

**J. POSADAS**

**WHAT IS A SOVIET**

Scientific, Cultural  
and Political Editions

## **To the reader**

This text  
emanates from  
a speech given by the author  
on the occasion of  
a cadres' school.

Some direct dialogues  
have been removed  
to facilitate  
the actual reading.

The original title of this text is:

**The intellectuals and the technicians, the development of the  
Socialist Revolution and the IV International**  
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# FOREWORDS ...

In this text, J. Posadas replies to the letter of a Posadist intellectual militant who wrote to him from Argentina. It answers 26 questions such as: What is a Soviet? What links are there between the Trade Unions and the Soviets? How do the Workers Parties intervene in the Soviets? What role for the International?

This book is mainly a manual about method: Human dignity and equality will not come from more production or improved technologies: It will come from the triumph of the fraternal human relation, which means Party, Programme and Proletarian Power – namely, the proletarian revolution.

This text remains valid today because it retakes the thread of the continuity of Marxism which Stalinism broke when it eliminated the Soviets, the independence of the Trade Unions, the Bolshevik leadership and the Communist International.

Though written in 1968, this text remains paramount; and not just for now, but for after the taking of power. One of its main contributions is to retake the revolutionary conclusions of Lenin and Trotsky. It shows to the revolutionary leaders of the future that they will control and prevent the rise of bureaucracy by insisting on the independent functioning of the Trade Unions vis-à-vis the new proletarian State.

Intellectuals, artists, technicians, civil servants and environmentalists, revolutionary soldiers and police as well as the political Left and the anti-war movements will eventually join the working class in the planning of the economy. But then, the need to distribute equitably the wealth of the new society will mark the proper start of the anti-bureaucratic struggle.

Since distribution can never be wholly equitable in one country alone, the fight against the bureaucratisation of every new revolutionary leadership is going remain, for a period, a central preoccupation of humanity.

The author shows the way.

*Editorial*



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

J. Posadas was born in Argentina in 1912 and died in Italy in 1981. He started his activities as a Trade Union leader in the shoe industry. He soon adopted the ideas of Trotsky and joined the IV International. He soon developed as a writer, theoretician, political leader and revolutionary organiser.

In view of the process of Peronism and revolutionary nationalism, he created a movement in Argentina and in Latin America based on texts such as: '*Five-Year Plan or the Permanent Revolution*' (1947), '*Peronism*' (1963) and '*From Nationalism to the Workers State*' (1966).

Those who belonged to the leading group of the IV International in those days greeted his ideas with incomprehension. Judging that they were abandoning the Marxist principles, J. Posadas separated himself from them, and in 1962 he organised the Trotskyist-Posadist IV International.

A flurry of his fundamental texts followed, such as: '*The Construction of the Workers State and from the Workers State to Socialism*', '*Partial Regeneration, Historic Re-encounter and the Process of the Permanent Revolution in this Stage*', '*The role of the USSR in History*', '*The Living Thought of Trotsky*' and '*The Revolutionary State*'.

In the more general field of Art, Science and Culture, J. Posadas has left many other writings. They incorporate into the Marxist analysis subjects ranging from 'human relations' to 'the Communist future of humanity'. It all forms part of his *History of the Human Civilisation* which remained unfinished due to his unexpected death.

The works of J. Posadas and the example of his life champion the confidence and security of humanity. As he used to say: "*Socialism is not only a necessity of history, but of life itself*".

His last words give food for thought: "*Life has no sense without the struggle for Socialism, whatever the consequences*".

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# THE INTELLECTUALS AND THE TECHNICIANS, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION, AND THE IV INTERNATIONAL

**J. Posadas**

10.10.1968

Dear Comrade,

We have read your letter with great attention. We salute with all our revolutionary affection and fraternity your preoccupation to intervene in the life of the Party as a sympathiser.

Clearly, there is an obvious difference between active Party militants and sympathisers who do not militate. Active militants impel the movement and can be instrumental to it, receiving strength and security in return. This is the difference.

However, active and non-active militancy are not opposed or antagonistic. They differ in quality, degree and importance, but they share the same nature. Your letter confirms this because it shows you as a sympathiser preoccupied like a Party member. (1)

The activity of the Party comrades and your own may be two different types of militancy, but both are necessary. There is no doubt that by way of effects and conclusions, active militancy is much more productive. But a parallel militancy, like your own, is very important too. Indeed it plays an irreplaceable role, for no revolution can triumph and develop without the support of non-active popular layers who care for what happens to it.

No progress in human history was ever made without the proximity and the sustenance of such popular layers; we are talking here in reference to revolution; but this applies just as much to art and to science. Science, art and revolution are the three basic pillars of human progress – revolution being the most complete and decisive.

No important revolutionary activity can succeed without the support of popular sectors whose sympathy and endorsement eventually spread to the rest of society. Such people win others through their eagerness, their confidence, their staunchness and their desire to see the revolution develop.

This builds up a revolutionary fund of social support from every direction: Social, political, technical, scientific, professional, economic and militant. When the time comes, this reserve fund becomes the mainstay of the revolution.

The development of the revolution cannot incorporate the best elements of society all at once and at the same level. The concerns you express in this letter are of the finest in society. You share them with countless technicians and specialists who want the progress of the Socialist revolution, knowing it to be decisive and central to human development.

Many technicians, intellectuals and professionals are not attracted to militancy. Perhaps they do not understand the need or feel motivated enough, but they support the revolution and welcome its development. In their contact with other intermediaries and vanguards, they pass on their confidence in the revolution.

These others tend to stand on parallel lines to the revolution, or on its margin. But with a good revolutionary wind, they too become animated. They start creating or improving the conditions that allow for yet more social layers to become involved.

This is how the process ends up mobilising many people who had seemed inactive or unconcerned before. It may be that action had not attracted them in the past. It may be that they had welcomed the ideas but not the militancy. But even when they acted in a limited way, they meant to be responding to the need of the revolution.

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Countless technicians whose job it is to serve the system have lost confidence in capitalism. But when they look at the Workers States, they see bureaucrats no better than rogues who cream-off the best, and appropriate like the capitalists. If this is Communism, they do not want it.

They watch as the Communist parties negotiate and defend capitalism - actually preventing the masses from overthrowing it, preventing the revolution from progressing! The intellectuals and the professionals of capitalism are not impressed by the conduct of the Soviet bureaucracy in Vietnam or in Cuba.

These trained layers of the capitalist system know that capitalism is useless. They also know that the Workers State is superior, but the baseness and unworthiness of the bureaucracy undermines their theoretical and political confidence.

These people want explanations. They want to know whether, beyond the bureaucracy, Communism is still valid, progressive or justified. They



wonder at bureaucracy, this snag, this regression, this drawback! They want to know what could have caused the rise of such a historic obstacle, and they ask: Is the bureaucracy transitory? Or is it a natural consequence of the revolution?

The bureaucracy is not a necessity of history; it is not the natural consequence of the revolution. It is a transitory element that arises because history rushes ahead of the ability of the proletariat to summon up a leadership of its own. That is all.

This swift movement of history has other effects. See for instance how science gallops ahead of capitalism's ability to incorporate it into attainments and realizations!

Nuclear science advances are such that we could put an end to world hunger in a matter of weeks. If only such a science were applied to the relevant economic and logistical means, world hunger would end in two weeks! The development of science is immense, compared with what society does with it. (2)

It has been demonstrated that isotope manipulation - the different atomic forms of one basic element - in the production of food and livestock can yield in one week what used to take decades. But humanity does not make use of these possibilities because scientific knowledge is locked in empiricism.

Through rational manipulations, we could substitute for what is normally produced by heat, light and time. Through long exposures to light, water, sun, heat and cold, nature generates substances retrievable in isotopes. The unorganised energy of matter that nature traps empirically in isotopes can be harvested rationally.

Through this, or similar, we could proceed very fast to resolve world hunger. But instead of this, 6,000 human beings are allowed to die of hunger every day in Biafra-Nigeria! Isn't this mass murder?

Scientific knowledge brims over with the power of humanity, but people continue to die of hunger: This is terrible, criminal!

When nuclear science is placed at the service of humanity - this should be soon because capitalism cannot last many more years - everything will be transformed. What will be transformed above all is the mind, because it will be directly involved.

The transformation of our relationship with nature will revolutionize all our social relations, and all the relations of the mind.

Ordinary children will feel equal to organising the world. The two-year-olds will be as capable as the adults of today.

This explains the already changing notion of historic time: In the end, time is nothing but a measure of the capabilities of the mind.

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It took thousands of years of human history to learn all about water or rain, but now, we learn about similar things in a matter of weeks. We can replace the cycles of nature, and nuclear science is compressing this further.

But none of this inspires capitalism or the Soviet bureaucracy. It leaves them cold, and the only interest they take in such knowledge is for war: Capitalism in a bid to crush revolutions and go on existing, and the Soviet bureaucracy - to subsist.

Since the bureaucracy likes to show off, and the Workers State is capable of an infinitely greater incorporation of science than capitalism, why are the results still comparatively small in the Soviet Union? Results are still small because it is not the aim of the bureaucracy to make Socialism; and nothing short of Socialism can allow the incorporation of all the scientific knowledge that we already have.

From now on, any further application of science needs Socialism.

In its turn, Socialism needs unfettered imagination. 'Socialism' means that people discuss everything and that they intervene freely. Anything less belongs to the province of class, group or 'caste' interests.

In the Workers States, the mass of the people must debate and interpret openly. They must take their own decisions and apply their own solutions. This is not asking for more than what is due to humanity. Quite apart from the fact that human knowledge itself depends upon it.

Once knowledge is liberated, human progress will leap ahead by millions of kilometres, instead of hopping on one foot the way it does now. Note that the conditions for this emancipation are gathering. If this were not so, we could not even begin to imagine it.

When the mind imagines, it is already on its way to action. Etched in the brain, the ability to imagine leads to resolution-taking and problem-solving. Human imagination forms part of the primary disposition to acquire scientific knowledge. From the way things are, imagination surmises how they could be.

Its imagination tells humanity it no longer needs to live as it does.

Our imagination intimates that today, it is not more economic leaps that are required, but leaps in our fraternal human relations.

Today, the energy which we invest in disputes ravages our fraternal and social relations. Tomorrow, we will concentrate and fuse the energies of all our minds in pursuit of our common advancement.

Of all the transformations that this feat will bring, the most momentous will be in our brains.

The ability of the human brain will then take leaps measurable in thousands of years.

The distance separating us from other universes will shorten, and we will understand much better the beings of other worlds.

\* \* \*

Note how we use looks, gestures and movements when we speak. This can only happen because the process of thought precedes that of speaking. Well then, why shouldn't there be creatures in other worlds that capture thought directly? We are not very far from achieving this already, and tomorrow, we will do this very simply.

The distance between thought-emitted and thought-received is already narrowing, tending towards instantaneousness. Tomorrow, we will contrive to think, communicate and receive influences simultaneously and constantly. Human communications will improve until we eliminate 'distance'.

Communications on Earth will be uninterrupted and complete when the planet is enveloped by the same social sentiment of fondness, the same eagerness for progress and human fraternity, from end to end, rendering obsolete all the previous mechanical means of communication.

Today, artificial satellites circle the Earth to fill a gap in our means of communications. But mostly this gap is in our brains!

Make no mistake these satellites are for war. They may be used for communication just now, but tomorrow, war will start from there.

And humanity will overcome.

There is no greater capacity than that which resides in our brains. Rockets continue to go to the Moon, but humanity is thoroughly determined to kick out every social, military and economic obstacle in the way of its progress on Earth. It knows that when this is done, no planet will be unreachable.

Logically enough, humanity wants to solve the problems of the Earth first. Who are they, then, those who rush to the Moon? What do they want?

They are capitalism and the bureaucracy of the Workers States! They seek their self-preservation!

But humanity knows that it is the Earth that needs attention. It has not the slightest doubt that it will get to the Moon. This is why it is not rushing.

Imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy are rushing to the Moon for military ends, but in their precipitation, there is a certain wish to quit. Deep down, their historic conduct hints at the desire to get out, leave the Earth, get away.

They face liquidation here on Earth - and they know it. They have nothing to do down here.

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Today, scientific knowledge advances much more than the capacity of humanity to put it to use - Workers States included. Similarly, the historic capacity of the revolution is much superior to the leaderships that emanate from it. These realities explain why the IV International goes on existing and cannot be destroyed.

The IV International represents the consciousness of this process. It cannot be destroyed because it is a historic necessity. If this were not so, there would have been no justification for its existence. It could not have mustered the historic security needed to exist, let alone to transcend. History would have caused it to dissolve.

But far from history having dissolved it, the IV International went forward. Today, the world revolution takes up its programme, policies, methods and objectives – sometimes its complete texts. This could only happen because the role played by the IV International is historically necessary,

In the past, the International sought to maintain the continuity of Marxism. Today it must still do this, and lead the revolution concretely as well. This is why we are accepted by Fidel Castro. We are accepted in the USSR, Syria, Mali, Algeria, Yugoslavia and China. There is even an argument for saying that the IV International advances more in the Workers States than in the capitalist countries.

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In your letter, you speak of your 'non active intervention'. There is no doubt that an active intervention is better; but for the moment, it is open to you to make your non-active intervention as complete as possible. And indeed, your letter shows that your intervention is 'active' within its limits.

This is going to allow you – and indeed it must – to pass on the ideas of the IV International to intellectual and professional people, to technicians and researchers, to scientists, artists and others who cannot be reached directly by our Party.

No revolution can triumph without the support of sympathetic popular layers. Their sympathy helps sustain the confidence of the militant cadres. It reassures the proletarian vanguard, of which the Party is the conscious core. It makes them feel that their actions have an effect and an echo, and that their ideas are just.

It is true that some of the texts of the International and of Posadas are not always well presented in the Argentinian *Voz Proletaria*, as you say. But the section is now entering a period of reanimation and reorganization. The Party is showing signs of improvement. Now, it is necessary to publish rapidly all the texts of the International which have not already appeared in the *Latin American Marxist Review* and in the *European Marxist Review*.

Lenin said that “when the Party is not understood, it is because it does not explain well enough”. This is so. But more often than not, the Party does not explain well enough because its aims are unclear or incorrect. Then, the task is to clarify the aims of the Party, or to specify them.

However, it is not our limitations that slow the revolutionary process down, but the limitations of the mass centres: For whilst the latter centralize the mass of the people, they dominate and oppose the revolution. This is the problem.

Who or what are these ‘centres’? They are the most important parties: Communists, Socialists, Nationalists, Petit-Bourgeois, Christian Democrats, etc. Their leaderships do not preside over a greater development of the revolution because they oppose it. They do not understand ‘revolution’ and have no liking for it. They do not even think it will happen.

Take the Communist leaderships: They have no ambition apart from waiting for capitalism to switch-off and self-destruct. Blinded by fear, they fail to see that capitalism must be brought down by revolutionary means. These leaders will ‘lead’ when the proletarian revolution and Communism turn up of their own accord.

Such leaders no longer subscribe to Communism. Their disbelief in the Communist future of humanity leaves them terrified of the atomic war. They reckon that their grip on the apparatuses of the Communist parties gives them a command of history; but the tighter they grip, the less confidence they have in the masses.

This is essentially how the Communist leaderships came to abandon whatever confidence they might have had in Communism.

They had confidence in Communism once, when the Communist parties were formed. But time passed, and they did not rise to the challenge

of the objective comprehension required. And now, they fear for the accumulated privileges and powers they reckon are due to them, in their roles of functionaries: functionaries of the Communist parties or of the Workers States' bureaucracies.

The Communist leaderships are not inclined to use or stimulate the crises of the capitalist system, its contradictions and its rivalries. The immense superiority of the Workers State and of the revolution leaves them cold. Not for them the idea of using such things to stimulate the revolution!

On the contrary, they use these factors to combat the revolution! They use capitalist weakness and revolutionary superiority to get bargains from capitalism. They reckon that this hurries capitalism along down towards self-destruction.

Parliament has become the central plank of the activity of the Communist parties. They have done this for so long that they could not begin to explain why they do not make the revolution. The idea does not enter their heads, and they never handle such notions as '*Soviets*', '*organisms of proletarian power*' or '*dual power*'.

And so, there is a great lack of explanations on these subjects in the world. There is a lack of consciousness about *Soviets*, about *Militias*, the *Workers Party based on the Trade Unions* and everything you mention in your letter.

However, it is important to note that this does not really stop the revolution advancing. And it does not stop people from finding answers.

An essential aspect of the revolution is characterized by the instinctive and objective conduct of the masses. Whichever road they take, they arrive at our programme, our policies and our objectives. When the revolution mobilizes the masses in earnest, Communists, Socialists, Nationalists, Christian Democrats, sectors of middle cadres and many others, advance with the revolution.

The empirical but objective experience of people causes them to organize revolutionary action. We too organize revolutionary action, but we are there through foresight. Through foresight also, we have organized each one of us, beforehand, consciously, for this purpose. This is why we can give revolutionary guidance.

The new revolutionary leaderships may work empirically for a time. But there always comes a point in their development when they must turn to experience and tradition, i.e., the scientific understanding of Marxism. At that point, they wish to know how Marxism works and the organisms through which it is applied.

Any revolutionary organism worthy of the name has confidence in the masses. The phrase 'confidence in the masses' means complete respect for the will of the masses, and complete respect for the organisms built by history.

Few Communist Party leaders think such considerations are important; and the Soviet bureaucracy has no idea what they mean.

But the revolution carries on advancing. And we advance with it because we are its conscious part.

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"*Sovietskaya Rossia*" the organ of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, has recently felt the need to warn the world against a certain '*J. Posadas*' and a '*Posadist IV International*'. But at the other end of the world, Fidel Castro of Cuba bases some of his speeches on complete texts of Posadas. This can only happen because our publications, our orientations and our mastery of the process have a real influence.

We need to produce more publications and explanations about '*Soviets*', '*the Workers Party Based on the Trade Unions*' (3), '*Workers' Militias*' and the like. But this is not really what slows down the development of the revolution, or even of the IV International.

If slowness there is, it is due to the form of the process in this stage. But in fact, this slowness is more apparent than real because our growth in political authority is much greater than our organic one. Politically, we are already at the head of sectors that belong to world leaderships.

Of course, we need to grow organically because our organisms are indispensable. But in spite of our limitations, we are already influencing – and sometimes very powerfully – decisive revolutionary sectors. This is the case in Cuba, Syria, Algeria, Mali, the Soviet Union and China.

The revolutionary leaders want to advance but they do not know how. They rarely understand Marxism and see no Marxist continuity in the world; but their objective sentiments, their revolutionary consciousness and their experience take them to policies, programmes, objectives and methods which are also our own.

When they read our texts, the new revolutionary leaders are moved by a feeling of coincidence. The harmonious explanations and the continuity of Marxism inspire them. They gain new perspectives and learn to develop their own harmonious view of the continuity of the process.

They soon discern for themselves what measures, programmes and objectives to adopt for their situations. But our task does not end there, because in continuing to interpret for them the world revolutionary process, we confirm them in the knowledge that they have taken the correct road.

Essentially, this is the role which we play; if we could add to this more brochures, texts and explanations as you suggest, it would be splendid. We are behindhand in this, partly because of the limitations of the Argentinean section, and partly because we need more forces, more time and more material means.

Your questions deserve more than one text. But bringing them out and translating them in all the languages of the International need time. The Posadist IV International publishes in Spanish for 7 countries in Latin America and Spain. We publish in French for France, Belgium and Algeria; in Arabic for Algeria and Syria; in Persian, German, Greek, Flemish, Portuguese, Italian and English.

The International has regular publications in all these languages. No mean task! It has certainly taught us to concentrate. The demands are great in time and material means, and above all, in the way this professionalizes our militants. We are not talking here of simple, daily or Trade Union activities, but of activities dominated by constant streams of texts.

This requires militant comrades working uninterruptedly. This also requires finances to cover publishing, transport, distribution and the like. In a word, it requires a much greater economic capacity than we have now.

This said, the International already publishes a great deal in all the languages mentioned, and is known in the world. This is why Fidel Castro takes up our texts. And this is also why, in the Soviet Union, "*Sovietskaya Rossiya*" publishes a warning against Posadas and IV International. We are the people who spearhead the Permanent Revolution.

This is the reason why "*Sovietskaya Rossiya*" publishes an article saying that it receives thousands of letters asking why Trotskyism and Posadas are developing in the world. Note that it is not a small matter when such questions are being asked in the Soviet Union!

Only last year an article appeared in the *Soviet Academic Review* for Political Sciences. It was an anti-Trotskyist polemic covering ten typewritten sides, half of it dealing with the positions of Posadas and the Posadist IV International on the inevitability of the atomic war.

Our publications, as you see, have necessary effects. They influence as we intended them to, and in decisive places. The restrictions that weigh against us do not stop the Posadist IV International being accepted as a conscious leadership.

The Posadist IV International is widely accepted in the world for its political authority, programme and objectives. Since is not wanted for mass organisation so much as for political leadership, we produce the texts for this need.



The development of the International, our development, has not allowed for a growth in cadres comparable to its growth in authority. But this is logical really: For we have had to build this present Posadist team in the throes of many struggles against old Trotskyism - people like Pablo and others.

We fought against all the old Trotskyists of Argentina. We had to do it in order to build this present Posadist team, spread it and develop our activity around the world. This struggle did not allow us to build all the cadres we needed, and we need them still.

But in the end, the contradiction you observe in our development is no different from that which exists between the power of the world revolution and its weakness of leadership. The result, in our case, is a very great disproportion between what we need to do, and the force we have to do it with.

Such is the way of history in this stage.

We refused to be intimidated by this disproportion. We did not allow it to put us down or to have second thoughts. Conscious of our smallness, but also of our immense capacity to influence the leaders of the world revolution, we developed the skill of concentration. We learnt how to focus on the production of key texts, directed to the world revolutionary leaderships and proletarian vanguard. With more means, we would have aimed at books for mass distribution, although we have not entirely given up on this. This text forms part of our resolution to see to it.

We aim our texts at the proletarian vanguard, but also at the intellectuals, professionals, technicians and others who need explanations because they stand somewhat removed from the revolution. The continuity of their adhesion relies a lot on a constant and scientific supply of explanations; and these must be convincing enough to win their respect and deserve their confidence.

Through their practical knowledge, on the other hand, the revolutionary militants develop an instinctive comprehension which often compensates for what they do not understand. This is why in many revolutions, as in the 1968 Revolutionary General Strike in France, the masses end-up building Soviets without any theoretical or political knowledge of Soviets.

In France, the masses made de-facto Soviets in 1968. All they had to do was to become a single seeing-and-acting body. People do not need 'Soviet' experience to do this. In Russia, there had been no previous Soviet experience but people made Soviets. Empirical experience had led them to create central organisms to discuss their own problems, choose their leaders and apply their own decisions.

In the Russian Soviets of 1917, every walk of life was represented: Workers, peasants, employees, soldiers etc. Because they all opposed the

power of capitalism, each sector sought to unite with the other - and the Soviet was born. In this organism, representatives came from every place, profession, activity and political Party.

Lenin said of the Soviets that they are a natural creation of the masses. And indeed this is so, because the masses resort to them the world over. People are not aware of making Soviets. They adopt Soviet functioning without calling it so, whatever name they give to their gatherings. The intention of the masses is to have a tool for their direct representation: The single most important thing that they want is the right to discuss, decide and apply.

In the 1968 Revolutionary General Strike in France, people re-discovered this tool. And so did the masses of Italy when they replaced the Sicilian Regional Council after the last Earthquake. They created de-facto Soviets in role and in form, never mind what they called them.

