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# *Communist Left (Australia) Programme - 1978.*

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## **1   The Historic Task**

The Communist Left of Australia is a revolutionary organisation which as part of the international movement is committed to building the party that will lead the working class to achieve a dictatorship of the proletariat transitional to communism in Australasia and the Pacific as part of the world socialist revolution.

The productive forces of our time have outgrown not only the bourgeois forms of property relationships but also the boundaries of national states. Liberalism and nationalism have both become fetters upon the further development of the world economy. The world proletarian revolution is directed both against private property and against the national splitting-up of the world economy. The socialist revolution, in abolishing wage slavery will abolish the division of society into classes and all social and political inequality therefrom.

The path to this goal lies through the smashing of the entire capitalist state, its army, its police, and its bureaucracy leading to its supersession by a new form of state—more properly called a community-- which, from the moment of its inception, will begin to wither away. This new form of state constitutes the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Faced with the trend to proletarian revolution on a world scale, promising under world communism to end all poverty, all political and economic oppression and all war, raising all humanity to the level of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx, a society where the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all, Capitalism in its most moribund stage, imperialism, can respond only by moves toward fascism and global war – threatening an international nuclear holocaust to maintain the bourgeoisie as the ruling class. The increasingly naked barbarism of a reactionary and parasitic world imperialism must accelerate the building of the world party of socialism.

## **2   The Revolutionary Tradition of the Communist Left.**

The Communist Left continues the revolutionary tradition of the international working class movement embodied in the politics of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. Our strategy and tactics, and therefore our programme also, are based on the experience of the Russian Bolshevik Party, the experience which enabled the party to build which won and retained proletarian power during and after the October Revolution of 1917.

The political tradition of revolutionary Bolshevism is constituted by the theory and practice of the Soviet Communist Party and the Third International until the death of Lenin, the Internationalist Left Opposition and the Fourth International until its fragmentation and disintegration during the second Imperialist War. This tradition is embodied in the programmes of the Bolshevik Party until 1924; the first four Congresses of the Third Communist International; and the Fourth Communist International (including the "War in the Far East". "Theses on the World Role of American Imperialism" and "Imperialist War and Proletarian Revolution").

The evolution of centrist groupings during this period (ie. Tendencies that vacillate between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary politics) that cover-up their opportunism and sectarianism by lip-service to the traditions of the Third and Fourth Internationals, make it imperative to emphasise those positions of the *Transitional Programme* of the Fourth International in particular which are basic tests of adherence to the revolutionary Marxist tradition.

The crucial test is the central political slogan of the Transitional Programme, the "Workers' and Farmers' Government", which is not only a demand for the dictatorship of the proletariat, but a demand indispensable to united front work to expose treacherous, Stalinist and centrist parties and the popular fronts that their politics inevitably generate. This demand must not be understood as a "democratic" self-limitation of the revolutionary party, that is, a watering-down of the revolutionary programme to win support from peasants and small farmers along Stalinist and Maoist lines, but as part of a programme aimed at convincing small peasants and farmers that their own democratic demands can be secured only through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The main political and economic demand of the Transitional Programme – for expropriation, the political overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the liquidation of its economic domination – is vital also. Expropriation is not merely an economic demand, for it must involve the political overthrow of the bourgeoisie. It is sharply differentiated from nationalisation, with or without compensation, which involves the capitalist state's dispossession of one section of the bourgeoisie for the benefit of the bourgeoisie as a whole. Expropriation is an action by the workers relying on their own strength, not that of the state apparatus (or the state plus some bogus form of 'workers' control'). Expropriation excludes indemnification of the expropriated owners which almost always accompanies bourgeois nationalisation.

### **3   The Crisis of Proletarian Leadership.**

The objective conditions for the overthrow of capitalism were in existence when the present imperialist period opened in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. But the lag between the objective conditions and the political consciousness of the proletariat, despite the ever-deepening crisis of the economic, political and social order, found its expression in the Social Democratic, Stalinist and centrist misleaders, who refuse to explain to the workers that socialist

revolution is immediately on the agenda of history and organise them accordingly.

Opportunists and philistines of all varieties try to blame the political worthlessness of the leaders of the workers on the workers themselves, not understanding that capitalism exploits workers culturally as well as every other way, and that socialist consciousness cannot develop from the workers' spontaneous experience but must be introduced into the working class from outside through the work of the revolutionary party.

This failure underlies the economism (limiting of political action to the level of 'trade union' consciousness) of all Stalinist and centrist groups today. They have already blamed their own mistakes on the existing level of working class consciousness. They have not broken from the social democratic to the Leninist theory of the crisis of leadership.

It is not enough for a party to 'orientate' itself to the working class and call itself the 'vanguard' or the 'leadership'. It must act in such a way that all other parties recognise and are obliged to admit that it constitutes the vanguard. This requires the organisation of an all-round political struggle under the leadership of the Communist Left in such a manner as to make it possible for all oppositional strata to render their fullest support to the struggle for a communist vanguard.

Communist practical workers must be trained to become political leaders able to guide all manifestations of the political struggle, able at the right time to lay down positive programmes of action for all groups oppressed by the capitalist state. Without a resolute cadre policy whose basis is to break from economism, it is impossible to resolve the crisis of leadership.

#### **4   The Vanguard role of the working class.**

Central to the Marxist perspective of world communism is the vanguard role of the proletariat. The working class, in emancipating itself from wage slavery, emancipates from political and economic oppression, all other layers of society. Since wage-slavery is the last attempt by any class society to conceal the subordination of the ruled to the rulers, (in this epoch by the fictions of democratic 'equality before the law' and 'freedom of contract') the working class, in breaking through these myths and smashing the capitalist state to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat, lays the basis for the classless society. The vanguard role of the proletariat therefore derives from its historical position.

