations of the Arab nation even as they fragmented it.

It has been most of all since the second world war that Arab national consciousness has really become general, helped along by three factors—the rise of the colonial revolution; the ephemeral Arab industrialization during the world war, owing to the isolation and weakening of the British and French colonial systems; and, last but not least, the Palestinian war of 1948, which, by establishing an anti-Arab state in the Near East, provided the most effective catalyst for Arab national aspirations.

3. Today, the consciousness of belonging to the same nationality is strongly rooted in the Arab masses, even in the most socially backward regions (the Arab peninsula) or those where the colonialists have left the deepest cultural imprint (the French colonies of the Maghreb). This consciousness has often penetrated in a directly political form, propagated by the anti-imperialist currents and promoted by the successive aggressions of the Zionist state.

The artificiality of the present state divisions in the Arab region is absolutely flagrant. These states were carved out to suit imperialist interests. Thus, what is Iraq except the sum total of the concessions granted to the Iraq Petroleum Company? (Comprising part of Kurdistan, it is certainly not a national entity!) What has shaped the Lebanese state, or the Sudanese state, except the communalist mixtures determined by imperialism? What is the Algerian state but a former French department? What is "Saudi" Arabia but an immense concession to American Aramco? And so on.

The fragmentation of the Arab nation is more than ever anachronistic and contrary to the course of history.

It blocks the economic development of the Arab region by preventing the formation of a unified national market and stands in the way of the conscious aspirations of the overwhelming majority of Arabs. Arab national unification is a historic and economic necessity. It is the essential prerequisite for a real industrialization of the Arab lands. Its revolutionary potential exceeds that of the German and Italian unifications in the nineteenth century. It must confront not only local particularist interests but above all world imperialism which cannot willingly accept the formation of an Arab national state capable of standing on its own feet. Moreover, none of the present Arab states can hold its own by itself against world imperialism.

It is in this sense that Arab national unity is the central task of the Arab revolution.

4. But as the direct result of the imperialist fragmentation of the Arab region, other national questions have been grafted onto the Arab one—the problems of the nationalities artificially included in the Arab states, as well as that of the Jewish population of the state of Israel.

In the case of the oppressed national minorities in Iraqi Kurdistan and the southern Sudan, it is evident that the program of the Arab revolution cannot fail to assert their inalienable right to self-determination, including the right to a completely separate state. For the Kurdish people, this right is part of their general right to national unification in a united state of Kurdistan.

The Israeli case is completely different. In the present state of Israel, the oppressor majority is Jewish. In this sense, the only revolutionary attitude is to recognize the complete and unconditional right of the Palestinian Arab people to self-determination, that is, their right to reclaim all the territory from which they have been expelled. The exercise of this right presupposes the destruction of the Zionist state, which rests on racist foundations incompatible with such a perspective. Only after the achievement of this necessary historical task of the Arab revolution will it be possible to envisage concretely and correctly the question of the rights of the Jewish national minority in Palestine. The liquidation of Zionist relationships—of the colonial type—between Jews and Arabs presents Israeli revolutionaries with the considerable task of breaking the Jewish masses from Zionism. Only the achievement of this task can guarantee the peaceful integration of the Jewish minority into the Arab region. The forms this integration takes will depend in their details on the pace and breadth of the development of class consciousness—that is, anti-Zionist consciousness—of the Jewish workers. On the other hand, this solution cannot be envisaged outside the context of a revolutionary overturn in the entire Near East at least, which alone can provide the forces necessary to liberate Palestine from the Zionist and imperialist grip. That is, the destruction of the Israeli state goes hand in hand with the abolition of the other Arab states, on the road to creating a united Arab state. Thus, the national aspect of the revolution in the Near East is not defined solely by the case of the Palestinian people but by the general problem of Arab national unity.

It is in this framework therefore that the question arises of the present Jewish population of Israel, which will become a national minority once the Zionist state is abolished. In regard to this question, as for any national community, the program of workers democracy, which

is fundamentally contrary to all chauvinism, was clearly defined by Lenin: "No privileges for any nation or any one language. Not even the slightest degree of oppression or the slightest injustice in respect of a national minority. . . ." ("The Working Class and the National Question," *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 92.) This means guaranteeing full civil and cultural rights for the Jewish population, as well as complete equality between Jew and Arab. Likewise, workers democracy requires recognizing the right to self-administration of the Jewish workers in their regions, within the context of the political and economic centralism demanded by a workers state. This is the working-class program for the solution of the Israeli question.

In the present conditions of the continued existence of the Zionist state, demanding the "right of self-determination for the Israeli nation" could in the last analysis only be reactionary. Presented as a sequel to the destruction of the Zionist state and the reestablishment of the Palestinians in their rights, it is premature and prejudices many historical circumstances too uncertain to be predicted. The most important of these is the possibility of a partial recovery of Palestine by the Palestinians. This alone would make it possible to envisage a situation where the existence of a separate Arab and Jewish state would be compatible with self-determination for the Palestinian Arab people. In any case, revolutionary Marxists in Israel must educate the Jewish proletariat in the perspective of a united state, which alone corresponds to their real interests, just as it is the duty of the Arab revolutionists to combat chauvinist tendencies among the Arab workers.

5. The agrarian question in the Arab countries, as in most underdeveloped regions, has a major importance, since a considerable part of the economically active population of these countries is employed in agriculture.