The lower ranks of the riot police gave support by not repressing, keeping away to avoid identification. Trade Unions, workers, peasants and soldiers congregated, determined to assume power and handle the devastation.

The decisions they took after their discussions, they applied themselves. Intermediaries no longer stood between what they decided and what they carried out.

They, themselves, did the 'doing' - and this, through these organisms, these Soviets, with feet both in the Trade Unions and the countryside.

The characteristic of the Soviet is that it eliminates the permanent intermediaries who stand, in the parliamentary system, between legislating and executing.

In the parliamentary system, the opinion of the masses does not count. The so-called separation of powers [legislative, executive and judicial] is a fraud because in reality they all 'execute' - the masses! It is to fool the people that these powers keep up the pretence of 'separation'.

In the parliamentary system, the opinion and the volition of the masses are not expressed. But in the Soviet, they are! The Soviet is the arena the masses enter to put heads together. They come from the Trade Unions, the housing estates, the factories, the countryside, the Party, etc., and the Soviet binds them together.

This is why the masses tend naturally towards Soviet functioning. The fact that they have no theoretical, political or organic Soviet experience makes no difference. When they stand up for themselves, the masses fulfil the requirements, the norms and the organic needs of the revolution. If this process is still uneven and patchy in the world today, it is for want of a general guide.

The masses have risen many times in revolutions and few people nowadays doubt that people should rule themselves. In May this year (1968) the French masses created veritable Soviets and made them work together. Some were called '*Action Committees*' and others '*Factory Committees*' but they operated as Soviets and allowed the representation of every political tendency.

In some areas of France, Trade Unionists, policemen, chemists, small tradesmen, farmers etc., joined in *Comités* started by local people. These committees took decisions based on the conclusions reached in debates, and anybody could help implement them. These were Soviets - small, but Soviets.

This was the beginning of serious dual power in France. It crowned many previous attempts, as around Caen and Nantes where people replaced the authorities for 8 to 10 days at a time. In the end, a heightening tornado of dual power moved into the factories and the universities, scattering itself around in mini-forms.

Without knowing the history of Soviets, but on a par with the Soviet masses of 1917, the French people created the organisms they needed. The experience of 1917 having already been made, it was passed down through an informal and empirical knowledge that the world proletarian vanguard had assimilated and developed.

Over time, the world proletarian vanguard summarises its experience and passes it on to circles that take in more and more of the masses. These circles are organisms through which the working class puts itself in contact with the rest of the population. Eventually, these start centralizing the will and the power of the masses.

This is how the masses progress - texts or no texts.

Mind we are not saying that texts are not necessary or urgent! For our part, the more we publish the better because we write textbooks of political and theoretical method. In what we write, we point the proletarian vanguard in the direction of the harmonious generalisation of its experience. Our texts seek to give theoretical stability and political confidence to those who read them. And such texts are an absolute necessity.

When we speak of *Popular Militias* or of *the Workers Party based on the Trade Unions* (POBS) (3), *Workers' and Peasants' Councils*, *Factory Committees* or *Dual Power* - as applied in different countries - we refer either to slogans or to conclusions. But in either case, these are the organizational measures of the revolution, even when they are applied in a non-organic way (4).

You may say about the *POBS*, *dual power* or the *Militias*, that you do not see them at the moment. They may not be present, or you may not see

any living example of them just now. But they have a transcendent continuity, so to say, because they never fail to return from the past.

In 1947, Villarroel (5) had hardly fallen in Bolivia than a Workers Centre (CO) sprang into life for the first time (6). The Trotskyists of that time, Pablo, Germain and others played a leading role in its creation. This Workers Centre adopted the Trotskyist programme: the *Programme of Pulacayo* (7).

If the Trotskyists of that period played such a role, it was thanks to this programme. The programme did not belong to them, it was the Trotskyist programme. Without it, the comrades would have been nothing.

Later on, these comrades capitulated, but the programme remained. History - which has forgotten them - has not forgotten the *Programme of Pulacayo*. This programme lives on, along with the Trotskyist experience and the Trotskyist tradition.

People like Pablo, Germain, Stalin and the Communists were revolutionaries once. When they stood in defence of the Communist programme and ideas, they served the progress of humanity. But from the moment they sought to oppose progress and contain the revolution, they started to disappear. History has forgotten them, but it has not forgotten the Communist programme.

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The Workers Centre that triumphed in Bolivia in 1947 did so with the programme of *Pulacayo*. This programme was the Trotskyist programme, that is to say, the programme of the IV International as applied to Bolivia.

This was the first attempt at a *Workers Party Based on the Trade Unions* on the part of a Workers Centre. The latter stood in elections with the above programme, and got 12 MPs, plus 2 Senators (Juan Lechin Oquendo and Lucio Mendivil). Three of the twelve, and one of the Senators, were Trotskyists.

This event may not have shaken the world but it shook Bolivia. It left behind tradition and proof that the masses can organise themselves inside their class organisms, and use them as political instruments.

The Trotskyists defended publicly the Trotskyist ideas in Parliament, like Lora. Sometimes they were a bit confused or adventurous. Lora too - but how he defended the ideas! Trotsky's *Stalin* in hand, he would stand up in parliament and argue with the Communists. He made superb defences of Trotsky's *Permanent Revolution* and of the programme of the IV International.

We recall this because it has transcendence and importance; and not just because the action was brave, but because the ideas were those of the IV International.

Lora is silent now (1968) and few people remember him. But no one can take away his achievements, so necessary and eminent at the time. And even today, what he did has not perished, far from it. It is a rule of history that scientific contributions detach themselves from their originators to become humanity's inheritance. The same goes for anything intellectual, scientific, cultural or revolutionary.

We are those who have continued. The IV International has the new task of giving a direct lead to the world. It does it by making a bridge between now and all this previous tradition, when the experience of Bolivia demonstrated that the *Workers Party based on the Trade Unions* is possible; and that the latter could spring up and operate directly out of a counter-revolution (1951).

At no time did the Workers Centre in Bolivia appear aware of its role of *Workers Party based on the Trade Unions*. The masses wanted nothing so much as a tool to fight for their interests. And so, they created this tool and gave it their class and revolutionary programme: Which was the programme of the IV International.

The direct involvement of the IV International in the leadership of the Bolivian Workers Centre (COB) was liquidated (1952-53) and followed by 'a COB stage'. And it is precisely during this new stage in Bolivia that the COB adopted its most accentuated form of a *Workers Party based on the Trade Unions*.

Compared to this, Peronism in Argentina was never more than a basic form of a *Workers Party based on the Trade Unions*. But it was such a thing nevertheless, because Peronism enabled the masses of Argentina to express their desire to be the class leadership of their own organisations, and of society.

Mind we are not saying that the Peronist leaders did this. We are referring here to a process where those who created various forms of the *Workers Party based on the Trade Unions* in Argentina, were the masses.

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When the Workers Centre in Bolivia adopted a proletarian programme (Nov. 1946), it surpassed in political ability anything that Peronism had ever achieved in Argentina. And what a programme! It was not just a list of workers' demands. It was an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist programme solidly backed from within by the *Workers and Peasants Militias* that defended the Workers Centre tooth and nail!

After the MNR became the government (8), it also controlled the Bolivian Workers Centre (COB). Feeling that it could capitalise on such assets, it started using the great weight of the COB - and the centralisation of the masses around its programme - to barter and negotiate with capitalism. The example of Argentina did not help, because its Peronist leaders were engaged in doing the same thing.

The MNR leadership was nationalist and revolutionary petit-bourgeois. It did not have the capacity - which the proletariat has - to lead, organize and draw the masses. Even as it nationalised the mines and distributed the land to the peasants, it addressed the masses through intermediaries - to keep them back.

However, the concrete action of people left the MNR no choice but to nationalise. The masses occupied the mines and seized the lands - literally delivering these into the lap of the MNR government. The powerful COB was sweeping everything before it, forcing the government to nationalise.

After a while however, top echelons in the COB started looking for self-serving roles. They started acting like bourgeois arbiters between the MNR and the masses, using the centralisation of one against the centralisation of the other.

The masses did not take this lying down. In their view, the COB was theirs' and did not belong to anyone else. Besides, it was their Trade Union as well as their political representative. Inside the COB, they mobilised their own organisms of struggle: The *Workers and Peasants Militias*.

These Militias waded into every battle and lent to the COB the power of a veritable army. They took the side of the MNR government (1952) as a way to safeguard the nationalisations. They fought in the defence of what they had gained, making ready to conquer more.

See what the Trotskyists have been through! In the Bolivia of those days, the big projects were Trotskyist projects. When the Workers Centre was formed, there were Trotskyists like Moller and Bravo in its leadership. They stopped being Trotskyist later, but the experience went on, and so did the authority of the IV International.

In Argentina during this period, Peronism presided also over a form of *Workers Party based on the Trade Unions* (1952-55). Even though we did not write on this question at the time, and no one else did, people continued to progress and come closer to us. But texts would have helped, certainly, for there is always a distance between the rather unconscious experience of life and the consciousness of texts.

There is a general shortage of political leadership in our present epoch; there are no writings on *Workers Parties based on the Trade Unions* (POBS), although it must be said that for a POBS to arise, there must be the right political leadership and the right historic stage.

The appearance of a viable POBS depends on certain relations of forces in the class and revolutionary struggle. Certainly texts are wanted, but since one must struggle to bring about the right conditions in the revolutionary struggle, the task is also one of Party building.

The Party, our Party, fights to bring about such conditions. Since the right historic stage and the opportune moment do not depend on us, the Party must also develop the ability to wait.

The political parties of the Communists, Nationalists, Socialists, Christian Democrats, etc., still have the power to block, frustrate and disorganize the masses' attempts - and our own - at the creation of POBS. But the masses keep struggling in other ways, and they are winning.

As for us, we will be part of the new initiatives that arise in the coming stages. Opportunities may arise without us, but we shall never be far away; and when these opportunities develop, they will need our participation.

This is what happened between us and the Cuban Revolution.

Fidel Castro was bourgeois when he took power. A little later, he shifted his position along with the process, still retaining his bourgeois ideology. On taking power, he genuinely wanted an honest bourgeois government purged of careerists and self-seekers. His original intention had been bourgeois-humanist, and there is no doubt that he was very well intentioned. Fidel was moved by Communist sentiments, but his ideas and programme were still bourgeois.

The pressure of the masses - Trotskyists included - obliged Fidel Castro to change. The Cuban Revolution did not triumph as a bourgeois revolution but as a Communist one, transforming Castro along the way. He managed to take power without being a Communist, but he could not build the Workers State without becoming one.

As he progressed along the Workers State road, Fidel Castro retook most of our ideas. In the past he had attacked us directly on the occasion of the *Tricontinental Conference* (1966). But in due course, he passed from attacking Posadas to retaking his positions: Castro's recent speech on Czechoslovakia more than proves this point - and few things illustrate better the importance of our texts!

As you say, we must publish! When the wind of the revolution blows, the empirical experience of the masses lets them sail towards power. But the texts show them how to get their political bearings. Texts avoid the repetition of errors. They show how skip unnecessary historic stages and save revolutions.

What does 'skipping historic stages' mean? It means dealing with capitalism before it has had time to get more weapons, commit more mur-

ders and destroy more of the world. It means cutting down the bureaucracy before it has had time to cut down the revolution.

The revolution can set sail without texts. But those who build Socialism must be conscious skippers, and only through Marxism will they do this. Such are the essential reasons why Trotskyism gains ground in the world.

Trotskyism develops almost more rapidly in the Workers States than in capitalism. Trotskyism grows in Cuba, China, Korea, Vietnam, Algeria, Syria and Mali, where leaderships adopt Trotskyist positions and measures. Some have even borrowed directly from our texts or quoted from us.

Dear comrade, such is the general background to our reply. With immense revolutionary affection and fraternity, we shall now answer all your questions.

