

TROTSKYISM VERSUS
REVISIONISM

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

VOLUME SIX

*The Organisation Communiste
Internationaliste
breaks with Trotskyism*

NEW PARK PUBLICATIONS

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edited by C. Slaughter

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Note on sources

The documents published in these volumes have been collected from the journals, internal bulletins and correspondence of the Trotskyist movement over the period since 1951. The series is designed to provide the basic documentation of the fight within the Fourth International during that time. Editing of the text has been kept to a minimum: footnotes and bracketed explanatory notes have been added only for essential reference. In all other respects the documents have been reproduced as they appear in the sources indicated below.

Each volume has a foreword introducing the reader to the main developments covered in it, with a glossary of names and an index provided as additional guides to the documents.

The sources for the documents used in this volume are as follows:

1. *Bulletin*, August 30, 1971
- 2, 3, 4 and 5. *Fourth International*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Winter 1971-71, pp. 72-76
- 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. *Fourth International*, Vol. 7, No. 4, Summer 1972
- 11 and 12. *Fourth International*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Winter 1972-73
13. Socialist Labour League pamphlet, February 1973
- 14a. *Informations Ouvrières*, January 29, 1975
- 14b. *Informations Ouvrières*, February 5, 1975
15. *Intercontinental Press*, January 13, 1975

Foreword

In this volume are contained the essential documents of the fight of the International Committee of the Fourth International to defend and develop Marxism in the face of the rapid degeneration of the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI). 1971 finds the OCI leaders providing political support for Guillermo Lora and his Partido Obrero Revolucionario in Bolivia, even beyond the point of the counter-revolutionary coup of Banzer. Confronted with this coup, the Bolivian working class was left disarmed, physically and politically, because of the betrayal of those who claimed to be their Marxist leaders, Lora included. By early 1975, as this volume was being prepared for the press, it had been publicly revealed that the OCI leaders had entered friendly discussions with the revisionist SWP and the United Secretariat in Paris, thus coming full circle from their first break with Pabloism in 1953.

The foreword to an earlier volume of documents (Volume Four) anticipated clearly this development:

What is vital is that the OCI, rejecting dialectical materialism as the theory of knowledge of Marxism and as the foundation of the training of the revolutionary youth, arrived at essentially identical theoretical positions with those of the SWP. (p.xvi)

It is now clear that as these words were being written, formal discussions with the SWP were already in preparation, on the initiative of the OCI (see Appendix to the present volume). It is worth recalling that when the International Committee in 1962 proposed a 'Parity Committee' to draw the Pabloites as well as the SWP into a comprehensive international discussion, in order to deepen the necessary understanding of the theoretical problems involved in the split in the Fourth International, this was first opposed and eventually only

reluctantly accepted by Lambert and the OCI leadership, who declared that they and their members did not require any further clarification on these questions. Similarly, they never tired of reminding the IC that it was the French section which first clashed with Pablo, and that only later did they receive the support of the SWP and the British section. Again, in July 1970, the International Committee considered the situation favourable for engaging the Pabloites in a full discussion, particularly in view of the rapid development of the economic and political crisis as well as the divisions within the Pabloite ranks. Yet, when Comrade Healy made approaches to this end, on the instructions of the IC (including the OCI), he was denounced by the OCI as making a concession to Pabloism!

The decisive factor in the development of political tendencies is clearly not the demonstration of formal intransigence. On the contrary, the great lesson of the 1953 split, learned in the subsequent years, was that only a conscious struggle to develop dialectical materialism on all fronts, but especially at the basic level of philosophy, could prepare the Trotskyist movement to defeat revisionism and grapple with the political tasks posed by the developing revolutionary crisis. Resistance to the 1962 and 1970 proposals for discussion by the OCI were more indicative of the complete underestimation of these theoretical problems than of revolutionary firmness.

Dominating the period since the Essen split and the Bolivian counter-revolutionary coup of 1971, has been the transformation of the world economic situation. Nixon's announcement in August 1971 that the post-war international economic agreements embodied in Bretton Woods were no longer in force was the sharp dividing-line. The dollar was finally cut adrift from gold convertibility, fixed parities were abolished, and US capitalism declared itself a bitter economic competitor rather than a collaborator and supporter of the other capitalist powers. Thus the stage was set for a development on a much higher level of the revolutionary clashes in France and Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Bolivia in 1971. Chile was soon to reveal even more starkly and tragically than Bolivia the consequences of abandonment of the permanent revolution. The collapse of Portuguese fascism and of the Greek junta in 1974 were to herald the decisive revolutionary effects of the inflationary crisis in Western Europe. And all this came before the plunge from uncontrolled inflation into actual slump, which took on real momentum in the winter of 1974-75.

Such objective changes do not by any means automatically 'correct' the opportunist course of those who deviate from the construction of revolutionary parties. On the contrary, it is in such periods that the pressure of enemy class forces becomes much greater. As we have seen, only the conscious struggle to develop dialectical materialism in theory and practice can equip the revolutionary party and the International to defeat these pressures and develop on that basis. The growth of the forces of the International Committee on the one hand, and the degeneration of the OCI, on the other, are the living proof of that. The book *In Defence of Trotskyism* (1973), reprinted in this volume, provides the first balance-sheet of the theoretical lessons of the OCI split, placed in the historical context of the long struggle against the revisionism of the Socialist Workers Party.

Chapter One

The Bolivian revolution and revisionism

Just as the entry into the Ceylon bourgeois government in 1964 of the renegades of the LSSP, formally a Trotskyist party, was a qualitative turning point in the struggle against revisionism in the Fourth International (see Volume Four), so was the defeat of the Bolivian workers in 1971. The POR (Revolutionary Workers Party) of Lora was not a section of the IC of the Fourth International, but it had been presented as such by the OCI, one of the IC's sections. It was one of the organizations whose representatives voted with the OCI against the Socialist Labour League and the IC majority at the Essen youth conference.

When Lora and the POR had collaborated in leading the workers into the trap of depending on the alliance with the 'left' bourgeois leadership of Torres, there was no escaping the most complete and ruthless exposure, which is begun in the first document in this chapter. Lora's reply (Document 2) only serves to confirm the completely revisionist nature of his politics. It was a clear warning of the path he was to take in continuing the alliance with Torres even after the defeat. And the OCI, with collaborators like *Política Obrera* in Argentina, continues to this day (1975) to support Lora and print his political material. This, again, only fulfils the promise of their resolution of September 19, 1971 (Document 3) and their joint declaration of October 12, 1971, together with Lora and with Nagy, of the League of Socialist Revolutionaries of Hungary (Document 4). In these declarations they choose to defend Lora and to condemn the Workers League (USA) and the SLL, who dared to insist on drawing the essential political lessons of Bolivia, August 1971, as 'agents of counter-revolution'.

DOCUMENT 1

Bolivia: Bitter Lessons of Defeat, by Tim Wohlforth, August 30, 1971

The right-wing militarists, with the support of the fascist Falangists and the old nationalist leader Paz, have taken over in Bolivia ending the Torres regime and the Popular Assembly. No information has been forthcoming on the fate of revolutionaries in Bolivia, particularly the militants of the POR.

Brutal as the old Barrientos military regime was, which took the life of Cesar Lora and other militants of the old Trotskyist movement as well as hunting down and murdering Guevara, this new fascist-supported military regime can be expected to carry through even more brutal murders of revolutionaries.

It is necessary to make an assessment of how this coup was permitted to take place, what it reveals of the Popular Assembly, and the role particularly of those within it who claimed to be Trotskyists. The construction of a Trotskyist movement in Latin America will depend on absorbing the bitter lessons of this latest bloody episode in the tumultuous history of Bolivia.

There is no time to lose in drawing these lessons. What has happened in Bolivia can be followed shortly in Peru, in Chile and even in Argentina. The crisis of capitalism is so intense and the working-class movement in Latin America so determined that the crisis of leadership is posed with acute sharpness. In every country of Latin America it can be said that capitalism rules only because of the paralysis and confusion of those elements which call themselves Trotskyists. This is the bitter lesson of Bolivia. Nothing, absolutely nothing can be constructed in Latin America unless this lesson is learned.

Outside of Ceylon, Bolivia has had the strongest Trotskyist movement of any colonial country in the world. Trotskyism has been a major factor among Bolivian tin miners for a decade and a half now. The key figure of Bolivian Trotskyism has been Guillermo Lora.

Lora, who lost his own brother under Barrientos and whose whereabouts at this moment is not known, must share a responsibility in the recent rightist coup.

Lora, in collaboration with the Bolivian Stalinists and with the agreement of the Bolivian and international Pabloites, failed to fight at any point for the overthrow of the Torres military regime. Thus he, along with the rest of the Popular Assembly, acted as a left cover for Torres while the right wing elements in Torres' own army prepared and finally executed their coup. In so doing Lora was carrying forward a political course begun over a decade ago, from which he has consistently refused to veer. At every point this course has received support within the Fourth International or forces claiming to represent the Fourth International. Though less known than the evolution of the LSSP (Lanka Sama Samaja Party) in Ceylon, the role of Lora and the POR has been no less treacherous and important.

In 1952 Paz, the leader of the bourgeois MNR, a party much like the Bandaranaike SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) of Ceylon, took over the government while the armed miners took over the mining areas creating the elements of a dual power situation. Under these conditions Lora and the POR called for Lechin and the COB (Bolivian trade union movement) to be admitted into the Paz bourgeois government and gave this government critical support. Instead of fighting to break the trade unions from the bourgeois nationalist government Lora fought for them to enter the government. Instead of calling for the overthrow of this government and its replacement by a workers' government, Lora called for critical support for this government.

This position received the full support of Michel Pablo, Mandel and other leaders of the Fourth International in that period. They wrote in their magazine:

The POR began by justifiably granting critical support to the MNR government. That is, it desisted from issuing the slogan 'down with the government'; it gave the government critical support against attacks of imperialism and reaction, and it supported all progressive measures.

It should be noted that we are here speaking of support to Paz who today seeks to ride back into power along with the fascist Falange, the right-wing generals and the CIA!

In this period the Fourth International was wracked by a fundamental split centering on Pablo's attempt to completely liquidate Trotskyism into Stalinism and the social democratic parties. Under

these conditions it was not really possible for the Bolivian question to be seriously discussed, much less fought out.

It must, however, be noted that Lora contributed his share to deepening this crisis by throwing his weight behind Pablo. Like many in the LSSP, Lora had areas of agreement with the SWP (Socialist Workers Party) and the others in the International Committee. But he did not proceed from questions of international concern and perspectives. The easiest course was to go along with Pablo. This he did. This way the Latin American sections of the Fourth International were thrown behind Pablo who subsequently, through his collaborator Posadas, was to do his best to break up and liquidate these forces.

At the time of the reunification of the SWP-supported forces with Mandel in 1963, Lora was independent of either the International Committee or the United Secretariat. The United Secretariat's group in Bolivia was headed by Moscoso. Soon thereafter Lora fused with Moscoso entering the United Secretariat and lending to the United Secretariat his support. The fusion took place on what appeared to be common agreement over Cuba and Castro.

The unification was not to last long as Moscoso sought to implement this agreement by subordinating the POR to guerrilla activities in the countryside. Lora insisted on an orientation based on the tin miners and other sections of the Bolivian working class and a split ensued.

Following this split Lora established contact with the International Committee announcing his agreement with the IC's international perspectives, especially its position on the centrality of the struggles of the working class in all countries. But Lora never made any serious attempt to assess his own history and on this basis make a fundamental development towards a break with his own past.

With the rise of Torres and the Popular Assembly the old positions of Lora re-emerge. Once again the country is faced with a dual-power situation and the possibility of civil war. Once again Lora refuses to face up to it, to pose the necessity to break with Torres, to form a workers' and farmers' government, to fight it out directly with all sections of the military and capitalism. Instead he combines with the Communist Party around a COB resolution which states:

The present process is contradictory: while the government is taking certain anti-imperialist and progressive measures on the one hand, on the other hand it is adopting pro-imperialist measures contrary to the national and popular interests. The proletariat supports whatever is positive for the

emancipation of our people and at the same time criticizes and fights the measures which are against the masses' interests, fighting to impose new anti-imperialist measures which will lead us to a true revolution on the road of national emancipation and socialism. This is our tactic in the present process, and this is without forgetting the final goals of the working class.

This section of the resolution, we understand, was written by the Stalinists, but the POR voted for the document as a whole anyway. In any event their position was not qualitatively different from that of the Stalinists. Together with the Stalinists the POR supported the position of threatening a General Strike and military action in defence of Torres!

The Pabloites, including Mandel and the SWP, must assume their responsibility in this situation. First of all it was the SWP which developed the theory of coming to power with 'blunted instruments' in Latin America encouraging liquidationist and anti-theory tendencies throughout the region. In a period when what was needed was a sharp theoretical struggle to develop a leadership for the coming class movement, the SWP encouraged adventurism and guerrillaism and all sorts of unprincipled combinations with Castroites, Maoists and Stalinists.

In 1969 Bolivia was a central feature of the struggle within the United Secretariat. The majority around Mandel-Frank-Maitan, which supported a strategy of guerrilla warfare, held up Bolivia as the one country in the world and Moscoso as the man for the job, where a breakthrough would be made through setting up guerrilla foci.

The SWP opposed this but offered no real alternative to this perspective. Then one year later Bolivia does become a 'focus' but of proletarian not guerrilla warfare. Mandel and Co. quickly drop Bolivia shifting their attention to Argentina. Such is the reaction of such elements to the movement of the working class!

However, most important, the SWP lets them do this. It also dropped Bolivia from its polemics with Mandel and Maitan only to, in the recent period, start speaking of the Popular Assembly in the same uncritical terms as Lora. Clearly the movement of the working class in Bolivia upset the SWP as well. How could it propose an orientation to the students on the basis of Bolivian developments where the question of working-class power, of socialist revolution itself was posed? It, too, had to do its best to see to it that the struggle in Bolivia did not go beyond the bounds of Torres.

Gerry Foley, writing in the July 19, 1971 *Intercontinental Press*, expressed the complete approval of the SWP precisely of the relationship between the Popular Assembly and Torres. He writes:

Arming to defend the democratic rights of the workers, the unions apparently gave critical support to the Torres regime — 'support' that perfectly suits Lenin's definition: 'as the rope supports a hanged man'.

And later on:

By and large, the programme of the Assembly seemed confined to demanding that the Torres government carry out its promises to the working people of the country. The measures it recommended flowed clearly and logically from this position.

Is it necessary to point out that Lenin was referring to support to social democratic parties and not to bourgeois governments and certainly not to military dictators?

The potential for building the Trotskyist movement in Latin America is now extremely great. What is fundamental is that now the struggle of the colonial peoples coincides with the struggle of workers in the advanced countries. This struggle now includes the powerful American working class as well as that of Europe — particularly following Nixon's new economic policies. At the same time the dangers involved are as grave as the potential is bright.

We cannot forget the terrible price the working-class youth of Ceylon have paid for revisionism in the form of the LSSP. In the Sudan the CP's support to another 'progressive' general has led to its massacre. We now fear for the very lives of the militants of the POR in a situation created by the refusal of the POR's leadership to confront the central lessons of the historic development of the Marxist movement.

It is not possible to build a revolutionary movement on any other basis than principle. To do otherwise in this period is to invite new defeats, new massacres. To take up the principled struggle for Trotskyism based on all the lessons of the struggle against revisionism can lead to the development of mass revolutionary parties throughout Latin America, to the successful overthrow of capitalism, of imperialism.

Like the LSSP leadership, Lora never concerned himself with questions of the international movement, its theoretical battles, its difficulties. He felt that as long as he rooted himself in the working class and adhered to the theory of the permanent revolution and

Transitional Programme as he saw it he would be able to play a revolutionary role in Bolivia.

But this perspective can only be developed on an international scale and through the struggle against its opposite, against the attempts of revisionism to destroy it. It is precisely through confronting all the difficulties of the movement — the isolation, the petty bourgeois pressure, the confusion, so much confusion — that theoretical development can take place. Without such development succumbing to the national bourgeoisie is inevitable.

The lessons of Bolivia reinforce our conviction in what we wrote on the recent convention of the SWP. There is no proletarian orientation outside of the struggle to construct the Fourth International. The Fourth International can only be constructed on the firm principled ground of a true and honest assessment of its own history.

DOCUMENT 2

What Happened in Bolivia? by Guillermo Lora, September 1971

On August 18, the awaited and announced *coup d'état* by the right wing of the army broke out, having as civilian support the dismembered FSB of Mario Gutierrez (one section headed by Riveros who claims to be a leftist) and the MNR, the faithful servant of US imperialism in the so-called Lima Pact.

The Minister of the Interior Jorge Gallardo Lozada made the official announcement and added that a state of emergency had been declared. (*El Nacional*, La Paz, August 20.)

The Revolutionary government announces that the fascist coup is underway headed by Mario Gutierrez, chief of the Falange Socialista Boliviana and minority groups of the right of the MNR.

In the face of rightist subversion, whose coupist scheme has been perfectly detected, a national emergency is declared and we call together the revolutionary and people's organizations to mobilize around the Revolutionary Government in order to defend the conquests of the Bolivian people and to destroy the fascist counter-revolution. The government is in control of the situation in the countryside and stands firm on the postulates of October 7, together with the people.

Previously it was predicted that the putschist *gorilismo* [the right-wing bourgeois militarists] would initiate counter-revolutionary operations in the periphery of the country, having as an axis the military troops stationed in the East. In fact, the subversive movement extended itself rapidly to the divisions of Riveralta, Camiri, Bermejo, as far as Tarija. These five pincers — powerful pincers certainly, because part of the army was engaged in it — were pressing and closing in on La Paz more and more, not so much in the eyes of the population but on the military hierarchy.

The defections of the garrisons of Cochabamba and Oruro turned

the situation of President Torres into an insustainable one, making it impossible for him to recapture Oruro, which was strongly surrounded by the Rangers of Challapata.

The military insurrection began by raising the flag of a furious anti-communism. This must be understood as the struggle against the decision of the mass and revolutionary organizations to establish a socialist regime and a government of workers and peasants; against the strengthening of the Popular Assembly as an organ of power of the masses and of the proletariat which realizes the slogan of the worker-peasant government, against the danger to the state that majority working-class participation in COMIBOL would mean and the single university under the direction of the proletariat. Said in another way, *gorilismo*, when discovering that the accelerated advance of the revolutionary process posed its immediate crushing, saw itself forced to consummate a preventive counter-revolutionary coup.

The campaign aimed at justifying the coup concentrated on the programme of the proletariat, referring only tangentially to General Torres and his government. The real struggle was and is between the national majority and *gorilismo* and in it Torres played a role of little importance.

Torres kept on balancing on the head of a pin for nine months, thanks to the extreme pressure established between the extremes in struggle, which accumulated forces without daring to initiate the attack. There is information that indicates that the US embassy lacked confidence in the Torres military regime because it had practically ceased to govern. In one way or another, the factions in struggle made efforts to use the government as a spearhead against the adversary.

The regime born on October 7, 1970, could not at any moment concentrate in its hands total or at least predominant control over the armed forces. It was exhausted in the efforts it made to win over the conspiratorial generals in exchange for the concessions, greater each time, that were made to them to the point that at every moment they could move with complete liberty. After each frustrated *coup d'état* the *gorilas* in most cases simply had their jobs changed (there are cases where they were not deprived of their commands) and in exceptional cases were sent into exile.

The counter-revolutionary plan consisted of taking from Torres all military support, and on the eve of the 19th, the President was, with difficulty, obeyed by 20 per cent of the military commands. Inspired in the experience of October, *gorilismo* worked firmly and

patiently to reach a correlation of forces that would be clear and indisputably favourable to them, so as to capture all political power without a battle and without firing a single cartridge, this in order to prevent the masses from taking over the streets and giving an unforeseeable course to the events. This preoccupation also reached the military chiefs in Torres' camp, who showed signs of fearing the masses more than the right wing of the army.

From the first moment of the fascist revolt in Santa Cruz until Torres' leaving Palacio Quenado three short days elapsed. It was sufficient time for the masses to take to the streets. The hundreds dead and the 500 wounded constituted eloquent and tragic proof of this.

At 11 pm on the 20th the Political Command, the body of the Popular Assembly charged with the leadership of the mass movement between sessions of the Assembly, met and decided to call on all the exploited to take to the streets to actively combat the *gorila* conspiracy. The military command was expanded to include representatives of the political parties belonging to the Assembly.

On the afternoon of Friday the 21st a massive anti-fascist and anti-imperialist demonstration was held. The workers responded positively to the call made by the Political Command and the COB (Bolivian Trade Union Confederation). The march lasted approximately four hours.

Originally it was agreed to have the rally in front of the Popular Assembly (formerly the Legislative Palace). However because of Lechin's conciliatory spirit, the Government Palace was used instead. The speakers were far below the spirit which moved the demonstrators and none pointed out clearly the objectives for which we must fight and die.

Torres and Lechin were frequently booed, and the latter, speaking under the whip of his adversaries, sought to look radical, with slogans of expropriation of the properties belonging to the fascist conspirators. Torres again showed signs of his servile follow-the-leaderism before the mobilized masses. The demonstrators shouted: 'J. J. (Juan Jose) Hit 'em Hard!' and the President responded like a little boy, 'I'll hit 'em hard.'

The demonstration, between the laughter and the hissing, again demonstrated that Lechin was a totally worn out and surpassed figure. The newspaper *Ultima Hora* (August 23) which totally supports him, wrote:

Lechin spoke amid booing and demands that he make his position clear. This veteran manipulator of crowds with his revolutionary oratory was unable to impose his domination. He stated concepts perhaps different from those he hoped to utter succeeding in asking for the unity of all left forces and the taking over of the property and businesses of those who supported the conspiracy.

Here he appeared as an ailing Belzu.

The anti-fascist march had a smiling face, explainable if it is taken into account that all were sure that the enormous size of it had already by itself crushed the fascist conspiracy. A few hours later it would be clearly seen that the military rebellion could only be crushed by picking up the gun.

In October of 1970 the working class occupied the political scene without arms, as a simple mass. By then it was clearly understood that in order to be able to defeat *gorilismo* it was indispensable to put a gun in the hands of the politicized worker. At this time everybody thought — including we Marxists — that the arms would be given by the governing military team, which would consider that only through resting on the masses and giving them adequate firepower could they at least neutralize the *gorila* right.

This position was completely wrong. It did not take into account that Torres preferred to capitulate to his fellow generals before arming masses who showed signs of taking the road to socialism and whose mobilization put in serious danger the army as an institution.

The course taken by events initiated at the end of 1970, the incapacity demonstrated by the military leadership of gaining the confidence of the exploited, of purging the army of the extreme right and of finding a left solution to the political impasse, forced a limited strata of young officers, ranks, and lower level officers to even come to the conclusion that if the destruction of the army were necessary for socialist victory there would not be reason to oppose it.

An anonymous proclamation of ranks and lower officers produced confusion and not a few believed that the army was totally divided between ranks and officers, and that the troops would disobey any order given to fire on the people. Now we know that things occurred differently. The proclamation which originated in the Air Force at La Paz had little repercussion in the rest of the armed forces. The government, whether or not it had anything to do with this act, looked for ways to take advantage of the proclamation and encouraged the economic demands of the lower strata of the armed forces.

Nevertheless, the rise and radicalization of the masses made an impact every day more and more on the masses of the army, probably in greater measure the younger officers, in this way beginning its disintegration which was common to all the bourgeois institutions and to the established order itself.

The growth of the revolutionary wave undermines the base of the armed forces (the soldiers are, for the most part, workers, peasants and middle-class elements with political and union experience) and ends up destroying them little by little, more than by defeating them in formal battle. The soldiers flee or disobey the orders of their superiors, who must be careful of those who fight in the streets and their subordinates. Then the people have within their reach their natural arsenal. This is what already occurred on April 7, 1952.

In the night of the 20th the Political Command centred practically all its discussion on the problems of arms. Until then President Torres and his ministers had offered, one time or another, to give arms to the people, a promise that awakened excessive illusions in certain sections of the workers.

Understanding that the fascist conspiracy was advancing through all the land and the menace of its victory became more serious every moment, it was agreed to send a final committee (Lechin, Mercado, Lora, Lopez, Reyes, and Eid) to the Government Palace to let the President know that if he did not keep his promise to deliver arms, the Popular Assembly would follow its own path. Torres in order to justify his negative answer, said that if he were to disarm the soldiers in order to deliver the guns to the workers, the officers would respond by rebelling.

We could not say if, at any moment, the President seriously thought about delivering arms to the workers. It seems that he utilized the promise as blackmail against his opponents to the right and the left. What is evident is that he found himself sharply pressured by the military not to do it.

The rumours circulated insistently that the military hierarchy threatened Torres with rebellion if he delivered the arms. It was on this occasion that Torres made known his plan to recapture Oruro, an operation which according to him, would be carried out at 6 o'clock in the morning, August 21.

He asked for aid to send clandestine emissaries who could contact the workers, at that time concentrated at San Jose and surrounded by

military forces. The operation was given the name 'Centipede — Flying Eagle'. The leftist delegates from Oruro, among them Emilio Perez, were satisfied with this solution.

In the middle of the deliberations of the Political Command, two members of the POR showed up who represented the miners of Siglo XX and Huanuni, who remained quartered in the vicinity of Vinto, unable to defeat the rangers who guarded Oruro. These workers had only dynamite, and although the sensible thing to do would have been to retreat to their bases to await arms, since there existed little possibility of getting them, they remained in their precarious positions waiting for the arrival of loyal troops.

Later it was learned that the regiments sent by Torres to rescue the strategic point of the plateau promptly went over to the rebels. Due to the masses finding themselves disarmed, the real battles were engaged not in the streets, but among the military commands who utilized the regiments of soldiers like chess pieces.

Even though the regiment in charge of recapturing Oruro had defected, the state radio (Illimari) kept on sending coded messages to that city to the effect that 'Operation Centipede — Flying Eagle' was to be consummated at nightfall. As a result of this criminal lie the workers assaulted the city and were virtually massacred by the army troops.

On the 21st, approximately at 10 o'clock the Minister of the Interior, J. Gallardo, and the Minister of Public Health, Javier Torres Goitin, appeared in person at the COB, where the Political Command and its Military Command (they had been called into permanent session) were working to make it known that the Castrillo regiment had rebelled, that within a few minutes the General Headquarters of Miraflores would be attacked in order to capture it. The plan consisted in having the Colorado regiment, commanded by Major Reuben Sanchez and the quartered regiment in San Jorge provide ground cover for the people which would press massively against the fortress.

In the 'Confederacion de Fabriles' 400 Mauser and Garant rifles were given away, many of them in bad shape, and 2,000 rounds of ammunition.

Lechin called by radio for all the masses to meet with their arms in the plaza of the stadium. Right away more than 2,000 people met. That Saturday was a day of great tension. La Paz was shaken by the explosion of dynamite the night before by the miners of Milluni.

The Minister of Government had promised that his troops were going to occupy Laikacota hill, which divides Miraflores from the centre of the city and has great strategic importance. But Castrillo's troops set machine gun nests in there. The Military Command stationed itself close to the Siles Stadium in order to be able to direct the military operations. But it could not do so effectively because of lack of reliable information about the situation in general.

It depended exclusively on Radio Illimari, which gave misleading reports for tactical reasons, and from information that was given by means of police radio. Another small stock of old Mauser rifles arrived at the stadium that soon disappeared amid the thirst for weapons. Other small quantities of munitions were received.

The masses attacked the Ministry of War and brought out large amounts of guns, the majority of which were useless. In the streets near the stadium there were workers and students and, in smaller numbers, other elements from other social classes. The majority of these forces belonged to the political parties of the left.

The idea did not occur to those who were there, and less to the leaders of the Political Command, to attack the General Headquarters. The firepower of Castrillo was too strong. The objective was to wait until the loyal troops forced the fortress to surrender and then the attack would occur. Those who at noon marched towards the stadium were sure that they were going there to organize themselves and to finish off the operation led from the Presidential Palace.

The truth was that the regiment from San Jorge did not move. At about 6 or 7 o'clock the Ministry of the Interior asked the armed people to go to Triangular Park about 200 metres from the General Headquarters. The masses ignored the request because that would mean sending them right to their deaths. Gallardo said it was a way to increase the pressure on the General Headquarters.

The people who were near the stadium were attacked from Laikacota hill by the rightist snipers who were posted in the buildings of the area. Many fell dead and wounded, victims to the combined fire.

Workers and students decided to capture Laikacota. When the mission was almost a success they were asked to leave the hill because, it was said, planes were going to attack the rightists who held the hill. The truth was that at 5.35 the Air Force, which had withdrawn its support to the government and sent an ultimatum to Sanchez to lay down their arms at about 3.00, flew around the battlefield to attack

the Colorados regiment and the civilians. At last the workers and students succeeded in silencing the guns of Laikacota.

Only later was it known that at 1.30 p.m. General Roque Teran, the Commander in Chief of the army, went to the Presidential Palace to announce to Torres that he should flee. Roque was captured by the popular militias, but they only asked him for arms, thinking that he was still loyal to Torres. 'But the meeting between the two gave no results and there followed a bitter discussion.' (From *Ultima Hora*, August 23.)

The same Roque had to carry out the uncomfortable mission of discussing with the troops of the Colorados and asked them to stop the fire. When the Colorados refused to stop, he then took his jeep and at the same moment fire from the machine guns was heard. Captain Terrazas and another officer died when they tried to cover Roque. Roque suffered a wound in his leg and was taken to the Military Hospital (*Ultima Hora*). In that way was punished the one who betrayed his Commander in Chief.

Men and women willing to smash fascism were posted in marginal areas (Alto San Pedro, Villa Victoria, Auga de la Vida, Calvario) and were throwing dynamite.

At noon the Andino regiment and the Viacha motorized regiment were back in La Paz after deserting in Oruro. At 4.30 young people and miners went to the Minister of Defence to look for arms. They had been told they were going to get arms there. Result: more deaths and wounded.

At 8.45 Torres left the Presidential Palace, the very man who until 7.00 was urging the masses to keep fighting to the end. The August 24 press confirmed that the former president did not even take the time to resign from his post, and was in the Peruvian embassy with others of his officials, including General Sanchez.

The tanks of the Tarapaca regiment, which sowed terror and desolation in the streets of La Paz, entered at 8.00 p.m. in the heights of the city (Munaypata and Villa Victoria). The State Radio broadcast unrealizable instructions to sabotage the march of the tanks. When the tanks were near the Plaza Murillo, Radio Illimari stopped transmitting and Torres fled. At the same time the few elements that were left in Miraflores from the Political Command (Lechin, Alandia, Lora) met for the last time, unaware of the real situation. Rumours kept coming in that the General Headquarters had surrendered.

Three tanks took possession of the Plaza Murillo and four others went to Laikacota, whose fire caused the majority of deaths. Machine-gun fire and dynamite blasts lasted until the next morning. The air force continued its cleaning-up operation, always having Laikacota as their objective.

In Santa Cruz the decree that created the military triumvirate which took the place of Torres was made public. (Jaime Florentino Merdulla, Hugo Banzer, Andus Selica). But it had no life except on paper. On August 22 Hugo Banzer swore himself in as the new president and different ministers were chosen from the MNR and FSB, which, together with the Army, form the Nationalist Popular Front.

The first hours of the morning of the 22nd the University of La Paz was militarily occupied and it was said that inside it remained around 20 armed students. The following day a mediation board was chosen (Archbishop of La Paz, diplomats, Red Cross, students) to seek a way out for those refugees in the University.

At noon about 500 students blocked Village Avenue and agreed to meet in assembly. Many were sitting in front of the tanks to stop them from returning to the University. The Army ordered the students to dissolve themselves as a group. They said that a shot was heard from the upper floors. The airplanes, tanks and soldiers attacked the students, killing seven persons and wounding over 27. The students said that their compañeros were murdered in cold blood and others were arrested.

More than 200 students were put in jail after this assembly.

Since noon groups of people called by the State Radio were getting together to show their support to the new government of the Nationalist Popular Front. (From *Presencia*, August 23.)

Groups of Movimientistas (supporters of the MNR) set up their general headquarters on Colon Street, in front of the Tesla cinema. They made the rounds of the streets of the city on motorcycles distributing propaganda calling on everyone to join the meeting. The Falangists carried out an assault on the Confederation of Secondary School Students on Yanacocha St. to install their offices.

The crowd concentrated in the Murillo Plaza was not small but there were no university students or workers. They began to group around the MNR and FSB layers of the middle class (small merchants and proprietors, public employees, unemployed, entrepreneurs) who want an institutionally and socially stable regime with guarantees for them and greater opportunities for economic advancement. The

slogans that began to be thrown up satisfied their desires, verbally: An end to anarchy and abuse; to assert order; work and discipline; respect for private property; banishment of communism and of violence and their replacement with law, etc.

Colonel Hugo Banzer, with all sincerity, even though in imperfect and stammering Spanish, clearly defined his political position: 'I shall follow the steps of Busch, Villaruel and Barrientos,' he said. In a defiant tone he let it be known that he will continue to be a *gorila* and his biggest and dearest dream is continuing the fascist politics of Barrientos. Banzer is already to the right in relation to the Torres government. Even though both speak of nationalism, this is no more than particular expressions of the petty-bourgeois nationalist process initiated in 1952.

The action of *Movimientista*, Tema Pelaez and the Falangist Mario Gutierrez were much more damaging, revealing for everyone. It was evident that here were two opportunists. Their speeches were frequently interrupted by hisses and some hours before, when they tried to enter the palace, they were sworn at and rotten oranges were thrown at them.

Meanwhile, during the high-sounding speeches of the leaders, the militants of the two parties in the filthy alliance exchanged punches. In fear that the fragile alliance would be broken into a million pieces, they have designated to ministerial posts some nonpartisan technicians (even though they were ultra-conservative elements politically speaking) so they can act as buffers in the internal government struggles.

Given these conditions, the army would continue to be the decisive force. The party base of the regime is being totally split.

Seven years after his overthrow Paz comes back to the country under apparently surprising circumstances. Overthrown by Barrientos and Ovando for not being able to bridle the turbulent toiling masses of workers, he is brought by these same Barrientistas to peddle everything contrary to what he said and did when in power.

It was not in vain that he remarked, in an emotional tone, that he returned to the fatherland now not to make the errors of the past. Which were those errors? His leftist blunders? His ties with labour, which dragged him into what today is called chaos and anarchy?

Returning he formed an alliance, that he wished strong and eternal, nothing less than with Falangism, which was an expression of the vulnerable interests of bosses, of the great miners and of the indus-

trialists who struggled bitterly against the communist deviations of the MNR.

The alliance between the Falangistas and Movimientistas makes one ask which of them has really taken the position of the other. The positions assumed by Gutierrez in the last years, the intransigent struggle against the left that arose in his own party, the conspiracy on the side of *gorilismo* demonstrate that the FSB continues to be the political expression of reaction. It is the MNR that went over to the positions of the Falangists. Paz returned to the country as one of the surest servants of the State Department of the USA and it is this fact that forces him to bloc with the Barrientistas and Falangistas.

Paz is now an eminent exponent of counter-revolution. His main weapon is revolutionary nationalism which has been totally overcome by the Bolivian objective situation, by the radicalization of the masses and by the evolution of the class consciousness of the proletariat. This nationalism which in 1952 could appear revolutionary and stir up many illusions in the masses is now unmistakably reactionary.

Paz knows fully that the masses are convinced that he betrayed his old preaching and has become a rightist; this is why he emphasizes that his nationalism is of the left. Surely the *movimientista* chief dreams of returning to the presidency in the next elections. Nevertheless, Banzer says that it is premature to speak of elections. He also says he does not know how long he shall retain power at the moment, since 'first I must attend to my obligations to the "people" through the government.' (From *Ultima Hora*, August 24.) At the same time he said there exists no sign of the Paz garrison demanding elections for May 1972, even though there is obvious proof that the resolution adopted by 500 officials of the army was to this effect.

They repeat what already occurred in 1964, the professional politicians are sure the victorious generals will surrender power easily. Already we know that the things occurred and will occur in another manner. Gutierrez and his *movimientista* friends speak of pacifying the country and of stopping the persecutions but immediately the military announced they would destroy the leftists. The battle between revolution and counter-revolution is posed this way.

DOCUMENT 3

Statement by the OCI Central Committee, September 19, 1971

The Central Committee of the OCI, section of the International Committee for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, having examined the situation in Bolivia, on the basis of all the documents available, and in particular on the basis of the report of the development of the revolutionary struggle drawn up by comrade Guillermo Lora, secretary of the POR of Bolivia, reaffirms completely its absolute solidarity with the POR, Trotskyist party, member of the International Committee for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, in its struggle waged in Bolivia for the workers' and peasants' government and for soviet power.

The Central Committee of the OCI recalls that the International Committee characterized the period opened by the General Strike of May-June 1968 and the process of political revolution in Czechoslovakia as the period of the imminence of revolution, that is the period when class confrontations will take place posing the question of power.

The CC states that the process of class struggle in Bolivia completely fits into this perspective. In Bolivia it is, in fact, around an organ of a soviet type that the worker and peasant masses organized themselves in their struggle against the domination of yankee imperialism and the miserable Bolivian bourgeoisie.

Like the soviet in Irbid in Palestine, like the workers' councils in the Baltic ports in Poland, the setting up of the Popular Assembly expresses the fundamental trend of the period, the will of the proletarian and peasant masses to enter into the struggle for power.

The CC of the OCI, member of the International Committee, salutes the heroic struggle carried out by the Bolivian POR in a

situation where all the forces of imperialism sought to break this deep aspiration of the Bolivian masses to destroy the bourgeois masses and the relations of production of capitalist property to build workers power.

The CC of the OCI states that in the *coup d'état* organized by the CIA and the military dictators of Brazil and Argentine and facilitated by the action of the Torres government is the proof that the policy carried by the POR was fundamentally based on the interests of the Bolivian proletariat and of the world proletariat.

The facts confirm this: at each stage of the process, the political struggle of the POR enabled the masses to preserve their independence of the class from Torres and to outdo all the manoeuvres aiming again to subordinate them to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism.

It is the policy of the POR which enabled the maintenance right to the end of the form, raised to the level of power, of the United Class Front of the political and trade union organizations, expressed in the Popular Assembly.

It is the unity in and around the Popular Assembly, organ of dual power, which under the leadership of the Trotskyist party, the POR, dominated the whole revolutionary process before and after the confrontations of August 20 to August 23.

The Moscow bureaucracy recognized this; they condemned their party in their press for having capitulated before the POR.

The POR gave to all the petty-bourgeois currents the example of an armed struggle based on workers' militias and completely integrated in the movement of workers in struggle for their emancipation.

It is consciously that through the voice of the *Washington Post*, yankee imperialism stated that, on the first day of the fascist uprising in Santa Cruz, the Bolivian situation was far more serious than that in Chile, that it confronted the United States with a more dangerous state of affairs than even the Cuban revolution of 1959, because the Bolivian masses had taken up the struggle for a 'workers' government'.

The CC of the OCI declares that the Bolivian revolution is an integral part of the E. Berlin uprising of 1953, of the Hungarian workers' council revolution, of the movement towards political revolution of the Czechoslovak people, of the struggle of the Polish workers, of the May-June 1968 General Strike in France, of the struggle of the British proletariat against the Tory government, of the

General Motors strike in the United States, of the struggle of the Spanish proletariat against Franco, of the struggle of the Argentinian proletariat against military dictatorship, of the struggle of the world proletariat to destroy the domination of imperialism and that of the Stalinist bureaucracy which coalesces with it.

It is this which determined the intervention of imperialism and which explains the hatred of the Bolivian revolution shown by the world bourgeoisie, by the Moscow bureaucracy and its Stalinist parties, and by all petty-bourgeois parties.

The CC of the OCI, member of the International Committee, states that those who attack the Bolivian POR, attack the party which was the instigator and motive force of the Popular Assembly, that is the organ which concretized the struggle of the Bolivian proletariat to build its own power and which opened the road towards the dictatorship of the proletariat in Bolivia. All those who attack the POR through this, represent the enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They take the sides of imperialism and Stalinism. They are agents of counter-revolution and are enemies, conscious or unconscious, of the Fourth International.

The CC of the OCI, member of the International Committee, notes that those who attack the POR and expose their total incapacity in understanding the meaning of the struggle of the Bolivian masses, are the same people who characterized Ho Chi Minh as a revolutionary, the man who covered up the murder of the Trotskyist leader Ta Thu Tau, those who subordinated the Palestinian resistance to Nasser, then to the petty-bourgeois leaders of the Palestinian resistance, who tried to justify, by talking of so-called counter-revolutionary threats, the intervention of the Kremlin bureaucracy in Czechoslovakia.

They take their rightful place in the camp of slanderers of the heroic struggle of the POR of which numerous leaders fell in the civil war paying the heavy price of the struggle for the international proletarian revolution.

The CC of the OCI, who took up the struggle in 1951-1952 to maintain the continuity of the Fourth International, that is the link with the struggle of Lenin and Trotsky and of Bolshevism, against the attempt of those who with Pablo agreed to liquidation in the face of the Stalinist bureaucracy, states that the Pabloite Unified Secretariat has once again taken a stand against the POR and the Fourth International, as they did in 1953, at the time of the E. Berlin uprising and the French General Strike, as at the time of the second intervention in

Hungary in 1956, and as at all crucial moments in the class struggle, on the side of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Today, when the whole of the perspectives on which the struggle of Leon Trotsky were founded becomes clear and concrete more and more as the linked crisis of imperialism and bureaucracy accelerates, and when confrontations posing power multiply, the CC of the OCI affirms that it will continue with all the necessary firmness the struggle taken up 20 years ago, because it is the struggle for the victory of the world proletarian revolution, for the universal power of soviets, for the building of revolutionary parties, sections of the Fourth International in each country, and the rebuilding of the Fourth International, the indispensable instrument for victory.

DOCUMENT 4

Statement by the OCI, the POR and the Organizing Committee of Eastern Europe, October 12, 1971

The delegations of the Political Bureau of the OCI, French section of the International Committee for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, of the POR, Bolivian section of the International Committee and of the Organizing Committee of Communists (Trotskyists) in the E. European countries, discussed questions of common interest raised by the struggle carried out by the POR, the significance of which is outlined as follows:

Since the General Strike in France and the process of political revolution in Czechoslovakia, the political power of the working class is posed at the centre of each struggle of workers and youth throughout the world. In the face of decaying imperialism which offers only misery, unemployment, fascist barbarism and a war of extermination, in the face of the bureaucracy which threatens to destroy the conquests of the glorious Revolution of October 1917, which puts a brake on and dislocates their struggles, all the resistance and demands of the workers, all their will to live requires the direct and immediate struggle to take power, to impose a workers' government. Never before has the conquest of power by the proletariat been such a clear, achievable and urgent task! The creation of the Soviet in Irbid by the oppressed Palestinian masses, the committees and councils formed by the Polish working class, the Bolivian Popular Assembly concretize these struggles converging on this immediate goal, proceeding, although through different stages and different forms, towards the Universal Republic of Soviets.

It is in Bolivia that this march forward of the working class towards its power reached its highest level, rich in experience, expressing and concretizing the deepest aspiration of the whole of the international working class. At the head of the Bolivian workers was the POR, armed with the programme of the Fourth International, steeped in dozens of years of determined struggle for the proletarian revolution

against nationalism, against Stalinism, against Pabloite revisionism and against all forms of petty-bourgeois ideas, such as guerrilla-ism, deeply entrenched in the most combative section of the Bolivian proletariat. Because this Party prepared this struggle, it was prepared for it, and was able to seize the occasion and, at each revolutionary process, it developed the conditions for the working class to take power. We can see, in the development of the Bolivian revolution, not only the aspiration of the workers throughout the world for their government, but also mainly the lessons and experiences on the means and methods to achieve this. The achievement of the unity of the class through the workers' United Front, motive force of the anti-imperialist United Front, materialized in the Popular Assembly, organ of power. The POR of Bolivia, member of the International Committee for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, worked for this unity to create the indispensable conditions for the taking of power.

This experience of a struggle for a workers' and peasants' government, under the leadership of a Trotskyist party, a vital experience for the international working class, brings to life the universal lessons of the 1917 October Revolution. It is the most worthy commemoration on the eve of its next anniversary. This is then the positive reply to the Hungarian revolution of workers' councils, which 15 years ago, sought in vain for its organized political leadership. Here is the Trotskyist demonstration of a struggle to give a centralized and organized strength to the struggle of the whole of the proletariat marching towards power against the French Stalinists who betrayed and dislocated the 1968 General Strike, and fought the attempt of the OCI to achieve such an organized centralization.

Today the French CP carries out a slander campaign against the POR with the aim of turning the proletariat away from the carrying out of its revolutionary tasks. The international apparatus of the Kremlin finds in this work the greatest of support from the campaign of the obedient Pabloites (Ligue Communiste, Lutte Ouvrière) against the POR in struggle. No one can be mistaken. All the open and concealed enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its Party, today pour out mountains of lies and slanders against the POR of Bolivia. The Stalinists who, at each point and on an international scale, fight the class independence realized in the Popular Assembly, which was firmly maintained by the POR, glorify the class collaboration in Chile, condemn not only the POR, but the Bolivian Com-

munist Party which, in the Popular Assembly, was forced to accept the United Front. All the petty-bourgeois currents spit out their hatred of the Bolivian POR because it vigorously resisted sectarian adventures, firmly guiding the struggle of the popular masses towards the workers' government. Particularly active in the petty-bourgeois Front against the POR, the Pabloites find their place with all their nuances, the 'Lutte Ouvrière', the so-called 'Ligue Communiste' of the Unified Secretariat, the renegades of the Fourth International, those who glorified petty-bourgeois leaders — Stalinists like Gomulka as well as Yassir Arafat — who carried out an unprincipled agreement with representatives of the bourgeoisie in the 'Vietnam Committee'. These same petty bourgeois attack the POR, who were able to express the revolutionary process in Bolivia. They capitulate in Latin America as in France and everywhere in front of so-called spontaneist currents of the petty bourgeoisie to participate in the Stalinist attack against the revolutionary upsurge of the masses who, in each country, pose the dictatorship of the proletariat, the democracy of workers' councils.

It is precisely because the Bolivian events concentrate at their highest point the march towards power of the international working class, posing as the most important thing all the decisive questions in the conquest of power, as well as the activity of the Trotskyist Party at the heart of this world process in an epoch of upheavals and sharp turns, that the unresolved problems come out of the crisis of the Fourth International which in 1950 Pablo, Mandel, Frank, etc., wanted to destroy, finding their expression also in the heart of the International Committee. Only the petty bourgeois find this surprising. The history of the Fourth International since its foundation by Leon Trotsky in 1938, was difficult struggle for its maintenance against immense forces grouped together to destroy it. Only the Fourth International, through its programme and through its untiring struggles, has always fought for the class independence of the proletariat, for the world proletarian revolution against imperialism and Stalinist class collaboration. That is why it was, and is today the centre of sharp attacks by all the enemies of the proletariat. The Fourth International is decisive in the outcome of the world class struggle as it is in the continuation of Bolshevism, of the October Revolution. The Trotskyists who, since 1950, resisted the policy of capitulation in front of the bureaucracy which is the essence of Pabloism, the Trotskyist organizations which, in 1953, set up the International Committee, they alone ensured the continuity of the Fourth

International and thus preserved the conditions for its reconstruction indispensable to the building in each country of the leading Revolutionary Workers' Party, national section of the Fourth International.

What is more natural than that all the difficult problems of the international class struggle be reflected and concentrated at its heart? What is more natural than the fact that the decisive factor in the outcome of the gigantic world struggle be reflected in the crisis of the Fourth International as it is in the crisis of all the organizations of the working class? Today, the leadership of certain organizations of the International Committee, like the Socialist Labour League and the Workers' League, lacking clarity precisely on the question of the strategy of the conquest of power and the reconstruction of the Fourth International, have given in to enormous pressure in attacking the POR.

The three delegations, meeting in Paris, believe that the discussion is a legitimate one, between the sections of the IC as well as within each of these sections, but that the method used by the Workers' League and the SLL must be condemned, as they, without even studying the reports from the POR leadership, undertook to publicly condemn the Bolivian section of the IC. This is why the OCI delegation and the Organizing Committee of E. Europe support the demand of comrade Lora that the International Committee meet in plenary session as soon as possible to take a position on the report of the POR on the Bolivian revolution and on the tasks of reconstructing the Fourth International.

Guillermo Lora,

Secretary of the Bolivian POR, member of the IC for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Pierre Lambert,

from the CC of the OCI, French section of the IC for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Balazs Nagy,

leader of the League of Socialist Revolutionaries of Hungary, member of the IC for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, leader of the Organizing Committee of Communists (Trotskyists) of E. Europe.

Chapter Two

The split

In Document 5, the lessons of Bolivia, and in particular the lessons of the OCI's opportunist support for Lora and the POR, are analysed in detail by the International Committee. The whole Bolivian experience is placed in the essential context of the building of the Fourth International, and the struggle against revisionism which lays the basis of it. Just as the Bolivian revolution itself was a manifestation of a new period in the crisis of imperialism (coinciding almost exactly with the definitive end of the Bretton Woods post-war settlement, through Nixon's ending of dollar convertibility on August 15, 1971), so the split with the OCI was the result of the conscious struggle for Marxism against idealism in the International Committee. To prepare consciously the building of a party necessary for the new stage in the crisis meant to take the struggle to a new theoretical level. This fight to begin consciously from the development of dialectical materialism as the theory of knowledge of Marxism clashed head-on with the rationalism and formalism of the OCI. The documents in this chapter record the course of this collision, and the relation of it to the split on Bolivia and the Essen conference, and they trace the theoretical struggle back to the Third Conference of the IC (1966) and the following years.

DOCUMENT 5

Statement by the International Committee (Majority), October 24, 1971

1. A new period for the Trotskyist movement

The Fourth International, founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938, now faces the greatest change and the greatest challenge in its history. Capitalism's international economic crisis entered a completely new stage on August 15, 1971, when President Nixon administered the death blow to all the economic and political relations imposed by the ruling class, assisted by the Stalinist bureaucracy, in 1944-1945. In the new conditions, the working class is everywhere driven into struggles for power, and the Trotskyist movement has now unprecedented opportunities for assembling and training the revolutionary working-class leadership. The conditions of defeat in which the movement was founded, the war which followed, and then the long years of post-war boom, mean that the fight for the continuity of revolutionary Marxism was a fight against Stalinist repression, against isolation and under conditions unfavourable for the development of Marxist theory. Trotskyism suffered from revisionist attempts to liquidate the Fourth International, and since 1953, when Pablo and his group split from the Fourth International only the International Committee of the Fourth International has fought for the continuity of Trotskyism. Now the International Committee has the task of building parties in every country capable of leading the struggle for power.

The leap in consciousness, the development of revolutionary theory and practice, necessary to meet this responsibility, involves an ideological struggle within the IC itself. On October 12, 1971, a minority of the IC, i.e. two sections, the Hungarian LSRH and the

French OCI, published a declaration denouncing the Socialist Labour League, the British section, and the Workers League USA (in political solidarity with the IC) for their criticisms of the Bolivian POR.

One of the signatories of the declaration is Guillermo Lora, Secretary of the POR, which is not a section of the International Committee. Its application for affiliation was to be considered at the next IC Conference (Fourth). The IC consists of British, Greek, Ceylonese, Hungarian, French and Canadian sections, together with the Irish and Mexican (LOM) sections admitted at the 1970 pre-Conference of the IC. Lambert (OCI), and Nagy (Hungary) do not speak for the IC, and this present document is the reply to their minority statement by the IC majority.

The calling of a meeting in Paris, advertising as Chairman Stephane Just, 'Secretary of the IC for the reconstruction of the Fourth International', shows that the OCI has arrogated to itself the functions of the IC, rejected the IC, and nominated its own 'secretary' as opposed to the elected secretary.

This is a split from the IC and its politics. It is a split by a minority.

On September 22, the OCI issued a public declaration denouncing as 'enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat, agents of counter-revolution and enemies, conscious or unconscious, of the Fourth International, all those who attack the POR (Bolivian)'. They refer to the SLL and the Workers League.

There is the International Committee of the Fourth International, resting on the foundation laid down by Trotsky in 1938, the first four Congresses of the Third International, and all the work of the IC since 1953, particularly the decisions of the 1966 Conference. And there is the bogus 'IC for the reconstruction of the Fourth International', represented by the OCI and the Hungarian section, who want to regroup with centrists *against* the Fourth International. This split, and not the Bolivian revolution and the Bolivian POR, is the basic issue.

2. *The split at Essen*

This became crystal-clear at the Essen Youth Rally in July 1971. There, representatives of the OCI, the Hungarian section and the Mexican LOM, voted along with centrists and even right-wing organizations against the amendment to the main resolution put by the representative of the SLL and supported by representatives of a

majority of the IC sections (Ceylon, Ireland, Canada, Greece, SLL). The issue was clear: the OCI and its associates voted against amendments stating that the only revolutionary international and revolutionary parties are the *Fourth* International. In their opposition they naturally received the support of the POUM (Spain) and other centrists, as well as of the right-wing American National Students' Association. NSA is a right-wing student organization directly tied to the bourgeois establishment, even to the extent, under a previous leadership, of admittedly receiving funds from the CIA. Its spokesman used the Essen rally as a platform for the Stalinist-supported 'People's Peace Treaty in Vietnam' campaign. Such are the dangers involved in the OCI's movement to centrism and centrist methods.

