A new stage in the crisis of imperialism opens with the election of Trump

Whither Cuba?

A century ago, the October revolution...
*(Bolshevism and Stalinism, from Leon Trotsky)*
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This end of the year 2016 is marked by an unprecedented accentuation of the general crisis of the capitalist system. At the heart of this tortured situation stands the principal imperialist world power, the United States. The presidential election and Trump’s victory sounded like a thunderclap, within the United States and at world level. The experts and other analysts drew the following conclusion: Trump’s victory, the “rise of populisms” in Europe, and the fall of Dilma in Brazil all express, according to them, a lurch to the Right by society at world level.

We can expect this song to be sung ever louder during the year 2017, which is the centenary of the October Revolution. For all the political specialists, of “the Left” or Right, the disappearance of the Soviet Union signifies the end of an historical period opened in 1917, the end of the class struggle and of socialism.

There are of course obvious big differences between the present situation and that in 1917. But we are still in that historical period analyzed, a century, ago by Lenin in his work Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism. He there analyzed the evolution of capital, its decline, its crisis and the necessity for humanity to expropriate capital in order to preserve itself. Lenin characterized imperialism as “the epoch of wars and revolutions”, he described the mechanisms peculiar to imperialism as the concentration of capitalism, and the role of finance capitalism and the monopolies at world level. This analysis is not only of burning pertinence today, but further reinforced by the past century of domination of the world market by finance capitalism.

The crisis of the dominant American class
Far from expressing a strengthening of, or a lurch toward, the Right in American society, the election of Trump is on the contrary an expression of the world crisis of capitalism refracted within the most powerful imperialism. The bipartisan American system (Democrat party, Republican party) has been indissociable from the very functioning of American institutions for nearly 200 years. Bipartisanship is thereby one of the institutions of the American bourgeois State. The crisis, which revealed itself with this election, is an expression of the crisis of these institutions.

The Democrat and Republican primaries were a warning. In the course of the Democrat primary, Sanders, who presented himself as “socialist”, centered his campaign on the questions of social protection and employment. He received 16 million votes and placed Hillary Clinton in great difficulty. In the course of the Republican primary, the improbable candidate Trump, the billionaire, concentrated his fire against Wall Street and the establishment in general, and in particular against that of his own party. His campaign and nomination left the Republican Party in tatters. American voters had a choice between two capitalist candidates: the misogynist and racist billionaire, or the very distinguished Hillary Clinton, perceived as “the representative of Wall Street” and a symbol of the establishment.

Nearly half of American voters abstained. More than half of Blacks, who had mobilized massively for Obama’s first-term election, abstained. Among those who did vote, they mostly did so against she who most overtly symbolized the establishment. Significant were the votes in the so-called Rustbelt, those formerly industrial States of the northeast of the United States where the factories have closed and unemployment is massive. This was a vote of anger and rejection against successive administrations, be they Democrat or Republican. Indeed, since 1980 35 percent of industrial jobs have been liquidated in the
United States under one party or the other, in line with the demands of finance capital. The loss of one third of industrial jobs and the massive delocalizations to Mexico and Asia have precipitated tens of millions of Americans into poverty and want. These voters grasped the presidential election as a means of demonstrating their anger and hate of the politicians in Washington.

Of course, such elections are always a deformed reflection of reality. And the reality is that for decades and decades, the leaders of the AFL-CIO have opposed a demand of the workers’ movement dating back to 1930. That is, that following the example of the British trade union movement, the leadership of the AFL-CIO should have constituted a party for their members, a Labor party.

On the contrary, the US union leaders have continued to tie their fate to that of the Democrats, in the name of fighting the Republicans. After the election of Obama, delegates to an AFL-CIO convention voted unanimously, against the advice of the AFL-CIO leadership, to demand a universal or “single-payer” health-care system. The US president then instituted the so-called Obama-care, a system based on privately owned insurance companies. The AFL-CIO backed this, arguing that this was a first step toward a “single-payer” system.

With his socialist phraseology in the Democrat primary, Bernie Sanders fooled numerous trade unions into backing his party’s campaign, only to end up supporting Clinton. But the fact is that, given the situation among the working class, many trade unions, including those fooled by Sanders, did not back Clinton.

Some black organizations which had formerly supported Obama also did not participate in the Clinton campaign, given the revolt among the Black population against Obama, who had failed to settle any of their problems, and under whom the police violence against Blacks has reached a paroxysm (one Black person killed on average every 28 hours by the police). The Latinos also could not ignore the fact that under Obama, the number of Mexicans deported as illegal aliens reached a record of 2.8 million.

**Trump and finance capital**

Trump had hit out against the three big US automobile companies, accusing them of delocalizing their production abroad. On the morrow of his election, General Motors closed one of its factories, in the northeast of the United States, laying off 2,000 workers, indicating thereby that it is capital which is the “boss”.

Trump finds himself confronted with the reality of capital and its power. He who had condemned the establishment is now obliged to turn toward the Republican Party establishment to constitute his new administration.

The naming as Treasury Secretary of a former Goldman Sachs banker is an indication. Trump had vociferated against Goldman Sachs for months during his campaign. Protectionism and isolationism are impossible, even for the United States. As Leon Trotsky stated in 1926 in *Europe and America*: “The more the United States puts the whole world under its dependence, all the more does it become dependent upon the whole world, with all its contradictions and threatening upheavals.”

The interdependent nature of the world economy and the needs of finance capital can, of course, tolerate this or that measure, but cannot accept a brake on their world expansion. The imperialist monopolies are locked in a fight to the death for control of a world market in the throes of recession.

In this crisis – of which the financial crisis of 2008-2009 was a foretaste – the pursuit of profit by finance capital undermines the foundations of all national economies, throwing into question the prerogatives of States. But at the same time such States are needed (notably through the permanent pressure to increase military budgets to keep the arms industry turning over), in order to restore the order that such policies upset.

Finance capital needs the world market; it needs to remove all barriers to its penetration. But to do so, it needs to use these nation-States for its own interests. Thus Obama reacted violently in the name of the defense of “American interests” at the threat of sanctions by the European Union against Apple, thereby protecting a company, which does not pay its taxes in the United States and 97 percent of whose salaried workers are outside of the United States.

Finance capital not only uses States for the defense of its own interests, but it also demands that these same States yield to them whole swathes of their national productive apparatus. They want to do away with everything that was gained in the post-World War II period.

In Europe, in order to stem the revolutionary tide and reconstruct the bourgeois States, it was necessary to concede a series of gains and conquests to the working class. In the countries dominated by imperialism, in order to reinforce or constitute States on the basis of national independence, it was also necessary to make a series of concessions. For finance capital, that period has ended: not only must all national barriers be lifted, but all norms and regulations, and everything that exists in the way of public
services in the world, must also be privatized and destroyed.
The free-trade zones, which were established in Europe, Asia and Latin America over the last three decades with a view to deregulating in order to satisfy finance capital, are today no longer an instrument effective enough to satisfy the requirements of the multinationals. The big American companies possess liquidities totaling 2,500 billion dollars outside of the United States, and do not intend to repatriate them. They are pressing with all their might for the lifting of all barriers and norms in order to realize that capital. That is the fundamental reason for the crisis, which is breaking up these free-trade zones, under the contradictory pressures of the demands of finance capital and that of nation-States subordinated to these demands, but terrified by the risk of revolt of the peoples and working class of their respective countries. For these new demands by finance capital provoke a reaction by the working classes and peoples which could lead to a revolutionary situation.

The world order is threatened
The policy followed by finance capital with regard to the countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia attacks all the conquests of the workers and peoples concerned, and contributes to the break-up of nations. That is the meaning of the offensive waged by a fraction of American capital which, with its lackeys among the Brazilian oligarchy, organized the coup d’état for the overthrow of President Dilma. And yet the coalition government under Dilma, with its adjustment policy, had satisfied numerous demands made by imperialism. But that no longer sufficed, it became necessary to put in place a government which not only rolls back the gains and conquests won through the class struggle these last 15 years, but also those going back several decades and dating even from the mid-19th century when Brazil became independent. It is thus that the very existence of Brazil as a nation is thrown into doubt.
American finance capital has long needed a strong government by which to crush the American working class under its iron heel and discipline the peoples of the world as a whole. But it has a weak government, in crisis, which is incapable of mastering world developments. That does not, however, mean that it is unable to strike blows against the peoples of the whole world, on the contrary.
The situation in the Middle East attests to this. The policy that Obama theorized with the expression “leading from behind” is an expression of this. Since the fall of the USSR and the disappearance of the international Stalinist apparatus, American imperialism must concentrate upon itself alone the counter-revolutionary tasks, and that is beyond its strength. It is for that reason that it has not ceased, since the 1990s and even more so this last decade, exhorting all its “allies” to assume their share of the burden of counter-revolution. This accentuates the contradictions and the crisis. Incapable of fully imposing its will, it unleashes contradictory forces. It is thus that in the Middle East, against its traditional allies of Saudi Arabia and Israel, the US administration not only agreed a nuclear deal with Iran but also has allowed Iran to intervene in Iraq and Syria against the Islamic State (ISIS). Saudi Arabia, faithful ally of the United States, finances Islamist militias in Iraq and Syria against whom the same United States is at war.
Israel bombards the Hezbollah militia in Syria officered by the Iranians who are fighting against ISIS. Turkey, a member of NATO for decades, is intervening in Syria in the name of the fight against ISIS in order to attack the Kurdish militia financed, armed and officered by American advisors in order to fight ISIS. Russia is playing its part by bombing the anti-Bashar forces supported by the United States.
They all of them quite obviously agree that the world order dominated by the United States must be preserved, but they do so while seeking to defend their own interests, which contradict each other. This absence of any real leadership is creating a fantastic imbroglio in the Middle East and at world level.
Trump has stated that the United States must cease financing NATO to the level of 70 percent. In so doing he is only following in the footsteps of Obama, who has been battling for the last year for all NATO member States to raise their military budgets to two percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Chancellor Merkel has just announced that Germany is going to do that.

Toward the break-up of the European Union
With the involvement of European States in the Middle East, with terrorism and the wave of millions of refugees fleeing war and barbarity, war is spreading to Europe. And the crisis of the European Union is developing at a gallop. All the governments of the European Union are being hit. All the institutions of the European Union are in crisis.
Every election in Europe is grasped by the masses as a means of expressing their anger and their rejection. A commentator upon European politics has spoken of a "veritable electoral insurrection". The referendum vote in Britain in favor of quitting the EU has sharpened the crisis
of European institutions and fragilized the economy and finance in the EU. The referendum result was, above all, the product of a massive vote against the EU by the laboring British population, but it was also due to the fact that a fraction of the British bourgeoisie is, in the new situation, which has opened up, seeking to establish direct relations on the markets, notably with the United States.

True, the presidential election in Austria saw the ecologist candidate beat that of the extreme Right, but the real political content of the contest was expressed in the first round of the election, in which the social-democrat party and the conservative party, which have shared power since 1945, each barely won 10 percent of the vote and were wiped out by the voters. Similar events have occurred in the Netherlands and Scandinavia.

In Italy, the defeat of Renzi in the constitutional referendum which he called expresses the same popular rejection and also the threat, due to the fragility of the Italian banks, which the State was supposed to bail out, of a financial crisis in Europe with world repercussions.

The offensive by EU governments of the Right and “the Left” against the working class is nourishing class resistance. The number of strikes in Greece during 2016 against the Tsipras government is a sign of this. In Belgium, several mass demonstrations have taken place at the call of all the trade union organizations, which have constituted a joint union front.

In France, for five months the mass mobilization of workers, supported by a united CGT-FO axis, has opposed a destructive labor bill decided by a “Left” government. While the mobilization did not succeed in getting the bill withdrawn, and it passed into law without a vote thanks to the reactionary dispositions of the V Republic constitution, the result left the presidential majority in tatters, and the working class does not feel it has suffered a defeat. The class is seeking to preserve CGT-FO unity for the battles under way or to come.

In Italy, it was significant that the metalworkers’ federation FIOM, and the main trade union confederation, the CGIL, called for a No’ vote in the referendum. The Renzi government had previously implemented a labor reform, the “Jobs Act”, which was a frontal attack on the conquests of Italian workers and their trade union organizations. While the No vote was close to 60 percent overall, in the most de-industrialized regions where many workers have been thrown onto the scrapheap of unemployment, the proportion was more than 70 percent.

Even in Germany, regularly presented as the most stable country in Europe, the crisis has eaten away at the “Grand Coalition” of Christian Union and Social Democrat parties, which has ruled in recent years. In an attempt to preserve the coalition, Merkel got the CDU candidate for the largely honorific post of head of state to stand down and backed the SPD one. Only then, in this situation of uncertainty created by the election of Trump, did Merkel announce that she would be running again as chancellor.

All the governments of the EU, and the EU itself, are caught between the jaws of a vise: between the demands of finance capital and the resistance of the workers. The European Union no longer constitutes an adequate framework for the rapid satisfaction of its demands that finance capital requires.

What went on to become the EU was first established after World War II under the auspices of US imperialism, with the collaboration of the European imperialisms, as a deregulated zone. But the EU is not a supranational body; it is the product of an accord between the principal European imperialisms, notably French and German.

The responsibility of these imperialist governments is thus total as regards the implementation of the whole of the EU’s plans. It is from this point of view significant that, nearly 15 years after the Maastricht Treaty rule limiting government deficits to 3 percent of GDP came into force, France still does not respect this limit, but has not been sanctioned by the European Commission.

It is similarly significant that on the morrow of Renzi’s referendum defeat, EU leaders, noting that the Italian government’s 2017 finance bill did not respect the so-called stability pact, concluded that it was for them “impossible to demand supplementary measures in view of the situation”.

There indeed is the contradiction for all the States and for the EU. They are subjected to the pressing demands of finance capital, but, terrorized by the risk of the masses entering upon the scene, they cannot fully accede to these demands. The monopolies which use the States and the institutions of the EU in order to implement their demands at the same time
undermine these States and institutions by further advancing their destructive offensive.

**The class struggle, motor of History**

For finance capital, everything that was gained after the revolutionary wave of 1945 must be liquidated. The compromise that capital agreed with the leaders of the workers' movement in order to stem the revolutionary tide must be thrown into question. No room for maneuver is possible, they will have to strike and strike again. This offensive implies questioning the very place of trade union organizations. The trade union organizations, whatever the policies followed by their leaders, because they organize only salaried workers in their ranks, constitute a materialization of the division of society into classes. Defending the most minor of workers' demands in the face of the owners is an expression of class antagonism. As a framework of organization of the working class, the trade union constitutes the class. A mass of unorganized workers is nothing; an organized mass is a social class distinct from the capitalist class. That is why Leon Trotsky defined the trade unions as institutions of the working class in a society where the proletariat posses nothing else but his labor power. Trotsky described them as "strongholds of proletarian democracy". And he stated:

"The proletariat cannot attain power within the formal limits of bourgeois democracy, but can do so only by taking the road of revolution (...). And these bulwarks of workers' democracy within the bourgeois State are absolutely essential for taking the revolutionary road." (Writings on Germany)

We indicated at the beginning of this article that in 1916, a year before the October Revolution, Lenin analyzed the decline of capitalism in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Lenin did not seek to make a pedantic analysis, but a demonstration that imperialism is not a new stage of development of capitalism, but the phase of its death agony. That is why, analyzing the monopolies, he indicated that production becomes more and more social in nature while accumulation is private. He thus described the monopolies as directors of the world economy:

"When a single center directs all the consecutive stages of processing the material right up to the manufacture of numerous varieties of finished articles (...) then it becomes evident that we have socialization of production (...) that private economic and private property relations constitute a shell which no longer fits its contents, a shell which must inevitably decay if its removal is artificially delayed (...)".

For Lenin, the elimination of imperialism will not occur naturally: "*Imperialism (because it is the highest stage of capitalism) is the prelude to the social revolution of the proletariat."

He knew, as Marx explained, that the originality of Marxism is not to have invented the class struggle, but to have characterized it as a political struggle, which must lead to the taking of power by the proletariat. That is why, while the Russian Revolution had already been under way for six months, Lenin then wrote *State and Revolution*, in which he stressed the need to destroy the old bourgeois State and to build a workers' State, which would expropriate capital and manage the transition phase to a higher stage. But to do this, there was need for a party, a revolutionary party, and that is the other pertinent aspect of the October Revolution.

In the first days of the revolutionary process of 1917, the Bolshevik party was in the minority within the working class. Most of the class was grouped behind the two big parties of that time: the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries. These parties, after having taken part in bringing down the czar, allied themselves with the bourgeois liberal party, seeking to contain the revolution in order that it should not transform itself into a revolution expropriating capital. The central combat waged by Lenin in the Bolshevik party was to align the party with the course of events, and the course of events was a revolutionary torrent, it was the laboring masses in movement for peace and an end to the war, for bread, freedom, agrarian reform. That is why Lenin fought upon a very clear line: "No support for the provisional government!" It was this position, which he persuaded the Bolshevik party to adopt, under the name of the April Theses.

**The question of power**

These theses led to the conclusion that the proletariat must take power. It was on this line that thousands of Bolshevik militants fought daily for months, expressing these watchwords and these demands, without dogmatism, without sectarianism, by broadening their links within the soviets to the masses engaged in the revolutionary process. It was this long fight, which resulted in the fact that in October 1917 the Bolsheviks had become the majority in the soviets, and that the soviets decided to take power.

Quite obviously, the present political conditions are different. History does not repeat itself, but the lessons of the fight of the Bolsheviks remains of burning pertinence today: in the epoch of imperialism, the question of expropriating the capitalist minority is on the agenda. To do so, the
The working class must smash the bourgeois State, install itself as the dominant class and expropriate capital. On this road, to help the working class in its struggle to overcome the obstacles and triumph, the existence of a revolutionary party is indispensable. A revolution can erupt without a revolutionary party, but in order to triumph the revolutionary party is a necessity.

It is on this orientation that the IV International and its sections will in 2017 celebrate the contemporary relevance of the October Revolution. During the year of 2017 will be held, at the call of the International Liaison Committee (ILC) of Workers and Peoples, a world conference against war and exploitation. For the IV International, the struggle against war and exploitation means precisely putting into practice a policy, which poses, as a development of the class struggle, the question of expropriating capital. As stated in the program of the IV International, “the strategic task of the IV International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow”.

The editors of *La Vérité/The Truth*
Brazil
40 years ago the OSI was born, present current O Trabalho of PT

1. In November 1976
the Internationalist Socialist Organization was created

In a clandestine conference held in Praia Grande (State of São Paulo) in November 1976, the unification of the Brazilian Trotskyist groups who were struggling for the reconstruction of the Fourth International1 along with the Internationalist Socialist Organization (OSI).
What brought the OSI groups closer together was the criticism of both the traitor policy of the Brazilian Communist Party prior to the 1964 coup (and continued later), and the “foquism guerrillerism” of the “lead years” of the dictatorship (1968-1972), who, isolated from the masses, was brutally liquidated by the police and military apparatus.
The Trotskyists defended an intervention alongside the masses to build their organizations, in the struggle for democratic freedoms against the dictatorship, based on the principles of class independence and internationalism. The 1968 turn in the world situation - May-June in France, invasion of Czechoslovakia by the USSR in August - reinforced their conviction in the social revolution in the capitalist countries and in the political revolution in countries where the bureaucracy parasitized the social conquests based on the expropriation of capital.
OSI, from its inception, was a national organization and sought to establish itself in the labor movement. The forces, which had merged there already had trade union tendencies or oppositions to official unions, with ballots and groups formed in different categories.
Its first organ was the Jornal dos Trabalhadores2, which was replaced by the newspaper O Trabalho on 1 May 1978.

Liberdade e Luta³
Shortly before the creation of the OSI in June-July 1976, the Socialist Student Front (FES) and the Tendency for the Worker-Student Alliance (TAOE), after a joint intervention in the student mobilizations of the period, United, giving birth to Liberdade e Luta.
The student trend Liberdade e Luta, which in a short time attracted thousands of young people across the country, played an important role in the mobilizations against the dictatorship, which preluded the working class with the wave of strikes which Started in the CBA in 1978.

“Neither Arena nor MDB⁴.
Blank vote for a workers’ party”
Through the O Trabalho newspaper, OSI helped and directed its militants to intervene in this wave of strikes that spread throughout the country. This allowed him to create links with other currents of the workers' movement and to develop its own political orientation: down with dictatorship, for a sovereign Constituent

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1 The IV International, founded in 1938, underwent a dispersal crisis in 1952-53 as a product of the revision of its program carried out by Michel Pablo and other leaders. Affirming the need for its reconstruction on the basis of its original program (Transition Program), successive regroupings occurred, until the constitution of the CORQI in 1972, with the participation of the French OCI and Pierre Lambert.

2 Workers’ Journal (translation note).

3 Freedom and Struggle (translation note).

4 The Arena (Aliança Renovadora Nacional) was the ruling military party; The MDB (Movimento democrático brasileiro) was the official opposition party, within an institutional framework of bi-partisans intended to give an appearance of democracy to the military dictatorship (translation note).
Assembly; Struggle for free trade unions and an independent trade union center; Struggle for a workers’ party.