The fundamental aspects of the agrarian question in the Arab countries, which are common moreover to a number of backward countries, are the following: an agricultural population whose overwhelming majority is made up of poor and landless peasants, as against a tiny minority of big landowners and farmers; obvious overpopulation on the land, which is reflected in very grave underemployment, both on a seasonal and permanent basis; a very low level of mechanization of agriculture, with primitive techniques remaining dominant; a large proportion of the arable land left uncultivated, often owing to the absence of adequate technical facilities (such as irrigation).

The solution to these problems is closely linked to other aspects of the social and economic revolution needed in the Arab region. It lies in a thoroughgoing industrialization (including mechanization of agriculture) in the Arab countries and the creation of a unified national market. It demands a nationally planned investment and finance policy. Without national unification and economic sovereignty, as Trotsky pointed out in the similar case of China, an agrarian revolution in the Arab countries can in no way solve the problem of underdevelopment in the region.

Moreover, many agrarian reforms already tried in certain Arab countries—as well as elsewhere—have shown irrefutably that when land division is carried out in the framework of a market economy and by bureaucratic

methods, it leads in the long run to accelerating rather than reducing social differentiation on the land by promoting the growth of a Kulak stratum. Furthermore, attempts at imposing "socialized" agriculture bureaucratic failures (which are cited hypocritically by pseudo-progressive Arab leaders trying to justify the situation on the land in their countries). In the rare cases where agrarian reform experiments have met with successes in the Arab countries (Algeria in the early years of independence, Southern Yemen), they have been based on a mobilization of the peasant masses that took place in the context of a general revolutionary process going beyond the bourgeois framework.

6. If the theoretical arguments are not sufficient, historical experience has already demonstrated that none of the essential tasks of the Arab revolution can be accomplished within the framework of the bourgeois state. It is for this reason precisely that none of these tasks have yet been accomplished. For the Arab region, as for all the underdeveloped countries, the only alternative remains: either a socialist revolution or a caricature of a revolution! There is no other way that the Arab countries can break out of their underdevelopment except through a dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the poor peasantry.

Only a dictatorship of the proletariat can achieve the popular mobilization needed to take on world imperialism, expropriate its Arab holdings, and break the chains binding the economies of the Arab countries to the world capitalist market. Only a dictatorship of the proletariat can break down the regional frontiers erected by imperialism, which have bred local bourgeoisies with competing interests. Only a dictatorship of the proletariat can achieve the unity of the Arab nation. It alone can pool the resources of the Arab nation by nationalizing the big agricultural and mineral holdings, as well as big industry, without compensation. It alone can unify the Arab market by nationalizing all foreign trade and centralizing distribution among the Arab people. It alone can develop a radical agrarian reform—along cooperative lines—by basing it on a mobilization of the masses of poor peasants (a large part of which are proletarian). Only primitive socialist accumulation, the dictatorship of the proletariat can industrialize the Arab region, which does not lack the material resources. Only a dictatorship of the proletariat, through an internationalist program, can win to its cause the national minorities of the Arab countries as well as the Jewish workers of Israel. Only a dictatorship of the proletariat can carry out the cultural revolution urgently needed in the Arab countries, a prerequisite for real liberation of Arab women.

The Arab revolution will be socialist or it will not be a revolution. It will triumph through the length and breadth of the Arab region, unifying the great geographical blocs of the Arab region—the Maghreb, Mashriq, and the Nile Valley—in the framework of a federative Arab socialist republic.

The Arab socialist revolution will necessarily carry over into the adjacent African and Asian areas and be in close solidarity with the revolutionary internationalist movement of the workers in the imperialist West.

This process illustrates in a striking way the theory of the permanent revolution developed by Leon Trotsky

which inspired the programs of the Communist International in Lenin's time and the Fourth International.

II. The June 1967 Arab Defeat and Its Consequences

7. Against a background of objective social and economic conditions long overdue for revolution, events of a political nature have intervened on several occasions to shake the established regimes in the Arab region. Among the most important of these events have been the Israeli-Arab wars. Planted in Palestine to defend the imperialist interests in the Near East, the state of Israel has contributed objectively and more effectively than years of agitation to developing the anti-imperialist national consciousness of the Arab peoples, thereby magnifying the threat hanging over the very interests this state was intended to guard.

Twenty years before the June 1967 war, the 1948 conflict—which came as a consequence of the official founding of the Zionist state—was to set off a change in the Arab political map. The economic and social crisis of the Arab regimes was compounded by the defeat of their armies by the new state, which helped to discredit the existing governments and to create conditions favorable to their overthrow. A prerevolutionary situation was to take form in the Arab region and particularly in Egypt, the major loser in the 1948 war, where the social crisis was the most acute.

The corrupt Farouk monarchy became hopelessly moribund. But there was no social force capable of supplanting it. The Egyptian bourgeoisie, which consisted in the main of comprador elements and which was in no way inconvenienced by the monarchy, had more to fear than to gain from any overthrow of Farouk. On the other hand, the so-called national industrial bourgeoisie was too weak to lead a popular uprising against the monarchy and the fact that the street demonstrations of the time were tending to develop in an antibourgeois direction made it even more incapable of doing so. The proletariat, finally, besides its numerical weakness (which was an important but not a decisive factor) lacked a revolutionary leadership. The Stalinists themselves were weak and disorganized and had been discredited by an ultrasectarian attitude toward the Palestinian question.

This typical situation—a prerevolutionary crisis in the absence of a revolutionary leadership—was to produce a no less typical response—a bonapartist coup d'etat. The likelihood of this response was enhanced, moreover, by the common specific characteristics of the army in many underdeveloped countries. After these countries won their independence, the army was the strongest component of a bloated state apparatus—precisely because of the atrophied state of the economic structures and the ruling bourgeoisie—and constituted the main lever of power. It contained within it the basic elements of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist tendencies, who saw it as a particularly favorable organized framework, given its social composition and the ideology presiding over the constitution. A military government of "liberal officers" is the perfect example of bonapartism.

