Chapter 5 - Against capitalist restoration! For proletarian political revolution!

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The counter-revolutionary character of the degenerated workers' states

From 1945-1991 the USSR acted as one of the two central pillars of the imperialist world order. Despite the military and economic rivalry between the USSR and the USA which spanned nearly half a century the Kremlin, its satellites and indeed its Stalinist rivals repeatedly acted to divert and abort the development of a victorious world-revolutionary wave which could have isolated and eventually defeated imperialism. However the limited hot wars with imperialism; Korea, Vietnam, the logistical support for various national liberation struggles, the overthrow of capitalism by Stalinist parties covered the counterrevolutionary role of Stalinist strategy. Thus the downfall of the USSR appears an unmitigated catastrophe for millions of subjective anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist fighters world-wide. Certainly, the collapse of the USSR and other degenerate workers states represents an enormous material and moral victory for imperialism.

But it is a contradictory one since it involves not only the near destruction of the historic economic gains of the October revolution but also of a counter-revolutionary agency of imperialism within the movements of the exploited and oppressed world-wide.

The counter-revolutionary consequences of this victory are immediate and obvious. The pyrrhic nature of this victory will emerge relentlessly in the decade to come. Indeed the crisis of the very restoration process contributes mightily to deepening the period of general crisis which characterises the end of the twentieth century.

The prestige of the Kremlin was greatly enhanced by its victory over German imperialism and its territorial expansion after the war. The essential role of the planned economy, a key conquest of the October Revolution in the achievement of this victory, its post-war survival, reconstruction and extension, were the material preconditions for the creation of a series of degenerate workers' states, the political and economic duplicates of the USSR.

The very existence of the USSR and the defensive manoeuvres of its bureaucracy against imperialism led to the defeat and overthrow of a number of weakened capitalist classes in Eastern Europe and later in the colonial and semi-colonial world. These overthrows of capitalism took place either through the agency of the Soviet Armed forces or by means of Stalinist parties and guerrilla forces under their leadership. In the case of Cuba a petty bourgeois nationalist movement assimilated to Stalinism and transformed the island into a degenerated workers state.

Under Stalinist control, however, these victories over capitalism did not result in the international spread of the proletarian revolution but, rather, in the achievement of a relatively stable balance of power between the USSR and imperialism.
The Stalinist parties ensured that all elements of independent working class organisation were destroyed prior to the liquidation of capitalism. For the world proletariat the overall consequences of the social overturns were thus counter-revolutionary.

Although the pace and circumstances of these bureaucratic social overturns necessarily varied they had a number of essential features in common; Stalinist parties, or proto-Stalinist national liberation movements, came to lead powerful armed forces in the struggle against fascism and imperialism. The armed forces of the bourgeois states were defeated and disintegrated by the Stalinist forces.

The bourgeoisie were deprived completely or in large measure of political power. The Stalinists crushed all independent working class organisations, preventing the creation of healthy workers’ states based on workers’ democracy and ensuring that the regime created was a replica of the bureaucratic tyranny established by Stalin in the USSR. Despite widespread nationalisations of industry and the expropriation of the semi-feudal landowners there was originally no systematic expropriation of the bourgeoisie as a whole.

True to their counter-revolutionary stages programme, the Stalinists had initially no intention of overthrowing capitalism but on the contrary sought to preserve it via a popular front, open or concealed, with the local bourgeoisie and with the imperialist powers. The "peoples democracies" were in no way intended to be "socialist" states.

Throughout this phase the Stalinists actively prevented any attempt by the working class to take power from the virtually prostrate bourgeoisie. The Soviet occupation authorities systematically liquidated its revolutionary vanguard and, indeed, any independent political parties, trade unions or proto-soviet bodies. It defended capitalist property relations whilst seeking via nationalisations, joint enterprises etc to exploit them for the reconstruction of the Soviet economy.

The armed forces of the bourgeois state were defeated and smashed by the Stalinist forces. However originally, the resultant states were not workers’ states. Rather Stalinism's intention was to maintain the existence of capitalism, which it proceeded to do. Stalin's objective was to ensure these states utter subordination, forming a buffer zone, a defensive glacis, for the USSR. The Stalinist bureaucracy thus carried out a pre-emptive bureaucratic counter-revolution against the working class and the poor peasantry, aborting the nascent revolutionary situation that the collapse of Nazi power had created.

Whilst doing this the Stalinists could rely on the active support of the indigenous bourgeoisie and the imperialist powers. In this way a form of dual power was established with the armed power of the Stalinists (the Soviet Armed forces or guerilla armies led by them) replacing that of the bourgeoisie.

However, the abortion of the post-war revolutionary wave and crushing of any independent proletarian class forces necessarily encouraged imperialism and the remaining forces of the bourgeoisie in eastern Europe to return to the offensive.

The continued pressure of Stalinist forces in the Balkans (without Stalin's approval) and the inability of British imperialism to stem it unaided, gave the new US administration the pretext to launch a economic and military push to strengthen the bourgeois states of the continent. Truman launched Marshal aid as the carrot and the return of large numbers of US troops as the stick to prevent any further successes for the Stalinists and to encourage a roll-back in central and eastern Europe.

But the first attempts of bourgeois forces to use the contradictions of dual power and the popular front governments to pressure the Stalinists to accept Marshal aid or relax their grip on the armed power produced a defensive reflex fatal for capitalism in Eastern Europe.
At this point the Stalinists, using their control of the repressive forces of the state, acted to remove the threat from imperialism and its indigenous bourgeois agents, by expelling the representatives of the bourgeoisie from government and expropriating the capitalist class as a whole. By a series of bureaucratic and military measures the capitalist system was uprooted and replaced by the nationalisation of industry and land and a system of bureaucratic command; planning-modelled on the USSR-was introduced.

This bureaucratic overturn destroyed capitalism but because the working class, acting as an independent and conscious force, was excluded the revolution in property relations did not result in the creation of healthy workers' states. For us the consciousness, fighting capacity and revolutionary action of the working class is decisive for the prosecution of genuine proletarian revolutions.

Thus, while limited united fronts with the Stalinist regimes during the bureaucratic revolutions would have been permissible, the strategic aim of Trotskyists would have been to break the control of Stalinism over the destruction of capitalism, fight for genuine organs of workers' democracy and force the withdrawal of the the Soviet Armed forces from Eastern Europe.

The bureaucratic social revolution, despite depriving the bourgeoisie of their property, was essentially a counter-revolutionary act in that it took place against the rhythms and flow of the class struggle. It could only take place because both the working class and the bourgeoisie had previously been disarmed and the state forces lay in the hands of the Stalinists.

Nevertheless the expropriation of the capitalist class and the suppression of the operation of the law of value meant that the property relations this state defended were proletarian ones, albeit ones controlled by a totalitarian bureaucracy. Thus like the USSR by whose agency, direct or indirect it was created, these states were degenerated workers states even though they, unlike the USSR, had not undergone any degenerative process themselves from being a healthy (i.e. workers council) states.

Throughout this phase, the Stalinist governments ensured that there were no independent working class mobilisations that could have used the impetus of the defeat of the bourgeoisie to challenge the political dictatorship and parasitic privileges of the Stalinists, thus opening a political revolutionary crisis where the state power of workers' councils was posed as an alternative to the totalitarian dictatorship.

They were carried out by the Stalinist forces as a defensive reaction against imperialism and as a pre-emptive measure against a proletarian social revolution. Thus, these bureaucratic social overturns were, at the same time, political counter-revolutions against the proletariat. Their outcome was a blocking of the transition to socialism, the attempt to realise the reactionary utopia of "socialism in one country" rather than the international revolution.

This was also counter-revolutionary from the standpoint of the historic and strategic goals of the proletariat. The transitional Stalinist governments which were the agencies of these bureaucratic social overturns can best be described as "bureaucratic, anti-capitalist" variants of the "workers' government" category identified by the Comintern.

In Cuba the key role in an essentially similar bureaucratic overthrow of capitalism was played by the July 26 Movement centred around the caudillo figure of Fidel Castro. It was a popular front with both bourgeois nationalist and left Stalinist wings. During its march to power and its first phase in government its overall tactics and programme remained those of revolutionary petit bourgeois nationalism. US hostility to its victory and to its attacks on US investments in Cuba led to a counter-offensive by the Cuban bourgeoisie in mid 1960.
This forced Castro to side with the left Stalinists, to seek alliance and fusion with the Cuban CP and massive economic and military assistance from the Soviet bureaucracy.

