

**INTERNATIONAL TROTSKYIST  
REVIEW**

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for the Political Regeneration of the Fourth International**

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*Documents of the Founding Conference  
of the International Trotskyist Committee*

**Workers of All Countries Unite!**

**THE FOUNDING DOCUMENTS OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL TROTSKYIST COMMITTEE:**

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## **THE FOUNDING DOCUMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROTSKYIST COMMITTEE:**

### **AN INTRODUCTION**

#### **1. The Crisis of International Proletarian Leadership and the Regeneration of the Fourth International**

In the view of Trotskyists today—as in the view of the revolutionary generation of Lenin, Trotsky, and Luxemburg before us—humanity faces a stark choice between socialism or barbarism. Today's barbarism confronts us cruelly enough in the starvation of hundreds of thousands in the Sahel while imperialism relentlessly presses unprecedented masses of the wealth of humanity into the morbid absurdity of a global arms race. But our future is threatened with the ever-growing possibility of a degree of barbarism hardly imaginable to our revolutionary forebears. For we face the very real danger that world capitalism in its death agony will convulse the globe with a nuclear holocaust and shroud it with a nuclear winter, achieving in a single, fatal moment of human history, the irretrievable extinction of human civilization—if not of the human species itself.

For Trotskyists, the decisive key to achieving the historically evolved alternative possibility of world socialism is the resolution of the crisis of international proletarian leadership. Now, as for Trotsky at the founding of the Fourth International in 1938—

The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat...

... Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. The turn is now, to the proletariat, that is, chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership. ("The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International" [The Transitional Program], 1938)

Over the course of the four and a half decades since the founding of the Fourth International, the crisis of the Fourth International has itself become central to the crisis of international proletarian leadership. Opportunist and/or sectarian trends dominate most of the organizations which trace their political origins to the revolutionary theory and practice summed up in the Transitional Program of 1938. The fight for the political regeneration of the Fourth International now lies at the center of the struggle to resolve the crisis of international proletarian leadership.

#### **2. The Founding of the International Trotskyist Committee**

Drawn together by a shared history of commitment to the struggle for the political regeneration of the Fourth International, delegations from Europe, North America, and

the Middle East met in Britain on 22-28 July 1984 to consider the possibility of taking a small but important step toward resolving the crisis of proletarian leadership. In the end, this international conference brought to culmination an already prolonged process of political struggle and discussion, founding the International Trotskyist Committee (ITC).

The founding documents published in this first issue of the *International Trotskyist Review*, are the public founding documents of the ITC and sum up the most essential political conclusions on the basis of which the forces represented at the July conference decided to found a democratic- centralist international tendency.

Historically derived mainly from the forces of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee (TILC), founded at the initiative of the Workers Socialist League of Britain in December 1979, the ITC could only come into being after its component forces had reached agreement on a critical analysis of the history—including the eventual crisis and split-of TILC. While the ITC's balance sheet of TILC is major omission from these founding documents, in fact the July Conference voted to found the ITC only after a lengthy report and discussion ended in a unanimous vote on the line to be taken in a document drawing up a balance sheet of TILC.

Such a balance sheet will appear shortly in a subsequent issue of this *Review*, which will also describe and document the struggle of the current forces of the ITC within TILC against both opportunist and sectarian distortions and revisions of TILC's original, essentially principled perspective for the regeneration of the Fourth International.

The four documents published here, however, express in themselves the political fundamentals of the ITC's relationship to TILC. The first two documents are careful, extensive revisions of documents originally drafted by what was to become TILC's Italian section. What is now the ITC's "Programmatic Principles" was, in its shorter 1979 version, amended and adopted by TILC as one of TILC's three founding programmatic statements. The considerably shorter 1979 version of "The Crisis of the Fourth International and the Tasks of Consistent Trotskyists" was submitted by Italian and French comrades as a discussion document at TILC's founding conference. (The texts of these 1979 documents are available from the ITC.) As amended and adopted by the ITC's founding conference, these two documents embody both a deliberate assertion of political continuity with TILC and a series of major political developments based on a critical assessment of the contradictions which led to the crisis and eventual split of TILC.

The two resolutions, on international work among women and international work among lesbians and gay men, were originally submitted for discussion within TILC by the Revolutionary Workers League/US, respectively in July 1982 and April 1983. They partially express the critical importance of the special-oppression issues in the crisis of TILC and in the struggle within TILC by the forces now with the ITC.

Taken together, these four documents provide fundamental political indications of the character of the theoretical and practical struggle the International Trotskyist

Committee has resolved to wage for the regeneration of the Fourth International on a consistently proletarian and consistently revolutionary basis.

### **3. "The Programmatic Principles of the International Trotskyist Committee"**

In effect, "The Programmatic Principles of the International Trotskyist Committee" is the platform of the ITC as an international tendency fighting within the movement of consistent Trotskyists and "Trotskyist-centrists" for the political regeneration of the Fourth International on the basis of orthodox Trotskyism. It defines what the ITC means by "orthodox Trotskyism."

The "Programmatic Principles" is not an exhaustive restatement of the programmatic heritage of revolutionary Marxism. Rather, the document takes the Transitional Program of 1938 and the revolutionary-Marxist heritage summed up in it as its starting-point—declaring that *"it is only on this basis that a revolutionary politics can be built today"*—and focuses its own attention on "the task of developing and updating the Transitional Program *itself* in the light of the events since World War II and the contemporary situation" (section 8).

More particularly, the "Programmatic Principles" focuses on the key questions which have divided Trotskyists in the postwar period. It defines in positive terms what orthodox Trotskyism is today over against the conceptions underlying the principal revisionist deviations—in particular in the Pabloite tradition—which have characterized the process of political degeneration and crisis through which the Fourth International has gone.

### **4. "The Crisis of the Fourth International and the Tasks of Consistent Trotskyists"**

"The Crisis of the Fourth International and the Tasks of Consistent Trotskyists" takes up the central political question of our time in fourteen precisely worded theses. The document begins with an extremely concise summary of the history of the Fourth International from its founding in 1938 to the present. After summing up the processes of disorientation and degeneration following World War II, which culminated in Pabloism and the split of the Fourth International in 1953, the document examines objectively the processes of degeneration which took place in both the Pabloite and anti-Pabloite sides after the split, from 1953 through the 1970s.

Thesis 12 presents specific summary characterizations of the main trends existing today at the end of these historic processes of political degeneration and organizational fragmentation. However sharp these characterizations may seem to some, they do not express a sectarian attitude.

In the first place, the ITC realizes that no such set of characterizations can be final. The situation of some of the trends discussed is so volatile that any such document is

bound to be to some degree out of date by the time it is published. And in some cases the ITC has had to make assessments based on rather limited information and discussion. On balance, even in such instances, the ITC preferred to take the risk of having to revise information or modify some of the judgements in this document rather than maintain any sort of diplomatic silence or a pretense of having no definite views at all.

Moreover, the ITC's analysis recognizes that the process of degeneration through which the forces of the Fourth International have gone has led, overall, not to the consolidation of a set of consistently opportunist, counterrevolutionary organizations, but rather to the development of a set of centrist organizations.

And, more importantly, a substantial number of these organizations preserve sufficient, living links with the revolutionary program of Trotskyism—the only explicit, conscious expression of revolutionary proletarian politics in our time—so that they must be viewed in a significantly different light than conventional centrist organizations, in which the Trotskyist program plays no role—or no meaningful role—at all.

Theses 13 and 14 elaborate the ITC's view of the tasks of orthodox, consistent Trotskyists under such conditions. The ITC argues that orthodox Trotskyists must function as an organized, international tendency within the whole set of consistently Trotskyist and "Trotskyist-centrist" groupings, fighting intransigently for the political regeneration of the Fourth International on a fully orthodox-Trotskyist basis—combining this struggle with a fight for exemplary revolutionary work in the struggles of the workers and oppressed, based on the method, strategy, and general tactics of the Transitional Program.

##### **5. "Resolution on International Work among Women" and "Resolution on International Work among Lesbians and Gay Men"**

The two obviously parallel resolutions on international work among women and international work among lesbians and gay men present a focus of especial importance to the ITC in defining what orthodox Trotskyism means. Trotsky himself repeatedly emphasized the differentiation and divisions within the working class and the importance of a correct orientation by revolutionaries to those sectors of the working class least affected by the illusions of social mobility, bourgeois democracy, and eternal progress under capitalism. Such illusions strongly affect the most privileged sectors of the working class (the "labor aristocracy"), are actively promoted by the bureaucratic and parliamentary apparatuses which have grown up on the back of the workers' movement, and are constantly kept alive through the myriad processes of interaction and exchange of positions between the working class and the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie.

The opportunist and sectarian trends in the process of the degeneration of the Fourth International have inevitably been associated with tendencies to orient, in practice, towards relatively privileged sectors of the working class and/or the petty-bourgeois sectors and leaderships of the movements of the specially oppressed groups.

Sectarian tendencies have been particularly prone either to ignore the special-oppression issues altogether or to attempt to deny the need for any genuine focus on the special-oppression issues by reducing them to mere special varieties of capitalist exploitation. In either case, in practice, the special-oppression issues are treated primarily as if they were "divisive" of a supposedly otherwise united working class.

The typical opportunist stance has been to accept the specially oppressed as targets of intervention but to treat their special concerns and struggles as fundamentally not proletarian and not of central concern to revolutionary strategy. Opportunism characteristically views the special-oppression issues as essentially petty-bourgeois and narrowly democratic in character.

Over against such opportunist and sectarian attitudes—both of which played highly destructive roles in the crisis of TILC—the ITC's two resolutions counterpose *what is actually the original historic orientation of Trotskyism*, as summed up in the passage quoted from the Transitional Program in the "Resolution on International Work among Women."

At the same time as the ITC, in adopting these resolutions as two of its four public founding documents, declares that a special orientation to the specially oppressed *is an essential aspect of its fight for orthodox Trotskyism*, it also recognizes that Trotskyism—has yet to go substantially beyond initial analyses or general statements of orientation has yet to achieve a fully adequate, concrete Marxist understanding of either the special oppression of women or the special oppression of lesbians and gay men. It follows that neither of these resolutions expresses a fully elaborated analysis or fully developed practical perspectives. Rather, the resolutions sum up the most essential aspects of a Marxist and revolutionary-proletarian approach to the questions of women's and lesbian/gay oppression and commit the ITC to work to develop the analysis and perspectives required—*and long overdue*.

Both resolutions therefore open discussions which the ITC will be carrying out over the next period. In line with the aims stated in the resolutions, each ITC section will be developing documents on the woman question and the lesbian/gay questions on the basis of its own experience, including analysis of the feminist and lesbian/gay movements in its own country. As part of the process of developing complete analyses of these questions, the ITC will also be examining other documents, in particular the resolution adopted by the 1979 world congress of the USFI, "Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation," and the material produced in March 1983 by a number of leading women comrades of the Workers Socialist League of Britain in support of their struggle within the WSL for a clear working-class orientation for work among women.

As a first step in consolidating the analyses needed, the ITC will develop a programmatic document on the woman question for the next ITC international conference, recognizing that such a document cannot be a definitive analysis, starting as

the discussion does from a situation in which Trotskyists have long delayed adequate analysis: in reality, there has been very little development of Marxist theoretical work on the woman question or the question of the nuclear family since Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. In part because of this, revolutionary organizations have made many mistakes, including a general failure to understand the role of the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

In publicly expressing its commitment to the systematic development of theoretical and practical work on the woman question and the lesbian/gay questions, the ITC expresses as well its more general commitment to all the struggles of the specially oppressed, which have assumed greater and greater importance over the course of the period since World War II. This commitment, in turn, underlines the practical relationship between the ITC's struggle for the regeneration of the Fourth International and its orientation to the politically advanced workers, who can to a great extent be defined by their willingness to fight against *all* forms of oppression and their opposition to all forms of bigotry—and many of whose most militant fighters necessarily come from specially oppressed backgrounds.

Finally, in its attitude toward the special-oppression issues as in its approach to the question of the Fourth International, the ITC's firm drawing of the class line and its activist, flexible, and dialectical method represent a clear break with the sterile opportunism and sectarianism which have characterized the crisis of the Fourth International.

Committee

Resident Secretariat  
International Trotskyist

23 December 1984



## **THE PROGRAMMATIC PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNATIONAL TROTSKYIST COMMITTEE**

Adopted by the Founding Conference of the  
International Trotskyist Committee  
24 July 1984

### **1. The World Socialist Revolution**

The aim of the revolutionary action of Trotskyism is the destruction of capitalist society and the development of socialist society. Only the destruction of capitalism on a world scale will make possible a sufficiently powerful development of the forces of production to permit the liberation of humanity from exploitation, poverty, sexual and social oppression, and inequality; from the deterioration and destruction of natural resources; and from war and violence—the products of a society divided into classes.

The abolition of capitalism, the socialization of the means of production and exchange, and the process of constructing socialism presuppose the destruction of the bourgeois state. This is only possible through the armed insurrection of the proletariat—the only consistently revolutionary class in capitalist society—drawing behind it the masses of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie oppressed under capitalism. Only such an insurrection can enable the proletariat to seize political power and to put an end to the inevitable violent resistance by the ruling class and the forces allied to it against the socialist transformation of society.