The OCI and its associates opposed and voted down the following amendment (presented by the SLL and supported by the majority of the IC sections: Greece, Canada, Ceylon, Ireland):

There can be no revolutionary party without revolutionary theory. Behind every opportunist development in the history of the workers' movement, and especially of Stalinism, has been the revision of Marxist theory. The continuity of the struggle for revolutionary Marxist theory in the past, the struggle of the Fourth International and the International Committee, was the only basis for the initiatives which led to this rally and for the struggle to build the international revolutionary youth movement. Revolutionary youth everywhere must devote themselves above all to the task of developing Marxist theory through the struggle against bourgeois ideology in all the forms it takes in the workers' movement. This is the only basis for combating the dangers of adventurism, activism and 'pure' militancy with which revisionists and Maoists mislead the youth, and which can only lead to historic defeats for the working class.

This was already a split, the real split. They do not want the FI built on the foundations of dialectical materialism and the politics of Lenin and Trotsky, but they want a centrist amalgam of all those who want to disarm the masses by talk about revolutionary united fronts and 'expressing the will of the masses'. Their 'IC for the reconstruction of the FI' is their fraudulent attempt to use the revolutionary name of the IC of the FI for their own opportunist aims. They will never succeed in doing this.

The majority of the IC rejected their unprincipled manoeuvre at Essen. Now they have chosen to stake everything on the issue of Bolivia, as a smokescreen for the real issues which they will not discuss. Running away from the real theoretical and practical ques-

tions of building the FI, they propose to intimidate the movement with shouting about solidarity with the POR of Bolivia. This was the old trick used by the SWP on Cuba in 1963: no theoretical discussion and no criticism of Cuba: they are involved in a revolution. Similarly, Pablo excluded political discussion with his theory of the imminent Third World War. And it must never be forgotten that the suppression of discussion on Cuba and Ceylon, used to effect the 'unification' of 1963, had as its direct consequence the entry of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), while still a section of the Pabloite Secretariat, into the bourgeois coalition of Mrs. Bandaranaike.

The vote of the OCI and the Hungarian section at Essen against the IC majority was carried out in front of an observer of the American Spartacist group of Robertson. This has an historical significance which cannot be overstated. At the Third Conference of the IC in 1966, the French and Hungarian sections voted with the rest of the IC delegations for resolutions affirming the revolutionary continuity of the Fourth International. Opposing this were two groups invited as observers to the Conference, Robertson's Spartacists and the French 'Voix Ouvrière' (now 'Lutte Ouvrière'). As opportunists and pragmatists they denounced the IC's struggle for continuity against revisionism. After the Conference, Robertson collaborated with Hansen and the revisionist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in wholesale slander of the SLL and the IC. In its resolution at the 1966 Conference, the IC, including the OCI, unanimously stated: '... The IC not only dissociates itself from the activities and publications of the Spartacists (Robertson) group but insists that a Marxist party can be built only in opposition to it.' Robertson's politics since then have been opportunist on every question, and his group has worked in complete opposition to the International Committee. To admit Robertson's group as observers at Essen at this stage is in effect to junk the whole struggle for principles upon which the IC is based.

The OCI will reply that the invitation was issued on individual initiative by Comrade Berg, secretary of the AJS, and that they have condemned it. On July 9, after Essen, the OCI Political Bureau carried unanimously the following resolution:

The Political Bureau regrets that the Robertson 'Spartacist' group was invited as observer to Essen, without this decision being taken responsibly. The PB considers this individual initiative to be wrong and condemns it.

This leaves unanswered the point that the OCI leadership is itself

politically responsible for the opportunist politics of Berg. Is it accidental that the OCI at Essen returned to an alliance, against Trotskyism, with a tendency such as the POUM, hostile to the very foundation of the Fourth International, and prepared to collaborate with the OCI *only* on the basis of *abandoning* the struggle for its foundation and continuity? Precisely at the point in the world crisis where everything depends on the conscious creation, on the basis of Marxist theory and programme, of revolutionary parties, where the struggle against liquidationism and against the revision of dialectical materialism comes to a head, at this point comes the split! The OCI runs clean away from this historic struggle and, in the name of 'expressing' spontaneous movements of the masses, joins sworn opponents of the FI, collaborates with the centrist riff-raff against the IC.

3. *The fight for dialectical materialism*

When the French delegation at Essen opposed the SLL amendment on the struggle for Marxist theory, they set the seal on an opposition to dialectical materialism which was not at all new. One year earlier, in June 1970, at the international pre-Conference of the IC, these differences became explicit. And for very good reasons objectively founded in the struggle. Anticipating the profound worsening of the economic crisis and the struggle provoked by it, the SLL delegates stressed the urgency of the basic training of the youth in dialectical thinking.

What was most essential in the preparation of the sections was to develop dialectical materialism in a struggle to understand and to transform the consciousness of the working class in the changing objective conditions. This means the understanding and development of dialectical materialism as the theory of knowledge of Marxism.

Reflecting the attacks on dialectical materialism by the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia of the advanced capitalist countries, especially France and Germany, and of E. Europe, the OCI and Hungarian delegations declared that dialectical materialism was not a theory of knowledge and took up the position that only programme was the basis of the building of parties. Here is the very essence of revisionism which prepares the way for liquidating the party into centrism.

We insist once more, with all our force: only a basic struggle for dialectical materialism against all enemies of Marxism and carried forward in struggle *against* the spontaneous consciousness of the working class, can equip the youth for the building of the Fourth International.

In the polemic with Burnham and Shachtman (1939-1940), Trotsky wrote: 'In the United States . . . where the bourgeoisie systematically instils vulgar empiricism in the workers, more than anywhere else, it is necessary to speed the elevation of the movement to a proper theoretical level.'

The theoretical struggle at this basic level is essential for every section of the Fourth International. And against those who refuse to 'acquire and develop dialectical materialism', Trotsky wrote: 'This is nothing else than a renunciation of Marxism, of scientific method in general, a wretched capitulation to empiricism.'

4. *The OCI and the French working class*

This opposition to the basic theoretical struggle for the revolutionary youth has roots in the orientation of the OCI towards the French proletariat. At no time has the OCI been able consistently to put forward a policy and programme to bring it close to the mass of the French workers who vote for the Stalinists and are organized around the Stalinist-led CGT. Instead they have orientated towards those sections still supporting the social-democrats, primarily in the older industries. They sought support outside of the orbit of the Stalinists instead of fighting for policies which would break the main body of workers from their mass party. One of the consequences is that the rapidly accumulating effects of the world crisis find the OCI paralysed in its political work in the French working class. Their hysterical outbursts on Bolivia, their frantic desire to find an issue to separate from the SLL and the IC — these are the reactions to the deepening crisis of a petty-bourgeois group which falls back on revolutionary shouting, not of a party which goes deeper into the masses to fight for a development of theory. This characteristic resort to radical phrase-mongering is, again, connected with the failure of the OCI to struggle on every level for dialectical materialism against the dominant forms of bourgeois philosophy, in this case French rationalism and its twin, pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric.

The Essen rally itself was conceived and carried through by the OCI as a diversion from the unresolved problems of their work in the French working class. An artificial formula was constructed which made W. Germany the focal point of the workers' struggle in Europe, and then the OCI led their youth movement to a rally where less than 200 German youth participated, and real political work to build sections of the FI was replaced by demagogy and showmanship. It could not and did not have the slightest effect on the workers of France or of Germany. The SLL participated reluctantly, and only on the understanding that we received the preparatory document in time. It was received untranslated, only a few hours before our delegation left for Essen. The SLL and the majority of the IC sections, having moved their amendment, voted for the general resolution despite differences, only in order to preserve public unity of the IC during the period of preparation of the International Fourth Conference, at which the disputed questions would be discussed.

May-June 1968, with the French workers on General Strike, themselves striving for an alternative government, was the greatest testing time for the OCI. But what did the strike reveal? It revealed the theoretical bankruptcy and political impotence of the OCI whose leadership — guided by a superficial impressionist analysis of De Gaulle's coup in 1958 — had exaggerated the strength and viability of the Fifth Republic, abandoned its revolutionary perspective and written off the revolutionary capacities of the French working class. This defeatist conception, which extended even to the Vietnam war, was summed up in the rationalization of Lambert that the French working class was 'decisively defeated in 1958'. This pessimistic and essentially middle-class outlook expressed itself in all the organizational and agitational work of the OCI and the AJS before and after 1968. It is an undeniable fact that at no time during the General Strike did the OCI leadership advance a socialist programme. Nor did it attempt to undermine the political credibility of the Stalinist leadership by critically supporting the demand of the Renault workers for a 'popular government' by advancing the demand of a CP-CGT government. Instead, the OCI leaders tail-ended the working class and restricted the political scope of the strike by demanding a central strike committee. This was a complete evasion of the *political* responsibilities of revolutionary leadership.

Is it necessary to remind the OCI leaders that one of the chief reasons for the definitive split with the Pabloites was their refusal to

address political demands to the trade union bureaucracy and fight for a CP-CGT government in the French General Strike of 1953? Revolutionists do not abstain on basic political questions — only centrists and syndicalists do.

The Socialist Labour League had warned the French section of the dangers *before* 1968. May 15, 1967:

Now the radicalization of the workers in W. Europe is proceeding rapidly, particularly in France. The election results there, the threat of a return to the political instability of the ruling class in the Fourth Republic, the mounting strike struggles, the taking of emergency powers — all these place a premium on revolutionary preparation. There is *always* a danger at such a stage of development that a revolutionary party responds to the situation in the working class not in a revolutionary way, but by adaptation to the level of struggle to which the workers are restricted by their own experience under the old leaderships, i.e., to the inevitable initial confusion. Such revisions of the fight for the independent party and the Transitional Programme are usually dressed up in the disguise of getting closer to the working class, unity with all those in struggle, not posing ultimatums, abandoning dogmatism, etc. (Reply to the OCI.)

Even from this 1968 experience the lessons were not learned. In fact the abstentionist methods and omissions of the General Strike period were continued into the presidential elections of 1969. In the referendum in March of the same year, the OCI had correctly campaigned for a vote against De Gaulle, in contrast to the abstentionism of the Pabloites. However, the gains from this correct turn were lost in the presidential elections, the class character of which was ignored by the OCI. Basing themselves on their fraudulent theory of the 'United Class Front', the OCI leaders used the failure of the CP and Socialist Party to agree on a single candidate as a pretext for not supporting the CP candidate, Duclos, against Pompidou.

The task of revolutionaries was to raise the consciousness of Stalinist rank and file by critically supporting Duclos and pointing out that the main enemy was Pompidou. The OCI should have campaigned throughout the labour movement to demand that the CP candidate be pledged to a socialist policy against the banks and monopolies. To carry forward this fight, while calling for a massive vote for Duclos, was the best way of exposing the Stalinists and their programme of 'advanced democracy' and fighting for alternative revolutionary leadership. Any other course leaves the Stalinist control undisturbed. It was also necessary to expose the SP candidate whose

party refused to vote for Duclos in the second ballot and supported the bourgeois candidate, Poher.

The OCI leaders did none of these things. Some members voted for Duclos, others for Deferre (SP) and others, including comrade Lambert, abstained. What was worse, the OCI attacked the Stalinists for having dared to stand a candidate in the elections despite the fact that the Stalinists in the previous presidential elections in 1965 did not do so and instead supported Mitterand, a bourgeois politician. In 1965, the OCI did not even intervene: thus in France, as in Bolivia, the policy of the 'united class front' and the 'united workers' front' has become a means for disorienting the workers and strengthening the grip of the Stalinists and petty-bourgeois nationalists over the mass movement. The sectarian absence of any policy towards the Stalinists in France easily turns into opportunism, so that the OCI now writes in *Informations Ouvrières* about the Clyde struggle in Britain without any criticism of its Stalinist shop steward leaders — in the same issue as their denunciation of the Socialist Labour League and Workers League as agents of counter-revolution!

5. *The capitulation to spontaneity*

Just as the difference over dialectical materialism at the IC's pre-Conference was the necessary and conscious anticipation of the essential theoretical problems to be overcome in the impending revolutionary crisis, so Essen was the anticipation of the open split which these problems would produce on the International Committee. The real split was already effected at Essen, when the OCI lined up with anti-Trotskyists in a public vote against the majority of the IC. They ran away from the principled questions raised at Essen. They raise the question of Bolivia in a totally unprincipled way in order to keep around them their middle-class allies. We will never accept this running to the centrists, and we will oppose to the end the OCI and anyone else who does it. As the Secretary of the SLL wrote to comrade Lambert of the OCI on July 14, 1971, in reference to Essen: 'We have not spent all our lives fighting centrism to suddenly decide to capitulate to it on the eve of the greatest class struggles in history.'

It is necessary to make one other major point on the split pronounced by the OCI. They carry out this split while a Congress of the IC is in preparation and due to be held before the end of 1971. Even though the events at Essen created conditions where day-to-day col-

laboration with the OCI became impossible, nevertheless it was agreed to proceed with the preparation of documents and arrange the Conference, as the only way of dealing with the differences. These documents are now prepared. But the OCI and Hungarian sections have chosen to split before the Conference. They act in the same tradition as the SWP, which in 1963 avoided the Conference of the IC and effected its 'unification' with the Pabloites.

At the very heart of the attacks of revisionism has been the attempt to liquidate the party into spontaneous and so-called 'objective' processes. This is the expression of an anti-dialectical method which denies the role of revolutionary consciousness in changing the material struggle, itself under specific conditions. Thus Pablo held that given a changed world balance of forces in the post-war period a 'new reality' existed whereby the 'revolutionary process' would force the Stalinist parties, the social democratic bureaucracies and the petty-bourgeois nationalists in a 'rough way' to make the revolution.

We now find this method developed once again by the OCI. We are told we are in a period of 'imminent revolution'. Within this period there is a 'revolutionary process'. Parties and leaderships then 'correspond' to this 'process'. We are even told of an overall process occasionally 'concretized' in something like the Popular Assembly in Bolivia, which proceeds 'through different stages and different forms towards the Universal Republic of Soviets'. The revolutionary party's task is to 'express these processes'. This is nothing more than idealism in the form of French rationalism gone mad. We repeat what Lenin said: 'The truth is always concrete'. Only through a detailed and specific analysis of the actual development of the class struggle under the specific conditions of the capitalist crisis can we begin to relate our strategy to the actual changes in the consciousness and life of workers. This requires of us a conscious development of dialectical materialism as we struggle within the workers' movement. This struggle is at all times the struggle to construct Trotskyist parties independent of centrism and Stalinism. Such parties and only such parties can lead the revolution. They can only lead the revolution in the bitterest of struggles against the counter-revolutionary Stalinist and social democratic betrayers.

Within this framework the OCI's position on the 'united class front' becomes a complete liquidation of the party and its subordination to the Stalinist and social democratic parties and union apparatus. Lenin and Trotsky saw the united front as a *tactic* and not a strategy as the

OCI claim. They saw it as a relationship between mass workers' parties of a temporary character for the purpose of winning the masses to the Communist Party. The OCI has transformed this into an overall 'unity' of the class achieved on the basis of its present leadership, without the participation in the united front of our party. This 'united class front' more and more, in their theorizing and practice, takes over the role of the revolutionary party itself. In the October 12 statement we find reference to 'the achievement of the unity of the class through the workers' United Front, motive force of the anti-imperialist United Front . . .' This carries the liquidation one step further dissolving even the *workers'* united front into a broader 'anti-imperialist' one — broad enough, no doubt, to include the bourgeoisie or at least its petty-bourgeois representatives.

In the 1950s, the OCI made an identical mistake in their policy in Algeria. The bourgeois-nationalist MNA of Messali Hadj was elevated to a revolutionary party not only in Algeria, but in France itself. The Pabloites supported one wing of the nationalist bourgeoisie, the FLN, and the OCI supported the other, the MNA. In Britain, the SLL had given critical support to the MNA, but broke off all relations with their representatives in Britain when the MNA approached the United Nations for intervention in Algeria. The OCI continued its relations with Messali Hadj even until the open collaboration of Messali with De Gaulle. The OCI's position today on the 'united class front' and 'anti-imperialist' front, even after the defeat in Bolivia, shows that their 'correction' of the Algerian adventure has been purely formal, and that its theoretical roots remain firmly implanted in the OCI.

Related to this has been the OCI's position that it is not a party, and that the Fourth International does not really exist. It sees the national and international party in quantitative terms rather than from the point of view of the development of Marxist theory. This in turn led it, on the eve of the May-June 1968 events, to not even have the post of secretary of its organization, so far had the capitulation to spontaneity developed.

On the question of the struggle in the colonial and ex-colonial countries, the anti-Marxist method of the OCI has had the obvious results, and not only on Algeria. The OCI refused to campaign in support of a victory for the National Liberation Front, because of its Stalinist leadership, and called instead for the 'victory of the Vietnamese workers and peasants'. This led to a situation on the eve of the

1968 Tet offensive where comrade Berg openly stated an abstentionist position on Vietnam. And now, after years of refusal to support the struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination, and inability to take the side of the Arab revolution against Zionism and US imperialism, the OCI welcomes the Irbid 'Soviet' as some manifestation of a world process towards the Universal Republic of Workers' Councils! Inability to fight against the Stalinists and petty-bourgeois nationalists in a real fight for independent leadership in the anti-imperialist struggle, and at the same time an abstract demagoguery about the victory of the workers and peasants and the international striving for Soviets.

6. *The Bolivian Revolution*

Bolivia is being used as a smokescreen to cover up the bloc with centrism against the International Committee. As if this were not criminal enough, in proceeding in this fashion, the OCI turns against the most fundamental lessons of our movement on the question of political principle and at the same time covers up for the worst sort of opportunism in Latin America. We take back nothing from our criticisms of Lora and his role in the defeat of the Bolivian working class. How could we have proceeded otherwise than with an open attack? The road to coalition government in Ceylon was paved by such cover-ups time and again on the part of the Pabloite leadership. How could we draw the lessons we do from their betrayal in Ceylon and practise the same politics in relation to someone on the periphery of the International Committee? We cover over nothing. We build the Fourth International on the basis of political principle and complete honesty.

It was in fact the OCI which first publicly criticized the politics of Lora and the POR. The October 1970 issue of *La Vérité* carried a lengthy criticism of the thesis passed at the April 1970 Congress of the COB (Bolivian trade union federation). This thesis was the product of the joint collaboration of the POR and the Stalinist Bolivian CP. It was voted for by both parties and the Popular Assembly was later to base itself politically on this document. The OCI wrote:

... We are dealing with a text which after having made certain concessions to the idea of constructing socialism in Bolivia alone, takes on the one hand, a Stalinist type view of the Ovando regime, and introduces in the chapter on proletarian internationalism, a Stalinist analysis. We have

found in the COB thesis on the one hand passages of direct Stalinist inspiration, and on the other a serious omission concerning Czechoslovakia.

The OCI concludes:

Comrades, we tell you without evasion, moved by a profound and even anguished conviction, that if this really became the charter of the Bolivian workers' movement and represented its orientation and if the POR was to adopt it (or even for a long time keep silent on the fact that it is the result of a compromise and only has a very circumstantial value) then the thesis of the COB can constitute a noose around the neck of the Bolivian proletariat for it encloses it within the framework of Bolivia.

Was the OCI at that time giving in 'to enormous pressures' as the OCI now says of the SLL and the Workers League? Was the OCI in making those criticisms identifying itself 'as enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat' and placing itself 'on the side of imperialism and Stalinism'?

The truth is that in 1967 the OCI held the position that revolutions could not be made in the underdeveloped countries until such time as mass revolutionary parties were created in the advanced countries. So distant was the struggle in the underdeveloped countries from the thinking and perspectives of the OCI leadership until very recently that the basic resolution around which it wished the Fourth Conference to be organized 'For the Reconstruction of the Fourth International' hardly mentions Latin America and does not mention Bolivia at all. And yet the Bolivian question is now made the pretext for a split from the International Committee.

We cannot educate a new generation of cadres as revolutionaries with such factional and dishonest methods. We cannot allow the question of Bolivia to be *used* rather than assessed for the purpose of actually developing theoretically a new leadership in the underdeveloped countries.

We restate what we said about the history of the Lora group. Lora was the major supporter of Pablo in Latin America in 1952. With Pablo's help he gave critical support to the bourgeois MNR Paz government. Here is how a member of his party reported the POR's position in the Fourth International at the time: 'The POR began by justifiably granting critical support to the MNR government. That is, it desisted from issuing the slogan "down with the government"; it gave the government critical support against attacks of imperialism and reaction, and it supported all progressive measures.' This is just

the way the LSSP began its move towards openly joining the Ceylonese coalition government.

The POR broke with Pablo, but it turned its back on the International Committee, refusing to take up a fight for the IC in Latin America though urged to do so. Lora from then on played only a national role. This is the history as we printed it in the *Workers Press* and *Bulletin*. The OCI does not deny this.

We can add to this some more. Understanding the past background of Lora, a background of Pabloism, nationalism and opportunism, the Socialist Labour League refused to put up any money towards his fare and collaboration in bringing him to the 1966 International Conference as the OCI had proposed. When he appeared in Europe in 1970, the Socialist Labour League made it quite plain it would not favour his admission into the IC unless a full discussion was held on his whole history and an understanding reached on this basis. We do not have one policy for the LSSP and the Pabloites and another for Lora. In our public statement we made this fundamental assessment of Lora's role in the Bolivian events:

Lora, in collaboration with the Bolivian Stalinists and with the agreement of the Bolivian and international Pabloites, failed to fight at any point for the overthrow of the Torres military regime. Thus he, along with the rest of the Popular Assembly, acted as a left cover for Torres while the right-wing elements in Torres' own army prepared and finally executed their coup.

Then, after writing this, we received Lora's own account of the Bolivian events which we published in the *Workers Press* and in the *Bulletin*. The OCI has yet to publish this account. Lora himself in this account states: 'At the same time everybody thought — including we Marxists — that the arms would be given by the governing military team, which would consider that only through resting on the masses and giving them adequate firepower could they at least neutralize the gorilla right.' Lora thus admits to what we had accused him of. Never really fighting to overthrow Torres, he had along with the Stalinists, counted on one section of the bourgeoisie to arm the working class for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie as a whole! Lora thus was carrying out the very same policy he carried out with Pablo in 1952. At no point did he raise the slogan 'Down with Torres'. This was, of course, Lenin's policy in the *April Theses*, while Lora stands with Stalin and the 'old Bolsheviks'.

Even after the defeat, Lora is unable to draw any lessons at all. He

openly defends his reformist position in the pages of the OCI's *Informations Ouvrières*:

The ultra-lefts and the Pabloites forget the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky: they draw up their 'documents' in a simple-minded way and place Torres and Ovando-Banzer on the same level. These people refuse to understand the various shades that bourgeois nationalism can take in underdeveloped countries.

Since they are removed from the class struggle they do not understand the difference between bourgeois-democratic demands of Torres and the methods of the fascists; that is the difference between going to prison legally or getting killed by a bullet in the back of the neck.

Revolutionary tactics must begin with this difference. It is not a question of supporting Torres, but of crushing fascism to impose a workers' government.

Revolutionary strategy does not begin with the differences between left and right wings of the military, but from the perspective of the overthrow of the whole bourgeois order. It does not base its policy on a bloc with the left bourgeoisie against the fascist threat, but on the understanding that there is no way to stop fascism without taking up the independent struggle for socialism. Thus lessons which Trotsky repeated thousands of times, particularly in regard to Spain, are once again borne out in the paralysis and complicity of Torres in the right-wing military takeover and in the prostration of the working class before this takeover because of the misleadership of all the workers' parties, but especially the POR which claimed to be Trotskyist. In the end the workers of Bolivia got both the bullet in the head and the jail.

The policy of the POR was consistently opportunist from beginning to end. Under conditions of a mass revolutionary situation it acted as the left cover for Stalinism and bourgeois-nationalism. Nowhere did it decisively break from the CP. In fact it put forward a common candidate for the presidency of the Popular Assembly with the CP. The policy of Lora had nothing whatsoever to do with the policy of Bolshevism, or Trotskyism. The construction of the Trotskyist movement in Latin America, as elsewhere, requires a decisive break with the narrow national outlook and a return to internationalism and the struggle to develop Marxist theory. The POR and Lora repeat the policies of the POUM in Spain in 1935-1938 and are in no fundamental way different from them. Their relations with Torres and the COB parallels those of the POUM with the Republican

Government and the CNT. The OCI's support for the POR now makes clear the political meaning of their bloc with the POUM at Essen.

7. The way forward

The essence of the struggle of the International Committee since 1953, has been the conscious construction of independent revolutionary parties of the Fourth International. Revisionists have always attacked this fundamental conception, Pablo with his 'new reality', 'mass pressure' and 'the revolution in all its forms', the LSSP with its 'united left front'. Now the OCI, using the formula, 'imminence of revolution', elaborating a schema of natural stages through which the working class passes on the road to power, distorting the tactic of united front of the working class, has taken the road of liquidationism laid down by these revisionists.

The split comes now, when we stand at the point of transition from one phase of the class struggle to a higher one, the stage in which Trotskyist parties are called upon to win leadership in the struggle for working-class power. In this transition it is inevitable that a decisive clash, and a split, becomes necessary with all those like the OCI who rejected the struggle for dialectical materialism and refused to break from the old propagandist conceptions. This hostility to theory always leads to centrism and opportunism.

The record shows clearly that on all the disputed questions, and above all on the importance of theoretical development and training, the Socialist Labour League and the IC majority tried patiently to correct the course of the OCI, and never proceeded precipitately or in such way as to provoke a split. The decision of the OCI to join the centrists at Essen against the International Committee and their manoeuvring and demagogy on Bolivia, constitute a decision to reject and oppose the struggle to build independent revolutionary parties of the Fourth International. We call upon all Trotskyists in every country to reject completely the OCI line and to fight on the principled positions of the International Committee.

The Fourth Conference of the International Committee will meet in the first weeks of 1972. There it will be necessary to make a balance-sheet of the struggle against revisionism and the fight to establish the Trotskyist cadre throughout the period since 1938. A new period opens up, a period in which the Fourth International is called upon to

lead struggles for workers' power. The perspectives of this struggle in the advanced capitalist countries, in the colonial countries, and in the fight for the political revolution in E. Europe, the Soviet Union and China, will be discussed and decided. The draft resolution for this Conference is now complete, and the discussion now begins in all sections of the International Committee.

Workers' League, USA (sympathetic to the IC of the FI)
Revolutionary Communist League of Ceylon
Workers Internationalist League of Greece
League for a Workers Vanguard of Ireland
Socialist Labour League, Britain

DOCUMENT 6

Declaration of the Central Committee of the OCI, November 24, 1971

Reply to a Splitting Act:

For the Defence of the International Committee!

For the Reconstruction of the Fourth International!

Workers Press, the daily paper of the Socialist Labour League, in the November 5 issue, and the *Bulletin* weekly organ of the Workers League of the USA, dated November 8, published a document entitled 'Declaration of the Fourth International (Majority).' This document was adopted on October 24 at the end of a meeting attended by, according to the signers, representatives of the following organizations: Socialist Labour League (Great Britain), the Workers League (USA), League for a Workers Vanguard (Ireland), International Workers League (Greece), and a German group 'Sozialistischer Arbeiter Bund' formed by elements expelled from the German Trotskyist organization, IAK, for refusing to obey in action the discipline of the organization.¹

The title of this document is in itself a flagrant political falsehood. There cannot be any 'majority' of the International Committee any more than there can be a 'minority' since there was no meeting of the International Committee. The factional meeting of October 24 was held in fact without informing the OCI, the League of Revolutionary Hungarian Socialists (LSRH), the Revolutionary Workers Party of Bolivia (POR), and the Workers Marxist League (LOM) of Mexico. The document which came out of this meeting was not sent to the sections of the International Committee before being made public. The purpose of this document is to break up the framework of the

¹ It must be noted that this German group is only mentioned as a signer in the *Bulletin* of the Workers' League. It is omitted in the *Workers Press*.

International Committee, to break up the discussion and not to provide the basis for a serious discussion. Therefore, as such, it is not so much a question of an answer, but a clarification: this is the purpose of the present declaration.

All the same this document represents by itself an element of the very discussion that it wants to prevent: this discussion will be carried out and the Central Committee of the OCI will publish next a text which will answer the basic questions posed by the present stage of the fight for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Who wants to break up the International Committee?

The first chapter of the text adopted on October 24 is called 'A New Period for the Trotskyist Movement'. A flamboyant headline for such a pitiful attempt to break up the International Committee founded in 1953 to defend Trotskyism, the programme of the Fourth International against the liquidationists. The whole argument of this chapter is dictated by the following conclusion:

There is the International Committee of the Fourth International resting on the foundations laid down by Trotsky in 1938, the first four Congresses of the Third International and all the work of the IC since 1953, particularly the decisions of the 1966 conference. And there is the bogus 'IC for the reconstruction of the Fourth International', represented by the OCI and the Hungarian section, who want to regroup with centrists against the Fourth International. This split, and not the Bolivian revolution and the Bolivian POR is the basic issue.

To believe the authors of this document, the OCI and the LSRH have thus created the split by publicly attacking the SLL and the Workers League in company with Lora (whose organization is supposedly not affiliated with the IC) and in holding a meeting where comrade Stephane Just abusively designated himself the title of Secretary of the IC, etc., all in order to be able to avoid discussing the 'fundamental questions'. What terrible crimes!

Suppose for a minute that the formal excuses used by the signers of the October 24 Declaration are well founded: the OCI and LSRH committed a splitting act in relation to the IC. What then was the duty of the other sections and especially of the most important among them, the SLL? To propose a plenary meeting of the IC as soon as possible, to place those who threatened the unity of the IC before their

responsibilities, to force them to make a retraction or else make a clear break. The way to proceed was certainly not to hold a secret meeting with four sections of the International Committee and then to try and make it appear that the others had taken the initiative to split.

But it only seems to be illogical. The strange method used by the leadership of the SLL who initiated the October 24 meeting can be explained by the inane nature of the excuses and by a panicky flight from 'fundamental discussion'.

Let us re-establish the facts, the best way to give politics its proper rights. For more than two years — and especially since the pre-conference of the July 1970 of the International Committee — the leadership of the SLL has been multiplying its efforts to prevent any discussion on the 'fundamental question', that is, on the concrete content of the present stage of the struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

In September 1969, the OCI submitted a political text, *For the Reconstruction of the Fourth International* for discussion. In July 1970 a pre-conference of the IC sections and groups associated with it was held, a step towards an international conference regrouping organizations, groups and militants who base themselves on the Transitional Programme.

The OCI text was the only document submitted to the discussion. The SLL delegation began by affirming that the heart of the problem was 'Marxist philosophy'. Then they declared that the OCI text was correct in its overall line, but needed some amendments. Then they declared that the text was unacceptable. Finally, they asked, due to 'lack of preparation' (when it meant taking a stand on a text in their possession for nine months) that the vote be put off until the second session of the pre-conference. They proposed that this session take place in October.

The OCI delegation, fighting to preserve and strengthen the International Committee, accepted this report, taking into account the political difficulties of the sections. But — by a common proposal of the OCI and the SLL — a statement was voted on which provided a framework to continue the discussion and which characterized the OCI text as a basis for discussion in line with the principles of the Fourth International.

Since July 1970, the leadership of the SLL has refused to call the second session of the pre-conference. Instead it appealed to the leading centre of the liquidators of the Fourth International, to the

'Unified Secretariat' of Mandel and company to propose a common conference in terms not only opposed to the decisions of the pre-conference but contrary to the meaning of the whole battle of the International Committee, proof of which is the article of its general secretary Gerry Healy in the September 8 issue of the *Workers Press*.

At that point a clear and rapid reply by the OCI Central Committee retarded the development of this dangerous tendency. But that it was able to reveal itself to this extent shows the seriousness of the oscillations of the SLL leadership which has led the SLL today, with the document of October 24, to become the vehicle of conceptions close to those of the Pabloites to the point where the Pabloites run out to distribute it as widely as possible. Since this episode, the SLL leadership intensified its obstructionist attitude, only to come out of it in order to launch a deliberate offensive against the unity of the International Committee, with a disloyal and slanderous attack against the POR of Bolivia: Tim Wohlforth's article in the August 30 issue of the *Bulletin*, reprinted by the *Workers Press* September 8, and in the October 24 document 'Our Statement on Bolivia'.

The OCI replied publicly to this public offensive, explaining its estimation of the revolutionary struggle in Bolivia (declaration of the Central Committee of the OCI September 17) without mentioning the SLL or the Workers League.

The three delegations, meeting in Paris, believe that the discussion is a legitimate one, between the sections of the IC as well as within each of these sections, but that the method used by the Workers League and the SLL must be condemned, as they, without even studying the reports from the POR leadership, undertook to publicly condemn the Bolivian section of the IC.

This is why the OCI delegation and the Organizing Committee of E. Europe support the demand of comrade Lora that the International Committee meet in plenary session as soon as possible to take a position on the report of the POR on the Bolivian revolution and on the tasks of reconstructing the Fourth International.

No political reaction to the political problems raised, no answer to the proposals put forward, no attempt to set up a discussion, but suddenly October 24, the declaration of a split by a factional meeting, held secretly by four sections of the IC and abusively baptized 'IC Majority'. In fact, in addition to the fact that we do not see how a majority could be created within the IC without a meeting, we must bring up the strange manner in which the SLL built this 'Majority'.

As it is well known, the activity of the IC to reconstruct the Fourth International led to the formation of new groups which did not automatically become members of the IC. There was unanimity on this question as on others. Thus, for example, the German Trotskyist organization, IAK, a sympathizer of the IC, is not a member. The International Committee is thus composed at the present time of the following eight sections: OCI (France), SLL (Great Britain), LSRH (Hungary), POR (Bolivia), Revolutionary Communist Party (Ceylon), Workers Marxist League (Mexico), League for a Workers Vanguard (Ireland), and Workers League (USA).² There is presently no Greek section, because the latter, which participated in the 1966 Conference split into two groups on the eve of the 1967 *coup d'état* and conditions have not allowed a study of the motives of this split and an analysis of each group's policies. Therefore, on Comrade Slaughter's suggestion, the IC decided to treat the two groups as sympathizers of the IC.

As for the POR in Bolivia the issues are clear: an old Trotskyist organization, section of the Fourth International before the split of 1951-1952, the POR rejoined the IC in 1970 on the basis of its experience and its fight against Pabloism in Bolivia itself. It joined after a meeting of the IC which Comrade Lora personally attended. Moreover this was officially announced in *La Vérité* (No. 547 March 1970) and was not denied by anybody. Then, after Comrade Lora wrote to the sections of the IC to ask that the IC hold a meeting as soon as possible to discuss a report prepared by the leadership of POR, comrades Lambert (OCI), Nagy (LSRH), and Lora (POR), signed a public declaration which said:

What is more natural than for all the difficult problems of the whole international class struggle to be reflected and concentrated within it? What is more natural than for the gigantic world struggle to be expressed in the crisis of all the organizations of the working class?

Today the leadership of certain organizations of the International Committee, like the Socialist Labour League and the Workers League, lacking clarity precisely on the strategy of conquering power and on the reconstruction of the Fourth International, have given in to enormous pressures by attacking the POR.

The legitimate status of the POR in the IC was not challenged in the

² Organization in political solidarity with the IC, the Workers' League politically has the status of a section, although as an organization it is not affiliated to the IC because of reactionary laws in the USA.

slightest by the SLL who wrote in No. 545 of its daily paper, *Workers Press*, August 28, 1971, on the death of a Trotskyist student leader at La Paz during the struggle against Banzer's troops that: 'the POR is the Bolivian section of the International Committee'. It would be inconceivable to think that the POR is a member of the IC when its militants are felled by fascist bullets and that it is no longer a member when an analysis of its policies must be discussed. In any case these are procedures alien to Trotskyism.

Thus, the efforts of the SLL to create, by adding and rejecting, a fictitious majority in the IC do not change the facts: There are only four member organizations of the IC among the organizations which signed the October 24 text. Moreover, and on the question of 'reconstruction of the Fourth International' since the October 24 document alludes to the decisions of the 1966 Conference, let us remember that the fundamental texts of that conference (general resolution manifesto and resolution on tasks) were essentially elaborated by the OCI and that they politically legitimize the use of the word 'reconstruction'.

The resolution on tasks (adopted unanimously) is moreover entitled 'Resolution on the Reconstruction of the Fourth International' and states among other things that:

The international conference declares that the Trotskyist movement, in the struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, must build the centralized leadership of the world party of socialist revolution in a fight organically linked to the fight in each country for the construction of revolutionary parties leading the revolutionary struggles of the masses. The construction of these parties and of the International must be conducted on the basis of the experience and the pursuit of an incessant battle against revisionism.

The IC is composed of representatives of sections designated by it. At the present stage, the decision of the IC can only be taken by unanimous vote. At this stage, the IC is not proclaiming itself the centralized leadership of the Fourth International which must still be constructed.

Finally, concerning the Secretary of the IC, let us simply recall that in light of the difficulties the SLL faced in assuming responsibility for this post, it was agreed to institute a co-secretariat composed of Comrades Slaughter and Just.

We have insisted at length on aspects which may seem secondary and judicial in order to give a clear place to the political aspect and to show that the formal excuses have nothing to do with reality, but are

only traps aimed at covering up an organizational break without political debate.

The essential thing is of course this 'fundamental discussion' that is spoken of and which naturally includes the experience of revolutionary struggle of the Bolivian proletariat and the policies of the POR for they are at the heart of the debate: the meaning of the 'imminent revolution' the question of the struggle for power and the way in which the working class can approach this problem (the United Front, a workers' and peasants' government, the institutions of dual power and the dictatorship of the proletariat).

This discussion only has meaning for Trotskyists in light of the problems of the reconstruction of the Fourth International which the leadership of the SLL seeks to avoid by wanting to break the framework of the IC. We must seek out in this discussion, beyond the manoeuvres, the falsehoods and the amalgams, a criticism of the October 24 document.

Split at Essen?

'Split at Essen'; this is the dramatic title of the second chapter of the October 24 document. A split which is supposedly expressed by the fact that 'the delegates of the OCI, the Hungarian section, and the LOM of Mexico voted with the centrists and even right-wing organizations (they refer here to the National Students Association of the USA) against an amendment proposed by the majority of the sections of the IC (Ceylon, Ireland, SLL, USA, Greece). We have already explained what this 'majority' is. What then happened at Essen? First, we must remember, because some seem to forget it, that it was an international gathering of revolutionary youth which brought together 5,000 participants and representatives of 32 countries. This gathering was called on the basis of an appeal written by the AJS and taken up by the Young Socialists at their January, 1971 Conference at Scarborough. This call, initiated by youth organizations working together with the International Committee was also signed from the beginning by youth organizations which did not consider themselves Trotskyist (like the JCI, youth organization of the POUM).

The incontestable success of the Essen meeting was a political success in which the International Committee and its organizations raised the level of the fight for the construction of a Revolutionary Youth International. In this sense, Cliff Slaughter, speaking in the

name of the Central Committee of the SLL, correctly hailed this gathering as 'a step forward in proletarian internationalism'.

The international meeting was preceded by a conference of delegates where a resolution was presented and adopted unanimously (including by the Young Socialists delegation) and ratified the next day by the 5,000 youth present. Right at Essen, the International Committee met to determine its political intervention. Amendments were proposed — moreover, several by the SLL were accepted. But during the conference, the delegates of the SLL and the Young Socialists, breaking with the agreement passed by the IC, presented a new amendment that the OCI delegates considered deeply false.

The chairman, Comrade Berg, proposed to consider this amendment and to refer it to the Liaison Committee established at Essen, in order to prevent the SLL and YS delegates from being politically crushed. This solution would allow the question to be taken up within the sections of the IC without a public battle before making a final decision. The YS delegation refused. The majority of the Conference adopted the proposal of the AJS. We must point out, in the interests of historical truth, that the NSA delegates who were only observers, did not take part in the vote.

In any case, this is not the essential point. There was not the shadow of a political concession by the OCI, the LSRH or the POR to centrist elements. Nonetheless the amendment was inadmissible for the OCI.

There can be no revolutionary party without revolutionary theory. Behind each opportunist development in the history of the workers' movement, and especially Stalinism, stands revisionism.

The continuity of the struggle for revolutionary Marxist theory in the past, the struggle of the Fourth International and the International Committee, was the only basis for the initiatives which led to this gathering and for the struggle to construct a revolutionary youth international.

Everywhere, revolutionary youth must devote themselves above all to the task of developing Marxist theory in the fight against bourgeois ideology and all the forms that it takes in the workers' movement. This is the only basis for combating the dangers of adventurism, of 'pure' activism and militancy with which the revisionists and the Maoists misled the youth and which can only lead to historic defeats for the working class.

Why? Above all, because of the section expressing the idealist position, the abandonment of Marxism, in the name of an ideology which it baptizes as 'Marxist philosophy'.

'When the French delegation opposed the SLL amendment on the struggle for Marxist theory, it sealed an opposition to dialectical materialism which is not in the least new,' explains the October 24 document. 'One year earlier, in June 1970 at the pre-conference of the IC these differences had become explicit.'

At the 1970 pre-conference, the OCI and LSRH delegations had warned the SLL of the serious political risks of any tendency which transforms dialectical materialism into an ideology (philosophy), a system of ideas developing within itself which breaks with the very essence of dialectical materialism: the unity of method, of form and content. They emphasized that a discussion on the Marxist method was a serious vital discussion for it concerns the foundations of the programme and it should thus be approached with caution. The correctness of this warning has been revealed by the Essen amendment. The babbling about 'Marxist philosophy' has led, we repeat, to a fall into ideology.

No, behind each development of opportunism in the workers movement, there is not 'ideology', in the form of a revision (abandonment) of Marxism, there is the reality of social forces in struggle, the class struggle expressed within the workers' movement itself which is the arena and outcome of this fight, and which gives rise to justifications in the form of a revision of Marxism.

It was not Bernstein's 'misunderstanding' of Marxism which lay behind reformism, it is the class collaborationist practice, resting on the situation of the workers' aristocracy in the period of the development of imperialism, which creates the necessity of ideologically justifying this practice. This doesn't mean that Bernstein is only a 'reflection'. In his political activity, he is an expression and at the same time an integral element of the struggle within the workers' movement. The defence of the proletariat's class interests imply a 'defence of Marxism' through an implacable theoretical criticism of revisionist ideology, a criticism which itself is an integral element of the proletariat's class consciousness in its organized struggle for emancipation.

Marx explains that we must go from the arms of criticism to the criticism of arms: but the arms of criticism is itself a moment in the development of the class struggle and in this sense is a criticism of arms. Also, the theoretical struggle is always an expression of the class struggle; it does not exist outside of it.

Neither does the limited character of Stalin lie 'behind' the theory of 'socialism in one country'. This expresses the interests of the bureaucratic caste which took hold of political power. Does this mean that the theoretical struggle is 'secondary'? No, on the contrary. Marxist theory is the concentration and generalization of all the determinations of the class struggle, of its historical movement, and in this sense the class struggle 'does not permit a single theoretical mistake'. But theory, Marxist method, is not an abstract system of ideas of social reality, existing in and of itself and which only needs to be 'applied'. The Marxist method only exists through its content which integrates all the moments in the proletariat's struggle for his emancipation. In this sense, the programme of socialist revolution concentrates Marxism and the defence of Marxist theory can only be the defence of the programme, that is, the struggle to resolve the crisis of leadership.

It is not by fighting against 'bourgeois ideology' in isolation, on the level of ideology, that the International, revolutionary parties, and of course a revolutionary youth organization will be built. It is by organizing the youth in a political fight for the proletarian revolution, under the leadership of the proletariat. The formulation of the astonishing Essen amendment means that the youth organization is a substitute for the party and not a part of the struggle to construct it. Theoretical elaboration comes from the programme, and thus from the party and the necessary relationship between the theory and the construction of the youth organization is the formation of young communist cadres, a task which unites the assimilation of the programme to the political fight.

Programme, Consciousness, Revolutionary Party.

But the Essen amendment goes further. In a fraudulent way — since it only deals with youth organizations — it makes the ideological struggle the basis of the construction of revolutionary parties. 'Revolutionary youth,' we are told, 'must devote themselves above all to the development of Marxist theory.'

At this point, we have the right to ask a question: is or is not the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International the highest expression of Marxism, that is, the theoretical generalization, on the basis of the Marxist method, of the experiences, struggles and gains of

the world proletariat, of the whole movement? On this point, at least the October 24 text is absolutely clear. The answer is no and thus the content of the Essen amendment is perfectly revealed.

What was most essential in the preparation of the sections was to develop dialectical materialism in a struggle to understand and to transform the consciousness of the working class in the changing objective conditions. This means the understanding and development of dialectical materialism as the theory of knowledge of Marxism. Reflecting the attacks on dialectical materialism by the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia of the advanced capitalist countries, especially France and Germany, and of E. Europe, the OCI and Hungarian delegations declared that dialectical materialism was not a theory of knowledge and took up the position that only programme was the basis of the building of parties. Here is the very essence of revisionism which prepares the way for liquidating the party into centrism.

So you say! We are so naive that we thought that the method of the Transitional Programme was the revolutionary mobilization of the working class, beginning with its present level of consciousness, against the bourgeois state, a mobilization indissolubly connected to its organization, whose movement towards accomplishing its tasks was its consciousness, or as Marx and Engels said in *German Ideology*:

A massive transformation of men is necessary for the mass creation of this communist consciousness as well as being a prerequisite for its success; but such a transformation can only take place by a practical movement, by a revolution; this revolution is necessary not only because it is the only way to overthrow the *dominant* class; it is equally necessary because only a revolution will enable the *class which overthrows the other* to sweep away all the garbage of the old system which hangs on to it and enable it to build a society of new foundations.

But no, to 'transform' the consciousness of the working class is a specific task, possible when one 'understands' this consciousness, an understanding which is gained on the condition that one wants to 'develop' dialectical materialism (which means precisely what? If one understands how a muscle is developed with exercises it is difficult to conceive the 'development' of dialectical materialism.)

What that means in any case, is that the programme is not enough. There is more, above that, in actuality up in the sky, as an independent factor, whose 'development' undoubtedly depends on the intellectual gymnastics of the thinkers of the SLL, Marxist philosophy as a 'theory of the knowledge of Marxism'. But what then is the prog-

ramme if not the most complete expression of dialectical materialism in our epoch? A recipe book? It will be necessary to carry this discussion through to its end and no preventive 'splits' sanctioned by trumped up majorities will prevent it.

Profound disagreements were revealed at Essen. By themselves do they make a split? Proof of the contrary was demonstrated by the leadership of the SLL who after Essen, invited Comrade Lambert to give the last presentation at the SLL's educational camp . . . on dialectical materialism!

Form and content: the revolutionary struggle of the Bolivian proletariat, the policies of the POR and the desire to break up the International Committee.

The sliding towards ideology and the putting forward of pronounced idealist positions, cannot be explained by an abrupt ideological loss of balance by the SLL leadership. The mists of so-called Marxist 'philosophy' invade the political landscape of the SLL at a very precise moment in relation to precise political problems.

The most dangerous oscillations of the SLL leadership are in relation to the central question of the reconstruction of the Fourth International. They declare their disagreement with the decisions of the 1966 conference that they nevertheless accepted. The Fourth International does not need to be 'reconstructed': it is timeless, immobile, incarnated in the International Committee.

In other words, the SLL leadership confuses the continuity of the Fourth International, the defence of its programme, assured by the activity of the IC and its organizations, faced with the attempt to liquidate the Fourth International, with the existence of political conditions, relations between Trotskyist organizations and the class, conditions of selection of an international leadership leading to the formation of a centralized international leadership.

This attitude is related to a refusal to follow through with an analysis of the crisis of the Fourth International, to a tendency to see it only as an episode, whereas the Fourth International, reorganized after the war, was broken up as a centralized organization around the Transitional Programme by the capitulation of the vast majority of its leaders, a capitulation whose origins must be identified in order to conduct an effective battle against revisionism.

There is no need to construct the Fourth International, it is enough to build the revolutionary party in each country. This is in fact the construction of the Fourth International in each country. The correct affirmation that the fight to build revolutionary parties in each country is an international task thus winds up as a hollow formula to the extent that the international dimension, that is the concrete tasks of reconstructing the Fourth International practically no longer exists.

This is not simply an academic position. It has led the SLL leadership to first ignore and then to practically oppose all the initiatives taken towards reconstructing the Fourth International. No Trotskyist organization can be built outside of the fight for the reconstruction of the Fourth International. The wrong orientation of the SLL on this, to the extent that it was carried out, could not help but have an effect on all its activities. The greater and greater place given to ideology corresponds to the more and more narrow limits of the impasse that the SLL leadership has got itself into.

From this point of view, Essen marked an important stage. The oscillations of the SLL leadership were expressed by its refusal to participate in the Essen meeting, then by the fact that it was drawn into it without mobilizing its organization. They were thus at this meeting under false pretences and the 'ideological' offensive expressed its political hostility to this step forward in the reconstruction of the Fourth International which places the SLL and all the organizations of the IC before its responsibilities.

If we do not begin from the political contradictions of the SLL leadership and from its refusal to work them out in a discussion within its ranks, we cannot understand the shocking bad faith and the criminal lightness in its approach to the problems of Bolivia and the policies of the POR. It is not a question of moral errors but of the results of an orientation which is taking the SLL in the direction of abandoning the programme of the Fourth International.

In all seriousness, the SLL leadership thus explains that Bolivia was only a pretext used by the OCI to precipitate the split by avoiding discussion. There is the same relationship between the real political developments within the IC and the affirmations of the SLL as there is between a positive and negative photograph. The terms must be reversed to find the truth.

It is the leadership of the SLL and its New York mouthpiece who seized on the problems of the Bolivian revolution not as a means of

political clarification but as a pretext to present the other sections of the IC with the accomplished fact of a brutal public offensive against the POR. It is the SLL who is running away from a full discussion in the name of a public break over the question of Bolivia and which avoids at the same time any discussion on Bolivia.

But form does not go without content. The chosen pretext is at the same time a question of capital importance since it directly concerns the proletarian revolution. The revolutionary process in Bolivia marked the highest political point reached by the upsurge of the working class on the whole Latin American continent and it was characterized by the role played by a Trotskyist party, section of the IC.

This deserves a serious discussion, a rigorous assessment of the POR policies, an assimilation of the lessons of the struggle. In this sense, it is legitimate to discuss the policies of the POR at every point. The OCI, for its part did not wait for events to happen: within the IC, between organizations which base their activity on the same programme, it conducted a discussion with the POR (*La Vérité*, No. 550, October 1970).

What is criminal, is that the deliberate desire of the Workers League and the SLL to use the victory of the fascist coup against the unity of the IC, leads them to reject this serious discussion, to repeat the most vulgar slanders of the enemies of Trotskyism and the proletarian revolution against the POR without even trying to inform themselves of the facts.

The *coup d'état* took place on August 20. On August 30 while communications were cut off, Tim Wohlforth publishes an article which brands the POR as having main responsibility in the workers' movement for the fascist coup. In this article, which the SLL hastens to make official by publishing it in *Workers Press* and where there is not the slightest reference to solidarity in struggle against the class enemy or the least allusion to the role of American imperialism, Wohlforth goes even further: he compares the position of the POR to the LSSP of Ceylon. Here is an amalgam worthy of the Stalinists: even if Wohlforth's attack against the POR were considered to be correct, what relationship is there between the renegades of the LSSP which rules with a bourgeois government and covered up a bloody repression, and the fighters of the POR who stood with their class before the counter-revolution?

The desire to treat the Bolivian question without regard to the real

positions of the POR as a 'war machine' against the unity of the IC is manifested once again in the October 24 text.

The POR and Lora repeat the policies of the POUM in Spain in 1935-1938 and are in no fundamental way different from them. Their relations with Torres and the COB parallel those of the POUM with the Republican Government and the CNT. The OCI's support for the POR now makes clear the political meaning of their bloc with the POUM at Essen.

This little paragraph is full of mistruths and is a good example of amalgams. We could write pages just on this subject alone. We will simply make two remarks, the first essential point which 'reveals' the political trickery of this pseudo-exposition: one of the characteristic traits of the POUM policies was the entry into the Catalan government (bourgeois government). What characterized the policies of the POR was the refusal to collaborate with the Torres government, the preservation of the political independence of the proletariat.

The second remark which shows with what indifference the SLL leadership treats historical problems of the workers' movement: the CNT and COB parallel. The CNT was in the hands of a political faction. The anarchists, the POUM militants were expelled and Trotsky criticized them precisely for adapting to this situation by forming their own union organizations. The COB, universal centre included all the tendencies of the Bolivian workers' movement and the POR militants, while not being its leadership played a considerable role in it, including at the conference level. Where is the parallel?

But better yet, in his interview in *Informations Ouvrières* Comrade Lora explained:

The ultra-leftists and Pabloites forget the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky: they elaborate their 'documents' with extreme simple mindedness and put Torres and Ovando-Banzer on the same level. These people refuse to understand the various shades of bourgeois nationalism in a backward country.

Because they are outside of the class struggle, they do not understand that there is a difference between the bourgeois democratic methods of the Torres government and the method of the fascists: the difference that exists between going to prison legally or being liquidated with a bullet in the back of the neck.

Revolutionary tactics must begin with this difference. It is not a question of supporting Torres but of crushing fascism in order to impose the workers' government.

This passage is commented on in the October 24 text in the follow-

ing way: 'Revolutionary strategy does not begin with the differences between left and right wings of the military, but from the perspective of the overthrow of the whole bourgeois order.'

Where Lora spoke of tactics, the editors of the October 24 text have substituted the term, strategy. Furthermore, the SLL introduces an almost absolute distinction between strategy and tactics. When it is a question of the workers' United Front (we will return to this) strategy and tactics are presented as totally separate categories which lead parallel existences in a metaphysical heaven. On the other hand when it is a question of attacking the POR, strategy and tactics become interchangeable terms. Moreover, when we read that criticism of the POR's policies were founded on the 'necessity to build the Fourth International on the basis of principle and total honesty' it seems to be an accidental comic note in an otherwise sinister text.