The 1978 elections, as part of the bipartisan dictatorship, made possible the campaign “Neither Arena nor MDB. No vote for a workers’ party”, carried out by the OSI alongside other sectors (such as the opposition of metalworkers in São Paulo). Even though, at the same time, many of those who initiated the PT were campaigning for MDB candidates.

The activities of the OSI extended to struggles for the release of political prisoners: for a broad, general and unconditional amnesty; for the release of Lula and the imprisoned striking leaders. Campaigns to support the revolution in Nicaragua and the struggle of the Solidarność trade union against the Stalinist bureaucracy in Poland highlighted the internationalist character of its action.

Mass strikes posed the question of freedom of association and the unity of workers within a Union Centrale. OSI participated in organizing the National Workers’ Meeting in opposition to the trade union structure (ENTOES, 1979-1980), which re-grouped the “combat unionism”, and other initiatives that led to the CONCLAT of 1981, which created the national pro-CUT commission.

**OSI and PT**

Between January and August 1980, the discussion on the evolution of strikes, which forced the trade unions to collide with the official structure, led the OSI to conclude, “The PT is a response to the proletariat movement in the sense of its independent organization”.

The OSI decides to enter the PT “to broaden the struggle for trade union independence, for the overthrow of the military dictatorship, to push the struggle for the liberation of the oppressed nation against imperialism, a political campaign centered on the watchword of the sovereign and democratic constituent assembly” (resolution of the Fourth Congress, August 1980).

OSI’s commitment to the legalization campaign of the PT (1981) made a significant contribution to the achievement of the objectives required by the legislation of the time. It should be noted that between 1979 and 1981 there was a regrouping of Trotskyist forces on the international level, which led to a rapprochement between the OSI and the Socialist Convergence (CS). Both organizations intervened in the PT to defend a “PT without bosses”, the independent trade union center and the student movement, until the unification failed on the initiative of the “Morenists”.

The OSI became a member of the IV International-IRC in 1983 and adopted in 1985 its name until today: current O Trabalho (OT) of the PT.

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5 These positions ranged from that of Socialist Convergence (CS), which supported “socialist candidates from the MDB”, through support for “authentic” candidates, to the position of Lula and other leaders of CBA to support Fernando Henrique Cardoso in the Senate.

2. From the Struggle for the Workers' Party to the current task of rebuilding the PT

In the early years of the PT, militants of the current O Trabalho participated actively in the process which led to the founding of the CUT in August 1983, helping to formulate the "union line of the PT" and the statutes of the Union Centrale, based on the principles of independence from bosses and governments, autonomy from political parties and the struggle for freedom of union association. Within the PT, O Trabalho sought to accomplish a common work with its ruling nucleus ("Articulation of the 113"), which then followed a leftist course.

This was the period of Diretas Já (1984), followed by the boycott of the electoral college of the dictatorship, when the PT was growing very rapidly, with its militants organized in grassroots circles. The struggle for a sovereign Constituent Assembly in 1985-1986 strengthened the PT as a political representation of workers and oppressed sectors and extended its interventions in the anti-imperialist struggle against payment of the external debt.

This PT trajectory had a global impact, because its positions - the fruit of intense internal debate - distinguished it from both Stalinism and "Reformist" social democracy. The discussion in the Fourth International in Reconstruction (QI-CIR) on the experience of the PT in Brazil updated the "line of transition" in the construction of the revolutionary party. The orientation of the struggle for "independent workers' parties" and for the creation of a broad international framework for discussion and action against imperialism is combined with the need for stronger centralization of the IV International.

In 1987, continuity was ensured

In May 1987 some of the members of the direction of O Trabalho prepared to "drop" the current and dissolve it in the then "Articulation". The majority of the activists supported the leaders who opposed the dissolution of O Trabalho and its links with the Fourth International-CIR, reaffirming its continuity at its 10th Congress (June 1987).

During this period the Constituent Congress (1986-1988) was held under Sarney's government and O Trabalho intervened in the discussions conducted by the PT (whose parliamentary group voted no to its overall text) and by the CUT (3rd Congress of Belo Horizonte) to adopt a position contrary to the 1988 Constitution, the result of an "elite pact" which blocked structural reforms and preserved the vestiges of dictatorship in the political system.

The Global Turning Point in 1989

The fall of the Berlin Wall (9 November 1989) and the collapse of the Soviet Union (December 1991) marked a historic turning point. Its impact could not spare the PT, which, at the end of 1989, launched in the first presidential campaign of Lula.

The end of "real socialism" - in reality the balance sheet of Stalinism, which prepared the conditions for the restoration of capitalism - caused changes in the positions that existed in the party: from those who began to view socialism as a « moral » question to those who advocated a "social market economy" or those who rejected a revolutionary break in favor of reforms that would improve the lives of the masses without breaking with the private property of the great means of production. The tendency to adapt to the institutions inherited from the dictatorship and reshaped in 1988 is reinforced, and the center of gravity of the PT is gradually becoming the electoral battle.

The current O Trabalho intervenes to associate leaders and militants of the PT in the preparation of the Barcelona World Open Conference "against war and exploitation", which will be at the origin of the International Liaison Committee of Workers' and Peoples' (ILC) in 1991. In 1993, it sent its delegation to the congress of re-proclamation of the Fourth International, held in Paris.

In the 1990s, resistance to IMF policy and privatization kept the PT its benchmark character of struggle for the masses, first with the "Oust Collor", then with the opposition to the governments of FHC (1994-2002). But the party was already losing its mark of organizing militants for the class struggle, and its leadership, after Lula's electoral setbacks against FHC, began to look for alliances far beyond that which it defined as the "democratic and popular ground".

8* Diretas Já is the watchword for immediate direct elections (translation note).
From “Lula President” to the struggle to rebuild the PT

O’Trabalho engaged in the Lula elections in 2002 despite disagreements over his program and his alliances (symbolized by Vice President Alencar). O’Trabalho fought against the policy contained in the “Letter to the Brazilians” (respect of the FHC’s agreements with imperialism) because it contradicted the necessary reforms (political, agrarian, fiscal) and the interests of the masses who had carried the PT to the Presidency of the Republic. That is why, when he was solicited, O’Trabalho did not accept positions in the Lula government, while reassuring that he would defend it against the attacks of imperialism or the bourgeoisie, preferring to fight for its positions in the PT.

Long before 2002, and during the thirteen years, O’Trabalho defended in the PT (and also the CUT) the struggle for a sovereign Constituent, in order to carry out the aspirations of social justice and national sovereignty of the Brazilian people. O’Trabalho was among the first to fight AP 470 since 2005 as an attack on the PT and has been committed to defending imprisoned leaders in the same way as now with “Lava Jato”. O’Trabalho fought the policy of “national alliance” with the PMDB led by the second Lula government, which led Temer to be Dilma’s vice president and to be one of the organizers of the 2016 putsch at the service of Imperialism and the bosses.

O’Trabalho has learned, as a section of the Fourth International, that class collaboration brings the organizations built by the workers to deadlock and defeat. Especially in a situation where imperialism can survive only by attacking the conquests obtained by the class struggle and the elements of national sovereignty won over by the struggle of the peoples.

Today, on an equal footing with other activists who are building Dialogue and Action Petiste, the militants of O’Trabalho are fighting for the reconstruction of the PT as an independent workers’ party they struggle to bring together activists and cadres who want to take action against the destructive policy of imperialism on a global level, through the initiatives of the ILC.

We claim the continuity of our political action during these forty years, based on the principles of class independence and workers’ internationalism.

Lauro Fagundes

The current O’Trabalho of the PT celebrates 40 years

On 18 November, in the auditorium of the Sao Paulo Engineers Union, activists from O’Trabalho, trade unionists and members of the PT of various currents participated in the meeting celebrating the forty years of current O’Trabalho the Brazilian section of the IV International. Rather than a commemoration of the past, it was a dialogue between activists on the present tasks.

The tribune, chaired by René Munaro (direction of O’Trabalho and of the CUT of the State of Santa Catarina), was composed of Julio Turra, who spoke on behalf of the current, Luis Eduardo Greenhalgh and Vicentinho, who gave testimonies on the common struggle against dictatorship and on the construction of the PT and the CUT, with also Sarah Lindalva, militant of O’Trabalho who is the leader of UNE. At the opening, Andreu Camps, on behalf of the Secretariat of the IV International, welcomed the meeting by video.

“Games are not over”
(Julio Turra, from the leadership of O’Trabalho)

“We were born in the fight against the military regime and today we are fighting against a state of emergency due to a perverse combination between a “dictatorship” of the judiciary and the interests of imperialism to reverse an obstacle to the full implementation of their policy: the government led by the PT. This is to inaugurate a usurper, Temer, who applies a set of measures to liquidate, quickly, the rights and conquests snatched by the struggle of the Brazilian working class.

And not without resistance, on the contrary of 1964, with a resistance, which is maintained and which we seek to reinforce. But we cannot dispense us with taking stock of what has favored this putschist offensive.

The national alliance policy with the PMDB has created a situation that is not new in history: collaboration with the enemy class leads to a deadlock, and ultimately to the destruction of workers’ organizations.

At half the first term of Dilma - June 2013 - her response had been positive: Constituent to reform the political system. But who vetoed it?
The Vice-President Temer, the STF, the Congress, that is, the institutions inherited from the dictatorship, patched up by the 1988 Constituent Assembly.

The adaptation of the PT to these institutions is at the root of the drift of the party, increasingly institutional. As quantity turns into quality, the PT is at this moment threatened to disappear if it does not pull itself together by leaning on the rich history that is its own.

The party disappointed these millions of workers who brought the PT to the presidency of the Republic. The impact on the PT activists of the defeat in the municipal elections was greater than that of the impeachment of Dilma, when it could be said that it was not the people who had rejected it, but 300 bandits of the Parliament. The PT lost 10 million votes compared to 2012 in favor of abstention, null and void votes. Those who had voted PT sanctioned the PT.

When the polls gave Dilma 10%, well before impeachment, they reflected the application of fiscal adjustment plans that had nothing to envy the European Union plans against the people there: reduced spending and subsidies to employers that had created a break in the public accounts.

The right saw what was happening and launched its attack, breaking through the gap between the government and its own electoral base. There was resistance, thousands on the streets, but what was the big problem? The factories did not move, the favelas did not descend, and the suburbs did not come.

How to regain this social base? That is the whole question, which is not just a Brazilian question. Is the whole world turning right? This is a unilateral and partial view of things, which conceals the necessary assessment of the mistakes of the left.

We are in a defensive situation; our clock has aligned itself with that of the world situation, a situation defending conquests and rights, because they want to liquidate everything, including even the existence of the organizations of the working class.

But the games are not over, the contradictions engendered by the politics of imperialism force the peoples to resist not to be liquidated physically. It is on this resistance that we want to rely.

We are proud to have maintained, during forty years of existence, continuity based on the principles vital to the workers' movement: class independence and internationalism.

For their presence here, we would like to thank the comrades of other parties, parliamentarians, trade union leaders who enrich this commemoration, and we want to tell them: you can count on us to preserve the best traditions of the PT, to rebuild the party as an instrument of struggle of the working class and the oppressed people of Brazil, and to establish bonds of solidarity at the international level with those facing the same challenge as us: to defend ourselves against the attacks of imperialism and to prepare the counteroffensive for the construction of a society without exploited and exploiters.”

“Space is lacking for PT militants”
(Luiz Eduardo Greenhalgh, of Dialogue and Action petiste)

“The current O Trabalho, who contributed and contributes, who built and is building the PT, the CUT, is more closely linked to the working class than many of the internal currents of the party. And these forty years of existence demonstrate this.

This democratic rupture that we are experiencing is deeper, more complex and effective than the 1964 coup d'état, which was a military coup. Who does not see this will be mistaken in the analysis of the conjuncture.

That's true what Julio said: the favelas did not come, the people did not come. Who came only? The glorious militants of the PT. And they came by themselves; they came for the red star and for dreams.

Space is lacking for PT activists to dialogue, to exchange opinions. Space is lacking for meetings, to hear analyzes of the conjuncture, to talk about what is happening in the neighborhood. The militants of the PT cannot remain dependent on the Journal of the chain Globo, on Folha de Sào Paulo, we must return to discuss with our militants. It is towards this that we went with the Itinerant Dialogue; we feel it. We're talking about 10 minutes and we're listening for an hour. It is impressive that dignity, courage, devotion and loyalty of party activists to this dream, to this instrument. We want to multiply this itinerant Dialogue.

There is only one way out, our own militants. It is we who are going to trace our own way, and who are going to emerge from this defensive situation in which we find ourselves.”

“It's a class commitment”
(Vicentinho, MP of the PT, former president of the CUT)

“It was very good to hear about the debates of that time, it has been like a school for us, who were young at that time. We have gone ahead, we have learned little by little and we have built ourselves as representatives of the class, which
is what is most important in this trajectory of forty years.
I am here to express my deepest respect for my brothers and sisters of O Trabalho. In the CUT, we have always been partners, critics too, because respecting the class and its representative’s means having the humility to understand that none of us is better than others because it is towards the class that we are engaged. Our hope is that those who voted for no one wants who knows, to hear something. It is important that O Trabalho’s comrades continue to act with their critics and to build the party, because it is our party. I will not leave my party, as I will not campaign with blue, green or red material, which is not the color of the PT.”

“This story will continue, marked by a lot of struggle”
(Sarah Landalva, militant OT and responsible for the UNE)

“The story of the current O Trabalho is that of a lot of struggle, and I am very happy to say today that this story will continue, marked by much struggle.
We suffered a blow that could destroy the rights of workers and youth. We, young people, felt this, but we did not only feel it, we resisted. It is for this reason that so many schools have been occupied, that so many universities are now occupied, with the most massive assemblies of students that have ever been seen.
But we know that this mobilization cannot be, cannot take place without the workers; it must be carried out jointly with them to inflict a defeat on all the measures that destroy our rights and this putschist government.
That is why we are pushing the construction of the Young Revolution to help young people to beat capitalism on the path to socialism.”
After the death of Fidel Castro: whither Cuba?

The man who was for decades the principal leader of the Cuban republic died on November 25. He had been chairman of the State Council and the government, before quitting these posts on July 31, 2006 because of serious illness. In 2008, the posts of chairman of the council of ministers and the State Council, as well as that of principal leader of the Cuban Communist Party, were officially transferred to his younger brother Raul Castro, commander in chief of the army. To a certain extent Fidel Castro remained the “critical conscience” through his articles in the official newspaper Granma. Thus when Obama visited Cuba in March of this year, he notably wrote: "We need no gift from the empire.”

But what was the role played by Fidel Castro these last 60 years?

January 1, 1959
The Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista, abandoned by the United States whose servile lackey he had been, left Cuba which had been paralyzed for a week by a general strike of agricultural workers, in communications and the universities. The regime collapsed. A guerrilla movement active since 1953 under the name of Revolutionary Movement of July 26 entered Havana amid a million demonstrators (in a country with a population of nine million). The government, which was then constituted proclaimed a "democratic and humanist" program, national sovereignty and independence with respect to the heavy hand of America. Bourgeois personalities such as Manuel Urrutia, who was president from January 1 until July 17, participated, and Fidel made a visit to the United States. At that time the Cuban economy was practically under the total control of American capital: 90% of mining production, 90% of the electricity and telephone networks, 80% of public services, 50% of the railways, 40% of sugar production...

With American capital, and in liaison with it, 30,000 proprietors possessed 70 percent of agricultural land. As regards sugar cane, the country’s leading agricultural product, 22 big landowners accounted for nearly 70 percent of production. The Batista dictatorship, initially supported by, among others, the Popular Socialist Party – the official Stalinist party - had placed a large part of the island in the hands of the US mafia: dozens of casinos and bordellos for wealthy American tourists.

The fall of the dictatorship represented the beginning of national liberation. A proletarian revolution got under way: the masses entered into movement, the peasants demanded land. The workers of the public services, the banks, the health and transport systems demanded the expropriation of their private owners. The dynamics of the mobilization rapidly threw into question the private ownership of the main means of production and provoked a rupture within the government itself with the departure of President Manuel Urrutia. Rapidly, the government's democratic platform took on a socio-economic content, and a workers' and peasants' government was constituted. On July 26, 1959, a million peasants and agricultural workers demonstrated in Havana in support of agrarian reform, which for them meant expropriation of the big landowners, going well beyond the Agrarian Reform legislation of May 17, 1959. The government took measures directly affecting the interests of the big owners and the big American capitalists.

On January 8, 1960, the US government broke diplomatic relations with Cuba. On February 3, the newly elected US Democrat, President Kennedy, decreed a total embargo and blockade. In April 1961, the CIA organized an invasion using exiled Cuban mercenaries. The Cuban government responded with a call for popular mobilization.

Hundreds of thousands of workers, peasants and students took up arms. Committees for defense of the revolution were formed – the same committees which later, centralized and controlled by the regime, were to play a role in controlling the population. The Bay of Pigs invasion was crushed within hours. It was at that moment that Castro declared the revolution to be socialist.

We can affirm that from that moment on, the development of the Cuban revolution became a reference for the workers and peoples of Latin America, while at the same time the orientations of its leadership conditioned to a considerable
extent the evolution of an important sector of the vanguard.

Castro does not escape the heavy hand of the Kremlin

In effect, the Cuban revolution, the first victorious workers’ revolution on the American continent, broke with the logic of "peaceful coexistence", that is to say, the counter-revolutionary accord between American imperialism and the ruling bureaucracy of the Soviet Union. The local agency of the apparatus of the Kremlin, the Popular Socialist Party which had rallied to the cause of the Movement of July 26 shortly before the fall of Batista, fully collaborated with the then Soviet leader Khrushchev in order to place the Cuban government under its control and make it a playing piece in Moscow’s relations with American imperialism.

In October 1962, the Kennedy government discovered that Khrushchev had installed missiles in Cuba in the name of “defense of the island”. The US president issued an ultimatum, and two weeks later imperialism and bureaucracy reached an agreement and the missiles were withdrawn. Castro and his government had been placed before a fait accompli. In effect, and not without contradictions, the Stalinist bureaucracy succeeded in using Cuba within the framework of its counter-revolutionary accords with the United States. In Cuba the Kremlin’s agency, the PSP, pressed forcefully for unity with the Movement of July 26, thereby creating the United Party of the Socialist Revolution of Cuba in 1962 and centralizing the structure of Integrated Revolutionary Organizations, that is to say, installing a single party on the Stalinist model. However, this process did not eliminate internal conflicts and contradictions, and it was not until 1965 that the new Communist Party of Cuba was officially created. Che Guevara, one of the principal Cuban leaders, did not attend the party congress, quit all his government responsibilities and sent a letter to Castro which was read at the congress. He sought to spread the revolution, notably in Latin America, after having taken part in guerrilla activity in The Congo. In 1966 he tried to set up a guerrilla army in Bolivia, outside of the real movement of the masses. His group remained isolated and perished at the hands of a CIA-trained Bolivian army in October 1967. Earlier, Che Guevara had made public his divergences regarding the alignment of Cuba with the Kremlin bureaucracy. It was thus that in February 1965 in Algiers, at a rally in honor of Ahmed Ben Bella, the first president of independent Algeria, he in particular said:

“The socialist countries are, to a certain extent, the accomplices of imperialist exploitation. The socialist countries have a moral duty to put an end to their tacit complicity with the exploiter countries of the West.”

In the course of those years, Guevara also criticized the manual of economic policy of the USSR of 1963, which served as a planning guide for the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The foreign policy of the Castro government followed the directives of the Kremlin, and internally, bureaucratic planning rendered Cuba dependent upon Moscow’s aid. It is in this framework that one should understand the participation of the Cuban armed forces in armed conflicts, in particular in Angola after the latter’s independence in 1975, and in other African countries such as Ethiopia. It is no hazard that these interventions came to an end when Gorbachev became Soviet leader in 1985, with his new policy of total subordination to US imperialism.

The present situation

The fall of the USSR in 1991 provoked a major crisis in Cuba: in the space of three years, gross domestic product fell by 35 percent. This situation was partly offset by the aid provided from 1998 on by the Chavez government of Venezuela, which notably provided oil at half the market price through the enterprise Petrocaribe, a subsidiary of PDVSA, the big public oil company of Venezuela. The crisis that Venezuela is currently experiencing has again placed the Cuban government at the crossroads. At the 16th Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, in April 2011, the government of Raul Castro succeeded in getting adopted a plan of “liberalization” of the economy, notably through the creation of hundreds of new forms of work and the promotion of self-employment. But so far, no more than 11 percent of the active population is outside the nationalized economy. According to official figures, 80 percent of the economy remains nationalized and the hierarchy of the armed forces occupies a central place.