Trotskyists reject as illusory the expectation of reaching socialism by a peaceful, gradual road as the result of a progressive development of democracy by the action of the proletariat within the framework of the bourgeois state. In the enormous majority of cases such positions mask the wish not to challenge capitalist relations of production and property. Even where they express a genuine anticapitalist impulse, they retain a utopian character and can only lead to the defeat of the proletariat in the face of the violence of the bourgeois state, which history has always shown—even recently—will be manifested in the most brutal forms when the bourgeoisie feels its domination of society to be challenged.

At the same time, consistent-Trotskyism rejects any revolutionary strategy centered on rural or urban guerrilla war. In fact, such a strategy leads to substituting for the proletariat another class (the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie, or the declassed youth) as the driving force of the revolution and so demonstrates its nonsocialist nature. In the same way, Trotskyism rejects the action of terrorist-guerrilla groups which claim to speak in the name of the proletariat. In reality, even when a majority of their members are workers, such groups represent layers cut off from the working class, and their adventurism is a disruptive element among the ranks of the proletariat.

Trotskyism reaffirms the Marxist and Leninist conception according to which the victory of the proletarian revolution can only be achieved if it is actively supported by the political majority of the proletariat in the context of a revolutionary crisis.

## **2. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

The proletariat will replace the destroyed bourgeois state apparatus with its own state—the dictatorship of the proletariat—based on the organs of soviet democracy: the workers' councils in factories, farms, and neighborhoods, centralized through higher levels of the workers' state. One of the central tasks of the proletarian state will be the struggle against the danger of bureaucratization. The dictatorship of the proletariat will provide for the election and recall of all state officials, whose functions must in no case yield them any special privileges.

Consistent Trotskyists favor the fullest democracy within the workers' state. But they reject any advance guarantees or civil rights fetishism and any attempt to shackle the proletarian dictatorship to a formal, legalistic schema. The concrete methods of operation of proletarian democracy will be determined by the concrete situation of the workers' state.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a transitional stage which, together with the progressive development of the forces of production, will lead to the extinction of social classes and to socialism. This objective can only be achieved through the international extension of the proletarian revolution and the creation of a world federation of workers' councils. Once socialism has been achieved, the coercive functions of the proletarian dictatorship will diminish, leading to the withering away of the state.

## **3. The World Party of Socialist Revolution**

The attainment of these objectives requires the existence of an international organization which represents the historical interests of the proletariat (as the only consistently revolutionary class), based on the theoretical and strategic foundations of scientific socialism, leading the revolutionary process of destroying the bourgeois state and building the world republic of workers' councils. Such an organization, then, can be nothing other than an International, firmly based on the principles of Marxism and Leninism for our time, that is to say, Trotskyism.

National sections of such an International must be created in every country, without exception. The task of the Trotskyist parties is to struggle to raise the proletariat above its spontaneous consciousness—trade unionist in nature—to socialist consciousness, the transformation of the “class in itself” into the “class for itself,” to combat the bourgeois organizations and the agents of the bourgeoisie within the workers' movement, which today constitute the main leaderships of the workers' movement, as well as all forms of opportunism and adventurism within the mass movement. In these

conditions, the maintenance of the political independence of the Trotskyist parties is a basic necessity.

#### **4. The Struggle to Resolve the Crisis of Proletarian Leadership**

The Stalinist and social-democratic parties, which in most capitalist states, particularly the imperialist states, represent the principal leaderships of the mass movement, constitute agents of the bourgeoisie within the workers' movement (bourgeois workers' parties). The link of these parties with the bourgeoisie and its state is a direct link in the case of the social-democratic parties and an historically indirect link in the case of the Stalinist parties—that is, a link determined and mediated by the politics of the ruling bureaucratic caste of the USSR or the other degenerated or deformed workers' states. Over the last decade, however, some Stalinist parties—mainly the so-called "Eurocommunist" parties—have developed links with their own bourgeoisies to the point that these links have actually become predominant over their links with any of the bureaucracies of the degenerated and deformed workers' states. The policies of the social-democratic and Stalinist parties are dedicated to defending the bourgeois state and capitalist property relations. In the oppressed countries, the petty-bourgeois nationalist organizations play a similar role.

Vacillating between reformism and Trotskyism, centrist organizations—among which the most radical petty-bourgeois nationalist forces and the anarchist-type organizations can be included—have not in general developed overt and consistent counterrevolutionary activity. But they constitute, with their opportunist policies, a supplementary obstacle to the proletarian revolution.

Consistent Trotskyists aim at breaking the hold of and politically destroying reformist, Stalinist, centrist, and nationalist organizations in the process of regrouping the political majority of the proletariat and the broadest possible sectors of other classes oppressed by capitalism, around the Trotskyist program. In the same way, consistent Trotskyists struggle to break the masses away from the influence of the reformist and centrist oppositions in the degenerated and deformed workers' states.

Orthodox Trotskyism rejects as revisionist those positions which envisage the transformation of opportunist organizations into "revolutionary leaderships" under the pressure of the mass movement. Similarly, it rejects the conception of the regeneration of the reformist and/or centrist organizations through a process of internal evolution.

Consistent Trotskyism struggles for revolutionary regroupment, that is, for the unification on the programmatic bases of Bolshevism of the forces of the vanguard of the proletariat. For this purpose Trotskyists may adopt—where conditions call for it—the tactic of entrist in reformist, centrist, or petty-bourgeois nationalist organizations, with the aim of provoking the break of the subjectively revolutionary members of such organizations from their respective leaderships and achieving their regroupment on Bolshevik bases.

Orthodox Trotskyism rejects as revisionist the policy of “revolutionary unity,” that is, the position according to which the revolutionary party of the proletariat can be created through fusion on vague bases and as a result of some sort of compromise between Trotskyism and forces of a centrist type. Similarly, Trotskyism rejects deep or “*sui generis*” entrism, that is, the policy which seeks to reduce the role of Trotskyists to that of pressure groups within the opportunist parties, on the basis of revisionist illusions about the possible evolution of such parties in whole or in part.

## 5. The Capitalist States

The fundamental dynamics among the capitalist states arise from the interaction of the international proletarian class struggle with both interimperialist rivalries and the contradiction between the imperialist and the oppressed nations. These dynamics express the fundamental contradiction of capitalism, the antagonism between its increasingly socialized, interdependent forces of production and its private relations of production, as ever-intensified throughout the epoch of imperialism by the contradiction between the international character of capitalist production and the acutely disruptive restraints of national boundaries.

At the same time, the existence of the collectivized economies of the degenerated and deformed workers' states—and, in particular, the Soviet Union—intensifies these basic contradictions and in certain respects limits the ability of each imperialist nation to resolve its own contradictions at the expense of its rivals, whom it must also maintain as allies against the threat of both the collectivized economies and the colonial and semicolonial world's anti-imperialist aspirations.

Under these conditions, the class-collaborationist treachery of the Stalinist bureaucracies has repeatedly been decisive in providing the imperialists with the possibility of avoiding or surviving major defeats and setbacks. Within the colonial and semicolonial world, the treachery of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships has played a similar role. As their contradictions have intensified, the imperialist nations have been forced to rely increasingly on the small number of colonial-settler states (South Africa, the Zionist state of Israel) and populations (the “Falkland Islanders”) implanted in the midst of semicolonial territories and either imperialist themselves or profoundly dependent on imperialist countries for their survival as privileged enclaves surrounded by oppressed nations and peoples, to assist their efforts to maintain economic dominion over the semicolonial world.

In the present historical epoch, Marxism recognizes decisive distinctions among capitalist nations—above all, between oppressor and oppressed nations. The various capitalist states fall into certain basic categories, based on qualitative differences among them in the level of development of the productive forces and on the specific relationship of each national economy to the entire imperialist system—that is, to the world capitalist

economy as a whole. By these criteria, we must recognize three types of capitalist nation-states, based on three essentially different levels of economic development:

1. imperialist states;
2. colonial and semicolonial nations or, in general, those oppressed by imperialism;
3. states with an intermediate level of capitalist development.

The imperialist states (the principal ones being the USA, West Germany, Japan, France, Britain, Italy, Canada), dominated by finance capital with a supranational character (export of capital) and the monopolies, represent the overlords of the world, which they exploit and plunder on the basis of the international division of labor: they thus play the role of oppressor states. In these countries the productive forces have reached a high level of development, and the proletariat is more concentrated and constitutes the majority of the working population. In the end, the fate of the socialist revolution is determined by the victory of the proletarian revolution in these imperialist centers.

The colonial and semicolonial states, or, in general, those oppressed by imperialism, comprise a wide range of social situations. The majority of the states of Asia and all the states of Africa (excepting South Africa) and Latin America (excepting Cuba) are in this category, as states in which the degree of development of the productive forces is low. They are in general subjected to imperialist exploitation and pillage. Nearly always the working class constitutes a definite minority of the population.

In the oppressed countries, democratic tasks (real national independence, agrarian reform, political democracy, etc.) have a central importance. Trotskyism responds to this situation on the basis of the perspective of permanent revolution. That is, it takes on the task of regrouping, under the leadership of the proletariat and its vanguard party, the peasant and, in general, petty- bourgeois masses. It aims at the achievement of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which, realizing democratic tasks, passes without break on to socialist tasks, doing away with the private ownership of the means of production—with regard not only to imperialism but also to the national bourgeoisie—and replacing it with a planned economy. Trotskyism, therefore, rejects any conception which sees in the theory of permanent revolution only a description of an objective process: for Trotskyism, permanent revolution is a strategy of action and cannot be realized by any other means.

While the overwhelming majority of capitalist states are either imperialist or dominated and oppressed by imperialism—colonial or semicolonial—a very few capitalist states exist which have an intermediate level of development (for example, Portugal or Finland). These states have not achieved that level of social development which gives rise to large monopolies and finance capital on a supranational scale—or, if they have seen the beginning of such development, are in decline in the present situation.

Yet neither can they be regarded as colonial or semicolonial countries. Generally speaking, these countries are links in the imperialist chain.

In these states the proletariat does not, in general, form the majority of the working population, being in a minority compared to the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie. From this there follows the importance of a policy of alliance between the proletariat and the poor peasants and the poorest section of the urban petty bourgeoisie.

Recognition of the existence of this handful of nations which are neither imperialist nor colonial must not be confused with the revisionist theories of “subimperialism,” which seek to equate the more developed of the semicolonies (such as Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, or Iran) with imperialist nations or, at any rate, with the less developed or particularly crisis-ridden imperialist nations, in effect denying or at least blurring the fundamental division of the capitalist world into imperialist and oppressed countries.

## **6. The Degenerated and Deformed Workers' States**

The degenerated workers' states (USSR, Mongolia) and the deformed workers' states (in the approximate historical order of the overthrow of capitalist property relations: Yugoslavia, Albania; Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, East Germany, North Korea; China; Vietnam; Cuba; Laos, Kampuchea) are characterized by the contradiction between the socialized (proletarian) nature of the relations of production—and therefore of ownership—and the fact that the proletariat has been robbed of political power by a bureaucratic caste which has a petty-bourgeois character. This caste exercises an oppressive dictatorship over the masses and makes use of its dominance to maintain and reinforce the material privileges which it enjoys by virtue of the bourgeois nature of the relations of distribution. The ruling bureaucracy constitutes a fundamental obstacle to further socialist development, and its defense of its material privileges and political power makes it an element of fundamental instability, a block to the development of the workers' state, and a vehicle for bringing the pressure exerted by world capitalism into the workers' state itself. Thus, the task of the proletariat is to overthrow, by means of political revolution, the ruling Stalinist bureaucratic caste, whose power tends in the end to place in danger the very social bases of the state.

Trotskyism, therefore, rejects the theory according to which there exists between the workers' state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) and the degenerated workers' state a difference which is only quantitative and not clearly qualitative. Consequently, Trotskyism also rejects the conception of the parasitic bureaucracy as a part of the workers' movement. Further, it rejects as revisionist and liquidationist theories of the possibility of the regeneration of some or all of the degenerated and/or deformed workers' states by an internal process of reform or under the pressure of mass mobilization. All the more, it rejects the revisionist positions which regard one or more states dominated by a Stalinist bureaucracy (in particular, Cuba) as *non*-deformed workers' states.

## 7. Wars between States or Nations

In the face of conflicts between states, Trotskyist positions are determined as follows:

1. Trotskyism adopts a position of revolutionary defeatism in conflicts between imperialist states, which are caused by the struggle for markets and for economic domination of the world.
2. Trotskyism unconditionally defends the oppressed, colonial and semicolonial states or nations over against the imperialist powers and the "intermediate" capitalist states. The unconditional defense of these states in no case signifies political support for the feudal-bourgeois, bourgeois, or petty-bourgeois regimes of the oppressed states. We also defend nations oppressed by other semicolonial or oppressed states (for example, Eritrea by Ethiopia, Kurdistan by Iran and Iraq—as well as by Turkey).
3. Trotskyism unconditionally defends the degenerated and deformed workers' states in conflicts between them and capitalist states. Such a position does not in any instance signify political support for the parasitic bureaucracy ruling a degenerated or deformed workers' state involved in such a conflict.