The Kremlin was willing to support this development for military-strategic purposes (missile siting), as well as to increase its ideological influence. From mid-1960 to early 1962 a bureaucratic anti-capitalist workers' government expropriated the native and imperialist bourgeoisie and instituted bureaucratic planning, creating a degenerate workers' state.

Thus, although all the degenerate workers' states share the counterrevolutionary character of the USSR, they were not created in the same manner. In the USSR, initial bureaucratic deformations grew until a qualitative leap, the Soviet Thermidor, or political counter-revolution, transformed the state into a degenerated workers' state.

By contrast, the other states were established as replicas of the USSR, they were degenerate from their very creation. Consequently, the programme of political revolution raised by Trotsky against the bureaucratic dictatorship of Stalin was applicable to these states from their establishment. As with the USSR, the bureaucracies of these states have consistently acted to hold back and to divert anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist struggles around the world. Despite their own anti-capitalist measures, their strategic but utopian goal was peaceful coexistence with imperialism.

Stalinism cramped the planned economies within the confines of its various "one countries". It actively prevented the spread of the proletarian revolution to the more economically developed areas, thus cutting the various economies off from all the benefits of access to the highest concentrations of the means of production, and integration into the international division of labour.

The state monopoly of foreign trade provides indispensable protection for the workers' state against competition from cheaper capitalist goods. But the aim of this monopoly is not to establish all possible agrarian and industrial sectors within the borders of one workers' state, such as can be found in the rest of the world. This path proved utopian (e.g. North Korea and Albania) and led to unnecessary and useless sacrifices being made by the working class in those countries with a planned economy.

Only the spread of the social revolution to the centres of world capitalism will allow a decisive breakthrough to socialist construction and a world planned economy. However despite the bureaucratic stranglehold, these post-capitalist economies did achieve dramatic growth in the early stages of the creation, or reconstruction, of an industrial base. However, the more sophisticated and diverse the requirements of economic development have become the less the bureaucracy was able to fulfil them.

Because it suppressed proletarian democracy, it also ensured that its own planning was ill-informed and ignorant of the actual operation of the economy and the needs of society. Thus, in all respects, the narrow, nationalist programme of "socialism in one country" served to retard relatively and eventually absolutely the development of the productive forces. Bureaucratic planning scored some successes in the first decades when it was primarily a case of extensive industrial development. Increasingly however, innovation and constant technological renewal proved beyond the capacities of bureaucratic planning.

Having abolished the dynamic mainspring of competition the ruling caste refused to replace it with the creative, self-interested participation of the direct producers in the planning process. The result was an inevitable decline in labour productivity and a further catastrophic falling behind of imperialist democratic capitalism.

While the bureaucracies could marshal resources to meet their own lavish consumption needs, and to
defend their tyrannical rule the further production and distribution was from these priorities the more shortages and poor quality of goods were the norm. Thus Military and defence spending, including the maintenance of a vast police apparatus, received top priority and were performed relatively efficiently.

But when it came to the consumption needs of the masses the bureaucratic planning mechanisms proved utterly unable to provide high quality and plentiful goods to lighten domestic labour, to both lighten and shorten productive labour and to increase the amount and quality of leisure. After some striking initial successes in the sphere of education and social welfare etc. even these fell victim to the stagnation of bureaucratic planning.

This experience eventually undermined the very idea of "planned" production in the consciousness of the working class, nationally and internationally. Bourgeois propaganda has spread with ever greater success the "lesson" that this was the necessary result of any attempt to plan an economy.

But Stalinist bureaucracy was and is not an expression of the logic of planning itself. Planning presupposes conscious control of production by the centralised and conscious will of the producers themselves. The goals of Stalinist command planning was drafted by a tiny core of planners, themselves dictated to by a bonapartist clique of top bureaucrats. The operation of the plan was thrown out of balance and disrupted by rival layers of the party and managerial bureaucracy.

The atomised and alienated work force who neither decided nor understood the goals of the plan increasingly treated production with apathy. A chronic stagnation moved in the 1980s into a critical situation throwing the ruling bureaucracies into ever deeper political crisis. From Moscow to Beijing, from Belgrade to Hanoi, the ruling bureaucracies divided into warring factions.

All attempts by the bankrupt bureaucracy to revive their system by admixtures of "market forces', so-called market socialism was doomed to failure. First in Hungary and Yugoslavia and then most spectacularly under Gorbachev in the USSR these measures disrupted and disorganised bureaucratic planning without creating a real capitalist economy. Dislocation and collapse of production, a rampant black market and corruption, gigantic state budget deficits and enterprise bankruptcy, staved off only by hyperinflation, mark the terrible final death agony of the bureaucratic planned economies.

For the working class, the purpose of post-capitalist property relations is the transition to a classless, communist society. They make possible the planning of production to meet human need, to end oppression and progressively eradicate inequalities. To do this they need the conscious and active participation of the proletariat as producer and consumer.

They need the sovereignty of the direct producers themselves who, for the first time in history, have an immediate interest in, as well as the creative ability to, unleash the productive forces. The various workers' states have to follow a path of progressive economic integration and common planning in order to make the most effective use of the principle of international division of labour which remain valid even for a socialist economy.

The Stalinist bureaucracies were not capable of taking advantage of this principle. The first step in this direction for a healthy workers' state would be the formation of common planning bodies for important branches and common plans for two or three states together with a common currency. Such a system can only be created by the revolutionary action of the working class itself, conscious of its goals and objectives. If everywhere bureaucratic planning is in various stages of its death agony late twentieth century capitalism has shown no capacity to rapidly step in and fund the restoration process.
An extended period of crisis where the moribund planning system shorn of its central co-ordination obstructs the definitive triumph of the law of value creates the opportunity for the working class to shed its illusions in the market and rediscover the programme of democratic planning and workers council democracy.

The fracture and downfall of the Stalinist bureaucracies

The Stalinist bureaucracies are historically illegitimate castes with no title to their privileges. From their birth they tended to develop factions and wings in response to the long term pressure upon them both from imperialism and the working class. In the USSR, Hungary, Yugoslavia and China dominant sections of the ruling bureaucracies developed which sought to dismantle planning altogether and to determine prices, wages and production by "market mechanisms".

They sought to put an end to the social wage represented by subsidised foodstuffs, social services and amenities that have directly benefited the workers as a result of the abolition of capitalism.

These advocates of decentralisation, the free market and the opening of their economies to the imperialist multinationals became ever more openly restorationist despairing not only of the bureaucratic central plan, but eventually of their caste's ability to hold on to political power.

This faction was closely enmeshed with the managerial strata and hoped to emerge as direct agents, if not members, of a new capitalist class. Such conscious restorationists were, as events in the USSR/CIS after 1990-91 showed, able to shed their Stalinist skins with remarkable speed and take on a Social Democratic, Liberal, Christian democratic, and proto-fascist colours.

Trotsky expected a small revolutionary pole of the bureaucracy to emerge, one that would side with the working class in a political revolution. He never accorded to this faction any independent role let alone that of leading the political revolution.

This faction has not materialised in the death agony of Stalinism, nor is it inevitable that it should do so. In 1938 Trotsky could point to the figure of Ignace Reiss a defector to the Fourth International from the KGB in 1937. Likewise he could point to Fyodor Butenko a Soviet diplomat in the Romanian embassy who defected to Mussolini's Italy in 1938, as the representative of a proto-fascist restorationist wing of the bureaucracy. Trotsky saw the majority of the bureaucracy under Stalin as trying by ever more savage totalitarian means to avoid being crushed either by restoration or proletarian political revolution.

Whilst estimating that Stalin's trajectory was taking him nearer and nearer to the restorationist camp (in its fascist form) he did not rule out the possibility of Stalin and Co resisting a restorationist attack and therefore of the need to form a limited military united front in defence of the USSR. this latter perspective proved to be necessary after Trotsky's murder, in the second imperialist war.

The death agony of Stalinism was postponed for forty years by the victory of the USSR in the second world war. Therefore the factional line-ups within the Soviet bureaucracy and the other workers states were profoundly changed. The triumph of the imperialist democracies and the expansion of the productive forces for three decades or more gave new life and vitality to liberal, free market capitalism.

This in turn exerted a different pressure on the Soviet and other workers' states bureaucracies, creating a preponderantly pro-marketising faction.