In the dominant imperialist countries particularly, but also in the colonies, semi-colonies and intermediate states, an upper stratum of wage-earners, bribed by the superprofits of imperialism, living "at the expense of society" as Lenin put it, constitutes a *labour aristocracy*. This stratum of workers act as supporters of bourgeois liberal parties –as in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain or modern USA –or bourgeois workers' parties. The labour bureaucracy, though generally recruited from the labour aristocracy, is not, like the labour

aristocracy, a stratum of wage-earners trying to escape their class, but a collective term for the various anti-Marxist misleaders who collaborate as the labour lieutenants of capital. The labour bureaucracy should not be confused with the labour aristocracy, since the bureaucracy owes its power and privileges to its role as ‘bonapartist’ mediator between sections of the proletariat and the capitalist class.

The labour aristocracy acts as an ideological vehicle for chauvinism, racism and sexism, together with reformism, in the workers’ movement. Its wage is indirectly derived from the oppression of colonial and semi-colonial workers and peasants. Its immediate interests therefore, lie in ‘emancipating’ itself from the international proletariat. It is a stratum in, but not of, the working class.

The term, labour aristocracy, is less an economic than a political characterisation of that stratum of wage-earners which views social and political gains not as the rewards of proletarian class struggle, but as tokens of an assured ‘status position’ in capitalist society, superior to that of the proletariat. Membership of the labour aristocracy is therefore expressed by political actions that follow from a consciousness of ‘emancipation’ or ‘near-emancipation’ from the world proletariat, leading in various ways to a political identification with imperialism.

The economic basis of this political identification remains, however, the accumulation of imperialist super-profits. Any fall in the rate of exploitation in the colonies and semi-colonies may lead to the re-absorption of sections of the labour aristocracy into the working class. Here, however, a lag in consciousness cannot be excluded, and the re-absorption of sections of the labour aristocracy into the working class will not be achieved automatically, but through hard political struggle.

In opposition to reformists, Stalinists and centrists who merely ‘orient’ themselves and pay lip-service to the working class, revolutionary Marxists build a party proletarian in composition and oriented to the lowest paid and most exploited –rather than the most affluent –sections of the working class. Again, these most exploited workers must not be confused with the un- or semi-employed lumpen proletariat which finds its ‘freedom from labour’ the sign of its emancipation from the working class.

In their propaganda, communists resolutely attack petty bourgeois and ‘aristocratic’ attitudes within the working class, warning workers that it is wage slavery that today incorporates all forms of oppression known in history. Having a ‘privileged’ language, race, nationality, or gender, do not constitute freedom from wage-slavery or guarantees of work, high wages, or elevated status in the capitalist economy. Such divisions within the imperialist world economy reflect the ways in which capital harnesses the labour-power of pre-capitalist workers and peasants to the production of profits. They give rise to illusions about the nature of these divisions that are promoted by capitalists and their ideological agents to divide and disorganise the working class internationally.

One example of the capitalist use of such divisions, is the revisionist theory of ‘double oppression’, in which wage-workers who are also oppressed on race, national or gender lines, are said to be ‘doubly oppressed’. This theory is designed to divert the most oppressed wage workers from their exploitation as workers to some other kind of exploitation, usually one denounced by petty bourgeois ideologists as equally important or more important than wage slavery. Revisionists attempt to steer the struggles for ‘sexual’ and ‘national’ liberation into reformist politics unrelated to revolutionary class struggle.

But communists point out that the oppression of women and the oppression of racial or national minorities results from the exploitation of their labour-power by capital, and that the most exploited workers are not those who are only partially exploited as wage-slaves, but those who are most totally wage-slaves. Under capitalism there is only one form of oppression, and that varies in intensity in direct relationship to the degree of exploitation of labour-power by capital. All forms of oppression in history are subsumed to that of the oppression of wage-labour.

The October Revolution still offers workers and peasants of all races, nationalities and genders, a model of how a workers’ revolution can be achieved through the working class leading all other oppressed groups and classes as long as the vanguard workers’ party follows a correct programme. After the revolution, the guarantee of the stability of workers’ power lies in the dictatorship of the proletariat exercised through soviets of workers’ and peasants’ deputies and enforced by armed workers. Where before the revolution the workers in Russia were armed together with the peasantry – what Lenin in *State and Revolution* called the ‘armed people’ – after the revolution, the achievement of the proletarian dictatorship required the purging of non-proletarian peasant elements from the Red Army and also from state power.

## **5   The Class Basis of Revisionism.**

Marxism has developed as a series of struggles against attempts to refute, misrepresent, ignore and caricature its basic tenets. Historically, the struggle for the development of Marxism against revisionism began with the struggles against Bernstein in Germany and Struve in Russia. Lenin saw Struvism, Economism, Menshevism, ultimatism, liquidationism and imperialist economism – the tendencies fought by the Bolshevik Party from its foundation in 1917 – as fundamentally expressions of the same petty bourgeois influence on Marxism. Bernsteinism merged with Fabianism as the ideology of the bureaucratic leaders of the social democratic parties, while Stalinism (including Maoism) continued and built on this revisionist tradition, becoming the official ideology of the privileged bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union, China and elsewhere.

In addition to the long-established social democratic and Stalinist bureaucratic centrism, the dominant revisionist tendency in the centrist ‘Trotskyist’ movement is Mandelism – a tendency which gradually abandoned any pretensions to orthodoxy in the post-war period to provide cover for figures

such as Pablo, Maitan, Hansen and Novack, who constantly discover new ‘vanguards’ –peasant guerillas, students, youth, the ‘new masses’ – who subordinate the building of the Party to the building of ‘mass movements’ of petty bourgeois liberal and economist character, and adapt to the bureaucratic leaderships of the social democratic parties and trade unions. Mandel’s willingness to continue to provide cover for the revisionists who have publically rejected both Trotsky and Lenin, is now under considerable strain, and his centrist current could move back in the direction of revolutionary politics, but not without a complete break with revisionism and a return to party-building in the most oppressed sections of the working class.