In all cases, Trotskyists seek to exploit the situation created by war in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie and the parasitic bureaucracy and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

## 8. The Transitional Program

The Transitional Program, adopted as the central document of the Founding Congress of the Fourth International in 1938, constitutes Trotskyism's fundamental program of action. Trotskyists defend the method, the strategic lines, and the general tactics of the Transitional Program. *It is only on this basis that a revolutionary politics can be built today.* Trotskyists reject the revisionist conceptions according to which the Transitional Program is an outdated and superseded historical document or a document whose method alone can be maintained. Such conceptions merely represent a disguised abandonment of the very essence of the Transitional Program as the program of action of Bolshevism. Orthodox Trotskyists take on the task of developing and updating the Transitional Program itself in the light of the events since World War II and the contemporary situation.

## 9. The Struggle for the Workers' Government

The struggle for the workers' government (the government of workers and farmers) is a central part of revolutionary strategy. In the general strategic perspective, the term "workers' government" is a popular expression for the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this sense, the workers' government is only realizable as a government of the Trotskyist party or a government which is led by the Trotskyist party. To the extent that the proletarian and peasant masses are not led by the Trotskyist party but are instead led by bourgeois workers' parties or petty-bourgeois nationalist parties, Trotskyists must counterpose to class-collaboration the need for the unity of the whole workers' movement and the masses on the basis of an anticapitalist program—that is, Trotskyists must advance the perspective of a workers' (or workers' and farmers') government. As the Transitional Program declares:

Of all the parties and organizations which base themselves on the workers and peasants and speak in their name, we demand that they break politically from the bourgeoisie and enter upon the road of struggle for the workers' and farmers' government. On this road we promise them full support against capitalist reaction. At the same time, we indefatigably develop agitation around those transitional demands which should in our opinion form the program of the "workers' and farmers' government."

The essential purpose of this tactic is to counterpose the anticapitalist aspirations of the proletarian and mass base to the counterrevolutionary policies of their petty-bourgeois leaders, in order to facilitate the revolutionary regroupment of the vanguard and to develop the consciousness of the masses and the evolution in a revolutionary direction of the class struggle.

Trotskyists reject the revisionist conception according to which the creation of a "workers' and farmers' government" by the opportunist organizations is an inevitable stage in the development of the struggle for the socialist revolution. Trotskyists put forward the slogan of struggle for a workers' and farmers' government *based on an anticapitalist program*. We deny, on principle, any political support to any government—whether it be a government of bourgeois workers' parties or a petty-bourgeois nationalist government—which is based on a program of defending private property and the capitalist state, such a government being nothing but amasked form of collaboration with the bourgeoisie. Moreover, even in the exceptional case (but not impossible, as the postwar experience shows) where the petty-bourgeois parties break effectively with the bourgeoisie and form a "workers' and farmers' government," Trotskyists "promise them full support against capitalist reaction" (the above quote from the Transitional Program) but not unconditional political support. The attitude of Trotskyists will always be determined by the central aim of their activity: the creation of a workers' government over which the Trotskyist party has hegemony—the sole guarantee of the revolutionary continuity of the workers' government.

To this end, we fight on the basis of our program of demands against both capitalist and bureaucratic Stalinist governments for the construction of organs of workers' control of production, workers' self-defense, and workers' power—factory committees, occupation committees, workers' militias, and soviets. Only on the basis of such organs of dual power can the working class—led by a revolutionary party—develop



the necessary independent strength to carry through the overthrow of capitalist rule and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

## **10. The United Front**

### **a. The Proletarian United Front**

The tactic of the struggle for the “workers' government” is a central aspect of the larger policy of the united front. In general, Trotskyists fight for the unity of the proletariat and the oppressed masses on the basis of anticapitalist demands. In this context they propose tactical agreements—even long-term ones—to the opportunist organizations of the workers' movement. We recognize that only in the fight to win sufficient forces to our program can we hope to force the established leaders of the workers' movement into an alliance with us. And we recognize that the fight to build and maintain united fronts is normally a prolonged and difficult fight. The aims of this policy are the same as those indicated for the workers' government tactic: to counterpose the anticapitalist aspirations of the proletarian base to the politics of the leaderships; to facilitate revolutionary regroupment; to develop the consciousness of the masses; and, moreover, to the extent to which the united front is effectively realized, to win partial successes, both defensive and offensive, against the bourgeoisie.

On all occasions where the proletarian united front is actually realized, the aim of the Trotskyist party is to assert its own political hegemony over the united front. Consistent Trotskyism rejects the revisionist positions which transform the united front into a *strategy* for anticapitalist action, for building the party, or for the proletarian seizure of power, and so renounce the role of the vanguard party. Trotskyists also reject the conception of the establishment of the united front as a positive achievement in itself, without regard to the objectives it is based upon. They also reject united-front agreements which seek to end political struggle between the parties involved.

### **b. The Anti-Imperialist United Front**

In most oppressed countries, where the working class represents a small minority of the population and democratic demands play a pivotal role, Trotskyists may establish tactical agreements for an anti-imperialist united front with petty-bourgeois nationalist parties or organizations. Within such anti-imperialist united fronts, Trotskyists fight generally for the maximum of unity with and the leadership of proletarian forces and, in particular, for the revolutionary leadership of the Trotskyist party.

Orthodox Trotskyism rejects the revisionist position which (starting from the nature of the countries oppressed by imperialism and the centrality of the struggle against imperialism) maintains the possibility of establishing anti-imperialist-united-front agreements with the national bourgeoisie of an oppressed country. For Trotskyists, the anti-imperialist united front means, as Trotsky argued, “a bloc of the workers, peasants,

and petty bourgeoisie ... directed not only against imperialism and feudalism but also against the national bourgeoisie, which is bound up with them in all basic questions" ("The Revolution in India, Its Tasks and Dangers," 30 May 1930). To the extent that the parties of the national bourgeoisie actually enter into conflict with imperialism, it is possible to establish limited practical agreements with them—in order to implement the policy of unconditional defense of the oppressed nations against imperialism—but never a united-front agreement.

### **c. The United Front against the Stalinist Bureaucracy**

In a manner analogous to that which applies in capitalist countries, in the degenerated and deformed workers' states it is possible to establish united-front alliances with reformist and centrist opponents of the Stalinist bureaucracy, although not with proimperialist and capitalist-restorationist elements. Essentially, such a united-front policy is simply an application of the proletarian united front to the special conditions of these countries.

In part, the aim of the united front against the Stalinist bureaucracy is to unite the working class in these countries both against its Stalinist bureaucratic oppressors and in defense of the collectivized property relations against the threats and distortions of the imperialist system, over against the bureaucracy's false claims to be the "defender of socialism" and against the bureaucracy's own role in blocking the full development of the collectivized forces of production. And such a united-front policy also has the fundamental aim of facilitating the struggle of Trotskyists to gain leadership of the workers' movement in the degenerated and deformed workers' states, through winning the political majority of these workers, through their own experience in concrete struggles, from the conceptions of the reformist and centrist leaders to the Trotskyist program of political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy and establish a healthy workers' state based on revolutionary soviets.

Further, in those degenerated and deformed workers' states where large peasant masses suffer along with the working class from the tyranny of the bureaucracy, Trotskyists must fight for united-front alliances between the most oppressed elements of the peasantry and proletarian forces opposing the bureaucracy, in order to win the peasants away from capitalist-restorationist tendencies and to accept the leadership of the working class in a struggle for the rapid, *socialist* development of agriculture, in a carefully planned relationship with the socialist development of industry.

## **11. The Proletarian Class Struggle and the Orientation toward the Advanced Workers**

The main arena of intervention for revolutionaries is the working class and, therefore, the trade unions. In most countries where unions have some degree of independence from the state, they are led by petty-bourgeois bureaucracies—direct or

indirect agents of the bourgeoisie. The central task of Trotskyists is the struggle to remove these bureaucracies from the leadership of the unions and to replace them with a revolutionary leadership which ensures the independence of the unions from the bourgeois state.

In order to achieve their aims within the unions, Trotskyists should aim to organize revolutionary trade union caucuses under their political leadership. The program of these caucuses must be based on the general strategic and tactical lines of the Transitional Program.

Consistent Trotskyism rejects the position that—since the role of unions is different from that of the revolutionary party (essentially the defense of the proletariat's living and working conditions)—unions cannot be won to a true revolutionary program but only to militancy in routine economic struggle. Trotskyists maintain that, although unions cannot achieve a finished program and full revolutionary activity, unions can and must be transformed into auxiliary organs of proletarian revolution, breaking from both mere trade unionism and support for the bourgeois state.

In their work in the trade unions and in all their work taken as a whole, the primary orientation of Trotskyists is toward the most politically advanced workers—those workers most ready, both in word and deed, to oppose the capitalists and generalize the lessons of their struggles to an understanding of the exploitative and oppressive nature of the capitalist system as a whole and the necessity of its overthrow. Trotskyist parties therefore seek actively and systematically, not only to intervene in workers' trade union and other struggles and to fight for leadership of them, but also to win worker-communists to the Trotskyist parties from these struggles and to develop these fresh worker cadres politically. In this way Trotskyists both deepen the roots of Trotskyism in the working class and deepen the proletarianization of the Trotskyist parties.

## **12. The Struggles against All Forms of Oppression, Injustice, War, and Fascism**

Trotskyists intervene in every mass movement which has an anticapitalist content; not only those which are exclusively or largely proletarian, but also those which stem from the mobilization of other classes oppressed by capitalism or specially oppressed sectors, both proletarian and nonproletarian (peasants, women, gays, students, oppressed nationalities and ethnic groups, the disabled, antiwar movements, antifascist struggles, etc.). Trotskyists intervene in all mass movements on the basis of the Transitional Program and its method. So, starting from the level of consciousness and the demands of the masses, they identify those general transitional demands which allow them to center the activity of objectively anticapitalist movements on the perspective of overthrowing capitalism and establishing proletarian power.

Within mass movements that are not directly proletarian but which have an objectively anticapitalist thrust, Trotskyists intervene with a method analogous to that

adopted in intervening in proletarian struggles: that is, they base their action on transitional demands. They fight against the petty-bourgeois (or sometimes bourgeois) leaderships of these movements, struggling for proletarian leadership of nonproletarian mass movements. This perspective implies two simultaneous aspects: on the one hand, the struggle within the proletariat for it to take over directly the demands of the nonproletarian mass movements, which implies a struggle against any reactionary ideology and attitudes within the working class regarding these movements (for example, racism, sexism, antigay bigotry); on the other hand, action within these movements to defeat bourgeois ideology and "autonomist" or "separatist" positions and to lead each such movement to the understanding that only an alliance with the revolutionary working class in the struggle against the bourgeoisie can lead to real victory.

In particular where the specially oppressed sectors of the working class tend to be especially militant and class-conscious, the intervention of Trotskyists in the mass movements and struggles of the specially oppressed is an essential part of the process of mobilizing the proletarian vanguard, winning the most advanced workers to the revolutionary program, and building the revolutionary leadership of the working class.

In all mass movements, which are generally barely organized due to their instability, Trotskyists struggle for the building of well structured mass organizations. Where such organizations do exist or are being built under opportunist leaderships, Trotskyists must act as they do within the unions: they must organize revolutionary caucuses based on the general line of the Transitional Program, aiming to win the leadership of these organizations. Consistent Trotskyism rejects as liquidationist those positions which assume that mass movements should develop in an "autonomous" manner and which therefore lead Trotskyists merely to participate in these movements without fighting to win them to a proletarian perspective.

### **13. International Democratic Centralism**

Trotskyism sees democratic centralism as the structural basis of revolutionary political organization. Democratic-centralist principles imply the right to free internal debate as well as the duty of external discipline, with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democratic centralism includes the right to build both tendencies and factions within the revolutionary organization. It must be in force at both the national and the international levels, both within the regenerated Fourth International and also in the different stages of organization of the consistent Trotskyists during the struggle against revisionism.

Orthodox Trotskyism rejects the conception that democratic centralism should apply fully only at the national level while at the international level it is limited by the autonomy of each national party. It also rejects the practice of world organizations whose different factions carry out essentially independent policies. Further, it rejects practices which invoke "democratic centralism" to block any possibility of effective tendency or factional struggle. Similarly, it rejects any conception which discriminates between

“major” national organizations, with the right to decide on lines and principles, and “minor” organizations, which must be subordinated to the “major” organizations. Finally, it rejects any conception which accepts the perspective of democratic centralist only for the future regenerated International but not for the stages of international organization transitional to that end.

Therefore we insist on the fullest possible development of international democratic centralism within the international tendency of consistent Trotskyists fighting for the political regeneration of the Fourth International and the concrete realization of fully international democratic-centralist norms as a minimal condition for the maintenance of the political and organizational health of our tendency.

#### **14. The International Trotskyist Committee**

In all its words and actions, the International Trotskyist Committee must say what is, being true in small things as in large, with its own ranks and before the masses. Consistent Trotskyists must relentlessly expose every opportunist and sectarian obstacle to the regeneration of the Fourth International and the revolutionary mobilization of the masses. They must take up the spotless banner of the Trotskyist program, not to protect it from danger, but to carry it at last again into every arena of struggle where forces ready to fight can be won to the cause and the party of the world socialist revolution.