But once again, we must come to the essence. The October 24 text proclaiming Wohlforth's article to be 'our declaration' has no more than that to say about the Popular Assembly. This is however the most important question on which the OCI first took a position and gave an opinion on the programme of the POR. Therefore this is the question which must be discussed first. But from reading the October 24 text we learn simply that the OCI talks about a 'whole process' concretized in 'something' like the Popular Assembly.

In its declaration on September 17 the Central Committee of the OCI emphasized that the POR had been 'the motive force of the Popular Assembly, that is the organ which concretized the struggle of the Bolivian proletariat to build its own power and which opened the road towards the dictatorship of the proletariat in Bolivia'.

Yes or no, was the Popular Front, originating in the united reply of the Bolivian masses and their organizations to the October 1970 *coup d'état*, an organism of the proletariat's hegemony, from the base to the top?

Yes or no, did the Popular Assembly become, through the intervention of the POR, an organ of dual power which concretely opened the way to a workers' government? In this sense, did it or not deserve the epithet that its enemies gave to it, the first Latin American soviet?

Yes or no, was the correct strategy to begin with this reality given by the mass struggle itself, with this soviet organ to pose the question of power by linking the mobilization of the masses around the Popular Assembly as their expression to fight inside the Assembly to open concretely the way to power with the slogan: 'All Power to the Popular

Assembly'. Could this struggle be conducted independently of the Bolivian vanguard, of the revolutionary maturity of the masses themselves, independently from all the revolutionary developments in Latin America?

The OCI gave an answer. The anti-Trotskyist centre of Mandel & Co. in confusion have given theirs. What is the answer of the SLL and of the groups which signed the October 24 declaration with them?

This is a discussion which cannot be avoided by any organizational measure for it is a discussion that is at the heart of the problems raised by the present stage of the class struggle. The period of 'imminent revolution' — and thus also of imminent counter-revolution — the period of class confrontations raises the question of power: how can the masses concretely approach and understand the question of power?

This is the question of institutions of dual power, of a workers' United Front, governmental slogans, concrete questions of course as the October 24 text points out but this concrete would only be a dead abstraction if it was not the expression of a 'generality', that is that the period that we live in is marked by the movement of the international working class towards its own power. This is not an abstraction to us of which the revolutionary party should be a passive expression. This manner of understanding problems shows very well the deep lack of understanding by the SLL of the dialectic. On the contrary, it is concrete reality which constitutes the decisive part of the revolutionary party and the fight to build it nationally and internationally.

Some attacks on the OCI

There is an implacable logic to political conflicts. The SLL's evolution can only lead it to attack the OCI at its heart: the very method of the construction of the revolutionary party, the question of the workers' United Front, the means and expression of mobilization of the masses, a fundamental part of the construction of the party. But politics do not exist in a vacuum. If one attacks the policies of the OCI it is necessary to propose an alternative. And here the SLL must use the weapons of the Pabloites. Thus the attacks against the OCI lead to this conclusion: '... the position of the OCI on the united class front becomes a complete liquidation of the party and subordinates it to the labour bureaucracy and the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties.'

To reach this conclusion, the SLL leadership must purely and simply invent, in vague terms, a 'spontaneist position' of the OCI, must multiply attacks so exaggerated that they become insignificant, so little have they followed the OCI position, and which would make the collaboration of the OCI and the SLL in the IC incomprehensible. For our part, we seek political clarity, not just to make an impression which can only fool those who want to be: the SLL does not suddenly veer from white to black. We will simply point out the contradictions of the leadership and show the orientation that it has developed, which if continued, would lead to the abandonment of the programme of the Fourth International and to the break up of the SLL.

We wish to take up just two attacks. Firstly, the October 24 document dares to state that at the beginning of 1968 Comrade Charles Berg took an openly abstentionist position on Vietnam. This clearly means that he gave equal weight to imperialism and the revolutionary war of the Vietnamese people, in other words, that he took an openly counter-revolutionary position. This is false and outrageous. Even the Stalinists have not dared to go this far: so far only the well-known Weber of the Communist League has spoken of the 'defeatist' position of the OCI.

At no time, under any circumstances, has any militant, any OCI publication been equivocal on this topic. On the other hand, unlike others (like Comrade Banda who saw in Ho Chi-Minh's party, the party who assassinated the Indo-Chinese Trotskyists, the reincarnation of the Bolshevik Party), we have never confused unconditional support with political support to its petty-bourgeois and Stalinist leaders.

If we emphasize this miserable accusation it is because Comrade Berg, due to the development of the AJS is now the target of a concentrated attack by the bourgeoisie, the Pabloites and the Stalinists. The fact that the SLL leadership joins these attacks at this time should be noted.

There is a secondary attack which deserves comment. The SLL is so anxious to find motives for its split that it must go back in time. This is their right. They vehemently denounce the policies of the French Trotskyist organization in the Algerian revolution. They say that the Pabloites supported a faction of the petty-bourgeois nationalists and the French Trotskyists supported another faction. This is a bit brief and would only be convincing if the SLL criticized themselves. In fact, if there was no difference between the FLN and

the MNA why did they support as they explain, the MNA? It is true, as we are told, that this support was 'critical' which undoubtedly solves everything.

In any case the policy of the Trotskyist organization was false because it abandoned 'the fight to select a Trotskyist vanguard'. This is nothing new. This quote is from the pamphlet *Some Lessons of Our History* published in May 1970. We only hope — especially since the SLL finds it useful to accuse the POR and Lora of being a pillar of Pabloism in Latin America, which is false, while forgetting that the SLL and its general secretary were initially the hatchetmen of Pabloism in Western Europe — that the SLL will be willing to learn a few lessons from its own history in order to construct a vanguard in Britain and in the world.

The offensive against the workers' united front and its meaning

The trumped up charges against the OCI lead to a whole offensive against the workers United Front. The workers United Front had already been a point of disagreement between the OCI and the SLL within the IC. But for the SLL, the differences seemed to be on one point (brought up again in the October 24 document) that the United Front is a 'tactic' while the OCI calls it a 'strategy'.

To counterpose strategy and tactics as absolutes is to ignore the dialectic that it is so much a question of. Of course, the terms strategy and tactics are not interchangeable; they are geared to different levels of revolutionary politics. But strategy only exists through tactics which are its expression. At the same time each tactical move has meaning only as part of a general strategy.

When we speak, in Marxist terms, of a strategical slogan, we mean a slogan which under different forms (tactics) is a constant factor in the revolutionary struggle. For example, the necessity to defend the social conquests of the proletariat won in the October Revolution and by its extension, today controlled and threatened by the bureaucracy. But for Marxists, strategy and tactics are relative terms. To the extent that we say that the strategical line of the Fourth International is the fight for proletarian revolution, the defence of the Soviet Union is only a tactic following from this objective. Trotsky said on the defence of the Soviet Union (while showing that this defence is a major expression of the programme of the Fourth International and is a question of principle):

The defence of the USSR coincides for us with the preparation of the world revolution. Only those methods are acceptable which do not conflict with the interests of the revolution. The defence of the USSR is connected to the world socialist revolution in the same way that a tactical task is connected to a strategic task. A tactic is subordinate to a strategic goal and does not in any way contradict it.

In this sense, the United Front is a tactic in relation to the socialist revolution which it prepares for as a way of mobilizing the proletariat. It is a strategic line in the sense that it is always (that is, independent of circumstances, relationship of forces, tactical considerations in the strict sense of the word) present in a revolutionary policy, taking of course different tactical forms without which it would only be an empty principle ('government of united workers organizations' in France today: battle for 'a workers party based on the unions' in the United States, slogan of 'a Labour government on a programme of defence of the working class' in England, slogan of 'a break with the coalition and for a homogenous social-democratic government' in Germany).

The OCI's opposition to the implicit policy of the SLL, now explicit in the October 24 text, is therefore not a semantic quarrel. No, the United Front, is not, as the SLL says, simply a 'temporary relationship between mass parties, in order to win the masses to the Communist Party'. To reduce the United Front to this is not the conception of Lenin and Trotsky as the SLL falsely claims. At best it is the conception of Zinoviev, or rather a caricature of it, a pale reflection of the way Zinoviev expressed the policy of the Communist International.

The axis of the Transitional Programme is the mobilization of the proletariat to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The United Front 'slogan' of this programme is at the same time central to it. What is involved is the mobilization of the whole class, its unity based on its political independence against the common enemy. It is the concrete expression of the starting point of any revolutionary policy since the Communist Manifesto of 1847: class against class. And this policy takes the form of the United Front of all organizations of the working class under conditions where the working class is organized and controlled by distinct organizations.

As the text of the OCI September 1969 document states:

The policy of class struggle is identical to the strategic lines of the united class front of workers' parties and organizations. It is alien to 'peaceful

co-existence' between the traditional parties and organizations of the working class and the revolutionary vanguard which builds the revolutionary party. It is impossible to build the revolutionary party without concretely defining at each stage a policy which opposes the class as a class to the bourgeoisie, its state and its government. Without building the revolutionary party it is impossible to fight for the united class front for the workers and peasants government, for the destruction of the bourgeois state and for workers' power.

This conclusion perfectly sums up Trotsky's conception on the United Front in relation to Germany threatened by fascism and in France after the beginnings of the upsurge of the proletariat in the united demonstration of February 12, 1934:

Why are the soviets necessary in the struggle for power? The answer to this question is the following: as the union is the elementary form of the United Front in the economic struggle so the soviet is the highest expression of the United Front under conditions where the proletariat is entering into the period of the struggle for power.

And again Leon Trotsky, 'Collected Works', Volume III:

The natural apparatus of the United Front in the days of battle is the proletarian representation, the deputies of the factories and shops, of the workers' districts and the unions, the soviets.' (*It is France's turn. For the Fourth International!* March 1934).

The SLL is opposed to this conception of the United Front by criticizing the OCI policies during the May-June general strike of 1968. The October 24 text includes this sentence which deserves to be preserved for posterity: 'The leaders of the OCI trailed behind the working class, restricting the political scope of the strike by demanding a central strike committee. This was a complete evasion of the political responsibilities of a revolutionary leadership.'

Thus, to the profound dialecticians of the SLL, the national strike committee was not a political question. This is a confession which reveals the meaning of their hostile indifference to the Popular Assembly of Bolivia, the absence of any reference, in a text which claims to begin with the world class struggle, to the formation of workers' councils in Gdansk in December 1970, the scorn heaped on the Irbid Soviet.

Were the strike committees merely formed for immediate demands? Was this then the whole character of the general strike to the extent that it was not given a governmental 'formula'? No, the general strike, 'the sharpest form of the class struggle' as Trotsky said,

demonstrates 'the impossibility of separating the economic and political elements' as all those who are supposed to be Marxists know ever since Rosa Luxemburg wrote it in 1905. The general strike was inherently political because its demands led directly to the fight against the capitalist government and because the degree and form of the mass mobilization posed the question of working class power. As a political battle, the general strike could not achieve its goal unless the illusion that the general strike was enough in and of itself to win was overcome and unless a governmental solution, a road to the struggle for power was opened up.

All the bureaucracies linked to the bourgeoisie blocked this solution. The fight for a national central strike committee was the political fight *par excellence*, at the heart of the general strike, because it was a fight for this solution by centralizing the strength of the working class in struggle against the bourgeois state. The words 'in struggle' must not be forgotten and this is why the centralization of the strike committee born in this struggle: a step towards workers' councils, elements of the United Front, was the concrete form of the perspective of a workers' government, a government of united workers' organizations.

But the SLL leadership, not content with understanding nothing about the dialectic of the mass mobilization in the general strike had another government solution — a CP-CGT government and not a workers' government. Or rather if the formula of a CP-CGT government could be considered synonymous with 'workers government,' then the Socialist Party, the CGT-FO, the FEN are not considered workers' organizations. The SLL has not yet written this. What then does the 'preferential' choice of the Stalinist bureaucracy over the reformist bureaucracy mean? Have not both of them gone over to the bourgeois order? Or is this a new analysis of Stalinism — not so new at that, for it has already been exposed in the theory and practice of the Pablos and Mandels who said that Stalinism, definitively, and despite its crimes, despite its counter-revolutionary aspects was the only political 'delegation' of the proletariat.

This discussion must be continued and is related to a number of other political oscillations in the SLL: its idealization of the leadership of the North Vietnamese Communist Party and the NLF, its serious uncertainties about the political evolution in Czechoslovakia where on the eve of the invasion, they gave the same importance as the demand for the withdrawal of the Warsaw Pact troops from Czechoslovakia,

its discretion about the development of political revolution in Poland and its refusal to see the unity of the workers struggles in the USSR, China, and Eastern Europe against the bureaucracy with the struggle in the capitalist countries.

This discussion will also clarify the meaning of their criticism — which may seem minor and tactical — about the slogan of ‘a single candidate of workers organizations’ during the presidential elections. This criticism shows once again the SLL’s indifference to facts. The OCI is criticized for not having denounced the Social Democrats who refused on the second ballot to call for a vote for Duclos. The French working class has enough well-founded accusations against the reformist leaders without having to invent them: Duclos was eliminated in the first ballot. To make everything clear — we are dealing once again with a tactical application of the strategy of the United Front — this is what the position of the Trotskyists was during the presidential elections:

After the fall of De Gaulle the perspective of a working class solution to the government and of the regime necessitated development of great struggles by the proletariat. This could only emerge from the United Front of labour and political organizations which had called for a ‘No’ vote in the referendum. A single candidate of workers’ organizations meant that confronted with the bourgeois parties, proposing a candidate of a government of united workers’ organizations. Immediately all the leaders of the workers’ organizations and particularly the Socialist Party and the Communist Party managed to disrupt the unity established for a moment in the ‘No’ vote on the referendum. The candidate Deferre — supported by Mendes-France popped up as if out of a magician’s hat. The CP before putting Duclos forward as candidate demanded ‘the elaboration of a common programme’ as a condition for a common candidate of ‘the left’. The ‘programmatic’ concerns of the CP who supported the bourgeois candidate Mitterand in 1965 without any concern for a ‘common programme’ barred the road just as much as the Deferre candidacy to a united candidate of workers, not of the ‘left’ organizations. The fight for the workers’ United Front, the proletarian front against the voluntary and deliberate division that the Socialist Party and the CP imposed on the working class meant the development of a political campaign around the theme single candidate of workers’ organizations against the bourgeois candidates. (...)

But the programme? Wasn’t this necessary to the single candidate of workers organizations? What had become of it? In these precise circumstances, the development of a programme of a government of workers’

organizations flowed from this candidacy. The fight for the defeat of the bourgeois candidates gave a class content to the single candidate of workers' organizations that the revolutionary organizations had a duty to develop.

(Stephane Just, *Defence of Trotskyism*)

To Conclude

We are arriving at the end of this exposition. Its purpose has been to bring out the real differences, behind the petty manoeuvres, the blatant falsehoods and verbal terrorism. These disagreements are serious and deep ones. They demand a clear discussion that the OCI is not in the least afraid to hold publicly before the international workers' vanguard.

As the culminating point in its charges against the OCI the SLL leadership states that the capitulation to spontaneity had reached the point in this organization where . . . it did not even have a general secretary! What can we say about the nerve and capitulation to spontaneity of a party like the Bolshevik party which dared to lead the proletarian revolution to victory without a general secretary and even without a political office?

This would be ridiculous — it is obvious that if democratic centralism is an integral part of the revolutionary party, the forms of the organization of the leadership is not a principled issue and the existence of general secretaries as well as their absence, is not a guarantee — if it was not related to something more serious. In the same paragraph the OCI is taken up for not seeing the 'Fourth International as truly existing'. This is a backhanded way of attacking the OCI's position that we must fight *for the reconstruction of the Fourth International* broken up as a politically centralized force internationally by the Pabloite liquidationists.

Therefore, on the one hand the revolutionary party exists by itself, a timeless metaphysical category, waiting to meet the class struggle and whose nature depends on whether or not one proclaims or one has attributes supremely deemed necessary to its functioning (a general secretary for example).

On the other hand there is the proletariat, its 'objective' struggle, its general strikes which are not 'political'. In defence of the Essen amendment the October 24 document states that: 'the fundamental struggle for dialectical materialism must be conducted against all the

enemies of Marxism and developed in the fight against the spontaneous consciousness of the working class'.

The dialectic is most certainly misused. Independently of the fact that the idea of a 'pure' spontaneous consciousness of the working class is an absurdity: the conception — completely false — of proletarian consciousness at any moment is a historical result, this sentence sums up a whole relations between the construction of the revolutionary party (this is the fight for dialectical materialism!) and the movement of the class.

The revolutionary party is not outside of or against the movement of the working class. The construction of the revolutionary party proceeds from the whole development of the class struggle; based on the struggle of the proletariat, but it is not an automatic product of it. It only exists and can only be built as a conscious activity. Marxism is 'the conscious expression of an unconscious process'. The revolutionary party is the organized form of this conscious expression in the class struggle, but the very conditions of the proletarian revolution give it the decisive role in accomplishing the historic tasks of the proletariat.

Marxism, method of the proletarian revolution, the unity of theory and practice in the construction of the revolutionary party and expressing the historical interests of the proletariat, is contrary to each of the limited moments in the formation of the proletariat's class consciousness as a class of bourgeois society but goes beyond them by unifying the whole process involved in forming the proletariat's consciousness and by ultimately determining it. This truth has been known since the *Communist Manifesto* without which Trotsky's sentence on 'the instinctive tendency of the proletariat to rebuild society on communist foundations' would only be a utopian formula.

As S. Just pointed out in *Defence of Trotskyism*: 'considered as a historical and organic process, the formation of the proletariat's class consciousness is drawn from the analysis of the development of the class struggle and puts an end to metaphysical discussions about class consciousness brought in from the outside as well as those about the self-proclaimed vanguard'.

The dualism that the SLL creates between the party and the class is at the root of its incomprehension of the period that we are living in, of the dynamic of the advance of world proletarian socialist revolution expressed in the General Strike of May-June 1968, in the political revolution in Czechoslovakia, in the formation of the Irbid soviet, in

the formation of workers councils in the Baltic, in the formation of the Popular Assembly.

The inevitable subjectivity is accompanied by a mechanical objectivism. We are told that the years of the 'post-war boom' were unfavourable to the development of Marxist theory (one wonders how the Transitional Programme was developed in the years of profound defeat and what Trotsky meant when he said that the Fourth International was born out of the deepest defeats!) but that the 'new conditions' are favourable to us.

Subjectivity and objectivism indissolubly linked together were the methodological roots of the growth of Pabloism within the Fourth International. Today the SLL leadership is paying the price for its refusal to make a real assessment of Pabloism and of its origins which is impossible without analysing its own history, without relating the problems of reconstructing the Fourth International to the construction of the revolutionary party in Britain. But this is not automatic. Today because of precise political problems that the class struggles pushed to the forefront — the problems of the struggle for power — these tendencies develop into a policy whose logic, through the break with the International Committee is the abandonment of the programme of the Fourth International.

Responsibly, we address ourselves to all the organizations and militants affiliated with the International Committee but particularly to the SLL: to its leadership, to its militants because of the special place of the SLL in the formation of the IC. We say responsibly: the SLL is at the crossroads. The position of an organization, its political character does not depend on good intentions. Politically undefined organizations do not exist. The place the SLL holds in the British class struggle was won as a Trotskyist organization; the SLL is taking the path of a break with Trotskyism which does not exist outside of the Fourth International, that is the fight to reconstruct it today. It is thus taking the road to its own destruction.

In any case, because the struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International is an international process organically linked to the world struggle of the proletariat, the conscious fight for the construction of the revolutionary party finds its expression in Britain in the resistance within the SLL to its own liquidation as a Trotskyist organization. But, we say it firmly, political clarification is in the interests of the Fourth International and in the defence of its programme.

The International Committee must meet in a plenary session at the earliest possible date with the participation of all the member organizations especially to reply to the legitimate request of Comrade Lora.

The real flight from political problems, the amalgams, the gross manoeuvres cannot go far. There must be an end to the false prestige of leaders who — like everybody — have made political errors and have led positive actions. There must be no retreat from the discussion within all the sections of the International Committee, from the questions that the class struggle requires the Trotskyist movement to resolve.

We say, in any case, that this discussion will take place: no one has the power to prevent it. In any case, the gain represented by the International Committee, the continuity of the Fourth International, its programme, will be preserved in the fight to reconstruct the Fourth International, by the preparation of the Fourth International Conference on the initiative of the International Committee associating according to the decisions of the 1966 conference all the organizations and groups who fight for the programme of the socialist revolution.

We repeat: For those who intend to defend the programme of the Fourth International it is a common demand: the International Committee must meet as soon as possible.

DOCUMENT 7

Statement by the International Committee (Majority), March 1, 1972

The split in the International Committee is not something accidental, but something necessary. It flows out of a history of political differences between the Socialist Labour League and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste. We have fought to overcome these differences in joint work and discussion over many years. But under the impact of decisive changes in the objective situation — particularly since 1968 — a split has become necessary.

The split is not the result of organizational questions or misunderstandings. And it is not about tactical aspects of how to build the Fourth International. It is a political split, going to the foundations of the Fourth International — Marxist theory. For this reason, the primary task is to explain the basic theoretical questions involved, and in this context to disperse the smokescreen of organizational inventions raised by the OCI document.

The IC meeting which adopted the October 24 statement was not valid according to the OCI because they were not invited. But the IC had already been split by the political actions of the OCI at Essen and on the Bolivian revolution. It was the first responsibility of the IC majority to speak out for Trotskyism against this split. The OCI allege that they were excluded from the meeting as part of the SLL's avoiding of discussion on the principled questions of building the Fourth International ever since the IC pre-conference in July 1970. The meaning of the differences at that pre-conference, and their subsequent significance, are dealt with in detail below. However, we must clarify one fabrication before going on to the basic differences. According to the OCI:

Ever since July 1970, the SLL leadership has refused to call a second session of the pre-conference. On the contrary, it was to make approaches to the leading centres of the liquidators of the FI, to the Unified Secretariat

of Mandel and company, and propose a joint conference in terms which were not only opposed to the decisions of the pre-conference, but also to the overall struggle of the IC: this was revealed in an article by its national secretary, Gerry Healy, in the *Workers Press* on September 8, 1970. A sharp and rapid reply from the OCI was, at this stage, to stop the development of this dangerous tendency . . .

The author of these lines knows full well that Comrade Healy's approach to a representative of the Unified Secretariat was made with the full agreement of the OCI leadership. The purpose of it, like the Parity Committee for discussion with the Pabloites in 1962, was to carry the fight for the IC line into every section of their ranks.

We were convinced that the development of the capitalist crisis created conditions in which a thorough historical accounting could be made of the disputed questions in the Trotskyist movement since the split with Pablo. This discussion required the participation of all the revisionists as well as of our own forces. We also *were* sure that such a wide discussion was the best framework for fighting out the differences exposed at the pre-conference.

This discussion, if it had proved possible, would have given the opportunity of winning any cadres who were moving into opposition within the Pabloite organizations. Not only the revisionists themselves, and particularly Hansen, rejected such a discussion, but so did the OCI leaders. On both sides, they sensed the dangers to the course they were pursuing. The present discussion, in which Hansen and the Pabloites publish the documents of the IC majority and of the OCI, and make their own comments upon them, is in its own way confirmation of the necessity of the scope of the discussion which was proposed! Willy-nilly, all the parties are now engaged in the discussion of fundamental questions.

As for the flimsy arguments to 'prove' that the IC majority is not a majority, they are easily disposed of. Listing eight sections of the IC, the OCI acknowledge that four support the October 24 statement. But they omit the Greek section, commenting: 'At the moment there is no Greek section, for the latter which participated in the 1966 Conference split in two on the eve of the 1967 *coup d'état* and conditions have not allowed clarification of the reasons behind the split and an estimation of one group or the other. Consequently, on the suggestion of Comrade Slaughter, the IC decided to treat the two groups as sympathetic to the IC.'

This is untrue. The facts are these. In 1966 the Greek section was

internally divided, but accepted the proposal of the IC that they would avoid a split until a Conference with IC participation. As the OCI knows, such a document of the IC is not something which can be enforced as discipline. The majority leadership considered that refusal of the minority to accept decisions endangered the section to such an extent that expulsion was necessary. After this (1967) the IC tried to bring together representatives of both groups for discussion.

If the IC was not able to take a position on the question of the expulsion of the minority by the Greek section, this is not because of the situation created by the 1967 coup, but because of the fact that the problems of the Greek Trotskyist movement were the problems of the IC itself and could therefore be resolved only through the resolution of those problems. But there can be no question of the Greek section being excluded from IC membership because a majority of the IC want a discussion in the section re-opened! It is not true that Comrade Slaughter made any proposal to recognize two sympathizing sections. There remains a Greek section on the IC: and the proposal to bring together the two sides for discussion, including both their participation in an international conference if no unification is agreed beforehand, remains on the agenda.

There remains the POR of Bolivia. All that was agreed at the IC was that Lora's application for membership of the Committee should be put before the next International Conference. This would give full opportunity for clarification of the present political positions of the POR, as well as of the record of Lora and the POR in the struggle against Pabloite revisionism. The SLL had severe reservations on both counts, and the OCI knows perfectly well that these were forcefully expressed in IC meetings.

Finally, on these preliminary questions, the OCI tries to justify the designation of Stephane Just as 'secretary of the International Committee', on the grounds that the IC decided Comrades Just and Slaughter work as a 'co-secretariat', because of 'difficulties the SLL had in taking on the secretaryship'.

What happened (in 1969) was that, in order to facilitate closer working relations between the sections, given the prospect at that time of growing agreement, Comrades Just and Slaughter should meet briefly and more regularly, in Paris or London, to prepare statements on behalf of the IC.

On the two sides of the split are two distinct political lines. The IC majority, supporting the position of the SLL, are for the building of

independent revolutionary parties in every country as sections of the IC. This line proceeds from the fact that the Fourth International means precisely the cadres of such parties, fighting against all revisionism which has tried and still tries to destroy the parties of the FI. The FI means the struggle of these cadres to win the leadership of the masses in their own countries from the reformists and Stalinists. Only the building of such independent parties and their successful winning of the leadership can ensure the victorious struggle for working class power.

We live in a period where the break up of the Stalinist bureaucracy and its parties, which inevitably reflect the capitalist crisis, and the sporadic occurrence of petty-bourgeois nationalist and protest movements, exert pressure on the working class and the revolutionary movement. This pressure is, above all, concentrated against the development of Marxist theory, against the building of independent Trotskyist parties whose cadres are based on this theory.

As against theory, these petty-bourgeois tendencies glorify activism and militancy. They pour contempt on those who start from the revolutionary theory and continuity of the movement built by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. They talk about combating bourgeois ideology, but refuse to take up any struggle for dialectical materialism against that ideology in the fields of philosophy and the historical and natural sciences. They revel in 'new' revolutionary tendencies, but pull back from any struggle against Stalinism.

The OCI, the LSRH, and the LOM are a centrist tendency. Behind Trotskyist phraseology and worship of the Trotskyist programme, they in fact represent the results of petty-bourgeois pressure on the revolutionary party. This is why they reject the essential continuity of the FI, represented by the IC cadres, today. They prefer the 'commonsense' formula that there was a Fourth International, but revisionism smashed it, and we have to 'reconstruct' it.

In this way they politically avoid the essential theoretical and practical struggle against those centrists who say precisely that experience has proved the correctness of their own centrist forefathers of the London Bureau who opposed the founding of the FI in the first place, on the grounds that it was premature, not rooted in an upsurge of the masses.

The formula 'reconstruction of the FI' is the weapon with which a theoretical clarification of the struggle against Pabloism is avoided. It is converted into an organizational question. Little wonder then that

the OCI found its way back to international centrism at the 1971 Essen youth conference. Outstanding amongst the centrist groups of the 1930s who rejected Bolshevism and opposed the very founding of the FI was the Spanish POUM (Workers' Party of Marxist Unification). The utter failure of the POUM to provide any leadership or to win any independence from the Stalinists (for which they paid with their lives) was one of the most basic political lessons upon which the FI was established. The POUM continues to exist and was represented at Essen by its youth movement. The POUM's paper, *Adelante* (December 1971) reported the Essen conference as follows:

In the afternoon and evening, a meeting took place of an International Conference, where amendments were debated on the initial text which had been put forward by the various organizations. Only the amendment proposed by the English delegation of the Young Socialists, on the need to discuss the problem of Marxist theory, was rejected in a vote after discussion (the JCI did not participate in this vote) . . .

In its intervention, the JCI explained how the general framework proposed was in line with the struggle that the POUM and the JCI had been carrying on since 1936 . . .

In the 1930s, Andres Nin and his group sacrificed the organization of a centralized leadership based on Marxist theory for unity with the group of Maurin on the grounds that it commanded the allegiance of a large number of workers. This liquidationism led to defeat in the Spanish revolution. To repeat this type of mistake today, is to open the door to all the pressure from the petty-bourgeois tendencies which always denounce as 'sectarian' the Trotskyist insistence on theory and continuity.

That the OCI is prepared publicly to vote against the Young Socialists, youth organization of the SLL, with political support from the POUM, is a clear indication of the political nature of the split in the IC. No doubt the OCI will want to excuse itself on the grounds that there are possibilities of change in the POUM. This has been answered in advance by one of the POUM's leaders, writing in 1970 (published in Paris 1971):

. . . Almost 35 years afterwards, the younger generations in Spain are asking questions and are interested in the role of the POUM in these circumstances (the Spanish Civil War), and internationally people still recall the hopes aroused by the party in the world of revolutionary socialists as a new concept of the desire for freedom in the working class against totalitarianism and the crimes of Stalin, who, at the time, was at the

peak of power. On the other hand, Trotskyism can show no success in its record of activity in the different movements throughout the world, unless it is its breaking up into even more groups in all the countries where it exists, which are then enmeshed in an even more ferocious struggle against each other. (From the Preface to *Los Problemas de la Revolucion Española*, written by Juan Andrade, a leading member of the POUM as an introduction to a selection of the work of Andres Nin.)

The OCI leaders were perfectly aware that this was the position of the POUM. Their 'reconstruction' of the Fourth International is a rallying of centrist elements to whom they hand, as a concession, the formula: the FI was destroyed by revisionism, it must be reconstructed. They know that the centrists will interpret this to mean: in an international 'regroupment' we will all begin at the same place, with no compulsion to learn the lessons of past revolutions and past betrayals.

The OCI and its followers miscalculate. A thousand times more important than the ephemeral groupings thrown off by the Stalinist bureaucracy and the petty bourgeoisie because of the crisis of imperialism is the deepgoing change forced on the life and activity of the masses by this crisis. Only the independent work of the revolutionary parties, based on Marxist theory, will penetrate to these changes in the masses, and in this way carry forward the construction of the Fourth International.

The OCI's political association with the POUM, and their opposition to the line of the SLL and the IC of the Fourth International on the fundamental question of the International quite naturally came to a head on the amendment proposed by the Young Socialists at Essen. In order, so far as was possible at that late stage, to correct the completely anti-theoretical line of the document proposed by the AJS (youth organization of the OCI), the YS proposed the amendment drawing attention to the theoretical basis of the revolutionary movement. The OCI represents this as some sort of ultimatum. But, as the British delegation explained, what was actually required was a new resolution based on these theoretical foundations, and an amendment could only attempt to preserve for the future whatever basis there was for agreement. There proved conclusively to be none. The split actually occurred on the question of the place of Marxist theory as the foundation of the revolutionary party.

The OCI, as well as all sorts of other people, will pay lipservice to Lenin's statement 'Without revolutionary theory there can be no

revolutionary movement', but in the actual struggle to build the movement they reject the struggle for theory in order to preserve the centrist alliance they have been building up. They have 'prepared' for this public declaration against the *theoretical* foundation of our movement by years of failure to take up basic questions of theory in the French labour movement. We shall see where this neglect has led them in the revision of basic Marxist concepts.

And so the split is not a question of dozens of detailed points of organization, or even of political positions on various questions. Every one of these points must and will be answered, but the great *advantage* of the present split is that it occurs with the basic theoretical questions out in the open. At the point in history where the deepening of capitalist crisis actually opens the door for Trotskyist parties to be built and to lead the working class to power, a point where the conditions for development of Marxist theory by revolutionary cadres are better than ever before, and where all the lessons of the long struggle against revisionism in the Trotskyist movement can be capitalized — precisely at this point the OCI wants to devalue theory, to join the derision of the petty bourgeoisie against discussion on philosophy, to condemn the 'ultimatism' and 'sectarianism' of the SLL, and to *accept* the petty-bourgeois prejudice that the Fourth International, having in any case been misconceived, died long ago.

These are the fundamental positions behind the split. They are the basis of the differences on the united front, on Bolivia, and on the policies of the OCI in France, as well as on the historical and theoretical issues already raised in the discussion. When a split takes place on the fundamental question of the relationship of Marxist theory to programme and to the building of revolutionary parties, it cannot be tackled by arguments, like those of the OCI, that 'There can no more be a 'majority' of the IC than there can be a 'minority', since there has been no meeting of the IC!' The OCI did not need a meeting of the IC to reveal at Essen that on the question of the Fourth International they were prepared to write off some 35 years of history. It is not just that they returned, formally, to the position of 'for the Fourth International' instead of 'building the Fourth International'. They rejected the positions of the FI on those centrists who had opposed its very foundation.

The political differences in the IC did not begin in 1971, nor in 1969, as the OCI suggests. In the two years before the Third International Conference of the IC in 1966 there was discussion, both at IC

meetings and in written bulletins, on the differences between us on the nature of revolutionary leadership. The dangerous political implications of these differences were, in our opinion, most openly expressed (as early as 1964) in the assertion of a leading OCI member, that the meaning of certain expressions in the Transitional Programme has not been discernible in their objective significance until that time. According to him, only now were some of these phrases revealing their real content. He referred particularly to the last sentence of this paragraph:

Is the creation of such a [workers' and farmers'] government by the traditional workers' organizations possible? Past experience shows, as has already been stated, that this is to say the least highly improbable. However one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.) the petty bourgeois parties, including the Stalinists, may go further than they wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie.

The real experience of the Trotskyist movement since these sentences were written had proved beyond any doubt that, as the Stalinists and reformists grow ever more open in their betrayals, in their counter-revolutionary role, revisionism seized on precisely this passage to justify liquidation of the revolutionary party. Pablo split the FI with his thesis that 'mass revolutionary pressure' and World War III would force Stalinism to play a revolutionary role.

Ignoring the deliberate warning given by Trotsky (that even if a workers' government were established by the traditional workers parties, 'it would represent merely a short episode on the road to the actual dictatorship of the proletariat') Pablo predicted 'centuries of degenerated workers' states'.

The OCI was in danger of preparing the theoretical slipway for the same liquidationism in another form: to liquidate the independent programme and identity of the party in an all-embracing policy of 'united front for a workers' government'.

At this stage, we were prepared to fight for the clarification of these problems within the same International. At the 1966 Conference, the attack on Trotskyism by non-member participants, the US Spartacist (Robertson) group and the Voix Ouvrière (VO) group (France),¹ brought a united response from the SLL, the OCI and the other sections of the IC. Our opinion at that time was that the defence of the

¹ These groups attended as observers.

continuity of the Trotskyist movement against the opportunism of Robertson and Voix Ouvrière laid the basis for tackling some of our differences.

It is of great importance for the present discussion that the VO based their attack on the formulation in the IC documents that the FI had been organizationally destroyed by Pabloism and must be 'reconstructed'. While it is formally true, as the OCI states, that the final resolutions in some places retained the terms 'reconstruction' and 'rebuilding', what is certain is that the *content* of these resolutions was above all the continuity of independent parties and of the FI fought for and preserved by the IC and based on Marxist principle and theory. Against the attacks of VO and Robertson, the SLL, the Workers' League and the Greek section fought for the continuity of the FI and in doing so compromised with the OCI on the wording of the amendment carried. There was no concession on principle.

What soon emerged was that the OCI's participation in the fight against VO and Robertson, rather than proving a basis for changing their wrong positions on the question of the independent revolutionary party, served as a screen behind which they proceeded on exactly the same road. By 1966 the OCI had agreed that, even while opposed to Pabloism, it had committed grave errors of precisely a Pabloite type in relation to the Algerian national movement. But it did not go any further, and this was fundamental. The next step should have been to probe the unresolved theoretical question in the split with Pablo which had left the OCI vulnerable to such a mistake. Because this was not done, the OCI in its latest document can still say, on the lessons of the Algerian experience: 'The fact remains that the policy of the Trotskyist organization was wrong because it rejected "the struggle for the development of a Trotskyist vanguard".'

Certainly! But when you say this, you are left precisely with the big question: how did it arise that a 'mistake' was made on the *principal* question of the epoch! And if *this* question is not posed, let alone answered, what dangers exist of liquidation of the revolutionary party in France itself, and in every country? The OCI's attitude towards the 'rebuilding of the Fourth International' through a 'regroupment' of all those claiming to support the Transitional Programme is the instrument for this liquidation.

That is why, in 1967, the OCI, having moved from its previous position of setting up some sort of 'League' consisting of a supposedly already existing 'vanguard' of the best organizers and militants in the

working class focused its attack in the IC on all sorts of plans to create artificially a centre for the IC. Proposals were made for fulltime workers and special financial schemes to attract forces internationally (such as dissident youth in E. Europe) who were said to be only looking for somewhere to go. The SLL's opposition to these methods, its insistence on the central importance of the training of a cadre, was condemned as opposition to the need to build 'the International as such' (*en tant que telle*).

There was no resolution of these questions in discussion. We could get little or no agreement on our estimation of the growing economic crisis of capitalism as the objective source to which our comrades must be directed for their development as Marxists. Indeed, leaders of the OCI told us that our attention to Economic Perspectives at our Conferences was wrong, and that there could be no separation of economic from political perspectives. The fact is that their own perspectives were *not* based upon this appreciation of the depth of the economic crisis, and they were left like all non-Marxists and revisionists simply to agree on the existence of a crisis when its effects could no longer be missed by the naked eye. Consequently the political manifestations of the crisis, and particularly the May-June 1968 struggles in France, took them completely by surprise.

All through 1967, the OCI had pursued their proposals on 'the International as such' and attacked the organization of the SLL (just as later they privately opposed the plans for a daily paper) on the grounds, fundamentally, that we were leaping too far ahead of the movement and consciousness of the working class, the 'real movement' (see the letter of the OCI to the SLL and the SLL Reply, 1967). These differences about the discipline, training and organization of the revolutionary party were obviously connected with the emphasis of the SLL on the fact that the advanced stage reached by the economic crisis would very soon pose the struggle for power in a number of countries, and that our parties would be called upon to take up leadership. At the International Assembly of Youth in Britain in August 1967, the SLL found itself having to exercise great patience and firmness in insisting on these perspectives on all the questions which they affected: security, organizational details, finance, and the whole problem of preparedness of the youth cadre.

Undoubtedly the May-June days in 1968 once again provided the opportunity for a struggle to clarify political differences. It was absolutely correct for the SLL to campaign, as it did, to win wide support,

Let us state what actually occurred in the discussion, because this was indeed the occasion on which there first came out clearly and openly the issues voted on at the Essen Conference. Delegates from the SLL showed from experience of building the revolutionary party in Britain that a thoroughgoing and difficult struggle against idealist ways of thinking was necessary which went much deeper than questions of agreement on programme and policy. The Trotskyist movement had gone through a long period of isolation in which propagandism inevitably took a strong hold, so that it was difficult for comrades to be trained theoretically in an actual, developing relationship of revolutionary practice in the workers' movement. In these conditions, as was now being shown in the practice of trying to turn the movement to the working class and accept the responsibility of fighting for leadership, formal propaganda agreement, even to the extent of acknowledging verbally the basic theoretical premises of Marxism, actually served as a *barrier* to the real understanding of the unity of theory and practice. The same 'theory' which had rationalized a propaganda existence before, and which had never been called upon to guide a really revolutionary practice, now provided a screen of formal agreement to obstruct change, to obstruct understanding of the living movement of the class struggle. Formal agreement with Marxist principles in fact co-existed with failure to have challenged the deep-going ways of thinking and feeling (i.e. bourgeois idealist philosophy) which tied members of the revolutionary party to fixed ways of life under capitalism. Activism, no less than propagandism and abstract 'pure' theorizing had its roots in 'English' bourgeois tradition.

When, therefore, the SLL delegates spoke at the pre-Conference about the need to fight for a deepening of the understanding of dialectical materialism as the theory of knowledge of Marxism, it was precisely to direct the movement towards the fundamental questions involved in the nature of consciousness, of what is meant by a 'leap' in consciousness, and of what this means for the stage reached by the Fourth International and its parties in the new stage of the epoch of proletarian revolution which has opened up. When the OCI and Hungarian delegates dismissed this discussion as irrelevant and even dangerous, then the SLL and other delegations realized that their fears of fundamental differences concealed by formal agreements on programme were only too well founded. If this happened at the international level, then there was every danger that in the building of sections, in France or any other country, our sections would react to

the international crisis and the radicalization of workers by tail-ending the movement (though of course continuing to state their adherence to revolutionary principles) instead of, by a more intense struggle, selecting and training the best of the new forces in a fight to develop Marxism.

The OCI delegates at the pre-Conference did not simply, as they now put it, 'warn us of a tendency to transform dialectical materialism into an ideology'. They told us that dialectical materialism was certainly *not* a theory of knowledge, and that Marxist theory did not exist except as concentrated and fought for in the form of the programme of the revolutionary party. They rested then, as now, on the remark of Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* that philosophy is surpassed by the extension of science, of revolutionary theory and practice, to the sphere of human activity.

On these grounds they dismissed the arguments of the SLL and other sections that a struggle on Marxist philosophy was the basic qualitative task confronting the revolutionary movement. This is a sophistic distortion of Marx and Engels: The OCI remain indifferent to the fact that Lenin, in his work on philosophy in the early part of World War I, insisted that dialectics as the *theory of knowledge of Marxism* was not just a neglected 'aspect' of Marxism but was the '*essence*' of the question.² As for Marx and Engels, they regarded philosophy as 'surpassed' only in so far as it was practised as a system standing above the sciences.

There is no question but that Lenin's work on these questions was crucial to his break with Social-Democracy and the building of a new, communist, International, and for the October Revolution itself. His enriched understanding of the development of consciousness breaks through decisively in the April Theses and the discussion around them, against the 'Old Bolsheviks'. His work on *State and Revolution*, incomplete when the 1917 Revolution demanded his return to Russia, is directly and decisively influenced by the methodological advances he was able to make on the *Philosophical Notebooks* for the 1914-1916 period. Those who reject the thesis that dialectics is the theory of knowledge of Marxism, and that this 'essence of the question' is decisive for the period of proletarian revolution, where revolutionary

² 'Dialectics is the theory of knowledge of (Hegel and) Marxism. This is the "aspect" of the matter (it is not "an aspect" but the *essence* of the matter), to which Plekhanov, not to speak of other Marxists, paid no attention' (Emphasis in original.) Lenin: *On the question of Dialectics*. Collected Works Vol. 38, p. 362.

consciousness comes into its own, will soon find themselves questioning all the basic tenets of Leninism. And this is precisely what emerges from the OCI's document on the questions of the united front and on the question of revolutionary class-consciousness.

We are certainly not saying that the SLL has answered all the problems in this field: on the contrary, the first thing is to recognize that a long and continuous struggle is necessary in every section against the dominant bourgeois ideology, which inevitably takes a 'national' form. This was, of course, the meaning of Trotsky's deadly serious warning to the Socialist Workers' Party in the United States on the necessity of a conscious struggle against the dominant American philosophy, pragmatism.

The French Trotskyists have neglected to take up any fight against the school of 'Marxism' in France (actually a Stalinist compromise with 'national' traditions in the name of a revolutionary heritage from Jacobinism and the Enlightenment). This school is based, precisely, on playing down the decisive *break* from eighteenth century French materialism that was necessary for Marxism to be born. Unless this philosophical struggle is fought out and deepened in the course of a battle against the way that bourgeois ideology today still strengthens the hold of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat, then 'Marxists' and 'Trotskyists' in France will continue to publish books, articles and resolutions which look like Marxism, which rehearse the 'programme' with great expertise and with the most impeccable Trotskyist phrases, but without making any development of Marxism in theory or practice.

Marxism — here we see it once again — is not seen from the standpoint of a theory of knowledge, of the contradictory development of consciousness in struggle, but as the ideological expression of the interests of the working class. This one-sided view of the relation between Marxism and the working class is in fact very little different in its basic conception from the theory of knowledge which the pre-Marxist French materialists held. These materialists, to the limited extent that they applied their theories to history, explained ideology in terms of 'utility' in ensuring the interests or happiness of those who embraced the ideas.

If those who call themselves Marxists conceive of Marxism simply as the expression of the nature and struggle of the working class, they do not go beyond this. Roger Garaudy, for example, writing about the French materialists and Marxism, explained that the latter could be a

more consistent materialism because of the collectivist and non-exploitative character of the proletariat and its need for an outlook free of mystification: 'Materialism is the ideological expression of the action and struggles of the working class.' This has nothing to do with Marxism. Garaudy expands his explanation:

Here we discover at its very origin the fundamental weakness of all our precursors: not one of them, before Marx, set out his socialist or communist doctrine founding it consistently on the positions of the working class. For them, materialism was never the ideological expression of the action and struggles of the working class. What essentially distinguishes them from Marx is that they wanted to deduce materialism from this or that stage of the progress of the sciences instead of seeing in it the necessary principle of the action and struggles of the working class. This attitude condemned them to leave idealism its share: it will always be the same if one tries to make of materialism a necessity arising from thought and not from action. To deduce materialism from an idea or system of ideas is to subordinate it to something not the same as it, to descend into metaphysics and finally into idealism.

Marx gave to the working class and to philosophy the method necessary to escape from these illusions. Henceforth we have a measure with which to judge social doctrines and philosophical works: their value is a function of the weapons which they provide for escaping all mystification.³

The purpose of this quotation, let us say before the screaming starts, is not to make an amalgam of Garaudy and Stephane Just. They are, of course, politically different, opposed to each other, in their whole political course. But we are here talking about what Engels called 'the theoretical front' in one of its sectors, the vital sector of philosophy. Garaudy manages to make of Marx a continuator of the materialists of the eighteenth-century bourgeois enlightenment, but able to be consistent because he based himself on the specific interests of the working class. The French materialists of the eighteenth century prided themselves on tearing away the veils of illusion and unreason, particularly in their religious and political forms, but, according to Garaudy, only a philosophy based on the working class, which has no system of exploitation to introduce, can really provide the basis for destroying illusions.

Such explanations of class and ideology would not be out of place in the many books and magazines of 'sociology' from which 'Marxists' in France find it impossible to break, and which neither the OCI nor

³ Roger Garaudy: *Les Sources Françaises du Socialisme Scientifique*, revised edition, 1949, p. 177.

anyone else has theoretically challenged. Stephane Just, writing for the OCI, in his own way speaks very similarly to Garaudy:

Marxist method only exists through its content which integrates all the moments of the class struggle of the proletariat for its emancipation. It is in this sense that the programme of the socialist revolution concentrates Marxism and that the defence of Marxist theory can only be the defence of programme, i.e., the struggle to resolve the crisis of leadership.

Certainly it is only in the struggle for the revolution that the fight for Marxism has any meaning, but this struggle demands a defence of Marxism in the realms of philosophy, sociology, etc. as well as at the level of politics as such. The youth in the AJS are being educated in the spirit of Just's distortions, and this is the meaning of the opposition to the Young Socialists' amendment at Essen. We have the representative of the AJS, discussing the Essen amendment at the subsequent meeting of the 'Liaison Committee' set up there, saying: 'There is no ideological battle in itself, no Marxist theory in itself, but a programme which is the expression, concentrated through the Marxist method, of the totality of the struggles of the proletariat, and upon which an organization fights.'

We are not saying, of course, that there is such a thing as 'ideological battle in itself' or 'Marxist theory in itself', as we have explained in describing the differences at the pre-Conference. But we are certainly fighting against those who seem to understand the unity of theory and practice as meaning that theory no longer exists. We are certainly saying that dialectical materialism is the theory of knowledge of Marxism, of the path of struggle from error to truth — not to a 'final' truth, but continually making advances through contradictory struggle to real knowledge of the objective world as we fight to change it and change ourselves as part of it. Because this is rejected by the OCI leadership, insofar as they are represented in the document before us and in the writings of Stephane Just, they leave out the conflict between the development of scientific consciousness in the revolutionary party and the spontaneous consciousness of the working class.

The excursions of the OCI into historical questions of the movement in this connection are very instructive. So anxious are they to refute the Essen amendment that they contradict even their own recent writings. According to the OCI document, the Essen amendment errs by saying that revisionism can be found behind the development of Stalinism. 'No,' they say, 'behind each development of opportunism in the workers' movement there is not "ideology" in

the form of the revision (rejection) of Marxism, there is the reality of social forces in conflict, the class struggle expressed in the centre of the working-class movement itself, which is both the terrain and the stakes in the struggle. This created justifications in the form of a revision of Marxism.' And, on the interpretation, Stalin's revision of Marxism 'expresses the interests of the bureaucratic caste which is taking over political power ...'.

Once again we have developments in ideas interpreted purely as expressions of the interest of 'social forces'. This *general* truth is used to deny any role to the conscious struggle for theory. Trotsky once compared the revolutionary party to a 'laboratory', in which there certainly was, and must be, a temporary but definite abstraction of certain elements of the changing reality, and definite theoretical effort, before understanding of the reality of the class struggle could be taken further in revolutionary practice, the results are to further enrich theory.

On the other side, revisionism, like any other idealist development, has theoretical roots, epistemological roots in unresolved theoretical traditions, etc., and only under certain conditions do these traditions get the chance to develop and become 'anchored', as Lenin puts it, in definite class interests.⁴ Stalin's revisionism (the doctrine of socialism in one country) was the product of Stalin's (and others) limited theoretical outlook when encountering the intractable realities of the early 1920s. It became 'anchored' in the definite interests of the bureaucracy, and could have come to dominance only on the basis of this bureaucracy and the social and cultural conditions which sustained it. For this revisionism, and the bureaucratic caste whose interests it adequately represented, to succeed, it was necessary *first* to achieve what Trotsky called the 'inner corrosion' of the Bolshevik Party itself, and that process was above all one of ensuring the destruction of the theoretical basis of the Party (in the campaign against the theory of permanent revolution and the discrediting of Trotsky as a previous opponent of Lenin).

The dialectical relationship between ideas and the classes or fractions of classes whose interests they serve is entirely wiped out by the

⁴ 'Human knowledge is not a straight line, but a curve: which endlessly approximates a series of circles, a spiral. Any fragment, segment, section of this curve can be transformed (transformed, one-sidedly) into an independent, complete, straight line, which then (if one does not see the wood for the trees) leads into the quagmire, into clerical obscurantism (where it is anchored by the class interests of the ruling classes.)' Lenin, Volume 38, p. 363.

OCI's mechanical and 'sociological' theory that ideological changes are simply 'justifications' of social interests. Revolutionary consciousness developed in a struggle to grasp the changes occurring through the struggle of opposites in the objective world; this struggle and change is fundamental, whereas the identity of opposites is temporary and transitory.

It should at least be recorded in this discussion that in Stephane Just's *Defence of Trotskyism*, published earlier in 1971, which contains many of the mistaken theories which recur in the OCI document, he did at least state a correct position on this particular matter. Answering the Pabloites, who 'explained' the rise of Stalin by 'objective' conditions, Just replied:

It is not so-called 'objective' conditions which lie at the origin of the isolation of the Russian proletariat and of the Bolshevik Party, of the degeneration of the workers' state and of the Bolshevik Party, but so-called 'subjective' conditions which lie at the origin of these so-called 'objective' conditions.

Even though the use of the adjective 'so-called' reflects extraordinary confusion (as we shall see, Just obliterates the opposition of subjective and objective), this quotation is quite correct about the origins of the degeneration of the workers' state. At this point, since the OCI promises another document on the disputed questions, we will make one specific request: let them say categorically, is dialectics the theory of knowledge of Marxism or not? And if it is not, what were the consequences, in Lenin's theory and practice, of his mistaken conceptions on this score. We do not expect this request to be favourably considered, and yet the author of the OCI document has in fact already embraced a formulation by Stephane Just which without referring to Lenin as such, directly challenges his basic idea.

The OCI document tells us:

As S. Just recalls in his *Defence of Trotskyism*: 'Considered as a historical and organic process, the formation of the class-consciousness of the proletariat depends on the analysis of the development of the class struggle and ends the metaphysical discussions on whether class-consciousness is brought in from the outside or not, and on whether the vanguard is self-appointed or not.'

Here we have arrived at the crucial *link* between the philosophical and methodological errors of the OCI, on the one hand, and their centrist political tendency on the other. Stressing the unity of the

opposites, Marxist theory and exploited working class, they ignore the struggle of these opposites in which the unity consists. Just's 'organic' conception serves very well to help recognize any emerging 'allies' as more or less legitimate expressions of this organically developing consciousness. An extended quotation on this question from Just's book shows how, by a series of rationalistic formulae to 'integrate' all the different aspects of the class struggle, the actual dialectic of *how* consciousness is achieved is abolished.

But it is abstraction to consider the struggles and organization of the proletariat outside the totality of the social, political and ideological relations in society. They are born and develop as one of the components of the whole history of humanity. They are fed on all this history whose mainspring they become. The struggle of the proletariat against exploitation, the forms of organization which it adopts, concretize the basic contradiction in bourgeois society, but this is expressed in many forms within all classes and social layers in bourgeois society, through contradictions which derive from the production relations of that society.