The elapse of time and the destruction of the revolutionary generation of 1917-23, the crisis of revolutionary leadership including the destruction of Trotsky's Fourth International meant the
disappearance of the "faction of Reiss". Only a profound development of independent class organisations in a political revolutionary crisis plus the recreation of a significant international revolutionary force could lead to the re-emergence of such a wing of the bureaucracy. But such a development is not, nor was it for Trotsky, an essential part of the revolutionary programme.

The preponderant faction of the bureaucracy in the post 1985 death agony phase was the Market-socialist wing. At the same time openly restorationist forces became increasingly stronger within and outside of the bureaucracy. Gorbachev, echoing elements of Bukharinism, did not seek the restoration of capitalism. Rather, he aimed at first to utilise market mechanisms to shore up the caste dictatorship on the basis of post-capitalist property relations.

This alliance eventually fractured the bureaucratic dictatorship and created a duality of power with the old bureaucracy. In his last two years Gorbachev was forced to raise himself more and more above the divided camps, giving rise to a weak form of bonapartism. Possessing only a utopian economic and political programme of its own-one incapable of realisation-this bonapartism veered between the two camps drawing strength in turn from one camp to resist the pressure of the other.

Finally, in August 1991 the heads of the CPSU party bureaucracy and interior security services attempted an abortive coup to forestall the rise of the open pro-imperialist and USSR disintegrationist comprador forces led by Yeltsin.

The abortive coup revealed the lack of a solid social base of the conservative bureaucracy in the population at large but also demonstrated a lack of belief in its own mission by the hard line elements in the bureaucracy as a whole. As a result of this failure Yeltsin inherited the Gorbachev executive and Presidential machinery, increased its powers and used them in the service of a fast track shock therapy restorationist economic policy.

But the failed coup and Yeltsin's seizure of the executive did not resolve the dual power between the rival sections of the bureaucracy but merely heightened it and brought it into direct confrontation with each other free from the obscuring effect of Gorbachev's bonapartism.

In the degenerate workers states of Eastern Europe the policies of Gorbachev after 1985 acted as a catalyst to quicken the tempo of developments in the economy and to hasten the denouement between the conservative bureaucracy and the bourgeois restorationists. By 1989 Gorbachev has signalled that the Soviet Armed forces would not play any role in protecting the national bureaucracies from domestic protest.

The swift rise of amorphous "democratic" mass movements provided a solid base for the democratic intelligentsia and marketising wing of the bureaucracy-social layers far larger in Eastern Europe than in the USSR. In 1989/1990 the ruling Stalinist party apparatus in EE and armed forces crumbled in the face of mass protest.

Between 1989 and 1991 bourgeois elections brought to power bourgeois, bourgeois workers’ or popular front governments throughout the region (including the seceding Baltic republics of the USSR)-with the exception of Serbia. Dual power in the state superstructure no where long survived, as it did in Russia. Here the protracted nature of the restoration process has been entirely due to the objective economic difficulties of converting the main means of production into capital.

In China on the other hand Deng Xiaoping has attempted to combine radical marketisation with continued party dictatorship, resorting to bloody repression in Tiananmen Square to enforce this. The Chinese bureaucracy have a short lived historic opportunity to make this combination; police dictatorship for the
workers and the urban intelligentsia and a near free market for the peasantry plus enormous concessions to capitalism in special economic zones.

The historic factor which created this opportunity is the enormous size of China's peasantry and its role not only on the farms but in the barracks. Deng and Co have allowed a near total market economy to develop in the countryside and have thus for a limited period won the passivity if not the support of the peasants. They thus have the historic foundation stone of bonapartism But the whole logic of the rapid growth of market forces in rural China and in the special zones will act to pressurise and fracture the Chinese bureaucracy.

When it splits and is forced to take its internecine warfare onto the streets (as it did in the mid-sixties and seventies and again at the end of the eighties), China too will face the alternatives of social counter-revolution or proletarian political revolution. In China too revolutionary leadership will be the deciding factor.

But not all the shock-treatment rapid restorationist elements within the bureaucracy are bourgeois democrats or liberalisers. Nor are most of the authoritarian bureaucratic conservatives committed to the defence of bureaucratically planned property relations.

In the USSR, for example, the conservative bureaucracy has evolved rapidly into Great Russian Chauvinists and anti-semites using populist and nationalist slogans to mobilise the most backward sections of society against the democratic rights of the workers and oppressed minorities fascist and proto-fascist parties have arisen with profound links to the ex-KGB and the army. Groups like Nashi and Zhirinovsky's LDP reject collaboration with western imperialism only because their programme is for the restoration of a specifically Russian imperialism.

The most authoritarian elements within the bureaucracy recognise in such proto-fascism a bulwark against the threat of proletarian political revolution and a potential alternative to future domination by foreign capital. The growth of fascist and semi-fascist forces was most clearly reflected in the electoral victory of Zhirinovsky in December 1993. The further development of fascism as a mass force depends partly on the degree of revival by the workers movement in the coming years.

If working class resistance to the economic and political attacks of the restorationists mounts the danger will become greater that the latter will turn to a mass fascist movement in order to crush this resistance.

On the other hand it is also possible that the weakness of the Russian embryo bourgeoisie and the stagnation of the restoration process itself could strengthen those bureaucratic forces which support a state-capitalist road to capitalism under chauvinist and fascist slogans which might then turn to mobilising the lumpenproletarian and petty-bourgeois masses to smash both rival bureaucratic factions and the threat of an explosion of working class resistance.

The restorationist governments all look to look to imperialism for assistance. But imperialism, though it ardently wishes the final and complete restoration of capitalism in the degenerated workers' states simply does not posses the resources to ensure a rapid transformation, one free of revolutionary crises.

Only in one state, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), was a rapid restoration possible and this has proved a tremendous strain on the strongest European imperialist power. Thus despite the installation of restorationist governments there still exists subsequent to this an extended period in which the programme of political revolution has to be combined with an anti-capitalist programme against restoration.

The remaining gains of the workers states must be fought for to the bitter end. Only those who can defend old gains will be able to make new ones. Not only the working class of the degenerated workers' states,
but that of the entire world would suffer as a result of their wholesale destruction. On a global scale this would leave the working class at least for a certain period, disoriented and ideologically disarmed. In addition, the anti-imperialist struggles of the semi-colonies would lose an important, if ultimately inadequate, source of weapons and aid.

Imperialist access to the raw materials, cheap labour and markets of the degenerate(d) workers' states could open the way to a new if limited expansion period in the imperialist epoch. Nevertheless this itself could heighten inter-imperialist rivalry and promote such a conflict-ridden new division of the world as would re-raise the spectre of war and revolution.

As bureaucratic planning disintegrates, only proletarian political revolution can defend, restore and then extend the planned property relations and, thereby, prevent the revitalisation of imperialism. The world proletariat, therefore, must stand with its brothers and sisters in the degenerated workers' states in defence of the remaining planned property relations.

The state monopoly of foreign trade, the nationalisation of industry, the principle of planning must be defended against internal restoration and imperialist attack. In defending these economic conquests we are defending the pre-requisites for the transition to socialism, not the bureaucracy that presides over them.

At present the imperialists are relying primarily on economic levers to engineer the restoration of capitalism. But any halt, any serious reverse to the process of social counterrevolution could lead to direct military intervention to complete the restoration of capitalism in the face of working class resistance. The world proletariat must continue to stand for the unconditional defence of the workers' states against imperialism and its agents. Therefore, we oppose any reductions in the military capabilities, of the degenerate workers' states, nuclear or conventional, that would open up these states to military or diplomatic coercion.

For the working class, however, the best defence of planned property in the degenerated workers' states is an attack on the Stalinist bureaucracies who have led and are leading them to ruin. The proletarian programme for the degenerate workers' states, as well as for the struggle against imperialism, is not one of mere "democratisation" of the existing state and cannot be reduced to non-class specific demands for "people's power".

It is a programme of revolution, a programme for the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship against both bureaucrats, restorationist "democrats" and imperialists.

For a political revolution! For workers' council democracy!

The essence of the programme of political revolution, like that of the programme of social revolution in the capitalist states, lies in linking the ongoing struggles for the immediate needs of the working class to the fight for political power.

By combining intransigent defence of working class interests with the tactics of mass mobilisation, independent political organisation and the imposition of workers' control, revolutionaries can prepare the working class for the seizure of power. In all spheres of struggle, the proletariat must become conscious of its separate interests and identity, must become a class for itself.

