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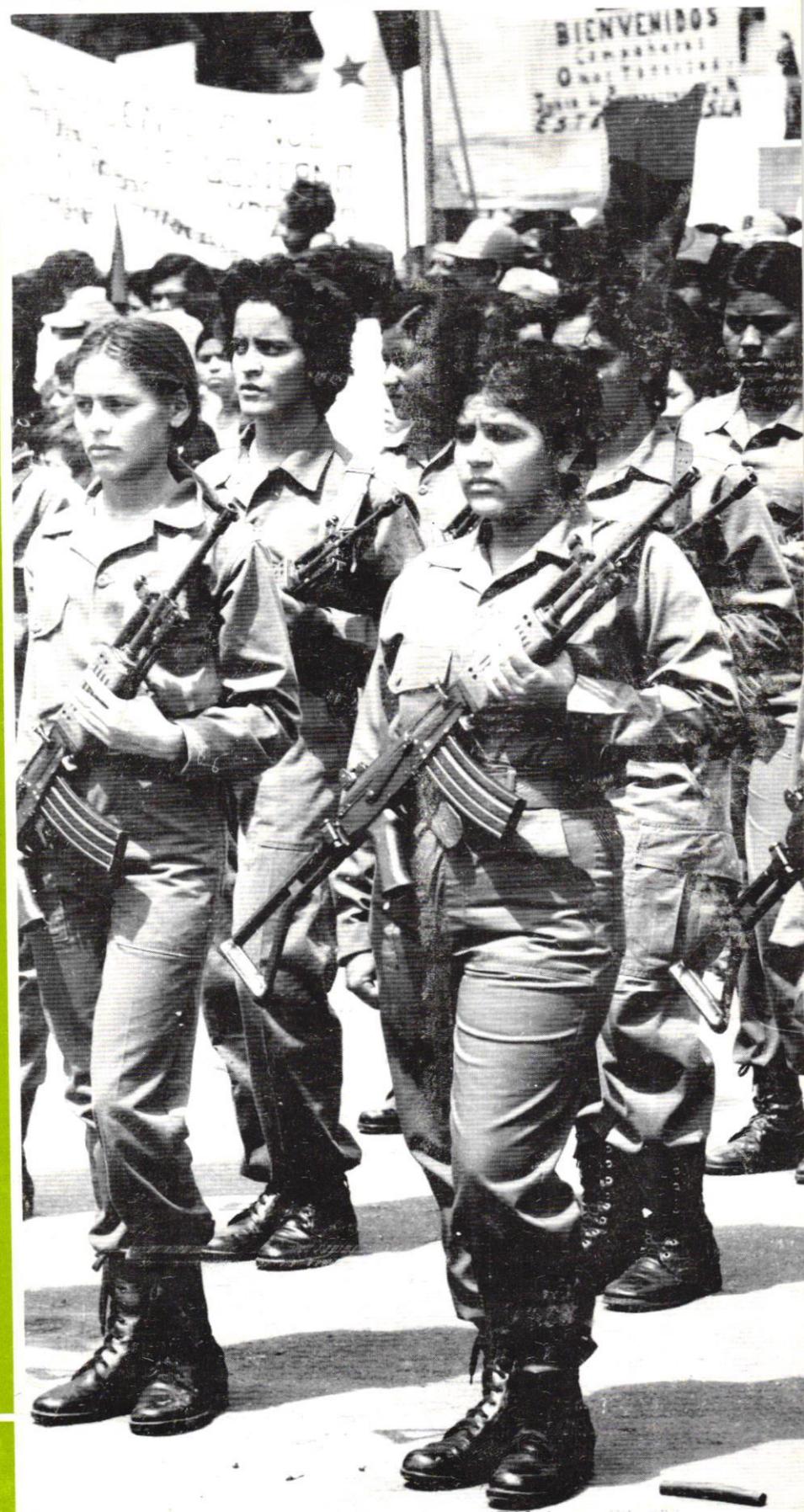
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## In defense of the Permanent Revolution

by  
Ernest Mandel



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## INTRODUCTION

"In defense of the Permanent Revolution" is a reply by Ernest Mandel, a member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, to an article by Doug Jenness from the American Socialist Workers Party that already appeared in English in the June 1982 issue of *The Militant/International Socialist Review*.

Jenness' article — entitled "Our Political Continuity with Bolshevism" — followed two earlier contributions by the same authors: Doug Jenness' "How Lenin saw the Russian Revolution" *Militant/International Socialist Review*, November 1981, and Ernest Mandel's "The Debate Over the Character and Goals of the Russian Revolution" *Militant/International Socialist Review*, April 1982.

The article, made available here to the English-speaking public, originally appeared in the French-language organ of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, *Quatrieme Internationale*, no 10, January-February-March 1983.

The Mandel-Jenness debate deals with key strategic questions facing the international workers movement:

- the theory of permanent revolution
- the road to power for the working class
- what we can learn from the Russian Revolution and subsequent revolutionary struggles in this respect;
- the contributions by Lenin and Trotsky on this question as well as the balance sheet of the big debates in the Russian socialist movement at the beginning of this century;
- the conclusions to be drawn from this in terms of united front policies, political alliances, etc. today.

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# In defense of the Permanent Revolution

Ernest MANDEL

Comrade Doug Jenness' article "Our Political Continuity with Bolshevism" (*International Socialist Review*, April 1982) opens a new stage in the debate on revolutionary strategy for the less developed countries. In his first contribution (1), comrade Jenness limited himself to coming up with a "new reading" of Lenin's writings. Now, he has moved to a direct attack on Trotsky and the theory of permanent revolution — often explicitly, sometimes by feigning a polemic with me.

## A FALSE METHOD

Comrade Jenness' article examines the vital problem of revolutionary strategy for the less developed capitalist countries by means of a thoroughly false method. Instead of looking at *real revolutionary processes* as they developed from the Russian revolution of 1917 until today, studying the way social classes acted during all these revolutions, the strategies followed by the various parties and political currents that influenced or led these revolutions, the results of these strategies — the victories or defeats that ensued — he essentially concentrates on a *study of the texts*, an examination of what Lenin, Trotsky, Marx and other authors wrote on the question. This method is not materialist. It is dogmatic.

The error in comrade Jenness' method is not just dogmatic. His dogmatism is also scholastic — he selects quotations to try and demonstrate a preconceived thesis. He can't be bothered with reading these works to find out what the authors really thought on a given topic. This is obvious from a large number of cases.

1. Basing himself on a quotation taken out of context from a polemical article written by Trotsky in 1933, *The Class Character of the Soviet State*, comrade Jenness attributes to Trotsky (on page 35 of his article) the idea that the workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, was not created in Russia starting from the 1917 October revolution, but only from Autumn 1918, or even 1921, or later still. There is no basis for such a supposition.

In that article, Trotsky was in fact

polemicizing against those who want to apply absolute (and therefore false) norms to the definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat so as to deny the existence of a workers state in the USSR in 1933. With fine irony, he shows how such arguments lead to absurd conclusions. He tells them: if we were to follow your use of absolute norms, then the dictatorship of the proletariat would not have existed after October 1917, it would not have existed in 1918, nor in 1920, and it would not even have existed during the NEP. In other words, since you deny that it exists under Stalin, it never could have existed. But Trotsky unravels this argument to its absurd conclusion, *not because he agrees with it, but because he rejects it*. For the very paragraph Doug Jenness took the quote from, ends with these words, which comrade Jenness omitted to quote:

"To these gentlemen, the dictatorship of the proletariat is simply an imponderable concept, an ideal norm not to be realized upon our sinful planet" (Leon Trotsky, *Writings 1933-1934*, 1972, p. 106).

In the same article, Trotsky explicitly states:

"The dictatorship of the proletariat was established by means of a political overturn and a civil war of three years."

And:

"So long as the forms of property that have been created by the October revolution are not overthrown, the proletariat remains the ruling class" (op. cit. p. 104) (our emphasis).

He defended without fail until the end of his life, the idea that the dictatorship of the proletariat was indeed achieved by the socialist revolution of October 1917.

2. Comrade Doug Jenness states (p. 36):

"using the scientific criteria for a workers state that Marxists have used since the 1930s, based on our analysis of the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet workers state — a workers state did not come into existence in Russia until at least the autumn of 1918, as Trotsky explained in the 1933 article."

Comrade Doug Jenness does not produce the shadow of a proof that Trotsky or other revolutionary Marxist authors have supposedly modified, "since the

1930s," the definition of the October revolution as establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the other hand, we could quote numerous documents written after the 1933 article which state exactly the opposite:

— In *The Workers State, Thermidor, and Bonapartism*, written in 1934, Trotsky stated:

"October 1917 completed the democratic revolution and began the socialist revolution..."

— *The Revolution Betrayed* written in 1936 starts with the following sentence:

"Owing to the insignificance of the Russian bourgeoisie, the democratic tasks of backward Russia — such as the liquidation of the monarchy and the semifeudal slavery of the peasants — could be achieved only through a dictatorship of the proletariat."

— In *Ninety Years of the Communist Manifesto* (October 1937), he wrote:

"Marx later counterposed the state of the Commune type to the capitalist state. This 'type' later took the very much more graphic form of the Soviets."

— In the *Transitional Program* written in 1938, Trotsky wrote:

"The power of the soviets, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat."

— In his article *From a Scratch to the Danger of Gangrene*, dated 24 January 1940, Trotsky spoke of "the social foundations (of the USSR) established by the October revolution."

— Many authors who are members of the SWP hardly express things differently. In his preface to *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, published in 1973, Joseph Hansen wrote this, concerning the conception of the Russian revolution defended by Trotsky:

"He [Trotsky] did this in his theory of the Permanent revolution, which correctly predicted, twelve years in advance, the course taken by the October 1917 revolution."

— Comrade Dick Roberts wrote in the September 1973 issue of *International Socialist Review*:

"In October, after the Bolsheviks won a majority inside the Soviets, Trotsky and Lenin led a socialist revolution against the provisional government, overthrowing

1. It appeared in the *International Socialist Review* inserted in the *Militant*, Vol. 45, No 42, November 13, 1981.

it and establishing a proletarian dictatorship.”

— And comrade Doug Jenness himself, writing in 1970, stated:

“Although Lenin was in total accord with Trotsky’s analysis that the capitalist class could not lead the Russian Revolution, before 1917, he believed that the revolution would be “democratic” rather than socialist, i.e., that it would not go beyond the bounds of bourgeois democracy. In addition, his justified emphasis on the importance of the peasantry in the Russian Revolution led him, in describing the dynamics of the revolution, to put forward an intermediate formula ascribing to the peasant allies of labor a joint leadership role they were unable to assume. He called for a “democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry” and not in Trotsky’s correct formulation, a dictatorship of the working class supported by the peasantry.” (Doug Jenness, “Introduction” to *Leon Trotsky on the Paris Commune*, N. Y.: Pathfinder, 1970).

3. On Page 37 of his article, comrade Doug Jenness suggests that Lenin in his polemic with Kautsky (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*) had implied, or even explicitly stated (“Things have turned out just as we said they would”), that the proletariat marched alongside the peasantry as a whole in the democratic revolution, and then with the poor peasants alone, in the socialist revolution. But Lenin does not at all say that in his 1918 pamphlet. In fact, he states the contrary. For he is referring to the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry after the conquest of power by the proletariat in October 1917, that is after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and not at all in the course of a so-called democratic revolution in February-March 1917, or some time prior to the October socialist revolution. Comrade Doug Jenness seems to have forgotten even the title of Lenin’s pamphlet which is *THE PROLETARIAN [proletarian and not bourgeois-democratic!] Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. But here are some exact quotes:

Page 413: “Finally, between August and September 1917, that is before the proletarian revolution in Russia (October 25/November 7, 1917)...”

Page 430: “...the power of the soviets, that is the dictatorship of the proletariat in its given form.”

Page 437: “He [Kautsky] does not say that in these theses (of December 26, 1917, on the Constituent Assembly) the question was treated...in relation to the break which emerged in our revolution between the Constituent Assembly and the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

Page 480: “However, a state of the Commune type, the soviet state, tells the truth openly and without ambiguity to the people, and explains to them that it is the dictatorship of the proletariat

and poor peasantry.” (our emphasis in all these quotations.) (Translated from the French).

The list of quotations could be extended further. But what would be the use?

4. Furthermore, comrade Jenness suggests in his article (pp. 37-38) that Lenin maintained after April 1917 that his 1905 positions were confirmed by the course of the Russian revolution of 1917. Apart from the fact that the quotations transcribed by Doug Jenness do not say that at all but refer only to particular aspects of Lenin’s position of 1905 and not to the “democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants,” comrade Doug Jenness eliminates a little detail throughout this passage. In 1905, Lenin said: “But of course it will be a democratic, not a socialist dictatorship.” (Lenin, *C.W.*, Vol. 9, p. 56).

By contrast, after his April 1917 Theses, Lenin never again used the formula “democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants,” (why?) but referred many times to the Russian revolution as establishing (or having established) the dictatorship of the proletariat (the power of the soviets). His entire book *State and Revolution* is given over to this issue.

The *Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People*, written by Lenin on January 4, 1918, and submitted by the Bolshevik fraction to the Constituent Assembly — a document which, for the Bolsheviks, had an historical importance, since it was meant to be the proletarian “counterpart” to the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* of the great French bourgeois revolution — begins with the following words:

“Russia is hereby proclaimed a Republic of Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’, and Peasants’ Deputies. All power centrally and locally is vested in these Soviets” (Lenin, *C.W.*, Vol. 26, p. 423). We already know that for Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks, soviet power was synonymous with the dictatorship of the proletariat. Further on, point 5 of this *Declaration* states:

“To insure the sovereign power of the working people, and to eliminate all possibility of the reestablishment of the power of the exploiters, the arming of the working people, the creation of a socialist Red Army of workers and peasants, and the complete disarming of the propertied classes are hereby decreed.” (Idem. p. 424).

Is there any other state than a workers state, the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that can decree the disarmament of the bourgeoisie, the arming of the workers, the formation of a socialist army?

The Soviet Constitution adopted in July 1918, before the nationalizations of the factories, established preferential voting rights specifically for the proletariat, and stipulated in article 23:

“In the interests of the working class,

the Soviet Socialist Federal Republic shall deprive of their rights individuals and groups of individuals who use them to the detriment of the socialist revolution.”