Nor can the fight against Mandelism succeed by turning the world revolutionary movement to a narrow economicistic concentration on trade union work on the lines advocated by Healy, Robertson and the Socialist Workers’ Party of the US since 1975. This is simple inverted Mandelism; tail-ending petty bourgeois mass movements in ‘challenged’ by tail-ending the traditional ‘workers’ mass movements, the unions. Both involve the liquidation of party-building in favour of building mass movements of ‘workers’ or ‘new’ vanguards.

These examples show how any deviation from Marxism, necessarily reflects the class standpoint of the bourgeoisie, expressed through classes and strata intermediate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Against revisionism, the growth of the Marxist party must involve constant testing of its political consciousness. At each major change in the international or national situation, factional differences will arise as a result. These cannot be avoided except by a sectarian refusal to relate tactics to changes in the world situation. Factional struggles are the only means of the correction of past mistakes and the preparation of a working class leadership capable of carrying out and winning political struggles against revisionist tendencies.

## ***6 The Post-Capitalist States.***

The degeneration of the Soviet Union under Stalin’s leadership failed to erode the class basis of the world’s first workers’ state, but placed at its head a bureaucratic stratum that expelled the workers from the Communist Party and the soviets. A political revolution is required to overthrow the bureaucratic usurpers.

The military expansion of the Soviet Union in 1939-40, and again in 1944-46, led to the expansion of the Russian degenerated workers’ state at the point of the guns of the Red Army. The Soviet leaders incorporated the Baltic states into the USSR but permitted in Eastern Europe continuance of separate national states formally independent of the USSR, though in its ‘sphere of influence’. These states were and are, however, simply extensions of the Soviet degenerated workers’ state that broke with capitalist economic relations under Soviet hegemony. They are therefore, themselves, degenerated workers’ states.

On the other hand, in Yugoslavia, Albania, China and later, Cuba, Vietnam and Laos, peasant guerilla armies under the leadership of Stalinist parties smashed the capitalist regime to establish a new regime. This took the form envisaged by Trotsky in the *Transitional Programme*: "one cannot deny in advance the theoretical possibility that under completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure etc) the petty bourgeois parties may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie. If a 'workers' and peasants' government' in the above sense were established it would represent merely a short episode on the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat".

Under the circumstances of war and mass revolutionary pressure, such a variant of 'workers' and peasants' governments' did occur, transitional to the dictatorship of the proletariat (comparable with the Russian Soviet regime between February 1917 and October 1917, though without the Bolshevik Party). Adherence to the *Transitional Programme* on this point is a basic distinguishing mark between centrism moving towards revisionism, and revolutionary Marxism. Any attempt to regard such petty bourgeois transitional regimes as a necessary two-class stage in the dictatorship of the proletariat, eliminates the revolutionary leadership of the working class and the vanguard role of the revolutionary party, and substitutes the peasantry as a spontaneously revolutionary class.

*Therefore, where such revolutions have occurred, these stages are characterised as "workers' and peasants' states transitional to the dictatorship of the proletariat" requiring the leadership of the working class and its revolutionary party to complete the transition.*

All the degenerated workers' states and the workers' and peasants' transitional states must be unconditionally defended by revolutionaries. In the defence of the Soviet Union, as in the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class, Stalinism and Stalinist bureaucracy are counter-revolutionary root and branch. No distinction can therefore be made between some imaginary 'progressive' role of the bureaucracy in defending the USSR against imperialism and the reactionary role of the bureaucracy in repressing workers. This is Deutscherite Utopia. The USSR can only be defended against imperialism not because of, but in spite of, the ruling bureaucracy. The arming of the soviet workers –and the workers of all post-capitalist states – as opposed to the arming of the bureaucracy, is the best guarantee of the defence of the bloc of states transitional to socialism.

The meaningless term 'state capitalism' used to describe any of the post-capitalist states is an expression of imperialist pressure on the petty bourgeois strata in the workers' movement to abandon defence of these states when they defy 'democratic' world opinion. The entire course of centrism in the post-war decades has zig-zaged between 'state capitalism' on the one hand, and Stalinophilia (apologetics for allegedly 'progressive' Stalinist regimes eg. Yugoslavia, Vietnam, Cambodia) on the other.

The main expression of Stalinophilia has been the characterisation of the post-capitalist states that have developed since 1945 as ‘deformed workers’ states’ – a characterisation implying the irrelevance of a working class revolutionary party in leading the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The reason for this vacillation springs from the abandonment, under pressure of imperialism, of the *Transitional Programme*.

Workers’ uprisings in the imperialist countries can spark off political revolution in the bloc transitional to socialism by confronting the workers and peasants of the Stalinist countries with the reality of soviet democracy, and making an international socialist division-of-labour, replacing the present autarchy, possible. Conversely, the political and economic nationalism of the contending Stalinist governments increasingly divides them in the face of imperialist attack leading now one, now another state, to ally with imperialism against the transitional sister states.

The weight of the peasantry, as against the working class, in the more economically backward workers’ and peasants’ states, shows specifically how the peasantry reflect capitalist pressures in the period before a firm workers’ dictatorship is successfully achieved in conditions of national isolation. The weakest link in the chain of workers’ and peasants’ states in this regard is Cambodia, where peasant armies have displaced the working class and only Cambodia’s relations with China retain it in the workers’ camp.

