

# For a Second Communist Manifesto

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## Preface

In contrast to the reactionary degradation of the Communist International, the Left Opposition, which was at the origin of the Fourth International, expressed the ideological and organic continuity of the Revolution, in the same way as the internationalist groups of 1914 in the face of the patriotic corrosion of social democracy. In addition, the Trotskyist movement had a new task, fraught with obstacles: to ensure the internationalist struggle against the peace of the military blocs as an extension of the revolutionary opposition to the war. The revolutionary defeatism, so admirably claimed in 1914-18 by Karl Liebknecht before a German military tribunal, and by Lenin in *Against the Current*, had to be carried to its ultimate conclusion: man's triumph over capitalism and war. It was therefore necessary to formulate, as immediate demands, the political and economic measures likely to rid the world of arms and armies, of the labyrinth of nations, of the industrial and political system based on the human commodity. But the clerics who took over the leadership of the Fourth Int. after Trotsky's assassination could not even cling to the old Marxist defeatism, which was part of their program, and they soiled their flag in national resistance.

On the other hand, it was becoming essential to reconsider the traditional tactics of the Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution, as well as certain determined aspects of the strategy, in order to adapt them to the important changes that had occurred since 1917. Indeed, the Thermidorian retreat of the Russian revolution, which began around 1921 (N.E.P. = New Economic Policy), was later completed by a state capitalist counterrevolution. And, first of all, thanks to this event, capitalism in general has perpetuated and increased its exploitative potential in an increasingly centralized and harmful way to men.

This same process led to a radical change in what the communist parties were, making them not opportunist organizations or workers' lackeys of the bourgeoisie, but direct representatives of a particular form of capitalism, that which is intrinsic to the law of concentration of capital, a law related to the automatism of today's society, and, in Russia, deliberately put forward. In turn, trade unions, whether dominated by Stalinism or independent of it, have increasingly accommodated themselves to the operating system from which they now seem inseparable.

However, the world proletariat was suffering a series of defeats that nothing has so far interrupted. What false friends present to him as his victories, China or Cuba, Algeria or Ghana, only serves to demoralize him, to make him inert, and to leave him at the mercy of his enemies. These victories being in reality those of certain capitalist circles against others, represent for the proletariat so many defeats; it is the material weight of the Russian counter-revolution that made them possible, but not without the revolutionary vanguard, prisoner of its own ideas, having given it free rein. More than ever, *the crisis of humanity is a crisis of revolutionary leadership*, as Leon Trotsky said. Those who continue to call themselves Trotskyists have failed, with tragic irony, in the muddy waters of Stalinism.

Most of the ideas and proposals contained in the Manifesto below were born from the fight against the degeneration of the Fourth Int. Some of the ideological changes mentioned date back to the most acute moment of the Spanish Revolution, 1936-37, when for the first time outside Russia, Stalinism revealed its full counter-revolutionary nature: in comparison to that of any Kerensky or Noske, it seems hardly evil. For this reason, among others, it has become essential to know in depth the adventures of the Spanish Revolution, so falsified or at least distorted, even in books like that of P. Broué and E. Temine <sup>1</sup> : It closes one stage of the struggle and thought of the international proletariat and opens another. His teachings will serve to shed light on a future renewal of the aggressiveness of the oppressed.

The governing bodies of the IV Int. had not yet found the time to take into consideration the rich experience of the Spanish Revolution, that already, on the occasion of the Second World War, they were showing signs of a lack of internationalism whose last implications would be ideological sterility and rapprochement with Stalinism. Not only the Spanish Revolution, but the serious events of the war and the post-war period passed before them with no other consequence than to accentuate their ineptitude.

From the very first symptoms of ideological degeneration, the Spanish group in Mexico of the Fourth International rose vigorously against it, at the same time as it undertook a vast task of interpreting world events and the Spanish Revolution in particular <sup>2</sup> . Deaf and obtuse, these governing bodies prevented criticism, information and proposals from reaching the grassroots in all parties, deliberately excluding any possibility of discussion.

At the first post-war congress, in 1948, the Spanish section broke with the Fourth Int. after denouncing its abandonment of internationalism and its pro-Stalinist course. Shortly afterwards, and on the same basis, Natalia Sedova Trotsky, who had been with us since 1941, also separated from her <sup>3</sup>.

Since the annihilation of the Spanish Revolution, the situation of the world proletariat has been constantly worsening. Always invited to support reactionary causes presented as liberating, ideologically swindled day after day and in all countries, this proletariat is gagged and regulated in slave organizations. The whole of humanity, by the mere fact that it is passively subjected to thermonuclear terror from beyond and below the Iron Curtain, is living in such a degrading situation that, unless it is rid of it, everything will further degrade it. Thus the capitalist society, to which class war and war between nations are consubstantial, reaches the degree of its development where its mere continuity will destroy man, unless man destroys it.

Key to the rebellion of humanity, the rebellion of the proletariat against capital and wage labour is the only one capable of turning such a low situation around, and of igniting the fires of the revolutionary dream, the historical materialist factor among all.

But the concrete ideas of the Russian Revolution, such as the *Transition Programme*, are far from sufficient for such a purpose. Written by Trotsky in 1937-38 when the significance of the period that opened the defeat of the Spanish Revolution was not yet clear, this *program* is now more than insufficient, good for promoting opportunism in the face of the Stalinist counter-revolution and its subsidiaries. It is obsolete, in the same way as Lenin's previous programme was in 1917. Unless it is overcome, taking into account the experience and objective conditions created by the rotation of capital, as well as the subjective possibilities of the proletariat in the case of full revolutionary agitation, it will not achieve victory anywhere and any insurrectional movement will be crushed by counterfeits.

This Manifesto, which inspires our activity in Spain and internationally, is intended to address this ideological deficiency. We address all groups and organizations around the world that also feel the need for socialist revolution, both in the eastern and western blocs. We invite them to study the ideas presented here. The rebirth of a proletarian organization on a global scale requires a break with many atavisms, and a constantly inventive thinking. We are ready to discuss publicly everything we expose, with any group whose practical and theoretical activity shows its commitment to the Revolution. But we will disdain those where dilettantism dominates, even if they claim to share, totally or partially, our ideas.

The revolutionary idea *is not a passion of the brain, but the brain of passion* (Karl Marx) and as such, it requires something other than small literary games or mental protests. Every dilettantism is a reflection of the world we are fighting against.

We must remember that some parts of this Manifesto were published in 1949 under the title *The Proletariat in the face of the two blocs* and, under the responsibility of a group called the International Labour Union, whose existence was ephemeral. But the short version of that time, as well as this one, are due for the ideological elaboration and drafting to Benjamin Péret and G. Equipped as militants with Fomento Obrero Revolucionario, whose origin was the Spanish section of the IV Int. in 1936 in the midst of a revolution, in Mexico City still under threat from Stalin's assassins, then in Spain again challenging Franco's repression, Benjamin Péret did not stop fighting with us for a single moment. We would like to highlight here the contribution of Benjamin Péret, the friend, the revolutionary poet, whose accent will appear here and there during the reading of this Manifesto.

## **Decadence of Capitalism**

*May the ruling classes tremble at the thought of a communist revolution! The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.*

More than a hundred years later, these words of the Communist Manifesto still resound like a slap in the face of the oppressors. Until now, the ghost of communism has not been exorcised by the social validity of capitalism, but by the emergence of new reactionary forces acting at the very heart of the proletariat, at the head of which is the state capitalism established in Russia by the Stalinist counterrevolution. Countless revolts in the world have resulted in defeats, the survival of a decadent society, the demoralization of the proletariat. The proletariat remains nevertheless the only force capable of putting an end to the slavery maintained for centuries by societies of exploitation and tyranny; but an ideological reconsideration is essential for the resumption of revolutionary thought and action.