The program of the Bolshevik Party, adopted in 1919, begins with the following words:

“The October revolution in Russia established the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

The *A.B.C. of Communism*, a popular presentation of this program, written by Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, stated:

“The proletariat, which took power in October 1917,...”

The first congress of the Communist International which met in 1919, adopted Lenin’s theses on “Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat,” which state:

“The form of the dictatorship of the proletariat which is already being practically worked out, that is the power of the soviets...”

“...what defines the power of the soviets is that all soviet state power, the whole state apparatus has a single and permanent basis, the mass organization of the classes that were oppressed by capitalism, that is the workers and semi-proletarians...”

The point is clear: comrade Doug Jenness can only establish an alleged “continuity” with the 1905 positions of Bolshevism on strategy for the Russian revolution, by first junking the whole continuity of the positions of Lenin, the Bolshevik Party, the Communist International, Trotsky, the Left Opposition and the Fourth International, from April 1917 until today.

5. Comrade Doug Jenness protests against my statement (although it is taken literally from Trotsky) that one of the reasons for the differences between Lenin and Trotsky from 1905 to 1916 was the fact that Lenin expected that a victory of the Russian revolution under “the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants” would inaugurate a long period of capitalist development in Russia, the economic and social prerequisite for the later victory of the socialist revolution (the old thesis of the whole Russian Social-Democracy first formulated by Plekhanov and reasserted in the Party program drafted jointly by Lenin and Plekhanov, which only Trotsky had challenged in 1905-1906). To support his point, Doug Jenness quotes the famous sentence from Lenin’s 1905 pamphlet *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, a sentence in which Lenin asserts that one should not erect a Chinese wall between the democratic and socialist revolutions. In our opinion, this sentence refers not to the victory of the socialist revolution (i.e. the seizure of power by the proletariat) but to the beginning of the struggle for the seizure of power. The whole context demonstrates this. At any rate, comrade Doug Jenness’ quote is selective to the point of being scandalous. For the fact is



Workers and soldiers soviet in Russia (DR)

“the guide,” “the leader” of the revolution, “drawing the peasantry in behind it.” The same article gives an important role to soviets along with participation in the revolutionary government (Lenin, *C.W.*, Vol. 15).

But an objective review of the context clearly shows that what is being discussed is still the role of soviets in a *democratic, non-socialist, non-permanent, revolution*, that is in a situation in which the social and economic foundations of capitalism have not been shattered but rather are being intentionally *fostered*.

This follows clearly from a comparison of the stated article with another one Lenin wrote, a few months later, and entitled *Some Sources of the Present Ideological Discord* (November 28, 1909). This article states with no possible uncertainty or misunderstanding:

“...the bourgeois development of Russia is now a foregone conclusion but it is possible in two forms — the so-called “Prussian” form (the retention of the monarchy and landlordism, the creation of a strong, i.e., bourgeois, peasantry on the given historical basis, etc.) and the so-called “American” form (a bourgeois republic, the abolition of landlordism, the creation of a farmer class, i.e., of a free bourgeois peasantry, by means of a marked change of the given historical situation). The proletariat must fight for the second path as offering the greatest degree of freedom and speed of development of the productive forces of capitalist Russia, and *victory in this struggle* is possible only with a revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry.” (Lenin, *C.W.*, Vol. 16, p. 87-88) (emphasis added).

“The proletariat must put its stake on democracy, without exaggerating the latter’s strength and without limiting itself to merely “pinning hopes” on it, but steadily developing the work of propaganda, agitation and organisation, mobilising all the democratic forces — the peasants above all and before all — calling upon them to ally themselves with the leading class, to achieve the “dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry” for the purpose of a full democratic victory and the creation of the best conditions for the quickest and freest development of capitalism.” (Idem, p. 94) (emphasis added).

Unless one assumes Lenin contradicted himself not only between March and December 1909, but also inside the very article he wrote in March 1909 (which contains formulations of the same type as that of December 1909), there is no room for doubt. The revolutionary government he speaks of, as well as the soviets, are in his eyes formations akin to those of the Jacobins of 1792-93, and of the *Jacobin clubs*, i.e. bodies meant to carry out a bourgeois-democratic revolution, to open the road not to expropriations, but to the take-off of capitalism.

In light of all these quotes — and many others could be added both from 1905

capitalism. The working class is, therefore, *most certainly interested* in the broadest, freest, and most rapid development of capitalism...”

“That is why a *bourgeois* revolution is in the highest degree advantageous to the proletariat.” (Idem, p. 45-50) (emphasis in original).

A few months later, Lenin wrote *Socialism and the Peasantry* and stated even more clearly:

“Bourgeois in its social and economic essence, the democratic revolution cannot but express the needs of all bourgeois society.” (Idem, p. 307).

“The mass of the peasants do not and cannot realise that the fullest ‘freedom’ and the ‘justest’ distribution even of all the land, far from destroying capitalism, will, on the contrary, create the conditions for a particularly extensive and powerful development of capitalism.” (Idem, p. 309) (emphasis added).

Similarly, in his 1905 article entitled “The Petty-Bourgeoisie and Proletarian Socialism,” he stated:

“In Russia, just as was the case in other countries, it is a necessary concomitant of the democratic revolution, which is bourgeois in its social and economic content. It is not in the least directed against the foundations of the bourgeois order, against commodity production, or against capital...Consequently, full victory of this peasant movement will not abolish capitalism: on the contrary, it will create a broader foundation for its development, and will hasten and intensify purely capitalist development. Full victory of the peasant uprising can only create a stronghold for a *democratic bourgeois republic* within which a proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie will for the first time develop in its purest form.” (Idem, p. 440) (emphasis added).

Lenin’s article on “The aim of the struggle of the proletariat in our revolution,” written March 9-21, 1909, is sometimes quoted to make the opposite point: it does discuss the proletariat as

that in the same pamphlet, Lenin writes exactly what Mandel (and Trotsky before him) claimed he did concerning the possibility of a capitalist development of Russia as a result of the victory of the democratic revolution:

“...under the present social and economic order this democratic revolution in Russia will not weaken but strengthen the domination of the bourgeoisie...” (Lenin, *C.W.*, Vol. 9, p. 23).

“Finally, we will note that the resolution, by making implementation of the minimum programme the provisional revolutionary government’s task, eliminates the absurd and semi-anarchist ideas of giving immediate effect to the maximum programme, and the conquest of power for a socialist revolution. *The degree of Russia’s economic development* (an objective condition), and the degree of class-consciousness and organisation of the broad masses of the proletariat (a subjective condition inseparably bound up with the objective condition) make the immediate and complete emancipation of the working class impossible.” (Idem, p. 28) (emphasis added).

We should add that this “maximum programme” scarcely mentions classless society and gives the “complete emancipation of the proletariat” the meaning of the establishment of...the dictatorship of the proletariat.

“Marxists are absolutely convinced of the bourgeois character of the Russian revolution. What does that mean? It means that the democratic reforms in the political system, and the social and economic reforms that have become a necessity for Russia, do not in themselves imply the undermining of capitalism, the undermining of bourgeois rule; on the contrary, they will, for the first time, really clear the ground for a wide and rapid European, and not Asiatic, development of capitalism.” (Idem, p. 48) (emphasis added).

“In countries like Russia the working class suffers not so much from capitalism as from the insufficient development of

and from the period stretching to 1916 (2) — it is a genuine falsification of Lenin's positions to claim that the great Russian revolutionary did not, in 1905, foresee a lengthy capitalist development in Russia (as occurred in other countries which underwent a bourgeois revolution, i.e., Great Britain, the United States, France, etc.) or only foresaw it in agriculture. Lenin says: a purely capitalist development, the rule of Capital; how could they possibly exist if capital was destroyed in industry and banking?

6. No doubt, the algebraic formulas of the Bolsheviks in 1905 allowed for interpretations that imply support for the bourgeois provisional government of February-March 1917, although other interpretations were also possible. Hence the need for rearming the party after the outbreak of the February 1917 revolution. Hence the historically decisive function of Lenin's April Theses, which we emphasized in our first article. (3)

Comrade Doug Jenness systematically plays down the importance of the *turn* represented by the April Theses. He even goes so far as to deny that there was a real turn, and heavily emphasizes instead the continuity. He quotes a passage from Marcel Liebman's book *Leninism Without Lenin* dealing with the allegedly correct position of Shliapnikov and other Bolshevik leaders prior to Lenin's return to Russia. It so happens Jenness is mistaken even in this minor detail. But that is not the main point.

The main point, once more, is that Jenness has Liebman say exactly the opposite of what he actually said. Here is what Liebman actually writes on the "turn" of the April Theses:

"Thus the difference between Lenin and the Bolshevik leadership in Russia was deep-going and wide-ranging....In the last analysis, all these political disagreements were derived from a more important cause. Lenin saw differently from his chief supporters the fundamental problem that faced the Russian labour movement in 1917, and which was bound up with the very nature of the revolution in progress. The entire tactic adopted by the Bolshevik leaders in Russia, with its caution, moderation and concern for unity with the Mensheviks, reflected a belief that the Bolshevik leaders shared with the Right-wing Socialists. As they saw it, the fall of Tsarism was the first victory in the bourgeois revolution, which must be followed up by other successes, and in this way consolidated, without there being any question of going beyond the limits of such a revolution and undertaking socialist tasks....This was an opinion Lenin had held for a long time and that only the 1905 revolution led him to question albeit without replacing it with a sufficiently elaborated new perspective." (Liebman, *Leninism under Lenin*, London, Merlin Press, 1975, p. 127).

7. Because he systematically downplays the turn represented by the April Theses, Doug Jenness must distort the

facts, the historical truth. He keeps mum about the first vote of the Saint Petersburg party committee which rejected the April Theses 13 to 2 with one abstention, (4) and of the Moscow and Kiev party committees which did likewise. Nor does Doug Jenness mention that Lenin himself proclaimed: "*Old Bolshevism must be abandoned!*" (Lenin, *C.W.* Vol. 24). "*Old Bolshevism*" obviously meant the 1905 positions on the nature of the revolution and revolutionary strategy — positions Doug Jenness now wants to uphold *against* Lenin's advice, rather than abandoning them. Nor does he utter a word about the fact that *all* the interpretations of the April Theses until the mid-20s, that is until the victory of counterrevolutionary Stalinist monolithism, unanimously considered the Theses represented a decisive turn.

Here is what Stalin himself — who scarcely needed additional attention drawn to the event, since he was among its main instigators — wrote as late as 1926:

"[The party] adopted a policy of Soviet pressure on the provisional government on the question of peace, and did not immediately decide to take the step that would have carried it from the old slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, to the new slogan of power to the soviets...this was a profoundly mistaken position." (*On the Opposition*).

8. Comrade Doug Jenness reproaches us with having stated that Trotsky discovered the law of uneven and combined development, which he claims is intrinsic to historical materialism (p. 47). But the quote he produces to back up his contention refers to the law of uneven development, that Marx obviously knew. The law of uneven and combined development is a *second* law. It was, indeed, discovered by Trotsky. Let us examine the following quote and ask ourselves whether Marx, Plekhanov, or Lenin, ever wrote anything of the kind (at least Lenin before 1917):

"Russia entered the road of proletarian revolution not because its economy was the ripest for socialist transformation, but because that economy could no longer develop on capitalist foundations. The socialization of the means of production had become the necessary condition above all to lift the country out of barbarism: *such is the law of combined development for backward countries.*" (*The Revolution Betrayed*, translated from the French) (emphasis added).

"Russia's evolution is characterized above all by its lateness. A historical lag does not mean, however, a mere repetition of the evolution of advanced countries, with a delay of one or two hundred years, but gives birth to an entirely new, 'combined,' social formation in which the latest achievements of capitalist technology and structure take root in the social relations of feudal and prefeudal barbarism, transform them and subordinate them, thereby creating an original relationship between classes."

(*Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution*, translated from the French) (emphasis added).

Moreover, we would like to know whether comrade Doug Jenness will reject the testimony of the following witness, as well as what the witness himself now thinks of his rather definitive assertions of 1973:

"Trotsky himself made *prodigious theoretical contributions to Marxism* in his celebrated theory of the permanent revolution, in his formulation of the law of uneven and combined development, and in his program for the regeneration of workers democracy in an unhealthy workers state" (George Novack, "Introduction" to *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973) (our emphasis).

9. Doug Jenness protests against Mandel's assertion (which is really Trotsky's) that Lenin went over to Trotsky's pre-1917 position on the strategy of permanent revolution (p. 46). But he keeps mum about the fact that, as early as the April Theses, Lenin speaks of the need for a *workers government* in Russia. He keeps mum about Joffe's testament which states Lenin explicitly told Joffe that Trotsky had been right on the question of permanent revolution. Did Joffe lie about this on the eve of his suicide?

Jenness remains silent on Trotsky's 1927 statement that:

"Upon our group's arrival in Petrograd, comrade Fedorov, then a member of the Bolshevik Central Committee, welcomed us in its name at the Finland station and in his speech of welcome posed sharply the question of the next stages of the revolution, *the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist course of development.* The reply I gave was in full accord with Lenin's April Theses which, for me, flowed unflinching from the theory of the permanent revolution. As comrade Fedorov told subsequently, the fundamental point of his speech had been formulated by him in agreement with Lenin, or, more accurately, at Lenin's direction." (Leon Trotsky, *The Stalin School of Falsification*, p. 5) (emphasis added).

Did Trotsky lie? Moreover, where did comrade Doug Jenness fetch the assertion that Trotsky had become "Leninist" on the question of revolutionary strategy

2. "The international proletariat undermines capital in two ways: by transforming Octobrist capital into democratic capital, and by transplanting it among the savages — by chasing Octobrist capital from its home. This broadens the basis of capital and brings it closer to its doom. In Western Europe, there is already almost no Octobrist capital left because all capital is democratic. Octobrist capital migrated from England and France towards Russia and Asia. *The Russian revolution and the revolutions in Asia are the struggle to chase Octobrist capital and replace it with democratic capital.*" ("Letter from Lenin to Gorky," January 3, 1911, p. 14, *Lenin Briefe* 1910-1911, Berlin 1967, translated from the French).

3. Ernest Mandel, "Nature and Perspectives of the Russian Revolution," *International Socialist Review*, inserted in the *Militant*, April 1982.

