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TROTSKYISM TODAY

WHOSE INTERESTS DOES IT SERVE?

Nikolai VASETSKY



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Translated from the Russian by Vyacheslav SEMYONOV
Translation edited by Selena KOTLOBAI

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In the late 1970s and early 1980s there was an upsurge of activities among left extremist groupings in many capitalist and developing countries. Taking advantage of this, Trotskyist leaders hasten to declare that a "Trotskyist decade" has set in.¹

Trotskyism has never been a movement with any strong political influence, but it has undoubtedly inflicted, and continues to inflict, serious damage on the liberation and revolutionary movement of our time.

Today Trotskyites spare no effort in adapting themselves to the specific circumstances in a particular country or region and have at their disposal a wider range of tactics and methods than, say, in the late 1960s and 1970s. Apart from resorting to direct actions such as demonstrations, rallies, and public polemics, the Trotskyites today are actively seeking other ways of influencing the political situation. More and more often they put up their own candidates for government posts, appear on radio and television, give lectures at colleges and

¹ See, e.g., *Correspondencia internacional*, No. 2, abril, 1980, p. 32.

universities, including highly respectable ones, adapt their propaganda literature in an attempt to attract mass readerships, and so on.

All these activities are looked upon favourably and supported by the capitalist media which now say that the Trotskyites "have matured" and have put an end to the stereotype of a left extremist, someone having long hair and wearing old jeans, most likely wielding a bicycle chain, a rubber hose or a truncheon, smashing shop windows and shouting ultra-revolutionary slogans. Today, Trotskyites appear in the capitalist press as respectable politicians with "new hopes".

This makes one wonder whom Trotskyism serves today, why it is receiving support from the very quarters against which, if we are to believe its leaders, "a most resolute struggle" must be waged.

The answer, first of all, is that the ruling elite in the West in its fight against the revolutionary movement led by Communists does not rely on its own forces alone. It is fully aware that today it is powerless to influence the broad masses politically unless it appears to accept some elements (how far it should go in this depends on circumstances) of petty-bourgeois ideology, of petty-bourgeois revolutionism generally, and of its Trotskyist variety in particular.

The root cause of such a seemingly unnatural alliance between the ruling classes and their opponents lies in the socio-political and ideological conditions in which capitalism finds itself at its present stage. The growing exploitation and oppression of the masses and the increasing authoritarian

tendencies in capitalist policies evoke protests not only of the working class but also of those social strata which ten or twenty years ago the bourgeoisie quite rightly regarded as a bulwark of the exploitation system. These strata include the petty bourgeoisie, the middle classes and the intelligentsia, office workers, students and other social groups whose numbers have been rapidly growing under the impact of the scientific and technological revolution.

Taking part in class battles, many of them either have no experience of political struggle at all, or have only a most general and vague idea of what it should be. This is not surprising. Often they begin with spontaneous protest against the anti-popular policies of exploitation pursued by imperialism which tramples underfoot the basic rights and freedoms not only of individuals but of whole nations.

In their protest against imperialism some of them side with the revolutionary working class and join Marxist-Leninist parties. But there are many who, while rejecting capitalism, do not accept socialism either; nor do they share the principles and aims of Communists. Often they are ensnared by left extremists who declare that "true" revolutionaries are not bound by ideological dogmas.

A major factor in the activation of Trotskyism today is its organisational structure. As is known, the Trotskyist movement has never been united, being constantly torn by internal strife. The entire history of the Trotskyist Fourth International set up in 1938 has been marked by bitter in-fighting. At present, there are at least seven groupings,

each claiming the sole right to represent the Fourth International.*

In recent years Trotskyites in the United States, France and some other countries have been clamouring for the establishment of a Fifth International which could put an end to the long-standing tendency toward factionalism and splits resulting in crises. However, most Trotskyist leaders today regard the differences as "normal" on the principle that the more confusion there is, the better. "This crisis is an objective process whose origins lie in the alignment of class forces and in the character of the class struggle,"¹ says Pierre Lambert, leader of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. This and other similar pronouncements never mention the real causes of the splits and divisions within the Fourth International, which lie in Trotskyism's lack of a broad social base, the Trotskyites' eclectic and subjective evaluation of political developments, and the overweening ambitions of Trotskyist leaders.

However, the Fourth International exists and,

* These are: the United Secretariat of the Fourth International led by Ernest Mandel, Alain Krivine, and Daniel Bensaid; the International Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International led by Pierre Lambert; the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency of the Fourth International led by Michel Pablo (Raptis); the International Committee of the Fourth International led by Denis Healy; International Socialism led by Tony Cliff; the Mexico City-based Fourth (Posadista) International whose leader, Julio Posadas, died in Europe in 1981; and the New York-based Spartacist League led by George Foster. The total estimated membership of these organisations is about 65,000.

¹ *Informations ouvrières*, 3-10. I. 1981, p. 9.

what is more, it has broadened its sphere of operations since the end of the Second World War, having set up national branches in virtually every capitalist country. This alone places the Trotskyites in a position of advantage compared to the other left extremists, such as the anarchists, and enables them to adapt themselves more effectively to the political situation.

Many political activists are also misled by Trotskyist terminology. In his article *The Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx* (1913) Lenin said that "the theoretical victory of Marxism compelled its enemies to *disguise themselves as Marxists.*"¹ This tendency can be observed today as well, when communist ideology in many ways determines the world's intellectual outlook.

In some cases interest in Trotskyism and in left extremism generally represents a negative reaction to social-democratic reformism, "a kind of penalty for the opportunist sins of the working-class movement."² The Trotskyites are making skilful use of the rejection by many workers of reformism with its total reliance on peaceful and parliamentary forms of class struggle. The Trotskyites also appeal to those who have shed their reformist illusions but have not so far worked with Communists.

Of late some left-wingers have also been gravitating towards Trotskyism. Some of them would like to use its anti-Leninist banner to camouflage their

¹ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 18, p. 584.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 32.

own departure from working-class positions. They are still trying to reassess the role played by Trotsky and his followers in the contemporary revolutionary movement. Denying the damage which Trotskyism has inflicted on the struggle for socialism, they attempt to "legitimate" it as a variety of Marxism. Such attempts are particularly harmful since few people in capitalist countries are aware of the real essence of Trotskyism, of which there are many false interpretations. The present situation resembles that described by Lenin in 1914 when he strongly criticised Trotsky's theoretical premises and political actions: "The old participants in the Marxist movement in Russia know Trotsky very well, and there is no need to discuss him for their benefit. But the younger generation of workers do not know him, and it is therefore necessary to discuss him."¹

Today, as many decades ago, the Trotskyites, with their "ultra-revolutionary" talk (in this they can be said to be consistent), are hindering the emergence of true revolutionary consciousness among the masses, whose anti-capitalist protest can thus be channeled into the dead end of pseudo-revolutionism. Trotskyism should be discussed today because working people, especially those who are young, who have no experience of class struggle, should have a realistic idea of the complexities involved in a socialist revolution and of the difficulties which are inevitably encountered by fighters for social justice and socialism.

¹ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 20, p. 346.

Chapter I

**AN OLD TRICK OF PASSING
OFF TROTSKYISM AS MARXISM**

A few days before the victorious socialist revolution in Russia in 1917, Lenin wrote the following in an article criticising the opponents of his course for an armed uprising: "Marxism is an extremely profound and many-sided doctrine. It is, therefore, no wonder that *scraps* of quotations from Marx—especially when the quotations are made *inappropriately*—can always be found among the 'arguments' of those who break with Marxism."¹ This precisely describes the political position of those who falsely interpret Marxism. And it also applies to Trotskyism both in its "classical form" and in its modern varieties.

Trotsky and his supporters were fully aware of the attractive power of the teaching of Marx, Engels and Lenin; they knew perfectly well that without giving some sort of recognition, if only a token one, of the theoretical propositions of this teaching they had no hope of winning over revolutionary-minded workers and other working people. In the words of Otto Kuusinen,* a prominent

¹ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 26, p. 212.

* *Otto Willie Kuusinen* (1881-1964), an outstanding leader of the Soviet Communist Party and government official and a prominent figure in the international communist and working-class movement. He made a major contribution to the theory and practice of the revolutionary movement. He was the author of the draft theses, *The Organisational Construction of the Communist Parties and the Methods and Scope of Their Activity*, adopted by the Communist International at its Third Congress.

leader of the international communist movement, the Trotskyites have mastered the art of manipulating scraps of quotations from Lenin, the art of political forgery.

Trotsky's followers today have improved this technique. They rarely omit to mention Marx and Lenin in their speeches and articles, usually misinterpreting passages taken from the latter's writings on scientific socialism. And together with Marx and Lenin they invariably mention Trotsky.

Distorting the ideological legacy of Marx, Engels and Lenin, today's Trotskyites present Trotsky as the "inheritor and successor of their cause", and Trotskyism as a creative development of Marxism-Leninism. "The Fourth International is based upon Marxism, Leninism,"¹ stresses Denis Healy, leader of the International Committee in London.

He is echoed by Tom Kemp, one of the ideologists of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, who says that "Trotskyism [is] the Marxism of today"².

Utterances like these pursue definite political aims. Firstly, in presenting Trotsky as a revolutionary, the Trotskyites seek to attract attention to his theory of "permanent revolution", which was most resolutely rejected by Lenin. Secondly, they try to create an impression that Trotskyism offers a time-tested revolutionary programme. Thirdly, they portray themselves as the "sole guardians and heirs" of the revolutionary traditions of the past. Let us take a closer look at them.

"Alchemists of the revolution." That is how

¹ *Fourth International*, No. 1, January 1982, p. 24.

² *Bulletin Twice-Weekly*, No. 1, January 3, 1978, p. 6.

Marx and Engels described those who artificially pushed the revolutionary process to a critical point and tried to stage impromptu revolutions where no favourable conditions for them existed.

This characterisation of pseudo-revolutionaries of more than a century ago is still valid today, as is borne out by the political actions of Trotskyites among whose ideas Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution" holds a central place. They try to prove that this theory, far from contradicting Marx's and Engels' ideas, represents a further development of their ideas. They maintain that Trotsky, in elaborating this theory, proceeded from the thesis which Marx and Engels put forward in the *Address of the Central Authority to the [Communist] League* in 1850.*

Let us recall that in the *Address* Marx and Engels opposed the subordination of the interests of the working class to those of the bourgeoisie in a bourgeois-democratic revolution. The proletariat, they wrote, should go much further than the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois democrats had done in order to "make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, [and] the proletariat has conquered state power."¹

* *The Communist League (1842-1852)* was the first international communist organisation. Its founders and leaders were Marx and Engels. Being a school of proletarian revolutionaries, it was the first organisation to adopt the principles of scientific communism as the foundation for its activities. It was also the first to combine the principles of scientific communism with the working-class movement. The Communist League was the predecessor of the First International.

¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 10, p. 281.

Developing this idea, Lenin showed that in the imperialist epoch, at a certain stage in the development of capitalism (Russia was at such a stage in the early 20th century) a democratic revolution tended to grow into a socialist one and the political line of the working class should be clearly oriented towards the bourgeois-democratic revolution growing into a socialist, continuous revolution. He wrote: "From the democratic revolution we shall at once, and precisely in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organised proletariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop half-way."¹

Thus, the Marxist-Leninist idea of uninterrupted revolution consists in a certain sequence of the stages of revolutionary struggle, each of which prepares the necessary conditions for the transition to the next stage. The revolutionary experience of the 20th century has confirmed the correctness of this conclusion.