In all of these countries, political revolution against the dominant Stalinist (or as in Cuba, petty bourgeois) bureaucratic caste is necessary to establish soviet democracy. Political revolution constitutes the most effective defence of these transitional regimes. At the same time it makes possible the transition of the workers’ and peasants’ states to proletarian dictatorship and the degenerated workers’ states to socialism. It leads to the replacing of the existing competing ‘socialist’ economic autarchies by an international socialist division-of-labour.

The political revolution, by-passing national frontiers, will unite under proletarian democracy the whole existing bloc of workers’ and peasants’ transitional states (with national rights of secession constitutionally guaranteed). The international spread of revolution in the capitalist countries, and especially the imperialist heartlands, will give enormous impetus to political revolution in the transitional states.

## **7   The Socialist Revolution in the Colonial, Semi-colonial and Intermediate states.**

The combined character of bourgeois democratic and socialist tasks in colonial and semi-colonial countries means that nations which have not yet experienced bourgeois democratic revolutions can achieve democratic goals only as part of a socialist revolution. Where the bourgeois revolution is incomplete, in semi-colonial and intermediate countries, it can be completed only as part of a socialist revolution. Under monopoly capitalism, a very few countries, the USA, Japan and West Germany, today dominate all others in a

constant struggle for the territorial re-division of the world, a struggle which finds its highest expression in bloody imperialist wars which decide the supremacy of one or other imperialist power.

In the period of US dominance now ending, the hypocritical pacifist and internationalist mask of Yankee bandit imperialism found its expression in the 'Latin Americanisation' of the colonial world. That is, concession of formal 'independence' to the colonies of the former imperialist powers, the better to ensure their continued subordination as semi-colonies on the models of Panama and Bolivia, under imperialist supervision (the main supervising agency being the United Nations Organisation). It was predominantly the US colonies under direct rule (Hawaii, Puerto Rico, American Samoa) that were exempt from this de-colonising process.

Naturally, such independence from imperialism fell far short of the achievements of the European national revolutionary movements of the nineteenth century and brought to power for the most part, those sections of the local bourgeoisie or feudal (comprador) ruling class most subservient to imperialism and prepared to compromise with it. US imperialism has not diminished by sharpened the fight against bourgeois democratic goals –as in Indo-China. Imperialism's resistance to popular movements for real political independence can only make the objective of socialism more attractive to the masses in the semi-colonies whilst forcing more to the left national revolutionary movements in the remaining colonies.

The exploitation by the imperialist countries of the various colonies and semi-colonies does not occur simply through the accumulation of capital at one pole, and immiseration at the other. Between the most exploited colonies and the imperialist powers surfeited with colonial super-profits, an intermediate stratum exists, which in periods of crisis is forced either to the imperialist or the colonial pole of the imperialist system. This stratum is characterised by both semi-colonial subordination to the major imperialism or imperialisms, and relatively high living standards and the remnants of a small scale empire, political concessions granted by imperialism in return for the continued financial exploitation of these intermediate countries. The Russian Empire before 1917 played such a role for French and British finance capital. Britain today plays such a role for the US. Australia and New Zealand as semi-colonies of Britain also have some of the characteristics of intermediate countries.

*In the intermediate countries, democratic and socialist demands are also combined, but in a different form from that in the colonies and semi-colonies without imperialist pretensions. Here the basis for any struggle for combining democratic with socialist demands must be the fight for democratic rights of the ex-colonial peoples (migrant workers mainly) against the chauvinism and racism of a declining (and therefore moving towards fascism) labour aristocracy. This is because in these countries, the imperialist pretensions are based on the indirect sharing in the super-profits of imperialism, usually restricted to a dominant nationality (such as the European settler) at the expense of a colonised nationality who comprise a super-exploited wage-*

*labour reserve, denied democratic rights. The specific combination of democratic and socialist demands applicable to New Zealand as an intermediate country are spelled out in a later section.*

As always, the working class must lead the revolution in the colonies, semi-colonies and intermediate states. The peasantry (and small farmers) organised on the principles of either Castroism or Maoism, can at best achieve a state transitional to the dictatorship of the proletariat in which the peasantry (or small farmers) act as a transmitter of the political and economic pressures of imperialism. As Trotsky wrote in *Europe and America*: "America stand second in line of revolutionary development. First in line are Europe and the Orient." In other words, the USA is compelled to base its power on an unstable Europe, (that is, tomorrow's revolutions in Europe) and the national revolutions of Asia and Africa. Today's history is the working out of this prediction.

## **8   The Socialist Revolution in the Imperialist States.**

The dominant role of finance capital in the monopoly capitalist period means that the imperialist countries represent a parasitic, and declining economic force. France before 1914, was an imperialist power in which rentier capital prevailed at the expense of industrial capital, retarding and impeding any real economic development. This is the basic characteristic of the imperialist epoch –the tendency towards stagnation and decay. The position that imperialism is the domination of agrarian economies by industrial economies is Kautskyite; finance capital in the monopoly period dominates both industrial and agricultural capital.

The imperialists countries are therefore characterised by first, the dominant role and increasing growth of the banks and financial oligarchy which together regulate the growth of industrial capital; second, by the growth of a swollen parasitic tertiary sector, unproductive in that it does not generate surplus-value but is a charge upon surplus-value; third, by the rise of labour aristocracies bribed by the superprofits of industry, a result, not of the need for 'unproductive consumption', but of the ever accelerated drive to war to defend the imperialist partition of the world; fifth, by finance of this whole structure by the export of productive capital (not commodities).