It is in this situation that from December 2014 Raul Castro has sought to re-establish relations with the United States. The American administration restored diplomatic relations on March 20, 2015, without lifting the embargo. During his visit to the island in March this year, Obama gave fresh impetus to the restoration of relations. This is also the product of the contradictions of American imperialism: different factions of the American bourgeoisie are opposed to the lifting of the embargo, while
others, such as the agro-exporting lobbies and the tourist and air transport industries, are pushing in favor of it. With historic irony, it is on the morrow of Castro’s death that commercial US air links with Havana have resumed. The latest statements by US president-elect D. Trump threatening to cancel the current accords with Cuba are likely aimed simply at negotiating more advantageous terms for US enterprises, the Spanish daily El País suggested on November 29. This does not prevent the Cuban government from playing a non negligible role in the different operations of the American administration on the continent, such as the negotiations between the ex-FARC and the Santos government in Columbia, the opening of negotiations between Maduro and the opposition in Venezuela, or humanitarian aid to Haiti without throwing into question the military occupation by the UN force Minustah.

* * * * *

This is not an attempt to draw up a balance sheet of pros and cons of Castro’s political course or the evolution of the Cuban revolution. The revolution that Fidel led made some unquestionable gains, and it remains a point of reference for the workers and peasants of the whole continent and beyond. The introduction of a free universal health service and free education for all, the expropriation of big capital, the agrarian reform and all the other struggles for the social and democratic emancipation of the Cuban people are undeniable and remain. The present regime, inherited due to subordination to the Stalinist apparatus, with its policy of “economic overture”, is not helpful for the maintenance of these conquests. The position of militants of the IV International and its sections regarding the Cuban revolution has always been clear and explicit: unconditional support against imperialist aggression, but without identifying with the regime; for us, the defense and survival of this revolution and its gains notably requires an alliance between the movement of peoples and workers of the whole continent with the North American working class. Today, Cuba is again at the crossroads.

Andreu Camps,
November 29, 2016
DOSSIER: Whither Cuba?

We follow up the presentation article of Andreu Camps with a dossier composed of three articles published in *La Vérité/ The Truth* in 2011, 2005 and 1994. These articles provide factual and precise elements, and illustrate the position of the IV International regarding the Cuban revolution and the defense of its conquests: unconditional support against imperialist aggression, but without identifying this defense with that of the regime.

Document 1

Cuba: the turning point.
The government of Raul Castro embarks upon counter-reforms

On Tuesday, January 4, 2011, the government of Raul Castro began applying the measures announced months earlier, for the suppression of jobs in the civil service and State enterprises¹. In the following six months, 500,000 jobs are to disappear, and 1.3 million in the three years to come, equivalent to 25 percent of the salaried workers of the public sector – which, let us recall, accounts for 95 percent of all the country’s salaried workers. (…)

The governmental press indicates that great conflicts and tensions have arisen among the workers threatened with lay-offs.

On January 2, the government also decided to reduce the number of basic commodities that one can obtain with ration cards. Already the year before, potatoes, peas, cigarettes and salt were no longer obtainable by ration cards. To this has today been added toothpaste and washing products. The price of such products has multiplied by a factor of 25. One should understand that ration cards allowed the whole Cuban population to obtain basic commodities at very low prices adapted to salary levels.

On January 1, Cardinal Jaime Ortega, head of the Catholic Church in Cuba, declared in a homily that he “supports the economic reform process proposed by Raul Castro”, and called on Cubans “to involve themselves in the changes under way without abandoning their critical spirit. This involves all of us, and the good implementation of these transformations does not depend solely on the authorities on their decisions, but also on a good comprehension by the population.”

According to a Cuban economist, the measures are “the equivalent of an IMF structural adjustment policy”. Following the 1959 revolution under the auspices of the Movement of July 26, Cuba expropriated capital and constituted a workers’ State, which was bureaucratically deformed by the exclusion of the laboring masses from power, and established a planned economy.

After 1962, when imperialism sought to liquidate the new regime by force, the Kremlin bureaucracy placed Cuba under its control in order to use it as a factor of barter in the framework of its policy of “peaceful co-existence” with imperialism.

For a transitional period, the Cuban economy was “protected” by accords with the Soviet Union. But in 1991, the disintegration of the USSR left Cuba unprotected from the world market. Today it is exposed to the full force of the general crisis of the capitalist system and its consequences due to the fact that the Cuban economy is dependent on the price of the basic materials it exports, such as nickel, while it is obliged to import 80 percent of its basic needs.

This is a further practical demonstration that socialism in a sole country is a reactionary utopia. The gains of the Cuban revolution, which are under attack and in danger, are more than ever dependent upon the development of the independent organization of Cuban workers and the mounting revolutionary processes on the Latin American continent.

¹ Extracts of an article by Andreu Camps in *La Vérité* N°70, of February 2011. The whole article is to be found in issue N°70 or by request addressed to the editorial office of *La Vérité*. 
Announcement of the convening of the 6th congress of the Cuban Communist Party

It was on November 9 that Cuban president Raul Castro made public, during a meeting held in Havana to celebrate the 10th anniversary of an accord of total cooperation between Cuba and Venezuela, which led to the subsequent creation of Alba (2), the decision to hold the 6th Congress of the Cuban Communist Party (CCP) “in the second half of the month of April 2011”.

This congress would be wholly devoted to “updating the socialist economic model”. The previous congress was held in 1977, even if the party rules state that a congress must be held every five years. The holding of the 6th congress had been repeatedly announced, and was due to have been held in October 2009, but postponed. Raul Castro made public a long 32-page document containing 300 points. This document has been distributed across the country since November 10. The first copy was given to Fidel Castro, the second to Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, who was present at the public meeting where it was announced.

The process of preparing this congress is expected to begin immediately. A timetable of discussions has been organized - discussions which the whole population is called upon to participate in (...). Before 523 party leaders, the Economy and Planning minister, Maino Murillo, stated: “This is no reform, but an update of the economic model. No one can imagine that we will yield on the question of ownership. We are going to administer in a different fashion.”

According to the party newspaper Gramma, one of the most important queries of the plan concerns point 16 of the directives, which explain that “national enterprises which suffer successive losses will be liquidated”. An analysis of the directives shows them to be veritable counter-reforms. And in order to carry these out, a reorganization of the CCP apparatus has also been necessary.

On August 1, 2010, during a plenary session of the National Assembly (parliament), Raul Castro had announced the imminent adoption of a whole series of measures, described as a “labor reform”, with the aim of giving a massive impetus to independent employment in order to “lighten” the civil service.

In Cuba today, 95 percent of workers are State employees, either of the civil service or public enterprises. In a country of 11 million inhabitants and a total of 4.95 million salaried workers, 600,000 people work in the private sector, of which 143,000 are independent workers and 250,000 are in cooperatives.

Among other things, Raul Castro told the National Assembly: “One must put an end to the idea that Cuba is the only country in the world where one can live without working.”

The Council of Ministers meeting of July 16 and 17 (with the notable participation of leaders of the Cuban Workers Central (CTC – trade union confederation), the CCP and the UJC youth organization) had decided “to broaden the exercise of independent work by eliminating the bans in force, by granting new authorizations and by making contracts more flexible”.

Independent workers would have to pay income tax, make social security contributions and would have the possibility of employing other workers.

Raul Castro presented these decisions to the National Assembly (...).

After an introductory affirmation that it was not intended to abolish the system of socialist planning, Raul Castro declared that he was proposing “an update of the economic model in order to make it more efficient, more productive and to ward off paternalism.”

The introduction gives a relatively clear idea of the orientation of this program. He spoke of the existence of a systemic structural crisis without saying which system was concerned. He also said that “Cuba has an open and dependent economy of very low efficiency, a decapitalization of its productive base, an aging and stagnation of its population growth.”

On pages 6 and 7 of the document one can also read:

“Eliminate the swollen excess employment in all spheres of the economy, organize a restructuring of employment, including by non State solutions (...). Raise work productivity, increase discipline, the level of wage motivation by eliminating egalitarianism in the mechanisms of sharing and distribution of income. This is part of a process in which it will be necessary to abolish unnecessary gratuities and excessive personal subsidies.”

It is therefore a matter of reducing wage levels and linking salaries to productivity in a move towards the individualization of wages and working conditions. The document thus states: “Work is both a duty and a right. It is a motive for personal realization by each citizen. It will have to be remunerated in conformity with its quality and its quantity.”

What difference with IMF structural adjustment plans?

In a second series of measures, it is a question of modifying the management model:

“It is a question of transforming socialist planning in order to open the way for new forms of
management and introduce market mechanisms in the system of buying and selling by enterprises.” Further on, it is stated: “Wholesale supply markets without subsidies will be developed for the system of enterprises, cooperatives and independent workers.”

Regarding the health and education system, point 154 relating to social security notably says that “it will be necessary to reduce the relative part of the State budget and continue raising the individual contribution by workers.”

For education, “that part of the budget will be reduced to the minimum necessary to ensure its assigned functions by favoring the criteria of maximum savings in staff and State budgets as regards material and financial resources.”

Concerning international trade, it is a question of “obtaining an external trade balance on the basis of a positive balance of payments supported by the behavior of the real economy.” Behind this language, it is a question of reducing imports and increasing exports by giving guarantees to international capital.

To which are added decentralization measures, that is to say the transfer of State responsibilities to municipalities. Point 37 indicates: “The development of local projects, particularly for the production of crops, will have to constitute a work strategy for self-sufficiency in food at municipal level.”

In its preamble, the document stresses the need to attract international investments and to “make cooperative solidarity pass via the United Nations.” Let us not forget that Cuba furnished and still furnishes doctors and teachers for numerous Latin American countries, and latterly Haiti. Passing that role over to the United Nations means giving it to imperialism.

The project also speaks of promoting the creation of “special development zones” and luxury tourism.

Overall, the document entitled “Economic and Social Policy Directives” constitutes a veritable program of economic reforms, which throw into question State ownership, the system of workers’ protection and, in the long-term, the unity of the country. The document insists upon the need to give guarantees to international capital by proposing the reorganization of the payment of the debt in order to fulfill undertaking.

The position of the Cuban workers’ central

On September 13, 2010, a declaration by the national secretariat of the Cuban Workers’ Central (CTC) was published and widely distributed (...). This declaration had an unprecedented character. Raul Castro had announced that there was an excess of more than a million civil service and State enterprise workers. The same day, the government had announced that the plan for “adjusting” the economic model and making it bearable required a radical and immediate restructuring of employment. The first step would be to reduce the nationalized sector by 12 percent, or 500,000 jobs, in 2011, rising to 1.3 million in three years.

In the face of this extremely brutal restructuring, the national secretariat of the CTC concluded: “We commit ourselves and undertake to supervise the strictest observance and implementation of the principle of adequacy in order to determine who has the best right to occupy a position, as well as the transparency with which this must be executed. The trade union must implement systematic control of the working of this process in its sector to the highest degree, from beginning to end, and adopt corresponding measures and inform its higher levels and the CTC.”

Since November 8, the CTC newspaper Trabajadores has hailed the content of the new directives and announced the necessity to discuss and implement them.

The accord with Venezuela and the significance of Alba

The announcement of the holding of the 6th congress in the presence of the Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez has a particular significance. First of all, Venezuela is Cuba’s leading trading partner. Their total exchange of goods and services is estimated at 3.6 billion dollars for the year 2009. The accord with Venezuela, passed on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the setting up of Alba, has according to Chavez himself consolidated an unprecedented system of integration. Evidently, every worker, every militant for whom the sovereignty of peoples is dear cannot but hail the sovereign trade accords between the Cuban and Venezuelan governments – accords, which escape the direct control of American imperialism.

This shows that the perspective of a free union of sovereign nations of the Caribbean, free from all oppression and exploitation, might open the way for a real struggle for socialism. Precisely, Venezuela supplies Havana with a daily 100,000 barrels of oil. In exchange, 40,000 Cubans carry out aid work in Venezuela, 30,000 of them in the health sector (doctors and nurses). The others are teachers and officers of the armed forces.

The oil agreement is in the framework of a regional accord, which set up an enterprise named Petrocaribe which furnishes oil at low
prices to a whole series of countries of the region, including Cuba but also Haiti (although because of the Préval puppet regime, these accords in no way benefit the Haitian population). In the 10 years since the establishment of Alba, numerous trade agreements have been reached but do not go beyond barter deals. One cannot identify the planning on the basis of State production, which exists in Cuba with that which might exist in Venezuela itself. That shows the limits of the measures taken by the Chavez government with respect to imperialism and its local agents.

The US government has welcomed Raul Castro’s project. US assistant Secretary of State Arturo Valenzuela said on November 10 that freeing political prisoners and opening the economy to the private sector and foreign capital is “an important step”. Valenzuela confirmed the declaration of the Spanish foreign minister at the time, Miguel Angel Moratino: “The decision of the Cuban government to free all political prisoners would allow the opening of a new stage in the diplomatic relations between Cuba and the European Union. Moreover, it will have consequences with respect to the United States.” According to the minister, “this will lead to the lifting of the embargo that Washington has maintained since 1962”. After the 6th congress of the CCP, Raul Castro announced the holding of a national party conference to deal with internal affairs. Saying that was to say that the congress would be crucial. It will likely be the last congress of the historic generation of the 1959 revolution. Fidel Castro is 84, Raul Castro 79. They are no doubt preparing to renew the ruling apparatus of the CCP, and thus that of the central State apparatus. But behind this generational renewal, there is indeed something else.

It has to be said that Raul Castro has restructured a good part of the central State apparatus these last four years. According to estimates by the Madrid-based El Pais newspaper, he has changed 60 percent of members of the government. The latest reshuffle saw the disappearance of Yadid Garcia, minister for Strategic Industry, responsible for exchanges with Venezuela. Let us recall that 2009 saw the removal from power of External Affairs minister Felipe Perez Roque and the vice-president Carlos Lage, after some obscure affair. The latter two were seen as possible successors to Fidel Castro. The other ministries which have seen their heads and key officials change are those for economy, agriculture, transport, the sugar industry, internal trade, finance, food industry, labor and social security, and light industry (…).

In fact, Raul Castro has surrounded himself with men of the military apparatus, taking into account the fact that the army directly controls 30 percent of the country’s economy.

**Cuba at the crossroads**

(…) The Cuban economy cannot subsist outside of the world market. Since the 1960s, relations with the USSR had partly "protected" the Cuban economy, which suffered from the effects of the US embargo. In fact, Cuba was living off subsidies (if not protected prices) from the USSR. The fall of the Soviet Union brought about a catastrophic situation. For years, the “barter” agreements with Venezuela provided a certain, but quite insufficient, respite. Moreover, the uncertainty of the political situation in Venezuela has weighed negatively. From the outset, the Cuban regime renounced linking the fate of the Cuban revolution with that of international, and in particular continental, revolution. Since the departure of Guevara, in the international political framework imposed by the Kremlin, Castro has allied himself with a whole series of reactionary regimes in Latin America. In particular one should not forget his support for the PRI regime in Mexico during the massacres of 1968 and, since 1979, his efforts to prevent the Sandinista regime of Nicaragua from expropriating the bourgeoisie there.

A complete balance sheet of Castro’s foreign policy is necessary. He inscribed his international activity in the framework of the Kremlin’s policy of “peaceful co-existence”, thus against the development of world revolution. But the conquests of the Cuban revolution which remain depend upon the development of the combat of workers and peoples of the continent, and on the degree of independent organization of the Cuban working class. The CCP and the CTC are institutions of the regime and major obstacles to such organization. The CTC is the force, which is deploying itself to implement the new measures:

“The CTC, via its trade unions, plays a key role in each work unit. It is for that reason that one is going to ensure the implementation of the measures by cadres willing and ready down to the last detail. In the same way, the party and UJC (youth organization) must supervise matters to ensure that this takes place according to the principles of justice of the revolution.” (Granma, September 28, 2010)

Without any doubt, the Castrist regime is gambling on its future. The opening up to the world market, the search for an accord with Obama, are taking place to the detriment and cost of the workers. For all that, one cannot say that the fate of Cuba is sealed or consider that
the die is already cast. The working class, in Cuba and at continental level, has not said its last word.

For the IV International and its sections, the defense of Cuba against imperialism and for the lifting of the embargo remain an unconditional demand, over and above our characterization of the regime and its present policy. In any event, the defense of the gains of the Cuban revolution, in relation with the development of independent organization of the workers, is being played out at continental level, that is to say, with respect to the advancing mobilization of the workers and peoples of Latin America.

Andreu Camps

Document 2
The Cuban revolution revisited

(...) The Cuban revolution of 1959\(^2\) combined diverse particularities: not only was it the first successful revolution in America and the Western hemisphere, but it was also the first to take place on the basis of a rural guerrilla war and the first to be led by an organization (the Movement of July 26) that was not in the Stalinist orbit (...).

The Cuban revolution was an encouragement for revolutionaries the world over. Many revolutionary militants tried to exactly follow the path taken by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, and launched rural or urban guerrilla campaigns, with terrible consequences for a whole generation of Latin American militants (...).

After the collapse of the Stalinist regimes of the USSR and Eastern Europe, Cuba appeared to be a reference for many militants. One must therefore draw the facts out into the light, in order to be able to say how the Cuban revolution unfolded. Our viewpoint is that of Marxists of the IV International. We do not seek to impose that view-point, but to present our positions and open discussion (...).

(The text presents the particularities of Cuban history, the revolts against slavery and colonization: the caste of big landowners and the bourgeoisie had need of permanent repression in order to maintain their dominance, they feared independence, and when the Spanish colonization collapsed, they sold themselves to American imperialism, which often intervened militarily and placed the Cuban State under its tutorage.)

The Fulgencia Batista dictatorship
Fulgencia Batista first appeared on the Cuban political scene on September 5, 1933, when the date upon which there was a military movement

\(^2\) Extracts of an article by Luis Gonzalez in La Vérité N°47 of December 2005, available.
Batista organized a coup d'état, which the United States supported without hesitation. Among those who opposed it was the lawyer Fidel Castro, son of a rich farmer and member since 1950 of the Orthodox Party youth wing. Castro opted for armed opposition, and on July 26, 1953, at the head of a group of young militants, he attempted an assault upon the Moncada barracks in Santiago, capital of the country's eastern region (...).

By the end of Batista's electoral term, American capital dominated the Cuban economy (...). The Batista dictatorship also placed a good part of Cuba into the hands of the US mafia (...). Batista and his family, along with important members of the army, enriched themselves through illicit business, and controlled "one-armed bandit" gaming machines and parking meters. The Cuban people, subjected to extremely harsh repression, were indignant in the face of this degrading spectacle. When the revolutionaries invaded Havana in January 1959, the casinos, roulette wheels, gaming tables and parking meters were the object of special hate by the Cuban masses (...).

The Cuban Stalinist Party
Contrary to other Latin American countries, there existed in Cuba a powerful Communist Party with tens of thousands of members. The party was founded in 1925 with the participation of Julio Antonio Mella. It took various names in the course of its existence: Communist Revolutionary Union in the 1930s, Popular Socialist Party from 1944 to 1962 (...).

In the first half of the 1930s, the Comintern policy was in its so-called "third period", under which the greatest enemy was social democracy and other currents of the workers' movement. Any unity with them was forbidden (...).

Thus, when, faced with the Machado tyranny, the Cuban working class unleashed a great battle, the high point of which was a general strike beginning July 28, 1933, and which immediately spread right across the country, the Stalinists on August 7 issued a general order for a "return to work" in exchange for legalization by Machado of the Communist Party and its trade union bodies. Documents signed in the name of the National Workers' Confederation of Cuba (an agency of the Latin American trade union confederation of Montevideo) by the Stalinist César Villar were distributed and stuck on pillars, electricity supply poles and the trees of city parks by Machado's own police. Despite this, the strike and direct proletarian action continued, culminating in a veritable civil war situation on August 12. Machado fell and fled.

The zip-zags with respect to Batista were enormous. In 1935, the Communist Party described him as "national traitor". But when, in exchange for discreet collaboration, Batista permitted Juan Martínello to organize the CP under the name of Revolutionary Union Party and then permitted publication of the Stalinist newspaper Hoy (Today) in 1938, the party declared in a plenary session that Batista "is no longer the center of reaction, but the defender of democracy". In 1939, the party described him as a "comrade of the united front (...)". By the time of the 1940 election campaign, Batista enjoyed the total support of the Cuban Stalinists, and included two of them, Juan Marinello and Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, as ministers in his government.

The policy of alliance with the democratic powers that Stalin implemented between 1934 and 1939, and thereafter from 1941, meant that at the second congress of the Cuban Communist Party, there was no criticism of the United States. (...) The support for Batista during the 1940s was simply the consequence of an "anti-fascist" policy and Batista's declaration of war on Germany and Italy.

In 1944, the Revolutionary Union Party became the Popular Socialist Party (PSP). This was shortly after Earl Browder, leader of the US Communist Party, characterized the Teheran Conference of 1943 as an act putting an end to the class struggle and proposed transforming the US party into a simple association. (Browder's book Victory and After included an eulogy signed by Marinello).

Under different names, the Communist Party benefited from its collaboration with Batista, who guaranteed the Stalinists control of the trade union organization, the Cuban Workers' Central (CTC). And it was loath to abandon this association, despite Batista's turn toward a visceral anti-communism after the 1952 coup d'état (...).