Nasserite bonapartism rested on an equilibrium of forces between the proletarian and petty-bourgeois working masses

on the one hand, and certain sections of the bourgeoisie on the other. As a bourgeois bonapartism, it represented the general historic interests of the national bourgeoisie, fighting the enemies of this class—colonialism, imperialism, the comprador bourgeoisie, and the big landowners, as well as the labor movement and especially the Communists. It attempted to accomplish the historic tasks of the national bourgeoisie, in particular industrialization. The struggle of the Nasser regime for Arab unity corresponded fundamentally to the interest of the national bourgeoisie in enlarging its market. The cultist veneration of the petty-bourgeois masses—the urban petty bourgeoisie and the small peasants—for the particular leader, Nasser—fits in perfectly with bonapartism and is in fact characteristic of it.

The special features of Nasserite bonapartism—what distinguished it from the classic bonapartism of a rising bourgeoisie—were linked to the consequences of imperialist domination over the country it ruled. The extreme weakness of the national bourgeoisie, smothered in its cradle by the imperialist world market, meant that it itself could only participate directly in a very limited way in the endeavor that represented its historic interests. Nasserite bonapartism had to find another path of economic development. It found itself compelled, in order to promote the industrialization of the country, to substitute economically and not only politically like classical bonapartism, for the class it represented. For these reasons the public sector was the favored political instrument of the Nasserite regime. But this sector was no less governed by capitalist production relations. It represented a bourgeois state capitalism and not a "noncapitalist path of development" as the neo-Stalinist revisionists claimed.

Moreover, this economic autonomy of Nasserite bonapartism meant that it was more sensitive to the relationship of social forces than classical bourgeois bonapartism. Under strong pressure from the masses it could undertake certain radical measures which at times were absolutely contrary to bourgeois interests, as was the case in 1961 and 1963. Such steps have, of course, been only of a limited and above all temporary character.

The Nasserite experiment in the strict sense went a long way in its attempt to build an advanced bourgeois Egypt and to unify the Arab market. It nonetheless failed, confirming irrefutably the postulates of the permanent revolution. The Nasserite phenomenon has been repeated in a number of Arab countries (Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and, to a certain extent, Algeria). For more than a decade it placed a strong imprint on the Arab region and the entire colonial world. The June 1967 war was to highlight its limitations and deal a decisive blow to its original Egyptian expression.

8. The Israeli aggression in June 1967 fitted into the worldwide offensive launched by American imperialism in the 1960s. It was aimed at choking off the developing anti-imperialist dynamic in the Near East represented by two main processes. On the one hand, there was a revival of the Palestinian people's struggle. Armed nuclei arose within it and resumed military activities against the Zionist state. On the other hand, there was a radicalization of the Syrian regime established by the 1966 coup d'etat, with a left petty-bourgeois wing of the government imposing its radical policy on a state apparatus that was still bourgeois.

The June 1967 war resulted in a crushing military victory for the imperialist-Zionist axis. In this sense, the imperialist counteroffensive was crowned with success. But this success was compromised by the reaction aroused by the imperialist victory itself, something that could by no means be predicted by the victors. Galvanized by the defeat suffered and the national affront it represented, the Arab popular masses entered into the politically most intense mobilization in their recent history. This rise of the anti-imperialist movement of the Arab masses combined with the worldwide revolutionary thrust and powerfully counterbalanced the imperialist victory. It enabled the Syrian and Egyptian regimes, hard hit by their defeat, to maintain themselves in power.

Nasser was saved by the giant demonstrations of June 9 and 10, 1967, which revealed the new equilibrium established between the pressure of imperialism and of the working masses. Nasser remained in power, but Nasserism—dealt a mortal blow by the Israeli victory—became moribund in its turn just as its royal predecessor had. The limits of Nasserite anti-imperialism, which had already become evident in the economic area, were starkly revealed in the political and military realms. Incapable of competing technologically with the Zionist state armed by imperialism and endowed with much more highly skilled manpower, imported directly from the industrialized countries, the Nasserite regime was unable to both arm and mobilize the popular masses to the degree needed to defeat Israel, since this would have undermined the foundations of its bonapartist rule.

In June 1967, Nasserism reached its ultimate limits. The policy conducted by Nasser after June was marked by his capitulation—his regime's collaborating with its recent enemies, the tools of imperialism in the region, the main one being "Saudi" Arabia. Such collaboration was the condition for getting financial aid from the pro-imperialist regimes.

After June 1967, Nasserism became virtually impossible in the Arab region, since any real anti-imperialist activity necessarily involved a revolutionary dynamic incompatible with a bourgeois bonapartist state power. In relation to the pre-1967 Nasserism, the Sudanese and Libyan coups d'etat were nothing but rightist caricatures linked to imperialism. The present Federation of Arab Republics has nothing in common with the old United Arab Republic except its reactionary repressive function, and it takes on the appearance of a Holy Alliance. It has none of the unifying and anti-imperialist content of the Nasserite attempt at Arab unification.

With the death agony of Nasserism, an era of the Arab revolution was coming to an end; another was beginning to take form.

9. The most important feature of the rise of the Arab mass movement after June 1967 was the extraordinarily rapid extension of the armed organizations of the Palestinian people, designated under the common name of the "Palestinian Resistance."