As for Trotsky's theory, it has nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism except for the similarity between the phrases "permanent revolution" and "uninterrupted revolution". Trotsky recognised this himself. In his book *The Years of the Great Change (People of the Old and the New Epoch)*, published in 1919, he paid tribute to the German Social-Democrat Alexander Parvus* as the author

¹ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 236-237.

* Alexander Parvus (Alexander Lazarevich Geltand) (1869-1924) joined the Social-Democratic Party of Germany in 1890s. He published several books on the world economy. After the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) in 1903 he joined the Mensheviks.

of the "permanent revolution" theory. He wrote: "The author of these lines considers it a matter of personal honour to pay homage to the man to whom he owes more in the development of his ideas than to any other person from the older generation of European social-democracy." In another book, *The Permanent Revolution*, published in Berlin in 1930, Trotsky summed up the main points of his "theory" and added: "My way of looking at the matter is really different from Lenin's way." This is how Trotsky formulated the problem:

"...Outbreaks of civil war and foreign wars alternate with periods of peaceful reforms. Revolutions in the economy, technology, science, family structure, everyday life and customs unfold in a constant interaction with one another, preventing society from attaining equilibrium. Herein lies the permanent nature of the socialist revolution as such."

Trotsky completely distorted the idea of uninterrupted revolution, in fact parodying it. In his view, the permanent character of revolution consists in a *simultaneous* resolution by the proletariat of all the political problems it faces. According to Trotsky there is to be no sequence in the

During the First Russian Revolution of 1905-1907 he was in Russia where he contributed to the Menshevik newspaper *Nachalo* (The Beginning). It was Parvus who first put forward the anti-Marxist theory of "permanent revolution" which was later taken up by Trotsky as a means of struggle against Leninism. In subsequent years Parvus withdrew from the Social-Democratic Party. During the First World War (1914-1918) he backed the social-chauvinist slogan of fighting the war to a victorious end, a slogan which objectively disunited the working class in the belligerent states.

actions taken by the proletariat which must at once put an end to the domination of the bourgeoisie, establish its dictatorship, carry out democratic changes, implement the socialist programme of reconstruction of the entire society and ensure victory of the revolution outside its own country.

Trotsky thus opposed to the idea of uninterrupted revolution his own subjectivist concept of "combined development" in which stages in the revolutionary transformation of society were arbitrarily mixed. Like the alchemists who thought in terms of "either/or" and dealt only with such mutually exclusive ideas as "hot vs. cold" and "dryness vs. moisture", Trotsky was guided by the principle of "all or nothing at all".

Exposing the eclectic nature of the "permanent revolution" theory, Lenin wrote: "From the Bolsheviks Trotsky's original theory has borrowed their call for a decisive proletarian revolutionary struggle and for the conquest of political power by the proletariat, while from the Mensheviks* it has borrowed 'repudiation' of the peasantry's role... Trotsky is in fact helping the liberal-labour politicians in Russia, who by 'repudiation' of the role of the peasantry understand a *refusal* to raise up the peasants for the revolution!"¹

The Trotskyist theory thus became the basis for an adventurous line which broke away from the Marxist strategy of broad class alliances in revolution. In denying the need for waging revo-

* *The Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks* represented two trends—a revolutionary and an opportunist one—in the Russian social-democracy.

¹ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 419-420.

lutionary struggle in stages, Trotsky was not merely being "hasty"; he was orienting the working class towards a course of events which would doom it to isolation and the revolution to defeat. Instead of calling for purposeful, painstaking efforts to rally all working people, especially millions of peasants, around the working class in their struggle for a complete and decisive development of the revolution, Trotsky proposed the implementation of futile tactics of continuous acts of rebellion which would do damage to the revolution rather than to capitalism.

Trotsky's theory is also untenable from the point of view of the internationalist tasks to be fulfilled by the working class. In calling for world revolution, it actually denies the need for unity between the national and the international elements in the revolution as well as the possibility for successful struggle by national sections of the working class. "It is inconceivable that the socialist revolution could be accomplished within the framework of just one nation..." Trotsky wrote in *The Permanent Revolution*. "The socialist revolution is not complete until the final triumph of the new society throughout the world." He then stressed: "The pattern of the development of world revolution removes the question about countries being 'ripe' or 'not yet ripe' for socialism... Since capitalism has created a world market, a worldwide division of labour and the world productive forces, it has prepared the world economy as a whole for a socialist reconstruction."

Trotskyites today declare that these conclusions are Trotsky's contribution to the development of

“classical Marxism.”¹ In fact, these ideas are a revision of the Marxist-Leninist teaching on the revolution for Trotsky ignores the basic factors in historical development.

Although the capitalist system as a whole is ripe for revolutions, the contradictions at different points in this system develop at different rates, because *capitalism itself develops unevenly*. Therefore, *the gravity and the degree of acuteness of these contradictions differ in different countries*. That is why in the system of imperialism there will inevitably be some areas having more favourable conditions than others for the breaking of the imperialist chain.

In his study of capitalism at its imperialist stage Lenin came to the following conclusion: “Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone.”² The unevenness of the political and economic development of capitalist countries manifests itself, in the epoch of imperialism, in conflicts and in the spasmodic character of growth. In conditions of struggle for world domination and for spheres of influence, this leads to acute conflicts and wars between imperialist powers which, in turn, aggravates the internal contradictions within the capitalism system. Just because the political development of individual capitalist countries is uneven, the revolutionary processes in these countries develop in different ways and occur at different times.

¹ See, e.g., E. Mandel, *Trotsky. A Study in the Dynamic of His Thought*, London, 1979, p. 34.

² Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 21, p. 342.

Lenin explained that the world socialist revolution consists of several stages separated by longer or shorter periods of time. Revolutions in individual countries emerge as relatively independent links in a single worldwide socialist revolution which embraces an entire epoch in history.

In each country the revolutionary process unfolds in highly specific national and historical conditions, which accounts for the multiplicity of ways to achieve socialism. In 1916 Lenin wrote: "All nations will arrive at socialism—this is inevitable, but all will do so in not exactly the same way, each will contribute something of its own to some form of democracy, to some variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the varying rate of socialist transformations in the different aspects of social life."¹

Historical experience has confirmed the soundness of this approach to problems of the development of world revolution. In none of the socialist countries had there been any mechanical copying of foreign experience with regard to forms, methods and ways of carrying out a socialist revolution, as was pointed out at the 26th CPSU Congress (1981). Each of the socialist countries carried out its revolution in its own way and in forms dictated by the alignment of class forces within the country, by national traditions and by the external situation.

Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution" also omits such elements of the world revolutionary process as the national-liberation and anti-imperialist revolutions in the colonial and dependent

¹ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 69-70.

countries. In *The Permanent Revolution*, Trotsky wrote: "In the imperialist epoch the national-democratic revolution can only triumph if the social and political conditions in the given country are ripe for the proletariat to take over power as the leader of the popular masses. If the conditions are not ripe, the struggle for liberation from the colonial yoke will produce uncertain results that are wholly directed against the working masses."

Here the Trotskyist anarchist formula of "all or nothing at all" turns into a prophecy of the complete futility of struggle for national liberation. Like the leaders of the international social-democracy, Trotsky brushed aside problems of the anti-imperialist movement for national liberation, regarding them as being of little importance so long as revolutions have not won in the developed capitalist countries. When fascist Italy attacked Abyssinia (as Ethiopia was then known), Trotsky declared that "Socialists have nothing to do there, as the defence of Abyssinia would amount to defence of feudalism."

Marx, Engels and Lenin attached immense importance to the liberation struggle of the peoples. Marxism for the first time defined the historical place of national-liberation revolutions in the general liberatory, revolutionary movement by linking the national colonial question with relations between classes and with class struggle. Marx and Engels showed that national oppression, being an innate part of capitalism as a socio-economic system, has its roots in the domination of private property which determines and permeates the policies of the exploiting classes. They, therefore, regarded the struggle for national liberation of the

exploited peoples as being most closely linked with the working-class struggle against all forms of capitalist exploitation. Lenin applied Marx's and Engels' ideas on the national colonial question to the epoch of imperialism when the national-liberation movement became an inseparable part of the *world revolutionary process*. He wrote: "The social revolution can come only in the form of an epoch in which are combined civil war by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries and a *whole series* of democratic and revolutionary movements, including the national liberation movement, in the undeveloped, backward and oppressed nations."¹ And he stressed that the international working class played the leading role in this process.

Following the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia in October 1917, working-class solidarity with the peoples fighting for their national liberation ceased to be a theoretical proposition. Lenin declared: "We now stand, not only as representatives of the proletarians of all countries but as representatives of the oppressed peoples as well."²

Having taken a "special" stand on the national colonial question, Trotsky, who continued to profess loyalty to Marxism, in fact sought to replace it with his own ultra-left and essentially defeatist theses and conclusions.

"*Revolution*" against the revolution. Today's Trotskyites, whose pronouncements are echoed by bourgeois propaganda, are making a considerable effort to present Trotsky as the "leader of the October Revolution" and "organiser" of the October

¹ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, p. 60.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 453.

uprising the victory of which allegedly meant at the same time "a change of heart" on the part of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party and their adoption of the theory of "permanent revolution".¹

To back up this idea they maintain that Lenin took a most favourable attitude to Trotsky's joining the Bolshevik Party in August 1917. "Lenin did not lay down any conditions for Trotsky's joining the Party, nor did he reprimand him for his past..."² write Trotskyist historians Georges Haupt and Jean-Jacque Marié.

However, in this case, too, the Trotskyites have obviously deviated from facts. In May 1917, Trotsky disassociated himself from the Bolsheviks led by Lenin. At a conference of the so-called Inter-District Organisation* (of which Trotsky was the leader) Trotsky declared: "...I cannot call myself a Bolshevik... It must not be demanded of us that we accept the Bolshevik cause." However, two months later he realised that he and his grouping had nothing with which to counterpose the Bolsheviks. He therefore applied for Party membership, being afraid to remain "in the shadow" at the climatic moment of revolutionary developments. In his autobiography *My Life* Trotsky recalled that Lenin met him "with reserve". Lenin and the Bol-

¹ See *Vérité*, No. 587, juillet 1979, pp. 37-38, and P. Broué, *Trotsky*, Paris, 1979, p. 42.

² Georges Haupt, Jean-Jacques Marié, *Les bolchéviques par eux-mêmes*, Paris, 1969, p. 19.

* The Inter-District Organisation of United Social Democrats was set up in 1913, in an attempt to reconcile the different trends within the ranks of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Shortly before the 1917 October Revolution most of the members of the organisation joined the RSDLP (Bolsheviks), and the organisation was dissolved.

sheviks did not adopt the Trotskyist position; Trotsky, on the other hand, had to make a public statement about his complete agreement with all the Bolshevik theses.

Later developments showed that this statement was another act of political duplicity on the part of Trotsky. After joining the Party Trotsky and his followers did not draw closer to Lenin and the Bolsheviks; on the contrary, they fought them on all the basic issues of the revolutionary movement and the construction of socialism in Soviet Russia, having set themselves the aim of imposing their line on the Party and taking over the leadership.