The July 26 movement
Fidel Castro, jailed after the failed Moncada barracks attack, was amnestied in 1955 and emigrated to Mexico, where he tried to organize an anti-Batista resistance. In Mexico he created a new organization, the July 26 Movement. When he founded it, Castro regarded it as an element of the so-called Orthodox Party originally led by Chibas. Thus in August 1955, in a message he sent from his exile to a congress of Orthodox militants, he explained: "The revolutionary Movement of July 26 does not constitute a tendency in the party, it is the revolutionary apparatus of chibaism, rooted in
the masses, from whose breast it has surged in order to struggle against the dictatorship, while Orthodoxy remained impotent and divided in a thousand fragments. We have never abandoned its ideas and we have remained faithful to the principles of the great fighter whose passing we commemorate today.”

When he broke in 1956 with the leadership of the Orthodox Party, Castro continued to claim allegiance to the ideals of Eduardo Chibas, whom he believed the party leadership had betrayed in seeking a pact with Batista.

Eduardo Chibas, founder of the Orthodox Party, began his political activity as an opponent of the Machado regime, and then joined the party of Grau San Martin. But scandalized by the corruption which flourished within the ranks of the second Grau government, Chibas broke away to found a new organization, the Cuban Party of the People, known as the Orthodox Party. The Orthodox ideology was nationalistic and opposed to US intervention in Cuban affairs (...). On August 5, 1951, Chibas committed suicide during a radio broadcast in a gesture intended to galvanize the Cuban people.

The program of the July 26 Movement was laid out by Fidel Castro at his trial for the Moncada assault. “History will absolve me”, he declared. It is known as the Moncada Program. It was not a socialist program, but a range of radical democratic and anti-imperialist measures (...).

The program was concentrated in democratic and anti-imperialist demands which did not throw into question the private ownership of the means of production. This program was still maintained by Castro during the guerrilla struggle against Batista.

Thus on July 12, 1957, in the Sierra Maestra, Fidel signed the Sierra Maestra Manifesto with representatives of the bourgeois opposition such as Raul Chibas, president of the Cuban Party of the People, and Felipe Pazos, ex-chairman of the National Bank of Cuba and very close to Prio Socarras, leader of the “authentic”. The platform’s few points are even more moderate than the Moncada text.

As late as May 2, 1959, Castro told the economic council of the Organization of American States in Buenos Aires:

“We are not opposed to foreign investment (...). We trust in the utility, the experience and the enthusiasm of private investors. The enterprises which receive international investments will have the same guarantees and the same rights as national enterprises”(...).”

Certain persons have been tempted to rewrite history and maintain that Castro was always a Marxist (...). Of the Sierra Maestra guerrilla fighters, only Che Guevara had read some of the classic works of Marxism. Raúl Castro, younger brother of Fidel and "commander of the eastern front" of the revolution, had some vague Marxist sympathies dating from his distant former membership of the Young Communists and a visit to countries of Eastern Europe (...).

The guerrilla war against Batista

In November 1956, the July 26 Movement launched an armed movement on the island led by Frank Pais to coincide with the landing of the yacht Granma bearing 80 men with Castro at their head. But the insurrection was crushed and the landing of the Granma itself took place later than scheduled and far from its planned site. When Castro's men landed, Batista’s forces were waiting for them. The first fighting took place shortly after, at Alegría Pío, where the guerrillas were routed and forced to disperse. Batista even announced that Castro had been killed.

On December 18, the men of the Granma reassembled and there then began the guerrilla war in the Sierra Maestra, where the fighters enjoyed the support of local peasants. In January 1957, the guerrillas had their first military successes, such as the fight at La Plata.

The guerrillas gathered strength throughout the year of 1957, and spread out over the whole of the territory thanks to the arrival of new columns of fighters and the opening of new fronts. At the same time the struggle developed in the towns, waged principally by students.

In 1958, the July 26 Movement felt the time had come to take a further step, and called for a revolutionary general strike for April 9. But the strike called failed, being supported neither by the official trade unions nor the Cuban Workers' Central (CTC) led by the Stalinists of the PSP. (The PSP at that time rejected Castro’s struggle, which they officially considered "putschist"). The boycott of the general strike call by the PSP is not just an anecdote. The Stalinist civil servants who worked for Batista’s State apparatus remained totally deaf to Fidel’s calls, describing him as a “petit bourgeois adventurer”, while the Moscow News claimed that the armed insurrections were minor in nature and in no way weakened the Batista regime. The July 26 Movement in August of that year condemned the "treachery" of the PSP. In fact, during the 26 months' duration of the guerrilla war, there was little actual fighting. According to historian Hugh Thomas, in his work Cuba: A History, the only real battles that took place

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1 Plan for the advancement of Latin America, Havana 1959, page 32.
during the civil war were that of Santa Clara and the rout of the government offensive of the summer of 1958. Six soldiers and 40 rebels died in these encounters. Thomas believe there were few armed clashes overall. During the whole period of the guerrilla war, Batista lost more than 300 men. According to Castro, around April 1958 the total number of armed men under his command was about 180, rising to 803 at the time of Batista’s fall 4.

The bourgeoisie itself had begun to think that the Batista regime would be beaten, and its spokesmen had begun looking around for alternative ways out. On July 20, the July 26 Movement and various bourgeois opposition forces signed the Caracas pact, which committed the incoming government to implement an elementary democratic program (…).

The US government soon ceased furnishing arms for Batista. The Cuban Stalinists also sensed a wind of change. In July 1958 there took place the first meeting between Castro and PSP representative Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, a former Batista government minister. At the end of August, in the course of a second visit to Sierra Maestra, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez obtained the signature of an accord between the PSP and Fidel Castro: in exchange for communist support at various levels, Fidel accepted the entry of PSP members into the rebels’ ranks.

The Batista army rapidly fell apart (…).

The US government, convinced that Batista would be beaten, attempted a final maneuver: a military Junta, which would take power after Batista’s resignation. But at that moment, the working class of Havana and other towns played a decisive role in foiling the maneuver, launching a general strike, which precipitated the collapse of the regime. As K.S. Karol wrote in Guerilllas in Power: the Course of the Cuban Revolution, the whole week of the general strike in Havana constituted a decisive element of the situation, preventing anyone from taking advantage of the power vacuum.

On the eve of the New Year of 1959, Batista informed his collaborators of his intention to quit the island. Which he did, at 3 a.m. On January 1, 1959. The same day, Ernesto Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos were the first commanders of the revolution to enter Havana.

Permanent revolution in Cuba

The guerrillas’ entry into Havana in the middle of a general strike amid an atmosphere of mobilization among the urban masses crowned the victory of the revolution. On January 21, more than a million people demonstrated in Havana for the defense of their sovereignty, in favor of punishment of Batista’s criminals and in support of the triumphant revolution.

The new government at first planned not to go beyond the measures expressed in the Moncada program, the Sierra Maestra manifesto and the Caracas pact: democratic measures, restoration of the bourgeois constitution of 1940, a purge of Batista’s State apparatus, agrarian reform with compensation for landowners and nationalization of a few monopolies. But the decomposing bourgeoisie State was mortally wounded. On February 7 the basic law of the Republic was adopted restoring the 1940 constitution with a few minimal changes (…). Manuel Urrutia Lleó, a former magistrate who had opposed death penalties for the captured Granma rebels, was named president. Urrutia represented the bourgeois sectors and landowners who had broken with Batista and sympathized with the July 26 Movement. A “democratic government of national unity” was formed, in which Miro Cardona, a trusted ally of the United States, was named prime minister (…).

The Cuban Telephone Company and other foreign companies were confiscated; electricity and telephone rates were lowered, as were the price of medication and rents. The agrarian reform law was signed in May at La Plata (Sierra Maestra), which caused a clash with Urrutia. A good proportion of the land redistributed to peasants had belonged to US-origin landowners (let us remember that 47 percent of arable land was in the hands of American companies). The nationalized telephone and electricity companies had also been American.

The US government thus began to oppose such revolutionary measures and encouraged resistance to them. Its pawns in government took part in such maneuvers, including President Urrutia, who was therefore removed from office. The Council of Ministers named Osvaldo Dorticos Torrado in his place. It was in this context that the mass of workers and peasants were led to intervene, and they mobilized, as they had with the fall of Batista. Thus on July 26 – anniversary of the assault on the Moncada barracks – more than a million people, including thousands of peasants, gathered in Havana to celebrate proclamation of the agrarian reform.

Each step forward taken by the revolution prompted opposition from sectors of the bourgeoisie formerly opposed to Batista, and provoked new boycott measures by the United States. But the revolutionary mobilization of the masses overcame the bourgeois opposition, and at the same time took practical measures, which

4 Speech by Castro on December 1, 1961.
obliged the Castro government to move further ahead.

 (...) In the majority of cases, workers in the enterprises carried out the nationalizations themselves by naming an administrator from among their own ranks. In other cases, they were obliged to take over companies abandoned by their owners, who had withdrawn their capital (the Cuban bourgeoisie began to quit the island: as of 1959, there began a strong migratory movement toward the United States, which in the first few years of the revolution deprived Cuba of 50 percent of its teachers and doctors). One saw a similar process of workers’ mobilization in the nationalizations decided by the government. It was thus that a workers’ revolution began to develop.

In May 1959, the oil refineries operating in Cuba, and belonging to American companies, refused to sell oil products or provide tanker trucks for their transport. They also refused to handle the crude oil imported from the USSR. The USSR sent by ship the oil products needed to keep industry turning over in order to ensure the functioning of the Cuban economy, the oil refineries were nationalized on June 16. On July 6, in retaliation for the measures taken against the American oil companies, President Eisenhower canceled part of the Cuban sugar import quota.

On October 19, the US Trade Department for the first time banned the shipment of products bound for Cuba. In December, it canceled all imports of Cuban sugar for the American market. The USSR agreed a deal to buy sugar at a preferential price. On January 8, 1960, the United States broke relations with Cuba. The various pro-imperialist governments of Latin America followed suit. Cuba was expelled from the Organization of American States the same January. Shortly after, the Frondizi government of Argentina broke diplomatic relations with Cuba.

On January 24, the US Treasury announced that any goods wholly or partly containing products of Cuban origin, no matter in which country they were manufactured, were banned from entering the United States. On February 3, the recently elected New US president Kennedy decreed a total trade embargo on Cuba. On February 6, seeking to impose a total blockade, the White House announced that products purchased with US government money would be confiscated from foreign vessels believed to have traded with Cuba since January 1 of that year.

Military measures are added to economic ones

The US government enlisted former Batista soldiers to fight the revolutionary Cuban government. The mountainous central and western parts of the country began to fill with bandits armed and financed by the United States and drawn from among the exiled migrants who had fled the revolution. This powerful counter-revolutionary movement succeeded in establishing guerrilla forces in all parts of the country (...) and was not definitively vanquished until the end of 1965. The Castro government had to respond to the armed counter-revolution. In 1959 it set up a revolutionary national militia, and in 1960 committees for the defense of the revolution, which also became a means of controlling the Cuban population. In April 1961, exiled Cubans armed and trained by the United States, numbering some 1,500 men, landed in the Bay of Pigs. Their offensive was defeated within three days by government forces. In the same month of April 1961, Fidel Castro defined the Cuban revolution as having a socialist character.

The revolutionary action of the masses and the need to oppose the actions of American imperialism against the revolution led the Castro government to go further down the road of expropriating capital – its sole remaining means of survival. Indeed, a revolutionary government in a semi-colonial country like Cuba could not develop its program of democratic transformation and social reforms, even minimal ones, other than by opposing imperialism and taking steps toward a break with the regime of private ownership. Thirty years before the Cuban revolution, Trotsky wrote in The Permanent Revolution:

“(...) The democratic tasks of the backward bourgeois nations lead directly, in our epoch, to the dictatorship of the proletariat and (...) the dictatorship of the proletariat puts socialist tasks on the order of the day. (...) The theory of the permanent revolution established the fact that for backward countries the road to democracy passed through the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus democracy is not a regime that remains self-sufficient for decades, but is only a direct prelude to the socialist revolution. Each is bound to the other by an unbroken chain. Thus there is established between the democratic revolution and the socialist reconstruction of society a permanent state of revolutionary development.”

In the same work, he added:

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5 The bureaucracy decides to “help” Cuba not in the framework of the defense of the interests of the Cuban revolution, but in the framework of peaceful coexistence with imperialism, thus using Cuba as a pawn in its negotiations with the United States.
"With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses."  

Luis Gonzalez

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**Document 3**

**Cuba faced with Castro's “reforms”**

**The place of the Cuban revolution**

(…) This is the case of a workers' and peasants' government with the meaning that Trotsky gave it in the *Transitional Program*, that is to say, a government that breaks with the bourgeoisie and imperialism. Indeed, the Cuban revolution carried out the expropriation of the economic bases of imperialism by which the latter ensured the pillage of the country. The revolution also carried out the destruction of an army modeled by the United States by affirming national sovereignty.

On the concrete terrain of the class struggle, the possibility formulated in the founding program of the IV International became a reality: "(…) under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat; financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.), the petty bourgeois parties, including the Stalinists, may go further than they wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie."

In a world situation marked by the consequences of the accords made between American imperialism and the Kremlin bureaucracy at the end of World War II to bar the way to revolution by conjugating their efforts to maintain the status quo established at Yalta and Potsdam, the Cuba revolution – and this was also the case for the revolutions in Yugoslavia and China – constituted a rupture of the counter-revolutionary framework of these accords.

The result in Cuba was the formation of a workers' and peasants' government and a break with the bourgeoisie and imperialism. With the revolutionary mobilization of the masses, its constitution opened the way for the democratic power of the working class, that is to say, a power based on workers' and peasants' councils. That would have implied that the masses were in a position to decide, that is to say, that their power flowed from elected workers' organs and not from the unchecked decisions of a sole party. An alternative took hold: the power of a bureaucracy within the limits of Cuba and justifying its leading role by recourse to the ideology of "socialism in one country". Political and material pressure was exercised by the Kremlin bureaucracy in order to isolate the revolution in the framework of "one island", to confiscate power and concentrate it in the hands of a "single party" which ended up by controlling all the mechanisms of the State based upon the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. This pressure took strength from the political limitations of the July 26 Movement itself (…).

It is in this way that the Castrist leadership of the Cuban revolution also expresses the crisis of the leadership of the international proletariat, as much by its political limitations as by its subsequent subordination to the international apparatus of the Kremlin. A crisis which, of course, is also an expression of the absence of a revolutionary International which might have been able to aid the Cuban revolution. Let us recall the dismemberment crisis of the IV International of 1951-53 and the fact that the "reunification" carried out in 1963 by the liquidators of the IV International and the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, constituting the "United Secretariat", had precisely among its political bases a total adaptation to the political limitations of the Castrist leadership (characterized as "natural Marxist"), which led them even to consider the existence of a IV International section in Cuba as unnecessary.

This is the contradiction between, on the one hand, the conquests of the revolution – which are expressed by the forms of ownership antagonistic with regard to the existence of a local bourgeoisie and the demands of imperialism – and on the other hand, the policy of its leadership which deprives it of the capacity to break its isolation by subordinating itself to the international Stalinist apparatus. It is this case(6) of a workers' and peasants' government with the meaning that Trotsky gave it in the *Transitional Program*, that is to say, a government that breaks with the bourgeoisie and imperialism. Indeed, the Cuban revolution carried out the expropriation of the economic bases of imperialism by which the latter ensured the pillage of the country. The revolution also carried out the destruction of an army modeled by the United States by affirming national sovereignty.

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6 Extracts of an article by Julio Turra in *La Vérité* N°9, April 1994, also available.
contradiction, which gives a partial, unfinished, character to the break effected by the Cuban revolution. At the same time, it is in relation with the developments of the class struggle at world level, including the Cuban revolution, that we can explain the permanence of the revolutionary gains in Cuba, in spite of the long years of blockade, provocations and military threats of successive American governments.

The soviet “aid”
Thus it is not in the would-be protective shield thrown up by the USSR that we can find an explanation for the duration of the revolutionary gains in Cuba – which would amount to attributing under one form or another a progressive character to the way in which the Kremlin has always used Cuba as an element of pressure in the framework of its counter-revolutionary collaboration with imperialism. But it is in the powerful struggles waged by the masses, and not only in Latin America (Vietnam, Iran, the beginnings of political revolution in the Eastern bloc) that the preservation of the gains all these years resides. These struggles have hit imperialism hard, even if it has not been defeated (...).
Much has been said and written about the “aid” to Cuba furnished by the USSR and the Eastern bloc countries. (Here the text states that this ‘aid’ was a tool of barter for the Kremlin bureaucracy in its negotiations with imperialism aimed at maintaining the status quo. It was also a means of obliging the Cuban government to support the policies of the bureaucracy, which contributed to the isolation of the Cuban revolution, notably through its support for bourgeois governments in Latin America (PRI in Mexico, Collar in Brazil, Fujimori in Peru) engaged in repressing their own peoples. Similarly, the Cuban government always backed bureaucratic repression against the political revolution movement (1968 in Czechoslovakia, 1981 in Poland, 1989 in China).)

The fall of the wall and Cuba
After the historic turning point represented by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, there was a complete upheaval of the international conditions which had permitted the existence, at less than 100 kilometers from Miami, a State based upon the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, and thus independent of imperialism, in spite of all the existing deformations. Even before the collapse of the USSR, the policy followed by Gorbachev – responding to the demands of Bush – in refusing to deliver oil necessary for the functioning of the Cuban economy was already a factor of disorganization of the material bases on which the Cuban state reposed, and at the same time a formidable instrument of pressure for an “opening up to the market”.
Again, the Castrist leadership was faced with a decisive choice (...), and once again, it refused to open the perspective of common struggle against imperialism which would have allowed the workers of Cuba to receive the unrestricted support of the workers and peoples of Latin America and of the world as a whole. On the contrary, it chose to open up to foreign capital, at first in the tourism sector, while at the same time denying the Cuban people the most elementary rights of expression and organization.
But it was in the course of the second half of 1993 that far-reaching “economic reforms” began in Cuba. After having lost its traditional trading partners of Eastern Europe and the ex-USSR, the Castrist leadership sought, via successive Iberia-American summit meetings, to associate the different Latin American governments by inviting them – not only them but particularly the Spanish government of Felipe Gonzalez – to invest in Cuba. Thus would be established discussions with the PSOE government, as legitimate representative of the Socialist International, which would prepare the ground for economic reforms to go into force in Cuba.
In parallel, Castro used what prestige he still enjoyed through the Cuban revolution among sectors of the Latin American “left”, to try at the same time to appear as a factor of “order” in the region. For example, by the active role played by the Cuban leadership in a policy of “concertation” between the guerrilla movements of Central America and its pro-imperialist governments (Salvador, Guatemala), and between the Sandinistas and the government of Violeta Chamorro in Nicaragua, and in order to justify its “inevitable” policy of opening up to the market. The framework, which allowed this, was the São Paulo Forum.

The Socialist International in action: the Solchaga plan
(The text analyses the comings and goings of Carlos Solchaga, former economy minister in the Spanish government of Felipe Gonzalez. He met with Fidel Castro and made numerous trips to “advise” regarding “reforms” aimed at moving toward a “market economy”, in relation with the then managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Michel Camdessus.)
The Cuban government has, since September 10, 1993, authorized enterprises to “sell under market conditions”, that is to say, in dollars. At
the same time it authorized 117 professions linked with the provision of services to “set up on their own account”.

It then launched a process of “parceling out and reorganization into cooperatives of big State farms”, ceding land to individuals. The dismantling of collective farms, although ownership of the land remains in State hands (cooperatives and individuals have the usage), “rigorously associates workers’ revenue with the level of production attained” for the market.

To guarantee the implementation of these reforms in the existing conditions of total collapse of living standards for the Cuban people, the regime has hardened its repression. It has thus revived the Revolutionary Defense Councils (CDRs) which exist in each neighborhood of the big towns, and which have been extended to the whole country, now with the central task of “fighting against vandalism, delinquency and preventing counter-revolutionary protests” – that is to say, any attitude hostile to the “revolutionary” Castro government.

Each CDR has a rapid intervention brigade (BRR) at its disposal, ready to confront with violence any manifestation of discontent (...).

This repression is combined with the absolute usage of the apparatus of the Cuban Workers’ Central (CTC) – totally dependent on the Cuban State – to “prepare” the workers for the reforms (...).

(The text deals with the role of the IMF in the island and the heralded social shocks.)

It is up to the masses to have the final say!

However, at the beginning of 1994, approval of the reforms by the Cuban parliament was suddenly adjourned (...). This decision revealed the fear of the Cuban leadership in the face of a resistance, which still largely remains passive (...).

Today, as yesterday, under even more difficult conditions to the extent that the Castrist leadership is tending to become more and more the direct agent of implementation of IMF-inspired plans, the fate of the conquests wrested by the historic struggle of the exploited masses of Cuba is directly linked with the extension of the revolution, particularly in Latin America (...).

For its part, the IV International situates its activity in the framework of unconditional defense of the gains of the Cuban revolution. This means that, basing ourselves on the fundamental criterion of internationalism, which is the attitude to maintain on the question of private ownership of the main means of production, we follow policies independent of the maneuvers of the Castrist bureaucracy and its present policy, which is preparing the ground for destruction of the very bases of the existence of Cuba as an independent country.