After twenty years of lethargy during which they were lulled by the promises of the Arab governments, the Palestinian people—more precisely, the most severely tried section of it, the Palestinian refugees quartered in the "camps," were rudely awakened, shaken by the Arab defeat and the new Palestinian exodus that resulted from it. The growth of the Palestinian Resistance expressed

primarily the desire of the Palestinian people to take charge of the struggle for the liberation of Palestine, their native country. But the spontaneity of this reaction also indicated its limitations.

As a group composed largely of nonproducers and, above all, containing few owners, bereft even of territory, the Palestinian refugees formed a social milieu particularly receptive to any maximalist tendency, inasmuch as having absolutely nothing to lose they had, on the other hand, a country to win. This fact helps to explain the immense popular support for the Palestinian Resistance despite its distinctly maximalist slogans and its conception of the liberation of Palestine.

The Palestinian Resistance, at least the greater part of it, advanced a perspective of a "people's war of liberation," a strategic goal totally unrealistic without a precise social content and without transitional political organizations and military objectives. It is absolutely illusory to think that the Palestinian Resistance, even with its unquestionable popular support, can settle accounts with the Zionist army, which also has close ties with the popular masses, although on a reactionary basis, and is infinitely better equipped. Achieving such a goal requires not only the participation of Jewish revolutionists, who alone are capable of undermining the ideological foundations of the cohesiveness that characterizes the population of the Zionist state and from which it draws its strength, but also and above all the participation of the other Arab peoples in a generalized revolutionary war against imperialism and its Zionist bastion, which is the only realistic road to victory.

The Palestinian Resistance was unable to advance any program capable of insuring the combined participation of the Arab and Jewish masses in the struggle. Its maximalism was intrinsically linked to its Palestine-centric regionalism. In this there was a reflection of the historical experience of the Palestinian people, among whom particularist tendencies have been favored by the peculiar fate they have suffered and their disillusionment with the Arab regimes.

But, whatever their importance, these underlying objective factors did not make the maximalist-regionalist orientation of the Palestinian Resistance inevitable; they merely produced a tendency in this direction. A revolutionary Marxist workers vanguard could have combated the illusions existing among the Palestinian masses and explained to them that the liberation of Palestine necessarily involved a revolutionary overturn of the established Arab regimes, which was impossible without a working-class leadership for the entire Arab region, including revolutionists fighting in Israel itself. Avoiding these pitfalls and deceptions, such a vanguard would have been able to incorporate its military struggle against the Zionist state into an overall revolutionary strategy. In this way, without presenting it falsely as a "people's war of liberation," such military activity could have made an extremely important contribution to building a revolutionary party for the entire region. But a vanguard of this type was historically absent.

The leaderships of the Palestinian Resistance could not have come from a workers movement represented by the Stalinists who, following the USSR, recognized the right of the Zionist state to exist. They all come from petty-bourgeois nationalist movements dominant in the

Arab region. They are all, with the exception of direct extensions of ruling Arab parties, more or less radicalized petty-bourgeois patriotic teams, whose most advanced elements have come close to the revolutionary Marxist program without drawing the practical political, military, and organizational conclusions. The most influential of the Palestinian leaderships, the leadership of Fateh, is also the most right wing. By its pronounced right-wing regionalism, it justified its dependence on the Arab regimes, including most prominently even the worst reactionary governments, the open tools of American imperialism, Israel's chief supporter. In the name of the "main contradiction" with Israel, the Fateh leadership justified its collaboration with the Palestinian and Jordanian reactionaries, accomplices in the creation of the state of Israel itself. In the name of the special identity of the Palestinian people, it isolated from them the other Arab peoples with whom they were in contact, forbidding them to participate in the social struggles of these peoples. Drowned in the fabulous subsidies it received, the Fateh leadership developed a bureaucratic apparatus almost as large as that of an ordinary bourgeois state. Its military organization was paid, in flagrant contradiction to the principles of creating a revolutionary army.

But despite all this, Fateh—the major section of the Palestinian Resistance—led a struggle whose objectively anti-imperialist character is undeniable. It personified the just patriotic aspirations of the Palestinian people and provided an umbrella for the revolutionary tendencies that arose in the Near East after June 1967. This paradox is explained by the ambiguous position of the Fateh leadership. Although it was dependent on the equilibrium between its relations with the Arab regimes and the mass movement it led, the radicalizing pressure of the mass movement also afforded it a certain margin of autonomy.

10. The crushing of the Palestinian Resistance, the major stage of which was the campaign of extermination waged by the Jordanian Hashemite regime in September 1970, resulted directly from the policy followed by the leadership of the Resistance and most of all Fateh.

In fact, the Fateh leadership contributed more than anyone else to deceiving the Palestinian masses about the real intentions of the Hashemite regime. It propagated the deceptive slogan of "closing ranks against the national enemy" instead of organizing the existing mass distrust of Hussein. Rejecting any attempt to resolve in its favor the situation of dual power that existed for nearly two years in Jordan, and constantly on the defensive, it left the initiative to the reactionary regime, and after every campaign of extermination conducted by this regime, it gave free rein to illusions about a definitive reconciliation. Furthermore, it granted concession upon concession to the Jordanian regime—going so far as to disarm the masses—for the sake of accords that were never respected by the regime. But besides this demagogic attitude, the Fateh leadership ruled out the support of the Jordanian masses and the soldiers of Hussein's army—the only forces that could have really blocked the Hashemite regime. In the name of the "Palestinian identity" and "noninterference in the internal affairs of the Arab countries," it put forward no program capable of winning such support, sometimes even going so far as to oppose the struggles of the workers.