***Question 1. What is a Soviet? Who joins it? How does it work?***

The Soviet represents the will of the exploited masses. It is the organ of the masses. In it, people discuss, decide, and apply their own decisions.

There is nothing more complete than the Soviet. This is why Trotsky said that humanity will not find something better easily. But it is not entirely excluded that something better will be found before the onset of Socialism.

The Soviet is an organ of transition between the Workers State and Socialism.

Every social regime develops a particular structure and social organization to administrate itself. As a class society, the class organs of capitalism impose the will and the authority of capitalism.

Since these organs must also administer society, capitalism must defend its own concrete interests and some objective ones; it must defend its own circumstantial interests and some historic ones.

This is why capitalism needs parliament. It uses parliament both to defend its interests and maintain its authority; it incorporates within it the petit bourgeoisie and even the masses, so long as it can dominate and manipulate them through various workers parties and popular organisations.

Through parliament, capitalism diverts the political action of people away from the direct defence of their interests. And in an indirect way, it brings them to speak their mind, and stay centralised, in organisms where the bourgeoisie always decides.

When the bourgeoisie can no longer do this, when it can no longer impose itself through parliament, it launches a state coup.



In the Trades Unions, the masses decide and organize the struggle for their economic, social and revolutionary demands. But this never goes very far because Trades Unions are only concerned with aspects of the capitalist structure.

As far as the actual operation of society is concerned, the masses have no access to the places where the key decisions are made. Parliament serves only the bourgeoisie. When it doesn't, the judicial apparatus takes charge; and when this fails too, the 'executive' enters the stage - with the police and the army.

This structure obeys the interests of capitalism, and the masses have no power over it. There are no avenues in it for the masses to impose anything on capitalism through reasoning, thought or analysis.

True, the masses fight back and snatch concessions, as happens in Britain through Labour governments. But even then, the will of the masses never appears, unalloyed, at the level of the leadership of society.

Labour governments can happen in Britain, but only as long as the structure, the functioning and the jurisdiction of the Labour Party refer everything back to parliament. And in parliament, the representation of the masses is bourgeois. There is no forum where the masses can represent themselves - and the system does not give a fig about the masses representing themselves.

The parliamentary structure allocates no space within itself for the masses to voice their concerns about wages, living and housing conditions, job insecurity, etc. Worse: they cannot express their thoughts, their preoccupations, their judgements or their aspirations.

Capitalism takes it for granted that the masses need not bother. Who are they anyway to give advice, have preferences or abilities regarding the running of society?

The masses are unable to express themselves in capitalist society. Parliament prevents them because it is a [ruling] class instrument. The parliamentary structure is closed to what the masses think, as a class, about the problems of society.

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In the Workers State, on the other hand, people have the possibility of intervening. In the leadership of the Workers State, there are not just workers; there are peasants, petit bourgeois sectors, small traders etc. Swathes of the population weigh socially, and not all from the ranks of the exploited. How does the Workers State incorporate all these people into its life?

The Workers State does this by making them all feel the weight, the force, the decision and the capacity of the proletariat. The Workers State

needs organs where the masses evaluate, think, decide and apply. People want to try their hand. They want to decide. They want to apply what they decide! When they have decided upon a course of action, they want to carry it out themselves, without intermediaries.

In the Workers State, the masses have power-organs where they apply what they decide. Some of these are local, others are more central. In them, the proletariat participates and can influence the rest of the population directly. These organs are both 'deliberative' and 'executive', because they think, decide and apply. Such are the Soviets.

The Soviet brings the representatives of every sector of the population together with the proletariat and the Communist vanguard. Because the aim of the Soviet is to organize society, the Soviet operates at a most elevated level. 'Most elevated' means that each person coordinates with everyone else, and with the needs of society.

Different economic levels and social interests continue to exist. But as the Soviet advances, it improves the common condition by impelling a centralised Socialist economy. The Soviet comes about because people seek a collective improvement.

The Soviet does not invent a goal called 'Workers State' or 'Communism'. It starts from the simple need to set up, or improve, a State that takes into account the interests of everyone. Each individual in the Soviet becomes involved in the objective search for what is most elevated and most beneficial to everyone.

In the Soviet, each participant forms part of the common interest which, in turn, forms part of State ownership, the planning of the economy and the State monopoly of foreign trade. Production is then planned nationally, regionally and locally. The role of the Soviet is to see that production is distributed fairly.

The Soviet combines the abilities and the observations of every individual. See how different this is from capitalism! In capitalism, voters can lobby an MP, once in a while. But even when a voter can communicate quite well with an MP, this communication can only hope to influence.

With the Soviet, there is daily and permanent contact. There is the permanent participation of everyone. Each individual learns that no problem is insoluble; that everything can be done, and will be done. People take pride in what they build. It satisfies them for its own sake, even when the projects are not for them personally.

You have a Soviet when people start organising their own lives in the workers areas, the Trade Unions, the regions, etc. Soviets start locally. They eventually create central organs through intermediate ones. In a Soviet, you find the representatives of every profession: Workers, peasants,

employees, soldiers, militants, political parties and anyone. These congregate to discuss the problems of the day.

Every problem has a connection with planning. State-ownership and the State monopoly of foreign trade are the bases from which to plan, whilst planning determines what must be done in the workers areas and the regions.

There are two fundamental principles governing planning: It must be centralised nationally, and its application locally must be decentralised.

Planning brings together the different abilities of society. It coordinates them and makes each one serve the common good. This is the best possible use that can be made of the national and local resources.

There are instances when it is expedient for the plan to coordinate. But should time be gained, expense be spared or distribution improved, it is the role of the plan to separate efforts and send them in different directions.

Once planning is centralized, there is no end to what can be done in the way of the decentralisation of its initiatives. If the plan is being applied, decentralisation is the way to economise, to adjust to particular conditions, to save on raw materials, on communication, on manpower, on everything.

It is the role of the centralised plan to take account of all the local needs.

Capitalism cannot do this, but the Soviet can.

The Russian Revolution worked on this basis during the first seven years of its existence - a period during which it made more progress than in the following forty three years! Those seven years started from an abject level of poverty, an immense economic retardation and 70% of the productive apparatus destroyed. But at the end of those seven years, the USSR had recovered its losses and was not far behind the most advanced countries.

Compared with the 'growth' that goes on in capitalism, the rate of advance of the USSR during those years was easily 10, or 15 times greater. The USSR accomplished then what the Chinese are doing now (1968). Our present-day Chinese leaders sing very loud their own praise, as if their actual development had no historic precedent. But the Soviets did it before, like building railroads by hand, inch by inch.

The Yugoslav masses did this too in 1948. With great zest and passion, they built a Workers State. The masses gave it all they had, because it was their own State. As they were building it, they discussed everything and decided every aspect of this construction in complete freedom.

True, people seek freedom from economic want, but how insufficient, how in-existent this freedom is when the mind feels oppressed, subordinated or excluded!

When people feel that their opinion counts for something, they become fountains of creativity. In the Soviet, the population becomes aware of being the creative centre and actual locomotive of the Workers State. Each individual feels impelled to give the very best to the common good, in thought and in action.

A Soviet starts locally. This done, it spans out and sends delegates to other meetings, nationally and beyond.

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Such is the Soviet. It is the simplest thing. The Soviet deliberates, discusses and applies. No external force can control it, give it orders or directives. Everyone in it exercises control. Daily, weekly or when required, representatives of every profession observe, survey, apply and control. They decide together how to make corrections. They try new ideas and extend projects. They intervene on every question, and this is where the Communist Party has a chance to influence.

The Bolshevik Party - the Communist Party of the Russian Revolution - had no power to replace any Trade Union representative in the Soviet. In the Trade Unions and the professions, the Communist Party had only the power of its ideas.

The Soviets cannot be fooled by anybody. This is why, of course, the first act of the Soviet bureaucracy was to get rid of them. Stalin's first act was to suppress the Soviets.

It had always been customary for the Soviet masses to have direct access to their leaders in the Soviets, where they could alter their course. In the experience of the Soviet masses, the Communist leaders had always been subject to the correction of the Soviets.

Stalin swiftly dispatched these organisms, the Soviets, designed to control and override people like him.

Such is the Soviet!

***Question 2. What is the relationship between the Soviets and the Workers, Peasants or Popular Militias?***

The relationship between the Soviet and the militia is that of a central organ, the Soviet, exercising its popular power through specific organisms like the militias. The central organ of popular power is the Soviet,

whilst the Workers, Peasants and other Militias are military structures that defend the Soviets. When a militia is formed, it answers to the Soviets and defends them.

As opposed to the standing army, militias are territorial and impermanent. Their members work normally, taking part in military training on an intermittent basis or when the need arises. The 'Territorial Militia' is a proposal of Trotsky. We owe this great innovation to Trotsky's military genius.

The capitalist army imposes on the individual the discipline of the automaton. But the Workers State does not need this. To defend the Workers State is a conscious and communist discipline in itself.

In the Workers State, military training is still necessary, but what is no longer required is to lock-up recruits in barracks to robotise their minds. And the orders that are given no longer seek to enforce obedience.

The members of a militia train after work. They practice and take part in military exercises - atomic included - in the way one attends a Trade Union branch in the evening. The new interests, preoccupations and discussions, the lectures on militias and on military matters, remain undivided from the performance of one's productive role.

Contrary to the permanent army, the militia does not interrupt production. It is no burden on society whatever. Far from it, it lightens society's load. It claims no expense and goes on producing. Besides, it has no authority to raise itself above society or the population.

The militia has no power to give orders. It retains a permanent team, but the permanent army is done away with, along with the barracks and military paraphernalia. A militia core remains in place for the purpose of administering, studying, discussing and keeping the weapons. But it cannot create career-commanders as in capitalism.

Since competence is needed to coordinate the actions of hundreds, sometimes thousands of people, the militia must be led by the most able. Temporary coordinating leaderships are then created, and made to serve for the duration of a specific campaign or action.

The leaders who are re-assigned get no permanent posting. They enjoy no particular political or social status, and their leading authority remains military. The militia's leaders remain directly answerable to the command centres which are: The Soviets, the Party, the masses and the militias themselves. The leaders have no rank.

In the capitalist army, on the other hand, the generals are granted pre-eminence for life. Promotions, medals and distinctions raise them above society. The downside is that they can launch military 'coups'. But there is an upside: They can launch military coups against the capitalist system!

This is how Velasco Alvarado came to power in Peru recently (1968) at the head of a team of Military Nationalists. He is now taking measures in opposition to Yankee imperialism; these stimulate the anti-imperialist struggle in Latin America and pave the way for more in the future.

We foresaw this coup in Peru. In several of our articles written just before it, we posed how absurd it was to dismiss the Nationalist Military teams emerging in Latin America. We explained that it was absurd to ignore the soldiers in Peru who had already opposed the surrender of *Brea* and *Parinas* to the Yankees.

We foresaw this process before it took place because we had already observed similar things before. But mostly, it was because we clung to our view that Nationalist Military teams were inevitably going to arise, and seek progress.

Our sense of certainty in this matter came from what we saw of Military Nationalism in the world - its development, its teams and its actions. Our ability to foresee Alvarado did not come from an analysis of Peru but from our world analysis which takes full account of the decomposition of the capitalist armies.

In any capitalist country of a colonial or semi-colonial origin, as in Latin America, the capitalist system has less and less social and civilian support. As a result, capitalism falls back on the army.

The armies of such countries still support the capitalist system. But the increasing dependency of capitalism on the military has corrosive effects. The army feels that it is brought into roles it was not built for, and that it fulfils tasks capitalism can no longer cope with.

Feeling more capable than the bourgeoisie, leading military circles become detached. They feel in charge, but they are influenced also by the world revolution. They see that capitalism is collapsing and that a non-capitalist development is both necessary and possible. They want the end of underdevelopment.