It is on the basis of struggle against the privatizations and the IMF’s plans of social regression in Latin America and the whole world – a struggle waged through our support for the holding of Latin American Encounters of workers for the defense of public services and State enterprises and their association with initiatives of the International Liaison Committee of Workers – that we can constitute a point of support to help the Cuban people defend itself against the social and economic decomposition that threatens it today.

Julio Turra
The struggle against the oppression of women and the struggle for proletarian revolution are one and the same

To replace the conflict capital versus labour by the conflict men versus women is an impediment to the struggle of the whole of the working class for its emancipation.

In practical life, women of the oppressed classes draw this conclusion clearly: "For as long as the working class is prey to famine and extreme poverty, the struggle of peasants, workers, women, students and of all those who are oppressed and exploited will be necessary. This cannot stop" (Testimony of Elisabeth Teixeira, widow of Joao Pedro Teixeira, leader of the Peasant Leagues of Sapé (Paraíba), murdered in 1962, in the film Cabra Marcado Para Morrer)\(^1\).

The struggle to end the oppression of women

As the capitalist system survives on its last legs, due to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, there is a proliferation of supposedly new ways – new forms of organisation, supposedly new concepts. These "novelties" are blind alleys, all and every one of them. They can only serve to support and follow a mode of production, which is a straitjacket for the development of productive forces, and of mankind.

In this situation, it is normal that young people and workers who are new to political struggle should be tempted to consider these new concepts as alternatives to the struggle. Such is the case for the issue of the oppression of women. Today there is a proliferation of feminist "theories" and organisations that refer to the issue of gender (man versus woman) as a cause, and therefore make it their main target in the struggle against this oppression.

Among these new "concepts", there is the struggle against the "Patriarchal State" – promoted by feminist organisations, notably the MMF\(^2\). The supposed "struggle against the patriarchal State" was most apparent in the campaign for the referendum for the exclusive and sovereign Constituent of the political system, in 2013-2014, presented by feminists as one of the main tasks of political reform.

We have chosen the example of the MMF, but indeed there are many other examples of this view of the world through the "prism" of the gender, superposed over class domination.

In order to address this issue – it is by no means new, but today it is proportionately more important – we have to "begin at the beginning". Keeping in mind first and foremost the interests of the working class, the struggle for socialism, how should we address the issue of the oppression of women?

Marxism, and Marxism alone, can give its full place to the struggle against the oppression of women; Marxism, as the theory organising the class in its struggle for revolution and for the end of private property.

When for the first time in history the working class took power and expropriated the bourgeoisie, with the 1917 Russian revolution led by the Bolshevik Party, Lenin presented the issue of women’s liberation as follows:

"No special organisations for women. A woman communist is a member of the Party just as a man..."

\(^{2}\) MMF - Marche Mondiale des femmes, International feminist movement created in 2000, including NGOs and women activists of various sectors (trade unions, associations, movements and parties). In its address (March 8, 2015) it states: "The Women’s World March wants to do away with patriarchy, capitalism and racism, the three systems of oppression controlling our lives throughout the world." "Doing away with patriarchy" means doing away with the patriarchal nature of the capitalist State, without abolishing the material basis of its existence, i.e. the private property of the great means of production.

\(^{1}\) A documentary on the life of Joao Pedro Teixeira, by the director Eduardo Coutinho, whose shooting was interrupted by the police in 1964 during the military coup. This work was continued 17 years later, collecting the testimonies of peasants and of Teixeira’s widow.
communist, with equal rights and duties. There can be no difference of opinion on that score. Nevertheless, we must not close our eyes to the fact that the Party must have bodies, working groups, commissions, committees, bureaus or whatever you like, whose particular duty it is to arouse the masses of women workers, to bring them into contact with the Party, and to keep them under its influence. That, of course, involves systematic work among them: (...) We must get rid of the old idea of the “boss” once and for all, within the party as well as in the masses. (...) We need appropriate bodies to carry on work amongst them, special methods of agitation and forms of organisation. That is not feminism, that is practical, revolutionary expediency.” (Clara Zetkin, Memories of Lenin, 1925)

Two years after the takeover of October 1917, Lenin wrote:

“The position of women furnishes a particularly graphic elucidation of the difference between bourgeois and socialist democracy, it furnishes a particularly graphic answer to the question posed. In no bourgeois republic (i.e., where there is private ownership of the land, factories, works, shares, etc.), be it even the most democratic republic, nowhere in the world, not even in the most advanced country, have women gained a position of complete equality. And this, notwithstanding the fact that more than one and a quarter centuries have elapsed since the Great French (bourgeois-democratic) Revolution.

In words, bourgeois democracy promises equality and liberty. In fact, not a single bourgeois republic, not even the most advanced one, has given the feminine half of the human race either full legal equality with men or freedom from the guardianship and oppression of men.

Bourgeois democracy is democracy of pompous phrases, solemn words, exuberant promises and the high-sounding slogans of freedom and equality. But, in fact, it screens the non-freedom and inferiority of women, the non-freedom and inferiority of the toilers and exploited.” (“Soviet power and the status of women” November 6, 1919)

The Russian Revolution, as well as the Paris Commune, show most eloquently that the struggle against the oppression of women can only make progress in conjunction with the struggle to end class exploitation – this exploitation being based on the private property of the means of production. We shall dwell on this later.

What is the world we live in?

“On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form, this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution.

The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital (…). But you Communists would introduce community of women, screams the bourgeoisie in chorus. The bourgeois sees his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women.

He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production.

For the rest, nothing is more ridiculous than the virtuous indignation of our bourgeois at the community of women, which, they pretend, is to be openly and officially established by the Communists. The Communists have no need to introduce community of women; it has existed almost from time immemorial.

Our bourgeois, not content with having wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each other’s wives. Bourgeois marriage is, in reality, a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalised community of women. For the rest, it is self-evident that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i.e., of prostitution both public and private.” (Communist Party Manifesto, Marx and Engels)

This text, published in 1848, is still relevant today to the capitalist mode of production that has survived in the regime of the private property of the great means of production; the struggle against which led to the creation of the First International (1864), the communists being part of it.

The inferior, oppressed position of women in the bourgeois family – and in the bourgeois state – is the expression of women’s plight in the capitalist system. This inferior position has existed from the moment in the history of mankind that production relations were founded on the private property of the means of production.

In the book The Origin of the Family, of Private Property and of the State, published in 1884, Engels wrote:
“This form of family marks the transition from paired to monogamous marriage. In order to secure the fidelity of the wife, and therefore the paternity of the children, the woman is placed at the mercy of man’s discretionary power; if he kills her, he is only exercising his lawful right.” Engels also quotes Marx:

“The modern family carries within it not only the seeds of slavery (servitus), but also the seeds of servitude, since it bears first on agriculture. It carries a miniature form of all the antagonisms which will develop later in society and in its State.”

Family, society and its State, and the struggle of the proletariat

Marx’s statement that the modern monogamous family, with women being “at the mercy of man’s discretionary power”, is an embryo of society and its State, this can be proved historically.

When Engels wrote the Origins of Family, Private Property and State, the French State for example, was under the Napoleonic Civil Code (which remained in place until 1970). This was one of the most restrictive bourgeois instruments for women, dispossessed of all rights and entirely submitted to the father or the husband. The Napoleonic code did not recognize free unions, and children born from such unions were considered to be illegitimate. Women were deprived of the right to vote and women workers suffered from even greater exploitation in destitution. The Code established that the woman was the property of the husband, and her social role was only that of a mother (woman as a means of production, as indicated in the Communist Party Manifesto).

When working class struggle first burst onto the historical scene with the experience of seizing power – the Paris Commune of 1871 –, revolutionaries dealt in the same movement with the oppression of women and their subservient position. Women did not only play an important part in the Commune – not, of course, the bourgeois women who had fled to Versailles – the workers’ government also took major decisions concerning them.

Under the impetus of the Paris Commune, the women’s organisation “Union of women for the defence of Paris and for the care of the wounded” was set up. This was organised, among others, by Elisabeth Dmitrieff, a Russian activist of the First International, who took an active part in the struggle.

Among its first measures, the Paris Commune created childcare, equal pay for men and women, and a ban on prostitution.

Through the action of the working class, men and women moving forward hand in hand against class oppression: this is how the issue of the oppression of women was dealt with, in the very process of the struggle.

Indeed, as had been the case in the Paris Commune, the struggle against the oppression of women found a concrete answer in the Russian Revolution of 1917, when the Bolsheviks took power: with concrete measures of government emanating from the Soviet Constitution which gave women “equal rights with men in all fields of the economic, public, cultural, social and political life” (1918 Soviet Constitution).

A few days after the Bolshevik Party seized power in 1917, the following measures were taken: the eight hour working day, maternity leave for women, and equal pay for women and men for an equal job.

Indeed, in Soviet Russia, in the first years after the revolution, women conquered the right to vote (1918).

In 1920, with Alexandra Kollontai as the people’s commissar for Social Welfare, a decree of the Public Health commissariat and the Justice commissariat legalised the right for abortion:

1) The operation known as abortion may be lawfully performed free of charge in Soviet hospitals where the conditions guarantee a maximum of safety.

2) All persons who are not licensed doctors are strictly prohibited from performing abortions.

3) The midwife guilty of performing this operation is deprived of the right of practice and is liable to punishment by the People’s Courts of Justice.

4) The physician performing abortion in the course of his private practice with a mercenary purpose is liable to punishment by the People’s Courts of Justice.”

It is worth recalling that Lenin had already underlined in 1913 – thus including the struggle against the oppression of women in the elaboration of the Bolsheviks’ political orientation- as an unconditional enemy of the neo-Malthusians:

“This does not stop us from demanding the total abolition of all the laws which punish abortion or the circulation of medical works which explain contraception methods, etc.”

3 Each form of family organisation corresponds to a stage in the evolution of mankind. Group marriage corresponded to savagery. The paired family was linked to barbarism. It was the family form, in which polygamy remained a right for men, but the marriage bond could easily be broken, for men and women alike, and children belonged to the mother, during or after the marriage. The monogamous marriage corresponded to the era of civilisation.

4 The neo-Malthusians assumed that the cause of the underdevelopment was the overpopulation of countries.
In concrete terms, women were to take a different position in the Soviet State; the difference between legitimate children and “bastards” was abolished, and three months after the October Revolution, unregistered “common law” marriages called “free marriages” were recognised legally.

Once the Bolshevik Party had seized power, it destroyed the material bases of the capitalist State – the private property of the great means of production - and in the very same process it destroyed the bases of the bourgeois family, installing concrete measures against the inferior position of women.

“We really razed to the ground the infamous laws placing women in a position of inequality, restricting divorce and surrounding it with disgusting formalities, denying recognition to children born out of wedlock, enforcing a search for their fathers, etc., laws numerous survivals of which, to the shame of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism, are to be found in all civilised countries” (Lenin, Pravda, July 1919)

It is certain that the condition of the oppression of women in capitalist society today is not the same as it was one and a half century ago. In the same way that the situation of the working class is different; the working class, in the process of forming itself as a class per se (creating trade unions and parties with their own struggle methods), conquered better conditions for selling its work force, as the only means to survive. But although some rights have been obtained, there are still many to conquer.

As regards the oppression of women, in Brazil there is unequal pay for men and women, a great need for childcare for the children of working women, the criminalisation of abortion, which provokes the death of hundreds of thousands of women in the working class; these are only three examples – a proof that the fact that there is a woman president of the Republic is no guarantee to put an end to these aberrations.

But the defence of rights that have been obtained or the conquest of new rights “can only be victorious with the whole of the class struggle of the proletariat, they can only be defended by proletarian struggle methods and their means of power” (La Prolétaire, Rosa Luxemburg). How present is this statement, while the global crisis of imperialism threatens, worldwide, the conquests of the working class!

Class against class

Here is the main accusation against feminist “theories” and organisations preaching the struggle for the “liberation” of women as a gender issue: they situate themselves outside, and even against, the struggle of the working class for the end of the exploitation of men (and women) by men (and women); this exploitation is based on the property (by bourgeois men and women) of the great means of production. They preach the end of the oppression of women through misleading “shortcuts”; not through the class struggle of men and women workers aimed at putting an end to the bourgeois State and the corresponding family form, the bourgeois family. By substituting gender domination – the opposition of man against woman - for class domination – the opposition of capital versus labour –, feminism can co-exist with a system maintaining women exploiters who benefit from the added value produced by exploited women.

They substitute the struggle for the “emancipation” of women for the struggle against capital. And capitalism is ever grateful!

Is this exaggerated?

The UN, an institution dominated by US imperialism, guilty of wars and occupations such as the one that has crushed the sovereignty of Haiti for the last 12 years – and whose troops, amongst other barbarian deeds, rape women and children – can very well co-exist with the “theory” of the genre. Not only that: it promotes this theory.

In the UN document entitled “Women’s Empowerment Principles” we can read:

“Women’s empowerment and sex equality in all social and economic activities help build stronger economies, boost business, improve the quality of life of women, men and children, and sustainable development. Aware of the importance of the role of corporate business for economic growth and

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5 V. I. Lenin, Works, tome 29, extract from the text “The great initiative”, June-July 1919, pages 413 to 438.

6 At the end of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s the Workers State underwent a degenerating process under the thumb of the Stalinist bureaucracy that usurped the Soviet power and crushed democracy within the Bolshevik Party. Amongst Stalin’s crimes, there is the attack on women’s conquests. In 1936, the right for abortion was abolished.

“Abortion, destroying human life, is not acceptable in our country. The Soviet woman has equal rights with men, but this does not exempt her from the greatest and noblest duty assigned to her by nature: to be the mother of life” (Stalin).

Under Stalinism the equality between legal and free marriages was also abolished, and inequality between the children of the Nomenklatura and the children of the people. In his book The Revolution Betrayed, in the chapter “family, youth and culture” – of which we publish extracts in this edition - , Trotsky dwells on the regression of women’s rights under Stalinism, after the progress made in the first years of the Russian revolution.

7 In 1995, the fourth world conference was held in Peking under UN auspices; it approved a declaration and a platform for action? One of its aims is “the emancipation of women in countries”.
human development, UN Women and UN Global Compact have put forward considerations to help the community of business leadership to include values and practices aimed at sex equality and women empowerment". (UN Women site, whose slogan is “equality means business”)

With increased “empowerment”, women will help “boost business”! Is that women’s liberation? The same forces at the UN that recommend women empowerment, renounced convention 103 on the right for maternity leave, years before the publication of these “principles”!

After the example of the UN, whose function is after all to manage capitalist interests under the supervision of the US State Department, let us now consider another example: the International Monetary Fund’s attitude on the issue of the role of women.

On the present IMF managing director, Christine Lagarde, an “empowered” woman, an article of The Wall Street Journal (October 6, 2015) reads as follows:

“Lagarde has given a human touch to an institution that has long been regarded as a provider of drastic remedies (...) Not only does she criticise governments dominated by men, but she has also directed the considerable capacity of the Fund’s means of investigation to study the economic implications of sex inequality (...), she has ordered an IMF study on how women’s participation can increase economic growth.” (October 6, 2015).

Since the IMF, feminine or masculine, has only one goal: to guarantee the interests of speculative capital, in a situation of world crisis spreading through every country, we can understand why “former leaders of the Fund say that Christine Lagarde has been a breath of fresh air” (The Wall Street Journal). Rejected by the struggle of the working class in European countries, in Greece for example, and on other continents, the intervention of the IMF has supposedly received “a breath of fresh air” under the leadership of a woman.

“Feminising” capitalism?

Let us return to the MMF. The MMF has strengthened itself at the World Social Forum, in which the alter-globalist position predominates, professing that another world is possible, that we can give a human face to capitalism without having to fight for the end of the objective bases of the present world, namely, the private ownership of the major means of production. As if it were possible to humanize a system based on class exploitation and whose objective is profit.

Feminism, which replaces the capital-labour contradiction with the contradiction between men and women, professes that it is possible to "feminize" capitalism and its patriarchal State. Consequently, it replaces the struggle for the socialization of the means of production, and thus for the end of the capitalist state, with the “depatriarchalisation” of the bourgeois state, which continues to be based on ownership of the major means of production. In the same way that it is not possible to humanize capitalism, which drags humanity into barbarism, it is as little possible to "depatriarchise" the bourgeois state. Patriarchy - as a form of social organization in which men exercise power over women - is not exclusive to capitalism. It arises in the history of humanity along with private property, which raises the questions of the transmission of wealth, of inheritance and of the definition of maternity. Before the emergence of private ownership, society organized itself around the figure of the mother.

With the monogamous family, when the woman is given over “to the power of the man”, as Engels explained, the germ of the patriarchal State is born.

The capitalist mode of production corresponds with the bourgeois state, within which the patriarchy persists - and it could not be otherwise, as the question of private property and its transmission continues to be asked. Therefore, it is not possible to “depatriarchise” the bourgeois state. From the perspective of the fight against the oppression of women, only the destruction of the bourgeois state, of its material basis, can open the door to a world of free men and women. So to speak of “depatriarchalising” the bourgeois state is verbiage intended to distract from the objective of the struggle for the seizure of power by the women and men of the proletariat, by the class, for the reorganisation of society based on new production relationships (the socialisation of the means of production).

Let us examine the proposal of “depatriarchalisation” presented in a text published on the website of the Sempreviva Organização Feminista (SOF), an NGO which sat in the international secretariat of the MMF until 2013: “Political Reform: Progress for the
**Depatriarcalisation of the State**, written by Maria Júlia Monteiro.

Feminists are here attributed, in the political reform, “a task of extreme importance: to mark the horizons for the depatriarcalisation of the State”, whose “structures are not just capitalist, but also patriarchal”.

They are not only capitalist, but also patriarchal? However, the patriarchy is not an “addition” which is added to the capitalist state; it is inherent in the system founded on private ownership.

The oppression of women in capitalist society is the expression of a period in the history of humanity, which is powered by class struggle:

“The first class opposition which manifested itself in history coincided with the development of the antagonism between men and women in conjugal marriage, and the first class oppression, with the oppression of the female by the male sex” (Engels, *The Origin of Family, Private Property and the State*).

Let us take up Marx: the modern monogamous family in which women have a subordinate role, “sums up, in miniature, all the antagonisms which develop, further on, in society and in its State.”

The liberation of women from the oppression imposed by patriarchal capitalism is a task that belongs to the whole of the working class, on its own terrain, to exploited men and women, for the destruction of the bourgeois state.

In what consists the proposal of “depatriarcalisation” as a task in the political reform? From the outset, the fact must be established that the necessary political reform in Brazil (which can only occur through a sovereign Constituent Assembly) does not call the bourgeois state in to question – it is a reform, which remains within the realm of bourgeois democracy.

In Brazil, it is an urgent necessity to overcome the institutions - containing many legacies of the dictatorship - that alter the representation of the people, because the basic principle of “one voter, one vote” does not exist. This distortion takes place mainly to the detriment of the oppressed majority, which includes women, blacks, the youth and native peoples.

These are the oppressed majorities, with all their components, which are under-represented in the political system. It comes down to undoing the knot that hampers the changes (reforms) for the conquest of a sovereign nation, which does not yet mean, although this represents an important step, the overthrow of the capitalist (thus patriarchal) state.

But for one who apprehends the world from the perspective of the opposition between the sexes and not from the opposition between the propertied (exploiting) class and the dispossessed (exploited) class, the capitalist state could acquire a 'feminine face', be “depatriarcalised”, and continue to be capitalist!

The quoted text defines the State as “not only of bourgeois domination, but also of white and male domination”. A remark must be made here. With an anti-Marxist vision, without the perspective of class, this feminist position ignores not only the fact that patriarchy is inherent in the capitalist system, but also that the oppression of blacks is not a ‘addition’ to capitalism, it is inherent in the development of capitalism, starting in Europe, and the integration of the African continent in the world market, through the pillaging of emerging capitalism. It is not a question of diverse separate oppressions! It is a from one single oppression, that of capital, that they all derive. But, from beginning to end, this text, which defends “depatriarcalisation” in no way, refers to the end of bourgeois property, which only a proletarian revolution can accomplish. This is no oversights.

The text says:

“Depatriarcalisation - considering that it is still a concept under construction – fundamentally consists in engaging in policies and initiatives that maximally deconstruct the patriarchal character of the State.”

For example, “the combination of the different departments with the SPM (secretariat for the policy for women), in order to address a feminist perspective in a transversal way, is an initiative depatriarcalising the State; we also consider the Maria da Penha law as part of this process.”

Of course, laws like that of Maria da Penha, intended to curb and punish violence against women, are just. But, as I confess my ignorance about what "to address a feminist perspective in a transversal way" would mean, I propose to go straight to the point.