The struggles of the proletariat and its organization feed in their turn the social, political and ideological contradictions and antagonisms within bourgeois society. The proletariat maintains complex relations with all the other classes in bourgeois society, their struggles, their antagonisms, their political and ideological relations. There is nothing more stupid than these symmetrical views: Class-consciousness brought into the proletariat from outside its struggles by 'good prophets', bourgeois intellectuals, or the class-consciousness of the proletariat monopolized by horny-handed workers who produce surplus value, with the 'good' petty bourgeois or bourgeois having to put themselves humbly at the disposal of these workers and to imitate them.

Basically, these systematic points of view reveal the contempt of the petty-bourgeois for the proletariat: they make the working class a present of their consciousness and the others imagine a mythical working class made up of workers who are incapable of going beyond the narrow horizon of their immediate exploitations. Fighting against exploitation, trying to break the social relations based on their exploitation, in search of ways and means of organizing, the proletariat builds and develops its consciousness in an organic historical process fed by all its previous history and the relations it maintains with all the other social classes, their contradictions, their antagonisms, the political, social and ideological struggles developed there. Thus petty-bourgeois and bourgeois intellectuals can break with their class, join the proletariat, participate in the formation and development of its class-consciousness, by bringing the acquired knowledge of

other classes and social layers. But the latter are radically transformed when they are integrated into the struggle of the proletariat which they enrich. The struggles of the proletariat give them a new content and a new historical dimension.

Because the proletariat's role is related to everything else that happens in bourgeois society, and because its existing consciousness is dependent on the end-result of all the interconnections, Just forbids any study of the living struggle whereby the contradiction between the working class as object and the working class as subject is overcome! No wonder then that he dismisses the central idea of Lenin's *What is to be Done?* as a 'metaphysical discussion'!

It was precisely against the type of 'organic' theory of consciousness put forward by Just that Lenin insisted very firmly on the fact that Marxism as a science was developed on the basis of a conscious theoretical effort by bourgeois intellectuals to grasp reality at the level of the relations between all the classes, and not at the level of the experience or existing consciousness of the working class. If Just's 'organic' point of view were correct, why would Lenin want to insist that left to itself the proletariat can achieve only trade union consciousness, and that this is bourgeois consciousness? Because, although from some god's eye view, or from the point of view of pure reason which has gathered into itself all the determinations (or 'moments' as Just has it), the beautiful whole can be seen as integrated, nonetheless from the standpoint of revolutionary practice the task is precisely the struggle *for* political or socialist consciousness *against* the ideology imposed by the bourgeoisie and its agencies.

In their anxiety to oppose this insistence on the fight for Marxist theory, for dialectical materialism, and to make themselves acceptable to others who dismiss the basic importance of this question, the OCI are forced back on to the use of quotations from Marx in a way which deliberately counterposes general statements of the principles of historical materialism against the specific developments of this theory by Lenin. The document quotes *The German Ideology*, attempting to show by this that it is nonsense to talk about fighting for socialist class-consciousness because only the revolution itself can produce such consciousness. ('A massive transformation of man is necessary ... the mass creation of this communist consciousness ... such a transformation can only be wrought through a practical movement, through a revolution. ...') This is another sophism.

The fight to build the revolutionary party on the basis of Marxist

theory is the struggle for conscious leadership of the 'practical movement' of the proletarian revolution. Nor did our original formulation suggest that the fight for consciousness was some abstract one taking place entirely separately from the class struggle. That is a distortion. What we said was 'What was most essential in the preparations of the sections was to develop dialectical materialism *in a struggle to understand and to transform the consciousness of the working class in the changing objective conditions*' (emphasis added). What a shameless distortion to quote this and then make jokes about people who want to 'develop dialectical materialism on the model of exercising the muscles'.

These thoroughly anti-Marxist views on the character of dialectical materialism and on the nature of the relation between theory and class-consciousness cannot but be associated with a revision of the Marxist positions on the revolutionary party and the relation to the working class. Lenin's argument on the question of theory being 'brought from the outside' was directed to laying the foundations of the revolutionary party in Russia. Just's rejection of this as 'metaphysics' is directed towards the liquidation of the positions of the International Committee, which have been fought for against revisionism in the Fourth International.

In 1967 the SLL warned the OCI on the political implications of failure to build on the gains of the 1966 Conference. The OCI has now reaped the political harvest. Already by 1967 the OCI presented once again the formula 'the FI was destroyed under the pressure of hostile social forces.' (May 15, 1967)

The SLL Central Committee replied (June 19, 1967):

The OCI delegates voted [at the 1966 Conference] for the SLL's amendment that the FI was *not* destroyed. It is not possible to go forward and build revolutionary parties except on this basis. Those who left the Conference on this issue joined the attack on the SLL by those who have gone over to the camp of bourgeois pacifism *and they will never return*. We tell the OCI: You cannot separate the return to this formula, together with your attacks on centralized organization and the supposed 'ultimatism' of the Socialist Labour League, from the line-up of revisionist forces on exact these questions.

In the preparation for the Fourth Conference of the International Committee, as our SLL 9th Conference resolution makes clear, we will fight to reaffirm the decisions and gains of the April 1966 Conference. We have insisted there on the continuity of the Fourth International, rejecting

formula 'The Fourth International is dead' as a middle-class, pessimistic rejection of the revolutionary role of the working class and of revolutionary consciousness, we went on to formulate in the Commission on the tasks of the International Committee, the central principles of the type of Party we build, a Bolshevik party.

We stressed that all trade union work, youth work, etc. was subordinated to this task. We specifically rejected all 'spontaneity' and syndicalist theories of the 'organic' or 'natural' emergence of revolutionary parties through struggle.

Further, we drew the attention of the OCI to the implications of these differences for the developing situation in France itself. It is necessary to quote this section in full, because it shows the continuity in the positions the SLL has taken on the political questions involved, in contrast to the OCI's caricature of the SLL position as one of abstract theorizing on philosophy:

Now the radicalization of the workers in W. Europe is proceeding rapidly, particularly in France. The election results there, the threat of a return to the political instability of the ruling class in the Fourth Republic, the mounting strike struggles, the taking of emergency powers — all these place a premium on revolutionary preparation. There is *always* a danger at such a stage of development that a revolutionary party responds to the situation in the working class not in a revolutionary way, but by adaptation to the level of struggle to which the workers are restricted by their own experience under the old leaderships, i.e., to the inevitable initial confusion. Such revisions of the fight for the independent party and the Transitional Programme are usually dressed up in the disguise of getting closer to the working class, unity with all those in struggle, not posing ultimatums, abandoning dogmatism, etc.

The indications here for the policy of the OCI in the May-June events, only 12 months later, discussed in our statement of October 24 last are obvious.

The OCI's turning its back very deliberately on the theoretical foundations of the building of the revolutionary party, particularly in respect of the youth, is the necessary companion of its distortion of the Leninist policy of united front. The capitulation to spontaneity is the link between these two aspects. Whereas Just wipes out the distinction between spontaneity and revolutionary consciousness, calling it 'metaphysical', Lenin very deliberately insists on this distinction:

The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism: nonetheless, the most widespread [and continuously and diversely revived]

training fought for in the building of our independent resources, our independent political line.

What are these dangers? We already know their manifestation at Essen, in the international youth movement. We have already indicated their results in the failure to go beyond the demand for a 'central strike committee' in 1968. These results could have been avoided. The warnings against these dangers abound in the theoretical work of Lenin and Trotsky. The fact that they went unheeded is a sure indication of the weight of hostile class pressures behind the line of the OCI leadership. Trotsky, writing and speaking at the time of the Third and Fourth Congresses of the Communist International (often specifically about the French Communist Party) devoted many thousands of words to the question of the united front, but never *once* went beyond describing it and advocating its use as a tactic. (*First Five Years of the Communist International*, Volume Two). Nor was this tactic applicable in all cases or at all stages in the development of the revolutionary movement.

In cases where the Communist Party still remains an organization of an insignificant minority, the question of its conduct on the mass-struggle front does not assume decisive practical and organizational significance. In such conditions, most actions remain under the leadership of the old organizations which by reason of their powerful traditions continue to play the decisive role. Similarly, the problem of the united front does not arise in countries where . . . the CP is the sole leading organization of the toiling masses.

We cannot simply take phrases from the history of the communist movement about the necessity for the united front, and transplant them as timeless truths into the present. It is always a question of understanding definite and necessary stages in the development of the revolutionary party in relation to the development of the working class and its needs. This is what Lenin explained in the discussion of tactics at the Third Comintern Congress (1921):

The first stage in our struggle was to create a genuine communist party, so that we could know with whom we were talking, and in whom we could have complete confidence. At the first and second congresses we said 'Out with the centrists!' . . . But now we have to go a bit further. The second stage, after we have created the party, must be to learn how to prepare the revolution. In many countries we have not even begun to learn how to win the leadership . . .

The sections of the International Committee are not, of course,

the same stages of development as the parties of the Comintern. These sections, as part of the Fourth International, have had their own specific evolution, with its own specific stages, in the fight against Stalinism and revisionism, in objective conditions different from those of the years after World War I. But we can certainly say that these sections have defended Trotskyism and have developed as revolutionary parties, and will continue to do so, *only* on the basis that the building of independent revolutionary parties is the central task of our whole epoch. These parties must indubitably work out the way to use the united front tactic in each country.

But the OCI is making the united front a principle to which the independence of the vanguard and the development of Marxist theory are subordinated. Under today's conditions this is equivalent to a new and more sophisticated form of the liquidationism which has been the main content of revisionism in the Fourth International. This history of the struggle for the Fourth International is strewn with warnings against these dangers which exist in the united front tactic, and for good reason. Representative are the following extracts from Trotsky's writings on Germany in 1931-1932, writings in which he deals fully with the question of the united front, and indeed where the main emphasis was on the necessity of the united front. His warnings therefore carry special weight:

That a workers' party is compelled to carry out the policy of the united front — that is not to be gainsaid. But the policy of the united front has its dangers. Only an experienced and a tested revolutionary party can carry out this policy successfully. In any case, the policy of the united front cannot serve as a programme for a revolutionary party. And in the meantime, the entire activity of the SAP is now being built on it. As a result, the policy of the united front is being carried over into the party itself, that is, it serves to smear over the contradictions between the various tendencies. And that is precisely the fundamental function of centrism.

To reduce the whole policy of the proletariat to agreements with the reformist organizations or, still worse, to the abstract slogan of 'unity', is something that only spineless centrists of the stripe of the Socialist Workers Party (SAP) can do. For the Marxists, the united front policy is merely one of the methods in the course of the class struggle. Under certain conditions this method becomes completely useless; it would be absurd to want to conclude an agreement with the reformists for the socialist revolution. But there are conditions under which the rejection of the united front may ruin the revolutionary party for many decades to come . . .

this is not a new question in the history of our movement. Trotsky wrote in the summer of 1934, in France: 'We criticized Naville for not concretizing the revolutionary content of the united front, thus permitting the two bureaucracies to seize upon this slogan without great risk.'

With this distortion of the tactic of the united front, the OCI goes over to the essence of the revisionism which has for 20 years attacked the Fourth International. The difference here is not one of emphasis but of principle. Trotsky, writing on the ILP in 1933, condemned '... a united front made not for one single practical action but for collaboration in general...'. There cannot be the slightest doubt about where Trotskyists place their essential concentration. Every day of the history of our movement, especially in the fight against Pabloite revisionism, has reinforced Trotsky's warning:

The policy of a united front with reformists is obligatory, but it is of necessity limited to partial tasks. There can be no thought of making the socialist revolution in a united front with reformist organizations. The principal task of a revolutionary party consists in freeing the working class from the influence of reformism. (September 1933.)

The 'government of united workers' organizations' in which the OCI wants to participate is clearly a government of the bourgeois state. Revisionism opens the door to reformism.

If this point has had to be explained at length, it is because the consequences of error on this score are truly enormous. For the sake of a practical 'alliance' with Lora of the Bolivian POR, the OCI leaders 'reconstructing' the Fourth International in Latin America after their own prescriptions chose to forget even their own criticisms of the POR's capitulation to Stalinism in 1970. They adopted a position on the Bolivian revolution which totally liquidates the independence of the working class and the revolutionary vanguard, not merely into the trade union bureaucracy and the Stalinist apparatus, but into the bourgeois nationalism of Torres.

All the demagogic talk from the OCI about the 'universal republic of Soviets', with the Bolivian Popular Assembly as its first manifestation, all the talk about the permanent revolution, is disguise for the awful reality that the working class was placed under the domination of the bourgeoisie. Because of this the counter-revolution was able to isolate and repress the working class without the Popular Assembly being able to carry out any real mobilization of the masses. Lora and

the Assembly supported the Torres regime, they did not prepare for its overthrow in any way; and finally, with the counter-revolution at the gates, the POR itself appealed for the arming of the masses . . . by Torres!

There could be no more fitting end to this reply. Lora's party took to its logical and practical conclusion the opportunistic opposition to theory entailed in the positions of the OCI. It is time to draw all the lessons of this experience, in line with those of the Belgian General Strike, of the Ceylon coalition and of Algeria. With such policies and programmes, a split in the International Committee of the Fourth International was shown to be absolutely necessary and inevitable.

DOCUMENT 8

Report of the Fourth Conference of the International Committee, April 10-15, 1972

The International Committee of the Fourth International held its fourth international conference from April 10-15. Delegates from eight countries participated, some of them travelling many thousands of miles.

First concern of the conference was the urgency given to its proceedings by the transformed economic and political changes in the months since the August 15 measures of United States President Nixon. In the US and in the capitalist countries of Europe, the working class have moved into struggle under conditions where the question of taking power cannot be avoided.

Only the forces of the International Committee have fought, all through the 1950s and 1960s, to prepare for these changes. Every other 'socialist' and 'Communist' tendency — including some falsely claiming the name Trotskyists — based themselves on the theory that the capitalist boom had made it no longer possible for the workers of the advanced countries to achieve the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

As the conference resolution on international perspectives points out, this theory of 'neo-capitalism', a capitalism without fundamental contradictions, was only the surface impression of middle-class opponents of Marxism. With this theory they turned to other social forces — the Stalinist bureaucracy, the colonial middle-class nationalists, the peasantry, and finally, in 1968, the students — as the basis for the overthrow of capitalism. This was really the politics of protest and radical propaganda in the capitalist countries.

Since May-June 1968 in France, the working class itself has thrown into chaos and confusion all those who based themselves on these revisions of Marxism. Consequently, only the International Committee is able to put forward a revolutionary international perspective at this stage. The conference Manifesto urges revolutionaries in every

country to recognize and to act upon their historic responsibilities, to fight in every struggle of the working class for the building of revolutionary Marxist parties.

Now the full fury of the crisis has been unleashed by Nixon's measures, it is necessary to prepare for the most explosive economic and political consequences, says the Manifesto. Trade war becomes massive slump. Great industrial and financial concerns quake and crash. Whole national economies face breakdown. War tempts big business as the solution, and at the same time frightens them. Revolution and counter-revolution appear first in one country, then in another.

The reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies, tied to imperialism, can only lead the masses to disastrous defeats. These same bureaucracies assist the imperialists who are driven by intensified competition to turn upon the working class in their 'own' countries to destroy their basic rights and organizations.

Never was it more urgent to build working-class revolutionary parties based on the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. This period now brings out the full meaning of the long struggle, since 1953, of the International Committee against Pabloite revisionism, which abandoned the building of such parties.

In this overall perspective, the conference proceeded to discuss in detail the work of the national sections. It is a question, in each country, of working out a concrete programme of struggle to enable the working class to emerge as a politically independent force, by breaking it from the present domination of the Stalinists in countries such as Greece, France or Italy, and from the social democracy in other countries, such as Britain.

Conference also discussed the work of Trotskyists in the United States, although the Workers League, which works in sympathy with the IC, is prevented by US law (the Voorhis Act) from joining the Fourth International.

In this presidential election year, the conference considered that the long-term fight for a US labour party based on the trade unions could be and must be taken forward decisively. Not only are US trade unionists being subjected to the internal measures — pay freeze, legal restrictions — flowing from August 15, but the presidential candidacy of the ultra-right wing George Wallace is the spearhead of a big attack by the capitalist parties on the unions.

It was the strength of the American working class, particularly in

Torres and bloodily repressed the working class had cruelly exposed the descent into centrism of the POR (Revolutionary Workers Party) led by Guillermo Lora and sharing the political conceptions of the OCI.

At this point, the OCI, far from pulling back from its dangerous positions, persisted in them and solidarized with Lora against the International Committee. The conference endorsed the positions taken by the IC in breaking from the revisionist leadership of the OCI. It would be impossible for revolutionary Marxists in this period to co-exist in the same international organization as those whose false theories and opportunist actions prepare defeats for the working class.

In planning for the future, commissions at the conference gave guidance to comrades struggling to establish new sections in places as far away as Australia. The international summer school was planned, in which several hundred comrades from many countries will participate.

One of the main issues at this school will be the history of the Fourth International and the International Left Opposition. A special commission was appointed to begin this work. They, and the individual sections, will bring together the preliminary results by the summer. This is no academic pursuit: the history of the International embodies the theoretical lessons of all the vital experiences of the working class in our epoch.

Another resolution on future tasks instructed the International Committee to draft rules for its functioning founded on the original statutes of the Fourth International (1938) which would facilitate centralized work and guidance to the national sections.

In the five days of the conference, delegates worked together, not in an atmosphere of mutual compliments and abstract schematic formulations, but rather in an intensive struggle to examine every problem to its roots, by relating it to the great historical transformations in the objective situation and the theoretical struggle made urgent by these changes.

In this sense, the Fourth Conference of the International Committee ended on a note of high revolutionary optimism, an optimism tempered by determination, above all else to devote every nerve and every muscle to the task outlined by Leon Trotsky: to resolve the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the working class, the only road to resolving the historical crisis of humanity caused by decaying capitalism.

DOCUMENT 9

Manifesto of the Fourth Conference of the International Committee, April 14, 1972

The Fourth Conference of the International Committee of the Fourth International, meeting on April 10 to 15, 1972, calls upon revolutionaries in all sections of the world movement to take up with every resource they can command the great historic tasks now posed before the Fourth International.

Entirely new conditions have opened up for resolution of the crisis of revolutionary leadership which has held back the working class since the rise of Stalinism.

The struggle for working class power, for the socialist revolution enters a new and decisive stage with the crisis of world capitalism precipitated by the August 15, 1971 measures of US President Nixon. With the collapse of the financial agreements of Bretton Woods, the end of dollar convertibility, and the open declaration of trade war, the foundation of all economic and political relations between imperialism and the working class in the metropolitan capitalist countries since World War II is smashed.

In every major capitalist country, the ruling class is forced to set out to destroy all the positions won in the past by the working class, to destroy it as a class, break up its organizations, and reduce it to mass poverty. Only in this way can the capitalist class of each country hope to survive the world recession and trade war.

Above all, the conditions under which the revolutionary movement works are changed qualitatively. Trotskyism faces its greatest challenge since the formation of the Fourth International in 1938. Having successfully defended the programme of the Fourth International and the theory of Marxism against all the physical repressions and political betrayals of Stalinism and reformism and having defeated the

class, and the radicalization of the working class in Britain and Ireland, have shown that the workers of the advanced capitalist countries are undergoing a fundamental development as the crisis makes its impact and this strength reveals itself as the main source of its extension and development.

Nixon's measures of August 15 were made absolutely unavoidable by the wage settlement in the US steel strike and the other impending wage battles. It became impossible both to contain the strength of the US working class and to continue with the international role of the dollar. This is the very heart of the crisis.

Nixon's international measures were, therefore, linked with new preparations against the US working class. The institution of the Pay Board, the rejection of the longshoremen's settlement, preparations for anti-strike legislation, combined with Nixon's conscious unemployment policy have brought the trade unions into direct collision with the government.

This crisis is shaking all the old relationships of class collaboration between the trade union bureaucracy, the government and its two parties. This is what forced Meany to walk off the Pay Board. Every struggle of the American working class for wage increases, against speed-up and unemployment must now be a political struggle, a struggle for power.

American workers built the most powerful trade unions in the world but these unions have been tied politically to the Democratic Party through the trade union bureaucracy's collaboration with the aid of Stalinism.

The only way the American working class can defeat the attacks of the employers and the government is through the break with the Democratic and Republican Parties and the formation of a labour party based on the unions and on socialist policies.

The 1972 elections now take place in an entirely new period since August 15, which places the labour party immediately on the agenda now. The emergence of Wallace raises the greatest dangers to the labour movement. Behind the racist and populist demagoguery of his campaign is Wallace's real programme — the destruction of the unions, the destruction of every right and gain the unions have won. Wallace is the right-wing spokesman for the capitalist class that now must above all destroy the unions if their system is to be preserved. Behind Wallace are gathering all the racist and fascist forces.

Nixon and the Republican and Democratic Parties stand with him.

Wallace is putting forward today what the capitalist class as a whole is preparing for the working class in the future. Wallace cannot be defeated today, as the trade union bureaucracy claims, by supporting politicians in the Democratic Party. The only way that Wallace can be defeated is through the construction of this labour party, through the break with the two capitalist parties.

The fight for the labour party is the central responsibility of the Workers League. This must be fought for in the unions with the call for a congress of labour to establish this party on a socialist programme. It is to this struggle that the youth and the students must be turned in a fight against the Stalinists, who openly support capitalist parties, and revisionists who seek to sidetrack the struggle for a labour party, proposing Black and Chicano capitalist parties.

Only through the building of the labour party can the American working class be broken from the reformist illusions built up in the past and the road prepared for power.

The Nixon measures have confronted the ruling class of the European capitalist states with the inescapable necessity of going to war on their own working class. By thrusting the burden of the dollar crisis on to these countries, Nixon imposes the need for the break up of the compromise relationships and unstable equilibrium which have prevailed since 1945. This blow comes just at a time when, following the events of 1968 in France, the working class enters the scene, strong and undefeated, in a combative way with its own demand.

The new militancy of the working class passes at first, in a spontaneous way, through its traditional organizations and takes the old forms. The reformist and Stalinist leaderships strive everywhere to prevent it coming forward as an independent force. The task of the Fourth International sections is to establish leadership in the working class and to expose and drive out the treacherous bureaucracies. Only in this way can the working class take the power.

The alternative leadership must be established on the programme and with the perspectives of the International Committee of the Fourth International. There is no other way. Failure to resolve the crisis of leadership in the present period will mean defeats for the working class which will throw mankind back into a new era of barbarism.

The economic situation of European capitalism since August 15 has become truly desperate and the bourgeoisie itself has not fully grasped, even eight months later, the full depths of its crisis. But, in

In Italy the boom showed itself to be even more fragile. Since the 'hot autumn' of 1969, which was a direct continuation of the 1968 May-June events in France, the country has been in the grip of an economic, social and political crisis unprecedented since the pre-Mussolini years. Only the heavy weight of Italian Stalinism's apparatus has prevented the working class from asserting its claim to power in opposition to the debile Italian bourgeoisie and its main political expression Christian Democracy. The betrayals of Togliatti's heirs have given the bourgeoisie time to prepare new attacks which will be struck after the forthcoming elections, whatever their outcome. The panic-stricken petty bourgeoisie are attracted into the orbit of the neo-fascists to whom the monopolists are now turning as an alternative to the increasingly-discredited and impotent parliamentary regime.

The Stalinists are the last line of defence for this rotten political system. It is absolutely necessary to place the demand on the Italian Communist Party: break from all forms of coalition with the bourgeois parties; take the power. Along this road, the Stalinist hold on the working class will be broken.

The bonapartist dictatorship in Greece is a regime of crisis which is an expression of the world crisis of the capitalist system. It portrays the future that capitalism has in store for the working class in this period of its death agony, where the bourgeoisie is forced everywhere to pass to the most severe forms of state repression, having no other way to defend its rule.

At the same time the seizure of power by the Colonels was the advance warning of the fact that the class struggle, in the whole capitalist world, has developed to its most crucial point, posing on the agenda the proletarian revolution for the overthrow of the capitalist system. The colonels cannot solve the problems of Greek capitalism. They are unable to gain popular support or to stabilize their power. On the contrary, their regime is constantly undermined by the deepening crisis of imperialism. Particularly since Nixon's measures on the dollar and the declaration of trade war with Europe, an explosive charge has been placed under the foundations of the dictatorial regime.

The closure of a series of basic industries, which employed thousands of workers, and the last big increases on the basic price of food are the first products of the crisis in its new stage. Similarly, the split inside the junta which came into the open with the sacking of the

Regent Zoitakis and the taking of his post by the arch-dictator Papadopoulos, is the manifestation of this crisis in another sphere.

Intensification of the crisis following the August 15 measures has created conditions for a confrontation between the working class and the dictatorial regime. The Greek Trotskyists fight for independence of the working class, opposing the Stalinists who would drag it behind the liberal bourgeoisie, and to establish the revolutionary party to lead the struggle of the working class for power.

In the epoch of imperialism in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the most elementary demands for national independence and democratic rights can only be granted if the struggle in these countries is carried over into the socialist phase.

We warn the workers and peasants of these countries not to put any confidence in bourgeois nationalist leaderships. The experience of Bangla Desh demonstrates the danger of such a step. With the suspension of the Constituent Assembly on April 11, the ruling bourgeois nationalist Awami League has demonstrated that it is an obstacle to the granting of full democratic rights, and the voluntary and revolutionary reunification of India on a socialist basis.

In Ireland bourgeois nationalism expresses itself through IRA terrorism. Far from leading to real independence and liberation, their exclusive reliance on terror, and opposition to Marxism and the revolutionary party, have now resulted in a compromise with imperialism, reminiscent of the 1921 agreement. The imposition of direct rule from Westminster, welcomed by a section of the IRA leaders threatens the rights of Protestant and Catholic workers alike. Partition, religious divisions, low wages and unemployment will remain, through a coalition of Republican and Orange capitalism, backed by the Tory government at Westminster.

In the colonial and semi-colonial countries, as in all other countries, the only guarantee of success for the masses in their struggles for national independence and democratic rights is the building in these countries of sections of the International Committee, dedicated to the central strategy of establishment of political independence of the working class and the overthrow of imperialism.

In this period of unprecedented crisis for European capitalism the European Common Market takes on a new meaning. Its extension to include Britain and those countries grouped with her in the European Free Trade Area emphasizes its character as a counter-revolutionary coalition aimed at the working class and intended to create conditions

in which European capitalism can find a basis for survival in conflict with the United States and Japan.

The Heath government in Britain, supported by a section of the Labour Party, has hastened to join the Common Market in preparation for civil war and in the hope that ailing British capitalism will be given an injection of strength. Competition and rivalry between the European capitalist states will not disappear with the entry of Britain but will only reach a new pitch of intensity, driving each government to strike even more decisively against the working class. In Britain, the Industrial Relations Act, the strengthening of police forces and changes in the law affecting legal rights are part of this preparation.

At the same time, British finance capital prepares to take advantage of the new opportunities for profit which it hopes to find within the Common Market. Whole sections of industry in Britain which can no longer be competitive when tariff barriers come down will either be closed down or production will be shifted to the continent. Speculators and financiers are eagerly looking for fresh pickings, regardless of the long-term consequences. In the Common Market, as in the whole market, it is capitalist anarchy which prevails. In its own way, through the Common Market, capitalism tries to overcome the contradiction between the productive forces and the constricting limits of the historic national states within which bourgeois rule expresses itself. But the Common Market does not in fact transcend these limits or result in any merging of interests of the European ruling classes. It opens up a more bitter struggle for hegemony inside the so-called European Community in which the weakest will go to the wall.

The revolutionary movement opposes and fights in every way the sinister 'new order' represented by the European Common Market, which constitutes the main counter-revolutionary strategy of European capital against the working class, aiming to destroy its conquests. Brezhnev's declaration that the Soviet bureaucracy will modify its attitude to the EEC is a declaration of willingness to collaborate in this counter-revolutionary strategy. Against the capitalist Common Market, the Fourth International calls for the taking of power by the working class in the perspective of the United Socialist States of Europe. That is the only answer which accords with the historic interests of the working class.

The upsurge of the workers' movement in the advanced capitalist countries now joins with the revolutionary struggles of workers and

peasants in the colonial countries. In Vietnam, US imperialism is fought to a standstill, despite the international betrayal of the Vietnamese revolution: and in Bangla Desh the masses herald an entirely new stage of the revolution in South-East Asia, despite the blows struck against them by the Stalinist bureaucracy in Peking. Mao Tse-tung's approach to Nixon is the desperate response of imperialism and the bureaucracy to these revolutionary struggles.

The IC of the Fourth International affirms its solidarity with the national liberation struggles of the Arab people against world imperialism and its agents in the Middle East — the state of Israel. It warns, at the same time, against the perfidious policy of the Soviet bureaucracy which is using the situation to bring about a deal with imperialism to crush the revolution.

These are the transformed conditions in which Trotskyism fights for revolutionary leadership. The starting point for every Fourth International section can now only be this: after August 1971 we work in qualitatively transformed conditions which hold out the highest possibilities, and at the same time the greatest dangers, the most intense struggle: conditions in which the political decisions of revolutionaries involve the whole future of the working class.

The nature of the crisis in the relationship between the classes means that the task now before the revolutionary movement becomes that of winning the leadership of the working class and taking it to power. The International Committee has fought a tenacious and thorough-going theoretical struggle against all conceptions that the political consciousness of the working class can be developed spontaneously out of the experience of the class itself, or out of the struggle only for its immediate demands.

In every country, the capitalist state aims to destroy the trade unions. It is possible to defend the unions only by fighting for revolutionary leadership of the unions, based on a struggle for Marxist theory against trade union consciousness.

The urgency of the preparations now required could not be understood just from bringing together the struggles and experience of the working class itself. It is necessary to make a Marxist analysis of the developing crisis of the capitalist economy and its penetration into the objective relations between the classes at the level of state power and politics, as well as economically, and in the relations within the ruling class itself. Such an analysis is inseparable from a struggle for Marxist theory, of dialectical materialism, against all conceptions of spon-

taneous development of revolutionary consciousness, against all propaganda conceptions of simply fighting on a programme of demands. In every country, the sections of the Fourth International fight above all to develop the political independence of the working class, to intervene in every partial struggle in order to bring the class face to face with this question of its own power, which involves a complete break with the Stalinists and reformists, and the building of mass revolutionary parties.

The Fourth International exists only through a continuous and uncompromising struggle against every misleadership of the working class and, in particular, the Stalinist bureaucracy and its agencies throughout the world. Stalinism as always plays a doubly reactionary role. It holds back the harmonious development of the productive forces in the workers' states through its greed, corruption and parasitism. At the same time it disarms the working class in the capitalist countries and facilitates betrayal by its reactionary brain-child of 'peaceful co-existence' and 'peaceful transition' to socialism.

Stalinism is counter-revolutionary through and through. By its brutal intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and suppression of the Gdansk uprising in December 1970, Stalinism demonstrates its mortal fear and hatred of the working class fighting against bureaucratic privilege and dictatorship. The continued harassment, exile and torture of Soviet intellectuals, scientists and writers is a grim reminder of the fact that the Stalinist bureaucracy, to preserve its usurpatory regime, must repress every expression of artistic and literary dissidence. In doing so it stimulates new expressions of anti-bureaucratic revolt in the youth and the working class. The International Committee of the Fourth International fights for the unconditional release of these dissidents as an integral part of the fight to construct a Trotskyist party which alone can carry out the political expropriation of the bureaucracy and restore proletarian democracy and intellectual freedom in the USSR. At the same time the International Committee of the Fourth International will fight to combat Stalinism's treachery — Peking and Moscow alike — which has condemned entire communist parties and hundreds and thousands of workers in Indonesia, Sudan, Iran and other countries to extinction.

The collapse of the French General Strike of May-June 1968 constitutes the most decisive test to date of the correctness of the Trotskyist characterization of Stalinism as counter-revolutionary. Initially opposing the students' struggle, the CP leaders suddenly switched

their line in order to more effectively control the General Strike and — in the absence of a revolutionary leadership — steered the movement back to 'normality and order'.

The Fifth Republic and French capitalism were saved, not because of any intrinsic strength of the regime, but because of Stalinist collaboration. The refusal of the revisionists of the OCI and the Ligue Communiste to raise political demands and pose the question of power before the Stalinist bureaucracy contributed powerfully to the subsequent betrayal of the Stalinists and the retreat of the masses. As in the Belgian General Strike of 1961, revisionism played an important role in preserving the grip of Stalinism on the European working class.

The reformist counter-revolutionary policies of international Stalinism not only help perpetuate imperialism, but by the same token accentuate the isolation of the USSR and China and intensify the social contradictions within them. Stalinism cannot be reformed. It must be smashed, overthrown through the mobilization of the working class under the leadership of parties of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

But this struggle requires patience, tactical resourcefulness and a clear dialectical understanding of the present crisis and the nature and origins of Stalinism. No successful struggle can be carried out against the Stalinist leadership outside the USSR, Eastern Europe and China by groups or individuals who base themselves on a one-sided analysis and preconceived ideas.

Stalinism is the political expression of the interests of a bureaucracy transmitting the pressures of world imperialism on the working class. But the interests of the working class which supports the Stalinist parties, thrown into ever more violent struggle by the crisis of imperialism, demands that these parties go forward for power. In the epoch of the intensified crisis of imperialism these conflicting interests and mutually exclusive aspirations of the working class and the bureaucracy come into conflict and precipitate crisis after crisis in the Stalinist movement. The Stalinist-imperialist collaboration after World War II was part and parcel of the monetary arrangements which permitted inflationary policies to be pursued by the capitalist powers: now however the termination of the Bretton Woods agreement disrupts completely this relationship. This provides the Trotskyist movement with unparalleled opportunities to recruit from the Stalinist parties and destroy the political credibility of their leaders.

To ignore these opportunities is to condemn the working class to defeats greater than those of the 1930s. The International Committee of the Fourth International urges all its sections to engage in this task with revolutionary optimism and audacity. Every blow struck against Stalinism intensifies the death agony of the imperialist system.

The policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy, by turning the working class away from its revolutionary tasks and exposing it to the imperialist drive towards counter-revolutionary dictatorships, constitute the gravest danger to the conquests of the October Revolution itself. As the crisis deepens, imperialism is inexorably driven to seek ways of reconquering the areas lost in the Russian Revolution and after World War II. The danger of a third world war threatens the working class more menacingly with every step towards reaction by the imperialists. The only answer to the threat of war is the united struggle of the working class for its own power, achieved through the building of revolutionary parties.

The International Committee stands for the unconditional defence of the USSR and the other workers' states in a war against imperialism. Preparation for the proletarian revolution in every capitalist country is the only effective road to such defence.

The crisis of imperialism affects every section of society and, in particular, compounds the agitation and insecurity of the petty bourgeoisie in the developed and colonial countries alike. Unable to express their hatred of capitalism in a really revolutionary way, these social groups express their despair and political impotency by individual terror as well as by pacifist non-violence. The International Committee of the Fourth International warns the working class against the dangers of petty-bourgeois adventurism which leads to the blind alley of terrorism and the diversion of the working class from its historic goal — the seizure of state power and the replacing of private property by social property. None of these aims can be achieved by the methods of the 'urban guerrilla' — revisionist or anarchist — or the rural 'foco' of the Guevarists and Maoists. The Pabloite revisionists, by encouraging this trend as well as by their adventurist attacks on the traditional parties of the working class, display, in the most criminal way, their contempt and hatred for the working class and Marxism. The International Committee of the Fourth International will continue its irreconcilable struggle against this reactionary tendency.

Only the mobilization of the working masses, in independent

actions, under the leadership of parties of the Fourth International based on Marxist theory, can win workers' power. This has been the consistent stand of the International Committee against all revisionism in the Fourth International. The struggle to found the Fourth International against Stalinism and its betrayals was at the same time the struggle to construct new revolutionary parties on the basis of Marxism. Since 1953, the International Committee has constantly fought the tendency, originally led by Michel Pablo, which declared that the working class was no longer capable of independent struggle, and that therefore the construction of Marxist parties must be abandoned in favour of pressurizing Stalinism.

This adaptation to Stalinism was the result of abandonment of the Marxist method and thus capitulation to the pressures of the capitalist class. In 1963, the US Socialist Workers' Party, which originally supported the formation of the International Committee, broke from the International Committee to support a reunification with the Pabloites, forming what is known as the Unified Secretariat. This reunification took place without any discussion or assessment of the fundamental questions involved in the original 1953 split. Instead the Castro regime was uncritically supported as the new way to make revolutions without constructing Marxist parties, the opportunist Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) of Ceylon was held up as a model Trotskyist organization, and the programme of political revolution was completely thrown out for China. The SWP, having always refused to take up a struggle for the Marxist method, ended up supporting what it broke from in 1953. The Unified Secretariat stands today in complete opposition to everything Trotsky stood for.

The fruits of the reunification of these revisionists was soon expressed in Ceylon, where a party calling itself Trotskyist, the LSSP, actually entered a bourgeois coalition government, accepting cabinet posts. The unprincipled nature of the reunification was the political preparation for this betrayal in Ceylon. In 1971, the LSSP again entered the government, this time to participate in a bloody campaign against rebellious youth, ending up jailing Trotskyists and banning the press of the Trotskyist Revolutionary Communist League, Ceylon Section of the International Committee. This is the real expression of the role of revisionism in this period of the sharp capitalist crisis.

The Unified Secretariat today is racked by a fundamental internal crisis, being torn apart by the movement forward of the working class internationally. All the questions it refused to face in 1963 now come

up — but no section is capable of providing any answers. The majority faction preaches 'neo-capitalism' and 'structural reforms' in the advanced countries, while encouraging the wildest guerrilla adventures in colonial countries. It bears political responsibility for the assassinations by the ERP which occur precisely at the moment when the Argentine working class is going into decisive battles. The minority, supported by the SWP, collaborates with Stalinism in the anti-war movement, basing itself on all manner of middle-class protests when the American working class is forced to confront Nixon and the Democratic Party is being ripped apart in the process.

After a long struggle within the International Committee to change its course, the French OCI has decided to follow the path of the SWP by breaking from the International Committee. The break has taken place over the most fundamental issue of all. What was at the root of the degeneration of Pabloism — the Marxist method.

At the Essen conference in the spring of 1971, the OCI and its youth organization, the AJS, voted down an amendment, put forward by the majority of the International Committee. This amendment stated that the struggle against bourgeois ideology among the youth was central to the construction of the international Trotskyist youth movement. This struggle required a study of the Marxist theory of knowledge and the actual training of the youth cadres in the struggle for this understanding. Following this action the OCI openly supported Lora's POR which contributed to the defeat of the Bolivian revolution, by forming a broad front with Stalinism and the bourgeois nationalist regime of Torres and refusing to call upon the working class independently to arm itself against counter-revolution. Lora has since entered a popular front formation with Torres, the Stalinists and the Pabloites while the OCI remains silent.

This political course, which duplicates the Ceylonese events is the direct result of the refusal of the OCI to take up the struggle to educate its members in the Marxist method and in this way to be able to develop a real orientation towards the working class in France and towards the construction of the Fourth International.

There is only one revolutionary tendency in the world and that is the International Committee of the Fourth International, fighting for independent revolutionary parties in every country. What Trotsky said of the Fourth International in 1938 has even greater force today: *The Fourth International exists; it has neither to be proclaimed, nor created, nor reconstructed.*

What must now be done in each country is to develop the cadres of the movement through a serious struggle for dialectical materialism as in each country the Trotskyist movement takes up the fight for the political independence of the working class, its preparation for taking the power. It is in this way that revolutionary parties will be built and the world socialist revolution prepared. The Fourth Conference of the International Committee of the Fourth International calls upon working class revolutionaries everywhere to accept the challenge of the crisis opened up since August 15, 1971, to rally to the banner of the Fourth International in every country, and build the revolutionary parties which will lead the working class to the conquest of power.

Chapter Four

Lessons of the split

Documents 11 and 12 in this chapter show very clearly the way in which the theoretical struggle against the OCI was, as earlier documents had declared, entirely necessary and positive, and that the split with them must be understood in the same way. This was why the Fourth Conference could devote itself to the actual tasks, theoretical and practical, of developing national sections. The Peruvian and Greek comrades took these theoretical struggles as their base. From the analysis here carried out of the politics of centrism in Peru and in Bolivia came the Liga Comunista of Peru, foundation of the Peruvian section of the International Committee. For the first time, a revolutionary tendency in Latin America paid, in this document, specific attention to questions of dialectical materialism, of the Marxist method and its necessity for revolutionary practice. Here too the detailed political and theoretical capitulation of Lora to Stalinism is outlined.

The Greek section of the International Committee made similar gains in its reply to the formally correct but methodologically inadequate and dangerous position of the Workers Vanguard Group, expressed in Document 10. The Greek section's reply (Document 11), with its insistence on the inseparable connections between dialectical materialism and proletarian internationalism, was an indispensable basis for the construction of the section itself.

DOCUMENT 10

Statement by the Workers Vanguard of Greece, June 1972

The Bolivian Revolution and the Deviations of the POR

The victory of the counter-revolution has been established. 'Law and order' reigns in Bolivia. A victory or a defeat of the working class clearly has international significance on the relation of forces in the social, political, and economic spheres.

Our criticism, translated and reprinted from the illegal theoretical organ of the Workers' Vanguard of Greece *Proletario*, is of value only to the extent that it will assist comrades to understand the future process of historical development. And, more important, in so far as it influences the perspectives of the building of the revolutionary party and the victory of the proletarian revolution in our country. As in our country, the temporary defeat of the Bolivian working class enables local and foreign reformists to acquire new bases.

The immeasurable value of Marxism as a weapon of social and historical orientation is more than indispensable. It is a matter of life and death for all humanity. It demands a daily determined theoretical struggle for dialectical materialism in philosophy and in methodology in all aspects of the class struggle, leading to the most urgent task of today — the building of the revolutionary Trotskyist Party of Greece.

We have struggled and we shall continue to struggle against all 'new' roads to revolution, against the various 'popular' fronts with the fake anti-dictatorial struggle with mere anti-dictator and anti-imperialist attitudes ('first the junta must go and then we'll see'). We are opposed to the enemies of the construction of a Trotskyist youth movement and those who want the youth to have theories different from the party and worship 'the spontaneous revolutionary consciousness'. And most of all we fight against those who reject the struggle for the Transitional Programme under the influence of the day-to-day struggle, based on the theory of Marxism as a weapon

against the various bourgeois influences which are transmitted by the bureaucracy and the revisionists into the workers' movement.

The bitter lesson of Bolivia gives us the courage and the will to struggle against all betrayals, deviations and errors of our own Stalinists and centrists. In the final analysis, every error of estimation and tactics is paid for dearly by ourselves, through arrests, torture and incarceration in the medieval prisons of the hated capitalist military dictatorship. The critique that follows will, we believe, provoke discussion in the International Committee of the Fourth International and, we hope, among the members and cadres of the POR and French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste.

The deviations of the POR

The revolutionary developments in Bolivia and the part played in them by the Trotskyists of the POR who found themselves in the front line of the class struggle have justifiably attracted the attention of the revolutionary vanguard. A discussion has been opened up in the ranks of the International Committee. We participate in this discussion convinced that the building of the Fourth International and its parties is not possible without a full discussion of, and an ideological struggle over, the great events which occur in the arena of international revolution.

First, we feel duty bound to pay homage to those of the working class and those Trotskyists who fell on the battleground of the class struggle. However, apart from this supreme duty, we must face up to the problems arising from the class struggle in Bolivia. On these our lines have divided. The Bolivian question was in fact the culmination of a long series of differences within the IC. The last straw!

We find in the line of the POR deviations of the Pabloite type — particularly in their turning away from the Soviet experience of the October revolution, and on the question of a 'new' line, that of the 'Popular Assembly'.

The Bolivian problem has acquired an international significance also from the viewpoint put forward by the leaders of the French organization of the IC — i.e. that a 'Popular Assembly' of a 'Soviet type' can become the instrument of the taking of power by the proletariat on a world scale. We firmly believe that this tendency is characterized by a deviation from Soviet principles. The question of Soviets today is the touchstone for all those tendencies which, in the

name of 'realism' and 'modernized' Marxism, in reality abandon the basic principles of the Soviet dictatorship of the proletariat.

But what was the root cause of this deviation? The key lies in Lenin's famous axiom, 'Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement.' The struggle for theory has been at the centre of our struggle against the Pabloites and the state capitalists. The struggle for an understanding of *dialectic materialism as a theory of knowledge* has been at the centre of the divisions in the IC. But once again those who fought for such an understanding have been vindicated. It is our contention that the explanation of the POR's betrayal is found in their pragmatic adaptation to circumstances and their neglect and contempt for Marxist theory.

The bourgeois, counter-revolutionary nature of the Torres dictatorship

Torres masqueraded as a representative of the 'left'. Assisted by the right-wing trade unionist Lechin, with his influence in the unions of the COB (Bolivian Workers' Centre) he was able to create considerable illusions in the masses. Having suffered a long period of dictatorship, particularly under General Barrientos, the rebellious masses were deceived by the fake-left phraseology of Torres and Lechin. Proceeding from deeper motives, they took over the streets from the first moment of the Torres coup.

There is a precedent in the case of Castro. Starting from a bourgeois-democratic movement, he was forced to present himself demagogically to the workers and peasants as a 'communist' and to tolerate the growth of the workers' movement. Castro's example has inspired a whole series of military and political careerists. The Pabloite theory of the genuine communism of Castro, and their hero-worship of the Algerian leadership, as well as that of other Bonapartist regimes such as Nasser, Nkrumah, etc., naturally reinforced the illusions of the workers in the 'leftism' of various dictatorships in many colonial and semi-colonial countries. The release of Regis Debray, an associate of Che Guevara, was conceived as a smokescreen to delude the masses who were seeking their own freedom.

In reality, Torres was flesh from the same body as the militarist leadership which held power on behalf of the financial oligarchy and American imperialism. His only motive in opposing the rise of bourgeois political parties was to monopolize the crushing of the labour movement himself.

Torres' coup took place in a period of the sharpening of the cyclical crisis of capitalism. Major financial crises, the fall of the buying power or wages, the growth of unemployment to terrifying heights and social upheavals are the order of the day. In order to face the critical social conditions weighing down on the Bolivian masses and to overcome the crisis at their expense, Torres combined demagogy with violence. He turned to his patrons, the Inter-American Bank and the World Bank and received \$50m loans to finance the construction of an oil pipeline between Bolivia and Argentina in order to alleviate the serious unemployment problem and forestall an uprising of the masses.

The American CIA was as much behind the Torres coup as it is with all military *pronunciamentos* in Latin America. This did not prevent Torres demagogically adopting a fake anti-imperialist position. Barrientos did the same. So did all manner of fake lefts, fake democrats, fake socialists, from Chiang Kai-shek, Castro, Ben Bella, Boumedienne, Nasser, Gaddafi, Bandaranaike, Aref and others, in order to divert the anti-imperialist feelings of the masses from the channel of socialism, with the aid of many kinds of opportunist organizations. However, all the tendencies of the 'Popular Assembly' organized an 'anti-imperialist front' without, apparently, including Torres as one of their targets.

Although US policy towards Torres was one of ambiguity and manoeuvres, certain circles in Washington were already beginning to accuse him of being 'soft on communism' and began to conspire with the *gorilismo*. What frightened them was the growth of the movement and of the Trotskyist factor.

The army leadership was not homogeneous. On the extreme right were the *gorilismo*, the pro-fascists, and rabid anti-communists. Others, more supple of movement, were at the centre, or, like Torres, swayed from one end to the other, but always within the framework of the bourgeois regime. Torres, controlling only a small section of the military machine, and unable to face the conspiracies of the extreme right was ready to come to terms with it rather than permit the arming of the masses and the growth of class revolution. Thus, despite the 'leftist' mask, the nationalist, counter-revolutionary, dictatorial and capitalist nature of the Torres government was revealed for all to see.

Torres also posed as a reformer. Indeed, he drew up and announced plans for the nationalization of the zinc, copper, lead and silver mines. Nationalization with compensation and without workers' control is a

motif of all opportunist and Bonapartist governments. Even the Pabloites see a transition to socialism in the percentage of nationalization. But Torres did not dare go as far as to carry out this nationalization. He learned his lesson from the American reaction against Ovando when the Bolivian Gulf Oil Company was nationalized. The Inter-American Bank had already cut back Torres' credits.

On the other hand Lora's Trotskyists were demanding the nationalization of the mines under workers' control. Nationalization under workers' control without compensation has a transitional meaning. It means passing through revolution towards proletarian power, the supreme criterion of the social revolution. But Torres' demagogic promises amounted to no more than a shameless fraud.

The Trotskyists of the POR did make a distinction of the class antithesis to Torres. They announced that 'The Torres government is not a workers' government', but in saying this they should have characterized it categorically as capitalist, dictatorial and counter-revolutionary. It was as though they were trying to iron out the class contradictions, to avoid the necessity of an uncompromising struggle for the overthrow of Torres; as though they were debating the possibility of that government being a workers' government.

After the failure of Miranda's coup against Torres, a demonstration was organized with pressure from the POR Trotskyists. Their paper, *Masas*, advanced these slogans: 'Socialism, not bourgeois reformism', 'Yes to the workers' and peasants' government', 'No to the popular fronts of compromisers and traitors'. From this list the most concrete slogan was missing, i.e. 'Down with the Torres government'. How is this explained? Perhaps as the *leitmotiv* of opportunism, striking only against the right, whilst supporting 'democracy'?

How was it that the masses were not concretely orientated to the overthrow of the government? If the regime was one of bourgeois reformism, why this boosting of Torres?

At the time of the General Strike at the end of 1970 to have demanded the fall of the government was a necessity. When, in August 1971, the balance of forces had changed against Torres in favour of the workers' movement, whilst the danger of a right-wing coup was acute, the slogan against the coup and the falangists should have been raised without blunting the sword against Torres. It is typical of the Stalinists, and especially the Pabloites, to have a general strategy against fascism, at the same time uncritically tail-ending so-called Jacobin leaderships like those of Cuba and Algeria.

In his article in the *Workers Press*, Lora informed us: 'At that time everybody thought — including we Marxists — that the arms would be given by the governing military team . . .'

Here we have revealed some extraordinary illusions in the nature of the bourgeois government of Torres, even in the Lora tendency. This revision of the real nature of Bonapartist governments is characteristic of Stalinism and Pabloism. It proved disastrous in the development of the revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Witness the role of the so-called 'Trotskyists' in Ceylon, or the 'co-existence' of the Maoists in Indonesia. 'This position,' added Lora, as a sort of self-criticism, 'was completely mistaken.'

Recognition of this erroneous estimation of the Torres regime would have been valuable but *La Vérité* [the OCI magazine] informed us that Lora, during the COB conference, not only made 'certain concessions to socialism in Bolivia alone', but formed a front with the Stalinists with 'a Stalinist-type view of the Ovando regime'.

Ovando was a supporter of the junta who distinguished himself in the operations against Guevara: When he took power he posed as a reformer and a left-winger, his heart set on 'the liberation' of his country from 'foreign imperialism'. He permitted the repatriation of Lechin, who had been exiled by Barrientos, and, even more daring than Torres, he nationalized the Gulf Oil Company. But his counter-revolutionary role became clear when he began his attacks on the left.

The movement was rising fast under the pressures of the general crisis of capitalism. At this time, Torres was too weak to crush it. This task was undertaken by the junta of CIA-trained officers led by Banzer, tolerated by Torres, and assisted by the errors of the POR. It was not simply a mistake to have expected such a government of the bourgeoisie to have armed the masses. The repetition of this error by Lora, and his entrust tactic in the Estensoro movement, inspired by Pablo, proved to be a profound aberration.

Ever since 1848, when the 'democrats' dissolved the workshops and drowned the Parisian workers in blood, historical experience has pointed to the same conclusion. The case of Thiers and the Commune (1871); the massacre of 30,000 workers by Chiang Kai-shek in the Canton rising of 1927 and his subsequent crimes: Papandreou's record in December 1944; Suharto's role in the Indonesian massacres; the history of Arab leaders like Aref, Nasser, Sadat, Hussein; all the Bonapartist regimes in Latin America and around the world; all these experiences have proved that the most 'left', the most 'democratic'

bourgeoisie considers as its primary duty the disarmament and strangulation of the masses entering into revolutionary struggle.

The deviation towards the Popular Assembly

Informations Ouvrières, the OCI paper, informs us that after Miranda's unsuccessful coup and the significant demonstrations successfully instigated by the POR in January 1970, the Lora tendency was 'the only one' which put forward the slogan for the 'Popular Assembly' as a 'lever to accelerate the struggle for a workers' and peasants' government', a line fully approved by *Informations Ouvrières*.

Why? 'In order to channel revolutionary action to this end through a concrete organ.' But how? And why did the POR not think of channelling the revolutionary flood towards the concrete historical organ of *Soviets*? The revolutions of 1905 and 1917 showed us that the only road to the workers' and peasants' government is the road that passes through the *soviets*.

Bolshevik tactics are not opposed to the slogan for a constituent assembly. With this democratic demand we may seek a rostrum from which to explain our programme for real structural changes in the regime, for the conquest of wider democratic liberties, and for the overthrow of capitalism. In parallel, we seek to destroy the illusions held by the masses in the constituent assembly, and about parliamentarism generally. But the slogan for the assembly for Bolsheviks, connected with our central slogan for a soviet system which expresses not only a higher form of the tactic of the United Front, is also a sure instrument, concrete, and historically justified, for the conquest of power, for a workers' and peasants' government; and after the conquest of power it is the best and most democratic system for the construction of the workers' state.