Not wishing to follow Yankee imperialism to its grave, these military leaders try to save themselves. They adopt measures that oppose, weaken and disorganise Yankee imperialism. Alvarado illustrated this when he announced the nationalisation of the Peruvian imperialist-owned refineries.

### ***Question 3. How are the Soviets related to each other?***

Local Soviets establish relations between each other and form more central structures. Provincial Soviets become linked to regional ones, and a central organ of leadership is formed at the top. To this day, every Soviet

structure has been geographically based, but we do not exclude that something superior may be found.

Soviets always spread from the base upwards, never from the top downwards. The Soviet exists specifically to give a democratic representation to every revolutionary tendency, to every profession and to every activity, as long as the unconditional defence of the Workers State is agreed.

In the Soviet, all representatives are subject to instant recall. As soon as representatives start acting on their own behalf, they are replaced.

This is no more than what the workers demand from their delegates in factory sections or workshops. When the workers can operate like this in factories, you have the start of Soviets. This principle is known as leaders' revocability, or instant recall.

Revocability is a conquest of human history. It was first instituted by the *Paris Commune* in 1871. Today, we demand that it should apply to every shop steward and workers' delegate, as a primer to Soviet functioning.

Direct elections of all delegates and revocability of their mandates!

'Direct elections' means that everyone is involved in what the vote is about. 'Revocability' means that delegates must respect what has been agreed in debate, or be replaced! This type of representation is one of the great conquests of history. It is the legacy to humanity of the *Paris Communards*.

***Question 4. How do you distinguish between 'Soviet functioning' and what the masses organize spontaneously without calling it 'Soviets'?***

You recognize Soviet functioning by its work and by its aims. Essentially, you have a Soviet when it expresses the will of everyone. 'The will of everyone' must not hang in the abstract. It must be the quest by everyone for the progress of everyone - social, economic and revolutionary. The Soviet does not meet only to discuss how to build a drain, for instance, but how to do it in the interest of all the peoples of the area, of the region and beyond.

In Soviet functioning, the aim is to incorporate everyone into the common decisions for the advancement of all. Individuals are moved to contribute unreservedly when they become convinced that the proposed improvements - in production, organisation or distribution - are in the interest of everyone. Soviets start like this, and later, they become involved in deeper questions, like the development of the economy and its planning.

**Question 5. What difference is there between a 'Soviet' and a Factory Committee, a Neighbourhood Committee, a Trade Union Centre, a Popular Tribunal or a Commune?**

Soviets are different from those other organisms because, even in local areas, they act as the central power concerned with all the problems of society. Trade Unions and Factory Committees have specific roles. The Factory Committee operates in the factory and the Trade Unions resolve trade union questions; it is true that their importance constantly transcends the factory or the Trade Union. But each of these organisms is limited by its origins.

The Soviet, on the other hand, encompasses a whole zone. In it, there are all the committees you mention, plus the rest of the population. The entire population becomes involved in the problems of the zone: Peasants, students, Trade Unions, Workers Centres and unorganized people. In the Soviet, the Trade Union delegates have a Trade Union role, but they operate on an immensely superior level because they are in direct touch with each other, and with the population.

The Commune is yet another thing. It is involved with the organization of the activity of a zone, but it does not have the fundamental executive revolutionary role of the Soviet. That is to say, there can be - and there must be - Soviets in the Communes; as a form, the Commune allows mainly the organization of economic activities. It works particularly well in areas that emerge from great backwardness.

The Commune starts progress rolling. It arises when conditions are extremely backward. It is perfect for places where, for instance, the basic implements of agriculture and industry - like the tools - must be manufactured on the spot. In such places, the Commune also provides small-scale planning.

The Commune helps transform an essentially rural situation towards a greater industrial development. Some Communes have even been able to raise agricultural production to an industrial level. However, the Soviet is still needed in the Commune, because it gives a political representation to all the economic interests engaged in the Commune.

China progressed immensely through the Communes, but today, it needs Soviets. The Commune is an economic unit, but the Soviet is a revolutionary organ of political leadership for society as a whole. True, the Commune is not exclusively economic, but its role in political leadership is narrow. It helps mostly to develop the economy. It helped China in times of overwhelming economic backwardness. In our text "*Soviets and Communes*" we made a study of these problems (9).



**Question 6. What did the degeneration of the Soviets consist of?**

The 'degeneration of the Soviets' was the degeneration of the leadership. The Soviets, as such, did not degenerate. Soviets went on being necessary.

What degenerated was the functioning of the Soviets, hand-in-hand with the degeneration of the functioning of the Workers State. In the case of the Soviet Union, it is the functioning of the Workers State that degenerated, not the Workers State itself.

We sometimes say: 'the Soviets degenerated' or 'the Workers State degenerated' as a kind of shorthand. In reality, it is their functioning that degenerated. As far as the Workers State is concerned, its structure and its historic role are necessary. What degenerated was the leadership of the Soviet Workers State. It lost confidence in Communism. It allowed itself to be engulfed by the retreat of the world Revolution - a retreat which it helped to bring about, mind - and lost confidence in the future of Communism. It separated itself from the world revolution, immured itself in the Soviet Union and tried to make the Workers State work for it.

With this act of separation from the world revolution, the leadership of the Soviet Union made itself the prisoner of its own degeneration. The Soviet leaders placed the Soviet Workers State at the service of 'Socialism in one country'. Since the Socialist revolution cannot develop on a national scale - but only on an international one - the continued degeneration of this leadership was inevitable. A bureaucracy grew and took over the Workers State.

In today's Soviet Union (1968), the plans are those of the bureaucracy. The country produces what suits the bureaucracy and not the Workers State. The bureaucracy uses the organs of power for its own purpose, notably what it calls 'the Soviets'.

The leadership of the Soviet Workers State degenerated under the historic pressures that existed at the time.

Bureaucratic layers continue to appear in the world today. But they no longer find the space to develop anything like the importance of the Soviet bureaucracy.

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The degeneration of the Soviet leadership perverted the functioning of both the Soviets and the Workers State. These were taken over and made to serve the leaders.

The social reason for this degeneration was set in train when the masses were eliminated from Soviet participation.

Out went the direct-democratic elections of the delegates. Out went the revocability of their mandates. Finished were the Soviet's debates about economic planning! Finished Soviet power over national and international policies! The leaders stopped being controlled by the Soviets.

The opinion of the masses no longer counted in democratic revolutionary life. The power of the Soviet was cancelled whilst power moved over to factory directors, bureaucrats and army generals.

This is how, today, you observe the Communist Party leadership replacing the will of the masses and that of the Communist Party itself. Those who decide are those at the top. The Communist Party leadership assumes power instead of the Soviets. It replaces the Soviets.

And here lies, for all to see, the political expropriation of the proletariat and of the revolution.

There are no Soviets today in any Workers State. But it is important to note that, regarding the USSR, the bureaucracy still talks of 'a Soviet Republic' and refers occasionally to 'Soviets' - though they only exist in name. Had the idea of Soviets completely died in the minds, the bureaucracy would not trouble.

This semblance of Soviet formality parades as Soviet functioning. The bureaucrats still organize what they call 'meetings of Pan-Soviet Deputies', as if Soviets had 'deputies'! At a stretch, Soviet delegates could be called deputies, but what the bureaucracy refers to is a kind of bourgeois representative.

Soviet 'deputies' - to call them that way - are no parliamentarians. They do not emanate from a parliament that assembles at certain times to follow up certain questions. Soviet functioning is a permanent meeting. It has constant power over its representatives and over every question.

Elected Soviet delegates do not know for how long they will serve, because they can be replaced at any time. But in the parliamentary system, the MPs (or deputies) are elected for a specified period during which they exercise their own discretion.

In the Soviet, the delegates are subject to instant recall, as happens to shop stewards. Such delegates have sometimes been called 'deputies' to indicate that the Soviet elected them. But they are an entirely different thing from the parliamentary deputies, and should not be called the same for that reason.

**Question 7. Can a lot of Soviets form a 'Soviet State'? What are the conditions required?**

A whole lot of Soviets still does not amount to a Workers State. The base of the Soviet State is determined by a given economic structure and a given form of property.

Without basic State ownership, there is no Workers State, never mind how many Soviets. There can be a crop of circumstantial Soviets, as happened in China. But if they do not develop, they dwindle away.

When local Soviets are being set up, it is always necessary to support them. One must always guide local struggles towards the Soviet form. This is the base for the revolution to advance towards power. A Soviet may then emerge, but it will only become viable by becoming part of the struggle to transform the property relations in the country.

A Soviet operates only when it joins the struggle for the right to expropriate, to nationalize the economy and impose the State monopoly over foreign trade. This is a pre-condition to the continued existence of a Soviet.

A whole set of Soviets can exist without creating a Soviet State. This happened in China in 1927, in Shanghai and Canton. A Soviet that does not fight for State control and nationalizations cannot become a power-organ. Without the power to organize anything, it is soon forced to retreat and to disappear.

Soviets have arisen in many countries, Cuba being one. Trotsky refers to those that overthrew the Machado (10) dictatorship in 1932. Besides this, other Soviet experiences were made in Cuba: In December 1966, the daily Cuban paper '*Granma*' published a history of the *Mabay* Soviet (11) and others.

A Soviet started in Argentina in 1926 in the province of Cordoba. Others happened in Chile in 1919. Soviets have occurred all over the world. There were the *Bela Kun* ones in Hungary in 1919 (12) and others in Vietnam in 1922. There have been many attempts at Soviets. They died when they failed to advance. A Soviet dies if it does not advance towards the taking of power.

A Soviet can very well start without access to national power. But to continue in existence, it has no choice but to find a way of extending, of fanning out, of rising up towards power. Failing this, it will not maintain itself and will die.

The Socialist revolution, that is to say proletarian power, cannot do without Soviets. It needs the Soviets to come into being. It needs the Soviets to continue existing, and finally, it cannot develop without them.

This is another way to say that you cannot build Socialism without the backing of Soviet forms. Today, this fact underpins the crisis that can be observed in every Workers State, from China to Cuba to the Soviet Union.

A Workers State without Soviets must retreat. After a time, such a Workers State develops power-forms not only alien to the Workers State but opposed to the construction of Socialism.

It is necessary to foresee that, during our epoch or after the nuclear war, groups or political tendencies will want to take power - not for Socialism, but simply because they do not know and do not understand.

The transmission of all these Soviet experiences is as important for now as for after the nuclear war.

### ***Question 8. How does a Workers State operate without bureaucracy?***

Through Soviets! With Soviets! No need of bureaucrats! Some administrative tasks remain, but they confer no powers. When the transition to Socialism is slowed down, the Workers State needs to preserve a centralized administration and administrators, but even then, why should these people have any power? All they do is annotate, comply, communicate, organize and arrange.

When the Soviets operate, the above functions carry no political prerogative. In the young USSR, administrators applied the decisions of the Soviets and were ruled by them. But when the Soviets ceased, these people stepped forward with the power in their hands: They were now the State levers, centralizers and coordinators.

When the Soviets stopped functioning, the police, the army, the Party apparatus and others became the actual operators of the State bureaucratic machine. And when the State bureaucratic machine recognized them as such, it was not in defence of the Workers State but in their own defence as a layer.

The remedy for bureaucracy is Soviet functioning. As Trotsky said in the discussion about the Soviet bureaucracy, "The bureaucracy arises not from an historic necessity but from a retreat of the revolution, which is not an historic necessity".

In "*Bolshevism and Stalinism*", Trotsky posed that Stalinism, that is to say the dictatorship of the bureaucracy, evidently arose from within Bolshevism; but he added: "It did not arise from Bolshevism in a logical manner, but dialectically - i.e., not as the revolutionary affirmation of Bolshevism, but as its Thermidorian negation: Which is not the same thing!"

It is important to reiterate the particular conditions that allowed the bureaucracy to appear in the Soviet Union: The ebbing of the world revolution, the Bolshevik Party weakened by war and revolution, the main leaders and cadres of the revolution decimated, the already small economy 70% destroyed - etc. These factors laid the bases for bureaucracy to appear, grow, and eventually turn into counter-revolution.