The development of multinational corporations (MNC's) described by revisionists of all hues as a 'new factor' in the world situation allegedly requiring a revision of Lenin's anti-imperialist politics, has changed nothing basic to Lenin's analysis. The concentration of capital in the imperialist heartlands has increased, as Lenin predicted. The monopolies can choose slightly more freely which imperialist government, or alliance of governments, will defend their investments. The multinational bank alongside the MNC, demonstrates the increasing power of finance capital as the concentration of capital increases. The tendencies Lenin analysed in 1916 continue in the 1980's –the power of finance capital; its concentration and the size of firms has grown, this is all. Imperialism remains the eve of social revolution of the proletariat.

The failure to understand the parasitic character of advanced monopoly capitalism and its 'democracy' has given rise to errors which strike at the heart of the *Transitional Programme* as it effects the major imperialist countries. In the colonies, the revisionists argue, democratic demands still have their place (even to the extent of adopting the Stalinist two-stage revolution), but in the advanced capitalist countries, all that is needed are 'socialist' demands, pure and simple. The theory of permanent revolution, it is said, does not apply to the advanced countries. Of what use then, are the transitional demands of the 1938 programme of the Fourth International –which links democratic and socialist demands in a single programme – if all that is needed is a 'socialist; programme?

This false orientation leads to workerist denials of the existence of a labour aristocracy or, alternatively, its identification with the trade union bureaucracy, and to attacks on the central political concept of the Transitional Programme – the "workers' and farmers' government", as applied to the imperialist states. It is not without significance in the degeneration of the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers' Party of the USA, that it rejected Trotsky's assessment or that the pivotal American slogan should be the "workers' and farmers' government". The old programme of imperialist economism –democratic demands are unachievable under capitalism and unnecessary under socialism – is thus reproduced.

The parasitic character of imperialism means that it tends not to democracy but to reaction. The extreme form of that reaction is fascism. Capitalism in general, and imperialism in particular, turn democracy into an illusions – though at the same time capitalism engenders democratic aspirations in the masses, creates democratic institutions, and aggravates the contradictions between imperialism's denial of democracy and the mass striving for democracy. Capitalism and imperialism can only be overthrown by economic revolutions. They cannot be overthrown by democratic transformations, even the most 'ideal'. But a proletariat not schooled in the struggle for democracy is incapable of performing an economic revolution.

Capitalism cannot be vanquished without taking over the banks, without repealing private ownership of the means of production. These revolutionary measures however, will not be implemented unless the entire people are organised for democratic administration of the means of production captured from the bourgeoisie; without enlisting the entire mass of working people, workers and small farmers, for the organisation of their ranks, their forces, their participation in state affairs.

Socialism leads to the withering away of every state, consequently also of every democracy. But socialism can only be implemented through the dictatorship of the proletariat which combines violence against the bourgeoisie (ie. the small minority of the population) with a full development of democracy (ie. the genuinely universal participation of the entire mass of the population in all state affairs and in all the complex problems of abolishing capitalism) for universal participation of the entire mass of the population in all state affairs and in all complex problems of overthrowing capitalism.

The laws of uneven and combined development mean for imperialist countries in the imperialist epoch, that the political objectives of the bourgeoisie in its progressive period, the democratic programme, is achievable by the bourgeoisie only in exceptional circumstances. The vulgar evolutionary theory of the gradual 'perfection' of democracy side by side with the 'advancement' of capitalism borrowed by the Stalinists (and in their turn by the ultra-lefts) from the ideologues of the liberal bourgeoisie, is used to drive the left in the imperialist countries into either opportunism or sectarianism.

To develop democracy to the utmost, to seek out the forms for this development, to test them by practice, and so forth - all this is one of the elementary tasks of the socialist revolution. Taken separately, no kind of democracy will bring socialism. But in actual life, democracy will never be taken separately, it will be taken together with other things; it will stimulate its transformation and in turn be influenced by economic development. In an imperialist country, recognition of the demands of the colonial peoples in relation to their imperialist oppressor -opposition to the imperialism of one's own country - are the most vital democratic demands of the *Transitional Programme*.

If imperialism cannot afford democracy - most especially in the colonies and semi-colonies - it dispenses also economically with the progressive elements of free competition. Imperialism involves the regulation and partial socialisation designed to maintain the social balance in the interests of the ruling class. Out of the colonial super-profits is paid a labour aristocracy to keep wage-earners 'safe', that is, chauvinist.

The law of permanent revolution here is expressed in the fact that all classes in the most 'advanced' country have the most backward ideology. A farming sector must be deliberately kept in existence by imperialism, in spite of the huge costs this entails, because the rural idiocy of the yeoman farmer is vital for the stability of capitalist rule. The law explains the degeneration of the formerly Trotskyist Socialist Workers' Party of the USA into quasi-liberalism, in a country where advanced capitalism coexists with a labour movement so backward ideologically that it has not even formed a social democratic party.

The stability of the imperialist states is determined by inter-imperialist rivalry as well as by the ability of the colonial and semi-colonial areas that yield them tribute. In the building of revolutionary parties in the imperialist countries, national isolation leads to chauvinism. Although the revolution in the imperialist heartlands will probably follow after proletarian victories in Europe and Asia, only revolution in the major imperialist centres can make world socialism possible.

In the imperialist states as elsewhere, the working class in emancipating itself must emancipate all classes, strata, and national, ethnic and gender minorities, oppressed by the capitalist state. The hegemony of the workers over the revolutionary struggle derives from the character of the socialist revolution itself, from the incomplete character of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and from the minority position of the proletariat (in the Marxist

sense of the direct producers of surplus-value) even in the imperialist countries.