The theses outlined by Lenin on the question of the constituent assembly state clearly:

2. In formulating the demand for the convention of the Constituent Assembly, the revolutionary social-democracy, right from the start of the 1917 Revolution emphasized repeatedly that the soviet democracy is a higher form of democracy than the usual bourgeois 'democracy' with a Constituent Assembly.
3. For the transition from the bourgeois to the socialist regime, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the democracy of the soviets of workers',

soldiers' and peasants' deputies is not only a superior form of democratic institution (compared with the usual bourgeois democracy crowned with a Constituent Assembly) but also a unique form, able to secure the most painless transition to socialism.

The Trotskyists could have posed the slogan of the constituent assembly, demanding democratic rights and exposing in this way the falsehood of the Torres regime. Torres, like most dictators, made endless promises of election and the restoration of 'democracy', but he had no intention of reinstating the legislative bodies which the previous dictator, Ovando, had abolished. Indeed, he refused to convene the Popular Assembly.

Even these pseudo-democratic institutions of the bourgeoisie are irreconcilable with the dictatorship. In the end, it was forced to accept its convention for demagogic reasons, at a time when it was powerless to crush the movement in any other way, and when Torres was unable to resist the pressure of the masses. However, when he was convinced that Lechin's party would dominate the Assembly, he accepted it as an advisory body. He was quite willing to accept the muted criticism of the type of the April 21 regime of the Greek colonels.

'Let them make speeches to let off steam', he was advised by his ministers. But he wanted the Assembly to be no more than a forerunner of the legislative body that would be elected after the drawing up of a constitution. Similarly in Greece, Papadopoulos created the 'small parliament', a harmless advisory body where 3,000 appointed people vote on behalf of 9 million — a corporate body cast in the mould of the fascist state of Mussolini or Franco.

Thus the POR, together with all the other parties of betrayal, played a leading role in the setting up of the Assembly which was to be designated 'Popular', a name indistinguishable from the dogmata of 'People's Power,' but something which has nothing in common with the soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers.

The opening of the Assembly was postponed for a few days in order to give Torres a little more time to cover himself by whitewashing this dirty building. This incident was typical of the relationship between the Popular Assembly and the government. Indeed the party of Lechin consistently defended the advisory character of the Popular Assembly and the support of the government. The same tactic was pursued by the pro-Moscow Stalinists, though Moscow itself did not find the Popular Assembly to its liking, and openly supported, as it

does elsewhere, the Bonapartist regime as it was. The Maoists followed the same line, and by voting Lechin as president of the Popular Assembly, demonstrated their real treacherous co-existencist nature.

The POR, perhaps without realizing it, in fighting for the Sovietization of the Popular Assembly, entered the slippery road of opportunism, in the service of the institution of 'People's Power'.

Soviets and Constituent Assembly

However the comrades of the POR omitted their basic duty, to put forward the slogan of soviets, to work for the country-wide extension of the committees, which to their credit, only they had built in the mines, and to crown this embryonic Soviet organization with a Congress of the committees on a national scale, and finally, to work out a soviet constitution.

Instead of directing the masses on to the road of 1905 and 1917, they pointed to 1789. 'The relationship between bourgeois and proletarian democracy', as Lenin called it, attacking Kautsky's support for the Constituent Assembly against the soviets, was in Bolivia placed on a basis of debasing the concept of soviets. Consciously or unconsciously there was a renegacy from our basic principle that 'soviet democracy is generally a superior democratic form to the Constituent Assembly' (Lenin) and is founded on a different class basis.

The leaders of the POR, and also the leaders of the French section, did not attempt to analyse the profound differences, not only between soviets and a Constituent Assembly, but also between soviets and this 'Popular Assembly of a soviet type'. Soviets are organs of the revolutionary proletariat, waging a life-or-death struggle against capitalism for the triumphant victory of the proletarian revolution, for power of the type of the commune.

Before he became a renegade and a defender of constituent power against soviet power, synonymous with proletarian dictatorship, Kautsky once wrote this:

Today, the organization of soviets has behind it a great and glorious history. And it has in front of it an even greater one — and not only in Russia. Everywhere it is proven that faced with the gigantic powers at the disposal of finance capital, from the economic and political points of view, the previous methods of economic and political struggle are inadequate. We cannot ignore them. They remain indispensable during calm times.

From time to time, however, there appear before us such tasks as do not correspond to these, the success of which can be guaranteed only by the joining of the economic and political means of power by the working class.

But Kautsky reneged. Like the Mensheviks in 1905, he rejected the soviets as the instrument of seizing power and of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In opposition to the Mensheviks and opportunists of his time, Lenin proclaimed the soviets to be the basic organs for the taking of power and maintaining it after triumph of the revolution.

The Stalinists, after Thermidor, demolished the soviet structure of the USSR, and propounded the idea that in the capitalist countries the soviets could not and should not be created before the twelfth hour of the uprising. By thus disorientating it from the dictatorship of the proletariat, they destroyed the Chinese Revolution.

The Maoists, with the guerrilla nature of their new (northward) movement, not only failed to establish soviets throughout China, as Trotsky observed, but threw the soviet theory out of their ideological arsenal after they had taken power.

The Pabloites passed on to the worship of 'new types of revolution', to the Cuban, Algerian, etc. 'roads to socialism', which bear no relation to any of the principles of the Permanent Revolution or sovietism.

Now, as a continuation of Pablo's Chilean parliamentary road to socialism, there appears before us the vision of the Bolivian 'soviet-type' parliamentary road to socialism!

The POR has turned its back on the soviets with the deceitful concept of the 'Popular Assembly' which was to be of 'a soviet type'. The comrades of the POR inform us that the Popular Assembly was convened by the political nucleus which developed towards the end of 1970 as an organ of leadership and guidance of the General Strike.

A General Strike committee, with factory committees and 'committees of struggle' formed around it, can play the role of council-soviets. With their clear class nature, Trotsky saw in these committees a form of soviet. But he always stressed that these committees should be, had to be, *committees of revolutionary struggle*.

At the foundation of the Communist International in 1919, Lenin wrote that the soviet form was an international conquest after the creation of soviets in Germany and the committees of mass proletarian struggle in England (the shop stewards' committees). He proclaimed: 'The soviets are victorious around the world. They have won the sympathy of the workers.'

What happened in Bolivia? The General Strike committee could have created throughout the country a wide network of strike committees. These should have taken up the democratic and economic demands of the masses, opposing the conspiracies of the right wing and the Torres dictatorship, orientating them towards the conquest of power by the workers and peasants. In preference to this soviet road, the Bolivian Trotskyists attempted to sovietize the Popular Assembly, and thus entered in essence a 'new road to revolution'.

The Pabloites claimed to have discovered a 'new type of revolution', led by rebellious peasantry and a 'Jacobin' leadership 'which is unlike the others'. They boasted that they had enriched the theory of Permanent Revolution; in fact they had shamelessly distorted it. Similarly the leaders of the POR and of *Informations Ouvrières-OCI* claim the discovery of a new organ for the conquest of power, the 'Popular Assembly of a soviet type'.

Why this distortion of the soviet theory? Why were they drawn to the parliament-assembly? Why, instead of building soviets, did they try to frame a constitution, with which 'the Popular Assembly would deepen its roots in the Committees'?

Why the attempt to create a new, Bolivian-type of revolution, in place of the proven October? The Lechin tendency, the Stalinists and the 'Catholic Revolutionaries' dressed up the Torres regime with the cloak of parliamentarism. But what of the POR?

Dual power 'sui generis'

The most serious problem of a revolutionary situation arising in any country is the problem of power. The question of strategy and tactics for the conquest of power is of equivalent importance with that of the organ which will achieve it. Any deviation from this can prove fatal.

Nothing could be more erroneous than the view that the Popular Assembly represented a duality of power. We believe that the Popular Assembly in Bolivia was an impediment to the movement which objectively had developed to a situation of dynamic dualism, preventing it from taking the road of the creation of soviets and thus the development of a dual power.

Of what does dual power consist? In that, side by side with the provisional government of the bourgeoisie, there is formed another government

which, yet weak and embryonic, indisputably exists in practice and is developing: the soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies. (Lenin, *On Dual Power* - April 22 (9), 1917)

Lenin is quite clear, quite definite, on the soviets as the only expression of dual power. He continues: 'This power is not at all of the same type as exists in parliamentary bourgeois democracy.' It is not the same thing as an assembly-parliament of 'dual type', embellished with a few committees of miners. From the point of view of class essence and democracy no Popular Assembly can be compared with genuine soviets at the factories, the places of work, the neighbourhoods, the villages and the barracks, organized in a local, district, national and governmental structure, with elected and recallable representatives throughout. The soviets are real class organs, not plastic substitutes. Dual power means that the soviet and bourgeois powers are engaged in a struggle. The victory of the soviets establishes a new kind of state, the commune, i.e. the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The POR correctly established committees in the mines. If these had been spread throughout the country the possibility of victory would have been incomparably greater. But subordinated to the Popular Assembly, the committees faltered away from their natural tendency towards soviet power. The creation of the Popular Assembly was not 'a considerable victory for the workers', as the leaders of the POR and the OCI's *Informations Ouvrières* claim, together with the Pabloites. On the contrary, it was liquidation and a castration of the committees. It was a passing over to the side of parliamentary methodology, conciliation and compromise with the bourgeois regime of Torres.

The Pabloite opportunism of Pierre Frank and Ernest Mandel during the May-June events in France in 1968 provided us with another example of the distortion of the duality of power. With their Menshevik over-estimation of the role of the students and intellectuals, and an anti-Marxist underestimation of the role of the proletariat (take-overs of factories, committees, strikes of workers and peasants), they considered the epicentre of the revolution and of dual power to be in the Sorbonne! It was not the proletariat but the students who were the bearers of revolution. Yet another road to socialism!

It would have been strange if the Pabloites, with their knack of discovering roads to socialism in the most unlikely places, had not adopted the views of the POR on the Popular Assembly as 'an organ of

soviet character', as an 'indisputable lever', as an organ 'of workers' power', which 'pointed the way to a workers' and peasants' government.'

Support for Torres

The POR did not support Torres. The Pabloite Toussain tried to slander the POR on this question. The associates of Pablo, Frank, Mandel and Alain Krivine who have supported the regimes of Ben Bella, Castro, Nasser, Makarios and all the Bonapartes of the under-developed countries, ought not to discuss questions which really incriminate them. The POR line is crystal clear.

It would be extremely dangerous to say that there is a similarity of aim between the masses and the group of imperialists which formed itself around Torres because it was obvious from the start that they were both fighting for different ends.

Lechin and the Stalinists naturally supported the 'progressive' dictator Torres, and not only against the conspiracy of the right-wing junta. This subordination to the bourgeois 'democratic' left is in the nature of opportunism. From the time of Warski's support for Pilsudski in Poland, in whom he saw the 'democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants', and of the support for the dictator Pangalos in Greece on whom the Greek CP called to 'do as you boast, my general' in 1925, the continuity of support for Bonapartist regimes in the colonial and semi-colonial countries is a result of the fellow travelling of the Stalinists with the 'democratic' bourgeoisie (as in China, Spain, Indonesia, etc). It is no accident that Moscow always supported Torres, and that Soviet missions always operated in Bolivia.

We cannot achieve power without a merciless fight against the opportunists. It is sufficient to remind ourselves of the struggle against the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries inside the Russian Soviets. But in the Popular Assembly we had a conciliation of the POR with the Lechin tendency and the Stalinists, and a certain United Front with the Stalinists.

If this was not so, how was it that 'the proposals and documents presented by the POR to be used as a basis for the work of the Assembly were adopted with few changes and mostly unanimously'? And how was it possible for a POR comrade to be elected unanimously

as military commander of the Popular Assembly? (Comrade Sossa's interview in *Informations Ouvrières*.)

Communists must make a clear distinction between a 'democratic' and a fascist government. At a given moment it is necessary to concentrate their fire against the direct intervention of open counter-revolution — but not to support Torres in the way the Stalinists and Lechin did. It is not permissible to relax the struggle against the government and its lackeys inside the Popular Assembly.

The United Front with the Stalinists

On what basis was the front with the Stalinists made? 'We fought', says Lora, 'on the lines of the united anti-imperialist front and against the banning of some tendencies from the Popular Assembly.'

It seems that Lora has learnt nothing from the 'anti-imperialism' of all opportunists from which the anti-capitalist content is removed, and which is used to blunt their swords against their 'own' bourgeoisie. Analysis of the experiences of national liberation struggles has taught us that the bourgeoisie of a colonial or semi-colonial country cannot be more progressive and revolutionary than that of a non-colonial country.

The Pabloites gave their support to the 'anti-imperialist' petty-bourgeois and bourgeois leaderships. How could the POR form a United Front in such a sham 'anti-imperialist' struggle? The ruthless exploitation of the Bolivian masses by US imperialism and local finance capital aroused such deep hatred that the local and foreign bourgeoisie needed to base itself on the bayonets of the Barrientos, Ovando and Torres dictatorships against the uprisings of the masses.

These anti-imperialist feelings of the masses are progressive and revolutionary. We depend on them for the triumph of the Permanent Revolution. But the 'anti-imperialism' of the opportunists is counter-revolutionary. It is steeped in the spirit of collaboration with the local bourgeoisie. It is not accidental that both the Bolivian and the Moscow Stalinists supported Torres, who from the start was an agent of US imperialism.

The Stalinists inserted in the programme of the unions the view that the Bolivian revolution would have a bourgeois character. This meant that the unresolved problems of democracy, agrarian economy and anti-imperialism would be solved by another revolution, which would not be proletarian. Hence their Menshevik support for Torres.

What then would be the strategy of the 'United anti-imperialist front' of the CP and the POR? Would it be bourgeois-democratic? Or would it be proletarian, solving on the way the problems of the bourgeois-democracy?

The 'united anti-imperialist front' could not raise the question of national liberation since Bolivia is not a colonial country occupied by imperialism. However, according to the theory of the Permanent Revolution, even where there exists a problem of national liberation, the bearer of the democratic revolution is the proletariat which inscribes the tasks of the bourgeois-democracy on the banner of the proletarian revolution, and carries out the struggle against imperialism while fighting at the same time the local bourgeoisie and landlords.

For us, the anti-imperialist struggle is linked to the historical task of world revolution in general and the local one in particular, and a front with opportunists on the basis of an illegitimate 'anti-imperialism' is inconceivable.

The underlying meaning of the treacherous fake anti-imperialism of the Stalinists is shown by the fact that when Rockefeller visited Latin America during a period of revolutionary situations and intense strike activity, the opportunists turned the movement towards anti-Americanism, thus disorientating the masses from the conquest of power.

We would certainly form a tactical common front with the Stalinists against Banzer, Torres, and the whole junta — behind which stand the Pentagon and the CIA — but on the basis of class demands, through concrete class organs and methods of struggle, with the emphasis on the committee-soviets. Such a front should differentiate its responsibilities from the methods of individual terror and bombings, which have been in complete opposition to the mass movement ever since the time of *Iskra* at the beginning of the century.

The Stalinists would have done everything in their power to drag the 'united anti-imperialist front' towards guerrilla warfare in the mountains or the cities, and to turn the movement into a petty-bourgeois one, leaning on the peasantry and pushing the proletariat aside. (It was their love of guerrilla warfare which made the Pabloites betray the Permanent Revolution.)

But we saw none of these important, concrete questions in the history of the United Front of the Stalinists and the Lora tendency (as we were told by *Informations Ouvrières*).

Lechin's assembly at the service of Torres

The Popular Assembly placed itself under the leadership of Lechin at its June session. It suited Lechin perfectly, and he placed the Assembly at the service of Torres.

There should be no confusion between the Popular Assembly and soviets. Soviets grow out of strike committees; they are organs of struggle. The soviets could fall, or they could be victorious and become organs of state of the commune type. Had the Popular Assembly won it would have become a bourgeois parliament of a hidden dictatorship, like all the rest of them. And, of course, it would have trampled over the corpses of the miners.

The ten days of the Popular Assembly decided its fate. Sossa warned of the dangers of 'coming to terms with Torres and becoming what Lechin and the pro-Moscow Stalinists wanted — i.e. an institution assimilated into the other bourgeois institutions and being used by Torres as a bourgeois parliament, an organ of class-collaboration, and subjecting of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie'. This prospect alone is enough to smash the myth of Assembly-parliaments of a 'soviet type'.

In reality, by its very nature, the Popular Assembly could not have been transformed into a soviet body, despite the frantic efforts of Lora who was trying to 'sink its roots into the local assemblies and committees existing at the places of work'. At the best, the Popular Assembly could have brought about a government of Lechin and Torres, or of Lechin and the Stalinists — a government of pseudo-reform and counter-revolution.

What did Lechin represent? A right-wing reformist trade union tendency which, since his becoming a minister in the Estensoro government became organically linked to the bourgeoisie. The representatives of this tendency at the Popular Assembly were appointed by the trade union bureaucracy, or came from Assemblies dominated by the bureaucracy. (From the Greece of the April 21 coup we know what such Assemblies mean.)

Estensoro, aided by the Stalinists and by Lechin, (1952-1964) cracked down on the labour movement in a period of revolutionary upsurge. His counter-revolutionary policies paved the way for the Barrientos dictatorship. He imposed state control of the mines — which accounted for 80 per cent of the budget income and two thirds of all exports — and which had passed into the control of the workers.

He attacked the Trotskyists, who were struggling in the vanguard of the unions, and the armed rallies of workers, particularly miners, as well as in the vanguard of armed demonstrations of peasants.

At that time the peasants had occupied 4 million hectares of land, which eventually were distributed to 133,000 families. This was Lechin's role — a prop for bourgeois 'democracy' and dictatorship. Lechin won the chairmanship of the Popular Assembly against the joint non-partisan candidate of the POR and the CP. (On what programme did this non-partisan candidate stand?)

The POR leaders believed that they were a 'minority only on the organizational plane', while their positions 'found widespread echoes' (Sossa) in the opportunist mob of the Popular Assembly. The influence of the POR is indisputable. Lora confirms that all basic documents and decisions of the Popular Assembly were introduced by the POR and passed virtually unanimously. How is the virtual unanimity, or their acceptance with few amendments explained, unless they contained elements of opportunist conciliationism?

There can be no doubt about this. The POR leaders had terrible illusions about the Lechin tendency and the Stalinists — illusions of the Pabloite type. The March 8 issue of *Masas* pointed out: 'Torres feeds the counter-revolution' — meaning that Torres was aiding the movement of the junta right wing (was not Torres then a counter-revolutionary?) This meant that a bitter fight was needed, not only against Torres, but also against his lackeys: Lechin and the Stalinists.

But when *Masas* coined the catch phrase: 'Popular Assembly = workers' power', it created confusion of gigantic proportions. It was a deviation which ignored even the possible dangers which Sossa mentions.

The August rally organized by the Assembly showed, by the hostile reception given to Torres and Lechin, that the radicalization of the masses had surpassed the levels set by the Assembly. The situation was revolutionary. Even if under the influence of the opportunists, the confused masses were requesting arms from Torres, or asking him to strike against the right-wing junta. The consciousness of the masses was on a level similar to that described by Lenin in 'Draft order for the disbandment of the Constituent Assembly':

They rid themselves of the illusions of accord with the bourgeoisie, of the deceptive forms of bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism, and arrived at the conclusion to break with these forms and with every policy of compromise.

This was the meaning of the jeers and catcalls which greeted Torres and Lechin. The revolution educates the class at the most rapid speed. Lechin's Popular Assembly, which permitted Torres to address its rally, was *bankrupt*. Here the necessity for a real Trotskyist-Bolshevik party was demonstrated, a party free from Pabloite revisionism.

The 'Popular Assembly' Programme

If, from the theoretical and historical point of view, the abandonment of the soviets in favour of a 'parliament' described as a 'Popular Assembly' and embellished with a few genuine committee delegations, was unacceptable, from a political point of view it was disastrous.

The masses, with justification, detested the bourgeois parliaments and congresses, whereas soviets always hold an attraction for the oppressed masses. The programme which the Popular Assembly put forward from the seat of the old Congress did not correspond either to the real historical requirements of the revolutionary situation, or to the needs of the oppressed. So, at the decisive moment, the Popular Assembly was not able to raise a popular insurrection.

Sossa, in the interview with *Informations Ouvrières* (July 7 and 15) presented us with the Popular Assembly's programme:

The speeding up of the organization of the armed workers' militia.

In the event of a coup the Popular Assembly will call for a General Strike.

The bringing to justice of those who, under Barrientos, were responsible for the murder of militants.

Examination of the proposals of the miners' delegates for workers' control of the nationalized Comibol mines.

Examination of a further miners' demand for the creation of a unified university which would not only end the autonomy of the eight universities and clerical control of private education, but place the whole educational system under the control of the Popular Assembly.

The decision on the militias was 'undoubtedly the most significant one' (Sossa). But it was aimed against the coup prepared by Banzer and Gutierrez, leader of the 'Socialist Falange', and it was linked to the demand for arms from Torres. There was nothing against the capitalist state or the counter-revolutionary intervention of Torres.

But had the workers implemented this undoubtedly important decision and taken up arms, they would have known where, how, and

against whom to use them. The machine-guns of the workers and miners would have rung the death knell of the bourgeois-democratic parliamentarists.

Lechin, the Stalinists, and the groups that were the props of the nationalist bourgeoisie, voted for the proposal for the militia, but in action they sabotaged it by advocating the arming of the masses by Torres, and 'pressurizing' him to strike at the conspirators himself!

As for *Masas*, it came to the belated conclusion that: 'The political development of the masses led them to the conviction that the time was irrevocably past for asking for arms from any "leftist" general, and that they should take them themselves, wherever they could find them.' The misfortune was that 'the moment was irrevocably past' for agitation to arm the masses and for the POR leaders to rid themselves of illusions of pressurizing Torres into arming the workers. The error was fatal. And the result?

Only the 2,000-odd miners who had been deeply influenced by Trotskyist traditions and a few other workers and students joined the battle which was fought around Laikacota hill in La Paz.

The slogan of a General Strike 'in the event of a coup' was, of course, a most important decision. But a general political strike should be motivated by the economic and democratic demands and combine the struggle against the right-wing conspiracy with the struggle against the employers and the state. Only with such a programme could they have achieved the mobilization of the masses as an independent factor, defeated the coup, and at the same time placed a noose around the neck of the Torres government.

But there was no programme on the problem of the crisis of capitalism and against the financial oligarchy which was conspiring to place the burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the masses. The problems of the drop in the buying power of wages, the growth of unemployment, of the struggle for bread and for work, were not included in the Popular Assembly's plans for mobilization. The problems of the agrarian reform, of pegging prices, debts and taxes, public works, expropriations, etc., were ignored. Marx's recommendation in 1856 that the peasants' war should be combined with the workers' movement was forgotten. The poor peasants, who, in their struggle against the landlords, needed peasants' soviets, were now turning their backs on the 'pre-parliament' of Torres and Lechin.

The programme of the Popular Assembly demanded justice for the victims of Barrientos. It was not even 'anti-dictatorial' against Torres.

The anti-capitalist content was removed from the general political strike, which is a higher stage on the road to revolution. There was no plan of action for the general disruption of the army and for the winning over of the soldiers as a basic factor in the general arming of the masses, around the soldiers' soviets. There was no plan to popularize the Transitional Programme or to outline the tasks of the party in the spirit of Lenin's April Theses. The slogan for a workers' and peasants' government was devoid of any content.

The workers' and peasants' government

The crisis of world capitalism created a revolutionary situation in Bolivia. For the bourgeoisie there was no margin for concession — hence their need for dictatorship.

Quite correctly the Trotskyists raised the question of the workers' and peasants' government. But what would be its character? The revolution could not have been anything but proletarian. And this revolution would have created the workers' and peasants' government.

The POR leaders should have made a clear analysis of the revolution — and clarified the character of such a government. All the more, since by supporting the programme of the trade unions into which the Stalinists had introduced the strategy of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, they should have separated their position on this strategy.

For the Trotskyists, the establishment of the workers' and peasants' government was synonymous with the dictatorship of the proletariat. Its meaning was adulterated by the Pabloites on their slippery road of opportunism. They gave it the meaning of an intermediate government — between the bourgeois and proletarian powers — a sort of Stalinist version of the 'democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants' — the product of an intermediate revolution.

We in Greece, during the events of July 1965, in supporting the workers' and peasants' government as a pseudonym of the dictatorship of the proletariat, had to fight the Pabloite conception of the workers' and peasants' government as an intermediate government prior to the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, in the same period, the formula of the 'workers' and peasants' government' of a bourgeois type crept into the line of the International Committee via an article of the Hungarian section printed without comment in *La Vérité*.

How did this leap to the theory of the intermediate government come about? Was there perhaps a common logic between the old view of the French section on the 'workers' and peasants' government' of Castro and this adulterated interpretation of the 'workers' and peasants' government'?

Well, the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste has now come into the open. *Informations Ouvrières* of August 26, 1971, stood for 'a workers' and peasants' government of the united workers' organizations . . . which would restore and broaden all democratic liberties and secure the free struggle of the masses against the bourgeoisie and its state'. As for the workers' and peasants' government, in the sense of being synonymous with the dictatorship of the proletariat, it was regarded as being no more than the distant music of the future.

That is all. A government of Stalinists and pseudo-socialists, who have proven throughout the world to be the shameless agents of the bourgeoisie and have passed over to open counter-revolution, was supposed to restore liberties and assist the struggle of the masses to overthrow capitalism!

This renegacy from the dictatorship of the proletariat in the epoch of the death agony of capitalism, when the question of power had appeared on the agenda, created terrible illusions, just like those of the Pabloites about the self-democratization of the bureaucracy, revolutions led by the CP, etc.

The tactic of 'breaking with the bourgeoisie' which according to the Transitional Programme, we can and must demand from the parties of betrayal does not, in any circumstances, mean that agitation for revolution and for a real workers' and peasants' government should be relinquished.

On the contrary, agitation for the revolution must not only not weaken: it is in fact – together with agitation for soviets – of decisive significance in a correct strategy aiming for a workers' and peasants' government.

On the other hand, the process of fighting for a pseudo-workers' and peasants' government presupposes replacement of the methodology of civil war with that of pacifism: 'Such a government must break from the bourgeoisie, call on the masses to organize in councils, organize workers' control in production, place all power in the hands of the councils and destroy the bourgeois state machine'! Hey presto! The parties of betrayal are turned into organs of revolution. This is really a cloud cuckoo land!

When the Transitional Programme speaks of 'a workers' and peasants' government' as an 'exceptionally unlikely possibility', as a 'brief stopping place on the road to the real dictatorship of the proletariat' it does not 'lend itself to presumptions' so historically long-term and ambitious as those of our miracle workers. It stresses: 'Agitation around the slogan of the workers' and peasants' government retains in all conditions a colossal educational value.' However, the bloc of the French, Hungarian and Bolivian sections of the International Committee advance the slogan of the *bourgeois* workers' and peasants' government as a permanent central task of the period and subtract the agitation for soviets and for the revolution.

This 'workers' and peasants' government' means disorientation from the conquest of power and, combined with the suppression of the slogan for soviets in favour of the Popular Assembly is tantamount to a refusal on our part to go further than the bourgeois-democratic limits in the spirit of the Permanent Revolution, and adoption on our part of the Stalinist-Menshevik theory of stages and taking the 'Chilean' parliamentary road to socialism (like Pablo).

'Reality does not excuse even a single theoretical error.' And yet we see here the distortion of the tactic of the United Front which leads to the government of the United Front and from which we expect an impetus to the revolutionary struggle — thus weakening its ability to undermine the treacherous leaders. Here we must also note the under-estimation on principle of the significance of an alliance with the poor layers of the countryside.

It is no accident that the slogans for soviets and for a workers' and peasants' government were absent from the programme of the French organization during the May-June days in 1968. Not only because the over-ripe and over-revolutionary situation was most criminally under-estimated (opportunism is used to under-estimating the revolutionary upsurge and over-estimating the resilience of capitalism), but also because they were disorientated from the basic tasks of the movement which could be summed up as: 'Down with de Gaulle! Long live the workers' and peasants' government!' From this standpoint the position of the French in 1968 was to the right of the Bolivian organization in 1971.

In conclusion, in Bolivia, as elsewhere, we must struggle for *soviets*, in which the masses would recognize the organ of leadership which strikes decisively for power and for a *real workers' and peasants' government*.

'The organization of soviets', Lenin stresses in his draft for the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, 'is the *only* one able to lead the struggle of the class for its *total political and economic liberation.*'
The *only one*.

We have no need of illegitimate 'Popular Assemblies of the soviet type', which were supported not only by Lechin, Allende, the Stalinists and the Pabloites, but also the 'renovators' of the soviets of *Informations Ouvrières*.

DOCUMENT 11**Reply from the Workers Internationalist League, Greek Section of the International Committee, July 1972**

With its document *The Bolivian Revolution and the Deviations of the POR* (published in *Workers Press* from June 29 to July 5, 1972) the Workers' Vanguard of Greece wanted to present to the ICFI its positions on the latest events in Bolivia and on their reflection within the Fourth International.

We must, however, see clearly that this document is something more than a simple presentation of the Bolivian problem or a simple political placement in regard to it: it is at the same time the *partial* result and manifestation of a whole approach, of a certain political methodology, not at all new, as much within the Greek as in the world workers' movement.

Marxist criticism must not confine itself to a criticism of conclusions, but advance to an understanding of the way in which these conclusions were reached, to sharpen the method of its criticism by making a criticism of the method which was followed.

Deviations of the POR

The Workers' Vanguard criticism of the POR does not seem to have set out from this point. In the introduction to the document, we find, as a methodological 'explanation' of the deviations of the POR, its abandoning '... of the struggle for an understanding of dialectical materialism as a theory of knowledge', '... its pragmatist adaptation to circumstances and its negligence and disdain of Marxist theory'. This is all the document has to say. Afterwards it returns to the empirical events.

Does the Workers' Vanguard believe that with the ceremonial recitation of a credo on the basic principle of the ICFI on revolutionary theory, the whole subject of the POR's abandonment of dialecti-

cal materialism is exhausted? Without showing the principal cause of this anti-theoretical stand? Or, to look at the question from its other side, does the Workers' Vanguard believe that an essential theoretical development of the POR would have been possible, had it taken up the struggle for theory, but carried it out within the stifling localized framework where Lora's leadership had confined (and still does) the Bolivian Trotskyist movement?

The abstract truth of the necessity for the struggle for dialectical materialism is transformed into its opposite when it remains cut off from the concrete material reality which it reflects.

For us, an enmity towards theory is inseparable from a rejection of internationalism. The disdain of the POR leadership towards the struggle for theory is inseparably tied to the disinterest it has always shown towards the building of the Fourth International, its persistent refusal to base revolutionary work in Bolivia on the foundations of international revolutionary perspectives.

The struggle for the development of the science and philosophy of revolutionary Marxism cannot be undertaken fruitfully in a vacuum, nor in the solitary studies of isolated learned scholars, nor in the local office of some national party suffering from the characteristic political myopia of the leading group gathered around Lora, as far as international political developments and internationalist responsibilities are concerned.

Marxism is always developed only through permanent struggle against its opposite, the rejection of Marxism — every kind of revisionism — a struggle which does *not* unfold in the field of academic swordplay, but on the battleground of class conflicts, for the building of revolutionary parties which will lead the working class to power and mankind to the first truly human civilization.

And all those who take their weapons for present-day conflicts from the arsenal of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, are well aware that 'in the present epoch, an international epoch, a national revolutionary party can be built only as a part of an international party'. (L.D. Trotsky, *Centrism and the Fourth International*.)

Only by starting from an international strategy and an international programme, which are organizationally expressed within the international form of a world party of socialist revolution, can revolutionaries in each country see in a scientific light their national peculiarities and concretize, under local conditions, the tactics and strategy of the smashing of the bourgeois state.

Marxist theory was developed within this internationalist framework, within the struggle for the world party, the International, against every liquidationist trend, against every attack of bourgeois ideology from without or from within.

Between the struggle of Marx and Engels against the Bakunin anarchists at the time of the First International; and through the fight of Lenin and Trotsky against the social-traitor reformists of the Second International and against petty-bourgeois leftism for the building of the Communist International; between the struggle of the International Left Opposition and Trotsky against degeneration into a Stalinist bureaucracy for the building of the Fourth International and through the struggle of the International Committee against the liquidationist attempts of Pabloite revisionism, the same red thread runs without a break. The worldwide struggle of the proletariat does not tolerate breaks.

Often, in times of retreats and defeats, the Marxist vanguard remains concentrated in small minority groups. But it swims against the current, waiting for the next revolutionary wave which will bring it to the head of the masses, guarding all the theoretical and practical experience of the workers' movement which is found embodied in Marxism. This does not at all mean that the Marxist is transformed into a museum guard.

To the contrary, the Fourth International and the International Committee were able to surpass the imperialist storms and Stalinist brutalities, to defeat all the revisionist attempts at adapting the International to counter-revolutionary defeatism and to arrive armed on the threshold of this new revolutionary epoch, because for three decades, on all fronts of the class war, they defended Marxism in the only genuine way: by developing it further.

What role did Lora and the leading group of the POR play in this whole process of the defence and development of Marxism, within the struggle for overcoming the world crisis of revolutionary leadership and the building of the International?

Only within this concrete framework can the question of the abandonment of the struggle for theory by the leaders of the POR be posed. About these internationalist responsibilities not taken up by the POR, about the negative international role which it played, the Workers' Vanguard (WV) says nothing in its document. And as we shall see, this is not an accidental omission.

Lora's leadership, at the time of the big split in the Fourth International in 1953, maintained a completely Pabloite stand with regard to the nationalist MNR government which finally prostituted the Bolivian revolution of 1952. On the Latin American level, he put most of his weight behind revisionist policies, against the ICFI, and bears full responsibility for the liquidation and disfiguration suffered by the Latin American Trotskyist movement at the hands of Pablo, Posadas, Mandel and Maitan.

He came into conflict with the Pabloite Secretariat, proceeding clearly from local criteria and aspirations, while on the other hand he refused repeatedly to take up the struggle of the ICFI for Trotskyism in Latin America. When he reapproached the ICFI he again took as his starting point the problems which the Pabloite faction of Gonzalez-Moscoso created for him. He always was and is in opposition to any attempt whatsoever to base revolutionary activity on internationalist foundations.

This shortsighted localized view and anti-internationalism are at the root of the opportunist adaptation of the POR to bourgeois nationalism, the horizon of consciousness of the local national bourgeoisie.

So we see that in the final analysis, without revolutionary theory (and development of theory) not only can there be no revolutionary practice, there can only be practice (or inaction) adapted to the limits of bourgeois society.

The POR did not act as a revolutionary leadership in the latest revolutionary situation in Bolivia because it lacked the theoretical weapons which are acquired only within the theoretical and practical struggle of the International, only in the arena where the working class, as an international entity, struggles against the worldwide system of oppression.

This connection between the anti-theoretical and anti-internationalist stand of Lora's group, between the struggle for theory on a national and international level and the revolutionary practice of the International and its sections, does not seem to have been noticed by the WV.

The crisis of capitalism

This weakness in grasping the dialectic between the international and the national is also evident in the main document, which lacks the

first distinctive characteristic of a Marxist document: the correct historical dimension.

In the lengthy diatribe on the counter-revolutionary bourgeois nature of the Torres dictatorship, this regime is nowhere placed as it should be within its international framework. There is only a reference to the fact that this was a *coup d'état* that took place within this world crisis of capitalism, which the WV characterizes as 'cyclic'.

This assessment by the WV certainly does not surprise us. In 1966, at the 3rd Conference of the ICFI, when this group was still a minority within the EDE, it agreed with Robertson that we were at least ten years away from a crisis of capitalism. So from that time, the position of the WV concerning the world economic situation was diametrically opposed to the ICFI's analysis. In one of the group's documents again, after April 21, they talk about a crisis which, when at some time it acquires social depth, the dictatorship in Greece will fall . . .

But in the latest document which we are now studying, we see again that they confront the present-day crisis of capitalism as though it were one of the periodic crises which the process of the accumulation of capital has experienced up to now, and which have always been followed, as Marx's analysis points out, by periods of relative stabilization until the next crisis, and so on. Such a characterization of the present-day world economic crisis, which in the final analysis foresees that sooner or later the crisis will be surpassed and replaced by a new boom, would not find a Mandel, for example, in disagreement.

International strategy

The ICFI, on the contrary, has based its international strategy on an entirely different assessment. Today's crisis, the collapse of the world monetary system and of all the economic and political relations based on the decisions at Bretton Woods, are more widespread and deep than any that capitalism, in its whole history, has known before now. We are on the threshold of the greatest revolutionary earthquakes that class society has ever known.

It is certainly not enough for a Marxist to acknowledge the crisis that imperialism is undergoing throughout the world and from there to conclude mechanically that for this reason 'therefore the Torres coup took place', for this reason 'therefore a revolutionary situation was created in Bolivia' etc.

The most essential point of a Marxist analysis is the one where it is

shown how in every concrete situation and under particular conditions the general trend of the epoch manifests itself. That is, how the need that imperialism feels on a worldwide scale to come into total conflict so as to smash the militant decisiveness of the oppressed masses, in order to survive, in the one case passes through conspiracies for Common Markets, in another wears the mask of the populist demagogy of the Velasco junta in Peru, or of the popular front in Chile and in yet another passes from the Torres regime to Banzer's coup.

The truth is always concrete, Lenin said. This presentation of the concrete, the highest point of a Marxist analysis, is not the empirical conception of the raw fact (something Marx called 'the imaginary concrete'). The scientificness of Marxist thought consists of conceiving the concrete as 'the combination of many determinations, as the process of a composition'. (Marx, *Grundrisse*.)

Revolutionary action needs as its guide concrete theoretical analyses using Marxist method and not formalistic abstractions and schematic generalizations. In the WV analysis we see Torres and his regime placed not within the material conditions of our revolutionary epoch, but a statue hovering in some timeless, unhistorical circle of Dante's Hell, keeping company with Chiang Kai-shek, Castro, Ben Bella, Boumedienne, Nasser, Gaddafi, Bandaranaike, Aref, Papan-dreou, Suharto, Makarios, Sadat, Hussein, even Thiers.

A Crystal Clear Line

Let us look at the critique proper which the WV makes of the POR's policies.

It is impressive that the critics themselves are not absolutely sure about their critique. If this impression is wrong, then how can we explain how on the one hand the document condemns the POR for not having advanced the slogan 'Down with Torres' and for having waited for the military government to arm the workers, while on the other hand it comes to the defence of the POR against 'Pabloite slanders' on the same subject by saying: 'The POR did not support Torres . . . the POR line is crystal clear.'

We would find it rather unclear. The policies of the POR and the Popular Assembly always stood in support of the bourgeois nationalist government. And they never denied this, much less now that all the organizations of the Popular Assembly together with Torres, his

military clique and one section of the MNR (the other section is in power together with the Banzer and the Falange fascists) are together in a common front, the infamous FRA (Anti-imperialist Revolutionary Front).

The WV wants to reconcile the irreconcilable. How can it on the one hand accuse the POR of 'trying . . . to avoid the necessity of an uncompromising struggle for the overthrow of Torres,' and on the other hand rebel against the exclusively (it would have us believe) Pabloite accusations about the POR's support for Torres . . . At another point the WV accepts that: 'The Trotskyists of the POR did make a distinction of the class antithesis to Torres. They announced that: "The Torres government is not a workers' government", but in saying this they should have characterized it categorically as capitalist, dictatorial and counter-revolutionary.'

Lora did not seem willing however to follow this advice. Continuing along his 'crystal clear' line, he went on categorically characterizing the Torres government as a 'military nationalist government with bourgeois content, that is with an anti-imperialist orientation.' (Document presented by the POR at the Latin American conference in April 1972, *La Verité*, No 557).

Lora's group wants to 'justify theoretically' even this wretched capitulation to the national bourgeoisie with various tricks by legerdemain. One of the most seemingly serious is the one that seeks to justify the popular front with the bourgeoisie with references to the positions of the Third Congress of the Comintern which concern the united anti-imperialist front in the colonial countries. That united front would have permitted combined action of the proletariat and the peasants with sections of the national bourgeoisie for joint defence in a war against imperialism.

The Third Congress of the Comintern defined quite clearly the boundaries of this tactic:

The working class movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries must first of all win for itself the position of an independent revolutionary factor within the anti-imperialist front as a whole.

Only when its importance as an independent factor is recognized and its political independence secured, then provisional treaties with bourgeois democracy are permitted and necessary . . . (*The Communist International 1919-1943, Documents*, Vol. I Oxford University Press).

Lenin and Trotsky particularly emphasized the point that Lora prefers to forget: no amalgam, 'irreconcilable preservation of the

independence of the proletarian movement, even if it is in an embryonic stage'.

The WV however ignore all these attempts to present the capitulation as logical: 'The POR did not support Torres.' Its deviation lay in the fact that it formed a popular front with the Stalinists who supported Torres . . . And what was the danger according to the WV, carried by this united front POR-COB? They had nothing to say but that 'the Stalinists would have done everything in their power to drag the "united anti-imperialist front" towards guerrilla warfare in the mountains or the cities and to turn the movement into a petty-bourgeois one, leaning it on the peasantry and pushing the proletariat aside . . .'

To whomever has the slightest knowledge of reality and knows the relative positions of the Kremlin, the rabid polemic carried out by all the Stalinist agencies, all the CPs, particularly in Latin America and even more in Bolivia, against guerrilla warfare in the name of the 'peaceful road to socialism', arriving at conscious sabotage and open betrayal, the views of the WV on the fervent passion of the Bolivian CP for a guerrilla war seem ridiculous to say the least.

But we, the Greek Trotskyists, cannot laugh, as perhaps the situation merits, when we hear this *sui generis* 'Trotskyist' group from Greece uttering such insane apophthegms. And this is because we know quite well what their aim is.

By denouncing the guerrilla adventures in Latin America with the ridiculous accusation that they are inspired by Muscovite Stalinism, they are not aiming at the adventurist views of an arch-Pabloite like Livio Maitan which led so many innocent fighters up a blind alley, but they do it from a desire to justify the well-known stand they took at another time, during the guerrilla movement of ELAS in occupied Greece: because the guerrilla army had the Stalinist CPG in its leadership, the present leaders of the WV characterized the whole movement as being 'of a reactionary nature'.

This sectarian and reactionary stand of theirs played a terrible suspensory role in the development of the Trotskyist movement in Greece. For this reason, we Greek Trotskyists of the EDE can only feel anger about the opportunistic basis upon which they uphold their criticism of guerrilla warfare 'generally'.

They have raised their views about the communist guerrillas under the treacherous Stalinist leadership in a Europe occupied by the Nazis

to a super-historical metaphysical schema, into which they try to fit the most different things: the ELAS guerrillas, the Vietcong, the Bengalese Mukti Bahini, the Chinese partisans, together with the Tupamaros, the Pabloite ERP in Argentina or the various radicalized petty bourgeois of the Latin American Castroite Focos.

A second circle of Hell in this Divine Comedy of the WV!

We know from other cases (as for example, that of Shachtman and the 'state capitalists') that usually a hysterical Stalinophobia is the camouflage for an adaptation to the pressure of the bureaucracy, the refusal to come into conflict with Stalinism within the masses, for the raising of the consciousness of the masses.

In the same indictment served by the WV against the 'United Front of the Stalinists and the Lora tendency', the support of the Torres government by the Bolivian CP is characterized as 'Menshevik'.

Lora himself would not disagree at all with this characterization! On the contrary, he always wanted to justify his whole opportunist alliance with the COB with the 'theory' that Bolivian Stalinism is 'simply Menshevik', eccentric and radical and is forced to succumb to the pressure of Trotskyism.

The counter-revolutionary character of the 'left' zig-zags of the Stalinist CP is hidden under the screen of the revisionist conception of the 'Menshevik' character of Stalinism. From the time of Marx and Lenin we know that an imprecise, unscientific characterization comes, most of the time, to cover political opportunisms and capitulations.

Let us now come to the point to which the WV critique attaches most significance:

... the leaders of the POR and of *Informations Ouvrières-OCI* claim the discovery of a new organ for the conquest of power, the 'Popular Assembly of a soviet type'.

Why this distortion of the Soviet theory? Why were they drawn to the parliament assembly? Why, instead of building soviets, did they try to frame a constitution, with which 'the Popular Assembly would deepen its roots in the Committees'?

Why the attempt to create a new, Bolivian-type of revolution, in place of the proven October?

The WV bases its fundamental attack against the POR on a monumental confusion. Nowhere does it appear to have a clear idea about what this Popular Assembly is and where exactly the opportunism lay in Lora's line.

So does the deviation of the POR lie in the fact that '... *perhaps without realizing it* (our emphasis) in fighting for the Sovietization of the Popular Assembly ...' they '... omitted their basic duty, to put forward the slogan for Soviets ...'?

Let us try to dissolve the confusion of such statements: confusion at times tragi-comic, especially when we see the Popular Assembly of La Paz called in one case 'bourgeois parliament', in another 'Constituent Assembly', and another time compared to the 'Small Parliament' of Papadopoulos . . .

This final insane comparison shows clearly that the WV not only has no idea about the Popular Assembly in Bolivia, but furthermore is drifting on a sea of confusion as far as the situation in Greece itself is concerned. The unbelievable extract from the document reads:

Similarly in Greece, Papadopoulos created the 'small parliament', a harmless advisory body where 3,000 appointed people vote on behalf of 9,000,000 — *a corporate body cast in the mould of the fascist state of Mussolini or Franco.* (Our emphasis).

Let us leave for another time the spectacle of a Greece where, according to the WV, corporate and long-lived structural institutions of 'fascism' are operating, and let us return to the 'appointed body' in far-away La Paz.

The Popular Assembly was born in January 1971, out of the mobilization of broad layers of oppressed which followed the seizure of power by the Bonaparte Torres. This body consisted of 240 members, of whom 60 per cent had been nominated by the trade unions and the other 40 per cent by left organizations. Most of the 240 representatives had been nominated by conferences or assemblies, of the rank and file in places of work, they were obliged to have a mandate from their electors and they could be recalled at any moment, if they lost the trust of the rank and file. As we see, we are miles away from the 'small parliament' of Papadopoulos.

Most of the disputes on whether the Popular Assembly has a Soviet character or not are carried out, or continue to be carried out, by various trends for the sole reason of defending the policies of each trend and of avoiding discussion on the essence of the matter.

The Pablotites of Moscoso denied the Soviet character of the Assembly in an attempt to dissolve the movement into the remains of Guevarism. Lora and other opportunists defended (and defend) the 'first Soviet of Latin America' by cultivating the illusion of a 'dual

power' which would lead gradually, through the struggle against the fascist 'Gorilismo' and with the conditional support of Torres, to socialism.

This illusion finally reigned within the Bolivian proletariat, even in its most *avante-garde* sections, with the result that on August 21, 1971, it stood face to face with Banzer's fascists, unarmed, counterposing only its unrivalled heroism and its high revolutionary morale.

The Popular Assembly was a pole with continually increasing influence on the political and social life of the people. Torres, as much as the CIA thugs, did not hide his hatred towards the Assembly, which however was impotent against the imperialist designs, not having any legislative power, tied ideologically and practically to the chariot of bourgeois nationalism.

The Assembly always stood on rotten ideological foundations. The programmatic theses accepted by it were those which had been voted in 1970 in the COB, on the basis of a capitulation of the POR to the Stalinist CP. The stand defined by the position of the COB towards the Ovando regime was conserved within the conditional support of the Torres regime.

The POR wanted to compare this support with the support given by the Bolsheviks to Kerensky against Kornilov. It wants however to forget the letter from Lenin to the Central Committee in September 1917, of which Trotsky so correctly reminds us:

Even now, we do not have an obligation to support the Kerensky government. That would be unprincipled. The question is: then are we not for the struggle against Kornilov? Naturally we are. But this is not one and the same thing.

There is a limit to this: it has been surpassed by many Bolsheviks who fell into 'reconciliationism' and let themselves be carried away by the flow of events.

We will fight, we will struggle against Kornilov, but we do not support Kerensky, we uncover his weaknesses. The distinction is much more fine, but very important and it must not be forgotten

Wherein lies the change in our tactics after the Kornilov uprising? In this, in that we vary the forms of the struggle against Kerensky. (L.D. Trotsky, *Germany 1931-1932.*)

The Popular Assembly and the POR gave their trust and support to Kerensky-Torres, just as the 'old Bolsheviks' and Stalin had done. They were waiting for one part of the counter-revolution to arm the Bolivian revolution. And Kornilov-Banzer came in.

The Soviets

What does Workers' Vanguard (WV) think the POR should have done that it did not?

... the comrades of the POR omitted their basic duty, to put forward the slogan of soviets, to work for the country-wide extension of the committees, which to their credit only they had built in the mines and to crown this embryonic soviet organization with a congress of the committees on a national scale and finally, to work out a soviet constitution.

As far as the peasants are concerned, what, according to the WV, should the POR have done? 'The poor peasants . . . in their struggle against the landlords, needed peasants' soviets.'

Thus what conclusion must we draw from the Bolivian Revolution, according again to the WV? 'In conclusion, in Bolivia, as elsewhere, we must struggle for *soviets* [WV's emphasis] in which the masses would recognize the *organ of leadership* [our emphasis] which strikes decisively for power and for a real workers' and peasants' government.'

So the panacea has been discovered. Anyway we prefer to agree with Trotsky and see these 'phraseological genuflections before the soviets' as 'a misunderstanding of their historical function' (L.D. Trotsky, *Germany 1931-1932*).

Let us see better how the inspirer of the Petrograd Soviet in 1905 answered the fellow-thinkers of the WV of 1932 in Germany: 'The soviet *per se* is not the possessor of miraculous powers. It is the class representation of the proletariat, with all the strong and weak points of the latter.' (Trotsky, *op. cit.*)

When Urbans of the centrist Socialist Workers' Party of Germany cried that the leadership of the struggle belongs to the soviets elected by the masses without any involvement of any party, Trotsky answered: 'But to declare that the soviets "by themselves" are capable of leading the struggle of the proletariat for power — is a demonstration of vulgar fetishism for the soviets. Everything depends on the Party which leads the soviets'. (Trotsky, *op. cit.*)

The WV presents us with its soviet panacea, completely ignoring the dialectic between the soviet and the Party, between the masses and the revolutionary vanguard. The POR as well did exactly that. It refused to give the masses revolutionary leadership, it refused to build

the revolutionary party whose absence was catastrophic during the Bolivian revolution.

It was impossible to build this party without a struggle to win over to the cause of the proletariat, the broad masses of the peasants. The POR did not do any work with the peasants, it has no programme for them. From January 1971 until August, in its organ *Masas*, the peasants were referred to only once very briefly. To say that that the Bolivian peasants needed soviets is to confuse one means with the end. The peasants would have answered quite materialistically that what they need is *land*, an agrarian reform.

The WV, with its drivel about the leading role of the soviets, retrogresses not only to the positions of the centrist SWP of Germany, but even further to the German KAPD and anarchosyndicalism.

Lenin in 'Left-Wing Communism' and the Communist International at its first Congresses, and with the words of Trotsky, struck out implacably at the middle class and sectarian movement of so-called 'Communism of councils'. This movement not only ignored the dialectic between Marxist consciousness and the spontaneous movement of the masses, but also turned its back on the bloody experience of the European revolutions.

Do we perhaps need to remind the WV about the German revolution of 1918-1919, when the soviets of workers and soldiers filled all of Germany, and yet, because their overwhelming majority followed the Social Democratic Party, not only did they not lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat, they were slaughtered and smashed?

Or must we recall the revolutionary events in Italy during the same period, when the factories were occupied by the workers' councils who took down the signs of the industrialists and raised placards with the names of Lenin and Trotsky? Must we recall how the whole of that terrible movement was defeated because the leading party of the working class was the Socialist Party, which turned back the masses and gave the country to the fascists?

Contrary to the WV, the inspirer of the workers' councils of Turin, Antonio Gramsci, came to the opposite conclusions and fought to build the party, leaving us some of the most important analyses of this grave task of the proletarian struggle.

Soviet fetishism and a reverent attachment to the spontaneous organizations of the masses are transformed, when the situation calls for it, into their opposite.

The same people who preach the leading role of the workers'

councils, are dominated by a fear of the masses. This happened with the KAPD. This happened with the whole movement of 'Communism of councils'. Their rejection of the dialectic leads them not only not to see the role of the party, but also not to see the role of the masses within the fluctuations of the movement. They see their relationship to the masses as a relationship of indoctrination, of propaganda. Their organizations are propagandist circles, where, as Trotsky observed, in the name of a demagogy about the leading role of the masses, the leaders begin to play a disproportionate role . . .

The sectarian stand of the WV towards the masses appears at another point, and concretely with regard to the French proletariat. It criticizes the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) because in May 1968 it did not advance the correct (according to the WV) slogans: 'Down with de Gaulle! Long live the workers' and peasants' government!'

On the contrary, the IC of the Fourth International, not ignoring the fact that the largest and most dynamic section of the French proletariat follows the French CP and the Stalinist CGT, criticized the OCI with the greatest severity for not having advanced the only concrete slogans, the slogans that would have uncovered the counter-revolutionary Stalinists and led the masses to their ideological emancipation from their treacherous leadership: 'Down with de Gaulle: CPF-CGT government'.

The WV's criticism of the OCI (and the POR) was not placed on this Bolshevik basis. The fact that it does not grasp the whole essence of the dispute that brought the OCI into an alliance with the centrists and into irreconcilable opposition to the IC does not surprise us.

Out of the whole split, it retains only the events in Bolivia. The Bolivian events and the POR's treachery, which found enthusiastic support from the OCI, are only the consequences of a whole trend and method, the fruits of a whole system of centrist politics.