For independent workplace organisation!

Because of the nature of the degenerated workers' states, any independent mobilisations of the working class immediately collide with the power of the bureaucratic state machine. Whatever the issue that led to
the mobilisation, this collision poses the need for the working class to win the right to organise itself. Independent class organisations and consciousness is a pre-condition for acting as an independent force within the broad mass movements of opposition to Stalinism.

The social power of the proletariat is rooted in production and the class must be organised at the point of production. Within every workplace, democratic mass meetings must become the highest authority. Workers’ committees, elected and recallable by mass meetings must fight to impose workers’ control on every aspect of life in the plant, including the right to strike and the right to veto management and state plans.

For free trade unions!

Beyond the workplace, the proletariat must have trade unions independent of the Stalinists as a central element in its organisation as a class. Whether these are formed as the result of a thorough purging of the existing "state" unions or are created anew in struggle, they must be accountable to, and controllable by, their members. All officials of the unions must be elected and recallable, free from the, "leading role of the party", and be paid the average wage of their members.

From democratic rights to a real workers' democracy

In the struggles that announced the death agony of Stalinism the masses have primarily been drawn into battle against the bureaucracy behind demands for key democratic rights. The task of constructing the revolutionary party involves pushing the working class to the head of this struggle, to lead it and use revolutionary and working class forms of organisation to achieve them. In this fight the workers must not allow the bureaucracy or any section of it to decide who can and cannot be allowed to take advantage of any democratic rights.

The bureaucracy-in part or in whole-has proven itself to be the chief agent of restoration and in no wise can be trusted to be the guardian of the post-capitalist property relations.

Precisely because the bureaucracy is interested only in conceding as much democracy as will allow it to strike coalitions with other forces to become a new exploiting class the working class has every interest in the fullest and most revolutionary expansion of democratic rights in order to forestall this and to hasten the development of its own class consciousness, that is, recognise who is and who is not its enemy.

Where the CP still monopolises the media and electoral process we fight to end this. Down with the bureaucracy's censorship laws! The workers themselves must decide what is to be published or broadcast. For access to the press, radio and television for all working class organisations under workers' control. Workers must enforce their own ban on fascist, pogromist, racist propaganda.

Likewise they will allow no freedom of the press or access to the media for pro-restorationist forces that are organising to overthrow the workers state by force. All candidates in elections must clearly account for their electoral funding. The masses should fight for a veto over any candidate receiving clandestine financial support from the regime or from counter-revolutionary agencies such as the CIA, the churches, or reactionary NGOs (non-governmental organisations). Any new legal code that the "reformist" wing of the bureaucracy proposes must be freely discussed by workers.

Any code must place elected workers' courts at the centre of the legal machinery. For the release of all political prisoners to workers' courts who shall decide on their future.

For the freedom to form political parties, except for fascists, pogromists, racists, for those restorationists
(including those originating from within the bureaucracy) who are actively organising for civil war, and those which for other reasons have received the veto of the workers movement.

Whilst we will not defend these parties from repression by the conservative Stalinist regimes or from bourgeois restorationist governments, we recognise no government's right to judge who is a counter-revolutionary other than a revolutionary workers' government. The workers themselves, not the bureaucracy, must decide which parties they recognise as loyal to their own state power.

We fight to expose the anti-working class programme of confused or covertly restorationist parties and by political struggle to deprive them of mass support. We would advocate careful surveillance of their activities and severe measures against any attempts to overthrow the proletarian dictatorship. For the right of any group of workers and small peasants to put forward candidates in any elections.

For the smashing of the bureaucracy's repressive state apparatus, the instrument of tyranny against the working class and the instrument used by the Stalinists for capitalist restoration. This apparatus has been fashioned by the bureaucracy in the image of the capitalist state machine.

The political revolution must smash it on the road to the creation of healthy workers' state. For full political rights for soldiers, the right to hold meetings in the barracks to elect soldiers' councils free of all control by the officers and commanders, for the right to publish newspapers and have access to the media.

We fight for the right of rank and file soldiers, sailors etc to elect their own officers. For the right of all returning soldiers stationed abroad to have decent affordable housing for themselves and their families and the right to retraining and a new job after being demobilised. For the dissolution of the secret police and the punishment of all those guilty of crimes against the workers. A democratic workers state needs no secret police.

The plots of counter-revolutionary forces can be countered by workers' security commissions on the lines of the revolutionary Cheka of 1917. Dissolve the standing army of the bureaucracy and replace it with a revolutionary workers army linked to workers' territorial militias.

**Down with privilege and inequality!**

One of the earliest indications of the victory of the Stalinist political counterrevolution in the USSR was the arrogant condemnation of egalitarianism as a petit bourgeois deviation. But, as Trotsky predicted, the desire for equality and the hatred of privilege are instinctive and fundamental elements of proletarian class consciousness. On the road to the elimination of the bureaucracy's rule altogether the workers must fight to end abuses now.

They must mobilise to end the grotesquely privileged lifestyle of the bureaucracy. The special shops must be closed and the sanatoria, health resorts and leisure facilities currently reserved for the bureaucracy must be thrown open to the workers and poor peasants.

The role of a party or state official must cease to be a route to privilege and luxury. No party or state official should earn more than the average wage of a skilled worker.

In the workplaces a fight must be launched for the right of the workers to dismiss all officials/managers known to have profited from corruption or to have persecuted workers.

**Workers' control of production and the plan**
Economic decisions in a planned economy are not hidden behind a smokescreen of "market forces" as they are under capitalism. They are political decisions taken by the bureaucracy. Consequently any fight against the bureaucracy's decisions, in whatever sphere, are inherently challenges to the right of the bureaucracy to control the economic plan.

As that control breeds stagnation and decline, so the marketising wing of the bureaucracy and other restorationist forces attempt to divert working class struggle away from the state by encouraging workers to demand "self management" of their enterprises, free from the bureaucratic interference of the central plan. This doctrine of "market socialism" is a reactionary diversion designed to strengthen the most narrow forms of factory isolationism, to divide the proletariat as a class force and to break up the central plan itself.

Against it revolutionaries must fight to make every working class struggle a conscious challenge to bureaucratic power by raising the demand for workers' control of the plan. At the level of the workplace, this must include opening the books to workers' inspection and, at local, regional and national levels, a fight, drawing in the workers of the planning ministries, to expose the real priorities and the swindles, the corruption and the sheer incompetence of the bureaucracy's leaders.

Through its fight to defend itself against the bureaucracy's plan and to impose its class priorities on planning, the working class will not only safeguard its living standards and conditions but create the organisations which will be the very foundations of a revolutionary workers' state. These organisations will be the mechanism through which the workers' state will achieve a democratically centralised planned economy.

An isolated revolutionary workers' state will have to co-exist with, and utilise, market forces at the same time as seeking to overcome them. Without a doubt elements of the Stalinist bureaucratic elimination of the market have actually served to retard the development of sectors of the Soviet economy. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in agriculture and the meeting of the consumption needs of the masses. In these sectors our programme must be based on the following elements:

- Down with the serfdom of workers on the state and collectivised farms. For collective farms run by the toilers themselves. Down with any return to private family farming.

- For the democratic re-organisation of the farms, based on the democracy of the rural toilers, not on the whims of the functionaries. For councils of agricultural workers comprised of farm workers representing working units, and directly accountable to them. Agricultural production must be integrated into the national plan of production.

- For a massive injection of funds to raise the material and cultural level of the countryside to that of the cities, thereby overcoming the glaring inequalities in the conditions of life between town and country.

- Against all reforms which increase the influence of imperialist finance capital on the economies of the workers' states; against the abandonment of the state monopoly of foreign trade, against joint ventures in which workers' rights are reduced in comparison to those obtaining in state run plants. We oppose the bureaucracy's policy of subordination to the IMF. The disastrous consequences of this for the working class are already most clearly visible in Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary.

- We demand that the bureaucracy repudiates the debts it has incurred towards international finance capital. A revolutionary workers' government will judge what obligations to honour from the point of view of revolutionary expediency. A workers council state will call on the exploited masses worldwide to mobilise for the total renunciation of the external debt and the expropriation of the imperialist multinationals.
Illusions in parliamentary elections and assemblies

The consequence of decades of political repression and economic failures of the bureaucracy have created widespread illusions in bourgeois parliamentary democracy. Both the bureaucracy and the pro-bourgeois opposition have used these illusions to block the self-organisation of the working class, to obstruct the creation of such workers' councils as arose most clearly in the Hungarian revolution of 1956 but also existed in less developed forms in Poland and in Czechoslovakia during the political-revolutionary situations of the 1950s, the 1960s and the 1980-81 Solidarnosc upheaval.