Capitalist society has made its way. It is the most complete of all societies based on the enslavement of man by man that the world has ever known. It has, more than any other, developed the instruments of production, science, culture, general consumption and even freedom, within the limits where it can be useful to a minority of exploiters. It has searched the world in search of raw materials and markets, unified it by introducing its economic relations everywhere; it has digitally increased the proletariat and concentrated ownership either in an ever smaller number of hands or in the State, thus widening, more than in previous societies, the separation between man's natural capacity for work and the instruments of work that are necessary for the exercise of this capacity. Thus, the very mechanism of capitalism has led it to create the material conditions for the annihilation of any class society. In the past, the slaves of Spartacus, the serfs of the jacqueries or the Sans-Culottes of the 17th century revolted without any other way than to be crushed or to bring to power a new class of oppressors. Today, the proletariat has, within its reach, the possibility of triumphing in each country, on the entire surface of the Earth, and to achieve the emancipation of humanity. To do so, it must take possession of the instruments of work with which it has always been frustrated, restore the unity between man and nature - a guarantee of complete freedom - and destroy the State. More than ever, the revolt of the

proletariat will be the revolt of humanity. If he failed in this work, the future of humanity would most probably be extermination by atomic weapons, and, in any case, a new servitude for an indefinite time.

Capitalism conceals its decline by spreading the illusion of recovery through its own *planning* among the middle classes. This artifice cannot hide the truth; in the degeneration that leads it on the path of barbarism, capitalist society is oriented towards totalitarianism, an expression of the increased concentration of capital in large trusts and in the State; this process is already being accomplished or fully accomplished in the main countries of the West and the East as well as in the backward countries of the so-called *Third World*. It is accompanied by a relative decrease in the living standards of the working masses, a vertical drop in their consumption in relation to the product of their work, an exhausting acceleration in the pace of this work through the taxation of piecework wages, which forces workers to request overtime. In the political sphere, this process is coupled with a military, clerical-police or fascist dictatorship, or a single neo-reactionary party that claims to embody the *Holy Spirit* of the masses. In all these cases, there is a more or less complete suppression of freedoms and the degradation of culture.

A similar totalitarianism is based on an accumulation of capital and industrialization that is all the more reactionary because it plans the failure to satisfy needs, repression and systematic *brainwashing*. It can start with the old bourgeois parties. In this case, pseudo-liberalism gives way to an undisguised authoritarianism that deprives the working class of its basic rights. It can also result from the juxtaposition of these old parties and new reactionary elements, in a one-party apparatus merging with the state and posing the interests of capitalism as a system above those of the individual bourgeois. Fascism and the regimes of many new countries fall into this category. But the most complete form of totalitarianism is undoubtedly Stalinism. In him, the State, the sole owner of the instruments of production, is directly constituted by the ex-worker bureaucracy that has become a *collective capitalist* arbitrarily exercising all power and even dictating what everyone should think.

In any form whatsoever, capitalist society can only offer humanity a future of misery, economic and police coercion, social and cultural regression and, to make matters worse, atomic war. Although the productive forces have reached an unprecedented level, their development is permanently hampered by the form of capital (private, international or state trust) that they present everywhere today. This system is irremediably eroded by the contradiction between the actual or potential capacity of production forces and the possibilities of market absorption, which are increasingly narrowed by wage labour. Whether or not those who speak of a new industrial revolution; an economy of abundance (affluent society), the integration of the working class, and other opiates of technicism, capitalist development in recent decades has been rachitic and mainly due to the war economy. It has increased the number of men assigned to parasitic occupations to terrifying proportions, and it wastes astronomical sums of money on weapons, so that the share of the social product that accrues to workers is constantly decreasing.

This is one of the imperatives of the system, which war production will have taken to the extreme. The result is a generalized Malthusian economicism, and a slow social and even technical disintegration. Thus, with automation in the service of capitalism, unemployment spreads to both the United States and Russia, while physical exhaustion wreaks havoc on the workers it employs<sup>4</sup>. Even the astronautics, the glory and publicity band of the great imperialists, is driven by homicidal intentions. And for every Gagarin and every Glenn, millions of men struggle for endless hours, most of them without really satisfying their basic needs.

That the workers take over the production apparatus, that they restart it for the benefit of all humanity, by abolishing capital and wage labour from the outset, and a technical and cultural expansion that is inconceivable today will then become possible, even in the most backward areas. In both the economic and cultural spheres, the needs of each individual, and those of society as a whole, know no limits. Giving them free rein is the inseparable objective of the suppression of the classes and the State that the socialist revolution must set itself, from the moment of its triumph. From day one, the transitional society that will emerge from this victory will have to move towards this objective. It should not lose sight for a moment of the close interdependence between production and consumption. In today's society, the profit that intertwines from the first stage of production to the last stage of consumption sometimes reduces one and sometimes the other. When consumption is limited, profit and production fall - these are the so-called *overproduction* crises - they increase if demand exceeds the supply of the commodity. But mass consumption is always reduced by the waste of armies, police, bureaucracies and all kinds of parasitic activities, as well as strictly limited by the law of value, which puts a price on labour and its product, including scientific knowledge and culture in general. The taxation of the price of labour by the State aggravates the situation of the worker, because it leaves him defenceless against capital. In the transitional society, profit, in whatever form, must be banned, even in the form of the high salaries it is likely to adopt. Since the aim of a truly planned economy is to grant production and consumption, only the full satisfaction of the latter - and not profit or privilege, nor the requirements of *national defence* or industrialization foreign to the daily needs of the masses - must be considered as a production standard. The first condition for such an approach can therefore only be the disappearance of wage labour, the cornerstone of the law of value, universally present in capitalist societies, although many of them now claim to be socialist or communist.

Any so-called planned economy that does not take into account the vital needs of the masses is therefore oriented towards satisfying the needs of an exploitative and dominant minority that imposes the most draconian capitalist norms on society, while constituting itself as a kind of police state. It is a part of the managed economy and, whatever its industrial successes, it will only contribute to pushing humanity towards reaction and decadence. The admiring flycatchers of giant chimneys and production indices are imbued with the fundamental principle of the extended accumulation of capital. Scientific socialism, as Marx and Engels conceived it and as human needs demand, knows no other imperative than those of the individual, starting with

the worker: his concrete satisfaction, his freedom, the full development of his faculties. Those who *place society above the individual* (K. Marx) must be abhorred like the plague.

## **Stalinism against Socialism**

The historical task of the proletariat cannot be the transformation of individual property into state property. The mere disappearance of the bourgeoisie as the class that owns the instruments of production does not in itself guarantee the orientation of the economy towards socialism and the withdrawal of humanity: *The abolition of private property and communism are by no means identical* (K. Marx). Indeed, the social revolution must achieve the socialization of the means of production and the abolition of wage labour. These are not two different or successive approaches, but two aspects of the same transformation. It is property as a means of subjecting man to wage labour that must disappear before we can talk about socialism. This must be the organisation of production by and for producers. Either the instruments of labour will revert to society as a whole, or the owner state, far from withering away and disappearing, will only increase the gap between the capitalist form of the economy and the necessity of communism, while monstrously developing its dictatorial characteristics.

In this respect, for the world proletariat, the Russian Revolution is a decisive warning, and the counter-revolution that supplanted it is the most cruel lesson: the degeneration of the revolution was facilitated in 1917 by the nationalization of the means of production that a workers revolution must socialize. Only the extinction of the State as envisaged by Marxism would have made it possible to transform the expropriation of the bourgeoisie into socialization. However, statehood proved to be the stirrup of counter-revolution.