From the bitter lessons of Bolivia, Marxists are called on now, in the presence of today's huge conflicts, to draw the scientific conclusions in relation to a whole political methodology, as has happened with the lessons of Algeria, Cuba and Ceylon. The WV does not concern itself with these problems. This is because, for it, they do not exist as problems, but as theses of its own centrist policies.

To Greek Trotskyists it has been well known for a long time that, both as far as the transformation of the 'United Front' from a tactic of a revolutionary party into a strategy (liquidation of the party) is

concerned, as well as more generally in their anarchosyndicalist adaptation to spontaneity, the positions of the WV were and are always identified with those of the OCI and its centrist friends.

Lessons of the workers' movement in Greece: Archeiomarxism and Trotskyism

All the elements which we have seen in the Workers' Vanguard's analysis — confusion, formalism, sectarianism, anarcho-syndicalist ideas, are expressions of the same idealistic method, which is not unfamiliar, as we said at the beginning, to the Greek as well as to the international workers' movement.

Contrary to the Pabloite ideologists of the Novack school, in order to examine a method of thought, we do not make an abstraction of the historical horizon within which it comes into being and functions.

We cannot speak abstractly about empiricism, without seeing its historical development through the process of the English Revolution; nor can we talk about pragmatism, while ignoring the conditions of development of bourgeois ideology in America; nor about rationalism, independent of the class struggle that first formed it in France.

The WV's formalist method of thought, as well, has a historical origin. It is the method of a quite peculiar centrist sect, the Archeio-Marxist one, which developed before, parallel to and against the Greek Section of the 3rd International, the CPG, against the Greek Left Opposition and against the founder and guide of Greek Trotskyism Pantelis Pouliopoulos.

This great communist leader and fighter of the 4th International had correctly characterized this current as 'a peculiar substitute for social democracy within primitive Greek communism'.

The line of the Archeio was: 'Education first and then action', 'not just a passive but also a hostile stand against every political and trade union action of the workers' (Circular of the Archeio 1928), 'a systematic cultivation of hatred for every revolutionary organization, a blow and a split by terrorist means of the revolutionary wing in the trade union movement, the armed liquidation of the latter's conferences, a Masonic, despotic type of organization.' (Pouliopoulos *Democratic or Socialist Revolution in Greece?*)

Through the adventurist Molinier they came into temporary contact with the International Left Opposition, they hid behind the

books of Lenin and Trotsky until they withdrew and began their fierce anti-Trotskyist efforts against the Greek section of the 4th International, and against the International itself, approaching the temporary international focus of centrism, the London Bureau, in company with the English ILP, the SAP, the POUM etc.

After the war, some of its vestiges took part in the regrouping of the Greek section of the 4th International in 1947, with the blessings of rising Pabloite revisionism. Greek Trotskyism joined with just what it had been fighting throughout its whole history up to that time . . .

Stalinism always wanted to make an amalgamation of Archeio-Marxism and Trotskyism in order to annihilate its opponents. Until now the CPG tries to slander Greek Trotskyism for the criminal policies of the Archeio. And at the time of the Albanian revolution, the arch-Stalinist Enver Hodja used amalgamation, slander and assassination to identify Archeio-Marxism with Trotskyism and to be better able to drown in blood the strong influence of Trotskyist ideas in the Albanian proletariat.

When the EDE took up in Greece the historic continuation of the heroic Greek Trotskyist movement against Pabloite liquidation, in its ranks were Archeio-Marxist elements which crystallized into a minority.

Within the rapidly-developing crisis of Greek and world capitalism, before the imperative tasks of a new revolutionary period when the International is called upon to play the role defined by its founding Conference in 1938 and by the Transitional Programme, no co-existence with centrism was possible, even less with an Archeio-Marxist type. In 1967 the minority was expelled from the EDE and from that time called itself Workers' Vanguard.

Some people will say that these are old stories, that the WV cut its ties with Archeio-Marxism and its method. We believe that not only does the WV always follow its method, but also that *it consciously sees itself as its continuation*. An apparently 'innocent' phrase in their document about the POR suffices to show us this. They write:

From the time of Warski's support for Pilsudski in Poland, in whom he saw the 'democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants', and of the support for the dictator Pangalos in Greece on whom the Greek CP called to 'do as you boast, my general' in 1925, the continuity of support for Bonapartist regimes in the colonial and semi-colonial countries is a result of the fellow travelling of the Stalinists with the 'democratic' bourgeoisie (as in China, Spain, Indonesia, etc.).

In 1925, the general secretary of the CPG was Pantelis Pouliopoulos who was condemned by Pangalos' court martial together with other communists, exiled to Folegandro from where he returned after the fall of the Pangalos dictatorship and fought in the Conference of Cadres of 1926 his first great battle against the ideological and organizational degeneration of the CP by the Stalinists.

In relation to the WV's beliefs, Pouliopoulos writes the following in *Democratic or Socialist Revolution in Greece?*:

The political immaturity of all the Party cadres the first time, and their uncritical faith in the correctness of the strategic orientation of the 7th Balkan Conference and of the 5th World Congress ('for an immediate workers' and peasants' revolution in Bulgaria'), had initially led the Party to the mistaken idea that it could easily win over many 'left-ized' democratic officers, if it simply unmasked the original demagogic pseudo-radicalism of Pangalos before the masses as well as the democratic officers, proposing really radical demands — arming of the workers, alliance with the USSR, taxation, liberties to the proletariat, etc. From here, we have said, came the articles of the 'red major', the 'down with the masks, do as you boast' etc. (That the Party with these policies supposedly called on Pangalos to overthrow the bourgeoisie at the head of the workers, this is an idiotic slander of the Stalinists, which even small children can understand. No Stalinist believes this. That this is an impudent lie, that it is a disgraceful political slander, can be seen quite clearly also from the fact that it has been happening since 1926, for eight whole years, a very fierce struggle of factions within the party, where all sorts of trivialities and dirt were called up against the Marxist opposition — but even so about such a great crime the Stalinists speak for the first time today in 1934! They had . . . forgotten about it before! And this now — just in passing. They think: let us go ahead and say it, and whatever sticks in the minds of the new members who know nothing about history, well and good. *Calomniez, calomniez, il en restera toujours.*

If however — we stressed at the conference — the Party, from the very first days of the Pangalos dictatorship, had found the correct orientation and come in at the head of a truly heroic fight against it, (for example, the great anti-Pangalos meeting of refugees in Piraeus, disbanded by guns soon after the proclamation of dictatorship, new persecutions, trials of 'autonomists' etc.) on the contrary the 'Leninists' further deepened the mistakes . . . The fighters of the later opposition, then as yet unformed, by reminding the 1926 conference of all this, were saying that the political immaturity of the new Party cadres certainly explained the mistakes of 1924 and 1925 (later it was revealed that a mature leadership of a fully developed CP, like that of the Stalinist Warski in the Polish Party, when in May 1926 General

Pilsudski carried out his coup, called on the peasants to support him — something which never happened in the CPG, in spite of the relative Archeio-Marxist slander which, out of factional blindness, some of our more senseless Stalinists brought to the light again).

We see again, after almost 50 years, the ancient anti-communist slander of the Archeio, used with such enthusiasm by Koutvis-Zachariadis (later to become the butcher of the Greek revolution of 1943-1949) against Pouliopoulos and the Left Opposition of the CPG, served up again in the document of the WV, disguised as an anti-Stalinist attack! The 'political ichthyosauri' (to use an expression of Trotsky) of the Archeio are repeating past history for the second time, inevitably in the form of a farce this time.

In relation to Lora, the statement of the IC of the 4th International on October 24, 1971, said that:

When he appeared in Europe in 1970, the SLL made it clear from the beginning that it would not support his engagement in the IC without a full discussion on his whole history and an understanding reached on this basis. We do not have one policy towards the LSSP and the Pabloites and another for Lora.

The EDE again had told its former minority — now the WV — that any work whatsoever within a common framework would presuppose a critical re-examination of its whole history up to now, and a documented rejection of the centrist policies of this Archeio-Marxist group, particularly with regard to the time of the Occupation and the Civil War.

Greek Trotskyism will fight implacably any capitulation to centrism in any form, Pabloite, Archeio-Marxist or other. Now more than ever, in the presence of the mass struggles which have already begun in dictatorially-ruled Greece, any retreat whatsoever before centrism, any carelessness in the struggle against centrism will have catastrophic results. The centrist policies of the POR again taught the Trotskyist movement bitter lessons. We cannot have one policy towards Lora and another for Archeio-Marxism.

DOCUMENT 12

Statement by the Liga Comunista of Peru on the POMR and the International, June 1972

The Fourth International, the International Committee and Centrism

The break with the VR¹ and the founding of the POMR² did not represent a break with centrism but were basically a manifestation of the same centrism: they were an empirical response to the political bankruptcy of a centrist party at the moment when there was a radical turn in the spontaneous development of events.

The documents produced in the internal struggle in VR and the documents worked out by the POMR reflect faithfully the extent of the empirical and consequently opportunist nature of the split and the extent to which our 'turn to Trotskyism' was but an act of desperation in the search for a 'theory of justification' for our own spontaneity. The faithfulness and adhesion to Marxism, expressed in successive documents of the POMR in this way, only had a formal character.

By 'understanding' theory as a model ordering empirical facts through which these can be explained, dialectical materialism was totally denied and there was complete adherence to primitive forms of empiricism.

In this way, we repeated old contemplative materialism which Marx criticized so much and which, logically, led to the ignoring of 'revolutionary activity, of critical-practical activity'.

Theory, in this way emptied of its transforming activity, of its revolutionary content, was thus relegated to the field of metaphysical speculation, to mere intellectual dilettantism. Theory, elevated to the

¹ Revolutionary Vanguard. A group formed from a split in the Peruvian Stalinist movement in 1964. They based themselves on the theories of the Peruvian Socialist, José Carlos Mariategui.

² POMR. Revolutionary Marxist Workers' Party. A party formed after a split in VR. The leadership around Richaro Napuri supports the position of the OCI.

celestial spheres, was set free from its material connections and acquired its own independent dynamic in which 'facts' were atomized in 'abstract determination'. The divorce between theory and practice was consummated.

The dualist conception of the world which underlies all empiricist conceptions has always led to complete capitulation to 'objective reality', which means that conscious activity is useless. The pessimists forecast inevitable social disasters and the optimists assert the existence of 'objective processes' which lead to the 'universal panacea' or to the 'International Republic of Workers' Councils': both conclude always by denying revolutionary activity and consequently, by refusing to construct revolutionary leadership.

Only by breaking with dialectical materialism could Stalin 'adapt' to the isolation of the October Revolution and work out his 'theory' of socialism in a single country and, similarly, the Pabloites could capitulate to the apparent post-war boom.

All conceptions of spontaneity have implicit in them the rejection of Marxist method and adherence to empiricism or pragmatism. However, such a concession to empiricism has always been denied by its own authors, who have always declared themselves to be the most serious defenders of Marxist theory.

All this is possible precisely because they are empiricists, because for them theory is totally separated from practice and because their adherence to Marxism is a formal adherence from which they are unable to extract the necessary conclusions.

Having reached this point, it is necessary to understand clearly that the POMR may very well have declared its faithfulness to Marxism, but this is an attitude with only a formal content and consequently everyday it capitulates to the basest forms of empiricism.

The fetishist worship of programme was only the inevitable complement of the rejection of Marxism and the dissolution of the party into centrism. By describing the crisis of VR as a 'programmatic crisis' and by giving it consequently a 'programmatic solution', the fact that programme presupposes a theory and a method is completely left on one side. It was possible to say then that VR, because of its 'class-nature', could not work out a revolutionary programme — this is a conception which presupposes a base capitulation to spontaneity since it implies that revolutionary programme is born spontaneously in the proletariat.

In this way, one of the central aspects of Marxist theory was denied:

that class-consciousness does not arise spontaneously from the proletariat, but is introduced into it from outside.

It was not because of the VR's 'class-nature' that it could not formulate a revolutionary programme; in fact, Marxism did not arise from the proletariat since the spontaneous development of the working class only leads to what Lenin called 'trade-unionist consciousness', or the politics and ideology of the bourgeoisie in the working class. One has only to read the classics to see that. For example, Lenin affirmed in *What is to be Done?*:

The doctrine of socialism has arisen from philosophical, historical and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals. Marx and Engels belonged because of their social position to the bourgeois intelligentsia.

Trotsky, in response to Stalin, declared:

Marx and Engels come from the ranks of the petty-bourgeois democrats and were, as is natural, educated in their culture and not in the culture of the proletariat . . . their theory was formed on the scientific and political basis of bourgeois culture, although they declared on the latter a war with no quarter given. Under the sharp blows of the contradictions of capitalism, the idea of generalizing bourgeois democracy is raised — in its most honest and worthwhile representatives — to the point of genial self-regeneration, and for that end it was the whole critical arsenal prepared by the development of bourgeois science. Such is the origin of Marxism.

VR could not formulate a revolutionary programme and develop revolutionary policy because its position was completely outside Marxism, because it had broken with dialectical materialism. The POMR was not formed on the basis of the Marxist understanding of the methodological bases of its centrism, so there was no guarantee that the 'turn to Trotskyism' was not precisely an opportunist manifestation of that same centrism which it declared it was breaking with.

Today there exists more than sufficient evidence to affirm that, in effect, the POMR continues to be a centrist organization. Consequently the only positive solution to the present crisis of the party has its roots in the deepening and extension of the discussion until the methodological roots of its centrism are understood.

Only an implacable struggle for the understanding of Marxist method, for the defence and development of dialectical materialism, will be able to guarantee the future of the POMR as the embryo of the revolutionary party in Peru.

The POMR was founded as an empirical reaction to the crisis of the VR. During the whole of its existence its policy has reproduced the typical traits of centrism — the rejection of theory, expressed in the formal acceptance of theory.

The break with the VR did not take place on the granite base of the understanding of dialectical materialism, so the future of the POMR was inevitably in question. Thus, the rejection of Marxism would imply sooner or later the impossibility of fighting for revolutionary leadership and capitulation to the traditional leaderships in the workers' movement, to Stalinism and petty-bourgeois nationalism.

Today, it is necessary to understand that such a capitulation was implicit in the origins of the POMR and that, consequently, it is necessary to go to the roots in the understanding of the methodological bases which engendered it.

The internal struggle has laid the basis for our total break with centrism and has given rise to a Marxist tendency which struggles implacably to give a positive solution to the crisis in the POMR. We must repeat with all seriousness: *it is necessary to break completely with centrism, it is necessary to undertake a ruthless fight for dialectical materialism.* This is the only guarantee for the construction of independent revolutionary parties, and it is the fundamental weapon in the struggle for revolutionary leadership.

In moments in which the joint crisis of imperialism and the bureaucracy sharpens, and bigger and bigger sectors enter the struggle on a world scale, it is necessary to undertake the biggest offensive against all manifestations of bourgeois ideology in a struggle which defends and develops all the gains of Marxist theory. Without carrying forward this struggle, the future will be marked by defeats of the proletariat which will be even more terrible than those of the 1930s.

Hostile to all international perspectives, the POMR is condemned to being converted into the left wing of petty-bourgeois nationalism. The POMR will be built as a revolutionary party only as a section of the Fourth International. However, the POMR leadership has broken completely with this basic principle. It considers the question of the International as a problem of 'relations of internationalist brotherhood', in this way denying all questions of principle.

Without ever discussing in a principled way the problem of the International, the leadership has established relations with parties like the POR and Política Obrera and supports the magazine *America India* ('Indian America') which, in its name alone, reflects the most

reactionary positions of the nationalist petty-bourgeoisie (the narrowest national chauvinism and racialism).

Behind the phrase 'relations of internationalist brotherhood' is hidden the crudest pragmatism and negation of the International as the world party of the proletarian revolution.

The position of the party leadership on the International is just one of the most spectacular manifestations of its total hostility to Marxism. It is necessary to struggle against all such conceptions which can lead to nothing other than the liquidation of the party and the dissolution of the International into a centrist amalgam.

The International Committee

When Trotsky and his collaborators founded the Fourth International in 1938, the international workers' movement was experiencing a great period of reaction ('the FI arises from the most terrible defeats . . .').

The betrayal of the Second International, and then the betrayal of the Third International had conditioned the defeat of the international workers' movement, and fascism was advancing victoriously through Europe. In such conditions, the objective course of events determined that the FI was reduced in its sections to nuclei of militants basically extracted from the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia and workers linked to intellectuals, but without ever constituting powerful mass movements.

There did not exist any conception of adapting to this, but the composition of the FI was determined by the objective situation and by its historic task in that period. The struggle for the construction of independent revolutionary parties in each country took place then in totally adverse conditions, 'against the stream of history', as Trotsky described it himself.

When the revolutionary movement in general is declining, when one defeat follows another, when fascism is spreading over the world, when the official 'Marxism' is the most powerful organization of deception of the workers, and so on, it is an inevitable situation that the revolutionary elements must work against the general historic current, even of our ideas, our explanations, are as exact and wise as one can demand. (Trotsky, *Against the Stream*)

Today the international workers' movement has entered a new period of development as a result of the deepening of the imperialist

crisis and the crisis of the bureaucracy. The joint crisis of imperialism and the bureaucracy has only one positive solution within the present framework. The only solution which will open a new epoch of progress for humanity lies with the International Socialist Revolution. The development of the class struggle internationally from 1968, with the French General Strike and the revolution in Czechoslovakia, make the urgent and predominant task the problem of the revolutionary leadership necessary for the taking of power.

Only the FI can resolve the problem of revolutionary leadership and in fact the International Committee (IC) of the FI is the only tendency which subordinates all questions of tactics to the problem of alternative leadership in the workers' movement.

Contrary to what happened in the period in which Trotsky and his collaborators founded the FI, there now exist favourable conditions for its building. The period which has opened up is that in which Trotskyist parties, sections of the FI, are called upon to take the leadership of the workers' movement on an international scale. That is the conclusion of the Marxist analysis of the present period; to consider that we are in a period of 'imminent revolution' or in an 'objective process' which, through different stages, methods and ways, leads to the world revolution, has no other meaning than to deny the struggle for the revolutionary party and to capitulate to pragmatism, to the 'facts', to 'objective reality'.

Our epoch, as defined in the Programme of the FI, has two alternatives: socialist revolution or barbarism, there exists no 'objective process' towards socialism, the central problem is the problem of revolutionary leadership which only the FI can resolve.

The struggle waged by the IC of the FI has been basically the struggle for the defence and the development of Marxism, the only basis on which it is possible to talk seriously of the struggle for revolutionary leadership. The struggle against all attempts to revise Marxism has been the permanent basis for the building of revolutionary parties.

The revisionist tendencies reflect within revolutionary movements the positions of enemy classes, pressures which are permanent and which imply necessarily the building of the revolutionary tendencies in struggle against them. Only by struggling against all opportunist tendencies can the Bolshevik party be built as a revolutionary party.

The Pabloite leadership of the FI capitulated to the pressures of imperialism, and by doing so broke of necessity with Marxism. The

struggle against Pablo began as a rejection of his positions in relation to the Soviet bureaucracy and entrism *sui generis* which led to the refusal to build independent parties of a Bolshevik type. Pablo's revisionism was aimed at the very essence of the FI: 'The conscious struggle for alternative leadership based on revolutionary theory.'

However, the capitulation of Pablo to the Stalinist bureaucracy supposed a break with the Marxist method, and with dialectical materialism. The IC could only struggle not only against this or that position of Pablo, but from an understanding of the methodological bases of Pabloite revisionism. It is for this reason that the struggle of the IC has been basically the struggle for the development of Marxism and the defence of all the gains of Marxist theory.

What defines a party as revolutionary is only its development of Marxism. A party cannot be defined as 'revolutionary' because of its 'social composition', because of its links with the working class or because of the actual leadership of the working class it might have.

A quotation from Trotsky shows this:

He who swims against the current is not connected with the masses. Also, the social composition of every revolutionary movement in the beginning is not of workers. It is the intellectuals, semi-intellectuals, or workers connected with intellectuals who are dissatisfied with the existing organizations. You find in every country a lot of foreigners who are not so easily involved in the labour movement of the country. A Czech in America or in Mexico would more easily become a member of the Fourth International than in Czechoslovakia. A new radical tendency directed against the general current of history in this period crystallizes around the elements more or less separated from the national life of any country and for them it is more difficult to penetrate into the masses.

To accept a quantitative criterion to describe a party means a fundamental break with Marxism and a capitulation to empiricism; the Pabloite crisis was but the struggle between the proletarian Marxist tendency and the petty-bourgeois, empiricist tendency within the Trotskyist movement. Because of the extent to which the IC of the FI took up the defence of Marxism, we cannot affirm that the FI was liquidated. The IC of the FI represents the historical continuity of Marxism, of Bolshevism:

But has the time yet arrived to proclaim its creation? . . . the sceptics are quieted down. The Fourth International, we answer, has no need of being 'proclaimed'. It exists and it fights. Is it weak? Yes, its ranks are not numerous because it is still young. They are as yet chiefly cadres. But these

cadres are pledges for the future. Outside of these cadres there does not exist a single revolutionary current on this planet really meriting the name. If our International be still weak in numbers, it is strong in doctrine, programme, tradition, in the incomparable tempering of its cadres.

The struggle of the IC began against the impositions of Pablo and his group of the 'new character of the Stalinist bureaucracy' and entrism *sui generis* etc., all positions which were attacks on the very essence of the FI. It was the majority of the French section which began the struggle against revisionism, for which they were expelled bureaucratically by the Pabloite majority of the International.

However, the opposition to the positions of Pablo in 1953 was not a sufficient condition to guarantee the struggle for the building of independent revolutionary parties. The IC could only be constituted in struggle against Pabloite capitulation and the extension of this to the methodological understanding of Pabloism and of the significance of its break with Marxist method.

The SWP which had adhered to the IC, returned to Pabloism as the crisis of imperialism and the bureaucracy got worse. Cannon and the SWP leaders reacted empirically to the capitulation of Pabloism and its bureaucratic manipulations, but were incapable of understanding the theoretical roots of revisionism.

By leaving on one side the warnings of Trotsky on the need to fight pragmatism, the SWP prepared its cadres for the future capitulation. By abandoning Marxism and capitulating to American pragmatism, the SWP could adapt itself easily to Pabloism, by assuming a narrow nationalist position and denying its international responsibilities. Faced with the crisis of the bureaucracy in 1956 the SWP abandoned the programme of the political revolution and the struggle for the building of revolutionary parties in Eastern Europe, and, faced with the petty-bourgeois leaderships, it capitulated totally by supporting the leaders of Algeria, Fidel Castro in Cuba and the black movement in the USA.

The assassination of President Kennedy provoked a reaction which revealed its total capitulation: they sent their 'condolences' to the widow and published a statement condemning 'terrorist methods'.

The capitulation of the SWP concluded with its participation and its unprincipled 'reunification' with Pabloism in the 1963 Reunification Congress. The SWP leaders carried through their unprincipled reunification with Pabloism by using the argument that the IC is the 'new facts' of the world situation, 'facts' which went as far as the

natural evolution of non-Marxist forces and non-proletarian forces like Castro in Cuba and Ben Bella in Algeria towards Trotskyism. Thus, the independent revolutionary party was not the central task any more since there existed an 'objective process' towards Marxism and socialism — and Marxism was distorted to become, in the words of Hansen himself, 'consistent empiricism'.

The struggle against revisionism in the Trotskyist movement, and particularly the struggle in the SWP, revealed a fundamental difference in *method*. The leaders of the SWP had rejected Marxism and had replaced it with empiricism, had rejected the method which starts from the point of view of the transformation of the world and in its place they devoted their time to 'interpreting it' or 'contemplating it'.

What characterized Pabloism has been its inability to develop dialectical materialism against idealist methods of thought, in particular empiricism and pragmatism. It was by breaking with dialectical materialism that the Pabloites prostrated themselves before imperialism and the bureaucracy. The 19 years of struggle of the IC show that in the struggle against Pabloism there cannot be a simple empirical rejection of its positions or 'theories'. An equally empirical rejection can in no way constitute the basis for the theoretical development of Marxists, since such a rejection cannot be permanent and will be subordinated to the ever-changing 'objective reality'. That is the lesson of the return of the SWP to Pablo and Mandel despite having 'broken' with them in 1953.

Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary practice, and revolutionary practice cannot be separated from the construction of revolutionary leadership. The revolutionary capacity of theory is realized in the conscious intervention in the class struggle to build independent revolutionary parties. Nothing is more alien to Marxism than the establishment of a dichotomy between theory and practice; every concession to empiricism inevitably establishes a separation between the two.

What characterizes empiricism is the considering of reality in the form of an 'object of contemplation' and not as 'sensuous human activity, as practice; not as something subjective'. In this way, the only reality are the 'facts' and the development of theory acquires a speculative dynamic which is typical of idealism. ('Hence the *active* side was developed in an abstract way, in opposition to materialism, by idealism, which naturally does not know real sensuous activity as such.')

Pabloism reproduces the method of thought of the bourgeoisie which consists in an abundant collecting of empirical data which are then integrated into a 'model' or a rationalist scheme to explain them. For example Mandel in the Introduction to his 'Treatise on Economy ...' says that: 'Marxist method cannot be conceived except as the integration of dialectical rationalism with the empirical collecting of facts.'

Such a conception of the dialectic places Mandel in the ranks of the Kantian rationalists in the measure that it was Kant himself who integrated the French rationalism of Descartes and the empiricism of Bacon and Hume. Thus, what is implicit behind Mandel's definition is a dualist conception of the world which considers that human thought can only know scientifically the appearance of things (the phenomena) but not their essence, with the essence consequently being relegated to metaphysical speculation. Dialectical materialism has always had to fight against all these conceptions.

The method advocated by the empiricists, including the Pabloites, which consists in the 'collection of facts' erects an unsurmountable obstacle to the correct understanding of the objective world, since through this method one can only reach what Marx called the 'imaginary concrete' which only leads to the atomization of complete representation in abstract thought. The scientifically exact method is precisely that in which 'the concrete appears in thought as the process of synthesis, as a result, not as a starting point although it may be the real starting point and consequently, the starting point of perception and representation as well'.

Because of their rejection of the dialectical method, the Pabloites and Mandel were prostrate when faced with the apparent stabilization of capitalism and the Stalinist bureaucracy during the post-war boom. The theories of Pablo on the 'imminent third world war' and the 'new role of the bureaucracy' or the theories of Mandel on neo-capitalism and the third industrial revolution, the scientific technological revolution and the new working class, as with the theories now developed by the OCI on the 'imminent revolution' or the 'objective process which leads to the universal republic of workers' councils' have a common denominator — the capitulation to the 'facts', to 'objectivity', as theories are attempts to justify or adapt to the spontaneous course of events. All these presuppose a rejection of Marxist method and a capitulation to empiricism.

Only by breaking with Marxism could the Pabloites realize their series of betrayals of the international workers' movement and Mandel in particular became one of the greatest present-day apologists for capitalism. He capitulated to Stalinism in the Hungarian revolution of 1956 and to the petty-bourgeois nationalists in Algeria and Cuba: he played an equally important role in the defeat of the Belgian strike in 1961; he supported Dubcek in the Czech uprising in 1968, gave a cover to the French Pabloites who capitulated criminally to 'student power' in 1968 — not to mention the liquidation of the Latin American sections of the Unified Secretariat into OLAS and the Castroite movement.

Only through an understanding of the opportunist tendencies' profound rejection of the Marxist method is it possible to guarantee the struggle for revolutionary leadership in the continuity of the FI. The experience of the SWP has no other meaning and constitutes a basic stage in the struggle of the IC of the FI.

The Communist Internationalist Organization (OCI)

The International Committee of the Fourth International is the target of the attacks of all opportunists because of its principled position on the struggle in Bangla Desh. The political line up of the OCI with the Pabloites on Bangla Desh is not just an accidental or circumstantial fact. On the contrary, it is a manifestation of its move away from Trotskyism on breaking with the IC of the FI.

In the youth rally celebrated in Essen in July 1971, the OCI broke with the IC of the FI when it opposed an amendment supported by the majority of the IC (British, Irish, Ceylonese, Canadian and Greek sections) which stated that the FI is the only revolutionary international and that its parties are the only revolutionary parties.

Obviously, in their opposition to the amendment of the majority of the IC, they got the support of different centrist and opportunist groups like the Spanish POUM³ or the right wing NSA (National Students' Association) in the USA, which took the opportunity to campaign for the slogan — supported by the Stalinists — of a 'Popular Treaty for peace in Vietnam'. This action constituted the real break with the IC and the attempt to transform the International into a centrist amalgam. The regroupment of the OCI with the centrists

³ POUM. Workers Party for Marxist Unification. A Spanish centrist party with which Trotsky broke when it entered the Stalinist Popular Front in the Spanish Civil War.

against the FI constitutes the basic question and not the Bolivian revolution or the Bolivian POR.

The amendment presented by the SLL and supported by the majority of the IC is clear enough: 'Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary party . . .'

When the OCI rejected the amendment, it opposed the FI being built on the basis of dialectical materialism, thus completing its opposition to the defence and the development of Marxist theory which it had already revealed sometime before. The OCI, by refusing to understand and develop dialectical materialism as the theory of knowledge of Marxism, denies the essence of the struggle for the building of revolutionary parties and prevents sections of the FI from transforming the spontaneous consciousness of the working class into class-consciousness.

By adopting the position that only the programme constitutes the basis for the building of parties, it prepares the way for the liquidation of the party into centrism. As the IC of the FI declares: 'Only a fundamental struggle against all the enemies of Marxism, a struggle waged against the spontaneous consciousness of the working class can prepare the youth for the building of the FI.'

The OCI had denied the theoretical gains of the IC and the whole experience of the struggle in the SWP to such an extent that it has had to break with the FI in order to carry forward its opportunist conceptions.

The OCI tells us that we are in a period of 'imminent revolution' which 'proceeds through different stages and in different forms towards the International Republic of Soviets'. It is from this totally spontaneist conception of the struggle for socialism that the OCI works out its position to liquidate the FI. If there exists an 'objective process' towards the 'International Republic of Soviets' why do we need parties? Why do we need the International? Such is the logic which lies behind every spontaneist revision of Marxism.

Thus Pablo stated that the new relation of forces on a world scale after the war and the 'revolutionary processes' which would be generated would force the Stalinist parties and the reformist parties to carry through the revolution in a general way.

According to the OCI itself, parties and leaderships 'correspond' to this 'process'. This is a conscious refusal to fight against Stalinism and the other treacherous leaderships. It is by following these conceptions that the OCI has maintained that the FI and its sections must be

'flexible' organizations and has refused to accept that the FI is the only revolutionary International. All backed up by the argument that we must not be 'sectarian', 'ultimatist' or that we must remain 'linked to the masses'; in other words, the purest opportunism.

During the Algerian revolution, the OCI raised the bourgeois-nationalist movement to the level of the revolutionary party. Its support for the MNA⁴ was in the following terms: "The programme of the MNA is undeniably a revolutionary programme with a socialist content . . . Effectively, when we analyse the MNA we must consider that we have before us a revolutionary movement which is almost unique in its form, that we cannot define as a Marxist party, but which, because of its policy and character, carries within it all the revolutionary hopes of the Algerian people."

Such an analysis of the MNA, which is considered as 'revolutionary and socialist' without being Marxist and as a movement which is 'almost unique in its form', only leads to the rejection of the struggle to construct revolutionary parties which are independent, and to placing 'hopes of the people' in movements which in their 'natural or objective evolution' lead to socialism.

Logically, like Torres in Bolivia or the government of Allende or Velasco (which were to protect the workers' government in Bolivia) the MNA had nothing in common with socialism and rather rushed to the UN when the situation sharpened in Algeria.

Since they consider that there exists a 'natural process' towards socialism, the struggle for the independent leadership of the FI can be relegated to the background; in its place can be placed hollow phrases or empty formulas without any revolutionary content, but which are accessible to the masses. The slogan of the United Workers' Front raised to the level of strategy and to which the whole struggle of the party is subordinated is a typical example of this. In opposition to the position of Lenin and Trotsky, the OCI maintains that the UWF is a strategy, a permanent slogan and the body where the party will be built and will win its leadership in the course of the spontaneous development.

For Lenin and Trotsky, the UWF was a slogan which the party could put forward in specific conditions with the aim of breaking the traditional leaderships and winning revolutionary leadership. For the OCI, on the other hand, the UWF is not subordinated to the struggle for independent leadership: it is carried through with the

⁴ MNA. The Algerian Nationalist Movement.

'present leaderships' of the working-class movement and has as its final objective the 'leading' of the working class to government and the constitution of the 'party of the victorious proletarian revolution'.

The Bolshevik-Leninist position and the opportunist position of the OCI are completely opposed. As the IC of the FI declares: the position of the OCI on the 'United Workers' Front' is transformed into a complete liquidation of the party and its subordination to the Stalinist and social-democratic parties and the union bureaucracies.

Total abstention in relation to the struggle in Bangla Desh is but the culmination of the anti-Marxist evolution of the OCI and its adherence to contemplative empiricism. Only with that conception which rejects the point of view of the transformation of the world and which breaks consequently with Marxism, is it possible to work out theories like those put forward by the OCI. They have no other conclusion than the denial of all conscious revolutionary activity and the capitulation to so-called 'objective processes'.

The positions which the OCI has taken in relation to Bolivia, first of all denouncing the theses of the COB and later swallowing these positions completely and even accepting the position of the 'anti-imperialist united front' cannot be understood except by examining the move away from Marxism by the OCI and its adherence each day to opportunism.

Serious and scientific analysis is replaced by a demagogic pose and propagandist activity. Thus, after refusing systematically to support the struggle of the Palestinian people against Zionist aggression, it pompously salutes the 'soviet of Irbid' as part of the 'process' which leads along different paths to the 'universal republic of Soviets'. The combination of the refusal to struggle against treacherous leaderships and demagogic poses are the result of the break of the OCI with the IC of the FI.

Revolutionary Workers Party - POR (Bolivia)

From 1952 Lora's POR became the main support of Pabloism in Latin America. Accepting Trotskyism verbally, but denying it in practice, Lora has led the workers' movement in Bolivia to defeat since the revolution of 1952. In fact, Lora supported the MNR⁵ in

⁵ MNR. National Revolutionary Movement in Bolivia. A petty-bourgeois party led by Paz Estensoro which took power in 1952. The MNR and Estensoro now work in full co-operation with Colonel Banzer.

1952 and was incapable of struggling for the alternative leadership of the POR around a Marxist programme. Later on, when the MNR began its offensive against the masses, Lora changed his position and centred his hopes on the left wing of the MNR.

In the *Union Theses of the POR*, Lora built his strategy on support for the left wing of the MNR against the right wing. That is a grotesque remnant of the policy of Stalin towards the Chinese Kuomintang and the negation, consequently, of the construction of independent revolutionary parties.

The Pabloite crisis meant for Lora a conscious move from any international perspective. Lora fought from 1953 to 1969 against the IC of the FI, when he made a new opportunist turn and decided to 'support it'. During the whole period from 1953 to 1969 Lora carried out a policy of capitulation to petty-bourgeois tendencies; unconditional support for the petty-bourgeois government of Castro and support for guerrilla movements are the most striking proof of this.

In the pamphlet *Reevaluation of the method of the guerrillas* Lora declares: 'The POR, from its clandestine position, stated that it was putting to one side the discussion on the place occupied by the guerrillas in the revolutionary struggle in order to give them its determined support.'

In the POR manifesto on Che Guevara's guerrilla campaign, there is the statement: 'The guerrilla is no more than the method of struggle of the people against anti-popular capitulationist *gorilismo* . . .' And later: 'At this time of definitions, the POR says publicly that it solidarizes with and supports the guerrilla movement which has just broken out, according to official news bulletins in the south-east of the country. It assumes this position without previously considering its weakness or strength, its virtues or defects. The *guerrilleros*, despite all the limitations which they might have, are part of the advanced army of the people. Their objectives are national and social liberation and they are acting on behalf of progress and the advance of history.'

For Lora the construction of the independent revolutionary party, section of the FI, is left entirely on one side and guerrilla warfare is put in its place. In that period Lora capitulated completely to guerrilla warfare and made the whole strategy of the POR depend on 'support' and 'entrism' in the guerrillas.

Lora argues in this way in the same pamphlet: 'When we talk of popular support we are not at all subscribing to the silent sympathy which the masses may feel towards the guerrillas, but concretely to

militant support, to the economic and political support which must be given to them, to the co-ordination of guerrilla warfare and agitation in the cities and centres of work. The very existence of the guerrilla centres and the appearance of new ones will become the result of the support of the masses.'

At the extreme limit of his opportunism, Lora even goes so far as to say that 'the guerrilla movement seems to mean a return to Bolshevism of the first period' and calls for entry into the guerrillas, arguing that 'the Bolivian situation requires another kind of guerrilla, that which results from the united front of working-class tendencies'. Only when the *guerrilleros* themselves reject the entry of the POR does Lora criticize them saying: 'Sick and absurd anti-Trotskyism characterized the education of the guerrillas and the attempts which were made to justify them technically. The consequence of this was to keep the POR at a distance, obeying orders from afar and the doors were closed against any future participation by the POR.'

The permanent policy of Lora implies a rejection of the struggle for the building of a revolutionary party. His theses of support for the MNR for the guerrillas or at the moment the constitution of the FRA⁶ are but manifestations of an anti-Marxist conception which believes that the revolutionary party is the result of the spontaneous development of the mass movement.

In his book *Perspectives of the Bolivian Revolution* Lora declares: 'The exploited, on reaching a certain degree of maturity expressed clearly their central objective: the constitution of their own government and their wish to cease to be fodder for political movements which are alien to it. The existence of the POR is justified because it expresses this basic tendency . . .'

The party is reduced, according to Lora, to the 'expression' of the spontaneous development of the workers' movement, and at a given moment the 'expression' of the 'maturity' of the proletariat, in opposition to the Marxist theses that class-consciousness is introduced into the proletariat from outside and that the party is in no way the 'expression' of spontaneous consciousness but quite the opposite; that to introduce this class-consciousness, it is necessary to combat at all times this spontaneous consciousness.

When Lora decided 'to support' the IC after 16 years of struggling

⁶ FRA. Anti-Imperialist Revolutionary Front. Formed after the Banzer coup in Bolivia by the Stalinists, Pabloites, Lora's POR, the Torres wing of the military and other petty-bourgeois tendencies.

against it, was it not correct to draw up a balance-sheet of the POR as the British section maintained in the IC? What guarantee existed that the POR had broken with centrism?

However, the French section decided on its own account and without it having been approved on the IC to consider the POR as a member of the IC. Such a decision on the part of the French section was but a manifestation of its capitulation to centrism and a step forward in the attempt to dissolve the International into centrist organizations with the justification of not appearing 'sectarian'.

Thesis of the COB

The events in Bolivia have shown that the POR never broke with centrism and that its adherence to the IC was only an opportunist manoeuvre by Lora. The responsibility of the POR in the defeat of the Bolivian proletariat obliges Trotskyist militants to draw up a balance-sheet of the events which carried the military group of Banzer to power. This was a defeat for the Bolivian working class because of the incapacity of its leadership.

Because of his total break with Marxism, Lora and his group always developed an opportunist policy of capitulation to Stalinism and petty-bourgeois tendencies, a conscious negation of all international perspective and the rejection, consequently, of the building of independent parties of a Bolshevik type.

From the congress of the COB in 1970 the POR capitulated to Stalinism and to political theses based on the impossibility of struggling consistently against petty-bourgeois nationalism to the extent that an anti-Marxist conception of the latter was developed; the negation of the theory of the permanent revolution and the acceptance of the 'theory' of the revolution in stages; the acceptance of the 'theory' of the 'building of socialism in one country' and also the acceptance of the international policy of the Soviet bureaucracy. It was the French section itself which produced the first criticism of the theses of the COB. This criticism concluded:

Comrades, we tell you, quite plainly, motivated by deep and anguished conviction, that if this declaration becomes the policy of the Bolivian workers' movement and represents its orientation, and if the POR should adopt it (or even if it maintained a long silence on the fact that it constitutes the result of a compromise which only has circumstantial value), then the

thesis of the COB can constitute a noose around the neck of the Bolivian proletariat since it limits it to Bolivia.

When it justifies and backs up completely everything the POR has done, the French section opportunistically avoids this criticism and in particular its final conclusion:

This party prepared this struggle, was prepared for it, was able to take advantage of the opportunities and at each stage of the revolutionary process developed the conditions for the working class to take the power.

Revolutionary Leadership

The defeat of the Bolivian proletariat was the result of the prostration of its leadership. The POR was incapable of posing correctly (or, rather, it never even posed it) the struggle for independent leadership. Its basic break with Marxism led it to capitulate to the traditional leaderships and the union bureaucracies. It is no coincidence that after the defeat, Lora, in his balance-sheet, leaves out all question of working-class leadership. As he expressed it himself, the 'leadership of the workers' movement was correct' and the political policies of the working class were overtaken by the events.

But the main leaders of the working class were the *Lechimists* and the Stalinists.

In an interview which appeared in *Informations Ouvrières*, the OCI's newspaper, he goes so far as to say that Stalinism, pushed by events, was forced to take up 'revolutionary positions' — the same position of Pablo towards the Soviet bureaucracy, except that 'it has become real' for Lora. What is certain is that Lora always accepted the Pabloite theses on Stalinism, theses which led him to affirm that the Sino-Soviet conflict opened up the possibility that a fraction of the bureaucracy would 'debureaucratize' and 'return to Marxism'; a possibility which was reduced to nought by Lora since 'the theoretical discussion did not penetrate to the very root of the problem'.

This metaphysical conception of the bureaucracy is what makes him declare that Stalinism is the same as Menshevism, denying the international nature of Stalinism and the fact that the bureaucracy obtains its power from its control of the means of production and its compromise internationally with imperialism.

The formulation of Lora that Stalinism is only a bridge between petty-bourgeois nationalism and Trotskyism or the position he describes in the article 'Bolivia between nationalism and socialism' —

where he states that the independence of the proletariat is measured by its movement to the left in relation to petty-bourgeois nationalism — can only lead to one conclusion. That is the handing over of the workers' movement to Stalinism and the rejection of the struggle for alternative leadership. It is in line with this policy that the POR supported the CP candidate in the Popular Assembly, thus refusing to stand an independent candidate.

Petty-bourgeois nationalism

In Latin America the process of the national bourgeoisies has been of such a size that it is relatively easy for 'left' groups to appear which declare their 'faithfulness' to the theory of the permanent revolution and reject the theory of two stages.

However, this phenomenon is not backed by an understanding of Marxism, but is the result of spontaneous evolution. The majority of these groups — outside of the Marxist movement and consequently outside an international perspective — have refurbished the petty-bourgeois criticism of imperialism. This criticism is in essence reactionary and in no way touches the actual basis of imperialism. Such groups have invariably refurbished the Kautskyan conception of imperialism, considering it as super-imperialism and as exclusively a national question. In this way, they have been unable to break politically with petty-bourgeois nationalism, and have become its critics and its 'left' cover.

The POR, and Lora in particular, outside the Marxist movement, have refurbished this left criticism of petty-bourgeois nationalism — this is the basic content of the statement 'they are limited or inconsistent anti-imperialists'.

Consequently, a complete break with nationalism is never posed; in fact its 'anti-imperialism' is given support. It is no coincidence that Lora should conclude in this article that the governments of Velasco and Allende will defend the workers' state in Bolivia. Logically, Velasco and Allende did not even protect the petty-bourgeois government of J.J. Torres.

Chapter Five

In defence of Trotskyism

By 1972, the fight to make philosophy (dialectical materialism as the theory of knowledge of Marxism) the corner-stone of the struggle in the Fourth International, was bearing new fruit. On this basis, the revisionists began to recognize each other more easily, and even at this stage, though the OCI and the SWP had no former relations, their attacks on the International Committee began to coincide. They recognized that the major crime of the IC in the field of theory was its 'sectarianism in the field of philosophy'. The OCI explained that, since *The German Ideology* of 1845 there was no more philosophy; it had been displaced by scientific socialism, of which the 1938 Transitional Programme was the supreme and perfect result. Novack, for the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, explained that dialectical materialism was an 'optional' matter for members of revolutionary parties of the Fourth International.

In Defence of Trotskyism was the reply to these attempts to destroy the philosophical bases of Marxism, and an analysis of the historical development of these revisionist and liquidationist positions. It was originally published in pamphlet form in 1973.

DOCUMENT 13

In Defence of Trotskyism, by the International Committee of the Fourth International, January 1973

The attack on philosophy

After many years in which revisionists have sought desperately to evade discussion on the most fundamental questions of Marxism — the nature and role of dialectical materialism — there is now no doubt that this discussion can no longer be avoided, and has already begun. Already not only the OCI, breaking from the International Committee in 1971, has attacked the philosophy of Marxism, but the SWP, through George Novack, has entered the scene to attack the International Committee's positions on philosophy.

Novack's target is the struggle of the International Committee for dialectical materialism, a struggle which he calls 'A Malignant Case of Sectarianism in Philosophy' (*Intercontinental Press*, July 3, 1972). The very title brings out Novack's own position. On political questions, revolutionists have to struggle constantly against sectarianism. The sectarian tends to declare his 'revolutionary' policy, but to find no way of relating this to the real development of the living movement. He will endlessly state generally correct principles, but cannot make them live. His 'opposite' is the opportunist, who adapts his policies and principles constantly to what seems likely to lead to short-term advantages for a particular section of the working class. These two types are quite capable of being represented in the same person or party at barely separated intervals.

Lenin wrote many volumes on revolutionary tactics, above all his *Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*. He explained that it is sectarian nonsense to counterpose principles to participation in the living movement. Ways must be found of *proving* the correctness of Marxist positions in the actual experience of the mass movement. All

fixed notions of 'no compromise' and 'no participation' in organizations dominated by opportunists are contrary to the dialectical approach to these problems.

But what does Novack mean by sectarianism *in philosophy*? In this field, Marxism certainly does *not* make compromises. In the sphere of philosophy, every difference must be analysed and fought through to the end. Here the basic foundations of the movement are involved, and not the question of how to bring sections of the workers' movement to an understanding and rejection of their leadership.

It is only on the firm basis of dialectical materialism that flexibility in tactics is possible, and that periodic shifts in strategy can be undertaken. There can be no question of *tactics* in philosophy. The position of dialectical materialism, that theory is united with practice in and through the struggle to change the world, is a culmination of and at the same time a break with all philosophy before Marx (a negation in the Hegelian sense). All philosophy since Hegel is either part of the developing theory of Marxism or is bourgeois apologetics developed in struggle *against* dialectical materialism.

The question of 'sectarianism' can be raised here only by those who propose to blur the line between dialectical materialism and bourgeois philosophy. Novack's latest intervention bears witness to the absolute correctness of Trotsky's warnings that without the struggle for dialectical materialism the SWP must succumb to pragmatism.

By rejecting the central role of dialectical materialism, Novack leaves the door open for the dominant pragmatism. His life's work in this direction has actually made him the spokesman of this pragmatist tendency, despite all his lip-service to dialectics.

Just as the OCI considers that agreement on programme represents the 'fusion' of class consciousness and Marxist theory in the party, which must not be disturbed by an insistence on dialectics, so Novack tells us:

Of course, it is incumbent upon the Marxist party to educate its members in the ideas and spirit of dialectical materialism and counter the influence of anti-scientific tendencies inside and outside its organization. But this is a pedagogical and propagandistic task dependent upon rational persuasion leading to conviction in free discussion.

Ideas, and still less philosophical systems[?] and their theories of knowledge, cannot be imposed upon people's minds; and a genuine Marxist party would not bring organizational pressure to bear upon individual members to conform to official opinion on these matters. (*Ibid.*)

Before getting to the kernel of this quotation we must pull away the husk, which is nothing more than an appeal to the petty-bourgeois liberals within and on the periphery of the SWP. It is not a question of 'imposing' philosophical ideas. Such a thing is of course impossible; it is a nightmare of the liberal individualist. Nor is it a question of 'organizational pressure to conform'. If such a thing were possible, of what use would it be? All this is just playing to the 70-year-old hoary prejudice against Bolshevism as the enemy of 'freedom'. The point is that bourgeois ideas oppose themselves to the Marxist method *in a struggle*. This struggle takes a different form within the party from that taken outside the party. But it is a struggle nonetheless, and must be *fought*. The continuous educational work in the party is only part of this struggle. From time to time tendencies reveal themselves in hardened opposition to the necessary turns in party work, for example, and more often than not, this resistance is based upon firmly entrenched idealist habits of thought. A leadership which is not alert to the fact that it is in *this* way that the interests of the bourgeoisie are most sharply expressed is unable to fight to turn the party to make the changes necessary. Far from adopting organizational measures like expulsion against comrades who manifest these ideas, the leadership has the responsibility of conducting and constantly deepening the struggle against them, in order to educate the party membership in the course of changing the party work, and if possible to create the conditions for changing the comrades themselves. Without this theoretical struggle, the leadership itself cannot probe to the essence of the stage reached in the class struggle. The revolutionary party is *part* of the working class and of the class struggle. The party and its members themselves express and *live* the contradictions of this struggle. They do not simply contemplate it, reflect on it from the outside with a 'correct' method, and then 'persuade' others of their conclusions.

The dialectical method

By insisting that dialectical materialism is somehow an optional aspect of membership of a revolutionary party, Novack is in fact justifying the dominance of his *own* philosophy in the politics of the Socialist Workers Party, the philosophy of empiricism, in particular its American variant, pragmatism. He ridicules the IC's concern with

the fight for dialectical materialism and accuses it of refusing to recognize and start from 'the facts'.

Dialectical materialism is the theory of knowledge of Marxism, as Lenin showed in his 'Philosophical Notebooks' (*Collected Works*, Vol. 38). To equate dialectical materialism with empiricism, as Novack does, is to deny the dialectical theory of knowledge. For Novack, as for all empiricists, there is nothing dialectical or contradictory about the source of our knowledge: they believe that the senses take in 'facts', and that the mind then generalizes about these facts, thus creating general ideas or abstractions. Whether these general ideas are correct depends on whether they are found to 'fit the facts'. When they are judged not to do so, then they are modified or rejected in favour of new, higher generalizations.

But this is not in fact how our knowledge develops. When applied to society and the class struggle, this empiricist method ties the thinker to the existing system and the ideology of the ruling class. He can make judgements only after the event, explaining away the manner in which the system adjusts itself and finds new self-justifications. This method leads precisely to what Trotsky contemptuously called 'the worship of the accomplished fact'.

The approach of the Marxist party to the objective class struggle in which it participates is the highest form — and therefore the best 'example' — of the development of human knowledge. It expresses most clearly the conclusion of Lenin:

Cognition is the eternal, endless approximation of thought to the object.

The *reflection* of nature in man's thought must be understood not 'lifelessly', not 'abstractly', *not devoid of movement, not without contradiction*, but in the eternal *process* of movement, the arising of contradictions and their solution. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 195.)

What the empiricist calls the 'fact' involves contradiction right from the start. The immediately given material which the revolutionary party confronts and observes — the economic and political strength of the opposed class forces, the changing economic forces behind them, modifying them, the stage reached by the relations between these principal forces and the middle class, the internal relations of the different classes, the observable changes in organization, combativity and consciousness in the most recent struggles, etc. — are not taken into the minds of the party members and leaders as sheer 'brute facts'. We approach them, select them from the infinitely large range of interconnected processes, see them in relation to past

events and tendencies, etc., according to already developed theories, the Marxist theories worked out through previous struggles in the working-class movement and against revisionism. Besides this body of theory, which we consciously negate into the present, we must recognize that we carry with us the weight of past experiences not yet consciously grasped, which will become relevant for us only as future struggles force us back into them, impel us to make the historical connexion. We can say that the concepts with which we approach new experience everyday are for us the essence, extracted in the course of struggle, from the previous development of the objective world, an objective world of which we are part.

We cannot arrive at the essence of the ever-new reality which faces us simply by 'fitting it in' to these already existing concepts. These concepts were 'dead' as soon as they were framed, in contrast to the continually changing and living reality which they reflected. In revolutionary practice and in the struggle for theory which is itself, from one side, part of this practice, we must fight to grasp the essence of what is *new* in the situation. This 'essence' is not some mystery behind the objective reality; it is the concrete development of the class struggle through its own internal contradictions, a development to new limits, beyond which it passes, to begin a new struggle of opposites at a higher level.

We are materialists. We begin from the fact that the ideas with which we set out in each case are reflexions of the objective reality in our consciousness in the past. The reality has in the meantime moved on and changed. The followers of Kant, observing in this way that the object outside our consciousness can never be fully known (because it is in continuous contradictory motion), draw the conclusion that our knowledge is always only knowledge of the realm of experience structured by the properties of the mind (the categories of thought). Beyond experience, they say, is a 'thing in itself', the object, which we cannot know. They see experience and human cognition not as *roads to* the knowledge of this objective reality, but as an impenetrable screen beyond which thought can never pass. Dialectical materialists, on the contrary, say that the 'thing in itself' is not fully known but is *knowable*. It is transformed by man's own struggle to understand and to change it into a 'thing for us', not left as a 'thing in itself'. The realm of necessity (the objective world of nature and society governed by law) is transformed by men's 'revolutionizing practice' into their own realm of freedom. This practice develops on the basis of the growth of

real human knowledge, the discovery and recognition of the laws of motion of nature and society.

On this basis, how does the revolutionary party penetrate the reality of the class struggle, its real changes? The existing body of theory and experience of Marxism is the indispensable guide, but it can only roughly guide revolutionary practice. It is a guide to action, not a closed system.