But only in Romania during the 1989-90 uprising did the embryos of workers committees develop and play an important role in the strikes which helped bring down the Ceaucescu regime. Elsewhere multi-party parliamentary elections were hastily improvised to block the road to working class self-organisation, direct democracy and mass participation in politics.

Our programme is not for the creation of bourgeois parliaments in workers' states. Elected by an atomised electorate, incapable of holding their representatives to account, and separated from the executive power parliaments can never be an adequate expression of workers' power. These institutions directly aid the restoration plans of the bureaucracy or the nascent bourgeoisie.

Parliamentary representatives, not recallable by their electors are eminently corruptible by those who have wealth and power. When the ruling bureaucracy attempts to stabilise its rule through the organisation of parliamentary elections we counterpose to this the proletarian democracy of workers' councils. We fight for their formation as organs of struggle against the bureaucracy and as the organs of the democracy of a revolutionary workers' state.

But where such revolutionary slogans find as yet no echo in the consciousness or experience of the masses it would be utterly sectarian bankruptcy to rest content with this. We must seek out every way of organising the working class to actively intervene as a politically independent force in the existing political situation. If contrary to our wishes this is the terrain of parliamentary elections then it is there we must fight.

We oppose every attempt of the bureaucracy to manipulate or restrict the electoral process by imposing its vetoes on the lists of candidates or of eligible parties. Against bureaucratically rigged elections we we fight to impose the principles and certain of the forms of proletarian democracy. We fight for workers to stand their own candidates, elected by workers' assemblies in the workplaces and the workers districts.

We fight for them to stand on a workers' programme against bureaucratic rule and privilege and restoration in all its forms, for the defence of the rights of national minorities, for a fighting action programme to defend all the workers rights and gains. We fight for all candidates to be directly responsible to workers' assemblies and to be paid no more than the average wage of a skilled worker.

We take no responsibility for the existence of the form of a bourgeois parliament in a workers state (the Volkskammer, the Supreme Soviet etc)

These were the creation of the Stalinists who destroyed or dared not create soviets. But we have to seriously address the democratic illusions of the masses, when the nascent bourgeois forces seek to utilise the "democratisation" of such parliaments to create a permanent and stable instrument for the restoration of capitalism.

Our aim is to prevent the creation of such a stable parliamentary regime. When the restorationists try to create a legal and institutional basis for the capitalist regime, by means of bonapartist plebiscites or the votes of existing undemocratic assemblies, but where the workers still have no experience of soviets or
where their memory has been obliterated, revolutionaries can and should return to the revolutionary democratic demand for a sovereign constituent assembly.

This is not to call for a parliament (i.e. a permanent legislative body, part of a division of powers within a bourgeois regime), but rather to create an arena within which representatives of the conflicting classes will meet and fight over the political form and the very class basis of the state-embodied in its constitution. Of course we do not believe that the fight between restoration and proletarian power will be decided in any assembly. But the disguised and open agents of restoration can be exposed to the masses there.

The task in such conjunctures is for revolutionaries to become the vanguard of the revolutionary democratic struggle, in order if possible to tear the very weapon of political democracy out of the hands of the inconsistent (semi-bonapartist) bourgeois democrats.

We should advance the slogan of the CA in order to outflank the restorationists who will try and monopolise democratic slogans while in reality seeking to heavily restrict the powers of the parliament and surround it with bonapartist safeguards in case it falls too closely under the pressure of the masses. We can do this by fighting for the revolutionary democratic right of re-call. Every deputy must be subject to immediate recall by a majority of their electors.

We must fight to ensure that as much of the electoral campaign takes place before mass meetings in the work places where candidates can be cross-examined in detail on their programmes. We must fight for free and equal access to the media for all candidates except those of fascists or those seeking to overthrow planned property by force.

Of course, any actual constituent assembly can prove to be a force for counter-revolution, for the destruction of the workers’ state’s property relations. As such we must seek to expose it to the masses and mobilise the workers to dissolve it.

**For workers’ council democracy**

For the working class to overthrow the dictatorship of the bureaucracy it must forge its own means of exercising state power. The independent organisations generated in the struggles against the bureaucracy must be welded together into genuine workers’ councils. It will be these councils which will organise the mass insurrection of the working class, and their allies amongst the rural poor to smash the whole repressive machine of the Stalinist state apparatus which is the means of maintaining the political dictatorship of the bureaucracy over the proletariat.

Like the bourgeois state, upon which it is modelled, the essential elements of the Stalinist state machine are the "specialised bodies of armed men" and their apparatus of spies, gaolers and torturers. As the massacre of Tiananmen Square once again confirmed, even where the bureaucratic caste is internally divided, so long as the dominant faction has control of this apparatus they will use it to defend themselves against the insurgent masses. The spearhead of the programme of political revolution, then, is the formation of workers’ councils and the arming of the proletariat.

As the Russian Revolution demonstrated, the workers’ council is the form through which the working class exercises state power in a healthy workers’ state. Rooted in the factories, the working class communities and the oppressed layers of society, they organise the great mass of the once-exploited to become rulers of their own state. Workers’ council deputies will be directly elected by mass workers’ meetings.

They are responsible to their electorates and, therefore, permanently recallable by them. Workers’ councils are organs of class power, i.e. capitalists are excluded from the elections. The ruling sections of the
bureaucracy must be also denied the right to vote. We fight politically against those representatives of the bureaucracy in whom the working masses still have illusions. The political revolution will only be successful if the bureaucrats are driven out of the workers' councils.

The workers' council combines in itself both executive and legislative functions which means that a living workers' council democracy will control the state bureaucracy, reduce it and, in the long term, replace it altogether with the self-administration of society. Such bodies have nothing in common either with the present soviets in the USSR which have a mock parliamentary form, or the "popular committees" of Cuba, which exist to rubber stamp the decisions of the bureaucracy.

**Down with all forms of social oppression!**

Thermidor, in the USSR, marked not only the establishment of bureaucratic tyranny over the economy and the state but also the reversal of many of the reforms introduced after 1917 to counter social oppression. This re-introduction of reactionary legislation and moral norms has since served as a model for the other degenerate workers' states.

The victorious bureaucracies have all sought to strengthen the bourgeois family and to determine its size in accordance with their immediate economic and military requirements. Bureaucratic planning abandoned the goal of the socialisation of child care and domestic labour. Women remained subordinated to the double and triple burden of job, household and child-rearing. Nor do the "reformers" intend to reverse the effects of Stalin's Thermidor on the family.

On the contrary, Gorbachev's policy of perestroika, for example, strengthens a reactionary image of women which will be used to reduce women's principal roles to those of wives and mothers and to force them out of certain branches of production.

Youth are taught their "rightful place" in the educational establishments, they are stultified by the reactionary morality of Stalinism, they are denied free cultural expression. Likewise the great gains made by the October Revolution in legally defending the rights of homosexuals have long since been smashed and the daily diet of lesbians and gay men from Cuba and Asia through to Eastern Europe and the USSR is repression and even persecution. Against oppression on the grounds of sex or sexuality we fight:

? Against the oppression of women-for real socialisation of housework. For the plan to provide the crèche facilities that can make this possible. For a massive programme to build restaurants, canteens and social amenities in order to lift the burden that women bear.

? For a woman's right to work and equal access to jobs not subject to protective legislation. In order to fight the legacy of male chauvinism and oppression, a legacy preserved by the bureaucracy, we fight for an independent working class based women's movement.

? No limitation on abortion right, but for the provision of free contraceptive devices for all to give women real control over their fertility. No to any enforced family size imposed by the bureaucracy.

? Abolish the reactionary laws against homosexuality and release all those imprisoned or condemned to psychiatric "hospitals" on this basis. For an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbians and gay men. For open recognition that AIDS exists in these states; for a state funded programme of research, treatment and education about the virus.

? Down with the oppression of youth. For student, parent and education workers' control of the schools and for committees of the youth to control their own entertainment, sporting and cultural facilities, clubs etc.
Down with censorship which, far from protecting youth from reactionary ideas, cripples their intellect and fighting spirit and thus leaves them prey to such ideas. Abolish all laws that discriminate at work or in society against youth.