The combined character of the democratic and socialist tasks in all countries is the basis of Lenin's advocacy, in the *State and Revolution*. It is impossible to build a Marxist Revolutionary Party in our time except on the basis of the identity and tasks posed by Lenin's *The State and Revolution* and Trotsky's *The Permanent Revolution*

## **9 Work in the Trade Unions.**

The trade unions, under laissez-faire capitalism, played a progressive role, organising the workers, defending their wage levels, raising the level of struggle to that of a fight for the maintenance of the workers' economic organisations. Even then, as Marx noted, to move forward to the abolition of the wages system, the unions required the leadership of a revolutionary party, otherwise, the economic struggle on its own led directly to the politics of bourgeois liberalism.

Under monopoly capitalism, the unions, increasingly integrated into the capitalist state apparatus, become reactionary. The limits of the wages struggle become dictated by the state apparatus. Inner-union democracy constantly shrinks. The rise of a labour aristocracy and labour bureaucracy gives added strength to political reaction in major unions, which consistently stand on the right of the parties of imperialism (in the USA) or social imperialism.

In this situation, the unions can only be freed from their incorporation in the state apparatus, union democracy set on a firm basis, the power of the labour aristocracy and bureaucracy countered, and the unions' role turned toward progress instead of reaction, through leadership of the unions by a party fighting for the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist state, not in the unions alone, but in every arena of social conflict in capitalist society. This party is the revolutionary Marxist party which the Communist Left exists to build.

The leadership of the unions by a revolutionary party can be achieved in advance of -or after the victory of a socialist revolution - but is not identical with that revolution. A revolutionary party leading the unions, in a period before the total overthrow of the capitalist state, will, as the struggle intensifies, sever every tie linking those unions to the capitalist state. Closed shops will be enforced by the power of the unions themselves, and not by kind permission of the capitalist state or the employers (who always demand their pound of flesh for tolerating closed shops in the form of the admission of scabs into the union).

Despite, or rather because of, the reactionary character of unions in the imperialist epoch, it is obligatory for revolutionaries to work in unions to revolutionise them, for the same reason as communists work in the reactionary imperialist social system to revolutionise it. In all unions, cells of communists must be formed, preferably open, but underground where

suppression can be expected. These cells are part of the party, subordinate to the party as a whole and must not -as 'caucuses' - include non-party people in agreement with the party's programme as it relates to the unions but not as it relates to the rest of society. Such 'caucus' arrangements are typical of petty-bourgeois economist groups offering second-class membership to workers to preserve their popularity with the workers.

The aim of party cells within trade unions is the same as the objective of every unit of party organisation, to unmask the treachery of social imperialism and centrism inside and outside the unions in order to smash the capitalist state and economic system. This political role of the party's union and factory cells is the preconditions of their playing an economic role.

The orientation of the revolutionary party must be to the most oppressed workers which often means those unorganised by trade unions. Such workers, when drawn episodically into struggle with the rest of the class must be organised into ad hoc organisations covering the whole fighting mass - strike committees, factory committees and finally, soviets.

Revolutionaries must not hesitate when, at acute crises in the class struggle, the unions try to dominate the mass movement in order to render it harmless, to counter this union strategy by not only striving to renew the top leadership but to create in all possible instances independent militant organisations corresponding more closely to the tasks of class struggle, not flinching even from a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the unions. Trade unions are not ends in themselves, they are but means along the road to proletarian revolution.

The distinction between reactionary trade unionism - an apolitical and therefore bourgeois ideology - and the 'workers' own' and therefore, progressive unions, is false to the core. Without a consciousness of the revolutionary historic role of the working class in the overthrow of capitalism, and without independence from the capitalist state, no workers' organisation worthy of the name can exist.

Centrist confusion between unionism, and unions, is a threadbare disguise for the repudiation of Leninism on the question of economism, and the building of a revolutionary party. So long as unions are not led by the revolutionary party, they are bourgeois workers' organisation in the imperialists epoch. Their political role is determined by the capitalist even though their membership is working class. The centrist efforts to deny this basic fact demonstrates only a petty bourgeois refusal to build the revolutionary party within the working class and particularly within the unions.

## ***10 The Social Imperialist (Labour) Parties.***

Work within Labour Parties is of considerable tactical importance in certain imperialist countries (Japan, West Germany) and in intermediate states (some West European states, Australia and New Zealand). Reformist labour parties are bourgeois workers parties, their class character being determined (like

that of any other party) by their leadership and program, not their party membership or electoral constituency. Trotsky defined these parties as 'social imperialist', since they try to win workers to policies of imperialism and chauvinism and to divide them from other sections of the working class. The main base of support for these parties is the labour aristocracy, which in these countries is well established.

Marxist tactics towards these parties are based on taking advantage of splits between bourgeois parties to create splits within the bourgeois labour parties. In the words of Lenin, communists support labour parties "as a rope supports a hanged man". Where communist parties are too weak to stand against mass labour parties in parliamentary elections, they call for a vote to labour, not because labour will do anything to advance the interests of workers in office, but to put it in office, in order to expose its bourgeois role and detach its rotten leadership from its working class base. Such a policy is permissible in relation to any party of working class composition whose leadership acts as an agent for the bourgeoisie. Where there is no bourgeois domination of these parties, then the united front tactic would of course be unnecessary. Bourgeois workers' parties are by definition popular fronts which must be exposed.

## **11    *The Revolutionary Party.***

The building of a world party at the present juncture of class struggle can only be carried out by revolutionary parties with a correct Marxist program. Which will have inescapably, initially, a national base. The building of a world party requires that these parties place an international program at the forefront of their work and refuse to short-circuit the building of a world party by international non-aggression pacts of a diplomatic character. The building of a world party can take place in no other way than by winning of groups and parties in other countries to the international program of the existing national groupings adhering to revolutionary Marxism. Where necessary more politically advanced groupings must send cadres to other countries to further the international spread of revolutionary Marxism, even at the cost of temporarily weakening the initiating group.