Although not taken in by the illusion of "patriotic unity" with the Hashemite regime, the Palestinian left did not distinguish itself from Fateh in practice. It, too, proved incapable of gaining a base among the working masses of Jordan or preparing for the inevitable campaign of extermination. It was unable to put forward a transitional program capable of mobilizing the Jordanian masses, sometimes raising regionalist slogans without class content (such as "All Power to the Palestinian Resistance"), and at other times ultraleftist ones relating to nothing concrete ("All Power to the People's Councils"). It did not organize effective opposition to the Fateh leadership's capitulation and ended up failing to distinguish itself from Fateh under the pretext of unity. The Palestinian left was characterized by a maximalist-regionalist orientation similar to that of the rest of the Resistance. It failed above all to understand the urgent need for a revolutionary class party leading the military organization and which alone could root itself in the productive classes on a non-Palestine-centric basis. Moreover, it linked itself to the pseudo-progressive Arab regimes, providing them with a left cover and thereby betraying the interests of the revolutionary struggle against these regimes.

The same policy by the leaderships of the Palestinian Resistance explains the relatively easy success of the combined efforts of the Israeli army and the Lebanese regime aimed at isolating the Resistance from the Lebanese population and freezing its military activities based in the territory of Lebanon. In Syria, the Resistance never asserted itself as an independent power, repaying support it got from the regime by total obedience. Today this obedience has meant the immobilization of Palestinian troops, which for all practical purposes have been placed under the command of the Syrian army.

The precipitous decline of the Palestinian Resistance matched its rise. The focus of many illusions, its defeat was a terrible shock, a still more bitter one than June 1967. But the lessons of this defeat will not be lost. The intrinsic link between national and social struggles is clearer today than ever. It has become very obvious that the liberation of Palestine cannot be achieved in isolation but only as part of the Arab socialist revolution, under the firm leadership of a proletarian revolutionary party for the entire region. The new Palestinian and Arab vanguard will have to assimilate this truth.

11. The crushing of the Palestinian Resistance in September 1970, three years after June 1967, crowned the imperialist victory by liquidating the armed movement of the Palestinian people in its main arena. The Hashemite regime—the pliant instrument of imperialism—destroyed the equilibrium established after 1967 between the Israeli victory and the rise of the Arab mass movement represented most importantly by the Palestinian Resistance. The way was cleared for reorganizing the Arab region in accordance with imperialist and bourgeois interests, which meant above all throttling the anti-imperialist Arab regimes. This task was also facilitated by the death of Nasser coming at the same time, since his bonapartist prestige gave him a certain possibility for resisting imperialist pressure.

A month after the massacres in Jordan, the petty-bourgeois radical team ruling in Syria was overthrown by a military coup d'état organized by the right wing of the

regime representing the bourgeois state apparatus. The new regime was to extend its hand at home to the Syrian bourgeoisie and abroad to the Arab governments linked to imperialism.

In 1971, the Sadat regime in Egypt liquidated the Nasserite bureaucracy, the political and military apparatus inherited from the Nasserite past. Likewise, it set about progressively dismantling the nationalization measures affecting the interests of the Egyptian bourgeoisie as well as abolishing the obstacles to the development of both local and imperialist private capital, which comes down to liquidating the special economic aspects of the Nasserite regime. In fact, the Nasserite experiment, like any bonapartist regime, could only be a passing one. It produced two possible gravediggers. On the one hand, a new bourgeoisie arose, made up of the vestiges of the old (whose property was paid for by the state or left untouched) and a section of the ruling bureaucracy that turned the profit it made out of the state apparatus into capital. On the other hand, Nasserism gave rise to a numerous and concentrated proletariat, which, however, was marked by a lack of independent experience in struggle and was without any representative trade-union or political leadership. Once the bonapartist equilibrium was broken and after the death of the Bonaparte, the best organized of these two forces, the new bourgeoisie, was able to rid itself of the Nasserite bureaucracy, a parasitic growth blocking its development. The Sadat regime was the instrument of this bourgeois restoration.

In 1971 also the Sudanese dictatorship, ringing down the curtain on its brief parody of Nasserism, was able to liquidate the Sudanese Communist party, the main organizer of the workers movement in Sudan, and attempt open collaboration with Western imperialism.

Finally, imperialism strained every effort to strangle the revolutionary experience in progress in South Yemen. Bringing military pressure to bear through the intermediary of "Saudi" Arabia and North Yemen, it succeeded in forcing the government of South Yemen to accept a treaty of union with the North, threatening to liquidate the anti-imperialist and anticapitalist content of the regime that was established in the South after the ouster of the right-wing faction of the National Liberation Front in 1969.

Thus, American imperialism, after a few years delay, garnered the fruits of its 1967 victory. Its objective today is to consummate this victory once and for all by imposing its "peaceful solution" of the Arab-Israeli conflict and liquidating the revolutionary explosiveness of the Palestinian question. It is clear that in the present circumstances any "diplomatic solution" of the problems of the Near East can only confirm the Zionist and imperialist victory and seal the capitulation of the Arab states. The Arab and the worldwide revolutionary movement must denounce the conditions of this imperialist diktat, the capitulation of the Arab regimes and organizations that accept it, and the bureaucratic betrayal of the workers states supporting it.

12. In spite of the crushing of the Palestinian Resistance in Jordan, the victory of bourgeois reaction in certain Arab states, and increased imperialist pressure on the en-

tire Arab region, the national and social struggles of the Arab masses have not ceased to develop but on the contrary have taken a considerable qualitative step forward with the appearance in Egypt—for the first time in years—of a persistent movement of active opposition.