4. This figure is quoted by the very official *History of the USSR* by Aragon, Vol. 1, p. 51. Liebman mentions three votes in favor of Lenin's Theses.

for Russia the moment he joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917? Doug Jenness produces not the slightest shred of evidence, not a single document, not a single, quote, to support his contention which is false from A to Z. The truth is that from 1904 to his death in 1940 Trotsky did not change his position one iota on the applicability of the theory of the permanent revolution to Russia. He only extended it, subsequently, beginning in 1927, to other less developed capitalist countries — as did the Fourth International, and as did the SWP (that is its founding nucleus, the Communist League of America, when it joined the International Left Opposition). (5)

## THE NUB OF THE ISSUE

On this question of the theory of the permanent revolution, Doug Jenness manages to pile confusion upon contradiction upon deplorable mistake. Yet it revolves around a single and central problem: *under what government, in what state, could the bourgeois-democratic tasks of the revolution on the agenda in Russia, be accomplished?* What flowed from this in terms of the inevitable dynamic of the revolution?

The Mensheviks said: because the tasks of the revolution are bourgeois-democratic, only a bourgeois government and a bourgeois state can accomplish them. Any attempt by the working class to take power “prematurely” would lead to a revolutionary setback and a catastrophe for the revolution.

Trotsky answered: in the imperialist epoch, given the extent of capitalist development in Russia and the weight of the proletariat on the one hand, and the close intertwining of land ownership and capitalist property on the other, the bourgeoisie will inevitably go over to the camp of counterrevolution. If the bourgeoisie maintains its hegemony within the revolution, the revolution will be defeated. The only class capable of leading the revolutionary process is the proletariat. To do so, it must ally with the poor peasantry, and win the support of the majority of the peasantry (the majority of the nation). But it can do so only by destroying the bourgeois state and dominating the government. In this endeavor, lest it demoralize itself and thereby cause a defeat of the revolution, it cannot limit itself solely to implementing the revolutionary-democratic tasks of the revolution; it must simultaneously *begin* to resolve the socialist tasks (not all of them, and not instantly, of course, but at least some of them. (6) By the same token, any notion of a “two-class” government, not to mention a “two-class state” is a complete utopia. *The tasks of the national-democratic revolution will be accomplished by the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat allied to the poor peasantry, that is by the destruction of the bourgeois state and the creation of a new type of state, the state of the Commune, the state of the Soviets,*

the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only the proletariat and its *decisive predominance* within the government can guarantee the revolution will move forward to victory. Every other strategic line of march will lead the revolution to defeat.

Prior to 1917, Lenin had adopted an intermediate position between these two clearly counterposed positions. His outlook fluctuated over the years. Trotsky was therefore right to characterize it as based on an *algebraic formula*. Like Trotsky, Lenin rejected any notion that the bourgeoisie, or a coalition government with the bourgeoisie, could realize the tasks of the national-democratic revolution in Russia. Like Trotsky, he held that these tasks could only be accomplished against the bourgeoisie. But, unlike Trotsky, he did not specify, prior to April 1917, that their accomplishment also required the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus, that is, not the establishment of a bourgeois-democratic republic (see the 1905 quotations mentioned above), but the dictatorship of the proletariat, the rule of the soviets. The reason for his hesitation was that he did not exclude the hypothesis of a revolutionary government in which the proletariat would not be hegemonic, in which the proletariat and peasantry would have equal weight, or even one with a peasant majority.

True, Lenin, under the direct impact of the 1905 revolution — especially in 1906 — shifted his position closer to Trotsky’s, even spoke of the proletariat with the poor peasantry alone (7), and mentioned a rapid transition to the “socialist phase” of the revolution. But, following the victory of the counter-revolution, he basically reverted to the 1905 formulations: *bourgeois-democratic republic; development of capitalism in Russia; shift of the workers party into the opposition as soon as the democratic revolution triumphed.*

What was the nub of this difference? It had nothing to do with any “under-estimation” of the peasantry by Trotsky. That is a legend of the Thermidorians, the epigones of Lenin, passed on and

5. The first programmatic document of the International Left Opposition, of which the Communist League of America led by James P. Cannon was part and parcel, stated: “Rejection of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry formula as a specific regime different from the dictatorship of the proletariat drawing the peasant masses, and the oppressed masses in general, behind it. Rejection of the anti-Marxist theory of the peaceful transformation of the democratic dictatorship into a socialist dictatorship.” (“The International Left Opposition, its tasks, its methods, February 1933,” *The Congresses of the Fourth International*, Vol. 1, p. 62). (Translated from the French.)

6. The Cuban leaders themselves clearly state that the national-democratic tasks overlapped and intertwined with the anticapitalist tasks in the twentieth-century Cuban revolution. They are therefore more “Trotskyist” than comrade Doug Jenness:

“The content of our revolution which, in the colonial period, could not go beyond the limits of a national liberation movement based on the liberal principles of the last century, necessarily had to shift, by virtue of the capitalist development of our country and the emergence of the working class, towards a revolu-

tion amplified by the various anti-Trotskyist Stalinist and post-Stalinist factions (including the Maoists), a legend which comrade Doug Jenness now suddenly wants to make his own, although the SWP combatted it all along the fifty years of its existence. Trotsky always emphasized the decisive role of the peasants in the Russian revolution, given the predominant weight of the peasantry in the active population. Like Lenin, he rejected the putschist, “Blanquist,” notion of a revolution supported only by a minority of the masses of the people (the working class minority). Like Lenin, he emphasized the need for a *broad soviet organization of the peasantry*.

The real difference lay elsewhere. Trotsky rejected the idea that the peasantry could form a *political party, a political force, that was truly independent*, both of the bourgeoisie and proletariat. Yet, willy nilly, a government must be composed of political parties, or of groups acting as de-facto parties. For Trotsky, “a coalition government” of workers and peasants parties could only lead to the victory of the revolution if the latter *followed the leadership of the proletariat in moving towards the smashing of the bourgeois state apparatus*, that is if they were not bourgeois peasant parties but peasant “parties” or “groups” that were satellites of the proletariat. For Lenin until 1916, the possibility of genuine peasant parties, independent of both the bourgeoisie and proletariat, was not excluded. Hence the imprecise nature of his formulas *on the government and the state* that would lead the revolution to victory.

But beginning in 1917, Lenin resolved this question *in the same way as Trotsky*. We see the following:

“A mass Social-Democratic movement has existed in Russia for twenty years (if one takes the great 1896 strikes as its beginning). One can see over this great time period, through two powerful revolutions, through the whole political history of Russia, that the same essential question was raised: will the working class lead the peasants forward, towards socialism, or will the liberal bourgeoisie

tion that was also social. To the task of freeing the nation from imperialist domination, was added inevitably, thenceforth, the task of liquidating the exploitation of man by man in our society. These two objectives were already part of our historical process since the capitalist system that oppressed us from the outside as a nation, oppressed us and exploited us from the inside as workers, and since the social forces that could free the country from the inside from oppression, that is to say the workers themselves, were the only forces that, on the external plane, could support us against the imperialist power that was oppressing the nation.” (Fidel Castro, *Balance sheet of the Cuban Revolution*, Report to the First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, December 1975. Translated from the French). (Our emphasis).

7. See Lenin, “The crisis of Menshevism,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, December 1906: “Larin states that the disturbances in the countryside cannot be stopped. Did he prove it? No. He took no account whatsoever of the role of the peasant bourgeoisie which is systematically corrupted by the government. He gave little attention to the fact that the ‘reliefs’ obtained by the peasantry...intensify the break among the rural population between the counter-revolutionary rich and the poor masses.” (Translated from the French).



Bolivian women mineworkers (DR)

take them backwards towards a reconciliation with capitalism?" (V.I. Lenin, *C.W.*, Vol. 25, September 11, 1917, p. 303, translated from the French).

"Our experience taught us — and this is confirmed by the development of all the revolutions of the world, if one considers the present epoch, that is the last one hundred and fifty years — that this was so everywhere and always: all attempts by the petty-bourgeoisie in general, and by the peasants in particular, to become aware of their own strength, to lead the economy and politics in their fashion, led to a failure. Either they were placed under the leadership of the proletariat, or under that of the capitalists. There is no middle ground. Those who dream of a middle term are but dreamers, empty-dreamers" ("Speech to the Congress of Transport Workers," March 29-30, 1921," translated from the French) (our emphasis).

#### DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT OR "TWO-CLASS GOVERNMENT:" THE HISTORICAL BALANCE SHEET

The real criterion for judging the problem of permanent revolution is not, of course, what Trotsky, or Lenin, or whoever, wrote in 1905, 1906, 1909, 1917, or 1921. It is what actually happened in history. The balance sheet, here, is clear and illuminating. Wherever the historical tasks of the national-democratic revolution as a whole — above all the agrarian question — were accomplished, this was due to the fact that the proletariat, with the support of the poor peasantry, had previously taken power, smashed the bourgeois state, and built a state of a new type, that is to say the dictatorship of the proletariat, even though this may have taken place in a highly bureaucratized form and under the leadership of an extremely bureaucratized workers party (except in Cuba). Wherever the bourgeois state was preserved, the solution of the national-democratic tasks of the revolution remained in abeyance. In fact, the counterrevolution even-

tually won out, even though sometimes in a "diluted" form, as in Algeria. But it often was not that diluted: remember Irak, Egypt, Bolivia at the end of the 1950s and in 1971. And many times it meant counterrevolutionary bloodbaths: China in 1927, Indonesia, Iran after Mosadegh, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Turkey, to mention only a few instances.

But nowhere, in no historical case, was there something in between: a country that would have experienced a broad popular revolution in which millions of workers and peasants actively participated, which led neither to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat nor to a victory of the counterrevolution, but to the implementation of a thorough-going land reform under a "two-class" regime or government in which the working class and peasantry would have shared roughly equal power, that is, with no clear and definite proletarian hegemony.

Is this what happened in the Yugoslav revolution? Then, where was the "independent peasant party" or "independent peasant mass organization" in the 1945 Yugoslav government, to say nothing of the post-1945 government? Is this what happened in the Vietnamese revolution? Then when and where did we see such "independent" peasant formations appear in the Vietnamese revolutionary government, formations comparable in weight to the VCP? Did it happen in the Cuban revolution? Where and when were such "peasant formations" comparable in weight to the July 26 Movement, part of the Cuban governments of 1958, of 1960, of 1961? Has this happened even in the Nicaraguan revolution? Where can we find such "representatives of the peasantry" in the Revolutionary Directorate or governments that have ruled since Somoza was overthrown, to say nothing of representatives comparable in weight to the Sandinistas?

Comrade Doug Jenness refers to the case of the coalition government which existed in Soviet Russia between December 1917 and March 1918. He considers the Bolshevik-Left SR government was the very model of the "workers and farmers government" without clear pro-

letarian hegemony, that is without the dictatorship of the proletariat. This gets him entangled in some chronological problems. According to him, the dictatorship of the proletariat was only established in October 1918

Yet the Left-SRs only left the government in March 1918. What then was the purely Bolshevik government from March to October 1918? A "workers and peasants government" without peasants? Or could the "governmental representatives of the peasantry" have infiltrated the very ranks of the Bolshevik Party itself?

The real problems are far more serious. First of all, the Left-SRs never had equivalent weight with the Bolsheviks, whether in the government or the Executive Committee of the Soviets. Bolshevik hegemony was clearly established everywhere. Moreover, the Left-SRs never represented "the peasantry as a whole." Otherwise, how could one explain the split within the SRs? What would the Right SRs, who had an absolute majority of peasant votes in the Constituent Assembly, have represented? Finally, one has to resort to extraordinary acrobatics to portray the Left-SRs as a "peasant party." This was a party which advocated the dictatorship of the proletariat, the rule of the soviets, the elimination of capitalist private property (including in the countryside) and wage slavery (including in the countryside). Can comrade Doug Jenness produce a single other instance, anywhere in the world, where a "peasant party" had a program and an orientation of that kind?

In order to fit the real historical process into his preconceived schema, comrade Doug Jenness is forced to uncover "representatives of the peasantry" inside ...the workers parties (or the bureaucratized and petty-bourgeoisified workers parties) themselves, that is, to move from the revisionist formula of a "two-class government" to the even more revisionist formula of "two-class parties." This emerges clearly from his reference to the Chinese revolution:

"(It's ironic that Mandel, more than three decades after the Chinese revolution, should still be defending the view

that there cannot be peasant parties and peasant organizations and that a peasant revolution cannot play any independent role in a social revolution. In China a peasant army headed by a peasant party and with a petty-bourgeois Stalinist leadership made a revolution that opened the door to historic conquests, however badly deformed, of the Chinese proletariat — that is, the establishment of the Chinese workers state.)”

A social revolution means that state power passes from one class to another amidst tumultuous events including the smashing of the state apparatus of the old ruling class and the formation of a new state that serves as the instrument for the rule of another class. Comrade Jenness would have us believe that this event did not take place in 1949, in full view of the entire world, but only in 1953 or 1954, when no one noticed, except a few Trotskyist theoreticians. He would have us believe that the People's Republic of China, established in 1949 by a revolutionary government, was a bourgeois state led by a “peasant government” (or in the best of cases, by a “workers and peasants government under peasant hegemony,” since the army was “peasant”). But he runs into a slight problem: it was *this state and this government* that, without any break in continuity, destroyed not only capitalist private property but even peasant private property! When, then, was there a change in the Chinese Communist Party, or in the Chinese army, between 1949 and 1954? Is not the idea of a “peasant” party and a “peasant” army that destroy peasant property, pushing things a bit far from the standpoint of Marxism? Is not this turning dialectics into gross sophistry?

Moreover, if we moved, *without a new revolution*, from the bourgeois state of 1949 to the “dictatorship of the proletariat” of 1953, does not this mean that we can pass from the one to the other by peaceful, gradual means? Are we not then beginning to rerun the whole “reformist scenario,” to borrow a formula from Trotsky? Does not that mean abandoning the whole Marxist theory of revolution after abandoning that of the state?

Comrade Doug Jenness' error obviously arises from the fact that he confuses the largest social component of a party or an army, with its actual structure, including its command structure, the objective role it plays in society, and the class interests it serves historically. If we look at the class composition of an imperialist army, it is mainly proletarian. Yet no one can seriously doubt that it is a bourgeois army, because of its command structure, because of the role it has played and still plays as an instrument that defends the bourgeois state and the interests of the bourgeoisie, even when there are “bourgeois workers parties” in the government, as in Great Britain under the Labour government or in France under the Mitterrand-Mauroy regime. Likewise, despite its predominantly

working class social composition, the Peronist party of Argentina is a bourgeois party. Likewise also, the Chinese People's Liberation Army, not to mention the Chinese Communist Party, which have been the historical instruments of the destruction of capitalist property and peasant property, can only be considered a “peasant” army or party, by emptying Marxist class analysis of all its substance.