This error of the Bolsheviks is mainly explained by the characteristics of the October Revolution itself; the latter was not, contrary to a mistaken opinion, a socialist revolution but a permanent revolution, according to the conceptions exposed by Trotsky in the books *1905* and *The Permanent Revolution* and by Lenin in the *April Theses*: the proletariat's seizure of political power, the annihilation of semi-feudal, even tribal tsarist society, the proletariat's implementation of the measures of the bourgeois revolution that had not been achieved and the unbroken link with socialist measures. In addition, the triumph of social revolution in other European countries with greater economic and cultural development was considered essential for the Russian permanent revolution to successfully enter the transition stage to communism. In fact, the Bolsheviks tried to go beyond their initial program by introducing non-capitalist relationships into the distribution of products and therefore into production: it was *war communism*, the word war alluding to the scarcity of resources even more than to civil war. Trotsky himself said, in his book *From Red October to My Banishment*, that war communism aimed at broader economic goals than military demands in the face of reaction. The failure of this attempt, due to the vertical drop in production (below 3% of that

of 1913) caused the return to the mercantile system which was called the New Economic Policy (N.E.P.).

The state of mind of the peasants converted into owners by the revolution was, to a certain extent, responsible for this collapse of production, to which the civil war also contributed; but the main cause lay in the bourgeois mentality of the middle social strata, whose functions were essential to productive activity: the petty bourgeoisie, technicians, bureaucrats installed in trade unions, administrative bodies of all kinds, the Soviets and even in the Bolshevik party. By legally releasing the bridle to capitalist trade, the N.E.P. definitively sealed the alliance of the former bourgeois layers, who had sabotaged the revolution, with the bureaucrats and ex-revolutionaries who viewed it as a *cocagne* mast. From their merger in the State was to be born the dominant caste, which cheerfully calls itself the *intelligentsia*.

Lenin, who could only have a partial notion of the bureaucratic threat, defined the still Soviet state as a *bourgeois state without a bourgeoisie*. In his mind, the N.E.P. and the state capitalism it would establish was only a momentary second step and a step back, pending the resumption of the process of world revolution. The only guarantee of a future socialization of the economy remained the preservation of effective power by the Soviets<sup>5</sup>. In fact, this project of a politically proletarian-dominated state capitalism was impossible to achieve even without considering anything other than the balance of power in post-revolutionary society. The *tendency of the petty bourgeoisie to transform Soviet delegates into parliamentarians or bureaucrats* denounced by Lenin in 1918<sup>6</sup>, had therefore been very widely asserted. At all administrative and political levels, the revolution and the proletariat were overwhelmed by the old intermediate social strata and the new bureaucracy. The state defined by Lenin was not going to remain *without bourgeoisie* for long: a powerful bureaucratic caste was being formed that would immediately organize state capitalism and counterrevolution for its benefit.

The N.E.P. marks the stopping point of the permanent revolution, which has never, despite the attempt of *war communism*, surpassed the stage of the exercise of political power by the proletariat and workers control of production, a democratic-bourgeois measure, which, according to the Bolshevik conception, was to be a prelude to the workers' management of production and consumption, characteristic of social revolution. Instead of the revolutionary progression without any continuity, a thermidorian retrogression began, which suppressed one after the other the workers' conquests, up to the very appearance of the soviets, and culminated in counterrevolution.

The terrain of encounter and alliance between the bourgeois strata of the population and the new bureaucracy in organizations of revolutionary origin was the capitalist freedom of commerce: the assembly of individuals as much as of interests. This mixture, which held power and wealth, would use and abuse it as it pleased. This was the origin of Stalinism; it took advantage of the great shortage of food which made it difficult for the proletariat and revolutionaries to carry out their political activity. He also used the defeat of

several insurrectional attempts in Europe as a pretext, when in reality it suited him. What attracted and structured his enormous counter-revolutionary work in Russia and the world - work that has not yet been completed - was both the nationalization of property and the single party, without internal fractions, *monolithic* according to the new reactionary terminology. From commercial freedom, Stalinism moved to the centralization of trade and capital investment, which still forms the basis of its economic plans.

The revolutionary conception of economic planning starts with the disappearance of wage labour, which is both a condition and proof of the suppression of capital. Production and industrialization projects must be inspired solely by the social needs of consumption and, first and foremost, raise the standard of living of the classes exploited under capitalism, starting with the poorest strata. Only in this case, the unpaid work that constitutes the added value will revert to society as a whole: exploitation will disappear and communism and human alienation will be achieved.

The working class itself must decide, through democratically appointed committees for this sole purpose, how much social work must be allocated to new instruments of production (what today constitutes constant capital) and how much to the immediate expansion of consumption (what today constitutes variable capital, rationing by wages). Socialist planning is a complete reversal of the functioning of the economy. The men who, at present, in both the American and Russian blocs, are subjected to the production of constant capital in the form of machines, must put them entirely at their service and not produce anything that is foreign to them. And if by chance legitimately elected workers' committees put industrialization above the daily demands of their own class, they would only administer capitalism and perpetuate exploitation.

The plans of Russian production - like those of all its imitators - are the opposite of the revolutionary conception of planning. They are inspired by an accumulation of capital modelled on Karl Marx's analysis of capitalist society, and determined in detail on the basis of the highest possible productivity rate for each category and the lowest possible labour compensation. The resulting over-exploitation would be impossible without the total centralisation of capital in the State, the exclusive owner and legislator of the price of labour and *man* goods, which no longer even has the freedom to bargain its own sale to capital. This is how and why the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in 1917, instead of opening the road to socialism, gave way to the most brutal form of human exploitation by man: state capitalism.

To organize its state capitalism, the Stalinist counter-revolution took advantage of the material and mental misery of old Russia, aggravated by eight years of military operations. Nevertheless, politically it had to exterminate, and in the most abject way imaginable, an entire revolutionary generation before solidifying its domination. The great Moscow trials of 1936-1938 and the massacre or deportation to Siberia of all those who remained faithful to the Red October have no equivalent in the annals of counter-revolutions, not even in Hitler's or Franco's dictatorships. They reveal a reactionary consciousness and ferocity that constitute one of the most formidable dangers

for the international proletariat. Since then, if not before, the Russian power - apart from its imperialist competition with the Western powers, and in addition to them - has had the fundamental objective of avoiding any social revolution in the world, or crushing it through its national parties by imposing state capitalism under the name of socialism. Supporting evidence abounds, from the Spanish Revolution to the triumph of Mao Tse-tung and the entry of Russian tanks into revolted Budapest, not to mention the rapid reactionary crystallization of Castro power.

In short, the Stalinist counterrevolution is the most serious negative event of our century. Thanks to it and to the action of its vassal parties, the proletariat has suffered defeat after defeat and finds itself in the most complete disarray, at the mercy of any force that will fall upon it. Those who support this counterrevolution, for whatever reason, represent the class enemy; those who consider it only as a political distortion of revolutionary objectives play the role of old reformism in relation to expanding capitalism. Therefore, for the creation of a workers' organization of world revolution, it is necessary to require all groups and individuals to make a prior break with Stalinism, on the following bases:

1. Shaped by Stalinist counterrevolution, the Russian economy is a state capitalism, imperialist in the same way as the rival American economy;
2. This capitalism cannot be oriented in a proletarian sense by any measure, or even by any revolution that would be exclusively political, but can only be abolished by a social revolution inaugurated by the destruction of all current institutions, including the dictator party and state property;
3. Nowhere can Stalinism be seen as an opportunist or reformist workers movement, but as necessarily counter-revolutionary: it carries within it the state capitalism and the destruction of the workers' freedoms indispensable for the organization of socialism;
4. Its policy of *national unity* reveals its true nature. Socially identical to that of the former bourgeoisie but politically more perfidious, it postulates for Stalinism the supreme economic and political direction of capital in each country. The Moscow declaration, known as the 81-party declaration, barely conceals it.

Consequently, revolutionaries see Stalinism as a class enemy and consider any collusion or alliance with it as an abandonment of the proletarian cause, if not as treason.

The *destalinization* of Khrushchev, Stalin's accomplice in the assassination of the Bolsheviks in 1917, aims at best to consolidate Stalinism by perfecting it as a system. The *Soviet* legality of which Stalin's successors speak is that of his capitalist bureaucracy. The proletariat has no use for such legality, except to dismantle it and undertake the creation of its own. Even freedom of speech, organization, press, etc... - nor would the rehabilitation of Trotsky and other executed revolutionaries - which the bureaucracy might be forced to grant - change state capitalism, the essential work of the Stalinist counterrevolution.