In a class society, the exploited struggle through their organizations and conquer rights. But this does not make the bourgeois state less bourgeois! Rights such as the right to unionize
and organize, the right to leave, to paid weekly rest, etc., are achievements that the class has inscribed in a State that still is bourgeois, capitalist. Thus, the just struggle and the conquest of a women’s right, such as the right to vote, maternity leave, the prohibition of child labour and measures against violence, for example, would not make the bourgeois state less patriarchal. These are achievements affecting women, which, like all the conquests of the struggle of the working class, including those to be retained, as the previously cited text by Rosa Luxemburg affirms, “cannot be defended but with proletarian methods of struggle and their means of power”. Today, in the imperialist phase of regression across the board, capitalism menaces ever more the rights won by the working class. This also applies to the oppression of women. In European countries, for example, the ban on women’s night work is called into question. Even in Brazil, the implementation of the fiscal adjustment plan, with its budget cuts, compromises the right to day-care for the children of working women. These are rights of the exploited, which are suffering, and with them the conquests of women workers. In countries such as France, the Labour Code is called into question. In Brazil, the flexibilization of the CLT is put forward. Conceiving the struggle against the oppression of women - for specific rights - separated from the struggle of the entire class against the imperialist offensive and for the end of private ownership of the major means of production is to accept the maintenance of the bourgeois state, in the inglorious prospect of giving capitalism a woman’s face. Assuming that giving more space to women in a vision of gender but not of class would serve the struggle against the oppression of women is a lure! The female face at the head of the IMF (Christine Lagarde) does not soften oppression of women workers anywhere in the world, quite the contrary! “Politics has, historically, predominantly been a masculine place”, say feminists. This is true, but ask the female and male workers of Germany what they think of the “feminine” face of an Angela Merkel with an “enhanced power of action”, in the most powerful State in Europe.

On the path of opposition between the sexes, “exuberant promises” (as Lenin said) of equality between men and women are made. Nearly a decade ago, the question of “parity” in the leadership bodies of the organisations of the Brazilian labour movement was raised. In 2011, in the PT, and in 2015, in the CUT, following a quota of 30%, gender parity was adopted. “The quota of female participation in the leadership underlies the debate about the exercise of power” (site of the CUT) was inscribed for the defence of the quotas.

Women in power, in the PT and the CUT! One question: what progress has been made in the fight for equal pay, for nurseries, for the right to abortion… What has the quota represented, despite the “exuberant promise” of equal rights? I venture to affirm: what we have seen is that with more quotas, with more positions in bodies allocated on the basis of quotas, there are fewer struggles in the streets, factories, neighbourhoods around burning questions, apart from the question of abortion, such as, for example, the struggle for equal work, equal pay. It is just and necessary that a trade union organisation creates a women’s commission. Women, with their specific demands, have not only the right but the duty to organize within a central union to deal with the problems concerning women. But the struggle for the solution to these problems does not dispense with the struggle of the union as a whole, which must be based on the interests of the class, which are not contradictory; on the contrary, they integrate the specific issues of women workers. It is the same for the party.

Reducing the trade unions or parties built by workers as instruments of their struggle as a class to a federation of interests that compete amongst themselves (a competition for which the quotas would ensure a “power space”) goes against the need to strengthen these organizations as representatives of the general interests of the class.

It is no accident that, in the same period, in Germany, a debate has been opened between the male and female leaders of companies and the government on the question of quotas for women in business leadership positions.

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8 The “Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho” (CLT) is the Brazilian Labour Code (NDT).
“The Minister for the Family, member of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), a conservative party of which Merkel is a member, has proposed that, by 2020, businesses reach a quota of 35% women in management positions, according to a plan of voluntary membership. But already, the Minister of Labour, also a Christian Democrat, disagrees; because she thinks that this should not be voluntary. For her, the question of the quota must be written into law, to reach 30% women by 2018. On the other hand, according to the text, the Vice-President of the European Commission, Vivian Reding, known for defending laws on quotas for women on boards of directors, has recently announced that she would analyse the progress of member countries, threatening to introduce a binding directive from Brussels if they were unable to voluntarily establish the objectives by March 2012” (O Estado de São Paulo, October 20, 2011).

The questions of reinforcing women’s power of action, of the gender conflict, are not the subjects, which interest the labour movement.

It is not gender that represents our struggle, but the engagements of class!

Let us return to the question of political reform from the perspective of the gender conflict. The text defends public funding for the campaign, which is all very well, but it also explains that thus, “there will be equality between the candidates, whose election will not depend on the support of this or that company with a preference for white and heterosexual men”.

Deuce! Companies that choose to fund election campaigns, such as Katia Abreu (PMDB-TO) or Bruna Furlan (PSDB-SP), would be helping to “depatriarcalise” the State?

So, it would not be an issue of ending private financing to reduce the role of economic power in election campaigns! It would be so that we have more women in Parliament, regardless of the class they come from?

“The alternation of gender means that this list will be made up of men and women, alternating and in parity.” But with the alternation will come women of the PSDB, DEM, PMDB, PSD as well... and would the struggle of women workers thus be strengthened?

Political reform must serve to broaden the representation of the oppressed majority – much in the minority in representative institutions -, and with it all of its components: men, women, workers of urban and rural areas, young, black and native. And, even so, this would not represent a proletarisation of the bourgeois State, which is patriarchal.

Where does this perilous path lead? In the text on the “depatriarcalisation”, the writer says: “In our opinion, the political participation of women cannot be separated from a project of societal transformation - a feminist project.”

We come to the crux of the problem. Is it therefore a question of a feminist project of transformation of society, of women in power, but not of the socialization of the major means of production? But its author does not explain what this project would be. And she doesn’t explain it because it doesn’t exist! And it doesn’t exist because, even if the blind feminist can’t see it, the reality is this: the basis of all capitalist oppression is the oppression-domination of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, based on private ownership of the major means of production.

As Marxists, we fight for socialism - for the socialization of the main means of production. For the proletarian revolution, which expropriates middle-class families and destroys the bourgeois State. During that fight, with our class, we add our own banners, such as that of oppressed women.

Yes, there are democratic rights that have been conquered (such as the right to vote), or that are yet to be conquered (such as the right to abortion in Brazil), that concern all women of different classes. But to bring the struggle for the conquest of these rights to its end, it is the workingwoman, through her class organizations, who plays the decisive role, in total independence from the interests of the bourgeois woman.

At the beginning of the 20th century, in Europe, for example, regarding the suffragette movement, with bourgeois feminists, Clara Zetkin, of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, who was organizing the Socialist Women’s movement, wrote: “The bourgeois feminists do not demand universal suffrage. They are attached to their class...”

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9 These right wing Brazilian parties are composed of party bosses little favourable to workers, be they men or women.
prerogatives. We reject the limited suffrage of women as an insult.”

Clara was fighting feminists who defended the vote based on tax qualification as a restricted right for some women and not for all women, especially not a right for women workers. She added:

“The most serious of these conflicts is that which exists between the needs of women who work at the factory and their duty as mothers, which does not disappear with universal suffrage.”

At the Congress of the Socialist International of 1907, Clara Zetkin introduced the following resolution:

“Therefore, proletarian women must not count on the support of bourgeois women in the struggle for their civil rights; the class contradictions prevent that proletarian women can join forces with the bourgeois feminist movement. By this, we are not saying that they must reject bourgeois feminists if these, in the fight for the universal suffrage of women, stand beside them and under their leadership to fight the common enemy on certain fronts. However, proletarian women must be perfectly aware that the right to vote cannot be conquered by means of a struggle of the female sex without class discrimination against the male sex, but only through the class struggle of all the exploited, without discrimination of sex, against all the exploiters, equally without any discrimination of sex.”

It is no accident that the International Women’s Day, conceived as a day of struggle for women workers, raised out of a conference of socialist women in 1910. It is in the fight of the working class, with its own organizations and its own methods, that the fight against the oppression of women has taken its place.

It is no more an accident that, with the formalization of 8 March by the United Nations in 1975, the socialist red was rubbed off to be replaced with the feminist lilac.

“Reduce this social order to ashes”
The IV International’s program, our program, calls to give “a place to women”, women workers:

“Yet, the era of the capitalist decline deals the harshest blows to women, both as an employee and a housekeeper. The sections of the IV International must seek support in the most oppressed strata of the working class, and, therefore, among women workers. They there will find inexhaustible sources of dedication, self-denial and spirit of sacrifice.”

In 1914, Rosa Luxemburg wrote, concerning the women’s question:

“The dominant society refuses them access to the temples of their deliberative debates, but another power of this epoch opens its doors - the social democratic party. Therefore, within the ranks, as a member of the organization, an incalculable field of political work and political power extends in before the proletarian woman. It is only here that the woman is a factor concerning the equality of rights. She is introduced into the office of history through social-democracy (...), she reaches the effective equality of rights, whereas the written law of a bourgeois Constitution will be refused. There, alongside men, the working woman shakes the columns of the social order in power and, before being granted an apparent right, she will be helping to reduce to ashes this social order to ashes. The proletarian woman, the poorest of the poor, the most disadvantaged amongst the disadvantaged, throws herself into the struggle to release womankind of and the human race from the horror of the domination of capital” (La Prolétaire).

Liberation of the Human Race
In The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, Engels concludes, “when the means of production passes to common property, the condition of men will be deeply transformed. But that of women, all women, will withstand a significant change as well” (emphasis in original). The struggle against the oppression of women can be substantial only if it is integrated into the struggle of the proletariat against capitalist exploitation. To separate it from this struggle, turning it into a question of gender, is to condemn women, all women; it is to condemn humanity, as a whole, to the barbarism toward which the capitalist system pushes it if the working class is not capable of building a leadership, its own party, to take the power in its hands.

10 The German Empire practiced a system of suffrage based on tax threshold. Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin were fighting for a Republic and universal suffrage. Bourgeois feminists demanded the right to vote based on tax qualification for women in order to not call the monarchic state into question.
“There cannot be, there is not and there will be no real ‘freedom’ as long as the woman is not released from the privileges that the law has enacted favour of the man, as long as the worker is not released from the yoke of capital, as long as the worker peasant is not released from the yoke of the capitalist, the landowner, the merchant”, wrote Lenin in 1919, two years after the victory of the October revolution (“the Soviet power and the status of women”).

In this task, juxtaposing the gender question with class domination and, eventually, replacing the struggle for socialism with a “feminist project”, are obstacles that must be fought. Fought through concrete action, within the labour movement, for the defence of the rights of women, rights as workers (equal work, equal pay, public policies for women workers) and democratic rights (decriminalization of abortion, measures against violence).

This fight also requires recovering, within the labour movement, the theoretical conquests, fruit of the concrete experience of the proletariat, and which are an instrument for the fight of our class. Therefore, I will conclude by quoting Engels: “The means of production passing to common ownership, the conjugal family ceases to be the economic unit of society. The private domestic economy turns into a social industry. The maintenance and education of children becomes a public affair; the society also takes care of all children, whether legitimate or natural. At the same time, disappears the concern about “consequences”, essential social cause - both moral and economic - which prevents a young girl from giving herself without reserve to the one she loves. And is not that a sufficient reason to establish, little by little, a greater freedom in sexual relations, and to shape at the same time a less uncompromising public opinion as to the honour of the virgin and the disgrace of women? Finally, have we not seen that in the modern world, monogamy and prostitution are duly opposite, but are inseparable opposites, the two poles of the same social state? Can prostitution disappear without dragging monogamy with it into the abyss?” (The Origin of the Family, private Property and the State).

The struggle for the end of the private property of the major means of production, opened in the 19th century with Marxism, has been for past generations, and continues to be, for the present generations, the only way to free men and women from all oppression, to free humanity from the barbarism represented by the survival of capitalism, a step forward for a society of free men and women.

Diverting the class struggle to the gender struggle, with promises, which cannot be conquered outside the struggle for socialism, the end of the regime of private ownership of the major means of production is to stand in the way of liberating humanity from barbarism.

Returning to the tradition of the revolutionary labour movement with the publication of this collection of small texts and excerpts is an effort to help overcome the obstacles to the solution of the crisis of the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, a condition for overcoming the crisis of humanity.

A patient and arduous path, which must combine the resumption of the theory theoretical with the necessary integration in the concrete struggle of the working class, which includes the struggle against the oppression of women.

On this path, I noted a little anecdote. During a debate on the global situation and Brazil, a young person asked me: “What are the most modern theorists that you take as a reference?” I answered: “Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky…”

By adding Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin, quoted in this presentation, I am convinced that young people, men and women, workers and working women, will find, in these texts written so long ago, answers to the current problems they are facing, to understand that any form of oppression is based on the domination of disadvantaged classes by the propertied classes. And to understand as well that the fight against the oppression of women poses specific questions that need to be addressed as such, but by integrating them into the struggle for the proletarian revolution.

“A Communist woman is as much a member of the party as a Communist man (…). We need appropriate bodies to carry out the work among women. This is not feminism: it is the practical, revolutionary path” (Lenin).

This collection is an invitation to the study and discussion, to strengthen our struggle.

November 2015,
Misa Boito
February 2017 will mark a century since the beginning of the Russian Revolution, which triumphed in October of the same year. As we noted in the preceding issue, throughout the year 2017, a truckload of calumnies, lies and counter-truths will be dumped on the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviks. For us, it isn’t a question of commemorating an event or celebrating an anniversary, a historical tip of the hat, as if the cycle opened by October 1917 was now closed, but of underlining its current pertinence.

For us, the real content of this offensive against the Russian Revolution isn’t historical, but aims to affirm that capitalism is impassable and that class struggle is an archaism. To defend the October Revolution is to defend the fact that, despite all the declarations, class struggle remains the motor of history and that a century after the October Revolution, the confrontation between capital and labour sharpens in a combination of barbarity and the resistance of workers and peoples. It is to reaffirm that, to save humanity, the class struggle opposing the proletariat to the bourgeoisie must lead to the expropriation of capital.

It is in accordance with this assessment that we have decided that, throughout the year 2017, for the hundredth anniversary of the October Revolution, we will bring together the documents published by our review.

We begin with the year 1957, the year of the 40th anniversary. At the time, La Vérité was the weekly publication of the French section of the IV International. We have found a series of documents, subsequent to "A Look Back on the Hungarian October of 1956" (cf. the dossier published in La Vérité/The Truth #91, "A Look Back on the Hungarian October of 1956", pages 37-58).

First, a supplement inserted in the form of a brochure in #469 of La Vérité, dated 19 September 1957: it included two texts by Leon Trotsky, presented by a forward by Gérard Bloch.

We have decided to republish the essential content of this brochure in this issue of La Vérité, as it seemed important to make these documents known.

Let us point out that other documents were included in the brochure, but, due to lack of space, we will publish them in coming issues. We simply signal a text entitled “Spontaneity and Leadership in the February Revolution”, publishing important excerpts from the History of the Russian Revolution by Leon Trotsky.

Then, during the months of September and October 1957, the editorial staff of La Vérité organised a survey of militant workers on the question: “What does the October Revolution represent for you?” The results of this survey led to the holding of a meeting for the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution Friday, 8 November 1957. We will publish important excerpts of these contributions, as well as the principal speeches by militants in the labour movement of diverse origins (Jean Cassou, Charles Lemoine, a militant who quit the PCF, Benjamin Péret, Jean-Jacques Lebel, Pierre Hervé, Peter Fryer, Yves Deschezelles, André Breton, Claude Lefort, Henri Péraud, Gérard Bloch, Pierre Lambert). This dossier will be published in our issue #93. We begin, in this issue #92, by publishing the following brochure, "Bolshevism and Stalinism".

The editorial staff of La Vérité/The Truth
Leon Trotsky: Bolshevism and Stalinism
Forward by Gérard Bloch

"Because the highest human happiness isn’t in the exploitation of the present, but in the preparation of the future”
Leon Trotsky

On the 20th of August 1940, around 5:30 p.m., in a villa in the suburbs of Mexico City, the assassin sent by Stalin split from behind, with a blow of an ice axe, the skull of a 60-year-old man who had become, according to the expression of a contemporary, “the Marxist conscience of humanity”. The steel had penetrated 7 centimetres into his brain; Leon Trotsky died after twenty-seven hours of agony. His last words were an affirmation of his faith in the cause to which he had consecrated his life: “I am sure of the victory of the IV International. Forge ahead.”

Reactionaries were then triumphing throughout the world. Stalin, having completed the extermination of Lenin’s companions, of the whole revolutionary generation who had made October 1917, then of hundreds of millions of Russian workers and technicians, seemed to have consolidated his dictatorship. Humanity was sinking into the darkness of the Second World War. The leaders of the Comintern, faithful to the Russo-German pact, were singing the praises of the war of “proletarian countries” against “Western plutocracy”, while social democrats, in solidarity with allied imperialisms, preached the “war for democracy”. Proletarian revolutionary thought, which Trotsky had incarnated to the utmost degree, survived only in small isolated groups.

If it was then the “midnight of the century”, today, seventeen years later, the dawn has begun to break. It is true that, with the help of Stalin, the bourgeoisie has been able, for better or for worse, to patch up its dilapidated regime in Western Europe. But the revolutionary wave unleashed by the Second World War has powerfully swept across Asia, then Africa. It has now come back to crash on the banks of Europe, sparing neither the countries controlled by the Kremlin, nor the USSR itself. Stalin’s corpse was barely cold before his heirs, his “faithful companions in arms”, denounced the “errors”, then crimes, of the “great chief” - sure to satisfy, on this point, at least, the feelings of the Russian masses.

A precise boundary, defined by their interests as a privileged class, limited, in advance, the “revision” of Stalinism by Stalin’s heirs. Their fundamental political solidarity with the head of the bureaucracy in its past struggle for power against the proletarian opposition, the continuator of Bolshevism, this solidarity couldn’t be called into question, and Khrushchev hurried, at the first opportunity, to reaffirm it. In the fight against Trotskyism, against the program of the destruction of the bureaucratic regime by the insurgent working masses, the program of the socialist democracy of the Councils, the very doctrine, which triumphed in October 1917, Khrushchev is the “best Stalinist”. His tanks have shown it in Budapest.

The same causes, which have brought to the work of Leon Trotsky the mortal hostility of all oppressive regimes also make it that, more and more, the oppressed turn toward it. Stalinism is leaving frightening ideological ruins its wake. The most elementary notions: party, democracy, labour power, socialism, class-consciousness, class perspective... are sullied, obscured by the memory of a frightful past and the continued use by totalitarian bureaucracies. They appear equivocal, ambiguous, and deceptive. The young people looking for certainties, the militant workers breaking away from Stalinism, all those today take up, starting in their heads, the reconstruction of the revolutionary movement feel the need to return to the source. They need clear, solid, unshakable notions that are rationally and morally unattackable. They turn, naturally, toward the works of Marx, Lenin, toward those of Trotsky, who extended them all the way to the most burning problems of our time.

Stalin has not been able to destroy this work, neither under the assassin’s pick, nor the tons of paper printed with insults and ritual lies by mercenary writers.
Seventeen years after the death of the founder of the IV International, Stalin’s name, in the USSR itself, is omitted from all official publications; the young people who want to understand in order to fight turn invincibly toward the thought of his greatest victim.

This work is, firstly, striking in its immensity. In Bolshevism and Stalinism, Trotsky speaks of the 27 tomes of the Works of Lenin, to which a nearly equal number of volumes of unpublished correspondence, notes, etc., must be added. The complete works of Trotsky—books, brochures, articles, notes, correspondences—will fill three times more.

What strikes next is the diversity. Military arts, literary criticism, pamphlets, politics, economics, sociology, history, philosophy, etc., he had explored, at one moment or another, each of these domains, always with mastery. His military works from the time of the civil war made history; his portraits of Tolstoy, of Jaures, to only cite these two, represent unequalled models for the application of Marxist methodology in the study of a great personality; his book Literature and Revolution1 marks the summit of the famous discussion, in the 1920’s, of “proletarian culture”, socialist culture, and the relationship between art and revolution. Those who heard him speak attest to the fact that he was the greatest orator of his time. His pamphlets, which gained the admiration of G.B. Shaw, have kept their freshness. His famous History of the Russian Revolution makes him the greatest of Marxist historians. The revolution is the direct irritation of the masses onto the historical scene. And it is this prodigious event, which he exposes and explains in this book of unsurpassable depth and entralling reading.

His article on “Marxism and Psychoanalysis” is certainly, still today, the most serious thing written on this well-worn subject, but which is all the more difficult for it. His biography of Lenin, Alas! Unfinished – his discourse to the Mendeleev Institute on the role of the scholar in society – the story of his escape from Siberia in 1906 – so many masterpieces. None of his texts, even the most episodic, leaves one indifferent.

All are incitements to thinking, research and combat.

As much if not more than any of his peers – Marx, Engels, Lenin, Rosa – he could take as his own the ancient motto “nothing human is foreign to me”.

Nevertheless, in this multi-faceted work, what is striking, even more than its immensity, is its unity: unity, rigorous organisation based on a single objective, not only of his works, but of his whole life. Political critic, pamphleteer, historian, political writer, head of the Red Army, president of the Petrograd soviet, imprisoned or deported by the Tsar, exiled by Stalin, Trotsky remained the same combatant for the same cause: the proletarian revolution, the emancipation of all the oppressed, the edification of a classless socialist society.