Trotsky's intentions were so evident that they are not denied even by bourgeois historians who in general sing his praises. Alain Brossat, for instance, writes that "Trotsky's joining the Bolsheviks was not an act of conviction, but a political demarche"¹.

It was Trotsky who launched *the five discussions* in the Party in the first decade following the October revolution (1917-1927). Each time they began a new attack on Lenin and the Party, the Trotskyites chose those issues which were most crucial for the future of the revolution and socialism in Soviet Russia.* As in the years which pre-

¹ A. Brossat, *Aux origines de la révolution permanente. La pensée politique de jeune Trotsky*, Paris, 1974, p. 261.

* One example is the heated debate on the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty. In the Decree on Peace, the first government decree since the Bolsheviks came to power, it was declared that the continuation of the imperialist war was a crime against humanity. The faction of "Left-Wing Communists" and Trotsky opposed Lenin's line towards peace; they regarded war as one of the means of starting "a worldwide revolutionary conflagration".

ceded the revolution, in the post-revolution years profound differences emerged between the Trotskyites and Lenin's Party on all the key issues of the revolution and socialist construction. What were these differences?

First of all, Trotsky and his followers refused to acknowledge the fact that the Soviet Union had embarked on the building of socialism. In accordance with Trotsky's "theory", they sought to impose on the Party a policy of "export" of revolution to economically more advanced countries. They dismissed as "nationally limited" Lenin's policies of achieving as much as possible in one's own country so as to be able to support the revolutionary movement in other countries. They deliberately exaggerated the role and influence of capitalist elements in Soviet Russia's economy, depicting the Soviet economic system as state capitalism, and panicked when the petty bourgeoisie showed signs of wavering and when the USSR experienced the pressure exerted by world imperialism. This, in their view, justified the use of the same methods in economic practices as were employed by the bourgeoisie at a time when capitalism was still in the making. These methods consisted in obtaining the necessary means for financing the country's industrialisation by setting up a "dictatorship of the industry" based on harsh exploitation of the peasants.

The Trotskyites' foreign-policy doctrines also combined adventurism and irresponsibility. Totally ignoring political realities, they denied that capitalism had reached a stable state and continued to call for the immediate "spread" of the revolution to other countries.

And finally, in an attempt to precipitate a crisis in the Party, they called into question Lenin's principles on the organisation and ideological unity of Party ranks.

The Trotskyites were resolutely opposed and defeated by Lenin's Party and by the non-Party masses backing the cause of the revolution and socialism. This defeat was confirmed by the results of the Party meetings in 1927, with 724,000 Party members voting for the Central Committee's policies and only 4,000 voting for Trotsky's line.

This is indirectly confirmed by Trotskyist authors. Pierre Frank, for instance, writes: "This fight was neither over the personal interests of political leaders, nor between two political schools. First and foremost, it was specifically a battle between two political formations representing different social groups."¹ He is echoed by Ernest Mandel, the ideologist of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, who writes: "There can be no doubt that the question of whether it is possible to successfully complete the building of socialism in one country was a basic theoretical question in the discussion."²

Other Communist parties, too, gave their evaluation of Trotskyist activities. At its Fifth Congress in June-July 1924 the Communist International *

¹ P. Frank, *La Quatrième Internationale*, p. 20.

² E. Mandel, *De la Commune à mai 1968. Histoire du mouvement ouvrier international*, Paris, 1978, p. 89.

* *The Third Communist International*, or *Comintern*, was founded in March 1919 in Moscow. It was the successor of the First International founded by Marx and Engels, and it had also inherited the best traditions of the Second International. It helped different national contingents of the

described Trotskyism as a "petty-bourgeois" deviation posing a threat to "the unity of the Party and consequently to the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union."¹ At its Seventh Enlarged Plenary Meeting in November and December 1926 the Comintern Executive Committee stressed that the Soviet Communist Party was "carrying through its policy of socialist construction quite correctly, in the firm conviction that the Soviet Union disposes within the country of everything that is 'necessary and sufficient' for the construction of a completely socialist society. The denial of this possibility by the opposition is nothing but a denial of the prerequisites for the socialist revolution in Russia..."²

Marxist-Leninists explained the real meaning of the slogans of the Trotskyites and of their setting up of opposition factions within some Communist parties in capitalist countries. In a resolution of its Sixth Congress in 1929 the French Communist Party declared that in all capitalist countries Trotskyist groupings "have become strictly counter-revolutionary organisations which ignore the measures the Soviet Communist Party has taken against Trotsky and his followers."³ The French Commu-

working-class and communist movement to evolve the correct strategy and tactics in their struggle. After it had fulfilled this historical mission it was dissolved in 1943 during the Second World War (1939-1945).

¹ *The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents*, Vol. II, 1923-1928, selected and edited by Jane Degras, London, New York, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 142.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 330.

³ *VI^e Congrès du Parti communiste français*, Paris, 1929, p. 59.

nists urged that all Trotskyist elements should be expelled since they had set themselves the aim of inflicting damage on the international communist movement and on the Soviet Union.

The anti-Trotskyist campaign within the Communist parties was summed up in February 1928 at the Ninth Plenum of the Communist International's Executive Committee which adopted a resolution saying that "adherence to the Trotskyist opposition... is incompatible with membership of the Communist International"¹. The Sixth Comintern Congress in August-September 1928 endorsed the decisions taken by the Fifteenth Congress of the AUCP(B) * (the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks) and the Ninth Plenary Meeting of the Communist International's Executive Committee on expelling the Trotskyites from the Party and the Comintern. It also stressed that "thanks to its consistent communist policies, the All-Union Communist Party had succeeded in consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and in carrying out the construction of socialism. Unqualified support for the AUCP(B)'s correct policies from all sections of

¹ *The Communist International...*, Vol. II, p. 427.

* One of the names used between 1925 and 1952 for the revolutionary party of the Russian proletariat set up at the turn of the century by Lenin. In 1898 it was called the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party; in 1917 it was re-named the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party of Bolsheviks, the RSDLP(B), at its Seventh Congress in March 1918 it was given another name, the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks, the RCP(B). In 1925, after the formation of the USSR (in 1922), it changed its name again at the Fourteenth Congress and became known as the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks. In 1952, the Party's Nineteenth Congress gave it its present name, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

the Communist International was called upon to help the AUCP(B) in its cause of building socialism.”¹

Since then nothing has changed to justify a revision of the anti-Trotskyist decisions taken in those years. They remain valid today as an important aid in the struggle against the theoretical and tactical innovations of modern Trotskyism.

Chapter II

OLD IDEAS, NEW IMPASSES

The First Secretary of the Uruguayan Communist Party's Central Committee, Rodney Arismendi, described Trotsky as one who was fond of intricate combinations by means of which he tried to make the multidimensional revolutionary and historical experience fit the Procrustean bed of the theory of “permanent revolution”.² Trotsky's modern followers are doing exactly the same.

By extolling the anti-revolutionary and in particular the anti-socialist essence of the “permanent revolution” theory, modern Trotskyites are actually opposing not only the Soviet Union, but the whole world socialist system.

In Dostoyevsky's novel *The Demons* there is a character who invents an idea and then lives according to it. This is what the Trotskyites have been doing for several decades; they have been repeating Trotsky's tales that it is impossible to build socialism in individual countries. They are

¹ See *The Communist International* . . . , p. 871.

² R. Arismendi, *Lenin, Revolution and Latin America*, Moscow, 1975, p. 55 (in Russian).

not at all embarrassed by the fact that their ideas are at variance with reality. The greater the successes scored by the socialist countries, the more persistent the Trotskyites are in their attempts to distort and belittle what these countries have achieved.

Their rejection of real socialism is based on their old idea of "world proletarian revolution". As interpreted by Trotskyist theoreticians, this revolution is an uncertain state of "permanent confrontation" between the "world bourgeoisie" and the "world proletariat" in the "world" arena. "The world proletarian revolution is neither an aggregate of national revolutions, nor the falling away from capitalism of one country after another, nor is it a single act taking place in all countries. It is a clash between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat lasting over a lengthy historical period. Even in the USSR where the proletariat has taken power in its hands the revolution is not over. There it has only begun,"¹ say members of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. Proceeding from this position the Trotskyites draw two conclusions.

First, the working class of a country where a socialist revolution has triumphed may start building socialism, but it is doomed to creating "a deformed workers' state". The Trotskyites refuse to recognise as socialist those countries where socialism has been built. "The Soviet workers' state to us is a degenerated workers' state,"¹ writes George Foster, one of the leaders of US Trotskyites.

¹ *Vérité*, juin, 1980, No. 592, p. 106.

² *Workers' Vanguard*, January 30, 1981, No. 273, p. 5.

Second, unlike Trotsky, who believed that the Soviet Union, having emerged as "a workers' state", "became deformed" only when it failed to follow his injunction "to carry the revolution on bayonets" to other countries after it started to lay the foundations of socialism, his modern followers do not even consider the existence of "non-deformed workers' states" to be possible. "The now workers' states are established as deformed workers' states," wrote Julio Posadas.¹

In other words, from the point of view of Trotskyist ideologists, socialism is not something that exists in the present epoch, but a question for some remote future which is not a proper subject for consideration today.

Trotskyism depicts the world revolution as some kind of "boundless revolution", which can have a beginning but no end, or an end which is only possible in an infinitely remote future. In so doing Trotskyism claims the role of ideological spokesman for a specific section of the non-proletarian strata, or those who are against state monopoly capitalism but doubt if the working class has the ability to lead the working masses and carry out its world historical mission, which is not only to overthrow capitalism but also to create a new civilisation without exploitation. These strata are only happy with "the first part" of the socialist revolution when it puts an end to the domination by big business which is as much of an enemy to them as to the proletariat. However, they are deeply antipathetic to "the second part"—the

¹ J. Posadas, *L'eurocommunisme, la révolution socialiste et la construction mondiale du socialisme*, Paris, 1977, p. 27.

building of socialism—for the sake of which a socialist revolution is made.

By rejecting the Marxist-Leninist laws on mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism, Trotskyism has inevitably descended to slandering real socialism. In calling into question the significance of the collective experience in building real socialism, the Trotskyites are trying to make the working masses think that revolutionary struggle cannot succeed in individual countries and is therefore pointless.

Real socialism or "transitional society"? Denying real socialism the right to exist, modern Trotskyism persistently tries to equate *socialist* society with a *society that is transitional between capitalism and socialism*. An analysis of the socio-economic reality of the Soviet Union shows that it is "a society in a stage of transition between capitalism and socialism," writes Trotskyist "theoretician" Ernest Mandel.¹ A similar position has been taken by other Trotskyist ideologists. "The workers' state is a transitory process which combines aspects of capitalism and socialism," declare the British followers of Julio Posadas.²

To the Trotskyites, these aspects are commodity-money relations, the use of the distribution principle whereby everyone works according to his abilities and is remunerated according to his work, and the existence of two classes and of the socialist state. These aspects, says Ernest Mandel, testify to the "transitory" nature of the "workers' states" which inevitably create the prerequi-

¹ *New Left Review*, No. 108, March-April 1978, p. 34.

² *Red Flag*, February 12, 1982, No. 320, p. 2.

sites for the appearance of "deformations" in their socio-economic and political structures.¹

From these Trotskyist arguments it follows that the communist formation emerges and develops in two stages: a transition period (socialism) and communism proper.