We cannot imagine, express, measure, depict movement, without interrupting continuity, without simplifying, coarsening, dismembering, strangling that which is living. The representation of movement by means of thought always makes coarse, kills and not only by means of thought, but also by sense-perception, and not only of movement, but every concept.

And in that lies the *essence* of dialectics.

And precisely *this essence* is expressed by the formula: the unity, identity of opposites. (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol 38, pp 259-260.)

Now the essence of the situation which in any particular case confronts us and in which we intervene is its own definite contradictory movement. As we start the struggle to grasp this essence, we cannot but 'dismember, strangle', etc. this living, developing whole. Instead of concentrating on the extent to which we can find 'facts' to fit the existing concepts, we fight to apply consciously the dialectical method, to establish new abstractions which reflect more accurately the new opposites which have come into being. Moving from these abstractions through practice, we arrive at a 'really concrete' conception. This conception is then immediately made the starting point of the continuing struggle. As Lenin points out (p.279), 'we can never know the concrete completely'. But this does not leave us in the position of helplessness and scepticism embraced by the modern followers of Kant. Every step forward in knowledge, every relative gain, takes men a step further towards the infinite sum of general conceptions, laws etc. Only this would give the concrete in all its completeness. The revolutionary party does not have as its theory some sort of data bank which absorbs and integrates all knowledge of new phenomena. There does not exist any way other than the actual, rough battle to consciously bring the past of our own practice into conflict with what is new and the obligations which it poses. The vital steps forward are made in the practice which results from this conscious struggle.

Novack, and all those who want to 'stick to the facts', never starting with the revolutionary movement itself, its past practice and theory as the essence of previous development posited into the present, are in direct conflict with the most basic ideas of Marx. Marx criticised Feuerbach for conceiving of 'sensuousness' (the material world given to the senses) 'only in the form of *object*, or of *contemplation* . . .' (i.e. as if it consisted only of external, given 'facts' received by the senses and thought about) ' . . . and not as *human sensuous activity, practice*, not subjectively.' (*Theses on Feuerbach, I.*) It is only from this standpoint, by consciously negating our own past (represented in our own theory and practice, by *ourselves*) into the changing objective reality, that we can achieve conscious revolutionary practice. The negation of our past theory and practice is itself negated through the new practice, and the never-ending struggle of opposites begins again, at a new level (negation of the negation). The contradictions of the historical movement are in this way consciously transformed into forces working *through us*. Engels says: 'Men make their own history, but not under conditions of their own choosing.'

It is *this* unity of theory and practice through their conflict that Lenin refers to when he says: 'Not empty negation, not futile negation, *not sceptical* negation, vacillation and doubt is characteristic and essential in dialectics — which undoubtedly contains the element of negation and indeed as its most important element — no, but negation as a moment of connection, as a moment of development, retaining the positive, i.e., without any vacillation, without any eclecticism.' (*Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 226.)

Novack quotes this passage, but omits the phrase, 'which undoubtedly contains the element of negation and indeed as its most important element'. He thus seeks to lay all the stress on the continuity in development and to erase the conflict. The necessity of conflict between theory and practice, in order to arrive at the objective truth — this is what is expressed in Lenin's insistence that negation is the most important element of dialectics. Following Hegel, Lenin denounces idle play with dialectics, eclectic use of negation which dismisses the objective reality. Hegel warns against 'dialectics' as a way of merely showing that the reality given to first sight is 'negated' by the abstractions which then take place. These abstractions are a reflection of the object's own development through contradiction to something else: they are the object's *own* 'other', not something introduced purely independently by the mind. Through this internal differentiation

and struggle of opposites, the object is becoming something else, itself once again but at a higher level which unifies all the opposing sides and shades through which it has developed in conflict. The unity of analysis and synthesis in the thought process reflects this dialectical movement of objective reality, so that the 'first', the positive assertion, the thing at its first stage of development, must be brought into relation with its other, difference, negation, transition into its opposite. And then this other, this 'second', must be developed, in thought as in reality, through every phase of the living conflict of opposites with the original from which it was differentiated. The process has 'vitality', as Lenin emphasises, can produce the development of the *new*, the dialectical *leap*, only because the essence of it is negation.

In the struggle of the classes, proletariat and bourgeoisie, it is revolutionary practice which must be able to carry through consciously this 'negation of the negation'. Only by grasping the role of our own practice in the objective class struggle of which we are part can we transform the oppression of the working class into the taking of power by that working class. This is why Lenin insisted: without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. It was Lenin's ability to consciously apply the dialectical method in this way, and not some pure 'intuition' or 'brilliant opportunism', as is often wrongly supposed, that was the key to his ability to respond to the conjunctural turn of great events. This is why the present critical period of rapid changes and sharp turns, of historic revolutionary opportunities, places such a premium on the development and defence of dialectical materialism.

The OCI and the theory of knowledge

Whereas Novack always poses as a defender of dialectics, the OCI has attempted to give a rationalization of its rejection of dialectical materialism as a theory of knowledge. In earlier documents (particularly the IC declaration of March 1, 1972) we have explained in detail the 1970 discussion in which the OCI and its supporters found themselves declaring that dialectical materialism is *not* a theory of knowledge. We presented at great length, in the 1970 pre-conference and in the recent documents (*Fourth International*, summer 1972), the positions of Lenin on this question, in which he insists that the understanding of dialectical materialism as the theory of knowledge of Marxism is the 'essence' of Marxism. We asked the OCI the direct

question: is dialectical materialism a theory of knowledge or is it not? And now we find an apparent shift in position. The same people who told us categorically in June 1970 that to call dialectical materialism a theory of knowledge was 'sophistry' have now revised their opinion, or rather, they retain their old position behind a changed front. The OCI spokesman F. O. Forgontier now tells us:

Now we are completely agreed [!] that dialectical materialism is a theory of knowledge, which enables us to understand how, from practice, man can reach an objective knowledge of reality in movement, which provides us with a method of analysis, and thus of elaborating a scientific theory of this reality, etc. . . . ('On the latest statement from the SLL: United Front, Workers Government, and Marxist philosophy'. F. O. Forgontier, *La Vérité*, no. 557, May 1972.)

Forgontier's view of what this theory of knowledge is, his inability to see it as the essence of a revolutionary practice to change the world through the *conflict* between theory and practice, is reminiscent of Novack's view: 'Dialectical logic should enable competent Marxist thinkers to comprehend and cope with objective contradictions in all sectors of reality, and especially to analyse complex political phenomena.'

But having made this disorderly retreat, the OCI spokesman tries to come back round the flank. He tries to win Lenin over for his own purpose. Forgontier continues:

But knowledge of what, and *how*, in what conditions, from the point of view of which class? Knowledge of the development of consciousness? No, and even if notes are brought in which Lenin did not intend for publication, it is more difficult than the SLL thinks to transform him into a 'Marxist philosopher'. The famous formula on the theory of knowledge comes at the end of a fairly long exposition . . .

And Forgontier proceeds to make a lengthy quotation from Lenin's 'On the Question of Dialectics'. What is interesting about Forgontier at this point is that although quoting at length he stops at a crucial point. Below, we reprint the quotation in full. The section near the end in italics is the sentence *left out* by Forgontier.

The splitting of a single whole and the cognition of its contradictory parts (. . .) is the essence (. . .) of dialectics. (. . .) The correctness of this aspect of the content of dialectics must be tested by the history of science. This aspect of dialectics usually receives inadequate attention: the identity of opposites is taken as the sum-total of *examples* (. . .) and not as a *law of cognition* (and as a law of the objective world).

(. . .) The identity of opposites (it would be more correct perhaps to say their 'unity' — although the difference between the terms identity and unity is not particularly important here. In a certain sense both are correct) is the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory *mutually exclusive* opposite tendencies in *all* phenomena and processes of nature (including mind and society). The condition for the knowledge of all processes of the world in their 'self-movement', in their spontaneous development, in their real life, is the knowledge of them as a unity of opposites. Development is the 'struggle of opposites'. The two basic conceptions (. . .) of development (. . .); development as decrease and increase, as repetition, *and* development as a unity of opposites (the division of a unity into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation) (. . .); the second *alone* furnishes the key to the 'self-movement' of everything existing; it alone furnishes the key to the 'leaps', to the 'break in continuity', to the 'transformation into the opposite', to the destruction of the old and the emergence of the new. (. . .) *The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute just as development and motion are absolute . . .*

Thus in any proposition we can (and must) disclose as in a 'nucleus' (the 'cell') the germs of *all* the elements of dialectics and thereby show that dialectics is a property of all human knowledge in general. (Lenin *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, 'Philosophical Notebooks', pp 359-361.)

As Forgontier well knows — and here he must have decided quite consciously to obscure the point, since he had the text before him — it is precisely on this omitted paragraph that the split in the International Committee turns! The relation between theory and practice, between party and class, is a relation of *struggle*. The relative *unity* of theory and practice is established, constantly re-established, *only* through this struggle of mutually exclusive opposites.

The *struggle* between Marxist theory and the spontaneous consciousness generated in bourgeois society is the basis of the unity established in the revolutionary party for its practice. This struggle is continuous and permanent until such time as the revolution abolishes capitalism, and, with it, the proletariat itself. Forgontier on the other hand, by his careful omission, finds himself able to speak about unity and conflict of opposites as some sort of equally co-existing aspects, to be contemplated: 'Lenin underlines at the same time that the conflict of opposites is inseparable from their unity', he says. As is crystal clear from the 'missing' paragraph, Lenin's conceptions of the conflict and unity of opposites was directly opposed to this. Forgontier's view is the same as that of Novack: 'Theory is united with practice in Marxist

politics. The living link between them in the proletarian struggle for power is the revolutionary party. The basis of the party is its principles and programme not its philosophical method'. (*op. cit.*)

These are the elementary propositions of dialectics which the OCI rejects, and they cannot be dismissed on the grounds that Lenin wrote only 'notes' on the question. *What Is To be Done?* is essentially about this very same question. In any case, the notes on dialectics in 'Philosophical Notebooks' were in preparation for an exposition of the dialectical method. Earlier, Marx in one of his letters had expressed his wish to find the time to write a short booklet on the essentials of the dialectical method. When Forgontier and the OCI ridicule the idea of educating the cadre on the basis of dialectical materialism, they know they conceal and distort these facts. (For example, Forgontier reminds us that Lenin said Marx's *Capital* was really his *Logic*. This does not alter the fact that Marx planned to write a presentation of dialectics, just as did Lenin.) What Forgontier wants to do is to give substance to the OCI's 'theory' that after 1845 (*The German Ideology*) no Marxist would be interested in writing 'Marxist philosophy', but only in giving concrete expression to the historical process examined by Marxists, as in *Capital* or in the *Transitional Programme*. What then, for example, does Forgontier think Lenin was talking about, when, in the first years of the Soviet workers' state he advocated the formation of a society with a title like 'Materialist friends of the dialectic'?

Forgontier in fact has no idea of what is meant by Marxism as a theory of knowledge. It is precisely the problem of *how* consciousness moves 'from error to truth' that constitutes the problem of the theory of knowledge. 'Truth is a process. From the subjective idea, man advances towards objective truth *through* 'practice' (and technique).' (Lenin, Volume 38, p. 201)

And if Forgontier objects to this as 'not intended for publication', let him read *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, in which Lenin wrote:

In the theory of knowledge, as in every other sphere of science we must think dialectically, that is, we must not regard our knowledge as ready-made and unalterable, but must determine how *knowledge* emerges from ignorance, how incomplete, inexact knowledge becomes more complete and more exact.

How does the OCI square this with its notion of 'programme' as the consummation of theory? For good measure they should note Lenin's reference in the same book to 'Marxist philosophy, i.e. materialism

. . .’ (Similarly Trotsky refers to ‘the philosophy of Marxism’, in *In Defence of Marxism*, p. 97.)

The fact is that the fight to construct independent revolutionary parties is carried out only in the most tense and continuous struggle against anti-Marxist ideas that these parties are unnecessary, that leadership can emerge spontaneously, that Marxists can develop ‘naturally’, that a struggle for consciousness is not necessary, that the party may call itself a party but may not make demands on its members, and a hundred other such ideas.

The starting point is not the ‘programme’ any more than it is the ‘totality’ which the various idealist tendencies worship, from Lukács to Mandel. The starting point is the objective existence of ourselves as a party of the proletariat fighting to lead the working class to revolution.

Novack presents a view of the theory of knowledge identical with that of the OCI spokesman. It is a theory of knowledge perfectly adapted to tendencies whose politics are to prevent the Fourth International from successfully building alternative revolutionary parties. It sees knowledge and consciousness simply as the dead reflection of ‘objective’ conditions. Novack, like Hansen in 1962, does this by presenting dialectical materialism as simply combining the good sides of empiricism (which restricts itself to the view that concepts must be grounded in experience) and the idealist dialectics of Hegel. Thus Novack writes:

Empiricism emphasized the first phases of this process (sensory perception) and slighted the second (theoretical thought); rationalism concentrated upon the role of the second to the detriment of the first. Dialectical materialism overcame the one-sidedness of these earlier philosophical schools by seeing the organic co-ordination of all three of these phases (including verification in practice) in the process of cognition. (*Intercontinental Press*, September 25, 1972.)

For both Novack and the OCI, the revolutionary character of Marxism in philosophy is obliterated. It was not, for Marx and Engels, a question of combining the ‘good sides’ of empiricism and rationalism. Philosophy in the previous century had seen many ingenious attempted combinations of this sort. Hegel’s absolute idealism was the highest point that could be reached by the philosophy of reason. It had developed ‘the active side’ of humanity, left out by mechanical materialism, but could conceive of this activity only in terms of theory, of thinking. It left the material base of

alienated thought unchanged. Feuerbach insisted on 'sober philosophy', or materialism, against this 'drunken speculation', but his materialism remained *contemplative*, with man's thinking simply reflecting an objective world which did not include his transforming activity. Marx had to 'stand Hegel on his feet', by grasping 'the thing, reality, sensuousness' not simply as 'object' or 'contemplation' but 'as sensuous human activity, practice . . . subjectively.' (See above, Section I.)

Characteristically, Novack equates *empiricism* and *materialism*, and then insists that empiricism's 'knowledge is based on the experience of our senses' is 'progressive'. The real history of philosophy is very different. French materialism of the eighteenth century took Locke's basic premise and *combined* it in various ways with the rationalism derived from Descartes in the onslaught on the old regime and its ideology in the period up to 1789. Empiricism as a 'theory' of cognition set very definite limits to the development of knowledge, and, as Diderot noted very early, could result in the scepticism of Hume and the idealism of Bishop Berkeley, the godfathers of modern reactionary philosophy from Mach to Wittgenstein.

It is only by ignoring Marx's revolution in philosophy, which directs theory to the revolutionary practice of the working class in overthrowing capitalist society, that it is possible to conceive of dialectical materialism as a simple result of adding together empiricism and rationalism. But this way of looking at it is precisely the equivalent of the OCI's and SWP's political positions. In their activity, their practice, they adapt to the workers' movement as it is, rejecting the struggle for independent revolutionary parties. To this practice they add the gloss of formal adherence to the phraseology of dialectical materialism and call it 'orthodox Marxism'.

Is there a 'Marxist philosophy'?

What about the OCI's other main assertion, that there is in fact no such thing as Marxist philosophy? Here again we must quote Marx and Lenin at some length to refute the OCI's distortions. Of course, the question is clearly connected with that of the theory of knowledge. Behind the assertion that there is no such thing as Marxist philosophy is the practice and concept of the revolutionary party purely as a body of opinion and activity gathered round a 'correct' programme. A grounding in historical materialism and perhaps political economy

will be considered 'useful' to the adherents of this programme. But Lenin, in reading Hegel, was struck by the *philosophical* inadequacy of his predecessors. He wrote:

Flekanov wrote on philosophy (dialectics) probably about 1,000 pages . . . Among them, *about* the large *Logic* (Hegel), *in connection with it, its thought* (i.e. dialectics *proper*, as philosophical science) nil!! (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p.277.)

Let us note in passing that Lenin calls 'dialectics proper', 'philosophical science'. Lenin here unmistakably draws to their conclusion the many remarks made by Marx and Engels to the effect that they arrived at the dialectical method by extracting the rational kernel, the dialectical method, from the idealist philosophy of Hegel. By doing this, they 'stood Hegel on his head, or rather, on his feet'. Any acceptance of Marx's conclusions without a struggle to understand this philosophical foundation must run the risk of relapsing into empiricism. The empiricists and pragmatists, who *reject* the struggle to differentiate objective reality from the confusion of immediate experience, in order to reconstitute the concrete on a higher, richer level, are the *philosophical* expression of the 'common sense' view that what is immediately received in perception is the truth. Hegel attacks this, and Lenin comments: 'Thereby Hegel hits every materialism *except* dialectical materialism'. Quite so! It is not possible to work and think as a dialectical materialist without consciously fighting to grasp this *dialectical* method. This demands the study of the theory of knowledge. Dialectics is the theory of knowledge of Marxism, says Lenin.

For the OCI, all this is unnecessary. Gerard Bloch, for example, attacking the SLL, says the struggle for class consciousness is conducted 'in a definite political-organizational framework, the one defined by the programme of the Fourth International, the last word, the supreme result of dialectical materialism as the theory of knowledge of the struggle of the proletariat for its emancipation'. ('A Splitting Act Against the International Committee', Gerard Bloch, *La Vérité*, April 1972, No. 556, p. 158.)

This extraordinary statement is not an accidental error, but only the most extreme example of similar statements by Just, Forgontier and others. Its origin is the concerted attack on the conscious struggle to start in everything from the building of revolutionary parties, and the fight for dialectical materialism as a theory of knowledge which this entails. Thus Bloch continues:

Marxism proceeds from the concrete totality of the historical movement of the working class to analyse each of its facets. The programme of the FI expresses the result of the analysis of this movement in its totality. To oppose to it a theory [i.e. the fight for dialectical materialism] which is above theory, a programme above the *Programme*, is naturally to prepare to turn one's back on the programme, to raise up, thus to oppose one of the particular facets to its totality. (*Ibid.*, p. 159)

Here Bloch adopts the category of totality, in the manner of all idealist deviations from Marxism, to attack dialectics. He reduces the dialectical method itself to 'one of the particular facets of the concrete totality'. But what is this concrete totality and how is it arrived at? How is revolutionary consciousness to understand the changes which result from the 'absolute' struggle of 'mutually exclusive opposites'? To approach these questions without a theory of knowledge (dialectics) and instead with the 'supreme' 'last word' of the programme, is to be condemned to complete impotence. The OCI are in fact the consummate example of what Trotsky called 'a formal, ultimatic, anti-dialectic counterposing of programme to reality (which) is absolutely lifeless and does not open any road for the intervention of the revolutionary party'.

F. O. Forgontier, in his latest summary of the meagre stock-in-trade of the OCI on this question, repeats the well-worn quotation from *The German Ideology* bidding farewell to the old speculative philosophy, and thinks thereby to dismiss all further consideration of the dialectic. We shall see just how impossible this is!

According to Forgontier and the OCI, Marxism has nothing to do with philosophy after the conclusion in *The German Ideology* (1845-1846): 'When reality is depicted, philosophy as an independent activity loses its medium of existence.' We answered in our March 1 declaration that Marx and Engels pronounced philosophy dead in so far as it was 'independent', set up as a system standing above the sciences. Forgontier now replies

... they considered that philosophy had been definitely outmoded by science, as a system, not only placing itself 'above the sciences' as the SLL states, but equally at the side of the sciences as a system, wherever it is. All that remained of philosophy according to Engels' expression was 'thought and its laws, logic and the dialectic', 'the logic of evolution' as Trotsky defined the dialectic, Marx's method for analysing reality in movement, nature or in particular society in a process of change and perpetual transformation, to extract its laws, theory, in order to act, to intervene effectively in this transformation.

It does not occur to Forgontier that 'thought and its laws, logic and the dialectic' is precisely the great question of the theory of knowledge which we are discussing; what Lenin called 'dialectics proper, as philosophical science'!

It will, however, be enough to let Marx and Engels speak for themselves on the fundamental importance of the dialectic which they took from Hegel and 'stood on its feet'.

The OCI ignores any study of the writings of Marx before *The German Ideology* on this score, insisting that they give philosophy a place which disappears once historical materialism has been elaborated (1845-1846). The concern with philosophy after this time, they say, is a refusal to accept the great break made by Marx and Engels at that time. On the contrary, however, the constant re-study of these philosophical foundations and the development of the dialectical method extracted from them is the essential groundwork of the training of Marxists. Engels writing in *Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of German Classical Philosophy*, says that with Marx, '... dialectics reduced itself to the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought'. What was the relation of this to the previous philosophy? 'The revolutionary side of Hegel's philosophy was taken up and at the same time freed from the idealist trammels which in Hegel's hands had prevented its consistent execution.' What was this 'revolutionary side'? Engels says it is very well expressed in Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* (the 'smaller *Logic*'), as follows:

Everything that surrounds us may be viewed as an instance of dialectics. We are aware that everything finite, instead of being stable and ultimate, is rather changeable and transient; and this is exactly what we mean by that dialectic of the finite, by which the finite, as implicitly other than what is is, is forced beyond its own immediate or natural being to turn suddenly into its opposite.

To work with this dialectic as a materialist, to use it as a revolutionary method, not to transform it into a *system* as Hegel did with his idealism, meant at the same time taking it over and transforming it into its opposite. Thus Marx: 'My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. . .'

To consciously grasp this method, to struggle for mastery of these philosophical foundations, is surely the first requirement for any conscious revolutionary. Engels, for example, makes no bones about this, and speaks directly against the OCI's assertion that historical

materialism, 'the class viewpoint of the proletariat', once elaborated, made philosophy a dead letter.

Marx worked out thoroughly the critique of Hegel's philosophy and . . . established the dialectical method, divested of its idealist wrappings, in the single form in which it becomes the only correct mode of conceptual evolution. The working out of this method which underlies Marx's critique of political economy is, we think, a result hardly less significant than the basic materialist conception. (Engels' review of *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1859, reprinted as an appendix to the book, pp. 221 seq.)

There is no difference whatsoever between Engels' insistence on 'the only correct mode of conceptual evolution', 'the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought', and Lenin's detailed notes, 'reading Hegel materialistically' for an exposition of 'the path of cognition' which was the theme of his *Philosophical Notebooks*. It is no exaggeration to say that, unless the cadres of the revolutionary movement are trained on the basis of a struggle for this Marxist theory of knowledge, of the path by which the independence of the revolutionary party and the proletariat is basically established, then the road is open to capitulation to bourgeois philosophy. This is the struggle which has opened up in the international movement. It concerns the theoretical rearmament which is absolutely necessary if the Trotskyist movement is to be able to emerge from the period since 1938 and turn successfully to the completely new stage of the proletarian revolution, a stage in which it can take the leadership and go forward to the conquest of working class power. The present dispute, which the revisionists like to portray as a philosophical 'red herring', is about nothing less than this.

The road to idealism

When we say that rejection of the struggle for Marxist philosophy leads to capitulation to bourgeois philosophy, we can refer immediately to the SWP, and to the OCI's opposition to dialectical materialism. The SWP dismisses the International Committee as 'sectarian' in having arrived at an identical position with them in philosophy on the same grounds as the OCI attack our insistence of dialectical materialism: 'The (IC) resemble idealistic thinkers in their reverential attitude towards a self-subsistent method detached from social reality.' (Novack, op. cit.)

This is the same argument as the OCI uses: that the IC wants to advocate 'the domain of consciousness as such'. This revisionist approach *obliterates* the distinction and struggle between theory and practice by stressing their identity and unity. Marx certainly insisted, in his long struggle against the Young Hegelians, completed in *The German Ideology*, that their empty talk about criticism and consciousness changed nothing, only imprisoned them further in the old philosophical speculation, and that theory could now develop by philosophy being consciously negated into the living movement, the class struggle, through the building of revolutionary proletarian leadership. But the OCI and the SWP, noting this ending of the absolute separation and contradiction between consciousness and being, between theory and practice, now want to abolish the *relative* contradiction between them within the new Marxist world outlook. Once this is done, they fall flat on their faces into the error of empiricism. In the SWP this takes the form of open pragmatism.

Novack follows our last quotation with an explicit statement, which makes clear with what our opponents want to replace the struggle for dialectical materialism, the struggle they denounce as an empty abstraction. Novack says: 'The lifestream of materialist dialectics flows from its indissoluble merging with the facts of the real world. This is the source of the concrete content that makes its concepts meaningful and the method fruitful.'

This 'merging' is the same as the OCI's idea of 'fusion' between the development of the working class and Marxist theory. Everything is done to wipe out the conflict and contradiction between idea and reality, and the *path* of struggle, 'from living perception, through abstraction, to practice', through which objective truth is arrived at to begin the dialectical process once more. Against this, the *essence* of Marxist method, Novack stresses the 'indissoluble merging'. That which is relative and transient, the product of a process in which it is immediately negated, is abstracted by Novack out of the living, contradictory struggle which is the essence, is permanent.

To make the essence of Marxist concepts their 'merging' with facts is to do precisely what Lenin warns against in the *Philosophical Notebooks*. It ignores everything dialectical about these concepts, everything concerning 'philosophical science'. The coincidence of thought with objective reality is a *process*. The truly concrete (objective) is not an immediately given concrete 'fact' but is reached by the

path *from* experience *through* analysis *back* to synthesis achieved by practice.

In the sphere of political economy, Lenin takes the example of Marx's theory of value. The law of supply and demand coincides immediately with the world of exchange of commodities better than does the law of value. Yet, as Lenin puts it, '... *value* is a category which dispenses with the material of sensuousness [i.e. departs from the immediately concrete] but it is *truer* than the law of supply and demand.' (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 172.)

Can 'value' be discovered just by perception, in the 'indissoluble merging' with reality? Quite the contrary. Marx says 'value . . . does not stalk about with a label describing what it is. It is value, rather, that converts every product into a social hieroglyphic.'

Thus, not only did Marx need to penetrate beneath the surface appearance of the immediately given facts; he was also able to show the 'immediately given' mystifies and obscures the real relations between producers which receive expression in the value form. Marx, in *Capital*, could only return to detailed explanation of the movement of prices after long years of detailed abstract and analytical study, scientific struggle, to arrive at the concept of value and then develop its many transformations.

Empiricism, ever since the eighteenth century, has provided the philosophical basis for all those who conceive of knowledge as restricted to the immediately given facts. Dialectical materialism challenges the very basis of this outlook. Lenin begins his projected exposition of dialectics with the conflict of opposites *within* each thing, the negative aspect of every thing which develops it beyond its limit into something else.

The splitting of a single whole and the cognition of its contradictory parts . . . is the *essence* (one of the 'essentials', one of the principal, if not the principal, characteristics or features) of dialectics. (Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol. 38, p. 359.)

Contrast this with Novack's attempt at *compromise*.

Marxists part company with the empiricists by considering facts, not as isolated, fixed, and self-sustained entities, but as changing historical products that appear in concrete contexts and special forms and that have to be taken in their interconnections and interactions. (*Intercontinental Press*, September 25, 1972.)

What Novack does, as always, is to wipe out the conflict of opposites as the principal component of dialectics, just as did the OCI, in

order to justify the wiping out of the *conflict* of theory and practice as the essence of their unity.

From this empiricist view of the 'facts' flows Novack's complete rejection of the dialectical method. According to him, 'For materialists a genuine fact is something manifestly real'. But the repetition of 'genuine' and 'manifestly real' will not alter the truth: that the facts given in immediate experience do constitute only an 'imaginary concrete', as Marx put it. Before arriving at a concrete understanding of the reality reflected in these 'facts', there is necessary a conscious process of abstraction from what is observed, and then of practice, before it can be understood in its internal contradictions and transformations, dialectically related to the developing whole of which it is part, and the parts of which it constitutes the whole. The empiricist denies this process. He devises 'laws' which are but a summary of the phenomenal facts and their tendencies. The limits reached and transcended by the reality manifested in the observed facts continuously force the empiricist scientist to modify his laws. But empiricism as such is a limitation on the development of natural science.

Only by learning to assimilate the results of the development of philosophy during the past two and a half thousand years will [natural science] be able to rid itself on the one hand of any isolated natural philosophy standing apart from it, outside it and above it, and on the other hand of its own limited method of thought, which was its inheritance from English empiricism.' (Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Preface to the Second Edition, 1885.)

Trotsky's views on empiricism and natural science, identical to those of Engels, were plainly expressed in the 1939-1940 struggle, so that Novack is well acquainted with them:

The most finished expression to date of the laws of dialectic which prevail in nature and in society has been given by Hegel and Marx. Despite the fact that Darwin was not interested in verifying his logical methods, his empiricism — that of a genius — in the sphere of natural science reached the highest dialectic generalizations. In this sphere, Darwin was, as I stated in my previous article, an 'unconscious dialectician'. We do not, however, value Darwin for his inability to rise to the dialectic, but for having, despite his philosophical backwardness, explained to us the origin of species. Engels was, it might be pointed out, exasperated by the narrow empiricism of the Darwinian method, although he, like Marx, immediately appreciated the greatness of the theory of natural selection. Darwin, on the contrary, remained, alas, ignorant of the meaning of

Marx's sociology to the end of his life. Had Darwin come out in the Press against the dialectic or materialism, Marx and Engels would have attacked him with redoubled force so as not to allow his authority to cloak ideological reaction. (*In Defence of Marxism*, p. 107)

Thus Trotsky, in pointing out that scientists committed to empiricism would discover the dialectic in nature, did not in any way assimilate dialectics to empiricism. On the contrary:

Not all comrades possibly are content with the fact that I give the predominant place in the discussion to dialectics. But I am sure it is now the only way to begin the theoretical education of the Party, especially of the youth, and to inject an aversion to empiricism and eclectics. (*Ibid*, p. 120.)

What a treacherous role Novack plays today, in contrast to Trotsky's effort to 'inject an aversion to empiricism'!

Trotsky disposed of this whole argument about the 'facts' and 'concrete questions' in the dispute with Burnham and Shachtman. Building on Marx's notes ('The Method of Political Economy' written as Introduction to *Critique of Political Economy*) he wrote the following, which might almost have been written in answer to Novack's latest disquisition on 'the facts'.

Striving towards concreteness our mind operates with abstractions. Even 'this, 'given', 'concrete' dog is an abstraction because it proceeds to change, for example, by dropping its tail the 'moment' we point a finger at it. Concreteness is a relative concept and not an absolute one; what is concrete in one case turns out to be abstract in another: that is insufficiently defined for a given purpose. In order to obtain a concept 'concrete' enough for a given need it is necessary to correlate several abstractions into one . . .

The concrete is a combination of abstractions — not an arbitrary or subjective combination but one that corresponds to the laws of the movement of a given phenomenon. (*In Defence of Marxism*, p. 147.)

From mechanical to dialectical materialism

The *materialist* content of Marxism is the very opposite of what Novack puts forward. It is not the old mechanical materialism (and certainly not empiricism) simply fused with the dialectical principles of Hegel understood as rules of thinking. That would lead precisely to the misuse of dialectics condemned by Hegel, in which it becomes a mere play of thinking to arrange the impressions recorded as 'facts' by the empiricist.

Hegel's dialectical idealism was not a development parallel to or separate from materialism. Hegel's philosophical system attempted to integrate all the previous developments in philosophy, materialist and idealist, by taking them up to and beyond their own limits, and seeing them all as the expression of the development of the Absolute Idea. Within the idealist systematizing was the precious germ of truth which Marx and Engels discovered, 'rescued' (Lenin) and developed: that the development of philosophy is the reflection in men's minds of the eternal contradictory development of nature and society. The materialist content of Marxism could only be established by 'standing Hegel on his feet', and not simply by taking over the assumptions of the mechanical materialist. This same revolution in thought, the conscious reflection and preparation of the real revolution developing out of the contradictions of capitalism and the rise of the working class, was necessary before dialectics could become the method of Marxism, the opposite of what it had become in the hands of Hegel, the official philosopher of the Prussian state after the publication of the *Logic*.

It was Hegel's idealism that prevented him from accepting the definitely materialist implications of his dialectical method. But Lenin returned to the study of Hegel's *Logic* and proved more explicitly than Marx and Engels had done that from it the method of dialectical materialism can and must be gleaned. When Hegel says, ' . . . the method is the consciousness of the form of the inner self-development of the content of logic', he points unerringly to the materialist conclusion that the concepts of contradiction and negation in dialectics are not arbitrary constructions but are the concepts necessary to reflect the actual movement of matter. These dialectical concepts are the instrument for guiding man's practice to real knowledge of the objectively existing world, of matter in motion. Hegel puts it:

Contradiction . . . must further not be taken only as an abnormality which occurs just here and there; it is the negative in its essential determination, the *principle of all self-movement*, which consists of nothing else but an exhibition of contradiction. External, sensible motion is its immediate existence. Something moves, not because it is here at one point of time and there at another, but because at one and the same point of time it is here and not here, and in this here both is and is not. We must grant the old dialecticians the contradictions which they prove in motion; but what

follows is not that there is no motion, but rather that motion is *existent* Contradiction itself. (Quoted by Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 140.)

Stand Hegel on his feet: the concept of contradiction reflects the existence of motion.

Because of the eternal motion of all matter in infinitely varied forms, the concepts required to grasp it and act on it (and to understand men and their thinking also as part of it) must be those of dialectics, which destroy all fixed and absolute distinctions in thinking. But this does not mean that we descend into a pure relativity, in which every truth is said to apply exclusively to one time and place. The laws of *motion* of nature and society are discovered in the course of the practice and thinking of men in struggle with nature and with each other. Within the relativity of each discovery, there is manifested the actual growth of truth about the objective world, of absolute knowledge, i.e., a deepening of understanding of matter's movement through contradiction and conflict. Hegel came to the very edge of this way of grasping the process of cognition. In his doctrine of essence he established that the truth of anything is not some abstract universal, as the idealists thought, nor its immediately given appearance, as the empiricists claimed, but the product of its objective emergence and development through conflict and struggle. In this way he came to materialist conclusions but refused to recognize them as such: 'When all the conditions of a thing are present, it enters into existence . . .' As Lenin comments, 'Very good! What has the Absolute Idea and idealism to do with it?' (*Ibid*, p. 146.)

In his rejection of the traditional formal logic (which of course remains valid within narrow limits), Hegel again lays the basis for clarifying this problem of relative and absolute truth. The Aristotelian 'law of the excluded middle' asserts that 'something is either A or not-A; there is no third'. Such an assertion, Hegel says, is not objectionable so long as it only goes as far as indicating that everything has at the same time its positive and its negative determinations. But beyond that it is false. Within the rule itself is a 'third': besides +A and -A, there is A itself, which can and does take either form and passes from one to the other; it is both positive and negative. The truth of this argument of Hegel is that our knowledge (e.g. of this or that aspect of a thing) consists of reflexions of an objectively developing contradictory phenomenon, in motion, in contradictory relation to all other things. To go beyond the common-sense thinking which is bound by formal logic to dialectical thinking is thus to bring thinking

into line with the mode of development of the objective world. Whereas in metaphysical thinking (of which common sense is one variety, or rather a confused compound of several varieties) contradiction is seen as accidental, less important than identity or definition, for dialectics contradiction is the essential question, in order to reflect the material basis of our thought, to reflect the properties of matter in motion. Not only did Marx and Engels with this method arm the proletariat with scientific understanding of history, but they also (and particularly Engels) showed how the natural sciences in the nineteenth century provided the confirmation of dialectical materialism.

... Contradiction would have to be taken as the more profound and more fully essential than identity. For as opposed to it Identity is only the determination of simple immediacy or of dead Being, while Contradiction is the *root of all movement and vitality*, and it is only in so far as it contains a Contradiction that anything *moves and has impulse and activity*.' (Quoted from Hegel by Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 139.)

Those who, like Novack, talk about the 'merging' of concepts with the 'real world' are therefore not only denying the *dialectical* character of the reflexion of matter in the brain, they are also thereby opening the door to idealism, to the rejection of *materialism*. The antagonism between objective reality and the reflexion of this reality in the brain, in the subjective consciousness of men, cannot be eliminated. The unity of theory and practice exists only in the struggle between them. Knowledge is knowledge of the externally existing world with its objective laws. The concept of a thing is not at all the same thing as the object which it reflects. Only on this basis can we grasp the fact that man himself, working with ever-greater knowledge of external nature, acts to *change it, to master it*. But his 'freedom' in this respect is 'consciousness of necessity'. When Novack joins the empiricists and pragmatists in the worship of 'facts', he opens the door to the philosophy of subjective idealism, which for two centuries has constantly been reborn out of the assertion that there is no way of distinguishing or establishing the priority of the objects of experience, and the derived reflexion of these objects, through sensory experience, in ideas. Novack, having long ago refused to do battle against these idealist philosophical concepts (which parade in America and Britain as 'scientific'), ideas which dominate the thinking of all those in bourgeois society who do not fight to become dialectical materialists, is guilty of leading all those youth who listen to him into a

similar capitulation to bourgeois ideology, with all the disastrous political consequences.

Pragmatism and dialectical materialism

The philosophy whose theory of knowledge fits exactly with Novack's 'indissoluble merging' is the *pragmatism* of William James. Novack has *never* attempted an analysis of these real epistemological roots of pragmatism. He has criticized its misuse of the criterion of practice, its stress on 'what works' even though remaining silent on the SWP's own acceptance of this crude method. But behind this idea of 'what works' as the criterion of truth in pragmatism lies a more fundamental assumption, one which Novack actually shares.

William James called his system 'radical empiricism'. His desire to make empiricism complete, to drive common sense through every philosophical barrier, is equalled by Joseph Hansen's famous assertion in 1962 that dialectical materialism is 'empiricism consistently carried out'. If we look at James' definition of this 'radical empiricism' we have a premonition of Novack's 'merging' of concepts with the real world! William James was very enthusiastic about the French idealist Bergson, whose philosophy stressed that reality must be understood as a total 'flux' of experience. From this James proceeded to announce the abolition of the distinction between thoughts and objects, and replaced them with 'experience'.

... if we start with the supposition that there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, or stuff of which everything is composed, and if we call that stuff 'pure experience' ... (William James, *Does Consciousness Exist?* 1904.)

From this point on, despite the 'criterion of practice', the question of objectivity in relation to the external world and how it is reached (the 'theory of knowledge' problem defined by Lenin) is dispensed with by the pragmatists, and 'the true is the satisfactory'. The 'criterion of practice', which has led some people to assimilate pragmatism to Marxism, becomes a purely subjective matter of *expediency*. According to James, a belief in God is no more or less true than any other, provided it equips the believer with something useful. For example, modern life gives rise to strain and stress, and if the belief in God relieves a man, with the message that the future is well cared for, then this allows him to take a 'moral holiday', which he may find very

beneficial. James objected to some who drew openly idealist conclusions from his theory, but himself said: 'though one part of our experience may lean upon another part . . . experience as a whole is self-containing and leans on nothing'. If we seem here already a long way from the discussion about the future of the Fourth International, that is not a trick of argument. Novack and others, by refusing the struggle against pragmatism, *in actuality* leave the door open to this subjective idealism, which takes the everyday form of opposition to Bolshevism in the revolutionary movement and must be fought every day, but has *now* blossomed out 'philosophically' (in the IMG and the Ligue Communiste) in the open rejection of dialectical materialism, and eclectic combinations of phenomenology, structuralism, and every desperate variety of bourgeois idealism of this century.

Novack is perfectly consistent in re-writing the history of philosophy to adapt it to his present purposes. Both his book on Greek philosophy (*The Origins of Materialism*) and on empiricism (*Empiricism and its Evolution, A Marxist View*) identify materialism and empiricism and present it as always 'progressive'. However, Locke's empiricism, for example, contained major inconsistencies which opposed a consistent materialism and opened the door to idealism. ('As to myself, I think God has given me assurance enough of the existence of things without me . . .' and '. . . there are some things that are set out of the reach of our knowledge'.) But his 'sensationalism' was used in France to develop materialistic *social* doctrines. As Marx points out in *The Holy Family*, natural science in the 18th century was assured a free development through the internal critique of the metaphysical aspects of Descartes' rationalism, and *not* by the straightforward development of empiricism. Nor is it true in the earlier 'scientific revolution' that empiricism was the method and outlook employed by those who made the major scientific discoveries.

What is actually at stake here is Novack's own failure to have ever broken from empiricism and pragmatism. His crude mistakes on the history of philosophy are the rationalization of his own empiricist and pragmatist position, which only has the *name* dialectical materialism. Empiricism, never going beyond the thesis that sensory experience is the source of knowledge, left open the question of questions: the existence and knowability of the external world acting on the senses. By separating the mind and the senses from this unknowable 'thing in itself' it placed a barrier to the development of a

theory of knowledge, of how cognition progresses from non-knowledge to knowledge, from perception through abstraction to practice and knowledge of the concrete at a higher level.

No doubt Novack considers it 'sectarianism in philosophy' to fight every day for dialectical materialist concepts *against* the idealism which results from an uncritical and static acceptance of the 'indissoluble merging' of ideas and facts. As we have explained, it is *only* by the most detailed and principled insistence on the basic philosophical positions of Marxism that the cadre in the party is armed against the idealist deviations which are *constantly* encouraged and fed by the prevailing bourgeois ideology in the working class as well as the middle class. What has happened to the SWP and the whole Pabloite revisionist movement is this: having abandoned this training of cadres, this fight for dialectical materialism, hoping simply that the 'programme' would some day 'merge' or 'fuse' them with forces coming forward in the class struggle, they met up with the middle class forces thrown on to the campuses and the streets by the first stage of the capitalist crisis. These forces now stifle them, begin consciously to import idealist philosophy into the movement, and easily transform Novack, Mandel and others into their instrument. These are the forces, their path prepared by the capitulation to pragmatism, which now come together in the concerted attack on dialectical materialism and the International Committee.

Enemies of the dialectic

It is this fundamental cleavage on philosophy, between empiricism and pragmatism on the one hand and dialectical materialism on the other, which is the key to all Novack's vicious condemnations of the IC and dialectical materialism. His capitulation to pragmatism is the rationale of the SWP's politics of liquidationism and 'merging' with the middle class. On their behalf he hits out at the IC and its theoretical and political intransigence. Just at the OCI's opportunist elevation of the united front to a strategy, upon which they base their whole policy, is directly connected with their denial of the central role of struggle for dialectical materialism (the link is the capitulation to spontaneity and the attack on the theory of knowledge), so the SWP's corrosion by the middle class is the natural corollary of its abandonment of dialectical materialism for American pragmatism.

At the end of a struggle which necessarily split the International Committee, the OCI (over the name of F. O. Forgotier, writing in *La Vérité*) can shrug its shoulders and now say 'Marxism is a theory of knowledge'. In the same way Novack, for the SWP, says blandly that of course dialectical materialism is important, it is even 'the irreplaceable foundation of scientific socialism', but 'the basis of the party is its principles and programme, not its philosophic method . . .!' How does it come about that the party has a different 'foundation' from scientific socialism? Because we must be 'realistic' (Novack) and recognize 'that the struggle for philosophical ideas and the doctrine which constitutes the foundation of the revolutionary programme does not override at all times other more pressing tasks and objectives'. (*Intercontinental Press*, July 3, 1972).

In the case of both the SWP and the OCI, this attitude towards dialectical materialism is only an attempt to remove the dialectic from their practice, in order the better to adapt to the prevailing situation. This 'realism' is the opposite of Marxism: dialectical materialism is a method for bringing our theory and practice into an ever better correspondence with the changing reality, through the conscious conducting of the struggle between theory and practice. This means a struggle against the consciousness, the adaptations to reality, produced immediately, spontaneously, by the contact established in our practice, in the pursuit of 'pressing tasks'. Now we can see the logic behind the distortion of the IC's position, by both the OCI and the SWP. The OCI paints a picture of our misdirecting the youth into an airy sphere of pure philosophy and away from its international and national political tasks. The SWP (Novack) piously quotes Trotsky to the effect that not every party member will have a full knowledge or complete agreement with dialectical materialism. But Novack knows, just as the OCI leaders know, that this is beside the point. What is at issue here is the essential task of leadership, and not the 'qualifications' of every individual member. The leadership has the responsibility to constantly struggle at every level in the party to raise the party to the level of its historic tasks. This includes the direct attempt to encourage study of philosophy, but it is by no means exhausted by this educational programme. More important is the struggle for policies and initiatives which bring the party membership into a new and necessary relation with the changes in the living movement of the working class, thus providing the conditions for a theoretical development in both ranks and leadership. To undertake this struggle

for leadership on any other basis than the conscious striving to master the dialectical method is to court disaster. Especially when sharp turns are necessary in the work of the revolutionary movement, this conscious fight for the dialectical method reaches its peak against all the influences of basic bourgeois philosophy which are at the heart of the resistance of the conservative elements in the party, conservative elements which can just as well be represented in the activism of youth as in the propagandism of older members. The Fourth International, in the new stage of imperialist crisis and proletarian revolution which has developed since the end of the inflationary boom, faces precisely such a turn. It either transforms itself or it perishes. The forces brought into play and the magnitude of their struggles brooks no other choice. It is in the face of this necessity that those who turn to a concentration on the dialectic, the IC, are accused of idle play with philosophy as such, of being 'evangelists', with 'one-track minds consumed by a single subject', of 'conducting a crusade on behalf of the dialectical gospel' (Novack).

All those who want to consign the dialectic to the prehistory of Marxism, after which it was supposedly 'concentrated into the programme', which is now the 'last word', should be confronted with the words of Marx himself (the Marx, we may say, not of his youth, but of the 1873 preface to the second edition of *Capital*):

The mystifying side of the Hegelian dialectic I criticised nearly 30 years ago at a time when it was still in fashion. But just as I was working at the first volume of *Das Kapital*, it was the good pleasure of the peevish, arrogant, mediocre epigoni who now talk large in cultured Germany, to treat Hegel in the same way as the brave Moses Mendelssohn in Lessing's time treated Spinoza, i.e. as a 'dead dog'. I therefore openly avowed myself the pupil of that mighty thinker, and even here and there, in the chapter on the theory of value, conquered with the modes of expression peculiar to him. The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell. In its mystified form, dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors because it includes in its comprehension an affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time, also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every histori-

cally developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary.

If, once again, and this time in the heart of the revolutionary movement itself, revisionists once more seek to pronounce Hegel a 'dead dog', seek to push aside the dialectic as 'scandal and abomination' which upsets their 'realism', then it is the first responsibility of revolutionary Marxists, of militants of the Fourth International in every country to take up arms politically against them, and to defend and develop the foundations of Marxism, dialectical materialism.

Dialectical materialism and the SWP

In the last one and a half years, the Fourth International has experienced a vital period of transition. Around the divisions on the International Committee there crystallized two sides on the most fundamental questions of philosophy, of dialectical materialism. The challenge had to be met, in order for the Trotskyist movement to face up to the entirely new responsibilities posed by the economic crisis. As we have seen, to the support of the French OCI, which attacked the IC majority for its struggle to develop dialectical materialism, came the revisionists of the 'United Secretariat' and the SWP (USA), for decades the leaders of the liquidationist attack on the Fourth International.

The SWP spokesman, Novack, after describing various differences between the OCI and the IC wrote recently:

But Healy, true to form, has a more 'profound' rationalization for [the differences]. He claims that the French OCI did not see the urgency of inculcating the ideas of dialectical materialism in the youth.

George Novack was one of those in the SWP who was especially requested by Trotsky, before and during the fundamental 1939-1940 struggle with Burnham and Shachtman, to take up the fight for dialectical materialism in the SWP against pragmatism and empiricism. Perhaps he recalls the petty-bourgeois Burnham's accusations against Trotsky at that time: that he 'utilized dialectics as a red herring to throw the party and the International off the track of the political issues before us' and '... your introduction of dialectics is an evasion, a perfumed trap for the unwary'. ('Science and Style',

Appendix to *In Defence of Marxism*, p. 240.) These are identical with the allegations made against the IC and the SLL today.

They condemn as a pragmatist or empiricist anyone who gives primacy to the facts. Here again they stand in opposition to Trotsky's position. In 1934 he told one of Healy's precursors, the Belgian sectarian Vereecken: 'But we Marxists are interested, above all, in facts'. By their criteria, such a statement would classify Trotsky as a dangerous petty-bourgeois empiricist who had to be fought tooth and nail.

A brief examination of the letter from which this quotation is extracted is necessary. (*Writings of Leon Trotsky*, 1934-1935, p. 211.) Vereecken had opposed the turn advocated by Trotsky in July 1934 and subsequently carried out by the French Trotskyists, to enter the French Socialist Party as a revolutionary fraction. Even after the undoubted success of this tactic, Vereecken persisted in his opposition, but he based it upon general phrases about revolutionary principle, and made no examination of the actual experience of the French section to show which opinion about the tactical turn had been vindicated in experience. It was for this that Trotsky turned on him with the reply: 'But we Marxists are interested, above all, in facts', i.e. in the practice of changing the world, and in the development of theory in order to do this and in the process of doing it. Instead of the obvious and puerile hunting of individual quotations torn from their context, Novack would have done better to have asked what is the real lesson, for the present dispute, of the method insisted upon by Trotsky against Vereecken. If we ask: what are the actual lessons of experience, of the facts established in the history of our own movement and of the workers' struggle of which it is part in relation to the OCI's and the IC majority's position on the Bolivian revolution and the tasks of Trotskyist leadership; what must be concluded? That the Bolivian POR, endorsed completely by the OCI and used by them to split the IC, carried out a policy which led directly to defeat of the revolution; what is more, it persists in the same disastrous policy today. *This* is what neither Novack nor the OCI wants to face; and they avoid facing it by portraying the IC majority as a tendency running away from facts to an abstract discussion about dialectical materialism! Trotsky, in the same article to which Novack refers, asks: 'Does he (Vereecken) compare his predictions with the living reality?' It is precisely this dialectical method for which the IC majority is fighting. This fight for the dialectical method is not a diversion, but quite the opposite. It is the most urgent political question facing

the Fourth International. (See Statement of the International Committee on Bolivia.)

The OCI's support for the POR of Bolivia was part of its whole centrist orientation in the international movement, which led them, with POR support, to vote down the amendment at the 1971 Essen youth rally which insisted upon dialectical materialism as the foundation of the training of the revolutionary youth leadership. They then attempted to justify their action by denouncing the SLL's insistence on dialectical materialism as not only a smokescreen for avoiding international political tasks but also a profound theoretical error: the reduction of Marxism to an abstract ideology, through misunderstanding it as a philosophy.

The Pabloite spokesmen Pierre Frank and George Novack soon added their voices to the attack, condemning the SLL and the IC majority for philosophical 'idiosyncrasy' (Frank) and 'monomania' (Novack). The hostility of these revisionists to the whole basis of Trotsky's struggle for the Fourth International is expressed in their attitude towards the philosophy of dialectical materialism, as we can easily see by contrasting their positions with those of Trotsky in the 1939-1940 fight against Burnham and Shachtman. In his Open Letter to Burnham (January 7, 1940), Trotsky wrote:

While attempting to discredit the philosophy of Marxism [NB Messrs leaders of the OCI: *the philosophy of Marxism*] you do not propose anything with which to replace it . . .

We, comrade Burnham, cannot yield to cheap innuendos about the philosophy of scientific socialism. On the contrary, since in the course of the factional struggle the question has been posed pointblank, we shall say, turning to all members of the party, especially the youth: Beware of the infiltration of bourgeois scepticism into your ranks. Remember that socialism to this day has not found higher scientific expression than Marxism. Bear in mind that the method of scientific socialism is dialectic materialism. Occupy yourselves with serious study! Study Marx, Engels, Plekhanov, Lenin and Franz Mehring. This is a hundred times more important for you than the study of tendentious, sterile, and slightly ludicrous treatises on the conservatism of Cannon. Let the present discussion produce at least this positive result, that the youth attempt to imbed in their minds a serious theoretical foundation for revolutionary struggle! (*In Defence of Marxism*, p. 98.)

In a letter to Cannon, two days later, Trotsky wrote:

Not all comrades possibly are content with the fact that I give the predominant place in the discussion to the matter of dialectics. But I am sure now it is the only way to begin the theoretical education of the Party, especially of the youth and to inject an aversion to empiricism and eclecticism.

Novack 'notes' the stress of Trotsky on dialectical materialism in 1939-1940 but demands 'a sense of proportion'. According to him, and to Pierre Frank, a one-sided and disproportionate emphasis on dialectical materialism has *today* just as serious dangers as had its opposite in 1939-1940. He says that just as everything turns into its opposite, so to repeat Trotsky's insistence on philosophy today has the opposite effect and meaning from 1939-1940. It is not the Socialist Labour League and its fight for dialectical materialism that represents the 'turning into its opposite' of Trotsky's 1940 fight, but Novack's own descent into political opportunism as a result of his failure ever to fight against and break from pragmatism, as we have shown.

The SWP and the OCI miseducate the youth

From the standpoint of methodology, the OCI and its followers have arrived at a position very similar to that of the SWP. Behind the opposition of both to the IC's fight for dialectical materialism lies a common theoretical approach to politics. Since the death of Trotsky, the SWP has continued to publish his works on the biggest scale possible for them (and this is positive); they have also published and avowed support for the Transitional Programme, the founding programme of the Fourth International. But they consider the theory and programme of Trotskyism to be essentially fixed entities, a convenient apparatus of thought with which to interpret every historical development. In this way they could use abstract phrases from the programme to justify the conclusion from the Cuban revolution that revolutionary parties could be built by 'natural Marxists', like Castro. Their own responsibility to build revolutionary parties was abandoned. Every 'radicalization' of a section of the petty-bourgeoisie was estimated purely impressionistically and quantitatively and fitted into or added on to the framework of 'programme' and 'theory'. With this approach, what is already written about programme and theory is accepted as an adequate summary of the experience of the movement, and this remains unchallenged so long as it appears to bring results.