While cadres can and will be won from centrist, Stalinist and social democratic parties, the trend in most revisionist groupings away from the working class, means that the orientation of Trotskyists must be to the most conscious elements of the most oppressed sections of the proletariat; those elements that as a result of the degeneration of the Communist Internationals of the past, find themselves today without a political organisation. A strategy of "splits and fusions" from youth vanguardist sects would be a road away from the working class. The way to win cadres from centrist and other revisionist groupings, and provoke regroupment among them, is to build a revolutionary party which is part of the working class - a party which not only refuses to turn its back, but actively involves itself in every sphere of party and non-party working class life - unions, cooperatives, workers' clubs, tenants' unions and so on.

The revolutionary party must have a homogenous political character at every major turn in the class war, purging itself of petty bourgeois and opportunist elements that have crept in (in the history of tendency, Logan and Jesson) by means of unfettered factional struggle. This is the main guarantee that a party will be prepared for the seizure of power in a revolutionary crisis.

For the evolution of such a party, a regime of democratic centralism is necessary. This involves the centralisation and unified direction of the most varied forms of the proletarian movement and a concentrated agitation which illuminates the various stages of the struggle from a single standpoint and directs the attention of the proletariat at each given movement to the definite tasks to be accomplished by the whole class.

Only the objective consideration of the sum total of the relationships between absolutely all the classes in a given society, and consequently, a consideration of the objective stage of development reached by that society, and of the relations between it and other societies, can serve as a basis for the correct tactics of an advanced class. At the same time, all classes and all countries are regarded not statically, but dynamically, that is, not in a state of immobility but in motion (whose laws are determined by the economic mode of existence of each class). Motion in its turn, is regarded from the standpoint, not only of the past but also of the future, and that not in the bulgar sense it is understood by the 'evolutionists', seeing only slow changes, but dialectically, "in developments of such magnitude, twenty years are no more than a day" wrote Marx and Engels, "though later on there may come days in which twenty years are embodied".

At each stage of development, at each moment, proletarian tactics must take account of this objectively inevitable dialectics of human history, on the one hand, utilising the period of political stagnation or of sluggish, so called 'peaceful' development, in order to develop the class consciousness, strength and militancy of the advanced class, and on the other hand, directing all the work of this period towards the 'ultimate aim' of that class's advance, towards creating in it the ability to find practical solutions for the great tasks in the great days in which "twenty years" are embodied. This requires leadership with this capacity, in which power is centralised and which can elaborate day-to-day tactics based on the Transitional Program, a program understood in the above Marxist sense, and not as tail-ending of mass consciousness in the labour movement.

The building of such a leadership is unthinkable without the most considered attention to all, even small and partial, questions of tactics. The discipline of this centralised leadership flows directly from the iron logic of conscious class struggle. It is expressed in the rules that make all instructions from higher party bodies categorically binding on all party comrades in the period between congresses. This centralism necessarily goes hand in hand with democracy - that is, the right of factions within the framework of party unity in action. With a party built on such lines, wherever there are a dozen proletarians or semi-proletarians, the communist party must have an organised cell.

## **12    *The Question of the Fourth International.***

The struggle for socialism is an international struggle that requires a world party. The Fourth International, after the death of Trotsky, ceased to function as a democratic centralist organisation. This was not due entirely to the loss of a revolutionary figure of the stature of Trotsky to the international leadership. Trotsky had anticipated and even urged cadres in the war period to risk the possible loss of leading cadres in order to spread the ideas of revolutionary communism among the masses mobilised to fight in the imperialist war slaughter.

The breakdown in the Fourth International derives not from the death of Trotsky but from the failure of the international to establish a revolutionary world party capable of turning the second imperialist war into civil war. The Stalinists instead, led the revolutionary movements that emerged from the war. Only in Indo-China, Ceylon and Bolivia did sections of the Fourth International come close to power. The failure to establish a communist leadership during the war led to the rapid liquidation of national sections after the war, as the International centred itself on Europe, rather than in Asia where Trotsky's anti-war strategy had its greatest successes.

The post-1945 leadership broke with Trotsky on the crucial question of the characterisation of the degenerated workers' states in which Stalinists came to power - a failure which lead the Fourth International to capitulate to, rather than contest, the Stalinists in the struggle for the leadership of the working class. The 1953 split in the 'International' and the subsequent career of the 'orthodox' wing only accidentally raised fundamental questions. The current situation is that there is no functioning International based on democratic centralism within the ostensible world 'Trotskyist' movement. The question is, can from this point, the Fourth International be 'reconstructed'?

There is no historical precedent for the record of the Fourth International. The degeneration and betrayal of the working class by the Communist Internationals are death warrants without doubt. The first Imperialist war marked the death of the Second International, just as the unopposed rise to power of Hitler marked the death of the Third. The Fourth failed to fight and win against Stalinism during and after the second Imperialist war. Because of its isolation and weakness it was unable to challenge the misleadership of the working class by the Social Democrats and the Stalinists. In the post-war period the "crisis of leadership" remains so long as a functioning international has yet to be built.

What new defeats are needed to convince centrists of the death of the Fourth International? Bolivia? Ceylon? Algeria? Have any of the condensing Fourth Internationals won a victory against Stalinism? The Fourth International is dead. It is time to build a Fifth!