## **THE CRISIS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE TASKS OF CONSISTENT TROTSKYISTS**

Adopted by the Founding Conference of the  
International Trotskyist Committee  
26 July 1984

1. Orthodox Trotskyism rests on the firm foundations laid in the documents elaborated—following the line of the theses and resolutions of the first four congresses of the Communist International—by the first three international meetings of the Fourth International: the Conference of the Movement for the Fourth International (1936); the Founding Congress (1938); and the Emergency Conference (1940).

In the documents of these international meetings, the general programmatic, strategic, and tactical lines are indicated which, as developed and brought up to date on the basis of the historical evolution of the subsequent decades, still constitute the political foundations of orthodox Trotskyism.

2. The death of Leon Trotsky and World War II struck hard blows at the International. Not only did the war mean the cessation of direct relations among the different sections, but a bloodbath wiped out many of the International's most important leaders, in particular in Europe.

The International Secretariat, under the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States (SWP/US), was able only partially to fulfill its responsibilities of political and organizational leadership of the international Trotskyist movement. Nevertheless, the Fourth International met the test of the war, politically and organizationally, and, during the period of reorganization (1943-1946), corrected the opportunist deviations which had developed in some sections, for example, the French section.

3. In the period following World War II, notwithstanding a certain growth in membership and increase in the influence of almost all its sections, the International did not become a mass organizing center, as, before the war, Trotsky and the entire Trotskyist movement had erroneously predicted would happen. The International attempted to deal with this fact by substituting a voluntarist orthodoxy for dialectical method: under the leadership of Pablo, the International acted as if the crisis of proletarian leadership were approaching resolution and the development of the International as a mass organization could be easily realized.

At the same time, the principal section of the International, the SWP/US—using as the reason the reactionary Voorhis Act, which prohibits any American organization from maintaining an international affiliation—came to isolate itself from the rest of the

movement. In taking this stance, the SWP expressed what were actually federalist positions on questions of international organization and placed itself, in practice, on the right wing of the Fourth International. Nevertheless, despite all its mistakes, the International continued to base its politics on orthodox Trotskyism. The theses of the Reorganization Conference (1946) and the Second World Congress (1948), although containing errors, should be included as part of the historic legacy of our movement.

4. The first serious opportunist failure on the part of the International occurred in 1948 on the occasion of the break between Yugoslavia and the Kremlin.

Instead of limiting itself to defending Yugoslavia against any possible military attack by the USSR, the International treated Tito's break with Stalin as an expression of the revolutionary potential of the Yugoslav Communist Party. The Yugoslav CP was characterized as "left-centrist" and was regarded as moving towards Trotskyism, while over and over attempts were made to reach agreement with either the Yugoslav CP or with pro-Tito forces in capitalist countries. With an ultimate perspective of the affiliation of the Yugoslav CP to the Fourth International, these policies were maintained until 1950. Clearly this involved a total misunderstanding of the nature of the Titoist bureaucracy, resulting from the desire to find, at any cost, a shortcut to reaching the masses. Still, the desire to win the Yugoslav CP to the Fourth International makes clear the difference between the policy of 1948-1950 and classical Pabloism from 1951 forward. The opportunism of 1948 opened the way to Pabloite revisionism but definitely did not reach the depth of the opportunism of actual Pabloism.

5. Pabloite revisionism, which emerged at the end of 1950 and triumphed at the Third World Congress in 1951, represented an opportunist deviation of a centrist type. Drawing a false lesson from the unexpected events of the postwar period (the consolidation and expansion of Stalinism with the creation of deformed workers' states through the social transformations in the countries occupied by the "Red" Army and in the victorious revolutions in Yugoslavia and China; the cold war, and the failure of development of the Fourth International), Pabloite positions went so far as to deny the necessity of the struggle to build mass Trotskyist parties in all the countries of the world. The role of the revolutionary instrument was, in effect, assigned to the ruling bureaucracy of the USSR and the Stalinist parties, driven to assume this role by the revolutionary pressure of the masses and confrontation with imperialism and the "inevitable" formation and possible triumph of internal centrist tendencies. The sections of the Fourth International, placed within the Communist parties according to the strategy of "*entrism sui generis*," had to limit themselves to functioning as small groups for discussion among cadres, in order to aid the objective development of the revolutionary process under the leadership of the Stalinists. In this way, disappointment over the lack of success in achieving transformation into a mass organization led to political liquidationism.

6. The counterposed theses presented at the Third World Congress (1951) by the majority of the French section, although containing some mistakes and lacking a balance sheet of the previous errors, constituted a defense of orthodox Trotskyism against Pabloite revisionism. The cost to the French section of the defense of its positions was its expulsion from the International in 1952.

7. Only the emergence of ultra-Pabloite internal tendencies, which carried liquidationism to its extreme, drove the British section and the SWP/US to launch, in 1953, the struggle against Pablo. Conducted on the basis of the SWP's federalist conceptions, and so on the basis of relations among the separate national leaderships, this struggle did not come near to achieving the results which were possible.

On 16 November 1953, using Pablo's bureaucratic methods as the reason, the SWP, with an open letter, broke with the Pabloite leadership on the eve of the fourth world congress, so refusing to wage a struggle to win the majority of the International to opposition to Pablo. One week later, on 23 November, the expelled majority of the *Parti Communiste Internationaliste* (PCI/France), the English section, the Swiss section, and the SWP founded the International Committee of the Fourth International (IC), which declared Pablo and his International Secretariat removed from power, proclaimed itself the new leadership of the movement, and invited Trotskyists all over the world to group themselves under its banner. This call received a positive response from a few sections of the International (China, Canada), from the faction led by Moreno (Argentina), and from small minorities in a few other sections. And so, because of the incorrect tactics of the anti-Pabloites at the moment of the split, two-thirds of the International remained with Pablo.

8. In practice, the International Committee, based on organizational federalism, did not in any way represent a Bolshevik response to Pabloism. It proved incapable of drawing the slightest lesson from the crisis of the International. The successive policies of its different organizations (the entrism of Moreno's organization in the Peronist movement; the policy of the French PCI in relation to Algerian nationalism and, later, in relation to social democracy; the more and more marked adaptation of the SWP to petty-bourgeois intellectual circles in the US; the zigzags of the British section in its work within the British Labour Party; etc.) clearly demonstrated that the International Committee itself—even if obviously in a less serious form than the International Secretariat—suffered from opportunist deviations of a centrist type, which its federalist character could only exacerbate.

9. The reunification achieved in 1963 between the Pabloite International Secretariat and a wing of the International Committee led by the SWP/US, was the product of capitulation by the SWP to Pabloism, originating in the revisionist SWP's own ongoing shift to the right. A fundamental element in this shift had been the impact of the Cuban revolution, which the SWP understood in impressionistic rather than Marxist terms, going so far as denying, at least with regard to Latin America, the necessity of the



struggle to build mass Trotskyist parties and openly abandoning the Leninist strategy of proletarian revolution. At the same time, the International Secretariat, which agreed with the SWP and its allies (*Palabra Obrera*/Argentina, *Partido Obrero Revolucionario*/Chile, etc.) on the analysis of the Cuban Revolution and Castroism (which was presented as a revolutionary-Marxist current, although with theoretical limitations), continued to be based essentially on the entire policy of liquidationist Pabloism. In fact the International Secretariat had discarded only a few elements of Pablo's analysis (for example, the imminence of a third world war) which had obviously been shown to be false, while its fundamental positions remained the same as in 1951, in fact with a more open capitulation to petty-bourgeois nationalism in the colonies and former colonies—positions which were connected to an impressionistic evaluation of the new period of capitalist development which followed the war. From 1964 on, this evaluation would lead to the theory of 'neocapitalism' with the consequent underestimation of the actuality of the socialist perspective and the revolutionary role of the proletariat in the imperialist countries.

Despite such areas of political agreement, the 1963 reunification represented an unprincipled bloc, insofar as a number of fundamental political issues (such as entrism "*sui generis*" in Stalinist and social-democratic parties in Europe), on which profound differences persisted between the International Secretariat and the wing of the International Committee led by the SWP, were not confronted, in order to avoid disturbing the process of unification, while in essence an agreement was established which guaranteed the reciprocal independence of the original Pabloites with regard to Europe and the SWP with regard to the United States.

Significantly, it was precisely in the period immediately preceding and following this reunification that important splits took place from the right wing of Pabloism: the split in 1962 of the Posadas faction of the International Secretariat, still attached suprahistorically to all the formal aspects of original Pabloism, including the imminence of a third world war, and evolving toward openly pro-Stalinist positions; the expulsion in 1964 of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), numerically, the most important section and the only section of the United Secretariat with a large mass base, which had gone over to counterrevolutionary reformism, entering the bourgeois government of Sirimavo Bandaranaike; and in 1965 the split of the Revolutionary Marxist Faction, led by Pablo himself, at the time an adviser to the Ben Bella government of Algeria, which carried to an extreme the position of the United Secretariat (USFI) on the priority of the colonial revolution over the proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries and capitulated to Khrushchevism, among other things supporting the USSR in polemics with China, over against the rest of the USFI.

**10.** The struggle within the International Committee against the capitulation of the SWP was conducted primarily by the Socialist Labour League (SLL) of Britain and the *Parti Communiste Internationaliste* (PCI/France; later [1963-1981] the *Organisation Communiste Internationaliste* [OCI/France]; since 1981, again the PCI). This struggle,

however, was not based on a genuine balance sheet of the experience of the postwar Trotskyist movement or of the International Committee itself. In effect the SLL and OCI combined sectarian attitudes (on the unification itself—refusing to participate in the reunification in order to fight Pabloite revisionism within a united International, as would have been correct to do—as well as on the character of the Cuban state) with the maintenance of essentially left-centrist politics.

The International Committee, maintained by the SLL and OCI with the support of a few other organizations (Greece, Hungary, and a left minority in the SWP), although attempting in its initial period (1963-1966) to draw certain lessons from its own past history, did not have a qualitatively different political character from the International Committee of 1953-1962.

**11.** The Third Conference of the International Committee (1966) decisively blocked any possibility of the leftward evolution of the International Committee. In fact, the Conference reaffirmed the federalist character of the organization (a rule requiring a unanimous vote for a proposal to be adopted) and signaled the suppression of serious political discussion with the exclusion of the Spartacist League of the United States for expressing generally correct positions on a number of fundamental questions, including the nature of Pabloism and the crisis of the Fourth International, the origin of the deformed workers' states and the character of the Cuban state, and the evaluation of international economic and political perspectives.

The essentially bipolar condominium of the SLL and OCI established at the 1966 Conference contained in embryo the premises of the split of the International Committee into two counterposed blocs. The deepening of the differences between the two blocs' policies (the OCI's adaptation to international social democracy and its opportunist spontaneism; the SLL's national Trotskyism, verbal sectarianism—in particular regarding the Labour Party question—and idealist conception of the relationship between party and class) in fact provoked first political paralysis and then the definitive breakup of the International Committee in 1971.

**12.** From the standpoint of the intervention of consistent revolutionaries, the main forces which have presented themselves as Trotskyist in the historical period of the degeneration of the Fourth International must be politically differentiated among themselves as those—

1. which have actually been transformed into *counterrevolutionary forces*;
2. which have broken with key elements of the revolutionary program of Trotskyism but not been transformed into counterrevolutionary forces (*centrists*);

3. which have retained decisive links with the Trotskyist program but have adapted historically to non-Trotskyist positions and nonproletarian forces ("*Trotskyist-centrists*");
4. who are consistent defenders of the Trotskyist program (*consistent Trotskyists*).

#### **a. Counterrevolutionary Forces**

Only a very few of the organizations which have presented themselves as Trotskyist in the period since World War II have gone beyond breaking their political links with the Trotskyist program to actually becoming a part of the counterrevolutionary camp. Principally there have been two.

##### **1. The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP)**

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP; Lanka Equal Society [that is, Socialist] Party) of Sri Lanka was once the largest section of the Fourth International and the only one with a large mass base. After a period of increasing adaptation to the Sri Lankan national bourgeoisie and its party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the LSSP went over decisively to counterrevolutionary reformism in 1964, when it joined a government together with the SLFP and the Stalinists. At present, shattered by the victory of the most reactionary political forces in Sri Lanka and the crisis of the SLFP, the LSSP has become a small reformist organization, receiving less than 1 percent of the vote in the last elections.

##### **2. The "Fourth International" of Posadas**

The Posadasite "Fourth International" went over to Stalinist positions with its support to the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Throughout its history it has been characterized by the utter lunacy of its primary leader, Juan Posadas. Posadas died in 1981, leaving this grouping as is political ghost, with a few dozen members around the world.

#### **b. Centrist Forces**

A number of tendencies, while not overall counterrevolutionary in their political character, have broken sufficient fundamental links with the Trotskyist program so as to render politically meaningless any attempt to present them as Trotskyist. In most instances, as well, their political degeneration has been accompanied by the evolution of their internal regimes and their actual relations with their own class struggles in ways which effectively close off the possibility of healthy political development in the future. For these reasons, while these groupings have degenerated historically from Trotskyism and are now, generally speaking, centrist in their political character, they are not major poles of attraction to the Trotskyist program for leftward-moving militants breaking from

Stalinist, petty-bourgeois nationalist, or other centrist forces with no historical or political connection to Trotskyism. Nor, for the same reasons, are they likely sites for major internal struggles for the Trotskyist program.