Finally, there is a political agreement, sometimes tacit, sometimes explicit, between Western capitalism and the Stalinist counterrevolution, since the first symptoms of the latter. The services they have rendered to each other are countless. Western capitalism owes its longevity and prosperity to the Stalinist counterrevolution, and the latter owes its consolidation and extension to it <sup>7</sup>. Since the Potsdam agreements, Washington and Moscow have recognized each other as leaders of the world order, despite their rivalry for domination. The idea of the return of the proletariat to power in Russia terrifies American capitalism, but the Russian ruling caste is no less terrified by the prospect, unfortunately more improbable in the immediate future, of social revolution in the United States.

## **Imperialism and National Independence**

The imperialist-colonial relationship is the ever-closer web of global mercantilism, and it is as insurmountable for it as the fundamental relationship: capital-exploitation of wage labour- increased capital. Both have been changing for some time only through their own exacerbation, making the dissociation between the entire global system and human needs increasingly heartbreaking.

Since the end of the last war, many colonies have been granted independence, in other countries local wars have been launched to obtain it, all over the world there is talk of *decolonization*, *industrialization of underdeveloped countries*, *national revolution* and other returns. At the same time, Russia has seized nine countries in Europe <sup>8</sup>, half of Korea and Vietnam in Asia, where the vast China has had its national sovereignty more limited than in the days of foreign *concesions*; moreover, in most parts of the world the United States' control continues to be concentrated even on the oldest and strongest nations. In all these cases, it is only one and the same process of readjusting the planet to the imperialist forces, as they were remodelled following the 1939-1945 war.

Granted by the colonial power or acquired by arms, national independence in no way implies a break with imperialism, but on the contrary, reveals it in a clearer light, in its purest complexion of economic control. Indeed, we have reached a point where the work and knowledge of many generations is centralized, after multiple military and commercial spoliations, in huge production instruments mainly controlled by the United States and Russia. Since these instruments have the same capitalist character in both countries, the rotation of the economy throughout the world necessarily takes place around their respective centres. Conversely, this argument has the value of a demonstration: it is sufficient that the economic rotation of one or more countries has as its axis another country, to prove the capitalist nature of both the axis and the satellite. Because countries cannot, any more than individuals, avoid the imperatives of capital accumulation without removing capital.

The more important and profitable are the technical discoveries (automation, cybernetics, nuclear energy for useful or deadly purposes, industrial and agricultural chemistry, etc.), the more damning is the weight of Russia and the United States on countries all over the world, friends or adversaries, but first and foremost on friends. The military antagonism between the two blocs juxtaposed with economic and technical factors to consolidate imperialism's grip and extend it to territories that would seem forgotten without this intensive preparation for war. In short, by their enormous volume and the high scientific specialization of their industrial facilities, American or Russian capital cannot seriously help a national economy without vassalizing it. The military and administrative occupation of the colonial regime was a sign of economic weakness on the part of a metropolis. Just as at the national level, capitalism bases its domination on the monopoly of labour instruments which puts the working classes at its mercy and transforms the petty bourgeois into clerks, at the international level its full imperialist role is only achieved by draining surplus value towards the strongest capitals. Only capital is to be understood in the broadest sense of industrial and technical capacity, even better than in the purely financial sense. The subjection of weak economies to strong economies is thus made by *natural* means, the main coercion being that, inseparable from the system, of the increase in the capital invested in each production cycle.

The subjugation of underdeveloped countries will always remain proportional to the aid that the major powers will provide them, without the economic backwardness of the former ceasing to grow. And national independence accelerates this movement through the voluntary association of local exploiters who, while taking advantage of the traditional dubious deceptions of patriotism, become the carriers of the great imperialist capital. The power of the latter at the present time has little to fear, not even the nationalization of its properties by *sovereign* countries. *The expropriation of the imperialists* brings back to the end their due to the imperialists, through trade and investment in all branches of world production, while continuing to tighten the chain from the weak to the strong. It is not impossible for a country to move from one imperialist ferrule to another, but the brass law of the capitalist economy can only be broken by the suppression of the commodity, starting with its origin, wage labour, which makes man, everywhere in the world, a diminished being, in the grip of national and international demagogues.

The events confirmed Rosa Luxembour's thesis that, against Lenin, she denied the possibility, under capitalism, of a *right of peoples to self-determination*. And Lukacs' argument<sup>9</sup> against this thesis are tainted by dirigiste reformism. Lenin's offer above all a very outdated tactical character today. To the extent that it has been given the force of law, this right has been, exclusively, the right of indigenous exploiters to choose their own imperialism to crush workers as they see fit.

Obviously, it is no longer time to develop capitalism anywhere, but to destroy it everywhere. The global tree structure of the modern imperialist apparatus alone forces the proletariat to consider its action on a global scale, and in the same way in backward countries or colonies as in metropolises, on the ground

of social revolution and not on that of the capitalist nation. Revolutionary action must be based on the right of the exploited to self-determination, to overthrow capitalism and the nation and to engage in an international socialist economy.

The *national revolution*, the industrialization of underdeveloped countries, the *progressive role of the Third World*, etc., are all reactionary decoys. They can only do each imperialist bloc a favour against its opponent. Without social revolution, we can only move from Washington to Moscow, or vice versa, as the cases of Cuba under Castro and Yugoslavia undoubtedly prove. Even a war like that of Algeria, about which the entire French left, unable to take the side of the social revolution in Algeria and France, has pirouetted so much and more to the sound of music played in Moscow, if not Cairo, is the work of the Cold War. Without it, the brave F.L.N. would never have left their role as wards of French imperialism to adopt that of nationalist heroes. Installed in power, they may in no case behave otherwise than as limited partners of Western or Eastern capital. They will replace the black feet <sup>10</sup>.

All the deadlines have expired, all the economic and political developments in the world today are at their lowest point. Thus, in the capitalist form, trialism and technical discoveries can only be applied in a very limited and reactionary way in colonies such as metropolises, and culture and freedom retreat in the face of the dreadful propaganda and police demands of a rotten system; that organizations claiming to be still communists by an odious imposture are in fact ultra-capitalist and are inspired by the most perfidious counter-revolutionary consciousness; this is how the masses of backward countries are abused for the benefit of war preparation, when they could be a factor of primary importance in the overthrow of American-Russian imperialism.

Let us proclaim it: any national struggle is reactionary; colony or metropolis, Russia or the United States, the exploited must have as their immediate and universal objective only the fight for the seizure of power, the expropriation of private or State capital, the international socialization of production and consumption.

## **Revolution or Imperialist War**

By 1914, the forces of production, human potential and culture had reached the level necessary for the achievement of socialist revolution. A great alternative presented itself to humanity and in particular to the proletariat: continuous revolution or wars, suppression of capitalism or decadence and fall into barbarism. In fact, two wars have exterminated tens of millions of men and destroyed the work of several generations, with the sole aim of imposing on the world the domination of one of the slave blocs. On two occasions in less than thirty years, the rulers of the belligerent countries have called on their respective populations to massacre those of the *enemy* countries; in the name of freedom, civilization, law and future well-being, promising for tomorrow, like all religions, what they do not accept to give today. To establish a new global balance, yesterday's allies are once again willing to trigger a new carnage, which now can lead to the annihilation of the human race.

For the working masses, war represents the most terrible scourge: pushed far from their class objectives, they are trained to fight for the defence of the privileged of each belligerent country. Contrary to what bourgeois and social-democratic propaganda, as well as the fascist or Stalinist reaction, try to make believe, there is never a collective national interest, but only class interests, those of the proletariat being the only ones to be confused with those of humanity.