**Political revolution and the national question**

From its foundation, the revolutionary Soviet state had a federal character. As with every other aspect of Bolshevik political practice, Stalinism retained the form but emptied it of revolutionary content. Far from being a voluntary federation of peoples the USSR became a prison house of nations.

The pattern of denial of the rights of minority nationalities has been repeated in other degenerated workers' states, whether they have a federal character (as in Yugoslavia), are unitary states with supposed "autonomous regions" (as in China) or give no constitutional recognition to the existence of minorities (as in Rumania). The Kremlin has also oppressed nations outside the borders of the USSR and launched invasions to crush proletarian revolts against bureaucratic rule.

Opposition to the ruling bureaucracies has thus frequently taken on a nationalist character. Amongst these oppressed peoples revolutionaries champion and fight for the democratic rights of the oppressed nationalities as part of their struggle for the political revolution. We oppose every manifestation of Great Russian, Chinese and Serbian oppressor nationalism.

We support the right to the full cultural self-expression for all oppressed nationalities. This means full support for their right to use their own language in all public and state business as well as the right to be educated in their own language. We fight against any discrimination in jobs and for the right of oppressed nationalities to veto immigration policies determined by the bureaucracies of the oppressor nationalities. Likewise we are against any reverse discrimination of former national majorities now turned minorities in newly independent states (e.g. Russians in Lithuania).

We fight for all multinational workers' states to be free federations of workers' republics. In general we do not seek the fragmentation of the degenerated workers' states into their component nationalities both because we are in favour of the largest integrated territories in order to advance the development of the productive forces, and because nationalism threatens to divide the working class and blind it to the need to destroy the bureaucracy and imperialism.

It can lead workers to side with "their own" national bureaucracy or to a belief that it is possible to achieve "independence" through capitalist restoration and with the aid of imperialism.

The capitalist offensive is attempting to disintegrate every element of class identity and collectivist consciousness, and develop in their place individualistic, religious and nationalist-ethnic ideas. In various republics, regions, small areas and even enterprises the restorationists are trying to spread the idea that only total independence from the official state will give them better access to the international market, better prices for their exports and better conditions for purchasing imports and attracting investments.

The USSR has disintegrated into fifteen independent republics and there are many further autonomous republics and regions within them which have serious separatist tendencies. The bureaucrats and nationalists that are behind these independence movements are trying to create miniature bourgeois semi-colonies. In most of them other ethnic minorities suffer discrimination and oppression.

In the Baltic states, for example, the Slavic minorities are not recognized as citizens and suffer a new apartheid. In former Yugoslavia, in the Caucasus, Moldava, Central Asia and other former "socialist block" states bloody and non-progressive inter-ethnic wars are under way.
In fact genuine independence for any of the presently oppressed nationalities in the workers' states is only achievable on the basis of democratically planned proletarian property relations. "Independence" under the leadership of restorationists can only lead to the subordination of any newly established states to imperialism, to their becoming semi-colonies.

This would see the working class ever more directly exploited by international capitalism and their democratic aspirations brutally suppressed in the interests of profit. We do not advocate secession because it weakens the workers state and hampers the development of the productive forces. But, in the concrete case where within a particular oppressed nation the great majority of its working class has illusions in separation we should raise the slogan for an independent workers council republic.

Which side we take in the case of a military conflict between an oppressed nation's pro-independence movement and the centralised Stalinist apparatus must depend on all the concrete circumstances. Should this movement be carrying out pogroms against other national minorities or be in an armed alliance with imperialism, it would be possible to side with the Stalinist central apparatus whilst not supporting it politically.

We could do this whilst simultaneously raising the slogan for an independent or autonomous workers council republic (as in Azerbaijan in 1990). On the other hand where it is a legitimate movement based on the working people we could take sides with the independence movement (without supporting its aims or the popular front) against military repression (as in Lithuania in 1990/91).

However, the alienation of so many nationalities from the degenerate workers' states is the product of decades of vicious national oppression. The vanguard of the political revolution must seek by the most vigorous means to allay the fears of these peoples and win them to the side of the preservation of their own planned property by unconditionally supporting their right to self determination, including to secession.

Where the majority of the people concerned call for independence, in mass demonstrations or workers' assemblies, in elections or plebiscites we will support by all means the winning of such independence. To do otherwise would be to cut ourselves off from the democratically expressed will of masses of workers and, therefore, to ensure they will fall under the leadership of reactionary forces.

However, only proletarian political power and proletarian property relations can guarantee the independence to which such mobilisations aspire. Therefore our positive slogan in these conditions is for an independent workers' council state.

Even where existing separatist movements have espoused an overt social counter-revolutionary platform we will still defend the right to state independence whilst continuing the struggle against restoration. National independence is not simultaneous with the restoration of capitalism and the ending of national oppression will begin to untie the bonds between the representatives of opposing class interests.

We will continue to organise the workers for armed defence of the post-capitalist property relations. However, in conditions of war (external or civil) in any given workers state we may be obliged temporarily to subordinate the right of secession to the defence of workers' states under attack from the forces of imperialism and counter-revolution.

As an expression of our opposition to the reactionary utopia of building socialism in one country we stand for the widest federation possible of workers states, starting with regional federations. Thus the victorious political revolution will re-unite on a voluntary and equal basis the republics of the former USSR, Eastern Europe and beyond. In the regions where Stalinism and its successors have sown national antagonisms
and wars we fight for workers state federations (e.g. in the Balkans and Indo-China) as a step toward their integration within the World Socialist Republic.

**For a return to the proletarian internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky!**

The Stalinists sullied the slogan of proletarian internationalism by identifying it with submission to the Soviet bureaucracies state interests. The foreign policy of a revolutionary workers' state has as its aim not primarily its own defence nor even the defence and support of other workers' states but the interests all those struggling against capitalism and imperialism.

The defence of any single workers states or any grouping thereof is a part of and therefore subordinated to the World Revolution. This is the unfalsified programme of proletarian internationalism. It is the polar opposite of the foreign policy of the degenerated workers' states over the last half century which were geared to their attempts to achieve peaceful coexistence with imperialism.

The Stalinists cynically manipulated and betrayed the struggles of the working class and colonial peoples around the world. Side by side with strengthening market mechanisms and capitalist forces inside the workers' states, the remaining ruling bureaucracies are globally in retreat in the face of imperialism. Stalinism has always pursued an essentially counter-revolutionary policy at home and abroad. In Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Central America and Southern Africa the USSR over the last decade played a counterrevolutionary role, both in the manner of its support for progressive forces and in its shameful desertion of those forces in pursuit of a deal with imperialism.

The secret diplomacy operated by the Stalinist bureaucracies must to be abandoned completely. This policy was part of the bureaucratic monopoly of information in the degenerated workers' states and only served to misinform and deceive the working class.

Negotiations between workers' states and capitalist states or other workers' states have to be carried out in view of the working class. The demands from both sides should be made public. Negotiations have to be used in order to make revolutionary propaganda. The nature of the negotiations have to be revealed to the masses.

Relations with capitalist states also have to be used by a workers state as a weapon. Diplomatic ties and trade relations with each country have to be examined carefully. Stalinists used diplomatic ties with capitalist countries to excuse the drowning of workers' movements in these countries in blood and also caused the Stalinists to raise the prestige of these butchers (e.g. China's relations with Pinochet). This was a common practice among Stalinists. Diplomatic and trade relations have to be useful for the building of a workers' state and must not limit or harm the formation of a revolutionary movement.

In a situation of direct military attack on a workers' state, in or out of a political revolutionary crisis, it is legitimate to seek an armed united front with the armed forces of another workers' state.

In that united front the working class must not allow its forces to be subordinated to those of its allies, but must struggle for arms and assistance to be put under the control of its organisations and argue amongst the allied forces of the degenerated workers' state for internationalist political revolution.

We defend the right of the degenerate workers' states to possess nuclear weapons and, in wars with imperialism, use them when militarily necessary for the defence of the workers' states. But we oppose the bureaucracy's overall defence and military policy which has as its aim the realisation of the utopian goal of peaceful co-existence with world imperialism.
The foreign policy of a workers' state has to be subordinated to a revolutionary international. A genuine international can place the foreign policy of a workers' state in its rightful context within the pursuit of the world revolution. Only an international can effectively defend workers' states against imperialist intervention by co-ordinating the mobilisation of the working class across various imperialist countries.