But to these conditions favourable to the rise of bureaucracy, the simple antidote is Soviet functioning.

Certainly, the persistence of Soviets depends on historic conditions. Those in the USSR lasted only seven years; long enough, however, for them to prove their worth. They had time to demonstrate their historic capacity in terms of building and developing a Socialist society.

The Soviets were destroyed, but the fundamentals of the Workers State remained. Had the Soviets and the Bolshevik Party been the cause of the bureaucracy, the Workers State would have disappeared with them.

Both the Soviets and the Bolshevik Party disappeared - and bureaucracy remained. But the Workers State remained too! The bureaucracy was not able to destroy it.

This fact proves that seven years of Soviets and of Bolshevik Party were enough to lay down a basic Workers State structure. So much so that the Workers State continued afterwards to sustain and influence the world revolution, through the strength and resilience of its basic structure.

But what was that 'structure'? It was the consciousness of the masses, mostly. It was State-ownership, economic planning and the State monopoly of foreign trade as pillars of consciousness; a consciousness that transformed the world.

All in all, the USSR succeeded in imparting to the world the knowledge of the irrefutable conquest which it signified. The organs for the transmission of such knowledge were lost [Soviets], but the world proletarian vanguard and masses informed each other. This worked its way back into the Soviet Union and helped the Soviet population prevent greater retreats of the revolution.

### ***Question 9. When can you say that a State is a Workers State?***

In a Workers State, the key sectors of the economy are State-owned. But you already have a Workers State when revolutionary power is taken. The Workers State starts as soon as revolutionary power is taken; but if it does not quickly institute State ownership, it starts falling apart and disappears.

You have a Workers State as soon as the vital sectors of the economy are State-owned. Some countries are already Workers States even as their leaders seem unaware of the need to continue with State ownership and planning. But having embarked upon the road to State ownership, such leaders must continue, otherwise they are brought down and all the achievements disappear.

Take Syria: We uphold Syria as a Workers State. The key parts of its economy are State-owned. Its leadership is not Revolutionary Marxist but it is advancing towards Revolutionary Marxism.

Take Algeria: It is closer to a Workers State than to capitalism. We have explained this in many texts; and in letters to our sections. We published about this in our *'Resolutions of the VIII World Congress'* where we posed that the masses of Algeria behave like the masses of a Workers State.

Events have shown that the Algerian masses behave with the sense of their ultimate authority. They move in a way that shows that they feel in charge, and that they know capitalism will not last.

The same goes for Mali - with Iraq and Egypt close behind. Recently, Iraq declared itself *'a Popular Democratic Republic'*, adopting economic aspects and programmes 'for the construction of Socialism'. We salute with great joy the Revolution in Iraq and its quest for Socialism.

***Question 10. How does a Workers State operate when bureaucracy has made its Soviets degenerate?***

Where the bureaucracy has caused the Soviets to degenerate, the Workers State carries on, but it is ruled by the bureaucracy - this usurper of the power of the Soviets.

In that case, the plans and the decisions of the Workers State are governed by the national interests of the bureaucracy. In the USSR for instance, factories are making cars. Why? The last thing the USSR needs is private cars: It needs collective transport!

The bureaucracy associates the private car with property, the mores of property, capitalist trading and capitalist incentives. But the Workers State does not need any of these. Why a car industry in the USSR, particularly when public transport is still poor?

The private car inclines the bureaucracy towards property, that is to say, the usufruct and the abuses allowed by property.

The bureaucracy warps the functioning of the Workers State. It is not the Workers State that stimulates the private appetite, it is the bureaucrats. The Workers State still means collective property and is not responsible for these policies. Those who need a private car are the bureaucrats and their

cronies. The individual car responds to their inclinations. But the Workers State has not changed: It still needs collective transport to resolve the problems faced by the population.

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Not unlike what happens in capitalism, you get bureaucrats competing with each other across Workers States. But there is a difference: The Workers States impose on those bureaucrats a certain level of coordination. In one way or the other, the similar economic structures offer - even to the bureaucracies - something to gain by planning, collaborating and interchanging.

The different Workers States have interests in common. To start with, they all differ from capitalism. Besides this, their basic structures share common aspects of State control and elements of planning. Solely driven by the private interest, capitalism will never rival the Workers States, even as they are! This enormous difference imposes itself on the bureaucracies, bringing them to a minimum of cooperation between them.

This is not to say that Socialism will emerge from this type of cooperation. The bases of Socialism depend, for their growth, on conscious planning between the Workers States. But when they do, there will be no force to stop them. They will determine the form of world production, the places for world production and the types of world production. They will choose what is cheapest and most convenient. They will work on the behalf of all the Workers States, and not just of one.

***Question 11. What organisms replace the Soviets in the 'People Democracies' of Eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc?***

There are no replacing such organisms. In today's Workers States, the bureaucracy of the various Communist parties replaces the Soviets. It is not as simple as that in the USSR, because the old Soviet tradition has not been entirely extinguished. But in the other Workers States, the Communist Party replaces the Soviets; and almost every Workers State's President is also the Secretary of the Communist Party.

In the present Workers States, the Communist Parties are domineering bureaucratic centres. All the struggles that arise are filtered through them. This way, power is kept away from the reach of the masses and unforeseen rivals.

But the process that demands the development of the economy and the revolution is stronger than the bureaucracies. For instance, there is no longer space for conciliation between capitalism and the Workers States. The idea of 'peaceful co-existence' is obsolete.

This is why we said in our texts on Czechoslovakia (19) that the stage of arrangements and compromises with capitalism has ended. The world revolution progresses outside the control of the bureaucracy which can no longer hold it back.

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In the Soviet Union, legislative, judicial and executive forms - not unlike those in capitalism - replace the Soviets. Trotsky explained that they differ from capitalism in being concentrated in the Communist Party. This guards the bureaucracy from the plunder and competition of people like 'the technocrats'.

The bureaucrats continue functioning like a bourgeoisie, but we do not say this about Cuba. In Cuba, there are judiciary and executive powers, but no real legislative bourgeois forms. This progress in Cuba is limited, but it demonstrates how the Workers State must get rid of bourgeois forms in order to advance. We never criticize Cuba without showing that it can already do away with bourgeois distribution.

But in the other Workers States, you see patently bourgeois forms and bourgeois parliaments. Litigation, lawyers and private property make a very bad smell, but they are still fouling the Workers States. Absurd! Lawyers are for private property disputes. In the Workers State, bourgeois distribution causes disputes, but there is still a cure: The Soviet!

The Workers State rests on three Socialist pillars: State-ownership, economic planning and the monopoly of foreign trade. But they are constantly undermined by the bourgeois and iniquitous principle of income distribution 'to each according to their ability'. This is partly why we pose that the independence of the Trade Unions is so essential.

The Workers State must allow the free functioning of all the revolutionary tendencies – providing they defend, sustain and impel the Socialist revolution. Along with the independence of the Trade Unions, these help resolve the disputes generated by unequal appropriation and unequal distribution.

It is a fact, however, that when you look at Cuba, China, Vietnam or Korea, all you see is Communist consciousness. It is the Workers State that creates this consciousness. Even when production is insufficient, the Workers State allows people to overcome the worst effects of continuing bourgeois distribution.

Having noted this aspect of the Workers State, we are quite sure that it is already possible to aim at ending bourgeois distribution there. At least 'to each according to their needs' could be posed as a goal, whilst one increases measures of greater fairness and equitability in wages and distribution.



Some time back, a debate was started in Cuba about ending money and wages. Determined to jettison bourgeois management, Cuba started an experiment: Groups of workers were allowed to fix their own wages and working hours. This was done in an empirical and disordered way, but the great result was that the workers worked unreservedly and only asked for enough to live on!

We say that it was 'empirical and disordered' because this experiment was not harmonised. When workers join forces in this way, they want to know why they do it, and what the targets are. As it was, the experiment had a tinge of revolutionary bohemia about it. We saluted it for its noble and revolutionary intention, but it was not done in an adequate way.

For instance, this experiment should have led to a national debate. Who could open this debate more neatly and clearly than the workers who had asked for no more than a living wage? It is probable that the participants would have weighed up the relative merits of wages being determined locally, centrally, or otherwise.

This would have involved the people; it is certain that they would have been interested in the question of income distribution, which is still bourgeois because it is still 'to each according to what they can earn'. The idea of 'to each according to their needs' - equalising wages or something similar - could have surfaced.

We raised this matter as early as 1960. In 1962, we wrote that it was already possible for the Workers States - and not just Cuba - to distribute their wealth equitably. We posed that salaries should tend towards what the average person needs to raise a family; and that this should not be achieved by lowering the top salaries so much as by raising the bottom ones.

But here comes the point: You will not get this without Soviets.

In the Workers State, the greater equality or equalization of wages can only grow out of the Soviet, and the Soviet can only grow out of human fraternity. Soviet functioning is a powerhouse of Communist consciousness. Those who have more than enough say: 'What do I need this for? Let the neighbour have it!' Note how this supreme achievement is so entirely free of imposition. No coercion, no compulsion, just Communist consciousness!

The fact that humanity has started to make Soviets shows that Communist consciousness has arrived.

There is already enough Communist consciousness in the Workers States to melt all the glaciers of personal appropriation, possession and accumulation.

Observe how the masses of the whole world - like those of Korea, Vietnam and China - give all they have to the struggle, their eyes on the future and not the present.

***Question 12. What does dual power consist of?***

Dual power arises when the organisation of the masses leads them into roles normally played by the capitalist authorities. These roles can range from the simplest to the most complicated and elevated. When dual power is raised at the national level, it prefaces the taking of power. When dual power appears at the national level, or globally, it is because more primary forms of dual power have preceded it at a local level.

Dual power may appear in a factory or an area, or around a particular social activity. It arises when the population takes action outside official control, or brings its power to bear against capitalism. You have dual power when the masses stop capitalism applying its laws, or when people behave against the expectations of the capitalist system.

Dual power does not accompany every kind of popular action, because not everything is a challenge to capitalist authority. People may open a new road or build a new town square - and still no dual power. The authorities may even be glad of it. However, such an initiative is conducive to dual power, particularly if people start blaming the incapacity of those in power. If this happens and the masses challenge the capitalist prerogatives, dual power will appear.

Another sort of dual power is reached when the population takes over the political or social roles of the capitalists. This can happen in a factory, for example, where management demands 8 working hours a day but the workers vote for only 6. If the workers strike, occupy the factory, detain the bosses and lock them up in their offices, you have the start of dual power.

Dual power escalates if the workers start playing roles reserved for those in command. From a meeting or demonstration, workers may decide to take over the transport service and run it themselves. This will escalate further if the workers detain the bosses, keep them hostage and exchange them for jailed strikers or other concessions.

Actions of dual power may start small, but they prepare the masses. Through them, the masses learn that they can replace capitalism; they realise that they can dispute the power to make social decisions, even if capitalism is still in charge. The Revolutionary General Strike in France (May 1968) reached this level of dual power.

During that strike, actual power left the hands of capitalism and passed over into the hands of the masses. Through the Revolutionary General Strike, the authority to control the country left capitalism and passed over to the masses.

For a period of time, the French masses had the command of the country. Power was only one gesture away – though the Communist lead-

ership did not make it. In the *Soldiers, Sergeants and Officers Manifesto* written for that strike, the military authors say that they do not oppose a Workers and Peasants' government; that they will surrender their arms to such a government; and that they have lists bearing the names of the strike's enemies.

That period of dual power in the barracks marked the moment when capitalism had lost control of the country.

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The manner in which a factory is on strike, or occupied, indicates how much power the masses have conquered. Even if transitorily, any general strike is a major event of dual power because the masses, and not capitalism, decide what happens in the country: This raised level of dual power is always preceded by simpler forms.