Thus the case of China confirms most resoundingly Trotsky's prediction and the verdict of the Russian revolution. The peasantry, although capable of mobilizing by the millions, and by the tens of millions, in the course of a revolutionary process such as the Chinese, is incapable of playing, at least on a national level, a political role independent of both the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its colossal revolutionary forces are centralized either under bourgeois leadership — in which case the revolution heads for certain defeat — or under proletarian leadership (even though it may be extremely bureaucratized, as in China) and in that case, and that case only, the victory of the revolution is possible.

In China, it was the Chinese CP, a bureaucratized proletarian party, a petty-bourgeoisified workers party if you wish (we decidedly prefer the first formula over the second), a party that had inscribed the dictatorship of the proletariat in its program and that had charted a course towards establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat *in fact* if not in theory (8) a party that was able to centralize and unify under its command — and not under the command of some “independent peasant force” or other — the immense revolutionary potential of the peasantry. This is what allowed the Chinese revolution to be victorious through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Why is the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the smashing of the bourgeois state apparatus, of the seizure of political power, so decisive for the future of a people's revolution in a less developed capitalist country? From the intertwining of the interests of landowners and capitalists, of the “national” bourgeoisie and imperialism, of the *compradore* bourgeoisie and the industrial bourgeoisie, of usurers, bankers, and finance capital, which is characteristic of the less developed capitalist countries' economy, there follows that, as the popular revolution unfolds, as the mass mobilizations extend, as their anger deepens and their militancy sharpens, the masses threaten “to take their destiny into their own hands,” that is to implement *themselves* the expropriation of landowners, usurers, imperialist properties, and even some “national bourgeois” sectors. The bourgeoisie is perfectly aware of this. It strives, doubtless through all sorts of maneuvers, including alliances with opportunist workers parties (sometimes disguised as “peasant parties”), to postpone the time of reckoning. But the moment of *the beginning of its expropriation* gets inexorably closer,

*because of the very logic of the mass movement*, whatever learned (that is humming and hawing) tactic the conciliationist leaders of the workers movement may use.

This is why the entire fundamental strategic orientation of the bourgeoisie in the revolution is to prepare a counter-revolutionary coup to disarm, or to smash the masses. This was the case in France in 1848 and 1871. This was the case in Spain in 1931-37. It was so in China in 1925-27 and in 1946-49. It was so, too, in many other revolutions. It was so in Russia in 1917-18. The fundamental line of the Russian bourgeoisie was not the bourgeois-democratic revolution, not the Constituent Assembly, but Kornilov, Krasov, Denikin, Koltchak, Wrangel.

To foil this strategy, it is necessary to arm the workers and peasants, to centralize their armed power, that is, to establish their political power, that is, to constitute a dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the poor peasantry. *The irony of history makes the survival of the bourgeois state in the epoch of imperialism (and already before then) the main obstacle to the implementation of the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.*

Comrade Doug Jenness managed the feat of writing 35,000 words on the problem of the permanent revolution *without saying a single word to answer this burning question in all twentieth century revolutions*. We have entered this debate in defense of the theory of the permanent revolution with passion, neither out of some filial piety towards comrade Trotsky, nor out of some “obstinate traditionalism” toward the program of the Fourth International, but *because one hundred years of historical experience confirms that the real revolutionary processes of our century actually are permanent revolution processes.*

It follows that one cannot cast the lessons of the theory of permanent revolution overboard without causing the defeat of millions and tens of millions of workers and peasants. We discuss this question with passion because it concerns the life and blood of our class, not just some written formulas in books. The sharpest clarity is needed on this question lest the proletariat, the poor peasants, and their vanguards, be drawn into a bloody trap, under the guise of apparently confused formulas that actually spell doom for the revolution.

What we are speaking of is *the strategic orientation* that revolutionaries must adopt to move towards smashing the

8. At the time, the Chinese CP wanted to defend at all cost Mao Tse-Tung's erroneous theory on “new democracy” and persisted in denying what it had done in 1949, that is establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat with the support of the peasantry. Later on, it rectified its theoretical position, and now states that from October 1949 onwards, the dictatorship of the proletariat has existed in the People's Republic of China. See the new Statutes adopted at the 1977 Congress: “The state established after victory in the new-democratic revolution was a People's Republic under the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

bourgeoisie's power and state, that is towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, and not of the agitational slogans to be used on the road to power. That kind of confusion was promoted by the Thermidorian epigones of Lenin after 1923, and revived by the various Stalinist and post-Stalinist factions, until, alas, comrade Doug Jenness took his turn at it.

No sensible person, beginning with Trotsky, ever said that one could establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is take power, by mobilizing the masses under the slogan of "dictatorship of the proletariat" or "workers government," independently of the concrete social, economic, political, and military situation of a given country at a given moment.

The famous slogan "Down with the tsar; for a workers government" never was Trotsky's slogan, neither in 1905 nor in 1917. By contrast, opportunist leaderships, on the grounds that slogans should be flexible and appropriate to carefully analyzed concrete situations, have led innumerable revolutions to their doom, by refusing to chart a course towards the conquest of power and the destruction of the bourgeois state when this was possible.

The pretext of the "stage" of "the coalition with the peasantry as a whole," without the previous destruction of the bourgeois state, was also used on innumerable occasions, including by the opportunist leadership of the Sri Lankan LSSP, which claimed to be Trotskyist, when it presented its alliance with the bourgeois SLFP as an alliance "with the peasantry." This is the deadly opportunism to which the vacillations of comrade Doug Jenness on the dictatorship of the proletariat, have now opened the way.

There is no state that is neither a bourgeois nor a workers state, and there cannot be. The revisionist Kautsky believed that between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat there stood a coalition between the two. For revolutionary Marxism, between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat, there is a phase of dual power, that is, of struggle to the death between the old ruling class and the new class aspiring to rule.

This dual power can take the most diverse and unforeseen forms. Each new living revolution generally reveals another variant, as is the case with the current revolution in Nicaragua. This struggle to the death does not stop with the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It may continue with a civil war despite the existence of the power of a workers state. The dictatorship of the proletariat, once established, may even subsequently be overthrown, as was the case in Hungary in 1919. But in all of these cases we are dealing with *antagonistic forms of state power pitted one against the other*, not property forms pitted one against the other. Dual power ends either when the organs of proletarian power, or when the remains of

bourgeois political power, have disappeared on the level of the state (the army, police, judiciary, constitution, law and administration). Moreover, this does not exclude the possibility that they may later revive; but "reviving" is precisely different from "surviving." The former implies that they previously *disappeared*.

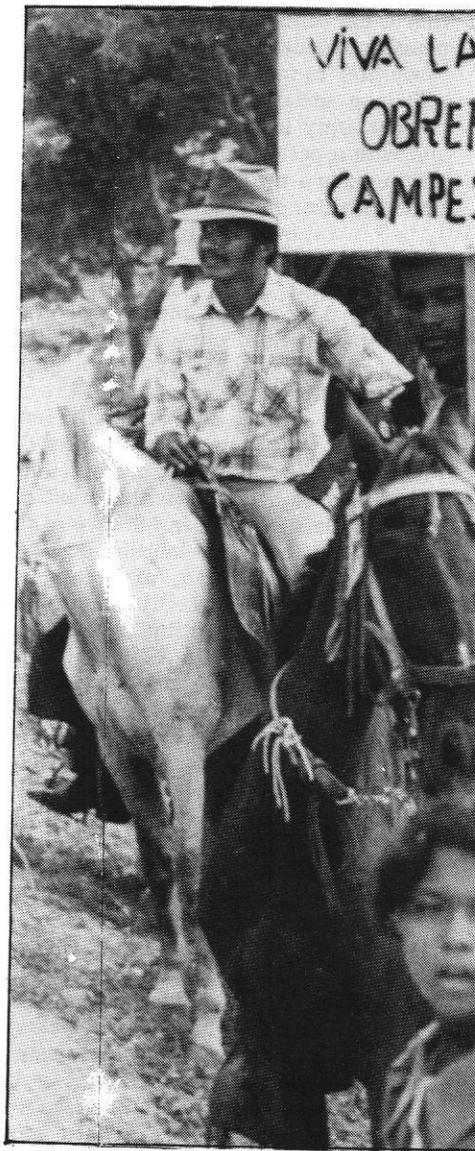
Any revolutionary Marxist knows this since 1917. It was definitively clarified in Lenin's *State and Revolution* and the documents of the first four congresses of the C.I. But Doug Jenness has now smeared a thick layer of confusion over it. He writes:

"Lenin and other Bolsheviks at this time used many different formulations to characterize the soviet government: 'workers and peasants government,' 'socialist republic of soviets,' 'dictatorship of the proletariat,' 'dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasantry,' 'people's government,' and so on." (p. 34)

We should stress that *we are not dealing with different formulations*. If one leaves out the formula "government of the people" which is never found in any document of the slightest programmatic importance, *all these formulas are synonymous*. The Transitional Program explicitly asserts: "For the Bolsheviks, the workers and peasants' government formula was used prior to the October revolution as a synonym for dictatorship of the proletariat." Will comrade Doug Jenness claim that comrade Trotsky was deliberately or unconsciously falsifying history when he asserted this in 1938?

We do not challenge the fact that if one goes through Lenin's writings, *one can find in 1917-1918 ambiguous and even contradictory formulas*. But only a sophist would rip one or two paragraphs in a polemical text out of their context and place them on an equal footing, or even above, *the dozens of quotations from programmatic texts and theoretical writings that assert exactly the opposite*. The correct method is to reinterpret these few slips of the pen in the light of the *theoretical continuity* embodied by *all the Communist programmatic documents from 1917 to 1923, and the revolutionary Marxist ones from 1917 until today*.

We know of many revolutions that were *lost* because a counterposition was deliberately created between, on the one hand, the need to mobilize the peasantry, the importance of democratic demands, the "bourgeois-democratic nature of the tasks of the revolution," and, on the other hand, the need to orient towards the seizure of power by the proletariat allied to the poor peasantry. Doug Jenness' ambiguous formulas reintroduce this counterposition, albeit only in undertones, into the ranks of our movement which until now, had been most effectively armed on the programmatic level against the danger of turning democratic demands, or "the democratic stage of the revolution" into a "noose tied around the neck of the proletariat," as the Transitional Program put it. We know of *no revolution that was lost because it pre-*



'Long live the workers and peasants alliance' in Nicaragua

maturely entered on the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin, of course, cannot be made to bear the least responsibility for any policy of revolution by stages that implies an alliance with the bourgeoisie, or with bourgeois parties, or with bourgeois parties coming forth as "representatives of the peasantry as a whole" during the course of a broad popular revolution. The historical continuity is rather that of the Mensheviks, of Martynov, of the Thermidorian epigones of Lenin (Stalin-Bukharin), and then of the various Stalinist and post-Stalinist factions of the "international Communist movement." Nevertheless, Lenin's algebraic formulas of 1905, and 1906-1916, did leave the door ajar to erroneous interpretations of that type. Trotsky had resoundingly slammed that door shut; Doug Jenness is tugging it open again. It is a sad business, a sorry business.

At the same time, while the utmost clarity on the question of the theory of the permanent revolution, especially on the need for the conquest of power by the proletariat allied to the poor peasantry, is *indispensable* for a revolution to be victorious in a less developed capitalist country, it is by no means *sufficient* to



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that end. You still need a favorable relationship of forces: a sufficient weakening and decomposition of the ruling classes, a sufficient revolt and mobilization of the popular masses. You need a revolutionary vanguard, that is a party, with sufficient strength, with sufficient roots in the masses, with already some sufficient level of political authority — gained in the period before the revolution — with a sufficiently concrete and rich analysis of *all* the objective conditions of the country, of *all* the social and political forces at hand, with sufficiently refined tactics, to succeed in bringing the majority of the nation together around the goal of conquering power. At any rate, no one, beginning with Marx and Lenin, ever tried to enumerate the conditions *guaranteeing* a revolutionary victory. That was not the point; the point was to reject the strategies that guaranteed defeat in light of the rich and tragic revolutionary experience.

Finally, when we say that between 1905 and the April Theses of 1917 Trotsky was right over Lenin on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is of the theory of the permanent revolution, we are by no means saying that Trotsky was a better revo-

lutionary than Lenin, or that we are Trotskyists rather than Leninists. Trotsky was wrong against Lenin, on many questions prior to the Russian revolution of 1917: not only on the question of organization, which was essential, but on that of electoral tactics, on that of unity with the Mensheviks beginning with the second split, on revolutionary defeatism during the First World War. Today no revolutionary Marxism exists, and no revolutionary Marxism can exist, based solely on the continuity of the political and strategic positions of a single source, be it Trotsky or the Bolsheviks of 1905.

Revolutionary Marxism today integrates what was essential in Marx and Engels, a good number of the advances made by the Second International, the theory of organization and most of the tactical choices and theoretical contributions of Lenin and the Bolsheviks prior to 1917, (e.g. his theory of imperialism and his theory of the state) the theory of the permanent revolution of Trotsky, a good deal of the political contributions (not all of course) of Rosa Luxemburg and the German Socialist Left, the main documents of the first four congresses of the Communist International, some of the theoretical advances of other non-Russian Communist leaders between 1919 and 1923, some of the main theoretical conclusions to be drawn from the victories (Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam, Cuba) and defeats of the world revolution since 1918, the Trotskyist theory of the bureaucratic degeneration of the USSR and of the necessary antibureaucratic political revolution, the Trotskyist theory of fascism.

How could it be otherwise? How could a supporter of historical materialism think that revolutionary strategy had already been entirely worked out in 1905-1906, that is even before the first revolutionary victory had been consolidated and without any knowledge of the three dozens of revolutions that have occurred since 1905?

Comrade Doug Jenness asks a rhetorical question: "Mandel argues that Lenin came over to Trotsky's pre-1917 strategy for the Russian revolution, while Trotsky came over to Lenin's view of party organization. But this is not true. In fact, it makes no sense at all. How can a historical materialist explain this supposed complete dichotomy between program and strategy, on the one hand, and their organizational expression, on the other?"