The identification of these two periods in the emergence of the communist formation clearly goes contrary to Marxism-Leninism and to the process of development of the USSR and other socialist countries.

In drafts for his book *The State and Revolution* Lenin summed up Marx's and Engels' views on how the state would wither away. Lenin wrote:

- "Thus, we have (I) the pangs of childbirth
(II) the first phase of communist society
(III) the highest phase of communist society"²

The "pangs of childbirth"—this is the transition period from capitalism to socialism during which the former is transformed into the latter. The society of the transition period is not yet a socialist one, because it still has what Lenin called "elements, particles, fragments of *both* capitalism and socialism."³ Socialism, however, is a new stage in the development of the communist formation which, in Lenin's words, "implies work without the aid of the capitalists, socialised labour with strict accounting, control and supervision by the organised vanguard, the advanced section of the

¹ E. Mandel, *La crise 1974-1978. Les fautes (leur interprétation marxiste)*, Paris, 1978, p. 163.

² Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 33, p. 185 (in Russian).

³ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 27, p. 335.

working people; the measure of labour and remuneration for it must be fixed.”¹

Lenin also made a distinction between socialism and communism. He wrote: “...the scientific distinction between socialism and communism is clear. What is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the ‘first’, or lower, phase of communist society. Insofar as the means of production become *common* property, the word ‘communism’ is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is *not* complete communism.”² At the first stage in its development, Lenin stressed, communism still requires law and the state to regulate the distribution of labour and of products for consumption. He wrote: “‘He who does not work shall not eat’ is *already* realised; the other socialist principle, ‘An equal amount of products for an equal amount of labour’ is also *already* realised. But this *is not yet communism* [Emphasis added], and it does not yet abolish ‘bourgeois law’, which gives unequal individuals, in return for unequal (really unequal) amounts of labour, equal amounts of products...”³ Lenin drew particular attention to the need for a comprehensive use of commodity-money relations under socialism. He explained that it was impossible to “organise the state production and the state distribution of products on communist lines ...directly as ordered by the proletarian state.”⁴

The Trotskyites’ attempts to equate real socialism with the transition period clearly reveal their

¹ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 30, p. 284.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 25, pp. 475-476.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 472.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 33, p. 58.

intention to place socialism outside the communist formation and thus "expel" it from history.

However, historical experience shows that it is impossible to "leap" over socialism or to pass it by as a stage in the development of communism. The socialist stage is indispensable because it creates the prerequisites enabling society to go over to a new, higher phase. Socialism must go through a number of stages before it can develop on its own foundations, that is, before it reaches a level of economic, socio-political and spiritual maturity at which the necessary conditions are created for its gradual transition to communism.

The process of creation and consolidation of the foundations of socialism is inevitably marked by different national features in different countries. However, these differences do not diminish, but, on the contrary, accentuate the significance of the general regularities that underlie the building of a real socialist society and its activities.

Contrary to Trotskyist allegations, real socialism is not some amorphous "transitional society". It has its own specific features which distinguish it from the other stages in the complex process in which the communist formation finally emerges. By rejecting real socialism as a specific stage in the making of this formation, the Trotskyites show a desire to artificially slow down the natural course of history. This position betrays a historical pessimism, for it places the prospects of struggle within a highly complex and long-drawn-out transition period. Intentionally or not, they and other similar critics of real socialism objectively distract the masses from the effort to achieve revolutionary transformation by orienting them towards "im-

proved" capitalism. It is quite obvious that this distraction only plays into the hands of capitalism.

Strategy of provocations. Being unable to propose a constructive programme of their own for the struggle for socialism, Trotskyites today are actively hindering the process of revolutionary transformation of society. What is more, they are spreading cock-and-bull stories about the revolutions that have already been carried out. And the more successful a country, the greater its confidence in laying the foundations of socialism, the more wide-ranging their attacks against it.

This is how, for instance, they reacted to the victory of the revolution in Cuba. Leaders of the Fourth International insisted that nothing really "important" had happened in Cuba and that it remained a capitalist state. As the economic and political foundations of state power in Cuba became stronger, they stepped up their attacks against it. They were particularly critical with regard to the establishment of the Communist Party in Cuba and the promulgation of the country's new constitution. The leaders of the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency of the Fourth International described these two developments as a "legislative expression of the degeneration" of the Cuban revolution, as its "final deformation". According to them, Cuba could only be "saved" by a "future revolution in Latin America and the United States" which would "put Cuba on a correct path".¹

And what is this correct path? In their view, Cuba should assume the role of an exporter of rev-

¹ See *Sous le drapeau du socialisme*, 1977, juillet, août, No. 72, p. 4.

olution to other Latin American countries. Posadas, for example, believes that Cuba ought "to concentrate its efforts on stimulating revolution in Latin America."¹

Such appeals vividly illustrate how something which is anti-socialist is camouflaged with "leftist" phrases. Assigning Cuba the role of "an exporter of revolutions", the Trotskyites are trying to push it onto the road of adventures and thus create obstacles in the struggle for socialism in the Americas. This is exactly what the imperialist rulers of the United States are trying to achieve, except that they use different methods and arguments.

No less hypocritical is the Trotskyites' attitude towards Southeast Asian countries, especially Vietnam. While the war against US imperialism was being fought in the region, they posed as resolute supporters of "the fight to the end". But as soon as the Vietnamese people emerged victorious and got down to building socialism, they reversed their position. Members of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers' Party of the United States condemned Vietnam's desire to embark on peaceful construction after 35 years of successive wars against Japanese, French and US imperialists. The party's leader, Gus Horowitz, described Vietnam's plans for peaceful construction as "renunciation of revolution", as an attempt by Vietnam to set up "stable relations" with world imperialism. He accused the Vietnamese government and party leadership of becoming "one of the privileged bureaucracies that exist in the workers' movement, whether on a party, trade-union or government

¹ *Lutte ouvrière*, 3.IX. 1982, No. 346, p. 5.

level". He declares that whereas the Vietnamese people want a "permanent revolution", the government in Hanoi is doing all it can to preserve the status quo.¹

It is entirely in a spirit of anti-Vietnamese propaganda that leaders of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International view the fraternal assistance rendered by the people of Vietnam to the people of Kampuchea who have overthrown the Pol Pot regime. The Trotskyites regard this help as being motivated by "a desire on the part of the Vietnamese bureaucracy to establish its control in the Mekong Delta."²

Again, the talk about "bureaucratisation" of the countries where proletarian revolutions have won has unmistakable political implications. The Trotskyites have actually taken the side of those who oppose the independent course of building socialism chosen by the peoples of Southeast Asia and who are obviously interested in thwarting the efforts to normalise the situation in that part of the world. Assessing the Trotskyist position on this issue, the US Communists' newspaper *Daily World* notes: "The central focus of Trotskyism is, in fact, to undermine support for Vietnam in the United States."³

The Trotskyites do not merely deny the significance of the socialist transformations carried out in countries which have freed themselves from capitalism, but also urge active opposition to them. Trotsky had called for a "political revolution" in

¹ See *Daily World*, March 17, 1979, p. 9.

² *Informations ouvrières*, 1979, No. 883.

³ *Daily World*, March 17, 1979, p. 9.

the Soviet Union and his modern followers would like to see such a revolution implemented in all socialist countries. Unlike Trotsky, however, who believed that this "political revolution" could only be an armed one, today's Trotskyites speak about a diversity of ways in which it can be brought about, including "peaceful" ones. "Although Trotsky set forth the main principles for a political revolution," wrote J. Posadas, "he could not have envisaged all those forms in which it may be carried out. We live in a different period of history. In Trotsky's epoch the Soviet Union stood alone. It is clear that the situation has changed today."¹ Posadas' conclusion is that "political revolutions" must be made to occur in all the "workers' states".²

A resolution of the Sixth Conference of the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency of the Fourth International reads: "Rejecting the experience of the workers' states, we oppose the transfer of power to different institutions like the state, the parties and the trade unions. . ."³

This anarchistic Trotskyist call for "universal civil disobedience" under socialism gives encouragement to anti-socialist forces of every shade and description, some of them operating in the very countries that are building socialism.

The Fourth International supports actions carried out by subversive elements in these countries,

¹ J. Posadas, *Les enseignements de la Pologne pour le progrès socialiste de l'humanité*. 1970-1981, Paris, 1982, p. 123.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³ *Sous le drapeau du socialisme*, 1978, janv., févr., mars, No. 73, p. 34.

urging them to resort to any means and methods including armed terrorism in order to destabilise the internal political situation and to undermine the foundations of the political and social system. In one of its resolutions the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency says: "It is time for us to make it clear that in the Eastern regimes the opposition forces could resort to terrorism."¹

This stand taken by the Trotskyites is incontrovertible evidence that their criticism of real socialism is of a counter-revolutionary character and is aimed at the restoration of capitalism. This has been confirmed by the attitude of international Trotskyism towards the events in Poland in the years 1980-1981.

The Fourth International unreservedly sided with the anti-socialist forces, expressing its complete solidarity with the leaders of KSS-KOR and other counter-revolutionary groupings. On the other hand, the programmatic aims of the Trotskyist "political revolution" are in many ways echoed by KSS-KOR members demanding that the Polish United Workers' Party give up its leading role in society, that government agencies in charge of management of the national economy be replaced by "workers' control" and that the Solidarity trade union become the organisational centre for the counter-revolutionaries.

This explains the ease with which the leaders of the Fourth International have succeeded in establishing contacts with the anti-socialist elements in Poland, including groupings of an openly pro-Trotskyist orientation. An international symposium

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

sium held by the Fourth International in Paris in December 1980 was attended by a delegate representing the Polish branch. In his address this delegate spoke of his colleagues' intention "to fight for the establishment of a Polish Socialist Workers' Party as a vanguard of the political revolution". The Polish Trotskyites were advised to set up "initiative groups" within Solidarity as the nucleus for a future Trotskyist party. "Trotskyism... will show the way forward for the Polish masses,"¹ declared the London-based International Committee. This "way forward" consists in creating tension in the country, stirring up sentiments of hopelessness and defeatism, and provoking all sorts of disturbances and clashes with the authorities. To this end the Trotskyites have been inciting the Polish counter-revolutionaries to take "decisive action". "You should have only one answer: you should stage strikes and refuse to cooperate," said the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International in an appeal to the Solidarity leaders.

Today, as the situation in Poland is returning to normal, the Fourth International continues its line of confrontation. "More strikes, more demonstrations and wider distribution of leaflets are necessary,"² urges the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. The International Committee in London conducts its propaganda under the slogan "Victory for the political revolution in Poland!"

Trotskyist publications are full of inventions concerning Poland's allied relations with the other

¹ *Fourth International*, No. 1, January 1982, p. 7.

² *Informations ouvrières*, 21-28. VIII. 1982, No. 1068, p. 8.

socialist community countries. They give a distorted picture of the help which these countries are giving fraternal Poland and misrepresent the support they have been giving the Polish authorities in their efforts to get the country out of the crisis.

In the light of these facts it becomes clear why such Trotskyist actions are supported by imperialist reactionaries. Significantly, the West German Ministry of Internal Affairs published a report in 1972 entitled *The Essence and Importance of the Trotskyist Fourth International*, in which it stressed that this support was highly valuable because the Fourth International "devoted much attention to analysing the possibilities of gaining ground in East European countries where the Communists are in power."¹ That is why the Trotskyites are given broad opportunities for conducting open propaganda in the West.