There are always periods of dual power before the overthrow of capitalism: A capitalist government may decide on a course of action - like continuing a war or stopping it - and the masses may not agree. The latter may respond with meetings, demonstrations and occupations. If they take over key posts of social administration, if they defy the will of capitalism or to impose their own will, power is only one step away from them.

These are all forms of dual power.

***Question 13. Does dual power take the same forms in the bourgeois State as in the Workers State?***

The bourgeois State is subject to every form of dual power: In 1917, the Russian capitalists wanted to continue the war, but the Bolsheviks refused. 'Down with the war!' was their slogan - and the soldiers agreed. The Bolsheviks mobilized the workers and peasants, first bringing down the Tsar and then Kerensky.

The question at the heart of that conflict was: Who has the authority to decide about the war? The Bolsheviks - joined by the workers and the peasants - stood for ending the war. As they mobilized, they created a momentum strong enough to pull the soldiers away from the front. The State, for its part, did everything to keep the soldiers there. This particular duality of powers found its resolution and was ended when the Bolsheviks won.

In the Workers State, there is no dual power comparable in form to that in the bourgeois State. Since State ownership is no longer in contention, there only remains to decide who leads the country: The bureaucracy or the masses.

The kind of dual power to be found in the Workers State has special characteristics. It has no roots in the property relations - these are now unchallenged - but in the remaining bourgeois form of income distribution.

This sort of dual power comes to an end when the Political Revolution eradicates the bureaucratic leadership of the Workers State.

We say 'political revolution' and not 'social revolution' because the property relations are not in question. It is the bureaucratic leadership - the usurper of the power of the masses - that the Political Revolution aims at, and eliminates.

Dual power in the Workers State is resolved when the masses increase their intervention, urge Soviet functioning and impose the programme of the revolution. Dual power ceases when the Workers State finally opens the door to the revolutionary programme.

In the capitalist regime, the struggle is about who has the most power; in the Soviet Union, it is about returning the power to the proletariat.

'Power to the proletariat' means proletarian democracy, instant recall of all the delegates, Soviet functioning, Soviet democratic elections and Trade Union independence. Above all, it means that the Workers State stands for the unconditional defence of the world revolution.

What a difference there is between dual power in the bourgeois State and dual power in the Workers State!

***Question 14. Where do you see dual power at the present time?***

We see unequal and combined patterns of dual power across many countries like Indonesia, Algeria, Iraq, Mali, Burma, Egypt, Tanzania, Congo Brazzaville - to name but a few!

Dual power in these countries comes from various levels - also unequal and combined - of State ownership. The result is a variety of property combinations, none of them really capitalistic because they all expropriate capitalism.

These developments awaken in people the consciousness of the superiority of what they are doing. On a world scale, this creates a high level of dual power between these countries and capitalism.

Note that we are not saying either that the capitalist system has stopped functioning in those places: Its laws, leaderships, preferences and interests continue to apply. But the non-capitalistic property bases operating at its core create very advanced forms of power dualisms, bringing power closer to hand.

Capitalism responds with military dictatorships or army-based regimes. But this does not stop the revolution very much, because in Egypt, Iraq, Algeria, Mali, Congo Brazzaville, Tanzania and other places, the national economies have continued to incline towards the Workers State in spite of this.

These countries experience two forms of dual power: The first is against world capitalism, and the second is against their own capitalists. The two things combine to produce a very elevated situation of dual power in the world - which would not exist if the system of the Workers States did not exist.

Apart from the countries we have mentioned above, there is also dual power in the rest of the capitalist world. It is less pronounced at the moment, but it is important. In Bolivia, for instance, the mines have been nationalized for 12 years, and during that time, the *Bolivian Workers Centre* and its *Workers Militias* have given great examples of dual power.

***Question 15. What various possibilities does dual power offer considering its unstable and transitory nature?***

Dual power can retreat completely - or it can go all the way to the destruction of capitalism. But when it retreats entirely, it is almost always in local areas. That is to say, dual power on the world scale does not retreat. Things are different from 25 years ago, because there are now 16 Workers States; plus another 14 countries close to being Workers States like Algeria, Mali, Congo Brazzaville, Iraq and Egypt - and to a lesser degree, Burma, Indonesia, Cambodia, Tanzania, South Yemen, Sudan, Guinea, Ghana, etc.

The great overall weight of these countries makes it difficult for any localised dual power to be pushed back to square one. Capitalism tries its utmost with counter revolutions, State coups and the like, but it is notable that it never quite manages to wipe out State-ownership. Indonesia, Burma and Algeria are instances.

In Algeria, a State coup was launched a few years ago by a national bourgeois sector allied to the centrist nationalist tendency of Boumedienne (became President of Algeria in 1976). In September 1965, we wrote to say that these newcomers would not be in a position to carry out their counter-revolutionary plans.

Our reasoning was based on the analysis that counter-revolution was not even in their interest, seeing what great subservience to capitalism this would demand from them. We predicted that this coup in Algeria would only slow down the revolution - and this is what happened.

In the wake of the Algerian coup, an alliance was formed between Socialist-Centrists and some Nationalists - the latter consisting of the

national bourgeoisie plus others who also intended to develop the economy independently of imperialism. We posed that the Socialist tendency had a future, and that the purely national-bourgeois tendency had none. These aspects were confirmed by everything that followed. We invite the comrades to read the articles that we wrote in those days.

***Question 16. When is a Political Party a Workers Party?***

A Workers Party is a Party with the programme to overthrow capitalism and build Socialism via the revolutionary struggle. These are the essential pre-requisites. Such a Party does not always begin its life with a working-class base. But it remains 'a Workers Party' as long as it keeps the programme for the overthrow of capitalism and the building of Socialism.

A Workers Party deprived of a working-class base develops a contradiction at its core. It resolves this contradiction by attracting a membership that corresponds to its aims. If it does not, its programme is eventually changed, and then dropped; and the Party stops being a Workers Party.

Important struggles were started by a Party that was not a Workers Party: Such was the Party of Fidel Castro. In the course of the process, Castro's Party rose to the challenge of the revolutionary struggle. It chose to overthrow capitalism and advance to Socialism. In that process, it became a Workers Party.

A Workers Party starts from the moment when its programme is anti-capitalist and Communist. As long as it keeps this programme, and corresponding aims, it is a Workers Party. Its social composition is important, but it is not decisive. Indeed, a Party can have a working-class base without being a Workers Party – proof being the British Labour Party, whose aim is to defend capitalism regardless of its working class base.

In France and Italy, the Communist and Socialist parties have an anti-capitalist aim and a strictly proletarian base. True, they propose to make Socialism through non-revolutionary means – but they are Workers Parties in their aims if not in their methods. They entertain the notion that capitalism will eventually throw in the towel if you conciliate long enough with it; and that, once capitalism has quit, Socialism will enter. But still, they have a clear workers' base and they aspire to Socialism.

Perhaps the question: 'When do we have a Workers Party?' is more correctly posed by asking: 'How does a Workers Party maintain itself?' You can have a Workers Party in the first place, like the Communist Party, but with a leadership that no longer believes that revolution is necessary. The Communist parties say that they want Socialism, and to be rid of capitalism - but that is all. The masses only stay in such parties because they see in them the continuation of the Workers States.

The Communist leaders condemn capitalism but do not propose its revolutionary overthrow. However, as we said, the Communist parties continue to be 'Workers Parties' because of their Socialist aims. If truth be told, this Socialist aim is more that of their working-class base than their own! For the Communist leaders hide from their members the full extent of their conciliation with capitalism. They do this behind loud and reiterated references to the bright future when Socialism will have replaced capitalism.

If these leaderships could do this 'replacing' without revolution, they might think about it! If their bureaucrats could be sure of traversing this 'replacing' unscathed, why, they might even do it! Such are the contradictions of the Communist parties: Their leaderships jettison the Communist programme, but the Communist masses pick it up again; inside the parties, the masses insist on keeping it.

This activity of the Communist masses resembles what we call 'interior-entrism' (13): Namely, they want to take power and they are ready to overrule their leaders. 'Interior-entrism' in this context means that the Communist masses have a mind to cast out all these leaders. They cannot do it just now, but should this continue, they will leave the Communist parties. They will build mass organizations more open to the idea of power.

***Question 17. How many Workers Parties are there today in Argentina, and what is the role of Peronism?***

The workers parties of Argentina are: *The Workers Party (Trotskyist)*, Argentinian Section of the Posadist IV International, and the Communist Party. The Peronist Party being a bourgeois Party is not a Workers Party, even though it is working-class in composition.

The Peronist Party aims at the nationalist bourgeois development of Argentina - with improvements for the masses. This is what Perón (14) tried to do. Since the end of Perón (1955) the conditions have changed, and a strict repeat of what he did before is now impossible. Should Peronism return in the future and prevail, it would have to sprout a non-bourgeois tendency.

As things stand at the moment in Argentina, Peronism is a bourgeois Party. Its programme, its aims and its method of struggle are bourgeois. But we make a distinction between this bourgeois Party and the Peronist masses: For the Peronist masses aspire to the overthrow of capitalism.

In fact, the Peronist 'Party' does not even exist because it has no functioning. Its only force comes from the masses that coalesce in its orbit. They do this for strength, particularly in the Trade Unions, but they do not give a fig for the leaders and their directives. The Peronist movement is not a Party because it has no answer to the problems of the masses.

***Question 18. When can a Workers Party be said to be 'based on the Trade Unions'?***

The *Workers Party based on the Trade Unions* (POBS) is not a Party that simply finds support in the Trade Unions. It is a Party that arises from the Trade Unions. However, it is not a new Trade Union either, but a *Party*: Those who compose and lead it need not be all Trade Unionists - but the main base of the Party needs to be. When a POBS is started, it addresses the population; it invites the population to join in the struggle for the programme of the Socialist revolution.

As we say, the Trade Unions must remain the POBS's essential base; people joining it will accept this fact as naturally as those in Britain accept that the Labour Party is overtly and directly supported by the Trade Unions. In the POBS, the Unions do not replace the Party. And people can join the POBS on the basis that they are attracted to it, even if they are not Trade Unionists themselves, for whatever reason.

As a Party, the POBS has the advantage of putting the Trade Union base in contact with the rest of the population. The proletariat is then in a position to attract popular layers and draw them to the Party. The next problem is one of leadership and programme, for it is not enough for a POBS to declare that it is a Party: Its programme must be revolutionary and it must aim at the overthrow of capitalism.

After 1947, the Workers Centre (CO and then COB) started representing most of the working people of Bolivia, factory workers, peasants, miners, petty bourgeois, etc. It stood as a single centralizing mass body. If it eventually failed, it was not because it abandoned its programme but because it did not control its leaders. Its demise became inevitable when it did not develop the organisms to control its leadership.

This failure removes nothing from the experience, since a Workers Centre can give itself the form of a *Workers Party Based on the Trade Unions*. Proof is the COB, whose example has been and remains of enduring importance.

Interestingly, what drove the COB leadership into the arms of the bourgeoisie was not any feebleness but its enormous success! Still, the result was the same: Disintegration and liquidation - first of the POBS, and then of the COB.

The leaders of the COB broke the unity between the urban workers, the miners and the peasants, killing the COB almost instantly; what they call 'the COB' in Bolivia today is just a name (1968). The same process put an end to the *Workers and Peasant Militias*, these outstanding organisms that had instigated the most elevated forms of dual power!

And who destroyed the Militias? The MNR. The MNR government took the side of the bourgeoisie.



The process ebbed away, leaving behind a useless COB.

But no one can take away the fact that a *Workers Party Based on the Trade Unions* can be made. And when it was made in Bolivia, it won the population over.

We consider it our duty to propose the creation of a new COB in Bolivia today. Strong of what we have learnt, we recommend that it seeks to incorporate the population as soon as it is set-up, turning itself quickly into a POBS, even if transitorily. In Bolivia, any future COB - whether it calls itself COB or not - will have to have learnt the lessons.