War - sometimes its simple threat - by accentuating the misery of the exploited classes and military supremacy, provokes a generalized social regression, favourable to all reactionary enterprises. But governments, both Western and Eastern, cannot avoid war because it is included in the mechanism of their system. It cannot be avoided any more by the pacifist movements, which are still powerless. We must uproot its cause, that is, capitalism. It should be recalled that if the proletarians on both sides had, in 1914, attacked their respective governments instead of killing each other, humanity would have spared itself fifty years of calamities, oppression and conflicts. But the workers leaders, in association with the exploiters, pushed for war on both sides and thus imposed on the working class the reactionary dilemma of destroying one group of countries for the benefit of another. The proletariat thus suffers a serious failure and an immense ideological retreat. The internationalist action of Lenin, Trotsky and some of the Bolsheviks, by allowing the victory of the Russian Revolution, replaced in its exact terms the historical dilemma of humanity, by calling once again on the peoples to seize the economy and political power.

It is indisputable that the betrayal of the leaders of the Socialist International would have been rather limited in scope if the Russian Revolution had not itself been betrayed a few years after its victory. But long before 1939, the Third International and the Kremlin government had rejected the dilemma of historical evolution and made it their own alternative through reaction. The Popular Front had not yet made its official appearance, that their policy, knowingly directed towards war, had no more meticulous objective than to paralyse the revolutionary action of the proletariat. Thanks to the *communist* parties linked to Moscow, a chauvinist and reactionary orientation was still imposed on the masses. Alongside the Axis powers against the *Anglo-American plutocracy* (German-Russian Pact and suppression of the German-speaking Stalinist press), as well as against fascism\* (participation in the war in the camp of *democracies* and national resistance), the Kremlin and its parties only changed imperialist camps. The debacle thus caused among the masses of the world cannot be compared to any other. It remains the main cause of the current demoralization of the proletarians, which makes them easily manageable by Stalinist, clerical or military devices.

Such a policy allowed the Russian counterrevolution to become the second imperialist power in the world, not without the material and moral support of the first. To humanity, it has led to the division of the planet into two zones of influence, the false propaganda of *peaceful coexistence* which is practically translated into the *cold war* and the balance of permanent terror.

*Coexistence* or Cold War are in reality the obverse and reverse of a single ductile strategy, likely to venture into local hostilities, or to be content for a certain period of time with the delimitation of undisputed areas of influence, or to take the ultimate military decision, according to the imperatives of expansion, internal political requirements, or the confidences of secret service spies. In any case, and despite the restraint that thermonuclear weapons impose on the two giants, the balance of terror will be followed by the disintegration of half or more of humanity, if the masses do not act first.

At the height of human exploitation by man, a permanent and legal class war, capitalism reveals militarily, in the most undeniable and terrifying way, its complete obsolescence as a system and its incompatibility with immediate needs and human aspirations. In the instruments of war, whose murderous capacity extends far beyond men and primates, to rudimentary organic life, the capitalist form of the instruments of production is hypostasized, which, by permeating social relations in general, gradually suffocates humanity, even assuming that peace lasts indefinitely. The solution to the dilemma is urgent: to end the current society or to degenerate.

In such conditions, congresses or *peace* movements led by representatives or friends of one or the other bloc are in reality a war commodity, if not a direct regiment of the working class. Proletarian internationalism demands simultaneous action against the American and Russian blocs, not in favour of peace between them, a reactionary status quo, but against their respective capitalist structures, the source of their rivalry for the hegemonic exploitation of the world. And this task becomes impracticable without pillorying, in the revolutionary assemblies and press of all countries, in the very factories, the thread clamps of the two main imperialist armies. Revolutionary defeatism is not outdated as some innovators who are moving backwards claim; on the contrary, its necessity is felt in full peace, and extends beyond the economic realm. The main enemy still continues to be in our own country, but in almost all of them we can and must also strike the clerks of external imperialism.

In the face of the balance of terror, it is becoming urgent to postulate the right of workers in all countries - the basic right to preserve life, without which any other right becomes a derision - to demand and carry out the dismantling of all factories and industries of war, nuclear or conventional, to dissolve armies and to erase borders.

The American proletariat could decisively contribute to creating a world movement in this direction, while opening a breach in totalitarianism, which links the possible action of Russian, Chinese and other workers. But it is essential that its most conscious part begins by unequivocally condemning its own imperialism, and that it undertakes this task with enthusiasm. Thus revolutionaries would be in a better position everywhere to organize fraternization with the proletariat of the other bloc, by forcing, if necessary, - and it will be - the police cordon.

## **Marxist perspectives**

In the old capitalist countries, the state, the police, the laws, the courts centralize and represent the interests of all individual capitalists. In Stalinist Russia, the state is the sole exploiter; in it are centralized capitalist ownership and exploitation, as well as the police, army and courts. The appearance of such a complete totalitarian regime was not in the perspective of Marx and Engels, whose starting point was the development of capitalism, its annihilation and its overcoming according to internal revolutionary needs. Their analysis and perspectives being at the time when capitalism was about to reach its peak, did not allow them to discern the specific features of its decline. The considerable development of the workers movement in the last years of their existence could, moreover, give them hope that the revolutionary party of the proletariat would destroy capitalist society at a time when it would cease to have a positive value for all humanity.

While Marx and Engels sometimes considered socialist revolution inevitable, they never considered it an automatic process. However, their assertions about the inevitability of socialism have given many *Marxists* a pretext for mechanical conceptions foreign to the revolutionary spirit. At the heart of these is the idea that economic centralization remains a sign of the positive evolution of capitalism, if not the beginning of socialism. However, experience shows that the concentration of capital, once a progressive factor in social evolution, is reactionary beyond a certain limit. This limit cannot be set by figures, as it is co-determined by other factors, such as the cultural and political level, the degree of ideological and economic freedom granted to the masses, and the general maturity of society, what could be called the *age* of the system. Once this limit of progressiveness has been reached (and who could doubt that it is already behind us?) society can only progress through revolution and this, regardless of the degree of development or concentration of each national economy. Under penalty of servitude, the conscious intervention of man must break the automatism of concentration, which has become regressive.

To persist in seeing in the centralization of the means of production a positive evolution leads, on the contrary, to the already criticized conception, according to which the disappearance of the bourgeoisie as a possessing class and the nationalization of the economy constitute, in the transitional society, the material basis from which communism would spontaneously emerge, provided that the bourgeoisie does not reappear. The *Marxists* who defend such theories sooner or later, as we have already seen, end up admitting that Stalinism accomplishes, through nationalizations, the essential task of revolution; this is the opposite camp.

Marx's perspectives on the development of capitalism have been broadly confirmed, but some new aspects have emerged that characterize the era of the decadence of capitalist society. Indeed, it is now possible to attribute a historical significance to State capitalism, the last of the transformations caused by the concentration of capital, acting on individual property as a law inherent in the system. Whether it comes from Stalinism, Nazism, Western democracies or Pan-Arabism with its resonances worthy of the Biblical Philistines, statehood gives concrete form and prolongs the general trend of capitalism as seen by Marx.

In the first stage of modern capitalism, that of the liberal economy, ownership, strictly individual, corresponded only to the capital invested in the company. Competition was the result of the struggle between capitalist individuals, in a market so small that it rarely exceeded the national level. Generated by the very process of capital accumulation and by the development of mechanization, the need to invest increasingly considerable sums caused the association of individual capitalists and, finally, the appearance of the public limited company, in which immense capital is invested, coming from a multitude of individual capitalists, without them really intervening in their management.

In the second stage, that of imperialism, public limited companies group into trusts and cartels that regulate prices on a large scale, while waging a fierce struggle to conquer markets and raw materials. The State which, in the previous stage, ensured a relative balance between the capitalists, becomes, in the imperialist stage, the executing agent of trusts and cartels, the most powerful of which are working to ensure control. This is the first sign of the decadence of capitalist society, which is therefore characterized by an enormous expansion of the war industry.