Chapter III

THE HARM DONE BY TROTSKYISM TO THE NATIONAL-LIBERATION STRUGGLE

Among the most radical "amendments" to the theory of "permanent revolution" introduced by modern Trotskyism is the idea that "colonial revolutions" in countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America constitute the leading factor in world revolution.

This idea, said to represent a further "development" of Trotsky's theory, in fact departs from

¹ See W. Gerns, R. Steigerwald, G. Weiss, *Opportunismus heute*, Verlag Marxistische Blätter, Frankfurt/Main, 1974, p. 185.

the Trotskyist canons, for Trotsky called for a world social revolution that was "Europe-centred", maintaining that such a revolution was only possible in advanced countries. Today, the pendulum of the Trotskyist strategy has swung towards the backward countries. What has caused this turn about?

Tiersmondism, Trotskyist style. It will be recalled that after the Second World War the national-liberation movement swept vast areas of what used to be the colonial and dependent world. The defeat of the German Nazis and the Japanese militarists had an immense influence on the anti-imperialist struggle by whole nations and continents. The successes in this struggle were largely facilitated by the victorious socialist revolutions and by the construction of socialism in a number of countries in Europe, Asia and in Cuba, and by the growing working-class movement in the capitalist countries. Tens of millions of people joined this struggle, including representatives of the most diverse social strata, such as peasants, members of the petty bourgeoisie, the working class and the democratic intelligentsia.

In this changed international situation imperialism could no longer preserve the colonial system, which collapsed under the impact of national-liberation revolutions. In the post-war years, nearly 100 new sovereign states have emerged in former colonies and semi-colonies.

This marked a radical turning point in the lives of peoples who make up two-thirds of the world population. Needless to say, this is of tremendous historical significance.

These major developments inevitably affected the

alignment of class forces in the world arena, changing the character of the struggle between the two opposing socio-economic systems—world capitalism and world socialism. This could not but be reflected in diverse political doctrines.

Trotskyism could not possibly ignore these developments. As it had been repeatedly done by Trotsky in the past, its leaders hastened to take advantage of the situation emerging in the world so as not to be left out of the mainstream of the progressive movement. At the same time they tried to spread Trotskyist ideas as widely as possible among those taking part in the anti-imperialist movement and thus consolidate their own positions. This circumstance prompted them to revise their attitude to the Third World. This was reflected first of all in their support for the theory of *tiersmondism* (from the French words *tiers monde*—third world), which in the 1960s and 1970s was adopted by many left-wing radical bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologists in the developing countries.

Whereas formerly they considered the peasantry to be reactionary, the Trotskyites now declared it the most revolutionary force of the modern world.

“In Latin America, Asia and Africa peasants, even the most backward ones, most readily accept the idea of cooperative forms of production. Even the peasants in Bolivia and Peru, who are under the strong influence of ancient Inca tribal and patriarchal traditions, are favourably disposed towards socialist cooperation,” wrote Julio Posadas.¹

¹ *Lutte communiste*, 19.1.73, No. 275, p. 3.

He was echoed by Pierre Frank who wrote: "In the growing avalanche of the guerrilla movement, the peasantry undoubtedly plays the most radical and the most decisive role in the colonial revolution, a role which could not have been envisaged by Marxist theory. This position taken by the peasantry in the developing countries serves as graphic evidence that its social function has changed..."¹

These utterances by Trotskyist ideologists clearly reflected a distinctive pattern of behaviour on the part of the Trotskyites in the zone of the national-liberation movement. They were playing a typical game whose purpose was to capitalise on the growing political activity among the peasant masses in countries waging a struggle to cast off the imperialist yoke, and it was there that the Trotskyites had been sending their emissaries. During the war of liberation and in the first years of independence in Algeria, Michel Pablo, the leader of the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency of the Fourth International, was in that country where he even managed to become a political adviser to President Ben Bella's government.

Meanwhile the Trotskyites have been pointing to the upsurge in the national-liberation movement as a justification for their defeatist stand as regards the revolutionary struggle waged by the working class in developed capitalist countries. They have been among the first to say that the Third World will, like Prometheus, give mankind the fire of freedom, and that the force which is to free Western civilisation from capitalist oppression and ex-

¹ P. Frank, *La Quatrième Internationale*, p. 142.

ploitation will come from Asia, Africa and Latin America. "The world revolution is developing from the periphery towards the centre," according to supporters of the Revolutionary Marxist Tendency of the Fourth International.¹

The Trotskyites say that although the "colonial revolution" is unable to "blow up" the capitalist countries because the Third World is now dependent on world imperialism indirectly, and not directly as before, it can nevertheless impart a fresh impetus to "the political revolutions" in the "workers' states", i.e., processes which determined the development of the socialist countries.

This line of reasoning which arbitrarily puts the continents swept by the struggle for national liberation in the focus of the world revolutionary process in reality sets this movement *in opposition* to its natural allies in the struggle against imperialism, namely, the world socialist system and the international working-class movement. This opposition can, and often does, lead to the *isolation* of the national-liberation movement from the other revolutionary currents of the modern world. The extreme left-wing sectarian line of *proletariat without peasantry* put forward by Trotsky is being replaced with a no less sectarian line of *peasantry without the international working class*.

As we see, the Trotskyist interpretation of *tiers-mondism* emphasises isolation and sets one revolutionary current against another. The Trotskyites are not only unwilling but also afraid to admit that there exists today an objective foundation for close unity between all the revolutionary forces,

¹ *Sous le drapeau du socialisme*, 1978, No. 73, p. 22.

that these have a common enemy—imperialism, and that the activities of each of these forces objectively promote the success of all the others.

Coming out against unity, Trotskyism plays into the hands of those who are interested in isolating and weakening the national-liberation movement and, consequently, in weakening the entire front of the anti-imperialist struggle.

ABC of adventurism. The Trotskyist theory of *tiersmondism* is in effect directed against the Third World countries. Feeling confused before the complex and contradictory developments in Third World countries after many of them have gained political independence, the Trotskyites have been unable to answer questions posed by the qualitatively new stage the liberation struggle has entered. They are either unwilling or unable to understand the main feature of the present stage: as the process of *political liberation* of the colonial and dependent countries is drawing to a close, another task—the achievement of *economic independence* and implementation of profound social transformations—becomes increasingly urgent.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Trotskyist theoretical propositions are inadequate and are not concerned with specific problems of the internal development of individual countries or peoples. The Trotskyites in fact openly advertise their neglect of specific national traits of individual countries. "The worldwide conditions of struggle alone determine the character of any revolutionary action, even if it does not depend on these conditions directly," says Julio Posadas.¹ This view

¹ J. Posadas, *Le triomphe de Mitterrand et la fonction du prolétaire*, Paris, 1981, p. 37.

of the Latin American Trotskyite is shared by the other Fourth International leaders. "The worldwide struggle between classes in the imperialist epoch is the same everywhere, just as the proletarian revolution is the same everywhere," writes Stéphane Just, a theoretician of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.¹

Actually, however, the internal conditions, on which the ripening of subjective and objective prerequisites for revolution and for the struggle for socialism depends, differ widely in different countries, particularly in the developing world. As the 26th CPSU Congress pointed out: "These countries are very different. After liberation, some of them have been following the revolutionary-democratic path. In others capitalist relations have taken root. Some of them are following a truly independent policy, while others are today taking their lead from imperialist policy. In a nutshell, the picture is a fairly motley one."²

In refusing to see this difference, the Trotskyites are following in the footsteps of Trotsky's supporters of the pre-war years. Their starting point is still a rejection of the idea that the development of the national-liberation revolution consists of several stages, a renunciation of the need for anti-feudal, anti-imperialist and democratic transformations in the course of revolutionary struggle, transformations which under favourable conditions can open up possibilities for a socialist orientation in the newly free countries. Trotskyism thus denies

¹ *Vérité*, 1980, juin, No. 592, p. 52.

² *XXVI Congress of the CPSU. Documents and Resolutions*, Moscow, 1981, p. 16.

that today's national-liberation revolutions are democratic revolutions of a new type.

"A revolution never occurs by stages,"¹ writes Pierre Fougeyrollas, an ideologist of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Proceeding from these assumptions, Trotskyites today are making considerable efforts to distort the essence of progressive movements in newly free countries. One of their prime targets is the role played by revolutionary democrats and by the Communist and workers' parties that take into account the real alignment of forces both inside and outside their countries. The Trotskyites criticise the appeals by the revolutionary wing of the national-liberation movement for unity of the working masses and the national patriotic forces in their struggle for profound democratic transformations in the economy, politics and social relations, seeing in these appeals a desire to "restrict" revolutions within the boundaries of capitalism and direct the masses' actions along a path required by the "bourgeois order".

The disastrous consequences of the use of such tactics by Trotskyist groupings in Chile are well known. When the People's Unity government was set up, these groupings launched a noisy campaign of slander against it. In saying that the aim of the Chilean government was "to try to freeze the revolutionary process in Chile,"² the Trotskyites were actually playing the same destructive role as the Rightist counter-revolutionary elements that

¹ P. Fougeyrollas, *La révolution prolétarienne et les impasses petites-bourgeoises*, Paris, 1976, p. 290.

² M. Raptis, *Quel socialisme au Chile?* Paris, 1973, p. 19.

were openly hostile to President Salvador Allende.

Even today Trotskyites continue to slander the People's Unity government, seeking to discredit the very principles of rallying the working people on a broad anti-imperialist platform. In their view, it was the People's Unity government, and not the Chilean reactionaries backed by US imperialists, that led "to the defeat of the masses and opened the road to Pinochet's fascist dictatorship."¹

Thus, Trotskyism is hindering the revolutionary and democratic forces in Chile in their attempts to analyse the three-year experience of the People's Unity government and draw the proper conclusions in devising the strategy and tactics of struggle to overthrow the Pinochet dictatorship and restore the democratic rights and freedoms of the working people.

The Trotskyites behave in the same way in other countries and regions. While a determined struggle was being waged against the Somoza dictatorship under the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front in Nicaragua (FSLN), they supported the revolution, at least in words. But as soon as the Nicaraguan people began their peaceful work, they immediately condemned the revolution.

The Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International criticised the National Revival Government for carrying out measures to rehabilitate the economy, virtually ruined under the Somoza regime, and for implementing radical social reforms which took into account the interests of all social strata including the middle and petty

¹ *Vérité*, 1979, décembre, No. 589, p. 28.

bourgeoisie. The Trotskyites described the FSLN's activities as an attempt "to limit the revolutionary struggle to carrying out democratic tasks and to overthrowing the dictatorship".¹ They accuse the Nicaraguan government of wanting "to curb the process of the peasants taking over land and to suppress the masses' desire to set up a government of their own, without representatives of the bourgeoisie."²

The Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, for instance, declares that "although the FSLN commands the respect of the working people, its activities do not meet the needs of the revolutionary struggle, and it restrains the initiative of the masses."³

The Trotskyites go beyond verbal attacks and resort to direct actions. Supporting Somoza's followers, they have embarked on the path of staging acts of provocation, including armed ones, against the revolutionary government. They support strikes at nationalised enterprises, describing these strikes as "revolutionary". They urge the establishment of political organisations that would fight against "the subordination of the masses to the government's policies". They counter the FSLN's course of national revival with the call for the setting up of a "Federation of Socialist States of Central America",⁴ that is, with the same old adventuristic line of export of revolution.