Five such tendencies have had some considerable historical significance.

### **1. The "Militant" Grouping**

The British Militant group, led by Ted Grant and best known for its policy of deep entry in the British Labour Party, heads an international current which has in reality adopted the conception of the peaceful road to socialism, rejecting the necessity of smashing the bourgeois state apparatus. This current adapts to imperialism—in particular, British imperialism—for example, in its positions on Ireland and the 1982 Malvinas War.

### **2. The Healyite "International Committee"**

After the split of the International Committee in 1971 between the Lambertist and Healyite forces, the forces headed by Gerry Healy's British Socialist Labour League (from 1973, the Workers Revolutionary Party) maintained their own "International Committee." This trend has traditionally been characterized by an idealist and ultimatist conception of the relations between the vanguard party and the working class, extreme national-Trotskyism, crisis-mongering in its economic and political perspectives, zigzagging with respect to Stalinist forces, and political gangsterism, both externally—especially directed against other organizations presenting themselves as Trotskyist—and internally.

Since 1975, this Healyite "International Committee" has undergone extreme political degeneration. It has established shamefully friendly political relations—and accompanying financial relations—with the Libyan Republic ruled by Colonel Muammar Qaddafi. This in turn has led to complete adaptation by the Healyites to all sorts of nationalist movements and regimes. Not only has Healy's "International Committee" provided uncritical support for petty-bourgeois movements such as the Palestine Liberation Organization. It has become a virtual public relations agency for regimes ranging from the left-Bonapartist government of Iraq to the reactionary bourgeois Khomeini regime in Iran.

Today the crisis-ridden Healyite "International Committee" is merely a sinister paranoid centrist sect and a constant source of violent provocations against other organizations presenting themselves as Trotskyist.

### **3. The International Spartacist Tendency (IST)**

The International Spartacist Tendency (IST) is no more than an international appendage of the Spartacist League/US (SL), headed by James Robertson.

In its first years of existence (1963-1968), the Spartacist League/US put forward generally correct positions, despite certain serious contradictions and mistakes. For example, during its intervention at the Third Conference of the International Committee in 1966, the Spartacist League made a series of correct criticisms of the positions of the International Committee.

However, from about 1968 forward, the Spartacist League went through a gradual and increasingly serious process of political degeneration. In the late 1960's, it began to elaborate sectarian attitudes in relation to work in the trade unions. By the early 1970's, the SL had crystallized utterly wrong, non-Leninist positions on the national question, denying the progressive character of the struggles of oppressed nations against imperialism. These positions came to involve both extreme sectarianism toward anti-imperialist struggles and extreme opportunism, including adaptation to bourgeois "public opinion" in the imperialist countries, reactionary positions regarding immigration, and adaptation to support for Zionism.

Over the course of the 1970's, such adaptations to American imperialism took the form of an intense pride in the SL's own "Americanism" and its conversion into an essentially national- Trotskyist sect. Increasingly the SL and its International Spartacist Tendency (founded in 1974) adopted a sectarian, ultimatist attitude toward reformist-led mass movements. Its strategy and tactics consisted overwhelmingly of sheer parasitism toward other left organizations.

From the late 1970's on, the degeneration of the SL and IST deepened very significantly. The IST adopted positions of open support for Stalinist bureaucracies during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and the suppression of the Polish working class in December 1981, while elaborating a global political theory implying "critical support" to the bureaucracy of the Soviet Union. In this same period, the Spartacists have also exchanged the methods of scientific communism for methods resembling those of pre-Marxist petty-bourgeois socialism in a series of simply bizarre positions, such as the rejection of the demand for nationalization under workers' control of factories threatened with closure, in favor of the demand for a "workers' auction" of plants being closed.

Throughout this process of political degeneration, the SL and IST have also experienced profound organizational degeneration. In practice, Leninist norms have virtually been eliminated, both in the increasingly and pervasively corrupt Robertson regime and in the Spartacists' relations with other left-wing organizations, which have taken a qualitative leap into a consistent pattern of political gangsterism involving slander, provocations, and acts of violence.

#### **4. The International Revolutionary Marxist Faction (Pablo)**

The International Revolutionary Marxist Faction, led by Michel Pablo, has very clearly put forward a politics of support for nationalist forces—not only for radical petty-bourgeois nationalism but also for "left-wing" bourgeois Bonapartist nationalism in the form

of open and practical support to the experience of the "progressive" Peruvian military from 1970 to 1978. This trend also holds a number of non-Marxist positions characteristic of the moderate petty-bourgeois European New Left, such as the program of "self-management" ("autogestion").

### **5. The Minority in the USFI Led by the American SWP**

Within the United Secretariat, the minority tendency led by the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP), headed by Jack Barnes, has been decisively transformed into a sect. It has broken all meaningful links to the Trotskyist program. Over the last several years the SWP has identified itself with Castroite Stalinism, which it regards as "the new international revolutionary leadership" along with the Sandinista FSLN.

On this basis this trend has in practice dropped the program of political revolution in the Stalinist countries—by, for example, adopting highly equivocal positions on the Polish revolution. And it has openly rejected the perspective of permanent revolution, even in its Pabloite version. The most flagrant expression of the politics of the Barnes minority in the USFI has been the counterrevolutionary support to Khomeinism offered by the HYE (Revolutionary Workers Party), the SWP's Iranian supporters.

In their intervention in the workers' movement, this trend displays crass opportunism compounded with abstract sectarian propagandism of an essentially Castroite brand.

The Barnes trend is of no practical interest to consistent Trotskyists, except insofar as it is a polluting factor in the USFI, far worse than Mandel's centrist majority.

### **c. The "Trotskyist-Centrists"**

The great majority of the organizations which present themselves as Trotskyist have gone through a process of political degeneration which has led to their being centrist in their overall political character, but without having broken their fundamental links to the Trotskyist program. The consistently revolutionary, consistently Trotskyist forces, taken together with these "Trotskyist-centrist" organizations, form an international movement within which our organization today constitutes an organized, consistently revolutionary, consistently Trotskyist tendency.

While there are many different national groupings with a wide variety of political positions with an overall "Trotskyist-centrist" character, including a few with a handful or so of co-thinkers in one or more other countries, there are six main international trends which contain the overwhelming majority of the "Trotskyist-centrist" forces in the world.

### **1. The USFI Majority (Mandelite)**

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI) is the major "Trotskyist-centrist" organization in the world. More precisely, in the period since the supposed dissolution in 1977 of the Mandeliste International Majority Tendency and the Lenin-Trotsky Faction led by the American SWP, two similarly aligned tendencies have reemerged, but much more sharply counterposed to each other than before. In reality, these two tendencies have functioned as two quite independent international organizations, pursuing their counterposed public policies while coexisting only formally within the fictitious unity of the United Secretariat. The majority tendency, whose chief spokesperson is Ernest Mandel and which is based on the major sections of the USFI in Europe and Latin America, remains the classic and most important international "Trotskyist-centrist" trend. The minority tendency headed by the American SWP has, as already described, broken its fundamental links to the Trotskyist program and now, quite correctly, refuses even to refer to itself as Trotskyist. This minority is clearly on the verge of ending its remaining formal ties with the USFI.

The current USFI majority remains the major political heir of liquidationist Pabloism. It denies the necessity of building independent Trotskyist parties all over the world as indispensable instruments for the victory of socialist revolution.

In the advanced capitalist countries the politics of the USFI majority features adaptation to the Stalinist and social-democratic leaderships of the mass organizations of the working class. Generally the USFI majority leadership sees its relationship to the class struggle as necessarily mediated through the leadership apparatuses of the established mass parties or trade unions or through particular sections of those apparatuses. This attitude is shown in the USFI majority's myth of "proletarian unity," meaning the unity of the established organizations; its initial failure clearly to oppose the Mitterrand government of France in 1981; and its adaptation to various reformist trade union "lefts" in many countries.

Both in the relatively advanced and the oppressed capitalist countries, the USFI majority tends to seek "unity" with various centrist forces (although in different forms now than in 1968-1977). In particular, USFI majority organizations have formed electoral propaganda blocs with centrist forces in Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Italy, and other countries. This revisionist policy is, sometimes expressed in more general forms, reflecting the USFI's conception of "proletarian unity," by either establishing (as in Peru) or proposing (as in Mexico) electoral blocs with the established mass petty-bourgeois organizations and the organizations of the labor movement as a whole.

In the oppressed countries, the USFI adapts to the ideology and politics of the radical petty-bourgeois nationalist movements, as expressed, for example, in its positions on the Salvadoran revolution or, worse, its uncritical support to the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, which it imagines to be a workers' and peasants' government. The USFI majority has also adapted deeply to Castroism and its counterrevolutionary world politics.

In the degenerated and deformed workers' states, the USFI majority capitulates to reformist oppositional forces.

Similarly, the USFI majority adapts to the petty-bourgeois ideologies prevailing in the women's, student, antiwar, and other mass movements not of a clearly proletarian character.

Since the late 1970's, having abandoned its previous line of supporting "*gauchisme*" (petty-bourgeois leftism), the USFI majority has tended more and more to soft-pedal the position that the armed insurrection of the proletariat is essential in order to smash the bourgeois state. At the same time, under the pressure of Eurocommunism, the USFI majority has adopted democraticist notions with regard to the proletarian dictatorship— notions which must coexist in contradiction with its adaptation to Castroite Stalinism.

Taken as a whole, the revisionist positions of the USFI majority can be traced to the objectivist conception of the revolutionary process which Pabloism developed at the point of its origin. This conception implies underestimating the critical role of the conscious, subjective factor: the Trotskyist party, and program and the necessity of a conscious, organized, and determined struggle to develop mass revolutionary socialist consciousness. This objectivism necessarily requires the misrepresentation of the entire active Trotskyist perspective of permanent revolution as some sort of objective and more or less automatic process.

## **2. The International Workers League (IWL; Morenist)**

The International Workers League (IWL or, by its initials in Spanish, LIT) exists primarily in Latin America and Spain. Its main leading figure is Nahuel Moreno, and its leading section is the PST of Argentina, which Moreno heads.

The Morenist trend has been characterized by wide variations and contradictions in its political positions, both over the course of its history and in different countries at the same time. An amazingly broad range of perspectives has been put forward by the IWL and its forerunners, from extreme adaptation to trade union bureaucrats to anti-union attitudes; from open support to popular-frontist policies to rejection of any united-front tactics with reformist and petty-bourgeois nationalist organizations; from embellishment of Stalinist regimes to forms of Stalinophobia.

What underlies these abrupt zigzags is a pronounced opportunist versatility—that is, the "ideology" of "Morenism," which is a chameleonic current incapable of carrying out the process of building revolutionary parties on sound Marxist foundations. The Argentine PST itself has a consistent record of right-centrist politics, including, despite some left turns and vacillations, deep adaptation to trade union bureaucrats, capitulation to bourgeois nationalism, popular frontism, and the constant misrepresentation of the revolutionary nature of its program.



### 3. The International Center of Reconstruction (ICR; Lambertist)

The International Center of Reconstruction (ICR) is the international extension of the French *Parti Communiste Internationaliste* (PCI; formerly [1963-1981] the *Organisation Communiste Internationaliste* [OCI]). The principal leader of the ICR and PCI is Pierre Lambert. In practice, all the sections of the ICR are subordinated to the PCI, which is deeply national-Trotskyist.

The paramount features of the ICR's politics are capitulation to social democracy around the world, political adaptation to the trade union level of consciousness of the working class, transformation of the policy of employing the tactics of the proletarian united front (and the anti-imperialist united front in Latin America) into a perpetual strategy, Stalinophobia, and political and economic crisis-mongering (the theory of "imminent revolution").

The ICR obviously lacks any real internal democracy, especially in the French PCI. Its leadership has become notorious because of its slander campaigns and gangster attacks against political opponents, in particular on the occasions of the major international splits suffered by its organizational predecessors, the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI [1972-1980]) and the short-lived bloc with the Morenist trend expressed in the Parity Committee (formed in October 1979) and the Fourth International (International Committee) (FIIC [December 1980-December 1981])—that is, the splits leading to the creation of the Vargaite organization in 1972-1973 and the Fourth Internationalist Tendency in 1979 and, in 1981, the breakdown of the bloc with the Morenists.

### 4. The Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT)

The Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT) has substantial forces only in Latin America, with handfuls of supporters in Europe and the Middle East. Its major sections are *Politica Obrera* (Workers Politics; PO) in Argentina and the *Partido Obrero Revolucionario* (Revolutionary Workers Party; POR) in Bolivia.

The FIT stands clearly on the left among the "Trotskyist-centrist" forces, but it holds revisionist positions on a number of fundamental questions, which have checked its leftward movement since its break from the Lambertist trend in 1979.

In reality, the FIT is hardly an international organization at all. It lacks any real organizational internationalism. Although it claims to be democratic-centralist, the FIT is based not on international democratic centralism but on a federal bloc of the PO and the POR. The other sections and any international leading bodies have no practical significance. In practice, at least for the time being, the FIT is merely the international projection of the PO, on account of the extreme national-Trotskyism of the Bolivian POR and its principal leader, Guillermo Lora, and the PO's adaptation to Lora's national-Trotskyism.