The third stage or state capitalism is a mechanical consequence of the previous process, which wars and counter-revolutions accelerate. Any backward country can do this, but only driven by backward interests, just as the world's revolutionary demands allow it to access socialist revolution on the same basis as the most industrialized countries. The Russian Revolution is inexplicable without the global maturity of ideas and the economy, which would have made it possible to undertake socialism. Just as well, but in the reactionary sense, Stalinism directly reached the maximum degree of centralization and capitalist exploitation in the world.

At this third stage, since the means of production cannot maintain their structure solely through the care of individual owners, they are placed under the protection of the State, the supreme representative of exploitation, *the ideal collective capitalist* (Engels), in which ownership is entirely concentrated. This becomes undivided property of the members of the social class or caste that holds political power, to such an extent that it loses - in Russia for example - any relationship with the direct investment of capital by individual owners. In old capitalism, now disappeared almost everywhere, the exercise of political power was a consequence of wealth; in state capitalism, wealth goes right away with the possession of any part of political power. The dominating circle tends to tighten and become more despotic than ever. The State, which owns and collects the surplus value, distributes it among its servants, which spurs low standards towards the highest placed groups, which are always very small. For their part, the workers are living more bent than ever by the slavery of wage labour, imposed at will by the State, the sole boss. The economic gap between exploiters and exploited, the arbitrariness of some and the subjection of others, are brought to a point never reached before. *Increasingly, capital appears as a social power whose official is capitalism.* (K. Marx) - This is the state capitalism, the level of degeneration of current society, that counterfeiters present to the proletariat as socialism.

The bourgeoisie, the class at the height of the development of capitalism, has performed an important historical function; it was and continues to be a matter for revolutionaries to put an end to this capitalism, its state and its classes. Otherwise, the decadence of the system, which has already begun, will not be the work of a distinct class, but of castes or bureaucracies dominating the State and its terrifying means of repression, which are breaking up society and leading it to barbarism. This is one of the most striking lessons in recent history.

Since the inter-war period, the involution, or retrograde movement of capitalist society, has manifested itself in various ways: one of the first chronologically, was the appearance of huge armies of unemployed people in Europe and the United States. In Russia, the increase in forced labour camps was equivalent to unemployment, and it led to the degradation of the workforce. Even today, despite the millions of men mobilized in the two blocs, unemployment has not disappeared. But the most brutal sign of degeneration was undoubtedly the 1939-45 war, whose reactionary consequences appeared increasingly overwhelming: the distribution of the world and rivalry between Russia and the United States as leaders, the military occupation of several nations, the disappearance or separation of others, the endemic war economy, the thermonuclear threat that no agreement between the two Empires would eliminate; a deterioration in the consciousness of the working masses and society in general, which each bloc cultivates in its own way. Peace, or more precisely, the armistice we are living in, has seen such ferocious methods of exploitation take root that the fixed salary and the eight-hour day have disappeared almost everywhere. The *piecework* pay, which the workers' movement had succeeded in eradicating, appears in many ways: bonuses, allowances, which the organization of work, chains and timing - if not the machines themselves - are responsible for perfecting. Workers are thus confronted with the need to produce more and more and to work more and more overtime voluntarily, when it is not the union contract that imposes it on them.

The result of these *scientific* methods of capital development, whose initiative is often due to the Russian counter-revolution<sup>11</sup>, is an exhaustion of workers and an intellectual drowsiness very useful to their enemies, in addition to the general lowering of the professional quality inseparable from modern technology in the service of exploitation. Most workers are just maneuvers attached to a machine. The specialists themselves are so much so that they too lack a profession.

The increasing output of workers and machines has led to a monstrous centralization of the instruments of production, i.e. capital, which confers on it a pernicious economic and disciplinary tyranny over the workforce. And while the owners assemble in a Common Market with a view to an International Market (in the other block in COMECON<sup>12</sup> the workers remain separated, not only into blocks and nations, but within them, by industries, from one company to another, from one category to another, and, in each establishment, they undergo a surveillance and regulation all military, which would have been refused thirty years ago as an attack on their dignity.

This contrast between the freedom of manoeuvre of capitalism and the paralysis of the proletariat is the direct consequence of the rejection of world revolution between 1917 and 1937, the results of the last war aggravating this negative consequence. The swelling of capitalism has been rigorously conditioned, for decades, in both the eastern and western zones, by the revolutionary inaction of the proletariat. Hence the doubly reactionary nature of the current super-concentration of capital. It was superfluous for the communist overthrow of society, and it put the exploited as a whole in front of the need to rebuild their revolutionary organizations stone by stone, even though they find themselves besieged by a complex set of enemies stretching from large private or state capital, to the parties and trade unions that complete the structure of the expanded accumulation.

In the midst of this uninspiring situation, the historical task that Marxism attributes to the proletariat - the transformation of the exploitative society into communism - takes on the greatest social urgency on a global scale. Without it, and in the best of cases, humanity will shrivel up in a Byzantinism worse than the one that prolonged the loss of Greco-Roman civilization. But the recovery of the combative spirit and the resurgence of a revolutionary situation cannot be expected, as some Marxists who lean towards economic automatism claim, from one of these cyclical crises, wrongly called *overproduction*. These were tremors that regularized the chaotic development of the system, not an effect of its exhaustion. Directed capitalism knows how to mitigate or dodge them in various ways, and moreover, even if one of them occurs, it will not by itself generate any revolutionary movement. Without the intervention of something different, it could, on the contrary, favour the tortuous designs of the new reactionaries, who are waiting for their time, five-year plans in their briefcase, and production standards in their hands. The general crisis of capitalism is its exhaustion as a social system. It consists, briefly speaking, in that the instruments of production as capital and the distribution of products, limited by wage labour, have become incompatible with human needs, and even with the maximum possibilities that technology offers to economic development. This crisis is insurmountable for capitalism; the West as well as Russia aggravate it day after day.

Consequently, the recovery of the proletariat must necessarily come from a vast shake-up against the economic and political conditions that the expanded and directed accumulation of capital has imposed step by step since the interwar period. It cannot be expected without a break with the traditional pattern of *immediate demands* and *revolutionary approach*. Today, the immediate thing to be achieved is the disappearance of bonuses, overtime and piecework, as well as a significant reduction in the working day, without the average pay decreasing under any circumstances. The general motto must be: less work, more pay! Secondly, we must face the frenetic accumulation of capital, which is increasingly reactionary: *Any increase in production to the working class that produces it*, a claim whose perspective is not state capitalism but the organisation of communism.

Politically, the working class must begin by asserting its right to reject any factory regulations or employment contracts, dictated either by capital or by capital and the unions jointly, that is, its sovereign right to make direct decisions on all its problems and strike movements, through elected and revocable delegates at all necessary levels. Finally, we must not forget the individual or collective right of the proletariat to political intervention alongside the workers of any other country. This is the path of European and world revolutionary unity, against the retrograde unification of capital around Washington and Moscow. Workers in countries that retain certain bourgeois democratic freedoms will thus take the course of proletarian democracy and they will be able to contribute to breaking the totalitarianism that prevails in countries such as Spain, Russia, China, Egypt, etc.

The above is sufficient to make it clear to what extent the return of the proletariat to the fight for world revolution depends on an ideological renewal. A period of mass insurrection can in no way be the unilateral result of either a *cyclical crisis* or even the general crisis of capitalism. If the presence of healthy revolutionary parties capable of arousing the enthusiasm of the best and symbolizing the hope of the oppressed is not combined with this crisis, any local revolt will fail without generating an international revolutionary movement.

## **The Revolutionary Organization**

In addition to the material causes that left the proletariat at the mercy of its enemies, it is worth noting, as an additional political factor, the bankruptcy of organizations that, having opposed Stalinist corruption from day one, were in the best conditions to regroup new revolutionary parties. Trotsky's work and the original movement of the Fourth International made a considerable contribution to the understanding of the Russian Thermidor. But the organization, which continues to claim to claim to be Trotskyism, far from completing and developing Trotsky's analyses and its own programme, taking advantage of all political and social developments, is only whispering empty phrases about the nature of the Russian economy. It refuses to accept the counter-revolutionary and capitalist nature of Stalinism, and it has welcomed as a *liberator* the entry of Russian troops into Eastern Europe, while they were snatching from the workers the weapons and factories they had seized in more than one case. His recent shameful collusion with various bourgeois nationalisms - that of Algeria in the first place - had long been prepared by his abandonment of the Marxist motto: *Against the imperialist war, civil war*, in favour of a national defence that the noun *Resistance* did not even claim to mask.