The extreme degeneration in class composition of all Fourth Internationalist tendencies (with the partial exception of the Healyite) during their "youth vanguardist" period still not altogether terminated means attempts to

reconstruct the Fourth International means necessarily to orient to non-proletarian cadres such as this it is impossible to build a world party which the vanguard of the working class

For example, the centrist International Spartacist Tendency, attempting to 'reconstruct' the Fourth International, is forced at every point by the logic of its recruitment by splits and fusions of existing groups, to capitulate to a youth vanguardism it claims to oppose. The impending split in the International Secretariat of the Fourth International is the outcome of the Socialist Workers' Party of the USA's further adaptation to social imperialism; the theory of 'two stage' revolutions in which the first stage is the national revolution against imperialism. Meanwhile the Mandel majority, pulling back from this revisionism, still does not see the roots of the present problem going back to Pablo's liquidationism of the 1950's.

This is where all the tendencies which evade the responsibility of building an international party lead. The building of a new Communist International can only proceed by returning to the fundamental principle "To the workers". "Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose by your chains" is as true in 1978 as it was in 1884.

### **13    *The Australian Revolution.***

The Australian Labor Party developed, far earlier than the European social democratic or British Labour parties, a social democratic character, the more blatantly racist and British chauvinist in expression in order to divert the working class from the struggle against British imperialism(at the time of Labor's formation) and for socialism. The ideological justification for social imperialism has always been in Australia the repudiation of any theory – socialism without theory – leading directly to the crudest economism.. Labor's social imperialism arose directly out of its class collaborationist alliance with the protectionist bourgeoisie.

The imperialist role of Australia in Nuigini and Melanesia were and are adventures permitted by an Australian comprador bourgeoisie by the dominant imperialist powers in the Pacific so as to focus the relatively strong Australian working class away from its subordination to at first British ,the American imperialism, by giving it delusions of a share in Australian imperialist grandeur, divide it from workers in Asia and the Pacific and so prevent it from assuming the leadership of an anti-imperialist alliance in the fighting for a socialist United States of Asia and the Pacific. The chauvinism of the Australian labour aristocracy and its corollary, the continued political and economic subordination to the dominant Pacific imperialist powers have led to the development of manufacturing, relatively labour intensive compared with that of Western Europe and North America, characterized by low productivity and falling even further.

Imperialist groupings such as the International Monetary Fund recognize Australia's relative backwardness in their characterization of Australia as a "developed agricultural country, they naturally fail to notice the corollary ,

Australia's dependence on the export of capital from imperialist metropoles (particularly from the International Monetary Fund's Group of Ten) and the virtual dictation of Australia's exchange rate by finance capital.

Australia thus combines , as a result of its political as well as its economic development , the roles of colony and imperialist power. The alliance of chauvinist trade union movement and Labor Party with the weakest and the most "national" section of manufacturing capital has led to a capital development exceptionally parasitic in which super-profits of imperialist capital subsidise the "wages" of a labour aristocracy by way of loans from major imperialist capital subsidise centres in Australia repaid by imperialist domination of mining, farming,, manufacturing and finance in Australia, a domination which increases the relative weight of mining against the other sectors. Australia can be characterized as a as a partner of a world corporation of imperialist powers insofar as this domination as this formulation recognizes that as an imperialist state both in its own right and by virtue of its military alliances it would be reactionary to defend one imperialist power against attack by another in any imperialist war. Revolutionaries are revolutionary defeatist in relation to the Australian ruling class – they turn the imperialist war into a civil war. This formulation means that Australia is simultaneously an imperialist power an a colony and must not be used , as all revisionist groupings in Australia, without exception, to exempt Australia – naturally on social patriotic grounds—from the basic laws of the imperialist powers precisely because a country's "sovereignty" is a fiction in the imperialist epoch to disguise its colonial subordination to one or other imperialist power through loan capital.

"independence" would be a fiction for a small country for a small country like Australia precisely because the political forms of colonial subordination to Britain mask the real transfer of political and economic power to the United States (and, in the near future, after the United States, Japan. Without having ceased to be a colony of Britain—at a time of increased British subordination of Britain to the United States—Australia is ruled as a semi-colony by Washington.

A programme for purely political national revolution would not only fail to recognize the imperialist as well as the colonial character of Australian development, but would fail to come to grips with the superimposition of semi-colonial forms of economic domination on the purely political forms of colonial domination. What follows from the characterization of Australia as colonial is not the slogan of "national independence but a recognition of the bourgeoisie's failure to complete the fundamental tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution—the failure to achieve either a united democratic republic or the nationalization of the land—means that transitional programme for Australia must combine these democratic demands with the major transitional demands a workers and small farmers government, expropriation of the bourgeoisie to secure proletarian dictatorship.

The position that Australia's minor role –in fact declining role in the south Pacific (Japan is supplanting Australia in Nuigini) means democratic demands play no part in a transitional programme is **imperialist economism**.

The form of exploitation of the working class by the capitalist state is not a matter of indifference for the proletariat. The fight for that form of state – the democratic republic – in which class struggle will be most open and direct will mean is linked directly with the struggle for socialism, since the sharper the fight for socialism the stronger the fear of open and direct class struggle and therefore democracy. The bourgeoisie's failure to centralise the state structure retards also the development of the productive forces the full political power of the seven states being used to obstruct industrial centralisation. The backwardness of manufacturing in Australia links directly with the bourgeoisie's failure to complete the political tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and places workers' control of the entire manufacturing sector on the agenda for class struggle as the world recession deepens. The concentration of capital on the land - the export sectors of agriculture and mining leads to constant class struggles involving rural labor, aboriginal and Island national minorities, and the small farmers all raising the issue of the nationalisation of land.

The revolution in Australia thus combines bourgeois democratic and socialist tasks, the attainment of a republic goes hand in hand with the overthrow of capitalism, the nationalisation of land will give the black people self-determination for the first time since colonisation while at the same time the steel mills will be expropriated by workers control and the way open for major technological advance, the proletarian dictatorship will free equally the Australian-born worker and the Torres Strait islander in the advance to world communism and the total abolition of wage slavery.

**End**