This is rather strange: historical materialism, according to Doug Jenness, would entail a correspondence between an organization's strategy and program on the one hand, and the organization itself on the other. We always thought rather that historical materialism asserted a correspondence between an organization's links with a given class (or fraction of class), i.e. *the social interests in which it is rooted objectively on the one hand*, and its program and strategy on the other. What is distinctively Lenin's, his main contribution to

Marxism, is *his conception of the organization, his organizational theory and practice* that have become part of the revolutionary Marxist program. This was the decisive question on which Lenin was right against Trotsky.

But, in 1905, at the time Lenin formulated his theory of the "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants," the "organizational expression" of that conception was a tiny group of 2,000 revolutionaries. It is precisely the excessive narrowness of this group, its lack of real experience in a popular revolution, that was one of the factors (not the only one of course) that made for the ambiguous and algebraic character of his strategic conception. In 1905, *the building of the party had begun; it was far from completed*. To complete it, not only was the historic experience of the revolution of February 1917 necessary. There also had to be the mobilization, self-activity, and self-organization of the Russian proletariat on a qualitatively higher level than occurred in 1905. Above all, there had to be a *massive influx of militant vanguard workers into the Bolshevik Party*, which jumped, in the course of a few weeks, from 15,000 to nearly 100,000 members (the figure most commonly mentioned is 80,000). In many ways it was a new organization, in which the proletarian component weighed incomparably more than in 1905, that helped Lenin in the highly charged aura of the revolution to overcome the errors and reticence of the old Bolshevik cadres who were products of 1905 and not 1917. Their correct organizational conception and the education of the intermediate cadres in uncompromising class independence finished the job. That is the materialist, Marxist, non-hagiographic explanation of what happened to the Bolshevik Party in April 1917.

We obviously never spoke of a "total dichotomy" between the Bolshevik program and the Leninist conception of the organization. We did speak of that program's lack of clarity on *one single* question: the nature of the state and government that could lead the Russian revolution to victory. The program was correct on all other questions, particularly in its rejection of any class collaboration with the bourgeoisie. It was the source of generally correct tactics. What was involved was therefore a partial, not a total, dichotomy. It is neither surprising nor unique in history.

Engels and Lenin completely endorsed — aside for a few details — German Social-Democracy's Erfurt program. They endorsed even more wholeheartedly that party's conception of organization; Lenin explicitly drew his inspiration from it. And yet, by 1908, the party's strategic conception of power was *completely* deficient — infinitely more so than the Bolsheviks' in 1905 — to say nothing of its clear failings on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We know the price humanity had to pay in 1914 and 1918-1919 for this "partial defic-

ency." History thus delivered its scathing answer to the simplistic and mechanistic theses on the automatic "correspondence" between the general program, the general education of the cadre, the organizational conceptions, and the current tactics on the one hand, and the ability to orient correctly in a revolutionary situation, that is the precise strategy for power, on the other.

### DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT AND PEASANT WAR

Comrade Doug Jenness further weakens his case by referring to the problems of "peasant war," that is to *the concrete fashion in which the worker-peasant alliance was achieved in the course of the Russian revolution* (and later in the course of the Yugoslav, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cuban, and Nicaraguan revolutions, with the inevitable variations in each case, variations that, on balance, turned out to be minor). This set of problems involves several distinct questions:

1. When did the peasant risings that led to the takeover of the land by the peasants actually take place?
2. What layers of the peasantry participated in them?
3. What social class wielded political power when the agrarian revolution was implemented?
4. What was the concrete political form of the worker and peasant alliance?

There were peasant risings before the October revolution. One could, perhaps, characterize these risings as "risings of the peasantry as a whole." These risings were obviously supported by the Bolshevik Party although it played only a minor, if not a negligible, practical role in them. But these were scattered risings that, while they prepared the ground for the October revolution, while they undermined the social and political bases of the Provisional Government's power, of the bourgeoisie's power, and of the landowners' power, which had the support of the Mensheviks and Right SRs, neither attacked it nor overthrew it. Only indirectly, through the soldiers' soviets, did the peasants participate in preparing and carrying out the October 1917 revolution. It would be difficult to contend that the majority of soldiers' soviets represented "the peasantry as a whole." How then could one account for the minority, yet rather important, segments of these soviets that continued to support the Right SRs before, during, and after October?

The real peasant risings, the real "peasant war," the real conquest of the land by the peasants, took place after the October revolution, under the military and political protection, and with the active aid and collaboration of the soviet power, of the dictatorship of the proletariat. *This is the concrete way in*

*which the worker and peasant alliance was achieved in Russia.*

The Bolsheviks, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the power of the soviets, were able to conquer power because they promised the peasants the land. They were able to stay in power because they kept their promise. With the support of the working class alone, that is of a small minority of the toiling population, it was impossible ("putschist") to conquer and stay in power in Russia. *Trotsky never advocated such nonsense*, contrary to the diehard Stalinist slander to which comrade Jenness is beginning to make concessions.

At the November-December 1917 All-Russian Congress of Peasant Soviets, a very significant minority emerged that opposed transferring power to the Soviets and the October revolution, a minority based mainly among the Right SRs.

Was this merely a political difference, or did this division also reflect divergent social interests, namely roughly the difference of interests between the rich peasants, the *kulaks*, the rural bourgeoisie, the more prosperous middle peasants, on the one hand, and the agricultural workers, the poor peasants, and the most impoverished middle peasants, on the other? We staunchly subscribe to the second interpretation which is also supported by Marcel Liebman's book to which comrade Doug Jenness refers, once again very "selectively."

In the Ukraine (where a large fraction of Tsarist Russia's peasantry lived), in Georgia and elsewhere, the question of the peasants' attitude was closely tied, *from the outset*, to the national question. This applied even more to Finland and Poland. It is beyond doubt that in all these regions, the majority of the peasantry, that is the whole rich peasantry and a good share of the middle peasantry *opposed the October revolution*, albeit for nationalistic reasons, and at first supported counterrevolutionary governments often directly backed by imperialism (German in most cases, British and French in the others) (it *later* changed positions, but that is another story).

The kulak uprisings took place prior to the nationalization of industry and were not mainly the result of "fear" of seeing "their land collectivized." They were class reactions to the measures taken by the soviets to confiscate their food stocks *in the immediate economic interest* not only of the workers and toilers of the cities, but also of the poor peasants who were often threatened by famine as a result of the disorganization of transportation especially.

We have now arrived at the heart of the matter. The differentiation between poor peasants and rich peasants does not occur after "a prolonged development of capitalism in the countryside" supposedly set off by the victory of the revolution. This differentiation occurs roughly *prior to the revolutionary victory itself*. It is written *into the particular pattern in which capitalist, semi-capitalist, and pre-capitalist relations of production and ex-*

*change interconnect* in the villages of the countries affected by permanent revolution. In Russia in 1917 the opposition between the rich and the poor, between the exploiters and the exploited, no longer pitted semi-feudal landowners against "the peasantry as a whole." Rather, it pitted landowners, substantial traders-usurers, rural bourgeois and rich peasants against poor peasants and the less-well-to-do middle peasants. Recognizing that there were many *remains*, vestiges, of pre-capitalist exploitation, including serfdom, in Russia, which the rich peasants were interested in fighting as much as the poor peasants, is one thing. But it is another to claim that it was possible for the poor peasants to rise, without *simultaneously* rising both against these various forms of serfdom, against the blood-sucking usurers, and against the capitalist exploiters who were all driving them to starvation, to claim that the poor peasants were in a position to "distinguish" stages: first with the usurers (since they are capitalist) against the semi-feudal nobility; then with the agricultural and industrial workers against the rural bourgeoisie.

Such "peasant wars" drawn from an abstract theoretical schema that does not take the law of uneven and combined development into account, have never existed since World War One, with the possible exception of extremely backward countries. At any rate there were no such wars in Russia, Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam, Cuba, nor in the innumerable cases of popular revolutions that ended in defeat. In every single one of these cases, the differentiation and latent and sometimes open civil war within the village, erupted in the first stage, from the onset, of the revolutionary process. *They were rooted in the social and economic reality of the village produced by the imperialist epoch* (let us repeat, except in the most backward countries, but, as Trotsky specified, the theory of the permanent revolution does not apply there anyway due to the nearly total lack of an industrial proletariat).

Let us take a typical case from today's world, that of India. At this time, there is no revolutionary situation in that country. The political rule of the Indian bourgeoisie appears to be stable at the national level. The workers movement is going through a temporary ebb rather than an impetuous rise. And yet, at the level of the Indian village, a latent and sometimes open civil war is slowly and inexorably rising with the underground force of a mighty volcano, and pitting the poor peasants (many of whom belong to the *pariah* castes) against the rich peasants who are organizing genuine terrorist armed groups to prevent the poor peasants from defending their immediate class interests. Will comrade Doug Jenness, mechanically aping Lenin in 1905-1906, claim that the Indian proletariat should first march together "with the peasantry as a whole?" Or will he claim that Indian capitalism is today much more highly developed than Russian capitalism was

in 1917, and that that is the reason why "the situation has changed?"

But if the differentiation between poor peasants and rich peasants is not the result of a learned political strategy of "revolution by stage," but the product of the social and economic reality of the village in the most important semi-colonial countries, not to mention the less developed imperialist countries, then, any attempt to *compel* the poor peasants and agricultural workers, their natural allies, to *limit themselves* to a struggle for "democratic, anti-feudal, and anti-imperialist" goals, at any "stage" of the revolutionary process will mean in practice *compelling them to trample underfoot their own immediate material interests*.

The difference between such a "strategy" and that of the permanent revolution is therefore by no means that the advocates of the latter "underestimate the peasantry." Quite the contrary, it is that its opponents refuse, in practice, to mobilize the poor peasants and the majority of the laboring peasants, and to encourage their self-organization in soviet-type organs, because they fear that such a mobilization will substitute to the utopian and unrealistic alliance of the working class with "the whole peasantry," the real and feasible alliance of the working class with the poor peasantry, an alliance that is sealed on the backs not only of imperialism and the semi-feudal forces, but also of the urban and rural bourgeoisie including the rich peasantry.

Only if one *limits* the goals of the national-democratic revolution to *purely political goals*, as the Mensheviks did in 1905-1906, can one hope for any kind of "political alliance" with the peasantry as a whole. As soon as one broaches the problem of achieving the historical goals of the national-democratic revolution *as a whole* — and that is what the theory of the permanent revolution is about; it never claimed that *none* of the goals of the national-bourgeois revolution could be achieved without a dictatorship of the proletariat; it only asserts that they cannot be achieved *as a whole, overall* — *one has to grant the agrarian revolution the highest priority among the goals of the revolution, and one has to conclude that in the imperialist epoch, such a revolution can no longer be achieved by a mobilization of the peasantry as a whole, but requires a spontaneous development of the class struggle between rich and poor in the countryside, which does not mean, obviously, a class struggle for or against socialism in the countryside, or for or against the collectivization of the land. Indeed, it matters little to a rich peasant-trader-usurer whether the poor peasant wants to cancel his debts because he is a "supporter of socialism," or "simply" to escape from unbearable poverty. What does matter to him is the danger of losing his property, his fortune, and even his life. This is the basis on which he will react.*

We say that we are here at the very heart of the debate around the theory of the permanent revolution. For it is

around this problem of the prior, inevitable, social and economic, differentiation within the peasantry that the question of the organized political forces and of the nature of the state set up by the revolution, is posed from the Marxist, materialist, point of view. The vacillations of the petty-bourgeoisie, the petty commodity producers, i.e. of the peasantry, that Lenin so often refers to, are reflected in concrete events by two diametrically opposed types of political behavior.

Either the "peasant parties" (which are at any rate in nine cases out of ten, bourgeois parties with bourgeois leaderships), and especially the peasant mass organizations, follow the rural and urban bourgeoisie and, as soon as the poor peasants mobilize and organize for their own class goals, they will turn to counter-revolutionary behavior on the same pattern as the urban bourgeoisie. In this case, the counterrevolution is victorious (the victory of the counterrevolution in Bolivia, after the 1952 revolution, was due in great part to the alliance of the peasant organizations with the MNR). Or else, the class struggle deeply penetrates the countryside; the poor and less well-off middle peasants mobilize and organize to defend *their own immediate interests*, in which case the worker and peasant alliance *can* march forward towards victory. But it can only get there if the exploiters of the cities and country are unable to drown the "peasant war" in blood, that is if their army is unhinged, cut to pieces, beaten back, that is if the proletariat and poor peasants are armed, that is if the state is a state of the dictatorship of the proletariat (or, what amounts to the same thing, if the civil war between the decomposing bourgeois state and the newly developing workers state has reached the stage where the latter is able to effectively protect the poor peasants against the bloodthirsty repression of the ruling classes).

When the parties that lead the workers

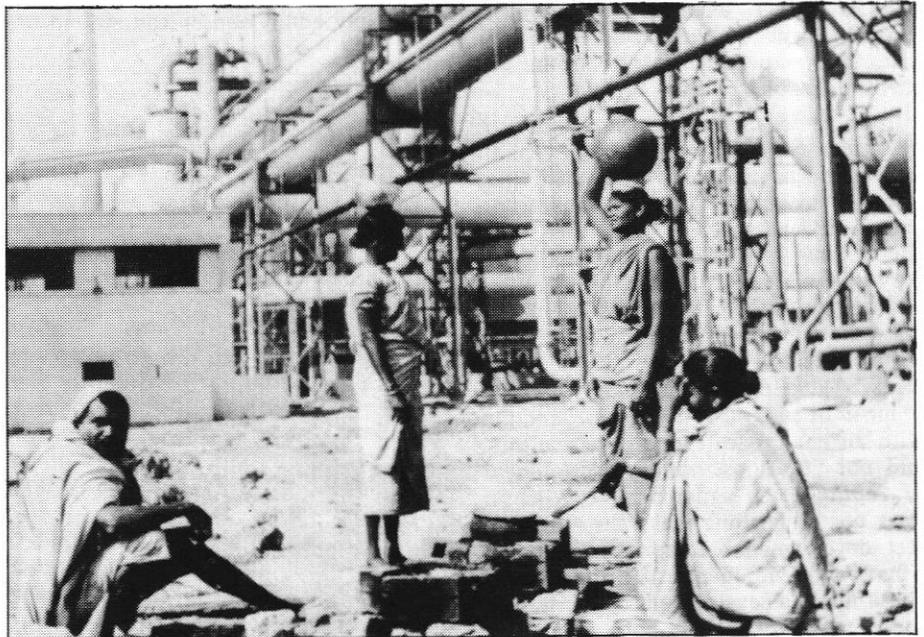
refuse to take power, they are displaying not some "more profound understanding of the peasant question," but a *lack of understanding* of the social and economic reality of the village which leads to the "peasant war" being smashed. *The peasant war can only win under the protection of the dictatorship of the proletariat.*

In the light of this analysis, it is now possible to tackle the question of "stages" within the process of permanent revolution. These "stages," to which Trotsky refers in his *Permanent Revolution*, have to do with the sequence in which the concrete goals of mass mobilizations emerge. This is a practical question, a matter of "concrete analysis of a concrete situation."