The political line put forward by the POR in its major interventions in the Bolivian class struggle, in particular at such crucial points as the Bolivian Revolution of 1952 and the events of 1970-1971 focusing on the experience of the Popular Assembly, has had, overall, a left-centrist rather than a Bolshevik character. The centrist tendencies of the POR have been revealed in these situations of mass upsurge and sharp class struggle by the tactical use of the demand for "a majority of workers' ministers" in left-wing bourgeois governments and by the POR's tendency to maneuver with Stalinist or petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships rather than counterposing itself to such forces in the class struggle in a clear, revolutionary manner.

Both the POR and the PO misrepresent the anti-imperialist united front, viewing this policy in a strategic manner, especially in periods of mass upsurge. Even worse, both the POR and the PO extend the policy of the anti-imperialist united front to include *bourgeois* nationalist forces, although each offers a somewhat different theoretical rationale.

The FIT holds an ultra-sectarian position on the reconstruction of the Fourth International. It characterizes as "counterrevolutionary" most of the forces which present themselves as Trotskyist-specifically, the USFI.

Although the split of the forces which formed the FIT in 1979 from the Lambertist trend (then the OCRFI, now the ICR) expressed the more progressive character of the FIT's forces in relation to the Lambertists and led to definite leftward development of these forces, the FIT has failed to draw a genuine balance sheet of its experience with Lambertism. In particular, the FIT has failed to provide a frank assessment of its current forces' support when in the OCRFI for even the most reactionary Lambertist positions—for example, hailing the "democratic" counterrevolution led by the Socialist Party in Portugal in 1975. The failure to draw this balance sheet flows from the fact that the FIT has yet to break its theoretical ties to the centrist revisionism of the main forces which have degenerated from the "anti-Pabloite" International Committee.

### **5. *Lutte Ouvriere* (LO)**

The French group, *Lutte Ouvriere* (Workers Struggle; LO), has allied organizations in the USA, the French Antilles, and among African emigres in France. The LO originated from a group formed in France during World War II on sectarian positions (the *Groupe Communiste Lutte de Classes*; after World War II, the *Union Communiste*).

The main feature of the LO's politics is economist workerism, expressed in the virtual reduction of intervention in the class struggle with transitional demands to the demand for the sliding scale of hours and wages, combined with abstract, popularized propaganda for socialism. LO has a myth of building "a genuine workers' party," on the basis of which it has adopted non-Leninist methods of intervention and internal organizational structures and functioning. As a result, even though LO has been receiving

relatively large votes—about half a million—in French elections since 1973, on the basis of populist propaganda, it has been unable to make use of these electoral gains for purposes of revolutionary party-building.

LO holds to a semi-state-capitalist theory of the degenerated and deformed workers' states, recognizing the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers' state but regarding the deformed workers' states as state-capitalist.

## **6. The Vargaite "Fourth International"**

The Vargaite "Fourth International," formerly the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (ILRFI), is a trend formed from a split from the OCRFI in 1972-1973. Its principal leading figure has historically been Michel Varga (now withdrawn from political activity). Its politics is characterized by distinctly adventurist positions based on blatant crisis-mongering and a particularly extreme form of "imminent revolution" theory. The Vargaite are also characterized by prominent Stalinophobia, virtually equating imperialism and Stalinism, which are seen as allies in a "counterrevolutionary holy alliance."

### **d. The Consistent Trotskyists**

Finally, there is a tiny number of organizations based theoretically and in practice on Trotskyist programmatic and strategic positions, as consistently developed in the light of the current international class struggle. This orthodox tendency is, in the first place, represented by our own international organization.

There also exist other small groupings, by and large nationally isolated, which maintain a consistently Trotskyist strategy and practical activity. But they are constantly threatened by two main dangers: a national-Trotskyist perspective and sectarianism toward the rest of the forces, centrist and consistently revolutionary, which meaningfully refer themselves to some degree or another to the Trotskyist program. Their fate will depend on whether our own organization will be able to present itself as a site for regroupment and whether they will succeed in overcoming the sectarian tendency to proclaim themselves the sole genuine Trotskyists in the world.

**13.** The Fourth International has suffered a grave process of political degeneration and organizational fragmentation. As an organized revolutionary political force, as the body of the international proletarian leadership, as the world organization of genuine revolutionary Marxism—it has obviously ceased to exist. This fact poses the fight for the international proletarian leadership in an extremely elemental form as the primary task facing proletarian revolutionaries today. The first question of international strategy which we as consistent, orthodox Trotskyists must, then, take up is the question of how actually to proceed in this elemental fight for the international proletarian leadership.

While politically degenerated and organizationally fragmented, the Fourth International *has not died politically*. Despite its acuteness, the historical crisis of the Fourth International still differs qualitatively from the historical crises of the Second and Third Internationals.

In August 1914 the betrayal of proletarian internationalism by almost all the national social-democratic parties at the outbreak of World War I, signaled the conversion of social democracy into a counterrevolutionary agent of the imperialists within the workers' movement, whose primary political function was to prevent the revolutionary unity of the proletarians of all countries and the revolutionary seizure of power by the working class of any country. The social-democratic program of reforms, real and illusory, became primarily a means of inhibiting the militant development of the proletarian class struggle and tying the workers of each nation to "their own" bourgeoisie and the economic development of "their own" national capitalism. The essentially counterrevolutionary role of the social democracies was confirmed by their responses to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the revolutionary situations which developed throughout the world in the aftermath of World War I.

In 1933 the most important section of the Third International outside the Soviet Union, the German Communist Party, thanks to the grotesque "third period" line of the Stalinist Comintern, proved utterly incapable of mounting a serious struggle against Hitler's seizure of power. Instead of openly drawing the lessons of this catastrophic failure, the entire Third International pretended no serious political errors had been committed, while moving, initially behind closed doors, from the bureaucratic ultimatism and adventurism of the late 1920's and early 1930's to the crassly opportunist policies of popular frontism in 1934-1936. Popular frontism and global class-collaborationism became the fundamental strategy of the Third International, to which the actual organization of the Third International itself was sacrificed in 1943.

The incapacity of the German Communist Party or the Comintern to respond in any sort of communist fashion to the victory of Hitler led Trotsky in 1933 to turn from the strategy of fighting to regenerate the bureaucratic-centrist Third International to the strategy of fighting to build a Fourth International, seeing the Comintern as still bureaucratic-centrist but no longer capable of regeneration. And with the adoption by the Stalinist government and Comintern of policies openly endorsing the "right to national self-defense" of "democratic" imperialists, the Comintern became itself, by the time of its seventh world congress in 1935, a counterrevolutionary force, in practice social-patriotic and committed to preventing world proletarian revolution.

In the aftermath of World War II, Stalinist parties betrayed the working classes throughout Europe and Asia, preventing or aborting revolutionary struggles. The bureaucratic extension of collectivized property in Eastern Europe and, eventually, East Asia and Cuba, did not alter the essential character of Stalinism as an international counterrevolutionary force.

The Fourth International has not gone through such a decisive transformation. Its degeneration and fragmentation have led to the development of a set of organizations which, with few exceptions—essentially a few particularly corrupt sects and the Lanka Same Samaja Party (Sri Lanka)—cannot be regarded as consolidated opportunist, counterrevolutionary organizations within the workers' movement. These international and national organizations differ qualitatively from the essentially counterrevolutionary social-democratic and Stalinist formations.

First, a number of small orthodox, consistently Trotskyist organizations exist. And a few groupings historically originating from Trotskyism, while not counterrevolutionary, have broken with the Trotskyist program, openly rejecting the Transitional Program or fundamental elements of it (for example, Shachtmanite and semi-pro-Stalinist groupings such as the American Marcy group). But the great majority of the forces which have degenerated from Trotskyism without becoming counterrevolutionary maintain politics which are generally revisionist and centrist—or, in a few instances, ultraleft-revisionist—without openly breaking with or actually liquidating the Trotskyist program.

The Pabloites have distorted the Trotskyist program and adapted it to various nonrevolutionary petty-bourgeois and bureaucratic currents. They have subordinated or denied the role of Trotskyist parties as the necessary expression of the political independence of the working class, in favor of adaptation to these nonproletarian and nonrevolutionary forces. The organizations of the International Committee of 1963-1971 tended to combine national-Trotskyist adaptationism with extreme forms of national-Trotskyist sectarianism (Lambert most clearly characterized by capitulation to social democracy, Healy by collapse into crazy sectarianism).

But, from both sides of the 1953 split, organizations and tendencies survive whose opportunist and sectarian revisions of Trotskyism have not yet produced a complete and decisive break with the programmatic bases of revolutionary proletarian politics. These organizations continue to relate themselves positively, in various ways, to the Transitional Program of 1938. Programmatically they still stand on the perspective of the proletarian dictatorship based on soviet democracy, still formally reject popular frontism, still declare their commitment to proletarian internationalism, and still—with some confusion and some significant exceptions—maintain the Trotskyist analysis of the Stalinist regimes and the necessity of defense of the collectivized property forms against imperialism—even while revising and distorting these principles and adapting to currents hostile to them. They are essentially *centrist* organizations, but *centrist organizations of a special kind*.

In continuing to proclaim their adherence, even in a distorted fashion, to the revolutionary program of Trotskyism, these organizations continue to attract militants—in particular, advanced workers—breaking towards revolutionary politics from social democracy, Stalinism, and conventional forms of centrism.

The actual and potential role of these "Trotskyist-centrist" organizations as apparently revolutionary-Marxist poles of attraction to advanced workers in the majority of the advanced capitalist, semicolonial, and Stalinist nations, creates a highly contradictory, complex, and historically unprecedented situation with fundamental implications for the strategic perspectives of orthodox Trotskyists fighting for the political regeneration and organizational reconstruction of the Fourth International. Not only do these organizations themselves vacillate between revolutionary and opportunist policies. In continuing to claim to base themselves on the Transitional Program, they retain the capacity to expose and, however inadvertently, train cadres in actual Trotskyist positions. Their constant vacillation between Trotskyist and revisionist policies tends to generate not only frequent splits but also frequent clashes of internal tendencies and factions, in which, over and again, some militants rise to the defense of at least some Trotskyist positions against revisionist pressures.

All of this means that, even though, by and large, the leaderships of these organizations are hardened in their revisionist and adaptationist positions, these organizations, viewed as a whole on an international scale, tend to contain militants who are moving toward orthodox Trotskyist positions; to be subject to a constant process of limited struggles for Trotskyist positions; and to display a constant tendency to draw toward themselves advanced workers searching, in reality, for the revolutionary alternative of Trotskyism.

The crisis of the Fourth International—in particular the failure of the anti-Pabloite forces to wage a correct and thoroughgoing international struggle—has led to a situation in which most of the *orthodox Trotskyists* in the world exist in small independent organizations, not inside the much larger "Trotskyist-centrist" organizations. But these two sets of organizations must be viewed together as historically and politically related focal points for the regeneration of the Fourth International. For the orthodox Trotskyists to turn their backs on the advanced workers being drawn toward Trotskyist positions by the "Trotskyist-centrist" organizations and the militants fighting for Trotskyist positions within them, would be an act of sectarianism of historically tragic proportions. Rather, the task of orthodox Trotskyists is to develop an international tendency oriented strategically toward reconstructing the Fourth International through linking up with, supporting, and organizing every struggle for Trotskyism, every genuinely Trotskyist development throughout the world, both within and outside the major "Trotskyist-centrist" organizations.

In their own independent organizations, orthodox Trotskyists must develop exemplary work in the class struggle in ways which will make them genuine poles of attraction to advanced workers, both outside and within the "Trotskyist-centrist" groupings. Within the "Trotskyist-centrist" organizations, Trotskyist factions must fight for the political regeneration of these organizations, basing themselves in particular on struggles arising from the problems of revolutionary intervention in the ongoing proletarian class struggle.

In the sense that within two sets of organizations, a few consistently revolutionary but many more centrist—both derived from the crisis of the Fourth International and both claiming to base themselves on the Transitional Program—a conscious struggle for the political regeneration of the Fourth International has taken place, is taking place, and must take place in the next period—in this sense, we must recognize and define the contours of a somewhat amorphous international movement in both parts of which we must fight to develop and reunify all the genuinely Trotskyist forces in the regenerated and reconstructed Fourth International.

By this perspective we do not mean that orthodox Trotskyists in any way identify or confuse their program with the program of either Pabloite or anti-Pabloite revisionists. Nor do we mean that *any* form of centrism or revisionism, including Pabloism, can somehow in and of itself be treated as a genuine revolutionary-Marxist trend. Nor do we mean that these "Trotskyist-centrist" organizations derived from the crisis of the Fourth International should be the sole arena of the struggle to regenerate the Fourth International. Decisions on whether to work as independent organizations, within the "Trotskyist-centrist" organizations, or within other centrist or even Stalinist or social-democratic groupings, must be made concretely, country by country, situation by situation, always on the basis of how best to wage an intransigent struggle, over time, to win the advanced workers to the full revolutionary program of Trotskyism. An international Trotskyist faction could, then, decide to enter as a whole into one international "Trotskyist-revisionist" organization, to work primarily within a number of such organizations, to function primarily as a group of independent organizations, and so on—all depending on the concrete conditions best favoring the struggle to regenerate the Fourth International.