**For a Leninist-Trotskyist party!**

The programme of political revolution, understood both as a linked system of demands and all the strategic and tactical means of achieving them, will not be arrived at by the spontaneous struggles of the working classes of the degenerate(d) workers' states. The experience of Hungary, Poland and China tragically shows that, as under capitalism, spontaneity must be harnessed to scientific class consciousness in the organisational form of a revolutionary party.

Although the first small nuclei of such a party may originate amongst the intelligentsia, the test of their "communism" will be their recognition of the need to win and organise the working class leaders thrown up by the anti-bureaucratic struggle. All the norms of membership, organisation, internal life and external activity developed by the Leninist Bolshevik Party and, later, by the Left Oppositionists and the Trotskyists, will be applicable.

We reject the "leading role" of the Stalinist parties. They are the parties of the bureaucracy. The experience of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1968 and of the "horizontal movement" within the Polish Workers' Party during the height of Solidarnosc's struggle, suggests that proletarian mobilisations will find a reflection in the ruling Communist Parties. This is so because a large number of workers are captive members of these parties.

We reject the idea that the ruling parties can be reformed or can peacefully evolve into centrist formations. These parties must be broken up as instruments of mass mobilisation in support of the repressive and privileged bureaucracy. Nevertheless, we do not ignore the fact that in an escalating political revolutionary situation, the bureaucracy may come under challenge from sections of the party membership or the proletariat.

The united front tactic, levelled at these forces and opposition groups outside the party, will be vital in breaking the masses from these mis-leaders, new or old. Where we cannot directly win rank and file working class elements to the ranks of Trotskyism, and recognising that such opposition will often be the first expression of political independence by such workers, we should encourage them to put the Communist Party, which they remain within, to the test by demanding:

Elections at every level, elections based on open platforms and political competition in open debate. For the lifting of the ban on the formation of factions and on the circulation of platforms, which was imposed as a purely temporary measure in the Russian Communist Party of Lenin and Trotsky in 1921, but which was turned into a repressive norm under Stalin.

The revolutionary party, forged anew in struggle must inscribe onto its banner the overthrow of the Stalinist dictatorships, the creation of a democracy of workers' councils, the installation of a democratic plan and above all the extension of the revolution internationally. If the workers' states undergo revolutionary regeneration then the death knell of imperialism and class rule will sound across the globe. Turn the bureaucratic prison houses once more into fortresses of the world revolution!

**The programme during the restoration process**

Due to the accumulated betrayals of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the prolonged crisis of revolutionary
leadership a new form of transitional period has opened up—the transition from degenerated workers state to capitalism. The task of revolutionaries is to re-orient their programme to guide a struggle against the remains of bureaucratic tyranny and disorganisation and against the restoration of capitalism.

The road to restoration has most frequently been opened by the rise to power of a faction of the bureaucracy that set in train a series of concessions to the market. These had been advocated with ever greater insistence from economic experts from within the bureaucracy from the 1960s onwards; (Liberman, Ota Sik etc). They were carried out first on a significant scale in Hungary.

They centred on the stage by stage weakening and narrowing of the scope of the central plan, the creation of real or simulated market mechanisms between the enterprises, the puncturing of the state monopoly of foreign trade, the entry into the economic institutions of world capitalism, the IMF etc.

The utopian aspect of this programme for the bureaucracy was the idea that it would increase the efficiency, the level of technical innovation or the responsiveness of the economy to the needs of the consumers. Instead it hampered and disrupted the working of the planned economy whilst the continued existence of the latter obstructed the development of a real market, creating instead a massive "black economy", it created a criminal class before it created a bourgeoisie.

Both in those states where the marketising faction of the bureaucracy tried to carry out this programme with democratic reforms and in those where it tried to maintain its political dictatorship intact the result was the same—a severe political crisis where three fundamental alternatives were posed;

(a) restoration of the bureaucratic dictatorship and a halting or slowing of market reforms,

(b) the seizure of power by an openly restorationist regime that would set about the destruction of the central planning system and the rapid transition to the operation of law of value as the dominant force within the economy or,

(c) a proletarian political revolution introducing workers democracy and a democratically planned economy. Only the latter two alternatives were and are fundamentally viable. Bureaucratic-dictatorship however bloodily restored or maintained can never solve the death agony of bureaucratic planning and it alienates the masses hurling them into the arms of the democratic restorationists. Whilst in China, Korea, Vietnam and Cuba the bureaucracy tries by repressive means to avoid the fate of Gorbachev the development of pre-revolutionary and revolutionary situations are inevitable.

A greater or lesser degree and duration of dual power creates a situation where the forces of the old bureaucracy, the proletarian political revolution or the bourgeois counterrevolution must engage in a life or death struggle. If the forces of political revolution fail to develop then sooner or later, with this or that violent backward or forward lurch, restoration is possible and indeed inevitable.

Thus far the weaknesses of the forces consciously seeking to defend the planned economy and the other proletarian gains has resulted in the seizure of power by a series of bourgeois restorationist governments. These have set out first of all to resolve any remaining duality of power with the old bureaucracy via the purging of the state machine.

This purgation will vary according to the degree of political homogeneity of the armed forces. Where an important part remains convinced of the viability of bureaucratic rule, the purging may take on a violent form, even leading to civil war. At the end of this process the degenerate workers state will have been smashed. The resolution of this dual power, the simultaneous prevention of the working class from intervening to establish its own organs of power, is vital to the successful restoration process.
But even the establishment of a reliable state machine, bourgeois not only in its class form but in its class character in that it actively defends the growing elements of capitalism and attacks the disintegrating remnants of the planned economy, is not the end. Only when the laws of the former predominate over those of the latter, only when the economic base of the workers state has been destroyed can we say that the process is complete and capitalism restored.

The economic programmes of capitalist restoration striven for are extremely varied. The one immediate "success" was the integration of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) into the West German imperialist state, via a prolonged combination of state capitalist and privatisation measures after the central organs of the planned economy were abolished. In the other states where the resources of a major imperialism are not available the neo-liberal shock therapy has been applied.

This means freeing prices, dissolving the central planning and resource-allocation institutions, the abolition of the old state bank monopoly and its replacement with a fully commercial credit system under which loss making enterprises can and must go bankrupt, the transformation of the enterprises into private and/or state capitalist trusts.

The massive economic slump which is the result of the implementation of this policy itself creates repeated political crises, pre-revolutionary situations which a deepening class consciousness and militancy of the proletariat and the emergence of anti-restorationist defenders of workers democracy can turn into a fully developed revolution. This revolution will have a combined character.

It will be a political revolution in the sense that the expropriation of the bourgeoisie is not its central task but with enormous social, i.e. anti-capitalist tasks. If it remains a political revolution it is nevertheless aimed at a bourgeois regime which holds all or part of the state power. It will have the task of seizing state power and creating a workers state based on soviets.

**The Action Programme Against Restoration**

In the moribund degenerate workers states, where restorationist governments are in the process of carrying out the restoration of capitalism we must fight for a programme of immediate and transitional demands to halt and reverse the social counter-revolution; a programme which in its totality can only be the programme of a revolutionary workers government.

? For a basic living wage that guarantee a shopping basket of goods as determined by the rank and file workers' organisations

? For a sliding scale of wages-an automatic, equivalent rise in wages for every rise in prices determined by elected committees of workers, particularly women and pensioners-to fully compensate for every increase in prices.

? Stop all price rises. Prices of food, clothing, transportation, rents and fuel should be prevented from rising. Only a workers' government can reform the currency in the interests of the toilers rather than that of the speculators.

? Put all private and state warehouses and food storage under the control of armed workers' detachments, under workers inspection and distribution. Confiscate all goods hoarded by the bureaucrats, the black marketeers, or private businesses. Workers must control and distribute any aid received from imperialist countries.

? Elected committees of workers must inspect the accounts of the enterprises and the planning ministries,
the bureaucracies special shops and the accounts of the new speculators. Only then will the scale of corruption, siphoning off and theft of the produce of the workers state be known, the culprits punished and a new plan of production and distribution be possible.

? Organise direct exchange between the cities and the countryside. The rural and urban workers should together work out fair exchange ratios and even prices between the products of industry and agriculture.