The key to this apparent paradox resides in the fact that the success of the imperialist offensive has in no way altered the underlying causes of the political agitation in the Arab region. Not only has the fundamental social and economic crisis of the Arab countries by no means been resolved but it has even been aggravated by the consequences of June 1967 in the belligerent countries (the weight of the military budget, the closing of the Suez Canal, etc.). This crisis has been compounded by the extreme political tensions resulting from the defeat of the Arab states, which grow more serious every day, since ever broader masses in the Arab countries are becoming disillusioned and convinced of the national betrayal of their governments.

The reactionary onslaught unleashed in the Arab region in 1970 was able to defeat only certain leaderships. It overturned the two main regimes linked to the (bourgeois and petty-bourgeois) Arab nationalist current, crushed the Palestinian Resistance whose leaderships originated in this current, and liquidated the Stalinist leadership of the workers movement in the Sudan, the strongest of the Arab Stalinist leaderships. But just as it is clear that Nasserism will never rise again, that the petty-bourgeois leadership of the Palestinian Resistance has been irremediably compromised, and that the Arab Stalinist movement has more than abundantly demonstrated its bankruptcy, it is equally clear that the radicalization of the Arab mass movement has entered into a new phase. It is in Egypt once again that the new radicalization has manifested itself with the greatest vigor, both in the very significant revolt of the workers in the Hilwan steel complex and the impressive movement of the Egyptian students.

The student movement is the spearhead today of the struggles throughout the Arab region, as has been the case elsewhere in the world. From Morocco to the Arab-Persian Gulf, through Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon, the student youth are in full political ferment, confronting the repression of the established regimes. As for the working masses, while they have conducted certain sectoral and partial struggles, they have not yet fought any general engagements. They will not be long in beginning to move, as is indicated already by the resurgence of social struggles in Lebanon and in Israel itself, the two countries most influenced by the crisis of the world capitalist system.

The Arab revolution more than ever needs a leadership that can measure up to these tasks. Only a proletarian leadership can meet this requirement. Building such a vanguard is the main task of Arab revolutionists.

III. Building the Arab Revolutionary Leadership

13. The Arab nationalist current, in its bourgeois and petty-bourgeois manifestations, has not succeeded in producing a firm and historically stable leadership for the Arab revolution. Nasser's immense personal prestige was

not enough by itself to lead the masses of the Arab nation. This prestige, moreover, after reaching its height in 1958, was sharply challenged; rivals appeared on the same nationalist ground. The only organization loyal to Nasserism on an all-Arab scale was the Movement of Arab Nationalists, whose fate is eloquent enough. The radicalization of the movement in the 1960s, under the impact of the shift to the left by the Nasserite regime in Egypt, culminated after June 1967 in the majority of this originally anti-Marxist movement repudiating its Nasserite allegiance and evolving toward Marxism. If Nasserism had a prophet, he left no Koran (coherent ideology) and, as is shown by the evolution of Egypt since Nasser's death in 1970, can have no caliph.

Although the Baathist movement grew out of a party, unlike Nasserism, which was the outgrowth of a regime, it presented still less cohesion. The anti-imperialist nationalist ideology of the Baath party and its vague socialism could attract partisans in various social layers, and all the more so because the Arab Stalinist movement had deserted the field of national struggles. As long as the Baath was an opposition party, it could preserve its unity. But once confronted with the concrete problems of power, the diversity of its social composition was to lead inevitably to splits. The most important was the one that opened up in 1963 between the traditionalist section grouped around the founders and historic leaders of the Baath, and a young radicalized tendency influenced by the Nasserite regime's turn to the left. The former tendency continued along the trajectory set by the Baath in its first years of participation in the Syrian government. A right-wing tendency in the service of the bourgeoisie, it opposed all anti-bourgeois measures in the name of the priority of nationalism over socialism. But it also made deals with imperialism, as shown by its relations with the Iraq Petroleum Company in 1963. This tendency was distinguished most of all by its anti-Communism. It took part in the repression of Communists in Syria at the time of the Syrian-Egyptian union in 1958. In 1963 it conducted a campaign of extermination against the Communists in Iraq. In 1969 it organized the reactionary coup aimed once more at liquidating the Communists and above all the left-wing faction of the Iraqi Communist party, which was attracted to armed struggle. Discredited by its attitude of objective support to Hussein at the time of the 1970 massacres in Jordan, the Iraqi Baathist regime tried to restore its nationalist facade in June 1972 by nationalizing (with compensation) some of the IPC concessions, a measure that caused the imperialists no annoyance since it was counterbalanced by increased oil production in the concessions that were retained (Basrah Petroleum Company), which, moreover, were more profitable.

The other tendency of the Baath party, including various petty-bourgeois layers and even a proletarian faction seized full control of the government in Syria following the ouster of the right-wing nationalist tendency of the Baath in 1966. It took a series of radical measures against the Syrian big bourgeoisie and initiated a policy of anti-imperialist offensives. But social divisions appeared within this tendency, and although the workers militias supported the regime, they were dissolved. The left petty-bourgeois team was overthrown in its turn in 1970 by the right which, basing itself on the state apparatus, then

set about restoring the bourgeois interests. The failure of the left tendency of Baath shows clearly that only a dictatorship of the proletariat, breaking up the bourgeois state, can take up the construction of a society liberated irreversibly from the bourgeoisie and imperialism. The defeat of this tendency in June 1967 had already shown the limitations of an anti-imperialism not based on a mobilization of the working masses. This is one more illustration of the Trotskyist lessons on the permanent revolution.