The revolutionary process (the stormy mobilization of the masses) may be *triggered* by an issue arising in the struggle against imperialism, by the question of national independence, by one of the particular aspects of the agrarian question, by a "national minority" question, by an issue in the struggle against dictatorship (release of political prisoners), or even by the problem of famine, of sharing existing supplies (after all, that is how the February revolution began in Russia in 1917). Any attempt to establish, in advance, a political hierarchy of issues of this type and to deduce it from a general definition of the "stage of development" of these countries, would be totally inoperative. In this field, events will *always* bring forth unforeseen variants.

Moreover, although it may tremendously upset the schematic thinkers, it is perfectly possible for a permanent revolution process to be triggered in an already partly industrialized underdeveloped country by the spark of a "typically" working class demand. The question of the nationalization of the mines played no small role in setting off the Bolivian revolution of 1952. It was not a "purely" anti-imperialist demand; the same is

Indian women outside industrial plant (DR)



probably true of the nationalization of the Suez canal in Egypt.

But what sets these "stages" within the permanent revolution process apart from the stages so dear to the Menshevik-Stalinists and their imitators, is that at no stage of the process do the political demands rule out of the struggle and mobilizations and self-organization of the masses of workers and peasants, their immediate material and historic social and economic interests. These masses can only be forced into such a schema by blocking, by smothering, and by repressing their own mobilizations, that is, let us repeat it once again, those of the workers as well as of the exploited peasants. These are the stakes of the real political choice.

Political alliance, "class" alliances, "anti-imperialist united fronts," yes, occasionally, punctually, for well-defined goals to be struggled for, and with strict compliance to the rule "march separately, strike together," we do not exclude these. But not at any price. Not at the price of putting a brake on the mobilization of the workers and poor peasants for their own interests, and on their self-organization to this end, even if this means that in real life the "anti-imperialist united front" will fall apart, because the "national" and (or) rural bourgeoisie prefers to capitulate to imperialism, to dictatorships, to "semi-feudalists," etc., rather than allowing itself to be surrounded by the surging flames of the peasant war and workers strikes with factory occupations, which are a deadly threat to it.

We are now in a position to answer another sarcastic remark of comrade Doug Jenness which demonstrates once more that he often does not even realize what the discussion is about. He writes:

"The October revolution, Lenin says, created the foundation for the "most perfect" development of capitalism in the countryside. (Mandel cannot deny this without breaking with Marx and Lenin.)"

Let Marx and Lenin rest in peace. Let us rather examine the problem both in light of the facts, that is of historical experience, and from the theoretical point of view.

The facts show that there was not "the most perfect development of capitalism in the countryside" (remember that Lenin is speaking of a development "on the American pattern"), neither after the October revolution, nor after the victory of the Yugoslav revolution, nor after the victory of the Chinese revolution, nor after the victory of the Cuban revolution, let alone the Vietnamese. In all these cases what occurred was mainly a development of petty commodity production with an embryo of capitalist agriculture, and not "the most perfect development of capitalism in agriculture." Whoever does not understand that "the most perfect development of capitalism" implies a massive development of farm machinery and a massive development of the agricultural proletariat, has not understood

much about capitalism according to Marx.

Where was there a private accumulation of capital in the hands of the Russian, Chinese, Yugoslav, or Cuban kulaks after the revolution on a scale that would have allowed them to massively purchase agricultural machinery which was, at any rate, not available in those countries? Lenin, who understood Marx, obviously meant to say: the nationalization of the land could serve as the point of departure for the most perfect development of capitalism, provided that a whole series of additional conditions were fulfilled, at the top of which the condition that the dictatorship of the proletariat not exist, would have a prominent place. Doug Jenness' simplistic shortcut transforms that correct observation into utter nonsense.

In fact, because we understand the law of uneven and combined development, we understand that the nationalization of the land under the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat could lead to "the most perfect development of capitalism in the countryside" (to agribusiness, because that is what we are talking about), only on condition that the workers state had supplied the kulaks with massive deliveries of farm machinery and authorized them to hire millions of farm hands to be exploited by them. But long before such a process could have come to fruition, it would have dealt a deadly blow to the dictatorship of the proletariat, it would have destroyed it. This would have been verified in the economic field (because the private accumulation of capital would have gotten the upper hand over "socialist primitive accumulation," and the law of value would have prevailed in Russia as a result of the links between the world market and the kulaks), and in the social field: the proletarianized and pauperized poor peasants would have revolted against the kulaks, and if the state had not supported them, the worker-peasant alliance would have been shattered.

This is why Lenin could peremptorily proclaim as early as 1917: "Do the SRs fool themselves, do they fool the peasants when they admit and spread around the

idea that transformations of that magnitude are possible without overthrowing the dominance of capitalism, without placing all state power in the hands of the proletariat, without the peasants' supporting the most vigorous measures of the proletarian power against the capitalists... The transition of political power to the proletariat, that is the main thing." ("Workers and Peasant," September 1917, C.W. Vol. 25, p. 308; translated from the French).

What a far cry from the "democratic republic" and "the rapid development of capitalism in the European-style" of 1905! The person who persists today, against all the evidence, in placing a "continuity" sign between the two sets of analyses, suffers from the worst kind of blindness, the blindness of those who refuse to see.

Paradoxically, even in a bourgeois state, the "most perfect development of capitalism in the countryside" can no longer be reproduced in the imperialist epoch in the less developed countries despite many more or less consistent, and more or less limited, land reforms. Here too, the cause lies in the law of uneven and combined development: the inextricable overlap of agriculture and industry, of agriculture and credit, of usurious and banking capital and finance capital, of national and international capital, of the bourgeois state and capitalist agriculture, of the semi-colonial and (or) dependent bourgeois state and the international imperialist system. At bottom, the problem is that "the most perfect development of capitalism in the countryside" precisely requires an American-style overall capitalist development in all its complexity. But, in the epoch of imperialism, "a second America is no longer possible." Doug Jenness started off by accepting this assertion — that only the theory of the permanent revolution can account for in all its dimensions — as a commonplace. But, a minute later, he implicitly rejects it.

This is why even the initial successes of the "green revolution" in the countryside of the most evolved dependent countries (Mexico, South Korea, some

Advanced farming machinery (DR)



parts of India) have not led to "the most perfect development of capitalism in the countryside," but to a partial, hybrid, combined, mongrelized, simultaneous development of development and underdevelopment that keeps these countries far below the conditions of the laggard imperialist countries, not to mention Western Europe, Canada, Australia or the United States.

#### THE QUESTION OF THE SELF-LIMITATION OF THE PROLETARIAT

In the section of his article which is an open polemic against comrade Trotsky, Doug Jenness reproaches him with the prediction that a "two-class" government would run the risk of repressing or limiting the struggle of the proletariat for its own objectives (p. 41). He peremptorily asserts that the "two-class government" established in October 1917, far from acting as a brake on the workers demands, including that of seizing the factories and expropriating the capitalists, actually helped the proletariat to achieve them. Trotsky's prediction is therefore allegedly mistaken.

This "refutation" is meaningless. We have already established that according to Lenin and all the programmatic documents of the Bolshevik Party and the C.I., the government that rose to power through the October insurrection was not "a two-class government," but the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was so not only in a "general historic" sense, but also in a concrete and immediate sense.

The workers were armed. The bosses were disarmed. The workers exercised power through their soviets. The bosses were bullied, despised, insulted (read the details in Victor Serge's *The Year One of the Revolution*) and chased from their villas, mansions and apartments by the workers, before being legally expropriated (how "anarchistic" this magnificent workers revolution was, to use an insult Doug Jenness is fond of, but which comrade Lenin looked upon rather as a compliment in his *State and Revolution*).

Obviously, under these conditions, no one in Russia could put a brake on or limit the workers demands. The fact that the Bolsheviks had to revise several times the calendar they had projected for the various nationalizations, under the impact of the battering ram of the spontaneous workers mobilizations, is nowhere mentioned by Doug Jenness although it is a fact recognized by all serious historians. The fact that Lenin and the Bolsheviks complied without the slightest hesitation, cheerfully, that they preferred a thousand times the real revolutionary process to preestablished schemas, testifies to their admirable revolutionary fiber, a fiber we never called into question.

But comrade Doug Jenness is careful not to ask the question which arises logically from his way of tackling the problem of "class alliances." What happened in every single case where the leaders of the revolutionary process actually allow-

ed themselves to be drawn into a "two-class government" that could only be a coalition government with the bourgeoisie, since no "peasant party" independent of the bourgeoisie and proletariat ever appeared on the scene of history? What happened even in those cases where the parties leading the revolutionary process, while breaking in practice with the bourgeoisie (and its "peasant parties"), tried to express their political orientation through the old formulas of the revolution by stages? In every single case, there were attempts, often successful unfortunately, to limit the mobilizations, the self-organization and the self-activity of the proletariat and poor peasants, against their will, insofar as these mobilizations did not correspond to the preestablished schemas.

In the worst cases, the result was not only a repression of the masses, but the defeat of the revolution as a consequence of the demoralization caused by that repression. In the best of cases, the result was the emergence of workers states highly bureaucratized from the outset as a result of the lack of self-organization of the masses. Disastrous consequences ensued for the solution of the problems, difficulties and conflicts, that inevitably arise on the road to socialism; the transitional society born under these auspices was "blocked" and unable to move forward towards socialism; this in turn had no less disastrous consequences on the consciousness of the international proletariat and the dynamic of the world revolution, which itself boomeranged back and further worsened the tension and waste afflicting the bureaucratized transitional societies.

About all this, comrade Doug Jenness keeps mum. Comrade Trotsky had no small merit in perceiving, as early as 1905, most of these problems that, together with those of the permanent revolution, overshadow twentieth century history. That one could reproach him today with such farsightedness instead of admiring it, is good cause for dismay.

We have already drawn attention to comrade Doug Jenness' rather selective method of "reading" Lenin. It consists in drawing one or two quotations from a book of 100 to 150 pages in order to "demonstrate" a preconceived thesis, without wondering why the book contains twenty quotations that say the opposite and whether, therefore, one ought not first seek to ascertain the overall opinion of the author as it emerges from the work as a whole. But Doug Jenness attempts to enlist even the works of Marx on behalf of his preestablished thesis. This is only possible thanks to an even more "selective" reading of the works of Marx and Engels.

In this instance, what is alarming and marks a further slippage towards a broader and more complete revision of Marxism, is the fact that he repeats in 1982 one of the last paragraphs of the *Communist Manifesto*, written before the revolution of 1848, as if it were still politically valid today, as if the Bolsheviks

had applied it not only in 1905 but even in 1917, without even explaining what political-strategic thesis is implied in the passage, without asking whether the prediction was borne out by reality in 1848 and whether Marx and Engels continued to uphold it.

What does the passage at hand say? That Germany is on the eve of the bourgeois revolution; that this bourgeois revolution will triumph under the leadership of the bourgeoisie; that it will be the immediate prelude to the proletarian revolution.

Of these three predictions, only the first was verified. The other two were disproved by events. The German revolution was not victorious, and could not be victorious precisely because it remained under the leadership of the bourgeoisie. Nor was it the prelude to the proletarian revolution. The concrete experience of the German and French revolutions of 1848 led Marx and Engels to drastically revamp their revolutionary strategy. In the *Address to the Central Committee of the League of Communists*, written in March 1850, Marx and Engels summarized their balance sheet of the 1848 revolution thus:

"We have already said, in 1848, that the German liberal bourgeoisie would come to power and immediately turn their newly acquired power against the workers. You saw how the business was carried out. The bourgeoisie could not achieve this goal without an alliance with the feudal party that had been brushed aside in March, and even without abandoning power, in the last analysis, to that feudal absolutist party." (Marx-Engels, *Selected Works*; translated from the French).

The historical sequence therefore was not: victory of the bourgeois revolution leading to the beginning of the proletarian revolution, but beginning of the bourgeois revolution leading to a victory of the counterrevolution. The bourgeois' fear of the proletariat got the upper hand over its desire to do away with the semi-feudal remnants.

Marx and Engels drew two strategic conclusions from this which had not been present in the *Communist Manifesto*: firstly, that the proletariat must form itself into an independent political party with its own specific tactics even before the bourgeois revolution breaks out and before the "revolutionary" role of the bourgeoisie and democratic petty-bourgeoisie comes to an end, and this in spite of the bourgeois character of the revolution; and secondly, the implementation of the strategy known as "permanent revolution," for it is in the *Address to the League of Communists* that this term is used for the first time by the founders of Marxism.

One should not forget that the *Communist Manifesto* calls upon Communists to join workers parties only in Britain and the USA which remained outside the revolution of 1848. In the two main countries of that revolution, France and Germany, the *Communist Manifesto* ex-

explicitly advocates that Communists join petty-bourgeois parties (the party of Louis Blanc in France, the democrats in Germany) and *not* set up independent parties of the working class. Here is the balance sheet of this tactic drawn up by Marx and Engels in the March 1850 *Address*.

"A great part of the members [of the Communist League] directly involved in the revolutionary movement, thought that the time of secret societies had passed and that it was sufficient to operate openly and publicly. The different districts and locals relaxed their relations with the Central Committee and let them gradually come to rest. While the democratic party, the party of the petty-bourgeoisie, organized thus more and more in Germany, the workers party lost its solid basis, remained organized in only a few localities, for purely local purposes, and thereby got in the general movement completely under the domination and leadership of the petty-bourgeois democrats. One must put an end to this situation; the independence of the workers must be established." (Marx-Engels-*Werke*, Vol. 7, translated from the French.)