All this has compelled the FSLN to ban Trotskyist activities.

¹ *Vérité*, 1979, décembre, No. 589, p. 49.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Informations ouvrières*, 24-31. I. 1981, No. 984, p. 10.

⁴ *Correspondencia internacional*, 1980, abril, No. 2, p. 65.

Such activities are particularly dangerous at a time when US imperialists are doing all they can to reduce to nought the revolutionary gains of the Nicaraguan people. They are staging armed provocations against Nicaragua with the help of supporters of the former dictator Somoza and reactionary Latin American regimes. In an attempt to prevent unity among the national patriotic forces, the Trotskyites are calling for the immediate expropriation of the property of the bourgeoisie, including that of the middle and petty bourgeoisie, most of whose members support the FSLN's foreign-policy course. "In Nicaragua," a declaration of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International says, "the government can only maintain a successful confrontation with imperialism by expropriating the bourgeoisie. Any other solution will open the door to counter-revolution and lead to the downfall of the Sandinista government."¹

This is the same adventuristic tactics of "all or nothing at all" which, in the words of Luigi Longo, a prominent leader of the world communist movement, "will more often than not turn into 'all' in word only and 'nothing at all' when it comes to practical action."² Thus, the Trotskyites' "ultra-revolutionism" turns into preaching of sectarianism, which can only lead the participants in national-liberation revolutions to self-isolation; this can win the revolutions many enemies, but few friends. The noisy appeals for a "colonial rev-

¹ *Informations ouvrières*, 1-8. IV. 1983, No. 1100, p. 11.

² L. Longo, C. Salinari, *Between Reaction and Revolution. Recollections and Thoughts of the First Years of the Italian Communist Party*, Moscow, 1974, p. 50 (in Russian).

olution" conceal the Trotskyites' unwillingness to rouse the masses to revolutionary struggle, to the fight for socialist ideals. What is more, these appeals camouflage a desire to create additional difficulties and obstacles for those countries and peoples that have started to implement constructive rather than destructive tasks of national-liberation revolutions.

Pseudo-socialist extremism vs. socialist orientation. Trotskyist negativism towards the national-liberation struggle is particularly noticeable when it comes to countries with a socialist orientation. Here Trotskyism throws off all restraint and can no longer conceal its hostility towards these countries. While the Trotskyites are quite ready to hold forth on the immediate "introduction of socialism" in countries where conditions for it do not yet exist, they are the first to sow the seeds of distrust towards those who boldly and purposefully set out to build socialism.

This obstructionist course is based on the Trotskyist belief that no revolutionary-democratic government is capable of conducting a policy that is independent of imperialism, a policy aimed at creating a genuinely national economy, promoting the growth of the working class and strengthening its own role in the life of society, consolidating the positions of scientific socialism, and rearing a national intelligentsia that would serve the people. The Trotskyites make the most of the fact that because of the small numerical strength of the working class the leadership in many socialist-oriented countries is assumed by revolutionary democrats, progressive-minded people from among the petty-bourgeois and non-proletarian strata. "In

countries where the national petty bourgeoisie takes over power, it becomes a prisoner of the bourgeois state machinery," writes Henri Valin, a leader of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. This brings him to the following conclusion: "The idea of 'a state of national democracy' reflects the illusion that it is possible gradually to transform a bourgeois state into a workers' state through a consistent, step-by-step mobilisation of progressive forces within the framework of coalitions or national fronts. . ."¹

This approach shows that Trotskyism is hostile to all the new elements derived from the collective experience of building a socialist system of government. Trotskyism is also opposed to the spread and consolidation of the ideas of scientific socialism in the developing world. It describes as "an ideology of slogans" the basic goals of the governments in the countries that look to Marxism-Leninism for guidance in following a non-capitalist road of development. What the Trotskyites are saying, then, is that the goals these countries have set themselves cannot be accomplished.²

It was Lenin who evolved the teaching on the revolutionary-democratic government as a stage in the transition to socialist transformation of society. In his article *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It* (1917) he pointed out that the struggle for thoroughgoing reforms in conditions of a developing democratic revolution could lead to the establishment of "a revolutionary-democratic

¹ See e.g., *Quatrième Internationale*, 1968, avril, No. 33, pp. 46, 47.

² *Sous le drapeau du socialisme*, 1971, juillet, No. 56, p. 23.

state".¹ In this state, major socio-economic and political reforms will be carried out, genuine democracy established and "revolutionary-democratic measures" taken which will ensure efficient control over the rich.² It "will *still not* be socialism, but it *will no longer* be capitalism. It will be a tremendous *step towards socialism*,"³ he wrote. Lenin's ideas about the democratic dictatorship of a revolutionary people and a revolutionary-democratic state were put into practice with the establishment of people's states in Bukhara and Khorezm in 1920, and in Mongolia and Tuva in 1921. These ideas were further developed and carried out in practice when people's democratic governments were set up in a number of European and Asian countries during and immediately after the Second World War, which have subsequently developed into socialist ones. In Cuba a revolutionary-democratic state (1959-1960) preceded a socialist state. Today revolutionary-democratic states, with some variations, exist in countries of socialist orientation whose number is approaching 20.

To be sure, these states are developing unevenly and in complicated international and domestic conditions. However, the very fact that this development takes place, despite all difficulties and obstacles, is evidence that the socialist orientation has a future. Experience has shown that this orientation is not something superficial or accidental, that it emerges in the midst of a national-liberation movement, that it is brought about by the logic of

¹ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 25, p. 340.

² *Ibid.*, p. 358.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

its evolution, and that it appears again and again despite all difficulties and setbacks.

This is borne out by the steady growth of the number of socialist-oriented countries, many of which have existed for as long as 15 or 20 years and have remained politically and economically stable often in spite of unfavourable domestic and international conditions. Algeria, for instance, has shown a constructive, progressive way, one different from that taken by some other oil-producing states, of using its foreign exchange earnings from the sale of oil, namely, for solving urgent social and economic problems at home instead of enriching a privileged group of "oil sheikhs".

In the socialist-oriented countries the state plays a progressive role as an active factor in national consolidation.

The vitality of the revolutionary-democratic tendencies makes itself felt even in those countries where the revolutionary-democratic regimes have been overthrown in coups. Some of the results of the progressive changes introduced by these regimes and the socio-political progress achieved under them have proved durable despite the attempts of the reactionaries to abolish them.

The basic common features and the main trends of development of the socialist-oriented countries have now revealed themselves with greater clarity. These are: the gradual ousting of imperialist monopolies and the local big bourgeoisie and feudal groups from their positions, and restriction of the scope of operations by foreign capital; control by the people's state of key sectors of the country's economy, transition to planned development of the productive forces, and encouragement of the coop-

erative movement in the countryside; the increased role of the working masses in social life, and the gradual strengthening of the state apparatus by employing national personnel dedicated to the cause of the people; and the conduct of an anti-imperialist foreign policy. In socialist-oriented countries the revolutionary parties, which express the interests of the working masses, are gaining strength.

Decisions on the further course of development in newly free countries are obviously made in the midst of sharp clashes between classes. In these countries there are still trends which hamper social progress, and pro-capitalist elements are still influential. In socialist-oriented countries local reactionary forces are fiercely resisting the socio-economic measures taken by the government. These forces have the active political, financial and often also military backing of imperialism.

Therefore, successful development along a socialist-oriented path depends first and foremost on whether the forces of democracy and progress will be able, upon coming to power, to further develop the struggle for economic freedom and complete the national-liberation revolution. There can be no doubt that in this respect the revolutionary-democratic government would need to be firm and be able to give a timely and resolute rebuff to assaults by internal and external reactionary forces.

Experience shows that in newly independent countries the government can repulse subversive actions by imperialism and its allies and achieve social progress if it takes a revolutionary course, mobilises the masses for the struggle against reac-

tion and unites around it all forces dedicated to the cause of democracy and socialism.

In directing their attack against this unity the Trotskyites show yet again their confusion over questions of the relationship between democratic and socialist tasks and of the motive forces of revolution. They are opposed to any union between patriotic, democratic and revolutionary forces, without which it is impossible to eliminate imperialist oppression and destroy the feudal and oligarchic foundations of society. The Trotskyist line can only serve the interests of reaction, however "left-wing" may be the phrases with which Trotskyites camouflage their policies. That is why Huberto Alvarado, a prominent leader of the Latin American revolutionary liberation movement, described the political role played by modern Trotskyism as adventuristic, provocative and divisive, and the Trotskyites as agents of imperialism.

Chapter IV

IN SEARCH OF IDEOLOGICAL "RENOVATION"

In their famous *Diary* the Goncourt brothers wrote about a literary critic. "Do you know how I've managed to stay on the scene for twenty years?" he asked before explaining his method. "I changed my views every two weeks. If I always said one and the same thing, people would know what to expect from me without reading."¹

¹ Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *The Diary. Notes on Literary Life. Selected Passages in Two Volumes*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1964, p. 88 (in Russian).

This opportunist comes to mind when one hears about the 'Trotskyites' activities in industrial capitalist states. If they did not change their views and tactics like our "critic", no one would pay any attention to them. They have mastered the art of political adaptation, or to put it more simply, they are politically unprincipled. How else can their constant lapses into extremes and their sudden twists and turns be explained? The things they condemned in the harshest terms only yesterday are passed off on the next day as their own discovery and their "latest contribution" to the struggle against capitalism.

That is why no one can say for sure whether each "new" Trotskyist "faith" means a renunciation of their previous views.

"Flexibility" for the sake of self-preservation. In the 1970s and 1980s the Trotskyites in industrial capitalist countries have been ostentatiously renouncing the policy of "unbridled activism" which they followed in the years 1968-1969. This policy was reflected in the slogan "Everything is possible!" Disregarding the real situation Trotskyist leaders in those years declared: "Workers' power is in the streets", and called for "insurgent strikes" and the immediate overthrow of capitalism.

As is known, the tactics of "aggressive actions" found no response among the overwhelming majority of the working masses. Even those who had fallen under the influence of left-wing adventurists began to withdraw from the extreme left-wing movement when they realised that it had no future. It was then that the Trotskyites hastened to

“disassociate themselves” from these tactics by condemning them as “ultra-left and sectarian”.

Today the Trotskyites no longer attempt to capitalise on the sentiments of bourgeois adventurism, as they did in the 1960s. Instead, they take advantage of the natural feeling of dissatisfaction among many social strata in modern capitalist society. The Trotskyist leaders have decided that it would be “in the interests of the cause” for them to publicly denounce the actions of left extremists, such as those that took place in France in May 1968. In a burst of polemic fervour, a French group, calling itself “Workers’ Struggle”, even declared that the left extremists’ actions at that time were largely provoked by the government which had been looking for a pretext for unleashing repressive measures against the working people.¹

Nevertheless, the Trotskyites cannot deny the fact that one reason for the massive withdrawal of intellectuals, students and young people in general from the extreme left movement following the failures in May 1968 was its lack of a constructive programme of action. Commenting on the events of May 1968 Pierre Frank wrote that “the militants [i.e., left extremists] who made up the revolutionary minority were handicapped by a considerable gap in their political arsenal—the lack of a transitional programme.”²

This circumstance largely accounted for the fact that the Fourth International and its national

¹ See *Lutte ouvrière*, 7-13. VII. 1970, p. 14.