14. The leading role played by the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois teams in the anti-imperialist national struggles of the Arab masses, the radicalization of whole sections of the nationalist movement and their evolution toward adopting a confused "Marxism" while remaining in a nationalist framework would be perfectly understandable phenomena if no Communist workers parties existed. But the fact is that the Communist parties are among the oldest political organizations in the Arab region, coming well before the Baath and Nasserism. This paradox is explained by the total default of these parties in the area of national struggles.

Formed at the height of Stalinism, the Arab Communist parties were always strictly subordinated to the diplomacy of the Kremlin. They paid the price of this servility, which sometimes cost them mass defections, by periods of total political isolation. Thus, in the aftermath of the Comintern shift in 1935 and particularly during the second world war the Soviet bureaucracy's policy of an alliance with the Western "democracies" had the corollary in the Arab region of the Communists abandoning struggles for independence directed against the Kremlin's imperialist allies. In 1948, following in the footsteps of Moscow, the Communist parties made an agonizing revision of their former anti-Zionist attitude and all approved the formation of the state of Israel, denouncing the Arab counterattack that it provoked. This position wiped out all the prestige that the Soviet victory over Nazism lent the Arab Communist movement. In order to defend it, the Arab Stalinist theoreticians developed a series of ultrasectarian theses on the national question that strongly marked the Communist parties. This sectarianism took on clearly reactionary dimensions in the case of the Maghreb sections of the French Communist parties, which on several occasions condemned the national liberation movements in their region, as, for example, the Algerian Communist party condemned the armed struggle for independence initiated in 1954.

The sectarian failure to understand the national question disarmed the Arab Communist parties, and above all the Syrian Communist party, in their opposition to the Syrian-Egyptian union of 1958, which was in part directed against them. Instead of waging its democratic struggle in the framework of the union, the Syrian CP opposed the union as such, which isolated it completely from the Syrian masses and facilitated the repression that fell on it. Likewise, in opposing union for the sake of supporting General Kassem, the Iraqi Communist party lost a considerable part of its influence to the nationalists. In all these positions, the Arab Stalinist movement placed itself at the opposite pole of the nationalist movement, denigrating the national aspirations of the Arab masses in the name of a so-called class attitude, totally overlooking the revolutionary potential of the question of Arab unity. Furthermore, the Stalinists never demonstrated their class

attitude against the Arab bourgeois regimes, defining their positions not on the basis of the class nature of these regimes but on the basis of the relations of each with the USSR.

The example of Iraq is the most instructive in this regard. The Iraqi Communist party mobilized its supporters to support the bourgeois bonapartist Kassem regime that came out of the 1958 coup d'état. Instead of orienting the masses of workers toward seizing power during the revolutionary situation that convulsed Iraq in 1959, the Communist party did everything possible to divert the popular mobilization into supporting the Bonaparte. The reward for this servility, besides the beginning of anti-Communist repression under Kassem, was the reactionary coup d'état of 1963 which, two years before the Indonesian tragedy, reaped thousands of victims among the Communists. In 1964, ignoring this clear lesson, the Egyptian Stalinists dissolved their organization to enter the Arab Socialist Union, the political umbrella of Nasser's bonapartist dictatorship. In 1969, the Sudanese Communists gave their support to Nimeiry's coup d'état; two years later he was to murder their principal leaders. Thus, in the course of the last fifteen years, the Arab Communist parties have several times underlined in the blood of their martyrs the teachings of revolutionary Marxism on the need to maintain a class attitude of no confidence in all bourgeois regimes, for maintaining the independence of the working class and arming it. These lessons will be assimilated by the Arab proletarian vanguard; by the Stalinist parties never! Even today they are participating in the bourgeois restorationist government in Syria as well as in the Baathist dictatorship in Iraq.

The balance sheet of the Arab Stalinist movement shows complete bankruptcy. Since 1967 the four largest Arab Communist parties have undergone splits—the CPs of Iraq, Sudan, Jordan and Syria. This crisis of Arab Stalinism is an integral part of the crisis of world Stalinism. The failure of the USSR's Arab policy—which became evident in the deterioration of its relations with Egypt, its former favored ally—can only aggravate this crisis.

15. The radicalization in progress in the Arab region in the 1960s was considerably accelerated by June 1967. Under the impact of the defeat of the Arab armies, large sections of the youth—especially among the petty-bourgeois ranks of the nationalist movement—became disillusioned with the so-called progressive Arab regimes and evolved toward revolutionary Marxist positions. Bourgeois and petty-bourgeois anti-imperialism had failed lamentably; on the other hand, the Vietnamese revolution was showing that only a proletarian course could effectively combat imperialism. Inspired by these examples, tendencies claiming to be Marxist-Leninist formed in the Palestinian, Lebanese, and North and South Yemeni sections of the Movement of Arab Nationalists and soon broke with the right-wing tendencies. But the "Marxism" of these tendencies was strongly marked by its spontaneous character. Rejecting the Stalinist movement, they were unable to develop a coherent revolutionary strategy that could stand as an alternative to Stalinism, and based their general slogans on a superficial theoretical eclecticism. The organizations of the radicalized petty bourgeoisie that were formed on this basis displayed centrist-type political behavior, vacillating according to the circumstances between a reformism close to Stalinism and ultraleftist positions. Moreover, under the influence of the

Stalinist model, these organizations departed from the conception of a Pan-Arab party practiced by the movement from which they came, resting content with mere solidarity among independent regional groups.