Underlying this strategic turn, there also was the experience of the class struggles in France, of the June 1848 insurrection of the French proletariat, of the bloody clash between the bourgeoisie and proletariat *in the very course of the revolution, before it had completed its tasks, before an institutionalized "democratic republic" had been born.* Here also, life, the class struggle, historical experience, demonstrated that the bourgeoisie had become *politically reactionary and counterrevolutionary* long before it had fulfilled its historic economic tasks. To deny this "break" in the thought of Marx and Engels, to proclaim that the Marx and Engels of June 1848, of 1850, of 1871, stood "in the political continuity" of the aforementioned paragraph of the *Communist Manifesto*, and to add on top of that that the Lenin of *State and Revolution* and of the October revolution stood "in continuity" with this paragraph, amounts to turning Marx and Lenin into half-Mensheviks, or even vulgar Mensheviks; it amounts to treating the true history of revolutionary Marxism with intolerable flippancy.

In the course of the German revolution of 1918-1919, a Left Social-Democratic leader (it did not take much to be "to the left" of Noske!) wrote a pamphlet entitled "How to Lose a Revolution." In it, he counterposed the "scientific," balanced, correct, well thought-out, position of the *Communist Manifesto* to the insane, in fact the "anarcho-Blanquist," position of the Marx who supported the June 1848 insurrection of the Paris proletariat. The latter had no chance of succeeding "since" the bourgeois revolution had not yet been entirely completed, "since" capitalism had not yet "exhausted all its economic potentialities." As a result, the only possible

outcome of this "insane" insurrection was to drive the bourgeoisie into the arms of the counterrevolution. The Menshevik (correction: Left Social-Democratic) author of this pamphlet had not yet understood, seventy years after the event, that the fact that the French bourgeoisie had gone over to the camp of the counterrevolution in France, was not the result of the "insane insurrection" of the Paris proletarians but quite clearly that of the *inexorable maturation of the class contradictions between Capital and Labor*, given the development of capitalism, of the workers consciousness, and of the workers movement. The workers insurrection was a response to this evolution of the bourgeoisie and not its cause. The name of this genuine supporter of the "self-limitation of the proletariat in the democratic revolution" was Eduard Bernstein. Bernstein: you have heard of him, haven't you? And of the kind of revisionist logic that led Bernstein to his conclusion?

#### THEORETICAL ROOTS OF THE ERRORS OF DOUG JENNESS

How was it that comrades educated for decades in revolutionary Marxist theory and traditions could "founder" and sink towards such deeply erroneous positions? We see essentially three causes, all interrelated, that illustrate yet another time in the history of the Marxist movement the terrible "objective dialectic of ideas," a logic over which Doug Jenness and his cothinkers seem to have lost all conscious control: "Du glaubst Du schiebst und wirst geschoben" (You think you push, and you are pushed"), as was put so neatly by that great dialectician who went by the name of Goethe.

\*It all began with the present leaders of the Socialist Workers Party's faulty understanding of the way in which Trotsky and the Fourth International had used the criterion of the nationalization of the means of production as the basic criterion showing the USSR remained a workers state, despite the monstrous bureaucratic dictatorship that held sway over it. For Trotsky, that nationalization was *the decisive residual element*, that is, as he often put it, what *survived* from the October revolution. But he never dreamed of *reducing* the conquests of October, and still less the nature of the October revolution to this nationalization alone, and to consider as "less important," or "less decisive," the destruction of the bourgeoisie's state power and the creation of the new power of the soviets.

For Trotsky, as for Lenin, as for Engels, as for Marx, what is decisive in a social revolution is the transfer of power from one class to another, and not the instant and complete abolition of a given form of property. *The Communist Manifesto* already stated explicitly:

"We've already seen that the first stage of the workers revolution is the forma-

tion of the proletariat as the dominant class, the conquest of democracy."

"The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest *little by little all capital from the hands of the bourgeoisie*, to centralize all the instruments of production in the hands of the state, that is of the proletariat organized as the ruling class, and to increase as fast as possible the amount of productive forces" (translated from the French) (our emphasis).

The new theoretical problem with which Trotsky and all revolutionary Marxists were confronted beginning in the 1930s was that of a state that was born out of an undeniable victory of the proletarian revolution, but in which "the proletariat organized as a class" no longer wielded political power, no longer enjoyed "political supremacy," and where proletarian democracy no longer existed. Could one still speak of a workers state under those conditions, despite the dictatorship of the bureaucracy? Yes, answered Trotsky, insofar as the nationalization of the means of production and the monopoly of foreign trade born of the October revolution still *survived*. It was a new criterion for a new problem, that of *the class nature of a bureaucratically degenerated workers state*. It was by no stretch of the imagination a new "scientific criterion for the creation of a workers state" to be applied by Marxists to all workers states.

\* Driven by the will to "systematize" this wrong criterion for the definition of all workers states — which they had already applied to all the victorious socialist revolutions, including by the absurd denial that the Paris Commune was a dictatorship of the proletariat — the SWP leaders who share comrade Jenness's current ideas began to revise *the whole* Marxist theory of the state. They began to identify "state" and "society," forgetting that the state is, by its very Marxist definition, *a set of apparati*, of bodies of specialized men (mainly, but not exclusively, "armed men") that take over functions previously exercised by society as a whole, and this in the interest of a ruling class. The class nature of a state is determined by answering the following question: "what class interests do these special apparati fundamentally serve on the scale of history?" and not by the question: "what property forms are developed or preserved in the immediate period under the rule of this state?" The state of the absolutist monarchy was a semi-feudal state, despite the fact that semi-feudal landed estates may have declined or even disappeared in this or that country, in one or another period. Yet there is no doubt that, on the whole, this state continued to defend the interests of the semi-feudal nobility and upper clergy, and that if it had not existed, or after it had been destroyed by a bourgeois revolution, the fate of these social classes would have qualitatively worsened.

Similarly, in the epoch of capitalism's decline, the bourgeois state can nationalize not unimportant sectors of the means

of production (not only under nationalist-populist regimes in the semi-colonial countries, but also in the imperialist countries, both under parliamentary-democratic regimes and under authoritarian and fascist regimes), and still remain a bourgeois state. If it did not exist, the breadth of the nationalizations would be far greater, the interests of the bourgeoisie as a class would be damaged definitively and comprehensively, rather than partially and temporarily.

This theoretical error is especially serious for revolutionaries in semi-colonial countries, because it can lead them to completely false conclusions on the class nature of certain states that seem, at first sight, to have nationalized the means of production as, or more extensively than the USSR under the NEP, yet remain bourgeois states. This is demonstrated by the entire subsequent evolution of Egypt, Irak, Algeria, Syria, the People's Republic of the Congo, that belonged in that category, and events will unfortunately confirm that, barring new upheavals, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Yemen should be classified in the same category.

Comrade Doug Jenness uses a strange argument to justify this revision of the Marxist theory of the state: since the October revolution did not "immediately" abolish private property of the large means of production, it allegedly preserved the bourgeois state, since this state (that is the ruling soviets!) acted to "protect" and even "defend" that property. In other words: if you bring a knife to the throat of a fascist mass murderer who brutally assaulted you after slaughtering several other people, yet do not immediately cut it, in order to check if he has an accomplice who might attack you from behind (you "only" cut it a quarter of an hour "later"), you are "protecting" him, you are "defending" him, you are "saving his life." The knife that cuts the throat becomes a "protecting knife." Truly irresistible "logic!"

Right from the moment they seized power the Bolsheviks proclaimed their intention of socializing the Russian economy. On December 25, 1917, Lenin already wrote in his article "How to organize competition:"

"The lackeys of the money-banks, the mercenaries of the exploiters, the gentlemen among the bourgeois intellectuals tried to scare the people away from socialism, whilst it is precisely capitalism that condemns them to forced labor, to a barracks-like existence, to excessive and monotonous work, to a life of famine and direst poverty. The first step towards the emancipation of the workers from this forced labor, is to confiscate the estates of the landowners, to introduce workers control, the nationalization of the banks. The next steps will be: the nationalization of factories and enterprises, the compulsory centralization of the whole population in consumers' cooperatives that will serve at the same time as distribution cooperatives, the introduction of state monopoly over trade in

wheat and other basic necessities." (C.W., vol. 24, translated from the French).

A state that proclaims that intention, from the moment of its creation, and carries it out without the slightest new revolution or internal transformation; a state that, a few weeks later, proclaims "the socialist homeland threatened," and ends that February 21, 1918, appeal with the words "Long Live the World Socialist Revolution" (p. 312-313), allegedly is a "bourgeois state" led by a "two-class government?" Need we emphasize once again the absurdity of such "conclusions" that provide sufficient ground, in and of themselves, to condemn comrade Jenness' entire sophistry as devoid of the slightest theoretical and political value?

\* The third theoretical error, which is connected to the previous two, was a false, because excessively simplistic and mechanistic, conception of the leadership



of a revolutionary process that ended with the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Comrades who share Doug Jenness' opinion are, by the same token, locked in an antinomy: either the dictatorship of the proletariat was established under the leadership of a party, and then this party *must* be a revolutionary Marxist party; or there is no revolutionary Marxist party and then, either there is no dictatorship of the proletariat or it was established despite and against the leading party, "under the pressure of the masses."

This error first led to a systematically sectarian attitude toward the Yugoslav, Chinese, and Vietnamese CPs that were falsely labelled as "Stalinist parties," which also led to long delays in recognizing the emergence of new workers states. That attitude was associated with a scholastic and dogmatic conception of "Stalinism" that reduced it to "theoret-

ical conceptions," independently of the real links which may have existed with the Soviet bureaucracy, and more importantly, *independently of these parties' real political practice* and objective role in the revolutionary process of the class struggle. All this led to a crassly spontaneist conception of the Yugoslav, Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions, in which the role the CPs of those countries played in preparing and leading the overthrow of capitalism, was completely denied (vestiges of these conceptions are still found — but for how long? — in comrade Doug Jenness' article, with regard to the Chinese CP).

For more than two decades we systematically warned the comrades leading the SWP of the dangers in such a sectarian and dogmatic position that, moreover, had failed the test of history, but to no avail. Black and white are not the only colors just as "counterrevolutionary Stalinism" and "revolutionary Marxism" are not the only alternatives. There are intermediate categories. There was the Paris Commune, established without a "revolutionary Marxist" leadership, under a leadership that included some Marxists (a minority), Proudhonists, Blanquists, and others. There was the dictatorship of the proletariat established in 1919 in Hungary, under a mixed leadership including Left Social-Democrats and Communists. The dictatorship of the proletariat was established in Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam, and Cuba by *pragmatic revolutionary leaderships* that had a revolutionary practice but a theory and program that was adequate neither to their own revolution, nor especially to the world revolution.

The fact that they carried out a socialist revolution — a fact that is infinitely more important than their lack of an adequate theory — means that it would be the height of sectarianism to call them "counterrevolutionaries." To call them "Stalinists" would amount to giving Stalinism entirely new merits. However, the fact that they did not and still do not have an adequate overall program for constructing a socialist world means that calling them "revolutionary Marxists" would be entirely out of place. They are pragmatic revolutionaries, we would say "left centrists" from a theoretical point of view, without giving the slightest pejorative coloration to that term. But the lack of a correct program is not a tiny little wart on a face radiating with beauty. It is a serious deficiency, which has *negative practical consequences* both for their intervention in the world revolution and for the construction of socialism in their own country.

The sectarian-dogmatic position first began to crumble under the hammer blows of the Cuban revolution, then of the Nicaraguan revolution. However, Doug Jenness' cothinkers remained locked in their "black or white" simplistic outlook, and simply reversed their position within the same antinomy they had created. The generalization of the concept of the "workers and farmers govern-

ment" as something other than the dictatorship of the proletariat, and its extension even to the October 1917 revolution, is the instrument with which the reversal will be "systematized."

The slogan for a "workers government" or for a "workers and farmers government" (in countries where the peasants are still an important part of the working population) is an indispensable *transitional slogan*. It crowns all the transitional demands. Its pedagogic, propaganda, and sometimes agitational function, is to bring the masses through their own experience, and starting from their really given level of consciousness, to pose in practice the question of overthrowing the bourgeois government, to take all the power, and destroy the bourgeois state.

This is why it is an eminently algebraic slogan whose concrete formulation depends on a series of conditions that vary from one country to another and from one conjunctural situation to another: the acuteness of the class struggle; the level of mass mobilization; the seriousness of the bourgeoisie's political crisis; the extent (and precise forms) of self-organization of the masses; the amount of confidence they still retain in their traditional organizations; the emergence, or non-emergence, of genuine revolutionary parties with mass influence, even though still real minorities, etc.

But it is a necessary slogan, *not a necessary stage* in the revolutionary process, not an alleged intermediate stage between the bourgeois state (the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie) and the workers state (the dictatorship of the proletariat). In practice, it turned out not to be necessary, and it turned out that it had no actual concretization (except as synonymous to the dictatorship of the proletariat) in Russia, in Yugoslavia, in Vietnam, or even, in our opinion (but this is no longer controversial inside the FI) in China. When it is concretized as something different from the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is only, as specified both by the Resolution on Tactics of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International and the *Transitional Program*, because the (or one of the) leading parties of the revolutionary process believes that it should not immediately push its break with the bourgeoisie to the end (or else *cannot* immediately push it to the end because of the extremely backward nature of the country).

We are speaking, of course, of a *political* break, of a break with the institutions of the bourgeois state and their destruction, and not of the "immediate and total" elimination of private property that no sensible person, beginning with Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, ever thought was a precondition for establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. Moreover such "a total elimination" exists nowhere on earth. Even today in the USSR, 65 years after the

October revolution, 6-8% of the means of production, and some 25% of agricultural production are still private.

In the past, all those who were not Trotskyists were counterrevolutionaries. Now, all those who are not counterrevolutionaries are revolutionary Marxists (you can bet that it will not be long before Doug Jenness attributes that virtue first to the Vietnamese CP, and then, who can say, also to the Chinese CP). In the past, getting enthusiastic about the victorious Yugoslav, Chinese, and Vietnamese *revolutions* was "capitulating to Stalinism." Now, expressing the slightest criticism of the Cuban, Nicaraguan, and even Vietnamese *leadership*, has become "sterile sectarianism." Either uncritical support or sectarian rejection: the comrades who agree with Doug Jenness cannot escape this dilemma. Yet its solution is quite simple: *combining* total support for the revolutionary process with justified criticism of its leadership everytime it acts against the interests of the ("national" or "international") proletariat.