² *International Socialist Review*, September-October, 1968, p. 31.

"branches" have since adopted numerous programmes and statements.

What are they?

New words, old deeds. Some 10 to 15 years ago the Trotskyites loudly condemned the movement for the anti-monopolist transformation of capitalist society, describing this movement as "renunciation" of revolutionary struggle and "integration" into the capitalist system.¹ If one were to listen to the same Trotskyist leaders today one might think that there is no more determined fighter for such a transformation as the Fourth International.

However, a closer look at what is hidden behind the Trotskyist appeals will show that the Trotskyites are least of all concerned with improving the workers' living standards or working conditions. The opportunist character of their "declarations" is apparent from their statement that it is impossible to change the masses' lot for the better without a "forcible overthrow of capitalism".

It is quite obvious that when Trotskyites speak in favour of general democratic transformations they are motivated by considerations of expediency. As usual they are trying to win over the working people, particularly those who are less experienced politically.

To this end the Trotskyites have even devised a special "strategy of transitional demands" based on Trotsky's notorious "Transitional Programme" which for a long time served as the ideological guide for the Fourth International in its activities. This strategy makes one think of a suitcase with

¹ *Quatrième Internationale*, 1969, No. 40, p. 8.

a false bottom: what is unimportant for the Trotskyites is in full view, while the essence of their real intentions is concealed.

This strategy contains appeals to fight for wage rises, for a shorter working week without loss of pay, for the workers' right to take part in the management of enterprises, and so on. However, these demands are not central to the "strategy". The demands that lie at the heart of it are those which, according to the Trotskyites, cannot be "integrated into the capitalist system". They include the immediate establishment of complete control by workers over the capitalist economy, and administrative control over the capitalist state; dissolution of police and the army and so on.¹ Belgian Trotskyites, for example, demand that "all enterprises that have been closed down or are threatened with closure be expropriated and be placed under workers' control so that they could serve the population."²

At the moment these demands are obviously impracticable. This means that the Trotskyist strategy *with its built-in unattainable goals*, will inevitably confuse the masses. In other words, it can demoralise them and eventually gives rise to pessimism and doubts as to the purpose of any mass struggle.

The harm which such a strategy can inflict on the anti-monopolist movement can best be illustrated by the stand taken by the Trotskyites in France during the debate between left-wing parties

¹ See D. Bensaid, *Portugal: la révolution en marche*, Paris, 1975, pp. 290-292.

² *Manifeste électoral*, 10 octobre, 1982, p. 8.

over the implementation of the joint programme of the Union of the Left which functioned in France between 1972 and 1977.

During the debate the Trotskyites made groundless attacks against the French Communist Party. They maintained that the Party's struggle for the carrying into effect of the programme of the Union of the Left and for a heightening of the anti-monopolist tendency of this programme was of no importance for the working class. Does it make any difference how many factories are nationalised, as many as is proposed by the Communist Party or only one-third of this number as proposed by the Socialists, asked Alain Krivine, leader of the Communist Revolutionary League. And even if the Socialists would support the Communists, the number of factories involved would be only 0.07 per cent of all enterprises, with a total workforce of only 120,000. This, he maintained, will not affect the alignment of class forces in the country, much less change the workers' position. Crisis has been and will remain their lot.¹ According to the Trotskyites, the thing to do is not to gain "partial concessions" from the capitalists, but to give a "resolute rebuff to their plans."²

By reducing the problem to arithmetic, the Trotskyites not only oversimplify it, but also distort its very essence. The point is not only how many factories will be nationalised, even though this is also important. The matter is one of principle: to encroach on private property, to put economic and, consequently, political restrictions on

¹ *Politique hebdo*, 3-9.X. 1977, No. 283, pp. 14-15.

² *Rouge*, 15.III.1977.

the scope of operations of all-powerful Big Business is to strike at the very foundations of the capitalist system.

The working class is in effect invading the economic and political domains traditionally under the exclusive control of the bourgeoisie. It is demanding nationalisation of key sectors of the economy as well as the major banks; democratic implementation of a financial reform; the establishment of workers' and democratic control at all levels—from individual industrial enterprises to the country as a whole; regearing of the industry for solving the acute problems of unemployment and inflation; and guarantee of the rights and freedoms of working people.

In dismissing these demands as "secondary" and "non-essential", Trotskyism is in fact *curtailing the anti-monopolist struggle*. While it does all it can to pass itself off as the "resolute" champion of the working people's interests, it actually becomes their opponent when it comes to supporting specific measures to improve the life of the masses.

Here it is pertinent to recall the following words from the article *Anarchism and Socialism* by G. V. Plekhanov: * "Whenever the proletariat makes an attempt to somewhat ameliorate its eco-

* G. V. Plekhanov (1856-1918)—an outstanding leader of the Russian and international working-class movement. A major philosopher and essayist, he was the first champion of Marxism in Russia. In 1883 in Geneva he set up the first Russian Marxist organisation, the Emancipation of Labour Group. Together with Lenin he drafted the first Party programme. After the Second RSDLP Congress in 1903 he took a conciliatory stand towards opportunism and joined the Mensheviks.

conomic position, 'large-hearted people', vowing they love the proletariat most tenderly, rush in from all points of the compass, and depending on their halting syllogisms, put spokes into the wheel of the movement, do their utmost to prove that the movement is useless." ¹

The Trotskyites have no faith in the strength of the working people or in the ability of the revolutionary movement to force the monopoly bourgeoisie to accept democratic transformations. They would no doubt be delighted if socialism should triumph worldwide at once and without any preparations. Their revolutionary talk in fact conceals their complete helplessness in the face of specific revolutionary tasks. The Trotskyites have borrowed the tactics of "left-wing" doctrinaires of the 1920s which, in Lenin's words, amounted to "waiting for 'great days' along with an inability to muster the forces which create great events". ²

To the left of common sense. Extreme left theories of the past are also reflected in the "selective" stand taken by today's Trotskyites on the *forms and methods* of the workers' class struggle. This applies above all to their rejection of the possible use of institutes of bourgeois democracy such as parliament in the anti-monopolist struggle. Here the line of reasoning of the Trotskyites is not particularly new; nor does it lead to any new conclusions.

In their view, the function of a bourgeois parliament is to arbitrate between the various sections of the bourgeoisie, with the role of the arbit-

¹ George Plekhanov, *Anarchism and Socialism*, Chicago, 1912, p. 134.

² Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 16, p. 349.

rater being played by finance capital which has ultimate control over the interests of the entire bourgeoisie. As to the demands of working people, at best what parliament can do is to register those of the demands whose acceptance the working people have wrested for themselves by extra-parliamentary means. The Trotskyites, therefore, believe that participation in parliamentary activity is "unnecessary" and even "harmful", as it leads working people to think that their struggle could be conducted within the confines of bourgeois democracy. The Trotskyites thus conclude it is necessary to abolish bourgeois parliament as soon as possible. Members of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International declare, for instance, that this is "one way of mobilising the working class for the struggle to assert its own class interests and to establish its own government and its own workers' democracy".¹

This parliamentary nihilism was most severely criticised by Lenin. He attached great importance to the parliamentary activities of Communists, and only rejected the bourgeois interpretation of parliamentarianism according to which parliament was a tool for waging various campaigns by the ruling elite and for decision-making behind the backs of the masses. He therefore called on the workers in Western Europe "to create a new, uncustomary, non-opportunist, and non-careerist parliamentarianism".² To him, the way out of bourgeois parliamentarianism did not lie through the "abolition of representative institutions and the elective prin-

¹ *Informations ouvrières*, 18-25.X.1980, No. 970, p. 3.

² Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 31, p. 98.

principle, but [through] the conversion of the representative institutions from talking shops into 'working' bodies".¹

This is how Marxist-Leninists have always acted. They use parliament to defend political freedoms, to support demands by all social strata exploited by capital, and to publicise the Communist parties' activities aimed at achieving genuine democracy and uniting the working class and all democratic and patriotic forces.

Communist parliamentarians make effective use of parliament in their offensive against the monopolies. In the 1960s and the 1970s French Communists proposed bills to nationalise monopolies in the aircraft, automotive, pharmaceutical and military industries. In the sphere of improvement of the working conditions and living standards of the masses, they called for the introduction of social insurance, equal pay for equal work for women and men, job-training schemes and so on. The fact that such measures have been implemented is clear evidence that Communists can and should use parliament as actively as possible.

Recently, the parliamentary activities have acquired another substantial dimension which has a direct bearing on the possibility for a peaceful development of the revolution, as proposed by Marxist-Leninists. A major component of such a programme is the election of genuine representatives of the people to parliament.

Therefore, the question of what road the revolution should take is one of the key issues in the struggle against petty-bourgeois revolutionism.

¹ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 25, p. 428.

The Trotskyites are trying to prove that the Communists' orientation towards a peaceful revolution is "essentially wrong". "Peaceful revolutions end in a bloodbath", declares A. Krivine.¹

In saying this, the Trotskyites do not mention the fact that Marxist-Leninists do not regard a peaceful revolution as the only one possible. A revolution can be peaceful when the working class rallies around itself all democratic and progressive forces, i.e., when the majority of the people are ready to deprive the big bourgeoisie of an opportunity to unleash *civil war*.

Accusing the Communists of limiting the scope of struggle, the Trotskyites declare armed struggle to be the only "correct" and "possible" way. In their opinion this could be set off by local or regional strikes, which will inevitably develop into a general "passive strike" and then into a general "active strike"; the latter will serve as a signal for staging an armed uprising. "The strategic prospect lies in armed struggle,"² says Jorge Brunello, a leader of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.

This total reliance on armed struggle derives from a profound lack of faith on the part of Trotskyites in the possibility that the working class and its allies could achieve a decisive supremacy and thus prevent the monopolies from using force to suppress a revolution.

Politics without the masses. The Trotskyites also betray their pessimism about the revolutionary po-

¹ A. Krivine, F. Zeller, *Les chemins de la révolution*, Paris, pp. 166-167.

² *Correspondencia internacional*, 1980, abril, No. 2, p. 33.

tentialities of the working class when they call for the seizure of factories and for turning them into "islands of socialism". Julio Posadas writes that the takeover of factories is necessary because of the "inability of the leadership [of the Communist parties] to bring the struggle to a decisive completion."¹ Other Trotskyist leaders agree. "The workers' struggle to seize the factories where they work shows which is the right road to take!" declare the Belgian Trotskyites.²

This is where the Trotskyites go wrong. In calling for the "seizure of power" at factories, they not only fail to mention the need for the working class to win power in society as a whole, but deliberately play down this issue. They thus discard Lenin's important thesis, one which has been confirmed by revolutionary practice, that the class struggle is "fully developed . . . *only* if it does not merely embrace politics but takes in the most significant thing in politics—the organisation of state power."³ The Trotskyites try to localise working-class actions and recognise as "revolutionary" only those forms of class struggle which are crude and immature. According to Daniel Bensaid, a factory under the "new power" will no longer be a factory "in its proper sense", i.e., a focus of alienated labour. If an industrial enterprise becomes at the same time a seat of power, he writes, it will then acquire "new functions" and serve as an agency which will not only have a formative influence on the workers themselves, but will also educate the

¹ *Lutte communiste*, 12.IX.1980, No. 431, p. 1.