What the recognition of the special character of these centrist groupings does mean is that orthodox Trotskyists must maintain a strategic orientation toward them. Further, their special character has a number of specific practical implications.

Within the "Trotskyist-centrist" organizations, we must promote the formation of orthodox Trotskyist factions, united on an international basis with each other—independently of the various international or national organizations in which they may respectively be intervening—and with the independent orthodox Trotskyist organizations, both components together forming an international Trotskyist faction, organized on a democratic-centralist basis both internationally and in its national sections.

The Trotskyist factions working within the "Trotskyist-centrist" organizations should, as a general rule, have neither an orientation committed in advance to short-run entries aimed at quickly splitting these organizations nor an orientation never under any circumstances to split these organizations. Rather, the main tactical orientation of such Trotskyist factions should be to fight in a disciplined way for their political ideas within the rules of these organizations and to make the centrist leaders clearly responsible for any administrative measures, such as expulsions.

All the components of the international Trotskyist faction—the sections functioning as independent organizations, the sections working within "Trotskyist-revisionist" organizations, as well as any sections doing work in other types of organizations—must put forward positions and engage in practical activity completely consistent with the Trotskyist program, respectively within the workers' movement as a whole, within the "Trotskyist-revisionist" organizations, and within any other organizations in which they are doing entry work. In this regard, the publication by the international Trotskyist faction of an international theoretical bulletin which is aimed particularly at the defense of revolutionary Trotskyism against all distortions and revisions, is an especially urgent task.

Such tactical considerations do not imply that there is a clearly established, guaranteed course of action which necessarily leads to the revolutionary regeneration and reorganization of the Fourth International. Nor do such considerations imply that it is inevitable or even probable that we will actually succeed in regenerating any one or more of the extant "Trotskyist-revisionist" formations. However, only the flexible, dialectical strategy of such a struggle for political regeneration, combining independent work in the proletarian class struggle with factional intervention within the "Trotskyist-revisionist" organizations, will allow us to complete the actual complex process, however it may develop concretely, which—through splits, fusions, partial regenerations, and growth of independent work—will enable the international Trotskyist faction to win the political majority of the militants orienting to Trotskyism throughout the world and be transformed into the regenerated Fourth International.

Of course a whole series of practical alternatives for the development of the activity of orthodox Trotskyists will present themselves. Trotskyists must be prepared to adjust their tactics to the concrete development of the struggle to regenerate the Fourth International and the concrete development of the international struggle of the working class—on the sole condition that they maintain the absolute political independence of the international orthodox Trotskyist faction.

**14.** The basic objective of the International Trotskyist Committee (ITC) is to unite all the consistent, orthodox Trotskyists, in the world in a determined struggle for the political regeneration and organizational reconstruction of the Fourth International. Functioning on the basis of international democratic centralism, the International Trotskyist Committee seeks to provide international political leadership and organizational and tactical coordination for the wide variety of struggles for Trotskyism developing, in many arenas, throughout the world.

Where its sections function as publicly independent organizations, the International Trotskyist Committee builds work in the proletarian class struggle aimed at winning the advanced workers to the Trotskyist program, while also directing its message to militants in the "Trotskyist-revisionist" and other organizations in which the vanguard leadership of the working class may also be in process of formation. Within the "Trotskyist-revisionist" organizations, it wages a fight for the full program of



revolutionary Marxism in a Bolshevik manner, building these organizations while fighting to regenerate them politically through relentless exposure of all forms of revisionism and through a struggle to win the political majority of their militants for consistent Trotskyism and, on this basis, form a new, consistently Trotskyist leadership.

In any other organizations, the ITC seeks to win advanced workers moving toward revolutionary positions to the revolutionary program of Trotskyism, fighting intransigently for a break with reformist and centrist politics. Recognizing the fundamental, qualitative programmatic leap which must be made for any social-democratic, Stalinist, non-Trotskyist centrist, or petty-bourgeois nationalist organization either to be won as a whole to Trotskyism or be the site of a long-range struggle for Trotskyism, the forces of the ITC intervening in such an organization can normally expect to remain only for the relatively limited period of time in which a given struggle for this programmatic leap can be waged effectively.

The tactics of the International Trotskyist Committee must be extremely flexible and fully dialectical, taking into account the concrete character of the struggle for the Fourth International in every country and uniting all the various struggles into a single, complex process of political development and regroupment. The ITC must recognize that its tasks are extremely difficult and will subject it constantly to intense opportunist and sectarian pressures—some taking quite unprecedented forms—both of which it must learn to identify and struggle against with utter consistency and clarity. It must never turn aside either from the revolutionary program itself or from the militants in any arena who are fighting for it or being drawn toward it. Whether its work takes the form of publicly independent organizations or activity within other organizations, the minimal conditions for the principled struggle of the International Trotskyist Committee will be the maintenance of its own political and organizational independence as a tendency, its international democratic-centralist functioning, and its absolute honesty, in small things as in large and, above all, in the defense and concrete development of the Trotskyist program.

The specific orientation of the ITC must always be determined by concrete developments in the ongoing evolution of the forces most pertinent to the struggle for the Fourth International. Its overall and strategic orientation, however, is always toward the working class and, in particular, toward the most politically advanced workers and toward the most militant layers of the working class. The ITC must also orient strategically toward the most oppressed and exploited layers among the nonproletarian masses, especially in the economically backward countries. It must fight to unite within itself consistently revolutionary leaderships and cadres from the imperialist, semicolonial, and Stalinist countries, as a necessary initial step in the reconstruction of the Fourth International as the genuinely international leadership of the working class. The ITC's necessary orientation toward the "Trotskyist-revisionist" and other political organizations of the workers' movement must be linked with and shaped by its overall orientation toward the most politically advanced representatives of the workers and oppressed of the world, both in terms of the regroupment on a Bolshevik basis of Trotskyist cadres and

through the development of work for the Trotskyist program in the ongoing struggles of the workers and oppressed.

However limited our initial resources and however difficult the initial challenges we face, only a struggle actually developed along these lines can win the first decisive battles for the resolution of the historic crisis of proletarian leadership: the actual political regeneration and organizational reconstruction of the Fourth International. To this struggle the International Trotskyist Committee dedicates itself.

## RESOLUTION ON INTERNATIONAL WORK AMONG WOMEN

Adopted by the Founding Conference of the  
International Trotskyist Committee  
26 July 1984

### **Women's Oppression**

Throughout history, women have been oppressed in every class society. From earlier forms of class society capitalism inherited a number of forms of social organization—especially the family—which had always been used to subjugate women. The nuclear family which exists under capitalism is an adaptation of the ancient patriarchal family into a form best suited to serve the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Women are exploited under capitalism as workers and oppressed by the sexual division of labor in the family. As workers, most women work in the lower-skilled, lower-paid jobs. Capitalists use them as a “reserve labor force,” hiring them into production when more workers are needed and laying them off when production slows down. In addition, women are oppressed by their role in the nuclear family, upon which capitalism depends to reproduce the working class. Women provide unpaid labor for household services, child care, and nurturance for the family. In order to force women into a subordinate role in the work force and in the family, capitalism devalues women and subjects them to discrimination and sexism.

All women are oppressed by the sexism of capitalist society. But there are class differences in that oppression. The majority of women in the world do not have paying jobs, must perform unpaid labor within the family, and have neither economic nor social independence. Working-class women are oppressed not only by sexism and the sexist division of labor in the family but also by their role in production as workers. They are a critical part of the only consistently revolutionary class.

In advanced capitalist countries, black, Asian, Latino, and other minority women are oppressed by the racism promoted under capitalism. As working women, they are forced into the lowest-paid jobs. They are often solely responsible for their families' survival under conditions of high unemployment, low incomes, lack of adequate health care and social services, and racist harassment and terror.

Lesbians, who challenge the nuclear family by offering alternative ways of living and developing relationships, are harassed and discriminated against under capitalism. Lesbian workers can be fired, laid off, or denied better jobs when they are openly gay. Lesbian mothers fight against a bigoted judicial system for themselves and their children.

The majority of women in the world live in neocolonial countries. Women in neocolonial countries are severely oppressed by the capitalists and landowners in their own countries and by imperialist domination. Severely exploited as workers, they

struggle to keep their families alive against starvation, lack of health care and social services, and brutality. Many of them are peasants whose families barely eke out a subsistence living under capitalist and imperialist exploitation. In many of the neocolonial countries—for example, some of the Islamic countries—women are oppressed by especially reactionary laws, religious traditions, and customs which regulate many aspects of human behavior, almost eliminating women's personal freedom.

Women in Stalinist countries are told that they live under “socialism.” The lack of workers democracy and the continuance of women's subordinate role in the nuclear family prove this is not true.

### **The Importance of Work among Women**

The goal of revolutionary socialist organizations, including the international organization, is to lead the working class in the struggle to overthrow capitalism. Women, who comprise at least half of the workers and oppressed of the world, must be mobilized to participate in this struggle in order for victory to be possible.

Owing to their particular isolation and their historical oppression, many women are conditioned to accept unconsciously their assigned role and its consequences. Revolutionaries must understand this situation and consistently fight for women's liberation in order to win the majority of women to the side of the workers' revolution.

Exploited as workers and oppressed by the nuclear family under capitalism, women potentially can play a leading role in revolutionary struggles. Women *have* played an important and militant role in trade union and revolutionary struggles throughout history. In the liberation struggles of the colonial and neocolonial countries, women have fought valiantly against brutal repression. Lenin considered the role of women in the Russian Revolution of 1917 crucial to the victory of the proletariat. In a discussion with Clara Zetkin on the importance of building international work among women, he stated:

In Petrograd, here in Moscow, and in other cities and industrial centers, proletarian women showed up splendidly during the revolution. We would not have won without them, or hardly. That is my opinion. (Clara Zetkin, "My Recollections of Lenin," in Lenin, *The Emancipation of Women*, New York: International Publishers, 1972, p. 98)

If women are not won over to revolutionary politics, the working class will be unable to complete its task.

Stressing the importance of organizing women, Lenin stated:

There can be no socialist revolution unless very many working women take a big part in it....

... The experience of all liberation movements has shown that the success of a revolution depends on how much women take part in it. ("Speech at the First All-Russia Congress of Working Women," November 1918, in Lenin, *The Emancipation of Women*, pp. 59-60)

Later, in the Transitional Program, Trotsky reiterated this in the context of the tasks of the Fourth International:

Opportunist organizations by their very nature concentrate their chief attention on the top layers of the working class and therefore ignore both the youth and the woman worker. The decay of capitalism, however, deals its heaviest blows to the woman as a wage earner and as a housewife. The sections of the Fourth International should seek bases of support among the most exploited layers of the working class, consequently among the women workers. ("The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," in Trotsky, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, 3rd ed., New York: Pathfinder Press, 1977, p. 151)

The importance of work among women with a focus on winning women to a revolutionary working-class perspective was put forward by the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee in "The Transitional Program in Today's Class Struggle." Focusing primarily on the intervention of revolutionaries in the radical women's movement, the document emphasizes the need for this work to maintain a working-class perspective:

Only in this way can revolutionaries develop the potential strength of working-class women and train the most advanced elements for leading positions within the class struggle and the revolutionary party itself ("The Transitional Program in Today's Class Struggle," adopted by TILC December 1979; in *The Basic Documents of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee*, part 1, *Founding Programmatic Documents of TILC*, Detroit: Revolutionary Workers League/US, 1984, p. 39)

In "The Programmatic Principles of the International Trotskyist Committee," the ITC emphasizes the importance of intervening in the organized movements of the oppressed with a transitional program.

Trotskyists intervene in every mass movement which has an anticapitalist content; not only those which are exclusively or largely proletarian, but also those which stem from the mobilization of other classes oppressed by capitalism or specially oppressed sectors (peasants, women, gays, students, oppressed nationalities and ethnic groups, the disabled, antiwar movements, antifascist struggles, etc.). Trotskyists intervene in all mass movements on the basis of the Transitional Program and its method. So, starting from the level of consciousness and the demands of the masses, they identify those general transitional demands which allow them to center the activity of objectively anticapitalist movements on the perspective of overthrowing capitalism and establishing proletarian power. ("The Programmatic Principles of the International Trotskyist Committee," adopted July 1984, section 12)

In order to end women's oppression, capitalism must be overthrown internationally and socialism established on a world scale. Unlike capitalism, socialism does not depend on the oppression of women in order to sustain its own existence. Therefore, socialism can provide the economic basis to end women's oppression, if concrete steps are taken by the most conscious workers to bring women into production and to replace the nuclear family. During the dictatorship of the proletariat, the transition from capitalism to socialism, the proletariat must lay the foundation to end women's oppression. If women are not already leaders in the struggles of the working class and participating in those struggles on a wide scale, ending women's oppression even under the proletarian dictatorship will be all but impossible.