After accusing us of "opportunism" towards the living revolutions, the comrades who agree with Doug Jenness now accuse us of "sectarianism" towards their leaders. Both accusations are false.

But since the world revolution forms a whole (albeit a whole structured by three deeply interrelated sectors), the increasingly clear adaptation of the comrades who agree with Doug Jenness to the pragmatism of the leaderships that led real revolutions since World War Two, cannot save them from the pitfall of sectarianism. It is in fact leading them to increased sectarianism towards all sectors of the world revolution and the world mass movement that do not fit into the simplistic schema of "campism" based on states: increasing sectarianism towards *Solidarnosc* militants; increasing sectarianism towards the activists of the *Labour Party* left; increasing sectarianism towards the activists of the mass antiwar movement; increasing sectarianism towards the trade union left struggling against capitalist austerity; increasing sectarianism towards the proletariat confronting so-called "anti-imperialist" bourgeois governments, etc.

The source of this increasing sectarianism (combined with opportunism towards the Fidelista current) is still the same: *the inability to judge a movement above all in relation to the objective consequences of its political practice in the class struggle*; the systematic substitution of a dogmatic-idealist criterion to this Marxist, materialist, criterion, namely the attitude of the leaders of this movement towards a political question determined to be "central" (without the slightest theoretical justification): previously it was the question of "Stalinism;" now it is the question of "the defense of the USSR."

This is not the place for a review of

the trajectory of the Nicaraguan revolution. Our movement has already done so in several documents; it will continue to do so at the Twelfth World Congress. But one thing is sure: nothing in the real course of the Nicaraguan revolution confirms the existence of some two-class "power," "government" or "state," or worse yet, of a revolutionary government that would destroy the bourgeois state apparatus while maintaining — a bourgeois state.

There can be dual power between the power of two antagonistic classes in a situation where history has not yet settled the question of which class, which power, has defeated the other. But there cannot be a "two-class government" in the sense that it would be neither under the hegemony of the proletariat, nor under that of the bourgeoisie.

In obfuscating this decisive question, the comrades who agree with Doug Jenness are entering without being aware of it, the path that leads to justifying some of the main revolutionary defeats of the twentieth century. Precisely the same line of argumentation was used to justify the course that led to defeat in Spain in 1936 and to defeat in Chile in 1973, to mention only two examples. If, at the level of real power, there is an "intermediate solution" between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat, pray tell us why workers parties could not exercise *genuine power* in the framework of a "truly weakened" bourgeois state. The whole of Leninism is being poured down the drain despite all the oaths to continuity...

#### FROM ABANDONING PERMANENT REVOLUTION TO ABANDONING THE ANTIBUREAUCRATIC POLITICAL REVOLUTION?

Three years ago, in our article on "The Twenty-One Theoretical Errors of Comrades Clark, Feldman, Horowitz, Waters" (dated September 15, 1979, and published in *Intercontinental Press combined with Inprecor*, Vol. 19, No 16, p. 456, May 4, 1981), we predicted that the leading comrades of the SWP who agree with comrade Doug Jenness' ideas would consummate an explicit break with the theory of the permanent revolution. Now that course is appearing more clearly. We still have to find out what its practical political consequences will be; (fortunately!) the SWP leadership has not yet elaborated them fully.

Today, we will be so bold as to venture a second prediction: if comrade Jenness and his "cothinkers" do not stop in time their advance down this revisionist path, they risk being drawn, unawares and unwillingly, at least at this time, into gradually abandoning the Marxist theory of the Soviet bureaucracy, and especially into abandoning our strategy of antibureaucratic political revolution, in favor of some meek perspective of "gradual democratization" of these



Czechoslovakia 1968 (DR)

states, and worse yet “democratization mainly from above.”

What is the basis for this prediction?

First of all, a fundamental fact of the international workers movement. The Communist movement has only given birth to two fundamental ideological currents that lasted a long time and were present everywhere: the Stalinist current and its byproducts, and the revolutionary Marxist current, that is mainly the Trotskyist current. Between these two currents, there is no space for a stable, lasting current, not even an “authentically Leninist” one, for the simple reason that Lenin stopped writing in 1923. Over the last sixty years, innumerable phenomena of great historic importance took place for which Lenin’s works only provide a few points of reference, but no proposals for overall solutions that can be verified or invalidated in the light of experience. More than Lenin’s writings is therefore needed to find one’s way around. Let us mention the following items to be remembered: the question of fascism; the question of the bureaucratic degeneration of the USSR; the question of the relationship between socialist democracy and the economic problems of building socialism; the question of the strategy for power in the semi-colonial countries; the question of nuclear weapons; the place of workers management in the fight against bureaucracy; the question of the connection between the decline of capitalism and the strategy for workers power in the imperialist countries, etc.

Under these circumstances, it is not by chance that, as Trotsky himself wrote:

“We can say that all of Stalinism considered at the theoretical level, issued from a critique of the theory of the permanent revolution as it was formulated in 1905” (*Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution*).

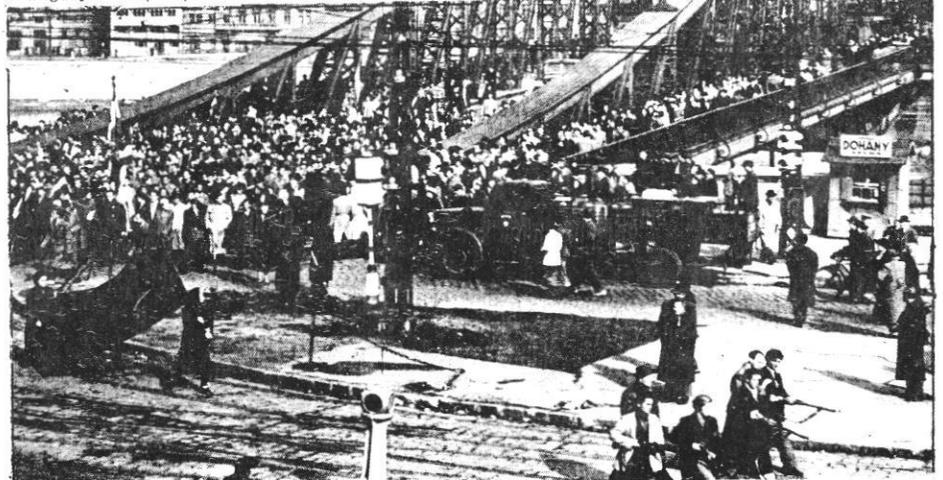
“A critique of the theory of the per-

manent revolution,” “all of Stalinism:” let comrade Doug Jenness and his co-thinkers ponder the fateful meaning of that analysis by Trotsky. Since 1923, in the history of the Communist movement, in the history of the revolutionary movement, every turn against the need for a direct seizure and exercise of power by the proletariat has always begun with an attack on Trotskyism. (9)

The denial of the theory of “socialism in one country” (that is the theory that says that the construction of socialism not only can, but must, begin in each country where the socialist revolution has already been victorious, but that it cannot be completed there) is part and parcel of the theory of the permanent revolution. As it were, the interconnection between the international revolution and a victorious revolution in one or several countries, implies also an interconnection between the process of bureaucratization of these workers states and the defeats of the international revolution, an interconnection which flows from the same source as the theory of the permanent revolution: a correct judgement on the relationship of forces between social classes on the eve of, during, and after the revolution, both within the less developed countries and on an international scale. The same lack of understanding of the key role of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the proletariat in insuring the victory of the revolution in those countries lies at the root of the lack of understanding of the key role of the proletariat in clearing the way for the elimination of the obstacle of bureaucratic dictatorship, an obstacle on the path of both the international revolution and the construction of socialism.

Wherever one may look for the solution, be it in the economic, social, political or cultural field, it always involves a strengthening of the objective and subjective weight of the proletariat in the revolution and in the state (which is linked to a beginning withering away of the state). International extension of the revolution; accelerated industrialization; the broadening of socialist democracy; the return to genuine soviets; real democracy within the party; soviet party pluralism: all these proposals, this whole

Hungary 1956 (DR)



strategic line, this whole revolutionary Marxist “counter-project” set against the strategy inspired by the material interests of the bureaucracy, rest on a single internal logic: the qualitative increase of the weight and power of the proletariat in the society and the state, establishing, extending, and generalizing the power of the workers councils (soviets). It must be understood that the socialist revolutions that were victorious after World War Two took a particular form, different from that of the October revolution, above all because — aside for the subjective, historical factors — of the fundamental fact that, in the countries where they were victorious, the urban proletariat was not the majority class and did not have sufficient weight to impose its own forms of action and specific forms of self-organization and make them hegemonic within the revolutionary process. But this is no longer the case in today’s world, in all the imperialist countries, in most of the semi-industrialized dependent countries, and in all the bureaucratized workers states. This is the reason why any proletarian revolution in a large country, and especially any victorious proletarian revolution, including an anti-bureaucratic political revolution, will lead to the formation of workers councils whose rule is the unifying goal that brings together all the various aspects of our world revolutionary strategy.

This is the link between the second and third fundamental theses of the theory of the permanent revolution and

9. Let us add that almost all the arguments used by comrade Doug Jenness against comrade Trotsky come down to us in a straight line from the polemic of the Thermidorian epigones of 1923-1928, from the polemic of neo-Stalinists like Mavrakis (*On Trotskyism*), or can be found in the Soviet bureaucracy’s pamphlet written by M. Basmanov, *Contemporary Trotskyism: Its Anti-Revolutionary Nature*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972.

the theory of the antibureaucratic political revolution since a self-reform of the bureaucracy is excluded as all of history has shown since 1923. It is enough to quote Stalin's famous outcry "These cadres will not be eliminated short of a civil war." Insert "bureaucrats" instead of "cadres" and you have understood the inevitability of the political revolution.

Finally, since the elimination of the bureaucracy, of its monopoly over power, is impossible without a revolution, as confirmed most recently by the Polish events, because for the bureaucracy this monopoly over power ("the leading role of the party") is the source of enormous material privileges which the bureaucrats cherish as the apple of their eye, the question of political revolution now concerns over one third of humankind, almost one third of the world proletariat. Any subordination of the political revolution to some alleged "priority" of the "anti-imperialist struggle," associated with a parallel subordination of the uncompromising defense of the proletariat's own interests in the semi-colonial and dependent countries to the same alleged "priority" of the "anti-imperialist objectives," reduces more than half the world proletariat to the role of auxiliary (in the best of cases), or victim, of the alleged "struggle between the two camps," which are no longer real class camps, but camps made up of states and governments independently of their concrete relations with the real proletariat. From then on, the unity of the world proletariat, the dialectical unity of the three sectors of the world revolution which expresses this unity, is broken. From then on, the orientation towards the real world revolution which can only be this dialectical unity, is postponed to better days, if not till Doomsday (The day when imperialism will have been defeated? How? Without a victory of the international proletariat?). When one abandons the theory and practice of the permanent revolution, that is the only alternative path which remains open.

Is the problem merely an attempt to "adapt our language" to "facilitate a dialogue" with the Castroist and Sandinist comrades? After all, "workers states," "bureaucratically deformed workers states," "bureaucratically degenerated workers state," bureaucratized workers states," this is the "jargon of sectarians:" no one should be expected to make head or tail of this hokus pokus. Why not use "current language," "common language" when we speak with the "new revolutionary vanguards," and simply say "socialist" states, even if we have to specify that the bureaucracy exists, etc.

But remember that the beginning revision of the theory of permanent revolution had also begun with a simple change in formulas. Then came the revision of the content, and it all ended up with the current rejection of both the formula and the content. This is cause for further thought.

Moreover, the possibility of a regeneration of the CPs is already being raised, albeit (for the moment) only for Central



Solidarnosc mass meeting in a factory (DR)

America. But why stop there? What about the CPs of the rest of Latin America? What about those of Africa (the South African ANC, notoriously CP-led, is already projected by some as an emerging "revolutionary leadership")? What about some Arab countries? What about Vietnam? What about Ireland? Are not we slowly evolving towards envisaging the possibility of a regeneration ("democratization") of ruling parties of the bureaucracy in Eastern Europe too?

All moot or even slanderous speculation? Let's hope so. But we noticed that in the *Militant* of October 1, 1982, comrade Ellen Kratke wrote:

"Many [workers] know there's a struggle going on in the world between two economic systems, capitalism and socialism."

So, an "economic system of socialism" already exists, even if it is a "socialism" with a money economy, a market, large-scale commodity production, wage-labor and many other "niceties" like "socialist" firing of strikers and "socialist" bans on strikes, "socialist" censorship of communist ideas and bookstores, "socialist" internment of oppositionists in psychiatric clinics, etc. So, "socialism in one country" is possible after all?

Just a slip of the pen? Again, let's hope so. But let's note that comrade Doug Jenness is the editor of the *Militant* and has accustomed us generally to much more "Leninist vigilance."

The reason we are provoking comrade Jenness in this way, is neither because of

some hostility nor because of some desire to paint the devil on the wall, as a German proverb puts it. It is because it is the duty of the Fourth International, of all revolutionary Marxist cadres and activists, to pull the alarm signal, to solemnly warn that a scratch is about to turn gangrenous. Our polemic has only one goal: to save the *Socialist Workers Party* for revolutionary Marxism, for the American revolution, for the world revolution. But it will be saved only if it stops the march of some of its leaders towards a break with Trotskyism in time. This is also how the "outside world" that watches us and observes us, has assessed the evolution of comrade Doug Jenness and his cothinkers, as is obvious from the following quote from the formerly pro-Stalinist and still anti-Trotskyist American weekly, *The Guardian*: "The SWP has been quietly dropping overboard some of its Trotskyist baggage." (July 14, 1982) ■

Ernest Mandel  
December 1, 1982

10. The non-Marxist nature of "campism" is revealed most clearly in its assessment of China. During China's military conflict with Vietnam, some campists even called it a "fascist country" or "fascist government." China had become "hegemonic," "reactionary," or even "imperialist" for the apologists of "campism." Yet the relations of production in China and the nature of the state are identical to those of the USSR. Does the conjunctural alignment of a state in the game of diplomacy determine its social nature, and not its social and economic foundations? Was not this the erroneous method of the Shachtmanites at the time of the Stalin-Hitler Pact?