In short, by considering that state capitalism in the Russian way is the economic basis of socialism, the Fourth International ostensibly denies the revolutionary task that was at the origin of its foundation. True modern reformism is indeed the Fourth International, plus its ideologically related organizations. They fulfil, in relation to centralized capitalism in the state, a role similar to that of the former social democracy in relation to private and

monopoly capitalism. Without breaking with them, it is impossible to tread a path conducive to revolution.

As for the groups that left this International after the 1948 Congress, or that claim to *continue* it - as most recently those in Latin America - they are locked in a Trotskyist orthodoxy as negative as any other, and on top of that, a false market. They have fallen into the same opportunisms, and also see in any rag of a nationalist flag the beginning of a *permanent revolution*, when in reality it is blocking the way to the proletariat. They interpret the Transition Programme in a right-handed way, even though the experience and needs of the masses command in the most pressing way to overcome it.

For its part, the *Socialism or Barbarity* trend, which also emerged from the already softened Fourth International, has fallen behind the French *left* failure on all issues and at all important moments: the Algerian war and the colonial problem, 13 May 1958 and Gaullist power, trade unions and current workers' struggles, attitude towards Stalinism and dirigisme in general. So much so that, although it recognizes in the Russian economy a state capitalism, it has only contributed to making people's minds even more troubled. By expressly renouncing to fight against the current and to say nothing to the working class *that it cannot understand* it has voluntarily condemned itself to bankruptcy. Without nerves this *tendency* has given way to a versatility that borders on existentialist funambulism. To her, as to others in the United States, it is worth recalling Lenin's word: *Only a few pitiful intellectuals think that it is enough to talk about the life of the factory and to repeat what they have known for a long time.*

As for the groups and parties which, in the Russian-Chinese dispute, have more or less taken Beijing's side, they are located very much to the right of what, with great tolerance, can be considered as revolutionary avant-garde<sup>13</sup>. Beijing is only imitating Russian state capitalism, the Stalinist counterrevolution. That its former protector treats China, and only agrees to treat it as a semi-colony, is the right currency for the role its leaders have long played. But this does not give him the right to speak in the name of the proletariat and the revolution. In 1925-1927, Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai destroyed the Chinese soviets for the greater glory of the Russian Thermidor. They are now reaping what they have sown. Russia, which has become a great imperialist power, demands dividends on the capital gain from five or six hundred million Chinese, in addition to the subordination due to it in terms of Asian influence. This is why the *ideological quarrel* contains only euphemisms and hollow words specific to the capitalist bureaucracy when it is going through serious difficulties.

By falling behind Beijing, we trample on the ideology of the proletariat as much as by bowing to Moscow. Only mental and psychological destitution - linked to thirty years of Stalinism - still allows the Beijing Mandarins to talk about a revolution that must also be carried out in China, and against them. The followers they manage to gather, they will use them to establish a compromise with Moscow, - first attempt -, and, if it fails, with Washington.

The most radical groups on the Stalinist periphery understand by *return to revolutionary politics* the return to the Popular Front, which was precisely the imperialist war tactic put into play, under a reformist appearance, at the very time when counter-revolution was marching in Russia with a beating drum, cutting off the heads of everything that continued to be at all revolutionary. The reality is that all these groups or parties are a by-product of the crisis that initiated the decomposition of the Stalinist counterrevolution and that they have absolutely nothing positive to propose. The workers and young men who, as a result of a thousand fortuitous circumstances, found themselves in their midst, will be lost for any revolutionary work, unless they recapitulate with the greatest critical rigour the whole work of Stalinism as capitalist counter-revolution in Russia and in the world. This is an essential preamble to be able to contribute, in theory and in practice, to the rebirth of a world proletarian party.

Never have we talked so much about *victorious revolutions*, and never have we seen an era at this reactionary level, from the East to the West. It seems that capital is about to reaffirm its domination for a thousand years, by shoving into the brains of its victims, like a religion, the idea that planned exploitation is socialism and that the police dictatorship of a party is the government of the proletariat. Appearances are deceiving. On either side of the border between the two blocs, formidable revolutionary energies have accumulated. They can be set in motion at any time, anywhere; but their crystallization into proletarian victory will prove impossible without a new revolutionary organization. On the other hand, the creation of this one will precipitate an irresistible avalanche of the masses, all energies directed towards the supreme objective. A true civilization will emerge for the first time among men.

The first International brought workers together across borders and, before its dissolution, had carried out a huge ideological work which, even today, is one of the main sources of revolutionary inspiration. The Second International contested capitalism for the rights and standard of living of the workers, but refusing to bring it down, it finally integrated itself into its legality, which is nothing but darkness for the exploited. The Third International led the struggle for world revolution for several years while continuing the educational work of the First, until the Thermidor began to use it as an instrument of conservative foreign policy. Totally degraded by the Stalinist counterrevolution, it assisted all its crimes in Russia and contributed strongly to the defeat of the world proletariat. For its part, the Fourth International, which held immense possibilities despite its organic exiguity, squandered its theoretical heritage from exegesis to exegesis until it finally lost its independence as a movement.

A new revolutionary organization is essential for the world proletariat. However, unless it incorporates into its thinking the severe ideological and organizational experiences that have occurred since 1914, its constitution will prove impossible, or at least seriously flawed. The defeats of the past must mark the way to victory. Such an organisation must go beyond traditional national party rallies and also reject any *centralism* allowing a handful of leaders to put *the basis* for accomplished disciplinary decisions. It must prefigure the future world without borders or class. With this in mind, we

adopt this Manifesto, which we propose to all revolutionary groups and individuals in the world. It is necessary to break sharply with dead tactics and ideas, to tell the working class the whole truth without reluctance, to rectify without regret all obstacles to the rebirth of the revolution, whether these obstacles come from Lenin, Trotsky or Marx, and to adopt a programme of demands that is consistent with the maximum possibilities of modern technology and culture in the service of humanity.

## **The Tasks of our Time**

Organization of the action of the working class, direct and independent of any trade union, with the general currencies detailed below:

### **Less Work and More Pay**

1. Elimination of piecework and the basic wage that stimulates it, by replacing it with weekly, daily or other work.
2. Reduction of the work week to 30 hours (first step), without any reduction in salary to which premiums, allowances, overtime, etc., in short, everything that constitutes, conceals or spurs piecework, must be incorporated.
3. Removal of timekeeping and controls that intensify exploitation, suffocate the worker and diminish his personal dignity. Only those interested in each company or branch of production are qualified to determine the pace of work.
4. Any increase in production (its current value), whether it comes from a higher worker's output or from technical improvement, must be collectively the responsibility of the workers who are the authors, until the entire class decides on its distribution. This is the way to limit the accumulation of capital, which is becoming more and more overwhelming, and to truly raise the standard of living of the exploited.
5. Work for all, unemployed and young people, and reduction of working hours in proportion to the number of workers and the improvement of tools. This is a class solidarity that will have excellent consequences, as well as a right to work that implies in return the supreme *right to laziness*, which today does not exist despite the holidays, a simple physical relaxation similar to hours of sleep.
6. Denunciation of collective agreements not directly established with the company by the workers and approved by them.
7. Free distribution, to the poorest social strata, of food and consumer articles stored as *production surpluses*, distributed within the country itself or in any other country, without distinction of block.