### **ITC Work among Women**

With the intention of rebuilding a democratic-centralist Fourth International, the International Trotskyist Committee expects to provide leadership to the working class on an international scale. Recognizing the importance of work among women to this task, the ITC is committed to work among women and to the development of women as leaders in its work. In order to consolidate work among women as part of the perspectives of the ITC, all sections of the ITC agree to begin the following:

1. Each section will analyze its current work among women, including work among women in the trade unions and among unorganized women workers; organizing working-class women in their communities; participation in workers' parties; and interventions in the women's movement, the lesbian/gay movement, and the organizations of blacks and other minorities. Each section will analyze its work regarding concrete organizing and recruitment, and the resources presently allocated to this work.
2. Each section will develop concrete written perspectives for work among women which provide short-term and long-term goals for its work. The resources needed to develop this work will be freed up over a reasonable period of time.
3. Each section will take the necessary steps to consolidate and expand its overall work among women. Each section will consider the effectiveness of its interventions in the trade unions, strike support, and organizing unorganized women workers. Organizing working-class women in their communities around issues of particular concern to women, such as welfare rights, housing, child care, health care, schools, etc., will be concretized. Each section will consider its interventions in unions and in workers' parties and plan how to raise issues and support struggles of concern to women. Perspectives for work among women in the women's movement, the lesbian/gay movement, and organizations of blacks and other minorities will be determined, with a focus on winning sections of these movements to a working-class perspective. In all of its work among women, each ITC section will raise transitional demands and other political issues to win women to revolutionary politics.
4. Each section will take responsibility for planning research on women's issues; the history of women in the trade union movement, the socialist movement, and the women's movement; and the theory of women's oppression. The leadership of each section will encourage and support this research and subsequent writing on these issues.
5. Each section will analyze its newspaper coverage of women's oppression and work among women and will take concrete steps to provide consistent coverage of issues regarding women in its particular country and internationally.

6. Each section will look critically at its current recruitment of women and will take concrete steps to recruit more women over the course of the next time period. The goal of each section will be to raise its number of women members to at least 50 percent of the total membership. To help achieve both this aim and the development of women's leadership, the ITC will recognize that it is essential for each section as a whole to take responsibility to assure child care and to develop among all its members a consciousness of the requirements of effective child care.

7. Each section will analyze its development of women's leadership and will take the necessary steps to provide the political education, experience, and support necessary to develop women leaders, theoretically and practically, in work among women and in all other aspects of their work. In this regard, each section will also work to ensure that the development of any partner, parent, or child active in the organization is not carried out at the political, emotional, or financial expense of any other family member active in the organization.

8. Each section will take the necessary steps to provide political education on the woman question for its comrades.

9. Sections in the neocolonial countries will intervene in the national liberation struggles to organize women and to emphasize the importance of the woman question to national liberation and workers' revolution.

10. Each section will provide copies of its perspectives for work among women, as outlined in this resolution, for all other ITC sections within one year after this resolution has been adopted.

11. Each section will exchange documents, organizing materials, etc., on its work among women with the other ITC sections.

The ITC will further develop guidelines for work among women in Stalinist countries when sections from those countries become members of the ITC.

The goal of the ITC, when possible, will be to form an international women's commission to develop international perspectives on work among women and to coordinate that work internationally.

## **RESOLUTION ON INTERNATIONAL WORK AMONG LESBIANS AND GAY MEN**

Adopted by the Founding Conference of the  
International Trotskyist Committee  
26 July 1984

### **The Oppression of Lesbians and Gay Men**

Lesbians and gay men are exploited under capitalism as workers and oppressed as gay people. Capitalism oppresses lesbians and gay men in order to defend the sexual and sexist division of labor and rigid sex roles of the family. By posing alternative ways to live and relate, lesbians and gay men challenge the structure, functioning, and bourgeois morality of the nuclear family. Since capitalism cannot survive without the nuclear family, it must attack lesbians and gay men as part of its campaign to keep the nuclear family intact.

Capitalist laws, discrimination, and bigotry attack lesbians and gay men. Their history of oppression and struggle for freedom has been largely buried by the capitalist conspiracy of silence against lesbians and gay men. Lesbians and gay men are threatened with losing their jobs and homes or with being denied employment and housing. Their children may be taken from them, or they may be locked in jails or mental hospitals. They may be ostracized by their families or communities. They may be raped, beaten, deported, or thrown into "rehabilitation camps." They may be forced to renounce their homosexuality, or they may be killed. In many countries the repression against lesbians and gay men is so fierce that there is virtually no public information about them.

All lesbians and gay men are oppressed by anti-lesbian/gay bigotry under capitalism. But there are class differences in that oppression. Working-class lesbians and gay men are oppressed not only by anti-lesbian/gay bigotry but also by their role in production as workers. However, working-class lesbians and gay men are also part of the only consistently revolutionary class and thus have power to help overthrow their oppression.

While lesbians and gay men are both oppressed by anti-lesbian/gay bigotry under capitalism, their oppression is different. Lesbians are also oppressed as women and so are relegated to low-paying jobs, are forced to do unpaid household labor, and are socially demeaned. Gay men have the advantage of being men; nevertheless, they are despised. Alienation from family and from all social approval and support makes both gay men and lesbians more vulnerable to low self-esteem. Capitalism attempts to prevent men from becoming gay by condemning gay men as "unmanly," "sissy," the "women" of men. It is a damning indictment of capitalism that being considered womanly in capitalist society is thought to be a terrible accusation.



In imperialist countries, black and other minority lesbians and gay men are also oppressed by the racism promoted under capitalism. As working women, minority lesbians are forced into the lowest-paying, least secure jobs. They face the same racist harassment and terror, high unemployment, low incomes, and inadequate health care and social services, as nonlesbian minority working women. Lesbian workers may also be solely responsible for their children's survival. They face the additional danger of losing their children if they are discovered to be lesbians. Because they face racism, sexism, *and* anti-lesbian/gay bigotry, minority working-class lesbians are often trapped in the prisons of their nuclear families.

Minority working-class gay men also face racist discrimination. As workers, they get lower-paying jobs and face high unemployment and racist harassment and terror, as well as antigay bigotry.

Lesbians and gay men in neocolonial countries are severely oppressed by the capitalists and landowners in their own countries and by imperialist domination. Severely exploited as workers and peasants, lesbians and gay men struggle to stay alive in the face of starvation, lack of health care and social services, and brutality. In Iran, lesbians and gay men are stoned to death; in Mozambique, they are locked in "rehabilitation centers" and forced to renounce their homosexuality or are exiled.

Lesbians and gay men in Stalinist countries face much the same legal and extralegal discrimination and bigotry as lesbians and gay men in capitalist countries. Ironically enough, the Stalinist bureaucrats denounce lesbians and gay men as "products of bourgeois decadence." Housing is limited to married heterosexual couples, and lesbians and gay men are not allowed to meet openly, either socially or politically. Lesbians and gay men may be denounced, fired from their jobs, jailed, locked in mental hospitals, or deported. Like the capitalists, the Stalinist bureaucrats need the nuclear family to maintain their power and control over the workers. Therefore, like the capitalists, they must attack lesbians and gay men to defend the nuclear family.

Marxists look at the condition of women as a key indicator of the level of development of class society. Similarly, we look at the condition of lesbians and to a great extent of gay men as a key indicator of the condition of women, because the oppression of lesbians and gay men and the oppression of women stem from the same source, the nuclear family. The terrible condition of lesbians and gay men around the world indicates the strength of the family, capitalism's cell-unit of class rule.

### **The Importance of Work among Lesbians and Gay Men**

The goal of a revolutionary international socialist organization is to lead the workers and the oppressed in the struggle to overthrow capitalism worldwide. Lesbians and gay men, who comprise at least 10 percent of the working class internationally, are a significant portion of the class that must be mobilized in this struggle in order for victory to be possible. But more important than their numbers, lesbians and gay men are

potentially among the most militant and committed revolutionary fighters, because capitalism's anti-lesbian/gay bigotry means they have less to lose and more to gain by capitalism's overthrow.

As a result of the capitalists' campaign against lesbians and gay men, anti-lesbian/gay bigotry divides the working class and so weakens the workers' struggle against the capitalists. Anti-lesbian/gay bigotry is also an important organizing tool of the fascists: lesbians and gay men are prime targets of fascist terror. Fighting against lesbian/gay oppression is an important part of the struggle against fascism.

Recognizing and fighting the oppression of lesbians and gay men also tests revolutionaries' depth of understanding of women's oppression and their commitment to ending it. Just as revolutionaries must win working-class women to revolutionary politics and build women as leaders now, in order to make women's liberation possible under socialism, we must also win working-class lesbians and gay men to our side and build lesbians and gay men as leaders now, in order to lay the foundation for ending lesbian/gay oppression under socialism.

In "The Programmatic Principles of the International Trotskyist Committee," the ITC has expressed its commitment to intervening in the organized movements of the oppressed, including the lesbian and gay movements, with a transitional program focussed on winning lesbians and gay men to a revolutionary working-class perspective. The ITC must aggressively seek to win lesbians and gay men to that perspective as well as to win nonlesbian and non-gay-male workers to the perspective of full, militant support for the fight against lesbian/gay oppression.

### **ITC Work among Lesbians and Gay Men**

With the intention of rebuilding a democratic-centralist Fourth International, the ITC expects to provide leadership to the working class on an international scale. Recognizing the importance of work among lesbians and gay men to this task, the ITC is committed to work among lesbians and gay men and to the development of lesbians and gay men as leaders in its work. In order to consolidate (or in some cases begin) work among lesbians and gay men as part of the perspectives of the ITC, all sections of the ITC agree to begin the following:

1. Each section will aggressively implement the policies adopted by the ITC in July 1984 in its "Resolution on International Work among Women.'
2. Each section will analyze its current work among lesbians and gay men, including work among lesbians and gay men in the trade unions; organizing working-class lesbians and gay men in their communities; participation in workers' parties; and interventions in the women's movement, the lesbian and gay movements, and the organizations of blacks and other minorities. Each section

will analyze its work regarding concrete organizing and recruitment, and the resources currently allocated to this work.

3. Each section will develop concrete written perspectives for work among lesbians and gay men which provide short-term and long-term goals for its work. The resources needed to develop this work will be freed up over a reasonable period of time.

4. Each section will take the necessary steps to consolidate and expand (or begin) its overall work among lesbians and gay men. Each section will determine possible work, including organizing working-class lesbians and gay men in their trade unions, workplaces, and communities around issues of particular concern to lesbians and gay men, such as management harassment, housing, health care, child custody, police harassment, fascist terror, racism and sexism in the lesbian and gay communities, lesbian/gay pride demonstrations, etc. Each section will consider its interventions in unions and in workers' parties and plan how to raise issues and support struggles of concern to lesbians and gay men. Each section will develop perspectives for work among lesbians and gay men in the lesbian and gay movements, in the women's movement, and in organizations of blacks and other minorities, with a focus on recruiting lesbian and gay comrades while winning sections, of these movements to a revolutionary working-class perspective. In all of its work among lesbians and gay men, each ITC section will raise transitional demands and other political issues to win lesbians and gay men to revolutionary politics.

In the trade unions, workers' parties, and other organizations of the workers and the oppressed, each section should raise democratic and transitional demands, taking as a starting point in developing these demands the program developed by the Revolutionary Workers League/US for its intervention in the Lesbian/Gay Coalition against Racism (LGCAR).

5. Each section will take responsibility for planning research on lesbian/gay issues; the history of lesbians and gay men in the trade union movement, the socialist movement, and the lesbian and gay movements; and the history and theory of lesbian and gay oppression. The leadership of each section will encourage and support this research and subsequent writing on these issues.

6. Each section will analyze its newspaper coverage of lesbian and gay oppression and work among lesbians and gay men and will take concrete steps to provide consistent coverage of issues regarding lesbians and gay men in its particular country and internationally.

7. Each section will look critically at its current recruitment of lesbians and gay men, especially working-class and minority lesbians and gay men, and will take concrete steps to recruit more lesbians and gay men over the course of the next

time period. The goal of each section will be to raise its number of lesbian and gay members to at least 10 percent of the total membership.

8. Each section will analyze its development of lesbian and gay-male leadership and will take the necessary steps to provide the political education, experience, and support necessary to develop lesbian and gay leaders, theoretically and practically, in work among lesbians and gay men and in all other aspects of their work.

9. Each section will take the necessary steps to provide political education on the oppression of lesbians and gay men for its comrades.

10. Sections in the neocolonial countries will intervene in the fight against imperialism to organize lesbians and gay men and to emphasize the importance of the lesbian/gay question, as well as the woman question, to national liberation and workers' revolution.

11. Each section will provide copies of its perspectives for work among lesbians and gay men, as outlined in this resolution, for all other ITC sections within one year after this resolution has been adopted.

12. Each section will exchange documents organizing materials, etc., on its work among lesbians and gay men with the other ITC sections.

13. The ITC will communicate with the International Gay Association (IGA), the International Lesbian Information Network (ILIN), and other international lesbian and gay organizations to begin to establish links with lesbians and gay men around the world.

The ITC will further develop guidelines for work among lesbians and gay men in Stalinist countries when sections from those countries become members of the ITC.

A goal of the ITC, when possible, will be to form an international lesbian/gay commission develop international perspectives on work among lesbians and gay men and to coordinate that work internationally.