² *Manifeste électoral*, 10 octobre, 1982, p. 6.

³ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 19, p. 122.

rising generation and become a "cultural and administrative centre" planning both the industrial and social process in the development of society. Therefore, Bensaïd concludes, this transfer of power will create "real conditions" for doing away with the division between mental and physical work, which is an "expression of the division of society into classes", and for "eliminating all exploitation of man by man".¹ Similar views are held by Italian Trotskyites according to whom "proletarian socialism can only be defined as 'a system of self-governing enterprises and organisations'".²

It is hard to tell whether the Trotskyites are driven more by a desire to confuse the issue of revolutionary strategy and tactics, of the laws governing the transition to the building of socialism, or by a deliberate attempt to distort this issue. One thing is clear: in the Trotskyist concept of "islands of socialism" there are fully manifested such features of "classical" Trotskyism as dogmatic intransigence and lack of political principles, features that are peculiar to reactionary petty-bourgeois ideologists who, Lenin said, are only able to create "a caricature of theory".³

This Trotskyist concept is utterly harmful politically. In the present situation marked by cut-backs in capitalist production and growing unemployment, the question of takeovers of factories by workers and of staging strikes for the purpose of keeping production going has become an exceptionally important one. The experience of such strikes

¹ D. Bensaïd, *La révolution et le pouvoir*, pp. 240-243.

² *Le prolétaire*, 1982, No. 18, p. 19.

³ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, p. 65.

in many capitalist countries has shown that the workers and office employees have mastered the art of "direct" management in industry. They have organised a basically different system of production, one without proprietors and overseers and founded on a voluntary basis. In some cases, having set out to fight for the right to work, the workers have been forced by circumstances to learn the "capitalist" system of accounting and deal with questions of what to produce, how and for what purpose.

However, such strikes do not decide the outcome of the class struggle. They become fully significant and meaningful only in the context of an overall *political struggle against capitalism*. This was made abundantly clear by Antonio Gramsci who wrote: "...the pure and simple occupation of the factories by the working class, though it *indicates* the extent of the proletariat's power, does not in or of itself produce any new, definitive position. *Power* remains in the hands of capital; armed force remains the property of the bourgeois state; public administration, the distribution of basic necessities, the agencies disposing of credit, the still intact commercial apparatus—all remain under the control of the bourgeois class. The proletariat has no coercive means to break the sabotage of the technicians and white-collar workers, it cannot secure its own supplies of raw materials, it cannot sell the objects it produces. The occupation of the factories in and of itself—without the proletariat possessing its own armed force, having the means to ration basic necessities according to its own class interests, or having the means to punish physically sabotage by specialists and bureaucrats—

cannot be seen as an experience of communist society.”¹

By furthering the ideas of workers' seizures of factories with the aim of turning them into “islands of socialism”, the Trotskyites only confuse the working class. Separating the struggle for economic demands from the political struggle to overthrow capitalism as a system, they are trying to revive, on the one hand, such destructive anarcho-syndicalist manifestations in the workers' movement in capitalist countries as indifference to politics and corporativism and, on the other, the principles of “classical” and technocratic reformism about the “neutrality” of the bourgeois state, about its being above all classes in society and its “non-interference” in the political struggle.

The Trotskyist slogans help to spread the illusion that workers' management of factories is possible without radical socio-economic transformations in the whole of society.

Trotskyism thus denies that the working class should conduct political struggle. When it sets the goal of attaining “socialism” within the framework of individual factories without support from the majority of the people and from organised political movement of the masses, it displays irresponsible adventurism and merely makes a pretence of working for revolution. This has nothing to do with the ideals of the revolutionary working class.

Reaction's Trojan horse. Having no close links with any class or social stratum, Trotskyism has

¹ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Political Writings (1910-1920)*, selected and edited by Quintin Hoare, translated by John Mathews, New York, International Publishers, 1977, p. 327.

always been contemptuous of the striving for unity among the masses in their fight against the monopolies. The position of today's Trotskyites in this matter has changed little. They ostentatiously declare that their attitude towards the struggle for common democratic goals is the same as that of their prewar predecessors towards the idea of a Popular Front.

"The experience of the Popular Fronts set up in France and Spain in the 1930s, the Resistance Movement in France and Italy, and the People's Unity Government in Chile all meant the submission of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie,"¹ declare the leaders of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International. Such statements turn the actual state of affairs upside down; thus the Trotskyites stress that "the formation of anti-monopolistic alliances ignores the ABC of the class struggle, for the bourgeoisie, weakened by the masses' actions, agrees to cooperate with the workers' parties".²

If one were to follow this Trotskyist logic, one would think that it is not the working class, but the monopolistic bourgeoisie that is interested in greater unity between the anti-monopolistic forces.

In favouring unity within the anti-monopolistic movement, Communists are guided by Lenin's analysis of class divisions under imperialism. Lenin stressed that the socialist revolution "cannot be anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements". He invariably drew

¹ *Vérité*, 1973, janv., No. 559, p. 95.

² *Ibid.*, 1980, janv., No. 597, p. 128.

the revolutionaries' attention to the need to broaden the social base of the anti-capitalist struggle. "Inevitably, sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will participate in it—without such participation, *mass* struggle is *impossible*, without it *no* revolution is possible—and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But *objectively* they will attack *capital*..." Therefore, Lenin concluded, "...the class-conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a variegated and discordant, motley and outwardly fragmented, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, capture power, seize the banks, expropriate the trusts which all hate (though for different reasons!), and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism."¹

Lenin stressed that one of the conditions for victory over the bourgeoisie must be the ability of the revolutionary parties "to link up, maintain the closest contact, and—if you wish—merge, in certain measure, with the broadest masses of the working people—primarily with the proletariat, *but also with the non-proletarian* masses of working people".²

These Leninist propositions are particularly important today as the proletariat's vital tasks become more and more closely linked with the major problems facing society as a whole. Today the historical role of the proletariat as a force working for

¹ Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 22, p. 356.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, pp. 24-25.

common national progress and rousing all progressive forces to the struggle against monopolies, manifests itself more clearly than ever before.

In this situation the working class does not at all lose its independent political line; nor does it dissolve its own interests in the general democratic movement, as the Trotskyites state. In rousing the exploited sections of the population to action, it creates the most favourable conditions for the fulfilment of its mission as leader of the revolutionary movement. Rejection of the struggle (both as a slogan and as a stage in the revolutionary movement) to unite the majority of the people and draw them into practical action amounts to rejection of the idea of socialist transformation of society.

However, Communists do not regard an anti-monopolist alliance as an end in itself. This alliance cannot guarantee the workers' victory. Rather, it is a means of mobilising the broad masses for the struggle to implement a programme that embodies the democratic demands and the interests of the parties and organisations in the alliance. To be efficient, this alliance must have something it is *against* and something it is *for*. It must be an alliance between all working people oppressed and exploited by finance capital and united against the handful of monopolists who have grabbed the wealth of society for themselves.

Thus, the Trotskyites distort the essence of an anti-monopolist alliance when they describe it as a "means of beating back the rising revolutionary wave and of protecting the existing regime".¹

¹ *Vérité*, 1980, juin, No. 592, p. 127.

While opposing an alliance between the democratic forces, however, the Trotskyites cannot openly declare their real intentions. Since the ideas of unity are being increasingly accepted by the masses, the Trotskyites, being afraid to be left "out of the game", begin to speak of the need to "consolidate unity". We can see the sort of unity they have in mind from the correspondence between *Informations ouvrières*, the organ of the French Internationalist Communist Party, and its readers.

In a letter to the editor a rank-and-file member of that party writes: "What you are saying about unity is not bad. However, what worries me is the question 'What is this unity based on?'"¹ It is a good question, especially if we consider that it is asked by many other people. Another reader writes: "You say you are revolutionaries. How do you then explain your attacks against the Communist Party and your complete silence about the Socialist Party?"² This question is also to the point. The editorial board, in fact, evaded a direct answer. Saying that the "leaders" [of the Communist Party] "do not want unity" which is desired by the workers and the young, it calls for a struggle for unity on the theoretical foundations of the Fourth International. "Any organisation which recognises the Trotskyist ideology must be absolutely clear on this point," the leaders of the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International admonish its wavering members.³

¹ *Informations ouvrières*, 27.IX-4.X.1980, No. 967, p. 8.

² *Informations ouvrières*, 13-20.IX.1980, No. 965, p. 7.

³ *Vérité*, 1973, janv., No. 559, p. 96.

Thus, unity as the Trotskyites understand it is an alliance of like-minded people based on the strategy of "one class against another". According to the Trotskyites, only in this way could the proletariat be "saved" from subordination to the bourgeoisie, and any other approach to solving the problem of unity only "obscures" it.

Countering an anti-monopolist alliance with the slogan of "one class against another", the Trotskyites interpret the slogan in a sectarian manner by saying that the "workers must fight everybody else". All social-democratic organisations are thus declared the "mainstay of the bourgeoisie". The Trotskyites do not differentiate Socialist workers from their opportunist leaders. Not surprisingly, such tactics not only makes it difficult to achieve unity within the working class, but it also impedes its contacts and cooperation with the non-proletarian strata in the anti-monopolist struggle.

From the Trotskyites' interpretation of the policy of "one class against another" it follows that their aim is to oppose the working class to the other working people and social strata, to prevent mutual understanding between them and to perpetuate existing differences.

Trotskyism does all it can to set the working class apart from the non-proletarian strata; for when the working people are in a state of social isolation they would be less open to the influence of scientific socialism.

However, people are becoming more knowledgeable and are gaining political experience. Even those who are still under the influence of Trotskyist ideas will sooner or later realise where the strategy of "one class against another" is leading

them and will then understand that they have been wasting their time and effort. In his letter, one of the former leaders of the Communist Revolutionary League writes: "Like the reformists we cannot propose any specific steps to counter the monopolies' offensive against the workers' interests. That our position is 'to the left of the Left' makes no real difference. Never before in its short history has the 'Communist League' fallen so low and its programme has become so opportunistic."¹

What we have said shows that today's followers of Trotskyism remain loyal to the traditions of "classical" Trotskyism and continue their subversive operations against the anti-monopolist movement behind the smokescreen of "left-wing" claptrap. This is one of the reasons why modern Trotskyism is supported by the ruling bourgeoisie to whom the Trotskyites have been and remain the Trojan horse it has been trying to smuggle into the camp of revolutionary fighters.

¹ *Rouge*, 7.IX.1978.

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на английском языке
Цена 25 коп.

Nikolai VASETSKY
Trotskyism Today:
Whose Interests Does It Serve?

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TROTSKYISM TODAY

WHOSE INTERESTS DOES IT SERVE?



Nikolai VASETSKY (b. 1948), Cand. Sc. (Hist.), graduated from Moscow State University. He is a journalist specialising in the criticism of revisionism and "left-wing" opportunism. Many of his articles published by Soviet journals, such as *Voprosy filosofii* (Problems of Philosophy), *Filosofskaya mysl* (Philosophical Thought) and *Voprosy istorii KPSS* (Questions of the History of the CPSU) criticise the theory and practice of Trotskyism today.



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