Meanwhile the great dangers resulting from the renegation of responsibility are accumulating under the surface, emerging only later as destructive forces — as the SWP now discovers to its cost.

The reactionary essence of this non-dialectical approach comes out most clearly of all in the period when the tide begins to turn, when the crisis of imperialism brings the working class once more directly onto the scene and opens up new and unprecedented opportunities for the Trotskyist movement. The preliminary phases of this transformed world situation manifested themselves in a contradictory way: the first mass forces thrown into the struggle were the colonial workers and peasants, and their leaders were petty-bourgeois nationalists. It was to these leaders (in the form of Castro, Ben Bella) and their 'left' middle class supporters in the United States that the SWP first prostituted Marxism. When the crisis then focused more sharply on the metropolitan countries, it agitated first the students, the 'peace movement' and the petty-bourgeois advocates of black nationalism, women's liberation, and 'gay liberation'. Faithfully, the SWP, guided by Novack and his friends, discovered here 'sectors of radicalization' as a substitute for the working class. While collaborating every day with the followers of Marcuse, Wright Mills and others who openly rejected the Marxist theory of the leading revolutionary role of the proletariat, they would occasionally produce articles abstractly defining the positions of Marxism on these questions.

Such a combination of formally strict adherence to 'orthodoxy' on the one hand and opportunist adaptation to surface political changes on the other is familiar enough in the history of the workers' movement. In the United States, if it is not opposed and corrected consciously in a struggle for dialectical materialism, it must result — as it has done in the SWP — in an inability to break from pragmatism, the dominant bourgeois outlook. Marxist theory is emptied of its revolutionary content by rejection of the dialectical method, it becomes 'a clock without a spring' (Trotsky). It is seen as a check list of 'principles' drawn from past experience to be formally compared with new experiences. The very materialist basis of Marxism is thus soon completely undermined.

For the objectively developing world of material contradictions is substituted 'experience' as a thing in itself, developing quantitatively through the addition of new 'facts' which are really impressions. The deceptive character of this pragmatic approach comes from the fact that it 'works'. Did not recognition of Castro as a 'natural Marxist'

help the SWP to make new relationships with the 'radical milieu' in the US? Did it not enable Cannon to justify the Soviet military-bureaucratic handling of the Cuban missile crisis and thereby solidify these new relationships? Did not the turn to the middle class and student youth bring 'results'? Did not Latin American centrists find it easier to approach 'Trotskyists' of this sort?

There can be only one end result. The pragmatic 'Marxists' who use this method, fooling themselves that they are 'using' every new development, end up the *victims* of the developments, of the social and ideological forces to which they capitulate. This means that in the US itself pragmatism becomes quite openly the standpoint of the SWP leadership against dialectical materialism. It means that the *international* consequence of this same impressionism and pragmatism — the 'reunification' dating from 1963 — prepares the ground for the emergence in the Pabloite 'International' of forces openly attacking dialectical materialism from the dominant bourgeois idealist standpoint of their own countries. This is exactly what has happened in France (the Ligue Communiste) and Britain (the IMG). Novack himself is publicly challenged by an idealist supporter of Lukacs and opponent of the dialectic of nature (see *Georg Lukacs: An Exchange* by Etienne Abrahamovici and George Novack in *International Socialist Review*, July-August 1972), and Mandel is called in to find a compromise with the new idealists of the IMG.

In the case of the OCI, we are told time and again that there is no philosophical struggle 'in itself' (a view which of course the IC has never put forward), a truth which is then used to oppose all theoretical development, all conscious struggle, to understand and apply the dialectical method. 'The programme' is raised to the level of an absolute truth which forbids any fight as dialectical materialists to understand and intervene in the changing reality.

Because the programme is 'the supreme expression of Marxism', revolutionary practice becomes reduced to propagandistic adaptations to centrist forces in the name of 'realism' and giving 'content' to the programme. Stephane Just has found the happiest formula for this 'concentration' of Marxism in programme:

Marxist method only exists through the content which integrates all the moments of the class struggle of the proletariat for its emancipation. It is in this sense that the programme of the socialist revolution concentrates Marxism and that the defence of Marxist theory can only be the defence of programme, i.e. the struggle to resolve the crisis of leadership.

But this very task of defending and developing Marxism *does* have a much more comprehensive basis than the defence of programme itself. The materialist and dialectical foundations of Marxism are under attack not only at the level of programme. The talk about the 'concentration' of Marxism as programme can only lead to exactly the position of Shachtman and Burnham: that only 'concrete' political questions of programme be discussed, since on this view any philosophical discussion is only a return to a metaphysical level to avoid answering the real questions.

Trotsky spoke out very sharply on this very question:

Mehring was a tireless propagandist and defender of dialectic materialism. For decades he followed all the innovations of philosophy and literature, indefatigably exposing the reactionary essence of idealism, neo-Kantianism, utilitarianism, all forms of mysticism, etc. (*In Defence of Marxism*, p. 94.)

Should not Trotsky have denounced Mehring, as Just would have done, for having failed to realize that 'the only defence of Marxism was the defence of programme'? Was Trotsky *wrong* to say to the youth: 'Study Marx, Engels, Plekhanov, Lenin and Franz Mehring'? Perhaps he should have educated the youth in the same way as Just and the OCI leadership, so that they could produce such statements as the one made by the AJS representative at a meeting of the 'Liaison Committee' set up at Essen:

There is no ideological battle in itself, no Marxist theory in itself, but a programme which is the expression, concentrated through the Marxist method, of the totality of the struggles of the proletariat, and on which an organization fights.

But of course it is not a question of some fight for theory which is supposedly higher than the fight on programme. In the first place, the fight for the programme, and the fight for the building of the revolutionary party in the course of this, itself involves the dialectical method, in which our existing concepts are brought into conflict all the time with the changing reality and with the everyday, *bourgeois* consciousness of that reality which is instilled into the proletariat. (See Section I above). Secondly, there is no escaping the defence and development of the all-round Marxist world outlook of which this dialectical method is the essence, the struggle for which Trotsky commended Mehring, for example:

The question of a correct philosophical doctrine, that is, a correct method

of thought, is of decisive significance to a revolutionary party just as a good machine shop is of decisive significance to production. It is still possible to defend the old society with the material and intellectual methods inherited from the past. It is absolutely unthinkable that this old society can be overthrown and a new one constructed without first critically analysing the current methods. (*In Defence of Marxism*, pp. 93-94.)

The youth of the OCI and of the SWP, educated in the spirit that the 'programme' is the basis and starting point of being a Marxist, told incessantly that the method of Marxism has resulted, through the 'integration' of the experience of the working-class movement, in this 'supreme' expression of the content of Marxism, are now turned *against* the IC and its struggle for the fundamentals of dialectical materialism. This can result only in their liquidation into the petty-bourgeois and centrist youth movements.

A new period

The Fourth International is without question facing an entirely new period in its history. May-June 1968 in France, followed immediately by the great steps to political revolution in Czechoslovakia and Poland, heralded this new period. Nixon's measures of August 15, 1971, definitively ended the post-1945 economic and political relative equilibrium of the capitalist world. Trotskyist revolutionary parties can and must be built; the conditions of isolation, imposed by the pre-war defeats, the wartime repression, and the post-war betrayal and the boom, have been transformed into their opposite. But this historical responsibility is precisely the source of the theoretical questions raised in the split in the International Committee, itself a continuation of the earlier splits of 1953 and 1963. Will revolutionary parties, able to lead the working class to power and the building of socialism, be built simply by bringing the programme of Trotskyism, the existing forces of Trotskyism, on to the scene of political developments caused by the crisis? Or will it not be necessary to conduct a conscious struggle for *theory*, for the negation of all the past experience and theory of the movement into the transformed reality of the class struggle? Those who, like the OCI, campaign in their own country and internationally, for 'regroupment on programme', represent the first tendency, a capitulation to idealism and empiricism.

The International Committee fights for the real continuity of the Fourth International and of Marxism by consciously striving to develop dialectical materialism in the struggle to build revolutionary parties, a struggle against the spontaneous consciousness which dominates the workers' movement in the battles caused by the capitalist crisis.

Centrism in the 1930s, expressed internationally in the formation of 'London Bureau' of fake internationalists, flourished under entirely different conditions from those which face the workers' movement today. The OCI's conscious decision to rally the centrists against the IC at Essen was an attempt to destroy the real lessons which must be learned from our history. Many workers today will go through a centrist stage of development as they break from reformist illusions to revolutionary politics. The Trotskyist movement, fighting for the political development of these workers *against* the 'professional' centrists, will need to be sensitive and flexible in relation to the ideas and organizational forms of these movements. But it is an entirely opposite situation to the 1930s. There, the world crisis undoubtedly propelled many workers from their fixed social-democratic positions in the direction of revolutionary struggles. But the *dominant* feature of working-class politics in the 1930s was *defeat* of the working class and the *consequent firm control of the Stalinists*.

Those workers who were radicalized suffered inevitably from the mentality engendered by those conditions. The Spanish section of the Fourth International, for example, could be liquidated into the centrist alliance with Maurin; the majority of the best militants could not resist the pressure of 'unity' as some sort of counter-balance to the world betrayals of Stalinism, particularly in Germany. The London Bureau itself soon cynically betrayed the aspirations of those who mistakenly followed it, by capitulating to Stalinism. The politics of the London Bureau, of centrist amalgamations, of crawling before the Stalinist bureaucracy, of opposition to the formation of the Fourth International, were reactionary in the 1930s when defeat gave them more substance. Today they are doubly reactionary. On no account was it possible for the IC to ignore the challenge put by the OCI's vote at Essen when it rallied the international centrists.

France and the United States are the two countries in which Trotskyism has longest continuous existence and in which Trotsky himself worked directly in the early stages. Here the scars of the period of defeats, in which the movement had to be born, are deepest. Here

above all the conscious struggle to negate the past of the movement into the present is the precondition of revolutionary practice. And yet it is from these two countries that the main attack on philosophy, on the method by which this negation is carried out, now comes. The failure, in both the US and in France, to carry forward the struggle for theory after Trotsky's death in 1940, has left these oldest sections of the Fourth International the most severe victims of the effects of the conditions of defeat in which our movement was born. Pabloism dealt severe blows to Trotskyism in France, where opportunism in relation to the strength of the Stalinist party almost completely destroyed the movement. It was followed, in the case of the Pabloites, by subordination to the national bourgeoisie in the shape of the Algerian FLN. When the OCI turned its cadres instead to the social democracy and towards the MNA of Messali Hadj in Algeria, it showed that it continued the same method exactly. With such an orientation, and without the lessons being fought for and turned into their opposite, the effects upon the Marxist movement are extremely serious. Cut off from the source of political and theoretical development, i.e. from the working-class movement, by the absence of any independent revolutionary work, the movement becomes politically and theoretically disorientated. If then, as in the case of the OCI, its correct opposition to Pablo in 1952 brings it into a working relation with the methods of the Socialist Labour League, a certain change takes place. But the change is deceptive. The OCI, with considerable delay and difficulty, adapted empirically to the work of the SLL in the youth, and to a certain extent in relation to the party administration.

At this point the dangers inherent in the theoretical positions of the French movement came directly to the surface. The turn to the youth coincided with the upsurge in the student and petty-bourgeois protest movement. Before, and particularly after, the May-June 1968 General Strike, the OCI achieved a measure of success, primarily among these student and middle class youth. To the 'radical', 'protest' inclinations of this youth was added the formal internationalism and the anti-dialectical method of the OCI leadership. Essen provided a very convincing proof of the results of this deadly combination. The experiences into which the OCI leadership takes this youth — an international youth movement of centrists, a centrist regroupment against the Fourth International, a hollow campaign for a 'united working class front', a series of demagogic rallies, and a denunciation of philosophy in the name of programme — can only lead to the

further degeneration of theory, of the OCI itself and of its youth movement.

In the SWP, as everyone knows, the 'old Trotskyist' leadership around Hansen, Dobbs and Novack, the chosen successors of Cannon, have recently found themselves forced to put up a formal opposition to the grosser revisions of Trotskyism by Mandel, Maitan, Frank and the old-line Pabloite leadership in Europe. But this very leadership in the SWP, originating in the group which adapted itself, along with Cannon, to Trotsky in the late 1930s, is itself responsible for the problems it faces today. It has failed ever to learn the real method behind Trotsky's political leadership of the SWP's struggles in the 1930s, particularly in the 1939-1940 fight, and has failed utterly to conduct the struggle for Marxism since his death. As we have seen, pragmatism has actually come to dominate the outlook of the SWP, in direct opposition to the last great struggle of Trotsky. Those who followed Trotsky in 1939-1940 became the majority leadership but did the exact opposite of what Trotsky concluded, on the basis of the 1939-1940 fight, must be done. Novack was addressed directly by Trotsky:

Dear Comrade Warde (Novack),

You are one of the comparatively few comrades who are seriously interested in the methodological questions of our movement. Don't you believe that your intervention in the discussion from *this* point of view would be very useful?

Friends write me that the interest for dialectical materialism in our party, especially in the youth, is becoming very acute. Don't you believe that comrades who could orientate this interest should now create some purely theoretical association with the purpose of promoting in the party the doctrines of dialectical materialism? Yourself, Comrade Wright, Comrade Gerland (very well acquainted with the matter) could possibly form the first nucleus of such an association, of course, under the control of the propaganda department of the National Committee. It is, certainly, only a vague suggestion from afar which should be discussed with the responsible party institutions. (*In Defence of Marxism*, p. 125.)

This same Warde (Novack) today attacks those who fight for dialectical materialism as 'monomaniacs' even though Trotsky asked him to 'create some purely theoretical association for the purpose of promoting . . . dialectical materialism'!

Novack wrote many articles and conducted many lectures and schools on Marxism but as a separate, formal activity, while Cannon

carried on the 'politics' of the SWP. Novack adapted to Cannon (and Cannon in turn to Pablo) just as he and Cannon had adapted to Trotsky. The task was to train a cadre, a leadership, which could develop dialectical materialism consciously in the struggle to build the party. This, the essence of Trotsky's fight, was a closed book to Novack and the SWP after 1940.

Eventually the SWP supported the 1963 'reunification' conference of the Pabloites, which was called on the basis of stopping all further discussion on the international movement on the grounds that it was 'divisive'.

At this time, in 1973, it is not at all surprising that the OCI prefers, *for the first time*, to attack the IC on the philosophical questions which were exhaustively treated in the 1961-1963 discussion. The same OCI which repeats phrases about the 'continuity' of the revolutionary movement is *liquidating* the real *struggle* for continuity by attacking the methodological foundations which have had to be fought for and developed against the enemies of the Fourth International. This is the logic behind its decision to line up with the centrists against the International Committee at Essen.

The SWP, the OCI, and 'proletarianization'

When Burnham, supported by Shachtman, led the opposition to dialectical materialism in the SWP in 1939-1940, Trotsky was able to prove irrefutably that the pressure of the class enemy, at the beginning of World War II, was the immediate cause of the petty-bourgeois in the SWP launching their assault on the fundamentals of Marxism. In calmer times, and when the exposure of Stalinism did not bring them into direct collision with the bourgeois 'liberal' establishment, they either held in reserve or did not yet understand their opposition to the Marxist world outlook. Trotsky soon saw in 1940 the need to conduct to the end the struggle against the petty-bourgeois rejection of the theory and history of the movement. If the middle class predominance in the SWP, particularly in New York, was to continue, then the party would not be able to survive and develop as a revolutionary leadership. He proposed stringent measures which would either prove or reject the petty-bourgeois members of the party. They must either succeed in recruiting workers or be suspended from membership. The youth must be turned towards the unions and the factories.

The party's newspaper must be changed to become a real workers' paper.

Cannon and the SWP leadership achieved a certain measure of success in the maritime and other unions by pursuing the line of 'proletarianization' during the war years. But the theoretical essence of Trotsky's advice was missed entirely, and it is exactly on this point of theory that Novack, as well as the OCI, now attack the IC and dialectical materialism. For Trotsky, the turn to the working class was entirely dependent upon the fight to put dialectical materialism at the centre. For this turn to be made would require a *struggle* for dialectics *against* the immediate consciousness of the working class, and not an adaptation to it. It was through this turn that the struggle against pragmatism would be prosecuted and developed, because the bourgeois constantly fought to reimpose the pragmatic philosophy on the workers. The following quotations from *In Defence of Marxism* make this clear:

It is precisely the party's penetration into the trade unions and into the workers' milieu in general that demands heightening the theoretical qualification of our cadres. I do not mean by cadres the 'apparatus' but the party as a whole. Every party member must consider himself an officer in the proletarian army. (p. 128-129.)

(Compare the last two sentences with Novack's *Intercontinental Press* article, in which he insists that dialectical materialism is 'a voluntary, not a mandatory, aspect of party activity and personal development'!)

After our American section split from the Socialist Party I insisted most strongly on the earliest possible publication of a theoretical organ, having again in mind the need to educate the party, first and foremost in the spirit of dialectic materialism. In the United States, I wrote at that time, where the bourgeois systematically instils vulgar empiricism in the workers, more than anywhere else is it necessary to speed the elevation of the movement to a proper theoretical level. (p. 142.)

It would be asinine to think that the workers' section of the party is perfect. The workers are only gradually reaching clear class consciousness. The trade unions always create a culture medium for opportunist deviations. Inevitably we will run up against this question in one of the next stages. More than once the party will have remind its own trade unionists that a *pedagogical adaptation to the more backward layers of the proletariat must not become transformed into a political adaptation to the conservative bureaucracy of the trade unions*. Every new stage of development, every increase in the party ranks and the complication of the methods of its work open up not

only new possibilities but also new dangers. Workers in the trade unions, even those trained in the most revolutionary school, often display a tendency to free themselves from party control. At the present time, however, this is not at all in question. At the present time the non-proletarian opposition, dragging behind it the majority of the non-proletarian youth, is attempting to revise our theory, our programme, our tradition and it does all this light-mindedly, in passing, for greater convenience in the struggle against the 'Cannon Clique'. At the present time disrespect for the party is shown not by the trade unionists but by the petty bourgeois oppositionists. It is precisely in order to prevent the trade unionists from turning their backs to the party in the future that it is necessary to decisively repulse these petty bourgeois oppositionists. (p. 183-184.)

Trotsky considered that the 'ideological break' from the petty bourgeois was 'the *elementary* conditions for our future successes' (our emphasis). Once this *elementary* condition was established in 1940, through Trotsky's leadership, the SWP abandoned the theoretical struggle in the working class itself. At one level, the attitude of the SWP to its worker members after 1940 was a repetition of the relationship in earlier years to the radical petty-bourgeois youth from the period of unity with the Socialist Party. That adaptation had produced the dangers of open and hysterical opposition to Marxism in 1939-1940. The adaptation to the workers was to reveal its dangers only over a longer period and, in the end, without the possibility of a repetition of Trotsky's intervention.

The SWP's attack on the fundamental role of theory in the building of the revolutionary party, the consequence of its essentially pragmatic misunderstanding of Trotsky's line of proletarianization, now coincides with the attack on Marxism from the OCI. Novack protests against the insistence on a struggle for dialectical materialism *against* the immediate consciousness of workers drawn towards the revolutionary party. The OCI launches into its attack on Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin's fight to establish the principle that theory is brought to the working class 'from the outside' in a struggle against spontaneity was dismissed by the OCI's Stephane Just as a 'metaphysical' discussion. The IC answered this point at length in its statement of March 1, 1972. (See *Fourth International*, Summer 1972 pp. 190-191.) But the OCI returns to the question, revealing still further its rejection of Lenin. F. O. Forgontier, writing in *La Vérité*, quotes some of Lenin's statements about the fight against spontaneity in *What Is To Be Done?* but then says:

Lenin was quick to show the one-sided and exaggerated character of this point of view which he had anyway borrowed from Kautsky, the theoretician of the Second International.

And later:

Finally, the Kautskian thesis, repeated by Lenin in 1902 [i.e. in *What Is To Be Done?*] according to which scientific theory is first of all elaborated by bourgeois intellectuals in an overall analysis of bourgeois society, of the classes in that society and their relationships, then introduced by them 'from the outside' into the workers' movement, is unquestionably, 'one-sided' and 'exaggerated' as Lenin was to say.

What is at issue here is the whole theoretical basis of Bolshevism, and it is precisely this basis which revisionism (the SWP and the OCI) now attacks in the Fourth International. The working class, faced by the world crisis with *revolutionary* tasks of the struggle for power, needs *above all* to be broken from reformist leadership. Revolutionaries are called upon to fight for the training of workers as revolutionary cadres who understand their struggles and their task from the standpoint of the whole Marxist world outlook. The most dangerous and deceptive *opposition* to this principle comes from those who, in one way or another, conceive of the development of revolutionary consciousness as a spontaneous product of the struggle into which workers are forced. They see this development as one which, facilitated by the objective class position of the proletariat driving it to a break with capitalism, does not need to be fought *against* by Marxists. The *conflict* between theory and practice is covered over by talk about the unity of theory and practice. But it is only in the conflict that the unity exists at all, and is constantly recreated in revolutionary practice.

Forgontier seeks to avoid this principled question by misusing Lenin's remarks following the revolutionary upsurge of 1905:

The working class is instinctively, spontaneously social-democratic, and the more than ten years of work put in by the social-democrats has done a great deal to transform this spontaneity into class consciousness.

This passage is quoted by Forgontier to give the impression that Lenin, influenced by the capacity of the Russian workers spontaneously to form soviets, moved towards 'spontaneity' and away from *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin goes out of his way to make clear that the 'transformation' of this spontaneity into class consciousness was precisely a matter of political intervention. However, *What Is To Be Done?* said nothing different. There, also, Lenin said 'The working

class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism . . .' This is because of the objective conditions of capitalism and the objectively revolutionary role of the working class thrown into struggle continuously against the enemy. Does this mean that in *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin was inconsistent? Not at all! He continues immediately:

...nonetheless, the most widespread (and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a still greater degree.

Hence our task, the task of Social-Democracy, is to combat spontaneity, to divert the working class movement from this spontaneous, trade unionist striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of the revolutionary social-democracy.

What Lenin did undertake in November 1905 was to change certain organizational forms of the party but without questioning in the slightest degree the essential organizational relationship between political leadership and the work and discipline of members. Forgoingtier's quotation is from an article entitled 'The Reorganization of the Party', and it advocates the creation of party organizations of workers electing their leaders instead of their being professionally appointed as in the illegality of 1902. This change is possible, Lenin emphasizes, only because *now, after* the work of the professional revolutionaries in the earlier period, the new workers would be centred round 'the steadfast, solid core' of those trained in the earlier years. Lenin summarized this in his article on Vera Zasulich in 1913:

...While retaining its fundamental character (Bolshevism) has known how to adapt its form to changing conditions, to change this form, in accordance with the demands of the movement.

All these points are made explicitly by Brian Pearce in his article 'Building the Bolshevik Party' (*Labour Review*, February-March 1960). This article is referred to by Forgoingtier but its whole essence is completely distorted by omitting these aspects.

Lenin, while preparing these changes in organizational form, never once moved away from his conception of the struggle for revolutionary theory against spontaneity. He carried on this struggle for theory at every level in the party and knew very well that it reached its peak on the eve of proletarian revolution itself. When he opposed the 'old Bolshevik' majority in March-April 1917, condemning their support for the Provisional Government, was not this struggle against the pressure, via the spontaneous movement of the masses, of the bourgeoisie?

In search for a respectable ancestry for the OCI's revisionism, Forgontier finally draws on Trotsky's remarks in his book *Stalin*:

In August 1905 Stalin takes over for his own purpose the chapter in *What Is To Be Done?* in which Lenin strives to determine the relation between the spontaneous workers' movement and socialist consciousness. According to Lenin, the workers' movement, left to itself, inevitably embarks on the path of opportunism, revolutionary consciousness is brought into it from outside by Marxist intellectuals. This is not the moment to begin a criticism of this conception which belongs to the biography of Lenin and not that of Stalin. The author of *What Is To Be Done?* recognized himself afterwards the one-sided and consequently erroneous nature of this theory, the sharpness of which he aimed at a particular moment against 'economism' which was too respectful towards the spontaneity of the workers' movement.

We have seen that Lenin later changed certain of the organizational forms he had proposed, because conditions changed, but he certainly did *not* change his fundamental ideas on the role of theory and its struggle against spontaneity. He replied, at the 1903 Congress, to those who took from his remarks the conclusion that theory developed in the heads of intellectuals separate from the workers' movement. He had emphasized the elaboration of scientific socialism by 'bourgeois intellectuals' very deliberately *against* the 'economists' who expected revolutionary consciousness to emerge spontaneously. What Lenin wanted to correct was any impression that theory could be developed except in intimate connection with the living movement.

What Just and Forgontier are doing is scraping around for every isolated remark which can be taken out of context and used to liquidate the struggle for Marxist theory, for independent revolutionary leadership, which is the *essence* of today's tasks. In doing this, the OCI is quite conscious that it is rushing in behind the revisionist leadership of the SWP in its rejection of the real theoretical heritage left to them by Trotsky. These SWP leaders have dived enthusiastically through the small loop-hole left for them by Trotsky in *In Defence of Marxism*. They know very well that he was necessarily laying all the stress against the obstacles to dialectical thinking among petty bourgeois intellectuals, who formed the core of an opposition threatening to destroy the SWP. Trotsky wrote then: 'What we term the class instinct of the worker, accepts with relative ease the dialectic approach to questions'. Taken out of context, as Novack and the SWP have deliberately done, this would result in an underplaying of the

necessity of struggle for dialectical materialism against the bourgeois ideology 'spontaneously' and continuously imposed upon it.

Trotsky represented the continuation of Lenin's struggle for Marxism and for the building of the proletarian party and the International. In 1917 he had to put behind him the serious mistakes he had previously made on the question of the revolutionary party and its nature. Lenin was unquestionably right in saying that 'from that day there has been no better Bolshevik'. After revolution and Civil War, Trotsky was thrust into the struggle of the Left Opposition. After his exile, and until he went to Mexico, he carried out the indispensable struggle for the Fourth International, primarily among small petty-bourgeois forces isolated from the masses. For the *first* time, the SWP gave him the opportunity of beginning to build a revolutionary party of workers. This process was in its *infancy* in 1940. Had Trotsky had the opportunity to continue it, undoubtedly he would have enriched the Fourth International with new theoretical developments. In his last days, the fight to turn the SWP towards the Communist Party workers unmistakably indicates that he would have taken up the cudgels against the SWP leadership on these very theoretical questions and corrected the mistakes in these two formulations on spontaneity and consciousness. The only people who will want to concentrate on these isolated quotations are those who want to eliminate the independent struggle for Marxist theory.

Programme and revolutionary theory

The OCI make this very clear, in a paragraph by Forgontier (faithfully echoing Just) which leads us back to the basic philosophical problems:

...neither Lenin nor Kautsky considered this introduction 'from the outside' of revolutionary theory into the workers' movement to be a permanent fixture in its history. For them it was an inevitable situation *at the beginning* of the formation of the organized workers' movement, which is not constantly renewed throughout the latter's history.

Forgontier knows very well that on this there is no argument. The fight for theory in our epoch takes place as the fight to build the revolutionary party. But that does not exhaust the matter. What the OCI does is to use this argument to *liquidate* the party's struggle for theory, thus:

The distinction between the conscious expression of the class interests of the proletariat expressed in trade unionism and the scientific theory of historical materialism loses all meaning in their (Lenin's and Kautsky's) eyes as in ours as soon as theory and the objective movement fuse together in the framework of the class party, the revolutionary organization of the proletariat.

Here we are at the very centre of the differences. Dialectics are thrown out of the window. The 'programme' of the party is the formulation of the interests of the proletariat. As in the theory of knowledge of the eighteenth century materialists, the conditions of life of the proletariat have produced the appropriate set of ideas (programme). What comes next — as with the eighteenth century materialists and their political followers, the Utopian socialists — is a mystery. How does the world change, since all ideas are the adequate expression of the environment? Well, since, according to another rationalist principle, 'opinions govern the world', if the prevailing opinions can be changed, if the programme can only be brought to the notice of enough people . . . There is no end to this argument. There is only a swinging about between propagandism and adaptation to spontaneity. The alternative posed by the IC is not, as the OCI likes to caricature it, a struggle for 'philosophy as such', a 'separate domain' of philosophy, but a daily fight to train cadres on the basis of Marxist theory and the study through intervention, of the living movement of the class struggle, against the bourgeois forms of thinking which distort and deaden this living struggle and, if not fought against, isolate revolutionaries from it.

With this rejection of dialectics, the OCI can only end up with the programme as a fixed truth which obstructs the struggle to grasp the development of reality. Forgontier's article gives us a very good example. He writes:

...contrary to what the SLL claims, what is expressed in the 'April Theses' is not the 'enriching of the understanding' that Lenin had 'of development of consciousness', but his understanding of the dialectic of the bourgeois revolution and the proletarian revolution, the motive force of the revolution in Russia. For Marxists the supreme expression of the fusion of theory and organization is the Marxist programme, the programme of the FI, which brings together the whole historical experience, both theoretical and practical, of the organization, of the struggle for the liberation of the working class.

With this behind him, Forgontier goes on to ridicule the IC's

statement that for the building of the SLL 'a persistent, difficult struggle was necessary against idealist forms of thought, which went further than questions of agreement on programme and policy'. Two different points are involved. First we must return to April 1917. The agreement between all Bolshevik leaders on programme was disrupted by the development of the Russian revolution. This programme — 'the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' — was transcended, contradicted, by the actual development, by the appearance of *dual power*. Only Lenin's struggle to express the new forces, against the old 'agreement' on programme, could place the Bolshevik party on the revolutionary road. To persist in the old programme meant to become the mouthpiece of the petty-bourgeois pressure on the proletariat. It was not possible for Lenin to turn the Bolshevik Party except in bitter struggle against the *impressionist* conclusion of the Bolshevik majority leadership that 'reality' was fulfilling the programme. If this is not a difference over *method*, no one will ever see one. The qualitative lesson of this experience — the lesson the OCI wants above all to obscure — is that *only the inner party struggle against empiricist adaptation, which disguised itself as defence of the programme*, could bring about clarity on the decisive question of revolutionary policy in 1917. The OCI wants to give us a simple picture of Lenin's clarity on programme making a few steps forward in line with obvious changes in the situation, i.e. the integration of new 'facts' into the existing theory and programme.

The point on the development of the SLL is closely related to this one, but the process takes a different form. The basic programme of Trotskyism is not in question, but within the Fourth International (at leadership level and in the national sections) formal agreement on this programme, particularly in conditions of relative stability in the class struggle, often concealed a situation where fundamental assumptions of the bourgeois idealist world outlook remained unchallenged. The formal presentation of texts on dialectical materialism would not disturb these assumptions. It was a question of struggling for a dialectical approach to the everyday questions of the building of the party. Once the IC itself came to the point, after the defection of the SWP, to a real discussion of the work of sections, then the fundamental questions of philosophy were posed. This is exactly what happened at the pre-Conference of the IC in 1970. At the point where the SLL suggested that, behind formal agreement on perspective and programme, philosophical differences must be probed, the OCI and its

supporters set out consciously on the road of a split. Every time they write on these questions, they make clearer their fundamental agreement with the Pabloite revisionists of the SWP.

Just as the OCI regards the fight for dialectical materialism against idealism as something which illegitimately disturbs the 'fusion' of party and class around the programme, so Novack and the Pabloites insist, against the IC:

From a sound premise they [the IC] draw the illegitimate conclusion that dialectical materialism is the central element in the political life of the revolutionary vanguard. This is not so.

Theory is united with practice in Marxist politics. The living link between them in the proletarian struggle for power is the revolutionary party. *The basis of the party is its principles and programme, not its philosophic method.* Although the programme of revolutionary socialism has been worked out and is refined with the aid of dialectical materialism, it does not coincide with it. (Novack in *Intercontinental Press* July 3, 1972.) (Our emphasis.)

Here again we have the OCI's idea that the 'programme' was the once and for all conclusion from the dialectical method. The latter may be used occasionally to 'refine' the programme, but it must *not* be the basis of the work of the members of the revolutionary party. This is precisely the difference which came up at Essen, and it is absolutely basic. The leadership of the revolutionary party has the irrevocable duty to fight to infuse every aspect of party work with the method of dialectical materialism. It will find in the course of all its work that the pressure of the bourgeoisie is transmitted *primarily* through the idealist forms of thinking of those who join the revolutionary party. That is an inevitable process, because the party is born, struggles and develops in bourgeois society itself. And we must repeat what emerged from the analysis of *In Defence of Marxism*: specialized attention must be paid to developments in bourgeois philosophy and not only to the workers' struggles. Only in this way can the party prepare to fight the latest forms of ideological domination. Lenin tirelessly studied the ideas of the new idealists, the neo-Kantians, in philosophy, even during the hardest practical struggle to establish the revolutionary party in Russia. When these ideas, in the form of 'empirio-criticism', were taken up by a section of the Bolsheviks themselves, Lenin made a specialized study and wrote against them a full-length work, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.

Lenin understood very well that the years of extreme hardship and isolation after the defeat of the 1905 Revolution exposed the

revolutionary movement to the greatest pressure from the class enemy. He knew that the most fundamental task of all was the defence and development of Marxist theory at the most basic level, that of philosophy. 1905 saw defeat, but it heralded, internationally and consequently in Russia, the whole epoch of wars and proletarian revolutions. Today we struggle within a very different stage of development of that same revolutionary epoch. The years of defeat in which the Fourth International had to be founded brought their own severe pressures and problems. The failure of the SWP leadership to grapple theoretically with these problems after Trotsky's assassination was one of the most important causes of the blows which Pabloite revisionism was able to strike in the early years of the post-war boom. On the basis of the struggle for Marxist method and against the liquidationism of Pablo, Mandel, Hansen and all those who did not break from them, it has now been possible to raise high the banner of Marxism in the construction of alternative revolutionary leadership, the building of the Fourth International. On the basis of the struggle for dialectical materialism, against all its revisionist enemies, we must undertake the education and training of the revolutionary youth and of all those workers thrown into great class battles by the crisis of capitalism. This training, this struggle against revisionism, is the preparation for the working class to come to power in the rapidly approaching revolutionary battles.

Appendix

The OCI after the split

The two documents appended here indicate the degeneration of the OCI subsequent to the split. By the beginning of 1975 their central campaign was the collection of signatures on an appeal for 'unity' within the electoral coalition of Stalinists and social democrats. It also transpired that the OCI had for some time been engaged in negotiations with the Pabloite 'United Secretariat' without any principled discussion of the 20-year split.

DOCUMENT 14a**Leading article from *Informations Ouvrieres*,
January 29, 1975**

Already there are tens of thousands of signatures on the letters to the leaders of the PCF and the Socialist Party calling for unity.

There are 3,500 from Clermont Ferrand, more than 600 of them from Michelin, 2,500 from Grenoble, the same again from Dijon and Auxerre, 1,500 from Lyon, thousands in the metal industry, in the big factories, in Paris and the provinces . . . thousands in the offices and schools . . . the campaign is in full swing. Throughout the coming days, tens of thousands more signatures should be added to the lists. This is both possible and necessary. It is indispensable.

The Giscard-Chirac government must go! An end to polemics which disorient the workers! Unity must be achieved to finish with this government, which is leading the country to catastrophe.

This is the simple message, clear and concise, which creates unanimity among thousands of militants and many millions of workers, over-riding the disagreements and differences which can legitimately exist on so many other problems.

This must come to an end! This government must be brought down. It is impossible to wait for another four to six years, when each day the cost of living goes up, workers are sacked and unemployment grows!

Because something must be done, because it is not possible to wait for the leaders to come to an agreement, because not a single obstacle should come in the way of realizing unity on such an indisputable basis; but also because each person understands that the difficulties are in our own ranks, in that which appears to be 'incomprehensible' in the behaviour of the leadership; because those 'on top' must be put down. 'Yes, I'll sign!' and often, 'I'll get others to sign'. This is the phrase which has been repeated thousands and thousands of times this week, often with this comment. . . 'Even if I am not in agreement with what the OCI is doing, I will sign, because something must be done, and you have begun to do something.'

These obstacles, which appear incomprehensible, what are they? In

L'Humanité of January 21, the president of the Communist Group in the National Assembly, Robert Ballanger, explains them himself quite clearly.

He congratulates himself on the adoption by parliament of the law regulating the hours of agricultural workers, which was put forward by the Communist deputy, Balmigère. (But has Giscard's leadership not meant that the average farming income of the small farmers has gone down by 14 per cent in 1974, and what real guarantee can the wage earners on the farms expect under these conditions?) Ballanger declares:

It has to be pointed out that since the beginning of the Fifth Republic, this is the first time that a proposal of the Communist group has been adopted *as such* (Ballanger's emphasis) . . . From this it must be seen that it is possible even under this regime to win substantial demands, by closely bringing together the mass action of the workers . . . with the struggle of their representatives in parliament. This is not a new discovery. It is a confirmation full of hope for the future of our struggles.

Everything is now clear: if it is possible even under this regime to win substantial wage demands by 'closely bringing together the mass action of the workers with the struggle of their representatives in parliament', under this regime, by maintaining Giscard and Chirac in power, then it is not clear why, in fact, there has to be a fight taken up to put end to the present government!

There is one problem: Ballanger himself does not believe a word of what he says. He knows, just like the postmen, just like the sailors of the 'France', the workers of the ORTF or the Livre, just like the farmers themselves, that there is nothing to be expected from this government but more unemployment, more rises in the cost of living, more poverty.

But Ballanger and the party leaders are not concerned with this. They have decided, as they told the postmen during their strike, 'that it is not a question of attacking the government'. That is the truth.

And it is precisely this truth which they do not accept, which millions of workers cannot accept.

And this is precisely why tens of thousands of signatures must be added on the appeal to the leaders of the SP and the PCF. Because this obstacle must be overcome! These signatures have an exact meaning: Ballanger, we do not accept a renunciation of our demands! We do not accept waiting until 1978, or 1981. We do not accept that Giscard-Chirac should stay in power!

DOCUMENT 14b**Leading article from *Informations Ouvrieres*,
February 5, 1975***We don't accept the split*

60,000 workers have signed the letter to the PCF and SP for unity to make the Giscard-Chirac government go; for a government of the SP and the PCF without bourgeois ministers, and for the workers united front.

Since the beginning of October, the division has only been strengthened. We have taken up our responsibilities and made people in their factories and work-places sign the address to the leaders of the PCF and the Socialist Party for unity.

It has been signed by 60,000 workers, spokesmen for millions of workers who, in the face of the growing division; are saying, 'We do not accept this division'.

Certain of expressing the aspirations of the whole of the working class and the youth, the National Committee has adopted the following decisions:

- to continue for two weeks the campaign for signatures.
- to call for, starting this week, those who signed to set up united committees to fight for the workers' united front, in their factories, offices, shipyards, to bring down the Giscard-Chirac government, for a government of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party without bourgeois ministers.
- to unite the representatives of these hundreds of united committees on Sunday March 16 in Paris.
- to propose at this meeting of March 16 in relation to the results of the battle to unite, a rally in Paris on April 20 of thousands and thousands of workers, militants and youth, who are organising throughout the country the fight for unity.

We were 60,000 on February 2.

We shall be 80,000 on February 16.

We shall be several hundred on March 16, delegates of the united committees in Paris.

We propose at this meeting of March 16, in relation to the results of the battle for unity, that thousands and thousands of workers, militants and youth must unite in Paris on April 20: it is then up to the leaders to take up their responsibilities!

We say: through our fight for unity we are giving proof that if the leaders take up their responsibilities and end the divisions, it is by hundreds and hundreds of thousands that the workers of this country can rally, and that unity would realize the aspirations of all of them:

- to bring down the Giscard-Chirac government.
- for a government of the socialist party and the Communist Party without bourgeois ministers.
- The satisfaction of their demands.

United Committees and Committees of the Workers' United Front

For all the members of the National United Committee which was constituted on December 15, for all the members who were involved in the campaign for signatures on the letter to the leaders of the PCF and the SP, the central task for them is to unite those who signed, and to organize them, by basing themselves on the work already carried out by hundreds of committees at the base, which on the basis of their factory, their workshop, their area, were to take charge of carrying on the battle to rally all those who think that they must realize the workers' united front to bring down this Giscard-Chirac government, for the government of the PCF and the SP without bourgeois ministers.

But what is the relation between the united committees at the base, which, let us repeat, must in the next few days, be formed in their hundreds on the basis of places of work, and the committees of the workers' united front realized at a particular level?

This important question was posed by the delegate from the faculty of sciences (Paris), while congratulating himself 'for the correct mass work through which the workers can clearly see the possibility of transforming the united committees into committees of the workers' united front bringing together the parties and the unions as such . . .'

There is confusion here, as Comrade Lambert established in his reply. We are fighting for the workers' united front, for an end to the Giscard-Chirac government. The workers' united front is first of all a struggle aiming at realizing the unanimous aspiration of the masses: that the traditional organizations, the PCF and the SP take up

demands, which for the workers, quite rightly, cannot be satisfied by the Giscard-Chirac government, nor by a government in which the workers' parties collaborate with the parties of monopoly capital.

The united committees will fight to make the workers' parties realize unity, so that on all levels, from the top to the bottom, the committees of the workers' united front are realized to bring down the Giscard-Chirac government.

To confuse the united committees with the committees of the workers' front is to confuse the different stages of the political struggle, in a situation characterized by the wish of the leaders of the PCF, to break down all search for unity.

Between the united committees and the committees of the workers' united front the relation is as follows:

There will be struggles. The working class cannot accept the fate which has been reserved for it today through the crisis of the decomposition of this bourgeois society. It is obliged to fight and to fight it uses the cadres which it has built up, the cadres which must be formed in the elected strike committees.

These cadres, which we are preparing through the formation of the united committees, in which the best of the militants, and the most conscious of the youth must work to weave the fabric which is absolutely indispensable, which in the struggles of the class, the great struggles now developing, will allow the working class to constitute the means by which it will take it upon itself to drive its struggle forward.

DOCUMENT 15

Statement by the Political Bureau of the SWP, January 2, 1975

On the OCI's proposal to discuss differences

On October 15, 1974, a meeting was held between representatives of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and representatives of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste. Observers of the Socialist Workers Party were present. The purpose of the meeting was to hear proposals made by the OCI to engage in a discussion of their differences with the United Secretariat.

The initiative in this move was taken by the leaders of the OCI. In May 1973 they wrote to the United Secretariat proposing that they be permitted to participate in the discussion then going on in the Fourth International. Because of the hostile way in which it was presented, the proposal appeared to be merely a factional manoeuvre and it was rejected.

The OCI leaders repeated their advance in a much more comradely way in October 1973. The United Secretariat decided to respond in kind, informing the OCI that while their proposal could not be accepted at the moment it could be reconsidered at a later time. Unfortunately, in the pressure of preparations for a world congress, the letter was not sent.

In September 1974 the OCI again took the initiative. This time, however, the OCI leaders did not go first to the United Secretariat but to the Socialist Workers Party. One of their representatives engaged in literary work in the United States became involved in private discussions with various members of the SWP. They pressed him on some of the issues that have kept the OCI separated from the Trotskyist movement as a whole.

Later the OCI representative asked for a meeting with the leadership of the SWP. This was granted, and two leaders of the SWP met with him. He said that the OCI was still interested in opening a

discussion with the United Secretariat, but if this proved to be impossible, the OCI would like to invite the SWP to hold such a discussion.

The SWP representatives said that it would be incorrect for the SWP to act unilaterally in such a matter. They did agree, however, to pass the OCI's request on to the United Secretariat.

The United Secretariat, after considering the question, decided to hear the proposals of the OCI and to explore the possibility of ameliorating relations. A first step in this direction could be the exchange of internal bulletins.

Practical arrangements were made and the meeting was held. The OCI representatives outlined their proposals and explained their motivation. Some preliminary statements were made concerning the differences. A possible framework for probing the differences and trying to ameliorate relations was discussed. No agreement was reached beyond such minimal steps as exchanging internal bulletins. The participants then reported back.

A copy of the internal report made by the OCI representatives to the top leadership of their organization happened to fall into the hands of one of the ultra-left sects in the United States, which immediately published it along with a provocative attack accusing the OCI of 'capitulation' to the United Secretariat.

Some of the things said in the internal report were interpreted by others as indicating bad faith on the part of the OCI leaders in their approach to the United Secretariat.

Certain formulations in the internal report lend themselves to misinterpretation, it appears to us. They could be taken as indicating a hope of making immediate gains by manoeuvring in the internal discussion that has been going on in the Fourth International for the past five years. However, one is led to an opposite conclusion if the internal report is considered as a whole and viewed in the more general context of the development of all the organizations claiming adherence to Trotskyism.

From this angle, the internal report tends to confirm the sincerity of the OCI leaders. As we see it, they are neither capitulating nor trying to carry out a raid. The OCI leaders, we think, have reached the conclusion that the Fourth International is discussing questions of prime importance to the revolutionary-socialist movement. In a debate of that depth they feel that their views as serious revolutionists ought to be taken into consideration.

While they hold firm positions, which they intend to defend vigor-

ously, they are prepared to modify them in the face of compelling arguments and draw the requisite practical conclusions. They expect that the organizations adhering to the United Secretariat, or in sympathy with its general aims, will display similar good faith.

The willingness of the OCI leaders to engage in the give-and-take of a free discussion is a favourable development, in our opinion. It promises to open the way to a fruitful dialogue.

Nevertheless, an obstacle still stands in the way. Some of the public characterizations used by the OCI in the past with regard to members of the United Secretariat, particularly leaders of the Front Communiste Revolutionnaire in France, were excessive, in our view. If they were to be echoed now, it would be hard to avoid concluding that the OCI is engaging in a short-term manoeuvre rather than moving toward a basic discussion with an open mind.

An example is to be found in *Informations Ouvrières* No. 679 (November 14-20, 1974). One of the leaders of the United Secretariat is called a 'sycophant' and is accused of having written 'perfidiously' eighteen years ago with regard to the proletarian uprising in Hungary. (The record of the comrade in question is absolutely clear on the decisive question — complete support of the incipient political revolution and opposition to Moscow's repressive intervention.)

We think that such characterizations are out of order. We consider them to be hangovers from past factional positions that demand re-examination if a serious discussion is to be undertaken. Particularly important is the question of accuracy and objectivity in considering the positions held by different individuals and tendencies at the time.

The issues in those factional battles and who turned out to be correct historically can be debated without the use of epithets. To let disparaging labels stand in the way of a comradely discussion of current differences (however much the current differences may be related in the final analysis to past positions) would be a political mistake, in our opinion.

It would be excellent if the OCI would again take the initiative and clarify this question in an unmistakable way.

We hope that the OCI will do its part to eliminate such obstacles and thereby help clear the way for a comradely discussion of current and past differences. Without such a discussion, it is hardly possible in this instance to reach a point where a principled basis can be found for closer fraternal relations and the kind of comradely collaboration that would give the Fourth International a new impulse forward.

Glossary of Names

BERG, Charles — National Secretary of the Alliance des Jeunes pour le Socialisme, youth organization set up by the OCI.

BLOCH, Gerard — One of the leaders of the PCI majority in 1953. Now in the leadership of the revisionist OCI.

CANNON, James P. — Founder of Trotskyist movement in the United States, expelled from the Communist Party in 1928. Leader of the SWP until he retired in 1960s. Supported Trotsky in the fight against the petty-bourgeois opposition of Schachtman and Burnham in 1939-40. Imprisoned during Second World War. Author of 'Theses on the American Revolution' in 1946 (see Introduction to Volume Two). Responsible for the 'Open Letter to the World Trotskyist Movement' of 1953, which denounced Pabloite revisionism and founded the International Committee. In the period 1961-63, together with Hansen, guided the SWP back into the revisionist camp.

DOBBS, Farrell — A leader of the Minneapolis Teamsters strike in 1934. Leading member of the SWP from the 1940s.

FOLEY, Gerry — Member of the SWP and regular contributor to its press.

FORGONTIER, F. O. — Pseudonym for a member of the Political Bureau of the OCI.

FRANK, Pierre — Collaborator of Molinier in pre-war French section of Fourth International. Leader of supporters of Pabloites in 1951 in French section. Today a leading spokesman of the 'United Secretariat'.

HANSEN, Joseph — One of leaders of SWP since late 1930s. Secretary and bodyguard to Trotsky in Mexico. Prominent in faction fight against Cochranites; after 1953 split took lead in opposing discussion of differences with Pabloites. Held principal responsibility for the international relations of SWP in the period covered by these volumes. In forefront of 'reunification' manoeuvres of 1961-63. Leads SWP since Cannon's retirement in 1960s. Author of *Too Many Babies*.

HEALY, Gerry — National Secretary of the Socialist Labour League (now Workers Revolutionary Party), and of the British section of the Fourth International before that. Member of the International Committee.

JUST, Stephane — Member of the Political Bureau of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, and one of its representatives on the International Committee until the split of 1971.

LAMBERT, Pierre — Leading member of the PCI (French section) majority in opposition to Pablo, expelled by him prior to 1953 split. Joined in formation of International Committee. Secretary of revisionist Organisation Communiste Internationaliste. Helped betray 1968 General Strike and split from International Committee in 1971. Defender and apologist for Social Democracy and Stalinism in France.

LORA, Guillermo — Secretary of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Bolivia). Well-known revisionist who betrayed 1952 and 1971 Bolivian revolutions. Close political associate of the French revisionists Lambert and Just.

MAITAN, Livio — Leading member of Pabloite revisionists since 1953. Secretary of their Italian section, and a major spokesman of pro-guerrilla faction in the 'United Secretariat'.

MANDEL, Ernest (Ernest Germain) — Member of European Secretariat of Fourth International and of Belgian section during Second World War. Betrayed majority of French section in 1951 to join Pablo. Major supporter of Pablo in 1953 split. Author of many revisionist works on 'neo-capitalism'. Betrayed Belgian General Strike in 1961. Secretary of 'United Secretariat' since 'reunification'. Heads the faction of 'United Secretariat' which is again at loggerheads with SWP today and includes IMG in Britain, Ligue Communiste in France, various guerrilla groupings in Latin America and a faction expelled from SWP in the summer of 1974.

MOSCOSCO (Gonzalez Moscoso, Hugo) — Leading Bolivian Pabloite, now in National Liberation Front supporting General Torres against existing military regime.

NAGY, Balazs — Secretary of the Hungarian Revolutionary Socialist League in exile, and its representative on the International Committee until the split in 1971. He and his organization subsequently broke with the OCI in 1972.

NAPURI, Ricardo — Leader of the Peruvian centrist group Vanguardia Revolucionaria in the 1960s.

NOVACK, George (pseudonym William F. Warde) — Leading member of SWP and prominent philosophical idealist. Sympathetic to Pablo at time of 1953 split, but stayed with Cannon.

PABLO, Michel (Gabriel Raptis) — Worked in International Secretariat of Fourth International during Second World War, becoming Secretary in post-war period. In the period of 1948-53 developed theory that mass pressure on Stalinist parties could transform them into revolutionary leaderships. His tendency broke from Trotskyism in 1953, calling itself the 'International Secretariat'. Shortly after 1963 'reunification' with SWP, was expelled from 'United Secretariat' with minority tendency standing openly for liquidation. Became a minister in the abortive bourgeois government of Ben Bella in Algeria.

POSADAS, Juan — Leader of Pabloite group in Argentina in 1950s. Expelled with his tendency from Pabloite movement in 1962. Notorious for advocacy of 'preventive nuclear war' by the Soviet Union.

ROBERTSON, J. — Expelled with Wohlforth from SWP. Formed revisionist Spartacist group. Expelled from International Committee at 1966 Conference.

SHACHTMAN, Max. — Founder member of American Trotskyist movement with Cannon and Abern. Led opposition to Trotsky in SWP over Russo-Finnish war and occupation of Poland. An advocate of 'bureaucratic collectivism'. Split with SWP in 1940 to set up Workers' Party, which he dissolved to enter Socialist Party of USA and to join the Congress for Cultural Freedom — a CIA-subsidized organization. Author of *Behind the Moscow Trials*. Died 1972.

WOHLFORTH, Tim — Led opposition tendency in SWP at time of unprincipled 'reunification' of 1961-63. Expelled from SWP for demanding discussion on Ceylon coalition, and formed Workers' League, in sympathy with International Committee. In 1974, resigned from the Workers' League, after having been removed as Secretary, and proceeded to attack the International Committee.

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In today's conditions of capitalist crisis, only the International Committee of the Fourth International stands on a record of fighting for revolutionary leadership in the working class. To carry forward this struggle now, when every revisionist tendency is striving to turn the working class back into the arms of the bureaucracy, an understanding of its history is essential.

Founded in 1938 in conditions of crushing defeat for the working class, persecuted by the ruling class and the Stalinists, the Fourth International has survived only by the most ruthless struggle against liquidationism in its own ranks. Revisionists like Pablo saw nothing but the strength of the bureaucracy in the relations between the classes after the Second World War, and refused to analyze the contradictions in the inflationary boom, which has now turned into its opposite. The Socialist Workers Party of the United States never carried through Trotsky's struggle against pragmatism within it, and split from the Pabloites in 1953 only to carry out a thoroughly unprincipled 'reunification' with them ten years later.

Volumes Five and Six of this series bring together the documents of the struggle against the opportunist Organisation Communiste Internationaliste of France, which openly repudiated dialectical materialism and split from Trotskyism in 1971. Their publication strengthens the basis laid in the previous volumes for drawing the lessons of the fight against revisionism since 1951, and training the cadre to build mass revolutionary parties as sections of the International Committee.