"We must be faithful to our fatherland of the time", he frequently repeated. It isn’t forbidden to discern a grain of regret in this aphorism. This man, who prefigured in his person, more than any other, the citizen of the future socialist society, born into a world where the exploitation of man by man won’t be any more than a memory difficult to understand, developing without any obstacle all the potentials of a personality exempt from the inevitable alienation of our time – this man, more than anyone, knew that a revolutionary militant must inevitably concentrate, restrain the field of his action and his thought to the objective that he has fixed, deliberately sacrificing in himself countless potentialities. “Leave this problem to our grandchildren, who won’t fail to be much more intelligent than we are”, he also said, when someone brought up a problem currently out of reach. Exceptionally, however, he let himself think beyond current problems, to imagine certain traits of socialist society – like in Literature and Revolution, or furthermore, for a moment, in responding to the questions of the Dewey Commission’s study on the Moscow Trials. His remarks on this subject are among the most profound: they go the furthest of all that Marxists have written on a subject whose essence, by definition, escapes us.

With this unmatchable power, he knew how to concentrate on the task to which he had consecrated his life, as witnesses attest. Here is what one of them wrote:

“In daily life, this power of will was spent on a severely organised work. The smallest useless distraction irritated him extremely: he hated rambling conversations, unannounced visits,
delays or gaps in the execution of commitments. Certainly, there was no pedantry in all of this. If an important question had just been posed, he didn’t hesitate a single instant to change all his plans, but it had to be worth the trouble. If it had the smallest interest for the movement, he would selflessly give all his energy and all his time, but he was as greedy as could be of these if the carelessness, frivolousness, or bad organisation of others menaced to waste them in a pure loss. He gathered the smallest parcels of time, the most precious matter of which life is made. His whole personal life was rigidly organised in function of what is called the quality of purpose. He had established a hierarchy of tasks, and brought whatever he started to its end.

Trotsky put his whole personality in his books. Personal contact with the man himself did not modify the portrait that surged forth from the reading of his works, but accentuated it, rendered it more precise: passion and reason, intelligence and will, all of it pushed to an extreme degree, but at the same time, melting one into the other. In everything Trotsky did, one had the impression that he engaged his whole being. He often repeated the words of Hegel: “Nothing great in this world is done without passion.” And he had nothing but resentment for philistines who reproached revolutionaries for their “fanaticism”. But intelligence was always present, in miraculous harmony with the fire. It would be impossible to dream of discovering a conflict: the will was unbeatable because the mind saw very far. Hegel must again be cited: “the will is a specific mode of thought.”

This unbendable will, this unrelenting perseverance, nourished by an absolute confidence in the historical perspective that he had assimilated since his youth, the perspective of world revolution, found its supreme application in the last seventeen years of his life; those where, voluntarily abandoning power to avoid becoming the instrument of the bureaucracy which was being installed, he organised the proletarian vanguard’s resistance to the Stalinist counter-revolution; those during which he directed the struggle of the Left Opposition, then set the foundation of the IV International.

Of the president of the first soviet known in history, the council of worker deputies of Petrograd in 1905, of the organiser of the insurrection of October 1917, of the founder of the Red Army or of the pursued exile, preparing a revolutionary future that he knew he would never see, it is probably this last image of Leon Trotsky that human memory will retain and place above all the others: it is what offers the highest lesson to the revolutionaries of the 20th century, of which the utmost quality is knowing to go against the current.

The characteristic trait of the petit-bourgeois philistine, today more than ever, is his invincible tendency to bow down before the way things are, before the men in power, before the victors of the hour - and, naturally, to employ himself to theoretically justify this victory.

How many heavy works have been consecrated to “historically” justify the Moscow trials? It is thus that only ten years ago, Mr Merleau-Ponty, in Humanism and Terror, applied himself to show that Bukharin, by confessing to monstrous crimes that he didn’t commit, hadn’t caved under irresistible pressure, but had obeyed historical reason. Trotsky had supposedly lost the sense of history. Since when? Since 1923, of course! Since he had left power; Stalin was right, because he had won. What could be added to this?

Since then, Stalin has died, and Mr Merleau-Ponty has abandoned his apology of Stalinism for that of the heroes of the “intelligent bourgeois”; Mr Pierre Mendès-France, baptising, no one knows why, his own misadventures as Adventures in Dialectics: maybe because the very dialectic which had him bow down before Stalin at the height of his power pushed him away in 1953. But what garbage bin will be big enough to contain all the volumes printed to “justify” Stalinism and to condemn Trotsky in the name of these same criteria?

In fact, during these seventeen years of struggle against the Thermidorian bureaucracy, Trotsky gained, in appearance, nothing but one defeat after another. The Left Opposition was excluded from the party, then exterminated: the old Bolsheviks, Lenin’s companions, the artisans of October 1917 capitulated one after another before the chief of the Thermidorian bureaucracy, not thereby escaping, in the end, a pistol shot in the neck. By the thousands, the militants of the Russian Bolshevik-Leninist opposition, refusing to capitulate, were exterminated in prisons and camps, without anyone knowing the hour and place of their death. By the thousands of tons, the Stalinist apparatus spread monstrous calumnies in every language against Trotsky. He saw his four
children perish successively, victims of Stalin’s vigilant hate. Expelled from one country after another, he had to seek refuge in faraway Mexico, after having feared to see the "planet without a visa" for him. But nothing turned him away, even for an instant, from accomplishing his revolutionary task.

A conduct so incomprehensible for the philistine was founded on a profound comprehension of the historical process and its mechanism. The world proletarian revolution is the law of our epoch; but it doesn’t develop itself in a rectilinear way: it has its ebbs and flows, which escape the will of the participating individuals. In an epoch of triumphant reaction, if he doesn’t pass to the enemy camp, the revolutionary can only suffer the consequences of defeat with his class, including the most extreme. It is in this way, and only this way – by never losing the train of events: by analysing, step by step, the momentary triumph of the reaction, its causes, its limits and its internal contradictions, which announce a revival of the revolution; by safeguarding the smallest parcel of the theoretical heritage of Marxist doctrine, which the philistines of every strain naturally force themselves to render responsible for the backflow; by ceaselessly enriching it with the analysis of new events – that it is possible, in such a period, to prepare the future.

This task, Trotsky fulfilled it to the utmost degree. His analysis of the degeneration of the USSR, of Stalinism, a transitory phenomenon born of the great defeats of the proletarian revolution and which its revival will sweep aside, will perhaps remain his most decisive contribution to Marxism.

Today, we witness the beginning of this revival of the revolution that he had announced, incomparably ampler than those that preceded it. What he planted, it is for us to harvest it.

Gérard Bloch

At a moment when countless militants seek, under the slag of Stalinist revisionism, the authentic Bolshevism, and force themselves to sound its current validity, the reedition of Bolshevism and Stalinism will certainly be useful.
Bolsheviivism and Stalinism

“On the historical and theoretical roots of the IV International”

Reactionary epochs like our own not only break up and weaken the working class by isolating it from its vanguard, but also abase the general ideological level of the movement by throwing political thought far behind it, to stages long since passed. In these conditions, the task of the vanguard is above all to not let itself be dragged along by the general backflow. It must go against the current. If unfavourable power relations do not permit previously occupied political positions to be kept, it must at least maintain itself on the ideological positions, as it is in them that the dearly paid experience of the past is concentrated. Such a policy would appear, in the eyes of sots, as “sectarianism”. In reality, it is only preparing a new gigantic leap forward, with the wave of the next historical rising.

Reaction against Marxism and Communism

Great political defeats inevitably provoke a revision of values, which are accomplished, in general, in two directions. On one side, enriched by the experience of defeats, the true vanguard, defending revolutionary thought tooth and nail, strives to educate new leaders with it for the future combats of the masses. On the other, the thought of creatures of habit, of centrists, of dilettantes, scared by the defeats, tends to overthrow the authority of the revolutionary tradition and, under the appearance of a search for a “new truth”, to turn far back in time. Numerous examples of ideological reaction could be brought up, most often taking the form of prostration. All the literature of the II and III Internationals, as that of their London satellites, fundamentally consists of this type of example. Not one trace of Marxist analysis. Not one new word on the future. Nothing but clichés, routines, lies and, above all, cares to safeguard the bureaucratic situation. Ten lines of a Hilferding or Otto Bauer suffice to smell the stench of decay. Of the Comintern’s theorists, it is better to say nothing. The famous Dimitrov is as banal and ignorant as a little shopkeeper. The thought of these people is too lazy to disown Marxism; they prostitute it. But it isn’t they who currently interest us. Let’s come to the “innovators”.

The Austrian former communist Willi Schlamm has consecrated a little book to the Moscow trials, under the title Dictatorship of Lies. Schlamm is a talented journalist whose interest is above all directed toward the questions of the day. The criticism of the Moscow falsifications, as well as the laying bare of the psychological mechanism of the “voluntary confessions” are, in Schlamm’s work, excellent. But he doesn’t content himself with this. He wants to create a new theory of socialism which would insure, in the future, against defeats and falsifications. But as Schlamm is in no way a theorist and is even, it seems, rather little familiar with the history of the development of socialism, he returns completely, under the appearance of a new discovery, to socialism before Marx and, what’s more, to its German variety: the most backward, the most sickly-sweet, the dullest. Schlamm

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1 This article by Leon Trotsky dated 29 August, 1937, appeared for the first time in the review Quatrième Internationale, n°4, January 1938. It was then published in La Vérité, n°469, 17 September 1937 (inserted pamphlet, pages 5-8). It is also found in Œuvres, tome 14, pages 339-358.

2 Rudolf Hilferding (1877-1941), Austrian, author of a theoretical work, Financial Capital (1910). Centrist pacifist during the war, he was one of the inspirers of the right of the independent social-democratic party and its spokesman against Zinoviev in the Congress of Halle before returning, in 1922, to the social-democratic party. He had emigrated in 1933, and collaborated, in 1937, in Paris, in the organ of the SPD in exile, the Neue Vorwärts.

3 Otto Bauer (1881-1938), head of the Austrian social-democratic party, theorist of “Austro-Marxism”, which had drawn close to the policies of the Communist International (CI) at the time of the popular fronts (“antifascism”), without approving of the Moscow Trials.

4 Georgi Dimitrov (1882-1949), veteran of the Bulgarian social-democratic party, former deputy, had become famous after the “Reichstag Trial”, where, the principle accused; he was acquitted after getting himself accused by the Nazis. He was, from 1935, the general secretary of the Communist International.

5 Willi Schlamm (1904-1978) had been one of the leaders of the Communist Youth, then of the Austrian communist party before being excluded in 1929. A greatly talented journalist, he then directed Die Neue Weltbühne and had opened its columns to Trotsky, whom he had met in Paris. For him, as for many others, the Moscow Trials represented the “bankruptcy of Bolsheviivism”.

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renounces dialectics, not to mention the dictatorship of the proletariat. The task of transforming society is reduced, for him, to the realisation of a few "eternal" moral truths with which he is from now on preparing to impregnate humanity, under the capitalist regime. In Kerensky's review, Novaya Rossiya (the old Russian provincial review published in Paris), Willi Schlamm's tentative to save socialism with an inoculation of moral lymph is not only received with joy, but also with pride: according to the just conclusion of the editorial board, Schlamm arrives at the principles of true-Russian socialism which, a long time ago already, had opposed the principles of faith, hope, and love to dry and rude class struggle.

Certainly, the original doctrine of the Russian "socialist revolutionaries" represented, uniquely in its theoretical premises, a return to the socialism of Germany before Marx. However, it would be too unfair to ask of Kerensky a more intimate knowledge of the history of ideas than of Schlamm. Much more important is the fact that the Kerensky who enters into solidarity with Schlamm was, as head of government, the initiator of the persecutions of the Bolsheviks as "agents of the German high command", that he organised the same falsifications against which Schlamm now mobilises moth-eaten metaphysical absolutes.

The psychological mechanism of Schlamm and the like’s intellectual reaction is very simple. During a certain time, these people participated in a political movement that swore by class struggle and, in words, invoked materialist dialectics. In Austria, as in Germany, this ended in catastrophe. Schlamm draws the summary conclusion: this is where class struggle and dialectics leads us. And as the number of discoveries is limited by historical experience and... by the wealth of personal knowledge, our reformer, in his search for a new faith, has met with a long-rejected anachronism, which he braavely opposes, not only to Bolshevism, but to Marxism.

At first glance, the variety of ideological reaction put forward by Schlamm is too primitive (from Marx... to Kerensky) to merit the trouble of giving it our attention. In reality, it is nevertheless extremely instructive precisely thanks to its primitive character, it represents the common denominator of all the other forms of reaction, above all of that which is expressed by a renunciation in bloc of Bolshevism.

“A return to Marxism”

In Bolshevism, Marxism found its most grandiose historical expression. It is under the flag of Bolshevism that the first victory of the proletariat was won and the first workers’ state was founded. No force can erase these facts from history. But as the October Revolution led, in the present stage, to the triumph of the bureaucracy, with its system of oppression, of spoliation and of falsifications, to the dictatorship of lies, according to the just expression of Schlamm, numerous formalist and superficial minds incline to the summary conclusion that it is impossible to struggle against Stalinism without renouncing Bolshevism. Schlamm, as we already know, goes even further: Bolshevism, which degenerated into Stalinism, is itself a product of Marxism. It is therefore impossible to struggle against Stalinism on the bases of Marxism. Less consequent, but more numerous, people say the opposite: “We must return to Bolshevism and Marxism.” By which path? To which Marxism? Before Marxism “went bankrupt” in the form of social democracy. The watchword “Return to Marxism” thus signifies a leap over the epoch of the II ET III Internationals... to the I International. But this also, in its time, was destined to defeat. In other words, in the end, it is a question of returning... to the Complete Works of Marx and Engels. This leap can be achieved without leaving one’s study, without even putting on shoes. But how to then pass from our classics (Marx died in 1883, Engels in 1895) to the tasks of the new epoch while leaving on the side decades of theoretical or political struggle, a struggle that also includes Bolshevism and the October Revolution? None of those who propose renouncing Bolshevism as an historically “bankrupt” tendency have indicated new paths.

Things are thus reduced to the simple advice to study Capital. Against this, nothing to object. But the Bolsheviks also studied Capital, even passably. This nevertheless failed to impede the degeneration of the Soviet state and the staging of the Moscow trials. So what can be done?

Is it true, however, that Stalinism represents the legitimate product of Bolshevism, as the reaction believes, as Stalin himself affirms, as the Mensheviks, anarchists and a few doctrinaires who consider themselves Marxist think? “We have always predicted it, they say, having started with the banning of other socialist parties, with the establishment of the Bolshevik dictatorship in the soviets, the October Revolution couldn’t fail to
lead to the dictatorship of the bureaucracy. Stalinism is, at the same time, the continuation and failure of Leninism."

**Is Bolshevism responsible for Stalinism?**

The error in this reasoning begins with the tacit identification of Bolshevism with the October Revolution and the Soviet Union. The historical process, which consists of the struggle of hostile forces, is replaced by the evolution of bolshevism in empty space. However, Bolshevism is only a political current, certainly closely linked to the working class, but not identical to it. And, outside the working class, there exist more than a hundred million peasants in the USSR of diverse nationalities, a heritage of oppression, poverty and ignorance. The state created by the Bolsheviks reflects not only the thought and will of the Bolsheviks, but also the cultural level of the country, the social composition of the population, the pressure of a barbarous past and of a no less barbarous world imperialism. Representing the process of the degeneration of the Soviet state as the evolution of pure Bolshevism is to ignore social reality in the name of only one of its isolated elements in a purely logical manner. At the bottom of it all, it suffices to call this elementary error by its name so the no trace of it remains.

Bolshevism itself, in any case, has never identified itself neither with the October Revolution nor with the Soviet state, which came out of it. Bolshevism considered itself as one of the factors of history, its "conscious" factor, a very important factor, but in no way decisive.

We see the decisive factor — on the basis provided by productive forces — in class struggle, not only on the national scale, but also on the international.

When the Bolsheviks made concessions to the petit-bourgeois tendencies of the peasants, that they established strict rules for entering the party, that they purified the party of foreign elements, that they banned the other parties, that they introduced the NEP, that they gave in to businesses in the form of concessions or that the concluded diplomatic accords with imperialist governments, they, the Bolsheviks, drew particular conclusions from this fundamental fact which was theoretically clear to them from the very beginning: that is, that the conquest of power, as important as it is in itself, in no way makes the party the all-powerful master of the historical process. Certainly, after having taken the state, the party receives the possibility of acting with an unprecedented force on the development of society; but, on the other hand, it is itself submitted to a tenfold action on the part of all the other members of this society. It can be rejected from power by direct blows from hostile forces. With slower rhythms of evolution, it can, all while maintaining itself in power, degenerate from the inside. It is precisely this dialectic of the historical process that is not understood by the sectarian reasoners who attempt to find a definitive argument against the Bolsheviks in the putrefaction of the Stalinist bureaucracy. At the bottom of it, these gentlemen are saying this: bad is the revolutionary party, which doesn't contain in itself the guarantees against its degeneration. Faced with such a criterion, Bolshevism is evidently condemned; it possesses no talisman. But this criterion itself is false. Scientific thought demands a concrete analysis: how and why did the party decompose? Up till now, no one has given this analysis, if not the Bolsheviks themselves. They have in no way needed to break with Bolshevism for this. On the contrary, it is within their own arsenal that all that is necessary to explain their lot is to be found. This is the conclusion that we come to: obviously, Stalinism has come out of Bolshevism, but it came out in a way which is not logical, but dialectic; not as its revolutionary affirmation, but as its Thermidian negation. This is in no way one and the same thing.

**The fundamental prognostic of Bolshevism**

However, the Bolsheviks did not need the Moscow trials to explain, in retrospect, the causes of the decomposition of the ruling party of the USSR. They had long foreseen the possibility of such a variety of evolution, and, in advance, had expressed themselves on it. Let us recall the prognostic that the Bolsheviks had already made, not only on the eve of the October Revolution, but already a certain number of years before. The fundamental grouping of forces on the national and international scale opened the possibility of the proletariat coming to power, for the first time, in a country as backward as Russia. But the same grouping of forces gave the certainty, in advance, that without the more or less prompt victory of the proletariat in more advanced countries; the workers’ state would not be maintained in Russia. The Soviet regime left to itself would fall or degenerate. More exactly, it would degenerate.
to then fall. I had personally written several times on it, starting as early as 1905. In my History of the Russian Revolution (cf. the appendix of the last tome, "Socialism in a Single Country"), what the heads of Bolshevism on the subject from 1917 to 1923 has said has been assembled. It all breaks down to a single thing: without revolution in the West, Bolshevism would be liquidated, be it by an internal counter-revolution, be it by foreign intervention, be it by a combination of the two. In particular, Lenin indicated, more than once, that the bureaucratisation of the Soviet regime is not a technical or organisational question, but the possible beginning of a degeneration of the workers' state.

At the XI Party Congress in March 1922, Lenin spoke about the support that, at that moment, the NEP and some bourgeois politicians, the liberal professor Ustrialov⁶ in particular, had decided to offer to Soviet Russia. "I am for the support of Soviet power in Russia", said Ustrialov, - albeit a cadet, a bourgeois -, "because it has entered the path by which it will become an ordinary bourgeois power." Lenin preferred the cynical voice of the enemy to "soft communist cooing". It is with a rude sobriety that he warned the party of the danger:

"Things such as those of which Ustrialov speaks are possible. History knows all sorts of transformations. Resting on conviction, devotion and other excellent moral qualities is in no way a serious thing in politics. Excellent moral qualities exist in a tiny number of people, and it is the gigantesque masses that decide the historical outcome, masses who treat this tiny number of people with very little politesse if these people don't please them."

In a word, the party is not the unique factor in the evolution and, on a large historical scale; it is not the decisive factor.

"It happens that one nation conquers another", continued Lenin at the same Congress, the last which was held with his participation... "It is very simple and understandable to anyone. But what would happen to the civilisation of these nations? Here, it isn't so simple. If the conquering nation has a civilisation superior to that of the conquered nation, it imposes its civilisation on it; but if it is the contrary, it happens that the conquered imposes its civilisation on its conqueror. Hasn't such a thing happened in the capital of the RSFSR and hasn't it resulted that 4,700 communists (nearly a whole division, and the best of the best) found themselves submitted to a foreign civilisation?"

This was in the beginning of 1922, and not for the first time, for that matter. A few men don't make history, be they the "best of the best"; and, what is more, these "best" can degenerate in the direction of a "foreign" civilisation, that's to say bourgeois. Not only could the Soviet state can leave the socialist path, but the Bolshevik Party could also, in unfavourable historical conditions, lose its bolshevism. It is from the clear understanding of this danger that the Left Opposition was born, formed once and for all in 1923. Noting day by day the symptoms of degeneration, it strove to oppose the Thermidor menacing the conscious will of the proletarian vanguard.

However, this subjective factor is found wanting. The "gigantic masses", which, according to Lenin, decide the outcome of the struggle, had been exhausted by the shortages in their country and by a too long wait for the world revolution. The masses lost courage. The bureaucracy took the upper hand. It subdued the proletarian vanguard, stamped Marxism under foot, and prostituted the Bolshevik Party. Stalinism was victorious. In the form of the Left Opposition, Bolshevism broke with the Soviet bureaucracy and its Comintern. Such was the true path of evolution.