? Restore the right and opportunity to work. The existing unemployed must be offered work or paid at the average industrial wage. No to all redundancies without equivalent work at equivalent pay. Occupy all factories, mines, shops or offices declaring redundancies or attempting closure. Demand that the idle members of the bureaucracy, the enterprise managers and the parasitic speculators perform useful work in the factories and on the land at the average wage of a worker.

? For workers' management in every enterprise. No to privatisation even in the form of alienable shares distributed in whole or in part to the workers themselves. In a workers' state the factories already belong to the workers. No to expropriation of the workers' property.

? No cuts in the social services. For a massive programme of housing repairs and construction of new dwellings, crèches, schools and clinics. No one should be unemployed and no one should be idle whilst people lack these elementary necessities.

? For a minimum living wage for all and for all pensions to be no lower than this and to be protected by a sliding scale

? For emergency action to alleviate the housing shortage. Seize the dachas and the big apartments of the former bureaucrats and the new rich. Occupy all state buildings that are not serving the collective good of the working class and convert them to accommodation for young families, the unemployed.

? Workers committees must draw up an inventory of all state property as it stood before the restorationist governments came to power. The misappropriation and hoarding of the former bureaucracy must be brought to light and all the resources of the workers state restored to collective ownership. All the "expropriation" of state property must be reversed.

? Down with national chauvinism. Summary execution for the organisers of pogroms and "ethnic cleansing". Merciless repression of the fascists and anti-semites, racists, chauvinists that organise attacks on national minorities, on women, gays and on the workers organisations. No platform, no "democratic rights" for these vermin.

? Respect the decisions of minority nationalities to independence if that was their choice. Unconditionally defend the democratic rights of all the nationalities against old style Stalinist or new style nationalist or religious repression. But just as we defend the democratic rights of all the minorities inside Yugoslavia, China or USSR, we should defend the democratic rights of all the Great Russian, Serb and Han Chinese workers in areas in which now they are minorities and may suffer oppression.

? For a workers' militia to protect the workers' struggles, to crush the fascists and pogrom organisers and to smash the armed insurrections of the counterrevolutionaries.

But to prevent the restoration of capitalism the workers face a combined task, a struggle against a bourgeois executive power and a struggle to save the remains of the planned state-owned means of production and distribution. To do the latter they must take up the struggle to overthrow the restorationist governments and put into power workers' governments based on workers' councils.
The restorationist forces cannot be removed by peaceful means alone though the more decisively and the more strongly the workers mobilise the less costly will such a victory be. They can organise a workers militia which in turn must win over the rank and file soldiers.

There is no shortage of arms or the opportunity to acquire them. Most workers have undergone military service. The workers can and must arm themselves. Arms in hand workers can snuff out the flames of national hatred, protect all minorities, protect the strikes and occupations and as soon as the opportunity of seizing power arises armed units attached to the soviets can carry this through and establish a workers' government.

The workers government would have to organise the election of workers tribunals to try all those who have committed crimes against the working people either under the Stalinist dictatorship or under the restorationist regimes.

The central tasks of a workers' council government will be the crushing of the restorationists' plans and the rallying of the world working class movement to its defence against the inevitable imperialist pressure and blockade. In the economy the workers' government will have to develop and implement an emergency plan to save the economy from total disintegration. This [word missing?] an emergency plan drawn up by the workers representatives and put into action by the working class itself. The most urgent measures for such a plan should be:

? Restore the state monopoly of foreign trade with control of all international commerce by elected organs of workers' inspection. The seaport, airport, communications and banking workers can rapidly decide on what trade is in the interests of the workers' state and what is speculation or harmful profiteering. Urge the workers' movements of the capitalist countries to force their governments into undertaking trade agreements that will benefit the workers' government's emergency plan.

? Stop all de-nationalisation of the large scale means of production and renationalise all sectors already sold-off. Close down the stock exchanges and the commodity exchanges that have been set up. Inspect all previous dealings and punish those guilty of anti-working class profiteering.

? Restore a state monopoly of banking. Nationalise all private banks installing workers 'control and inspection. The dollar hoards of the speculators, the joint ventures, the pseudo-cooperatives and the private accounts of the bureaucrats must be confiscated for the workers state.

? Refuse to recognise the foreign debt, stop all payments and break all the chains to the IMF, the World Bank and the European Bank of Restoration! Kick out all the imperialist "economic advisers".

? Carry out a monetary reform in the interests of the toilers. Money as a measure of value must as accurately as possible gage the labour time embedded in the products of industry and agriculture. The inflation of the last years of bureaucratic mismanagement must be brought to an end so that workers can undertake rational accounting without which planning is impossible.

? Transform the collective farms into genuine democratic co-operatives on a one worker one vote basis. Establish workers control in the state farms. Aid the small farms towards co-operation by the provision of collective resources.

? Small sized private businesses, industrial production, distribution, retail trade and services should be left to operate and even to expand in number as in spheres where the state and the cooperatives cannot meet demand. This sector of private small capitalists and petty bourgeois can even be useful to the workers' state providing their workers are all unionised and have their working conditions and hours regulated by
the local soviets, providing their accounts are subject to inspection and taxation is levied for the benefit of the workers' state.

? Re-organise a Central Commission for the Co-ordination of the Plan and create similar commissions at local, regional and city levels. The skilled statisticians, economists and administrators must be assembled and put to work under the control of elected workers representatives. There must be no re-emergence of bureaucratic privilege. No expert should earn more than the wage of a skilled worker and all planning organs must carry out the decisions of the appropriate organs of worker's democracy.

? The Emergency Plan must provide for a massive construction programme to improve the social infrastructure; house building and repairs, clinic and hospital building, and expansion of the nurseries, schools and further and higher education.

? The Emergency Plan must rapidly improve the communication, distribution and transport system. Military vehicles and aircraft must be drafted into an improved freight system so that food does not rot before it can reach the consumers. A longer term programme of road and railway construction, upgrading the telecommunication systems, creating a nationwide network of warehousing, cold storage, and freezer plants can ensure that the labour of the farmers is not shamefully wasted.

? The Emergency Plan must set as one of its central goals a series of measures that improve the condition of women. Improvements in the quality of goods, distribution and retailing must remove from women the crushing burden of the search for food and the endless queuing. Improvements in housing, in crèche and childcare facilities, in care for the sick and the elderly should take up the struggle to socialise domestic toil and liberate women so they can at last play a fully equal role in social and public life.

? For a woman's right to work, with equal pay for work of equal value; defend maternity leave and pay and the protection of women from harmful work. Resist moves to force women to work part time with lower pay and poor working conditions-reduce the working week for all workers. Defend the rights of women to abortion, and extend the availability of contraception.

? The churches and the mosques have begun to make claims to organise schools and to censor culture and education. They must have no control over the schools, the hospitals or the media. For scientific and rational education on sexuality free from clerical superstition and taboos.

**The Workers' Government must offer international solidarity**

The workers' government must break resolutely from the counter-revolutionary policies of the Walesas, the Yeltsins or the Havels. The allies of a workers' state cannot be the imperialist world devourers and the exploiters of the proletariat of the capitalist countries.

The victorious political revolution must appeal for direct aid and support to the workers' movements of the entire world and particularly to the rank and file. The victorious Russian Revolution in 1917 rallied massive support in Europe, Asia and the Americas such that the heroic resistance of the Russian workers could beat off the imperialist intervention. The international policy of the victorious political revolution must in return offer economic and military support to the struggles of the world's workers and oppressed peoples.

? Imperialist hands off Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea and the other bureaucratically ruled workers states. Military and economic assistance against the US blockade or intervention. For a socialist reunification of Korea, no to a capitalist reunification!

? Aid to the workers of these states to make a political revolution. Only revolutionary workers and peasants
council governments will be able to save these states. For a world-wide alliance and ultimately a federation of workers states. For economic co-ordination of the plans of all the workers' states.

? Support for all national liberation struggles against imperialism. Support for all workers and oppressed peoples who are fighting austerity and privatisation plans dictated by the IMF.

? Opposition to the sell-outs deals and betrayals in the Middle East, Southern Africa, South-East Asia, Afghanistan and Central America.

? Support for the struggles of the workers of Eastern Europe against capitalist restoration.

? Support for both the immediate and the revolutionary class struggles of the workers of the entire capitalist world.

? For a new voluntary federation of socialist republics of the ex-USSR; for a new voluntary federation of the socialist republics in the Balkans.

? For a world socialist federation of workers council republics.

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