As long as the Palestinian Resistance was in its ascendant phase, the groups in the Near East generally stood on a revolutionary line. But with the decline of the Resistance after 1970 they degenerated, coming to stabilize on right-wing opportunist positions. As for the South Yemeni branch of the Movement of Arab Nationalists, the National Liberation Front of South Yemen—whose left faction has been in power since 1969 when it ousted the rightist faction—carried out a series of radical anti-imperialist and anti-bourgeois measures unleashing a process of permanent revolution. But, under the pressure of imperialism and the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies, this leadership recently began a right turn, accepting a treaty of union with North Yemen, which has a reactionary semifeudal regime dominated by imperialism. For some years the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf has been waging a heroic struggle against the puppet sultanate of Oman and British imperialism, but it has still not succeeded in extending the guerrilla war to other regions of the Gulf. It is clear, moreover, that any struggle confined to the Arab Gulf can not hope by its own strength alone to liberate the (very small) population of this area, to drive imperialism from the part of the world from which it draws its greatest profits. This is a task that will have to be accomplished by the Arab revolution as a whole.

Among the "new vanguards" that have appeared in the Arab region, we should also note the "Central Leadership" of the Iraqi Community Party and the Israeli Socialist Organization (Matzpen). Following the split in the Iraqi Communist Party, the left faction was attracted to a foquista experience in progress in the south of the country. But the fierce repression that struck it following the Baathist coup of July 1968 completely shattered it. Since then, groups inside Iraq calling themselves the "Central Leadership" have slipped into ultra-Maoist-type positions as regards the USSR, while maintaining their Stalinist strategy of revolution by stages.

In the 1960s, the Israeli Socialist Organization (Matzpen) was a quasi-united front grouping of anti-Zionist revolutionary tendencies rejecting the adaptation of the Israeli Communist party to Zionism, which in differing degrees characterizes both its factions (Maki and Rakah). Under the pressure of some of its members, who were affiliated to the Fourth International and carried forward the heritage of the Trotskyist group formed in Palestine in the 1930s and disbanded after 1948, "Matzpen" adopted a series of advanced revolutionary positions. After June 1967, the organization underwent the same experience as the Arab and international left in general, with its well-known increase in numbers and political weight. But the relative ebb of the Arab revolutionary movement after 1970 had its impact on the membership. A series of splits culminated in the original group's breaking up into its different tendencies—various types of spontaneists, Lambertists, and Trotskyists. The ISO-Matzpen Marxist (sympathizing organization of the Fourth International) is the only one today to advance a dialectical conception of the

interrelation between the Arab revolution and class struggles in Israel, as well as the Leninist corollary of this—the need for building a revolutionary proletarian party for the entire Arab region, a task assumed by the Israeli Trotskyists together with all of the Arab Trotskyists.

16. In several Arab countries, Trotskyist nuclei are developing, although in some cases they are still in the embryonic stages. This represents an important advance for the Fourth International in a region where up till now it had almost no foothold. The Trotskyist militants of the Arab region—including those in Israel—are working toward founding an Arab section of the Fourth International.

Their struggle to build a revolutionary communist party for the entire Arab nation arises from their analysis of the Arab national question and the interaction of revolutionary struggles throughout the Arab region.

The interaction of revolutionary struggles in the world's large ethnic and geographical blocs is a conspicuous phenomenon in our time. The extraordinary development of the means of communication and exchange since the second world war paralleling the increasing integration of all the world's economies by imperialism has greatly changed the conditions of struggle by comparison with those at the start of the century. This evolution is moving in the direction of stronger international centralization of revolutionary struggles, reinforcing the Leninist conception of the International, and also of greater coordination of struggles at the level of the great regions of the globe (Western Europe, Latin America, the Indian Subcontinent, Southeast Asia, etc.), as has been illustrated by the experience of OLAS and the Indochinese Revolutionary Front. Moreover, the imperialists and the bourgeoisies with worldwide interests are ahead of revolutionists in this field, since they already have their organs of regional military, political, and economic coordination, as the case may be (NATO, the EEC, the OAS, SEATO, etc.).

In the Arab region, the national factor—above all the language—gives rise to a close interdependence of the

Arab countries, which since the middle of this century has been demonstrated by the creation of the Arab League, the holding of summit conferences of heads of Arab states, as well as the work of the various organs of inter-Arab cooperation in different fields, to say nothing of the attempts at Arab unification. This interdependence cannot fail to have its repercussions on the revolutionary struggles that are already running up against joint repression by the Arab ruling classes and will do so increasingly in the future.

Besides the real, close interaction of the situations in the Arab countries, the centrality of the task of national unification in the program of the Arab revolution means that simply coordinating struggles on an all-Arab level is not enough but must be complemented by a unity of program flowing from the common nature of the essential problems, unity of political positions on key events, as well as unity in action on the common themes of struggle. The petty-bourgeois Arab nationalist organizations have already understood the necessity of such unity.

It is essential to centralize the Arab revolutionary struggles. Only a proletarian party can achieve a lasting unification on an all-Arab scale, since it would represent the only one of the social classes in the Arab countries that does not have locally competing interests. Only the Trotskyist movement, the heir of the Bolshevik program and the sole representative of the historic interests of the world working class as a whole can achieve such a proletarian centralization of revolutionary struggles on an all-Arab scale. The spontaneists and the centrists are incapable of it, because they have no coherent program. The Stalinists refuse to do it, since, not wanting to oppose the interests of the bourgeoisies of their countries, they are in bondage to them.

The Trotskyist militants of the Arab region take on the task of building a revolutionary communist party to lead the Arab proletariat. Only such a party can lead this oppressed and divided nation toward achieving the fundamental tasks of the Arab revolution and linking up with the world revolution in the framework provided by the Fourth International.

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