Certainly, in a formal sense, Stalinism came out of Bolshevism. Still today, the Moscow bureaucracy continues to call itself Bolshevik. It simply uses the old Bolshevik label to better fool the masses. Even more pitiful are the theorists who still take it for the core, the appearance for the reality. By identifying Stalinism with Bolshevism, they best serve the Thermidorians and, in so doing, play a manifestly reactionary role.

With the elimination of all the other parties from the political arena, the contradictory interests and tendencies of diverse layers of the population would need, to one degree or another, to find their expression in the ruling party. As the political centre of gravity moves

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⁶ Nikolai V. Ustrialov (1890-1937) was a law professor and leader of the cadet party in Siberia in 1918. He had emigrated to Harbin, where he taught until 1934. He directed the newspaper Smena Veh and was the leader of the emigrants who saw in the NEP, then Stalinism, a natural movement of return to capitalism that must be encouraged. He returned to the USSR in 1935 and taught economic geography in and institute of higher education. Arrested in 1937, he was condemned to death and executed.

⁷ Lenin, Œuvres, tome XXXII, from page 291.
from the proletarian vanguard to the bureaucracy, the party is modified as much by its social composition as by its ideology. Thanks to the impetuous march of evolution, it has suffered, these last fifteen years, a degeneration much more radical than in a half-century of social democracy. The current purge draws between Stalinism and Bolshevism not only a simple line of blood, but also a river of blood. The extermination of all the old generation of Bolsheviks, of an important intermediary generation who had participated in the civil war and also of the part of the youth who had taken up the Bolshevik traditions in earnest demonstrates not only the political but also the direct physical incompatibility of Stalinism with Bolshevism. How, therefore, could one not see this?

Stalinism and “State Socialism”

The anarchists, on their side, attempt to see in Stalinism the organic product, not only of Bolshevism and Marxism, but also of “state socialism” in general. They consent to replacing Bakunin’s patriarchal “federation of free communes” by a more modern federation of free soviets. But they are above all against the centralised state. Indeed, a branch of “state Marxism, social democracy, once in power, has become a declared agency of capital. Another has given birth to a new privileged class. It’s clear: the source of this evil is in the state. Considered in a large historical perspective, a grain of truth can be found in this reasoning. The state, as an apparatus of constraint, is incontestably a source of political and moral infection. This also concerns, as experience has shown, the workers’ state. In consequence, it can be said that Stalinism is a product of a stage of society where we haven’t yet been able to cast aside the state’s straitjacket. But this situation, without providing anything, which permits the appreciation of Bolshevism of Marxism, only characterises the general level of human civilisation, and above all the power relations between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. After coming to an agreement with the anarchists that the State, even that of the workers, was born for the barbarism of classes and that the true history of humanity will begin with the abolition of the state, the following question remains before us in all its force: what are the paths and methods which are capable of leading, in the end, to the abolition of the state? Recent experience shows that they aren’t the methods of anarchism, in any case.

The heads of the Spanish CNT, the only notable anarchist organisation on earth, have changed, at the critical hour, into ministers of the bourgeoisie. They explain their open treason of anarchist theory by the pressure of “exceptional circumstances” . But isn’t this the same argument that was advanced, in their time, by the heads of German social democracy? Assuredly, civil war is in no way a peaceful ordinary circumstance, but rather an “exceptional circumstance”. But it is precisely for such “exceptional circumstances” that every serious revolutionary organisation prepares itself. The Spanish experiment has shown, once again, that the state can be denied in brochures published in “normal circumstances”, with the permission of the bourgeois state, but that the conditions of the revolution leave no place for the negation of the state, but demand its conquest. We have in no way the intention of accusing the Spanish anarchists of not having liquidated the state with a single stroke of the pen. A revolutionary party, even once it has taken power (which the Spanish anarchist heads didn’t know how to do, despite the heroism of anarchist workers) is also in no way the all-powerful master of society. But we all the more bitterly accuse anarchist theory, which it seems was entirely convenient for a peaceful period but had to be hastily given up as soon as the “exceptional circumstances” of the revolution appeared. In the old days, we found generals (and such are probably still to be found) who thought that that which most ruined an army was war. The revolutionaries who complain that the revolution overturns their doctrine aren’t worth much more.

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8 Mikhail A. Bakunin (1914-1876), former officer, was the inspiration of the libertarian wing of the First International and the adversary of Marx. Considered as one of the theorists of anarchism.

9 The International Workers Association (IWA), founded in Berlin in December 1922 by Anarcho-syndicalists from all countries, had, in 1933, put the perspective of a “free system of councils” in its manifesto.

10 The leaders of the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT), anarcho-syndicalists Federica Montseny and Juan García Oliver, Juan López and Juan Peiró entered, in November 1936, the Spanish Popular Front government led by the socialist F. Largo Cabellero.

11 In the confederation’s daily newspaper in Barcelona, Solidaridad Obrera, 4 November 1937, Federica Montseny, daughter of an old anarchist family, minister since the day before, explained “the circumstances had changed the nature of the Spanish government and state”.

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Marxists fully agree with the anarchists concerning the final goal, the liquidation of the state. Marxism remains “statist” only to the extent that simply ignoring the state cannot attain the liquidation of the state. The experience of Stalinism in no way overturns the teachings of Marxism, but confirms them by an inverse method. A revolutionary doctrine, which teaches the proletariat to correctly orientate itself in a situation and to actively use it, doesn’t contain in and of itself, obviously, an automatic guarantee of its victory. But, on the other hand, victory is only possible through this doctrine. It is otherwise impossible to imagine this victory in the form of a single action. The question must be taken in the perspective of the epoch. The first workers’ state, on a little developed economic basis and within the ring of imperialism, has been transformed into Stalinism’s gendarmerie. But true Bolshevism has declared a merciless struggle against this gendarmerie. To preserve itself, Stalinism is now compelled to lead an open civil war against the Bolshevism called “Trotskyism”, not only in the USSR, but also in Spain. The old Bolshevist party is dead, but Bolshevism is raising its head everywhere. To make Stalinism proceed from Bolshevism or from Marxism is exactly the same thing as making the counter-revolution proceed from the revolution. It is on this schema that the thought of the conservatives known as liberals is always modelled, and then reformist thought. Revolutions, as an outcome of society’s class structure, always engender counter-revolutions. Doesn’t this show, demands the reasoner, that there is some sort of internal vice in the revolutionary method? However, up till now, neither the liberals nor the reformist have been able to invent “more economical” methods. But if it isn’t easy to rationalise a living historical process, on the other hand, it is in no way difficult to interpret, in a rationalist way, the succession of waves by making Stalinism proceed logically from “state socialism”, fascism from Marxism, reaction from revolution, in a word, the antithesis from the thesis. In this domain, as in numerous others, anarchist thought remains the prisoner of rationalist liberalism. True revolutionary thought is impossible without dialectics.

The political “sins” of Bolshevism as the source of Stalinism

The rationalists’ argumentation sometimes takes, at least on the outside, a more concrete character. Stalinism proceeds, for them, not from Bolshevism as a whole, but from its political sins\(^\text{12}\). The Bolsheviks, say Gorter, Pannekoek, the German “spartakists”\(^\text{13}\), etc., have replaced the dictatorship of the proletariat with the dictatorship of the party. Stalin replaced the dictatorship of the party with the dictatorship of the bureaucracy. The Bolsheviks eliminated all parties but their own; Stalin strangled the Bolshevik party in the interest of the Bonapartist clique. The Bolsheviks recognised the necessity of participating in the old unions and in the bourgeois parliament; Stalin tied himself in friendship with the union bureaucracy and bourgeois democracy. The parallels can be pursued as long as you want. Despite the effect that they can exteriorly produce, they are absolutely empty. The proletariat cannot come to power but through its vanguard. The very necessity of state power stems from the insufficient cultural level of the masses and from their heterogeneity. In the revolutionary vanguard organised into a party, the tendency of the masses to achieve their liberation is crystallised. Without the class’s trust in the vanguard, without the support of the vanguard by the class, there can be no question of the conquest of power. It’s in this sense that proletarian revolution and dictatorship are the cause of the whole class, but in no other way than under the direction of the vanguard. The Soviets are only the organised connection between the vanguard and the proletariat. The party can only provide the revolutionary content of this form. This is shown by the positive experience of the October Revolution and by the negative experience in other countries (Germany, Austria, Spain); finally, no one has not only not shown it practically, but hasn’t even tried to explain precisely on paper how the proletariat could take power without

\(^{12}\) One of the most typical representatives of this type of thinking is the French author of a book on Stalin, Boris Souvarine. The material and documentary sides of Souvarine’s work represent the product of a long and conscientious research. However, the historical philosophy of the author astonishes with its vulgarity. To explain all the subsequent historical misadventures, he seeks the internal ways contained in Bolshevism. The influence of the real conditions of the historical process on Bolshevism does not exist for him. Mr. Taine himself, with his theory of “milieu”, is closer to Marx than Souvarine (Note by Leon Trotsky).

\(^{13}\) Herman Gorter (1864–1927) and Anton Pannekoek (1873–1960), Dutch Communists, mentors of the generation of “Communists of the left” following the WWI, and notably of the German KAPD. The group Spartacus – not to be confused with the League of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht – was one of the groups, which came out of the crisis of the KAPD.
the political direction of a party that knows what it wants. If the party politically submits the soviets to the leadership, in and of itself, this fact changes the soviet system as little as the domination of a conservative majority changes the British parliamentary system.

As to the banning of other Soviet parties, it in no way proceeded from some “Bolshevik” theory, but was a measure of defence of the dictatorship in a backward and drained country, surrounded by enemies on all sides. It was clear for the Bolsheviks, since the very beginning that this measure, later completed by the banning of faction inside the leading party itself contained the greatest dangers. However, the source of the danger wasn’t in the doctrine or the tactics, but in the material weakness of the dictatorship, faced with the difficulties of the interior and exterior situation. If the revolution had won, had it been only in Germany, with the same stroke the banning of other Soviet parties would have disappeared. That the domination of a single party had legally served as a starting point for the Stalinist totalitarian regime is absolutely indisputable. But the cause of such an evolution is not in Bolshevism, not even in the banning of other parties as a temporary military measure, but in the series of defeats of the proletariat in Europe and Asia.

It is the same with the struggle against anarchism. At the heroic epoch of the revolution, the Bolsheviks walked hand in hand with truly revolutionary anarchists. The party absorbed many into its ranks. The author of these lines has, more than once, examined, with Lenin, the question of the possibility of leaving certain parts of the territory to the anarchist so that they could carry out, with the consent of the population, their experiments in the immediate suppression of the state. But the conditions of the civil war, of the blockade and of the famine left too little affluence for such plans. The Kronstadt insurrection? But the revolutionary government could not, of course, “make a gift” to insurgent sailors of a fortress, which controlled the capital solely because a few dubious anarchists joined the rebellion of peasant soldiers. The concrete historical analysis of events leaves no place for the legends created by the ignorance and sentimentality, which surrounds Kronstadt, Makhno and other episodes of the revolution.

There only remains the fact that the Bolsheviks, from the very beginning, employed not only conviction, but also coercion, sometimes rather harshly. It is also incontestable that the bureaucracy who came out of the revolution has monopolised in its hands the system of coercion. Each stage of evolution, even when it concerns stages as catastrophic as revolution and counter-revolution, comes out of the preceding stage, has in it its roots and carries some of its traits.

Liberals, including the Webb couple, have always affirmed that the Bolsheviks dictatorship represents a new edition of Tsarism. By this, they close their eyes to details such as the abolition of the monarchy and the nobility, the transfer of lands to the peasants, the introduction of the planned economy, atheist education, etc. In exactly the same way, liberal anarchist thought closes its eyes to the fact that the Bolshevik revolution, with all its measures of repression, signified the subversion of social relations in the interests of the masses, while Stalin’s coup d’etat accompanied the reworking of Soviet society in the interests of a privileged minority. It is clear that in the identification of Stalinism with Bolshevism, there is no trace of a socialist criterion.

**Questions of theory**

One of the principal traits of Bolshevism is its strict, exigent, even fastidious attitude concerning questions of doctrine. Lenin’s 27 tomes will always remain the model for a supremely scrupulous attitude toward theory. Without this fundamental quality, Bolshevism would never have fulfilled its historical role. Stalinism, crude and ignorant, absolutely empirical, stands in complete opposition on this point as well.

Over ten years ago, the Opposition declared in its platform:

“Since the death of Lenin, a series of new ‘theories’ have been created whose only purport is to theoretically justify the deviation of the Stalinist group from the path of international proletarian revolution.”

15 Sydney Webb (1859-1943), and his spouse Beatrice Potter (1858-1943), former leaders of the Fabian Society, moderates among moderate Labour activists, returned from the USSR in 1935 with the enthusiasm of true “fellow travellers” of Stalinism.

16 This was then the total, since greatly exceeded, of volumes of Lenin’s works published in 1937.

17 The Opposition’s platform, planned to be presented at the XV Party Congress, saw its reproduction and distribution banned; its clandestine printing served as a pretext for the first exclusions and arrests of the Opposition.
Quite recently, the American socialist Liston Oak18, who closely participated in the Spanish revolution, wrote:

“In fact, the Stalinists are now the most extreme revisionists of Marx and Lenin. Bernstein19 never dared to go half as far as Stalin in the revision of Marx.”

This is absolutely correct. It must only be added that for Bernstein, there were real theoretical needs: he conscientiously tried to establish conformity between the reformist practices of social democracy and its program. The Stalinist bureaucracy not only has nothing in common with Marxism, it is also foreign to any program, doctrine or system, whatever it might be. Its ideology is impregnated with an absolutely police-like subjectivism, its practice, by empiricism of pure violence. At the very bottom of its interests, the caste of usurpers is hostile to the theory: it cannot account for its social role, neither to itself nor to another. Stalin revises Marx and Lenin, not with the pen of the theorists, but with the boots of the GPU.

**Questions of morality**

It is above all about Bolshevism’s “amorality” that the insignificant blowhards whom Bolshevism has demasked customarily complain. In petit bourgeois, democratic intellectual, “socialist, literary and parliamentary spheres, among others, conventional values or a conventional language exist to cover the absence of values. This large and multi-coloured society where a reciprocal complicity reigns (“live and let live”) in no way bears the contact of its sensible skin with the Marxist lancet. Theorists who oscillate between the two camps, writers and moralists thought and think that the Bolsheviks maliciously exaggerate disaccords, are incapable of a “loyal” collaboration and, by their “intrigues”, break the unity of the workers’ movement. The sensitive and susceptible centrist believes, above all, that the Bolsheviks “slander” him (uniquely because they take his half thoughts to their end, something of which he is absolutely incapable himself). However, it is only this precious quality, the intolerance of all that is hybrid and evasive, which is capable of educating a revolutionary party that “exceptional circumstances” are unable to take by surprise. The morality of any party ultimately comes from the historical interests it represents. Bolshevism’s morality, which includes devotion, selflessness, courage, contempt for all that is glitter and lies, the best qualities of human nature, comes from its revolutionary intransigence in service of the oppressed. The Stalinist bureaucracy, in this domain as well, imitates the words and gestures of Bolshevism. But when the “intransigence” and the “inflexibility” manifest themselves through a police apparatus in service of a privileged minority, they become a source of demoralisation and gangsterism. One can only have resentment for these gentlemen who identify the revolutionary heroism of the Bolsheviks with the bureaucratic cynicism of the Thermidorians.

Even still today, despite the dramatic facts of the last period, the average philistine continues to think that, in the struggle between Bolshevism (Trotskyism) and Stalinism, it is a question of personal ambition or, in the best of cases, the struggle of two “nuances” in Bolshevism 20. Norman Thomas, leader of the American Socialist party, gives the crudest expression of this point of view:

“There are few reasons to believe”, he writes (Socialist Review, September 1937, p. 6), “that if Trotsky had won (!) instead of Stalin, there would have been an end to the intrigues, conspiracies and reign of terror in Russia.”

And this man believes himself... a Marxist! With as much foundation, one could say: there is little reason to believe that if, instead of Pius XI on the Roman throne, we had put Norman I, the catholic church would have transformed itself into a bastion of socialism. Thomas doesn’t understand that it isn’t a question of a match between Stalin and Trotsky, but an antagonism between the bureaucracy and the proletariat. Certainly, in the USSR, the ruling stratum is still constrained today to adapt itself to the not entirely liquidated heritage of the revolution by preparing, at the same time, through a declared civil war (the bloody purge, the extermination of dissidents), the changing of the social regime. But in Spain, the Stalinist clique appears, starting today, as the bastion of the bourgeois order against socialism. Socialism’s struggle against the Bonapartist bureaucracy changes itself, in

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18 Liston M. Oak (1895-1970), American journalist, member of the CP for several years, already shaken by the first Moscow Trial, had then broken with the party following a long stay in Spain.

19 Edouard Bernstein (1850-1932) had been the advocate of “revisionism”.

20 Let us point out that the approach signalled here by Trotsky has been frequently renewed since his death and almost always presented as new.
front of our eyes, into class struggle: two worlds, two programs, and two moralities. If Thomas thinks that the victory of the socialist proletariat over the abject class of oppressors won’t regenerate the Soviet regime politically and morally, he thereby shows only that, despite all his reserves, his tergiversations and pious sighs, he is much closer to the Stalinist bureaucracy than to the revolutionary workers. As with the other denouncers of “Bolshevik amorality”, Thomas has simply not achieved revolutionary morality.

**The Traditions of Bolshevism and the IV International**

For these “leftists” who attempt to return to a Marxism, which ignores Bolshevism, all is ordinarily reduced to a few isolated panaceas: boycotting the old unions, boycotting parliament, creating “true” soviets. All this could seem extraordinarily profound in the fever of the first days after the war. But now, in the light of experience, these “childhood illnesses” have lost all interest for curiosity. The Dutchmen Gorter and Pankoeck, the German “spartakists”, the Italian Bordigists have shown their independence from Bolshevism uniquely by opposing one its traits, artificially fattened, to the others. Of these tendencies of the “left”, nothing remains, neither practically nor theoretically: indirect, but important, proof that Bolshevism is the only form of Marxism for our epoch. The Bolshevik Party has shown, in reality, a combination of supreme revolutionary audacity and political realism. It has, for the first time, established the only relationship between the vanguard and the class that is capable of insuring victory. It has shown through experience that the union of the proletariat with the oppressed masses of the petite bourgeoisie of villages and cities is only possible through the political overthrow of the traditional parties of the petite bourgeoisie. The Bolshevik party has shown the whole world how to accomplish armed insurrection and the taking of power. Those who oppose an abstract idea of soviets to the dictatorship of the party must understand that it is only the through the leadership of the Bolsheviks that the soviets were able to raise themselves out of the reformist march to the role of the state form of the proletariat. The Bolshevik party realised a just combination of military art and Marxist politics in the civil war. Even though the Stalinist bureaucracy has succeeded in ruining the economic bases of the

new society, the experiment of the planned economy, carried out under the direction of the Bolshevik party, will still enter into history as a higher education for all humanity. The only ones incapable of seeing all this are the sectarians who, offended by the blows that they have received, have turned their backs on the historical process. But that’s not all. The Bolshevik Party was able to achieve such grandiose “practical” works only because the light of the theory lighted each of its steps. Bolshevism didn’t create it: Marxism had provided it. But Marxism is the theory of movement and not of rest. Only actions of a grandiose historical scale could enrich the theory itself. Bolshevism brought a precious contribution to Marxism through its analysis of the imperialist epoch of wars and revolutions; of bourgeois democracy in the epoch of decomposing capitalism; of the relation between the general strike and insurrection; of the role of the party, soviets and unions in the epoch of proletarian revolution; of the theory of the Soviet state; of the transitional economy; of fascism and Bonapartism in the epoch of capitalist decline; finally, in its analysis of the conditions of the degeneration of the Soviet state and the Bolshevik party itself. Name another tendency who would have added something essential to the conclusions and generalisations of Bolshevism. Vandervelde, de Brukhère, Hilferding, Otto Bauer, Léon Blum, Zyromsky, not to mention Attlee and Norman Thomas\(^2\), theoretically and politically live off the used debris of the past.

The degeneration of the Comintern has expressed itself in the most brutal fashion in the fact that it has theoretically fallen to the level of the II International. Intermediary groups of all types (the English Independent Labour Party, POUM, and the like) each week newly adapt fragments of Marx and Lenin to their needs of the moment. The workers will learn nothing from them. Only the builders of the IV International, by appropriating the traditions of Marx and Lenin, have made their own a serious attitude toward the theory. Let the philistines mock the fact that, twenty years after the October Revolution, the revolutionaries are newly rejected on the positions of a modest preparation of propaganda. In this question, as in the others,

\(^2\) Trotsky here lists the names of the leaders of the principal parties of the II International of several countries.
big capital is much more perspicacious than the petit-bourgeois philistines who consider themselves "socialists" or "communists": it isn't for nothing that the IV International doesn't disappear from the columns of the world press. The burning historic need for revolutionary leadership insures exceptionally rapid rhythms of development for the IV International. The most important guarantee of these future successes is the fact that it hasn't formed itself outside of the great path of history, but that it has organically come out of Bolshevism.

29 August 1937