To independent action for the defence of elementary freedoms must preside over the motto:

## The right to speak, organise and strike for the Proletariat

These rights are confiscated by the parties and their trade union organisations which have become inseparable from decadent capitalism. In the factories, union-management agreements have suppressed individual freedom, as well as the collective freedom of workers, and especially that of revolutionaries, so that in many places they can be legally dismissed for talking about politics, for distributing propaganda, or for consulting each other for any purpose. It therefore becomes essential to claim:

1. Freedom of policy, speech and distribution of the press, leaflets, etc., in the workplace, as well as freedom of assembly in the same places when workers' self-defence so requires.
2. The challenge of any internal company rules dictated by the *bourgeois* boss or the State, or by the latter and the trade unions jointly. In each undertaking or profession, the workers themselves, through delegates elected for this purpose, must alone hold, to the exclusion of all others, the power to establish the internal regulations. Its approval at the general meeting is an essential precautionary measure.
3. The exclusive and unlimited sovereignty of workers, without the need for any trade union or government guarantee, to undertake an economic and political strike.
4. The right to speak and vote to all interested parties, outside any trade union or political affiliation, to establish the demands of each strike, the time of its outbreak and its end, and to resolve all related problems.
5. The right to elect directly, without any trade union or judicial formality, permanent delegates of workshops, factories, professions, etc., to represent workers before management.
6. The right to consult with workers in other industries or activities, throughout the country and internationally, in the event of any eventuality and at any time, through the above-mentioned delegates.

Such a direction must favour for the proletariat the recovery and increase of its freedom of expression and action, now suppressed in most countries, or transformed, in the less dictatorial ones, into a monopoly of parties and trade unions, which in reality constitute the legal structure of the exploitation of labour by capital. In countries such as Russia, China and their imitators, we must start by fighting against the ignominy of fines, police or legal measures for delays or absence from work, against the debasing *work book*, and for the right of the masses to speak and organize against the dictator party. Without a bold struggle for these claims, the proletariat will continue to lose ground to capital and increase its oppressive capacity.

The immediate minimum demands listed above can play a very important role in the renewal of proletarian activity throughout the world without distinction between backward or advanced countries. However, since it is by no means a question of improving or developing the economy based on *wage-capital*, but of putting an end to it, it is essential to link them without interruption to the

supreme measures of world proletarian revolution, without losing sight of the fact that in certain cases it will become possible to start directly with them:

## Down with Capital and Wage Labour

1. Political power to the workers, who will exercise it through democratically appointed and revocable committees at any time.
2. Expropriation of industrial, financial and agricultural capital, not by the State, trade unions or any other institution, which would give rise, as in Russia, to an even more brutal capitalism, but by the whole working class.
3. Workers' management of the production and distribution of products, which is inseparable from planning exclusively dictated by the needs of the disappearance of the classes.
4. Destruction of all instruments of war, both atomic and conventional, dissolution of armies and police forces, conversion of war industries into consumer production.
5. Individual armament of the exploited under capitalism, territorially organized, according to the scheme of democratic management and distribution committees. This is one of the best guarantees that social transformation can find.
6. Incorporation into useful activities of all segments of the population who today carry out parasitic or clearly harmful work: this will make it possible, by making maximum use of modern technology and science, and at the very least of human effort, to continuously increase production while reducing the working time devoted to it. It is also a way of overcoming the current imposed division between manual and intellectual work.
7. Elimination of wage labour, starting by raising the standard of living of the poorest social strata and finally achieving the free distribution of products according to the needs of each individual. There is no other evidence of the transformation of capitalism into socialism and the disappearance of classes.
8. Removal of borders and constitution of a single government and a single economy, as the proletariat wins in the various countries.

Finally, it is imperative to specify that the transformation of capitalism into communism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, is an inseparable Marxist sociological concept from the broader democracy within the working masses, themselves in the process of disappearance as a class. *The emancipation of workers will be the work of the workers themselves.* Those who identify him with the dictatorship of one or even several parties, in the same way as the so-called *parliamentary democracy* capitalist dictatorship, turn their backs on him. Only the disappearance of the mercantile law of value, based entirely on wage labour, will lead to the extinction of the State. Failing to move towards this disappearance in the early days of the revolution, the State quickly transformed itself into an organizer of counter-revolution.

The objective conditions for communism as history could create them are present and mature, to excess, on a global scale. But it is only on the wings of revolutionary subjectivity that man will cross the distance from the reign of necessity to the reign of freedom.

## Proletarians of all Countries, Unite, Abolish Armies, Police, War Production, Borders, Wage Labour!

Milan, 1961

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1. P. Broué et E. Témime, *La Révolution et la Guerre d'Espagne*.↔

2. Among other things, let us recall the following work: *The Socialist Worker's Party and the Imperialist War*, by the above-mentioned group; *Revolutionaries in front of Russia and World Stalinism* by G. Munis; *The Manifesto of the Exegetes* by Benjamin Péret; *Jalones de Derrota, promesa de Victoria (Spain 1930-39)* by G. Munis; *Open letter to the Internationalist Communist Party, French Section of the Fourth Int.* by Natalia Sedova Trotsky, B. Péret and G. Munis; *Reason and actions of the International Secretariat* by G. Munis; *Explanation and appeal to activists, groups and sections of the Fourth Int.* by the Spanish Section Committee.↔

3. We have at the disposal of those who request it, the letter of termination and the insulting reply of the Fourth Int. and the latest written statement by Natalia Sedova Trotsky.↔

4. American workers employed in automated machines call them *men killers*.↔

5. See Lenin, *State Capitalism and Cash Tax*.↔

6. In his speech to the All-Russian Congress of Economic Councils, held in Moscow in May 1918.↔

7. Some remarkable examples between a thousand: At the first International Conference in Geneva, attended by a delegation from Moscow, when the Stalinist Thermidor was already on the horizon, the British representative, Chamberlain, the future Munich man, exclaimed: "Britain will not deal with the Soviet Union until Trotsky has been shot." | Trotsky's expulsion from the C.C. and the Russian Party, as well as his later deportation to Alma Ata, were applauded by the bourgeois press and the Western chancelleries as a sure sign of the reactionary fraction's victory over the revolutionary fraction. | His Majesty's lawyer Pit publicly endorsed Moscow's judicial falsifications in 1936-38, while shortly afterwards, billionaire Eric A. Johnston (then president of the American Chamber of Commerce) welcomed the 1917 extermination of the men. In the same years, Laval obtained from Stalin a full patriotic subordination of the Western Stalinist parties. The French Party's motto was: *The police with us*. | In 1937-38, the imperialist capitals looked with relief and encouraged the repression of the Spanish revolution by the Negrin government, which Stalin's men dominated and inspired directly. | In 1944, the Greek proletariat, raised and almost victorious, was brutally repressed by a coalition of Stalinists, clerics and English troops. Churchill, after a personal conference on repression with the Greek *communist* party, bragged in the House of Commons that he had crushed *the true communist revolution, the one that is also feared in Moscow*. | Finally, Russian tanks could not have machine-gunned the Budapest proletariat in 1956 without the passive complicity of Western imperialism. For them, as for Russia, the assertion of rival power is always preferable to the triumph of a revolution that would set the masses of the whole world in motion. | A complete list of similar facts, still hidden or falsified by the propaganda of the two blocks, would fill a large volume.↔

8. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, part of Germany, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, not to mention Yugoslavia and Albania.↔

9. In *History and Class Struggle*, in the penultimate chapter.↔

10. This chapter was written before Algeria's independence at the beginning of 1961.↔

11. Programme of the Twenty-second Congress of Russian Technocrats (July 1961):... *ensure maximum production and production yield everywhere for each ruble invested (...). Constantly improve the wage and bonus system; control*

*the quantity and quality of work through the ruble; reject the levelling of remuneration.*↵

12. Mutual Economic Assistance Committee.↵

13. Without claiming to appreciate in particular each of these organizations, we can consider the various groups of the *Italian Left*, in France the Communist Programme, in Japan the Revolutionary Communist League and, almost everywhere in the world, some groups of Trotskyist or independent anarchist origin.↵