One lesson is that the leadership of any new COB must be prevented from conciliating with capitalism. The delegates from the factories, the mines and the countryside must keep the leaders in check. The old COB failed in this. From on-high, its MNR petit bourgeois leaders used to parachute the programme down. Ludicrous was the programme when the MNR government finally surrendered to capitalism.

To this day, there has not been anywhere near enough debate about this!

In Bolivia, one must not count on the revival of the old COB! Any new one will have to be different. The programme of the first COB welded together the proletariat and all the exploited masses, and this was excellent. But the mechanisms to stop the COB leaders conciliating with capitalism were never put in place. As a result, the MNR surrendered the masses to the bourgeoisie.

Any future COB in Bolivia must give its first thought to controlling its leadership. The exercise of this control is a matter of organisms that have to be built for this purpose: Factory Committees, Peasants Committees, Miners Committees, etc. Whilst the revolutionary programme and objectives are paramount, the actual forms of organization are no less fundamental.

The idea of a new COB in Bolivia must be seen in this light. The old COB managed to work as a *Workers Party Based on the Trade Unions* (POBS). It was never aware of being a POBS, and it never called itself so. But it played its political role absolutely deliberately and consciously. As for the masses, they did not doubt for one moment that this Workers Centre was their political organ.

Another lesson for the future: Whilst we would advise any new Workers Centre to play rapidly a POBS role, we would advise it also to retain its own identity. This way, neither the POBS nor any other political leadership could take it over and sell it.

In today's Bolivia, the demand for a true Workers Centre is rather more pressing than that for a Workers Party based on the Trade Unions.

These two tasks have different rhythms and we do not confuse them; it is also logical that the masses should seek a Workers Centre first.

But the Workers Party Based on the Trade Unions is more important than the Workers Centre: As a Party, it unites different popular layers and not just the Unions. The Party can then show that improving the life for people demands the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle, power and the preparation for power.

There is every reason to propose to any new COB the rapid creation of a POBS. This is correct and possible - since it has already happened, and in that way! We are not insensitive to the fact that it happened only once, only in Bolivia and only transitorily.

But there is nothing to show that these shortcomings invalidate the experience. This is why we said in our *Latin American Conference* of 1956: "In Latin America, the Trade Unions and the Workers Centres can play a transitory role of political leadership for the masses. The Bolivian Workers Centre has proved it".

Daily experience demonstrates that Workers Centres - and indeed Trade Unions - must occasionally take the stance of Workers' parties. But this is always limited, unstable and transient. Even in Bolivia where the political functions of the COB were acclaimed by the masses, even there, the COB remained politically deficient in ways that allowed the MNR to betray it.

Something in the principle of what we have explained underpins other processes. In Mexico, it is not the Trade Unions but the students who play the role of centralising the masses. Since the proletariat is isolated to the point of appearing non-existent, the students are playing a central role.

The Mexican Trade Unions are manacled by the 'charros' - people who have built a monolithic, bureaucratic and dictatorial structure at the service of the bourgeoisie in the Trade Unions. But with the help of the students, the proletariat has been able to shift them a little.

As a class, the Mexican workers have not yet been able to reply to the wholesale murders and pogroms which they have suffered - along with the students - at the hand of the Mexican bourgeoisie and government.

In Argentina, it is very early days (1968) for another experience of a *Workers Party Based on the Trade Unions* (POBS). However, we believe that it exists in an embryonic form, because the Trade Unions are still fulfilling the role of class and political leadership; but the POBS itself is yet to be organized.

***Question 19. In Argentina, is a POBS likely to be an entirely new Party, or could it emerge from already existing political or other organizations?***

An article we wrote in 1959 deals in detail with this question (15) . A POBS can emerge from already existing organizations, like the Trade Unions.

A group of Trade Unionists may set up a Commission, and the latter may decide to create a Workers Party. If most of the other Unions agree and support, a Workers Party Based on the Trade Unions is on its way.

It may happen that, besides workers' assemblies, Trade Union and factory meetings, groups of Trade Unionists decide to form a political Party based on the programme of the Socialist revolution.

If most of the Trade Unions agree, one can then organise for the POBS' leadership to emerge from democratic elections held in every Union.

The next task is to call on the population to join in.

If the Trade Unions have accepted this, they have accepted the programme to bring down capitalism and make a Workers State. Of course, the Unions continue in their role of defending the different categories of workers. But in the meantime, the Party recruits from the population and presents its programme.

As you can see, this new Party is more than the Trade Unions; it contains also the population – at least those in the population who agree with the overthrow of capitalism and the building of Socialism.

In Argentina, experiences were made where the Trade Unions and the CGT (16) under Peron functioned, in a certain form, as a Workers Party based on the Trade Unions.

Peron saw in the Trade Unions some significance, allowing them to select one third of all the MPs. The role of these MPs was bourgeois, but the depth of this historic initiative lies in that Peron felt he should look in the Trade Unions for political representatives.

In this instance, the parliamentarians of the Trade Unions stood in the manner of a political representation of the masses.

In principle, the Workers Party Based on the Trade Unions (POBS) has similarities with this: For it does not represent just the Trade Unions but the whole of the population, although its main support comes from the Trade Unions.

It is not mandatory for all the POBS' leaders to be Trade Union leaders; the bulk of them have to be, but not necessarily all. What secures a representative leadership is the revocability of the leaders' mandates; and their duty to uphold the programme of the Party.

As we said, the founding programme of the POBS opposes capitalism in every way: From the simplest Trade Union demand to the fight to bring down the capitalist system.

If the POBS respects the principles of democratic elections and instant recall; if it respects that the masses can discuss everything, decide everything and be fully engaged, this brings about the overthrow of capitalism.

***Question 20. What roles should the Trade Unions play in the bourgeois States and in the Workers States?***

In the bourgeois States, the Trade Unions defend the class interests of the masses. But in our epoch, capitalism is under great pressure. It faces 16 Workers States and the advancing tide of the Socialist revolution. Conditions are also gathering for the final settlement of accounts between the capitalist system and the Workers States. This concentrated situation produces changes in the role of the Trade Unions.

The Trade Unions usually deal with workers' rights, higher wages, shorter working hours and concessions from the bosses. But since industrial questions constantly overlap with political ones, the Trade Unions cannot avoid some political involvement, however transitory.

With strikes and general strikes, the demands made by the Trade Unions tend to become more anti-capitalist. And now, the slogans of the Revolutionary General Strike in France tend to be retaken, as when the Unions pose the need to plan production in the factories occupied by the workers.

Such demands are no longer purely industrial. They do not cancel the need for a Workers' Party but they make its role easier.

The Trade Unions of the capitalist countries have become more political to the extent that the mass parties - Socialists, Communists, Left-wing Nationalists & Christian Democrats, etc. - have no anti-capitalist policy. This causes the masses to turn to the Unions.

The masses seek the Unions, but the workers at the base of the Unions seek the masses too. They see the need to involve the population in their anti-capitalist struggles. In any strike, the workers demonstrate to the population that the capitalist system needs overthrowing.

The raised political profile of the Trade Unions facilitates Party political action. What do we mean by 'Party' here? We mean the revolutionary parties, the Trotskyists and the Communists. These parties are not *Workers Parties based on the Trade Unions*, but they either have, or find, bases of support in the Trade Unions.

It is true that in France and in Italy, the Communist parties are not revolutionary. They are conciliatory and reformist. But they are Workers Parties, with their main support in the Trade Unions.

Quite against the grain of historic necessity, the Communist and the Socialist leaders cringe at the sight of militant Trade Unions. They pay them lip service in order to keep them at arms length. The thought of *a Communist Party based on the Trade Unions* is not about to occur to them! They do not want to depend on the Trade Unions for fear of revolutionary policies.

As the Trade Unions organize the struggles of the exploited masses, they realise that capitalism needs overthrowing. In capitalism, the Trade Unions are schools of class and revolutionary struggle.

But this does not cancel the need for a political Party. In its proper role, the Party bases itself on the struggle both of the Trade Unions and of the masses. In capitalism, the Party is a school of class, revolutionary and Socialist struggle.

In the capitalist State, the masses are not concerned with the difficulties they cause the boss, the bourgeoisie or capitalism. Their only motive is the defence of their interests, that is to say, the struggle for social progress.

The confidence of people increases when they win their rights. Each of their conquests proclaims that they can bring capitalism down and assume the leadership of society. People constantly demonstrate that they can lead society.

The masses do not care how adversely they affect capitalism.

On the contrary, their struggles are one of the essential reasons why inter-capitalist competition is so furious, on top of the furious, historic and antagonistic competition - the class and revolutionary antagonism - between the Workers States and the capitalist system.

It is the struggle of the masses that causes capitalism to dedicate the greatest part of its investments to its survival, that is to say, to its weapons of war.

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The Trade Unions form part of the class struggle, but there are other forces at work. The Workers States are a source of influence superior to that of any Trade Union.

The existence of the Workers States undermines capitalism in ways constantly more accentuated and concentrated.

The result is that the Trade Unions in capitalism find it easier to link their immediate demands with the struggle to bring down capitalism. They do not lessen their struggles on account of the damage they inflict on capitalism: On the contrary, the greater the damage, the better.

But none of this applies in the Workers States, where the Trade Unions consider the State as their own.

Whilst the Trade Unions under capitalism oppose the capitalist State until it is overthrown, the Trade Unions in the Workers State support and impel the State.

The role of the Trade Unions in the Workers State is twofold: Although it defends the State through movements and demonstrations in favour of the Socialist revolution, it also insists on the independence of its own functioning in relation to the State itself.

Administrators who appropriate and plunder the Workers State can be stopped by Trade Unions operating independently of the State. Since the bourgeois principle of 'to each according to their capacity' goes on existing in the Workers State, such Unions can deal with the inequalities it produces.

Independence for the Trade Unions is a means to insist on equitable wages and the fair distribution of the planned production. 'Independent' does not mean that the Unions do not care or make unreasonable demands. It means that they can control the people in charge, and stop their excesses.

The independent functioning of the Trade Unions deters those who would raise themselves above society under the pretext that they administer it. To the self-seeking administrators and bureaucrats of today's Workers States, the antidote is the independent functioning of the Trade Unions.

This is why Lenin said about the Trade Unions in the Workers State: "They must defend the State and guard themselves against the bureaucracy of the State".

We have just looked at some essential Trade Union roles in the Workers States. But there are others: In the workplaces, for instance, the Unions want to know the purpose of what is being produced. They want the best quality, the best products, the best distribution and the best wages. They are the watchdogs of the living standards.

When this operates, the Trade Unions become towers of strength, as confident in themselves as in the future of the revolution. They feel ready to defend at all costs the Socialist functioning of society. They show the world that greater equity in distribution makes for a stronger Workers State.

At this school, the masses learn to defend the Workers State and the more equitable distribution of its wealth. They bring this knowledge to the Soviets where this facilitates their intervention immensely.

As a result, the Workers State soon becomes capable of passing, in rapid leaps, from the fight over salaries to the elimination of salaries.

From then on, the masses find that every problem has a solution.

Their confidence reaches new levels and they feel equal to controlling the State.

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In Socialism, there will be no bureaucratic roles: There will only be administrative ones. Book-keeping will show what has been done and what remains to be done. Nothing more. Income distribution will be a simple detail.

It is true that as long as production does not satisfy all the needs, an administration is required. But what is definitely not required is a bureaucracy! We insist that in the Soviet Union, the rise of the bureaucratic apparatus came from specific conditions.

What were these conditions? The poverty of the USSR, the liquidation of the best Bolshevik Party cadres and the retreat of the world Revolution. Such factors allowed a bureaucracy to materialise, appropriate the State apparatus and cream off the best for itself.

In today's USSR, there are factories making special 'bonbons' for the Soviet bureaucracy, luxury fur coats and the like. You find Workers States where the bureaucracy entertains itself with cancan and nude women. The bureaucracy imposes on the economy the production of private cars, exclusive goods and 'holiday' hotels for those at the top - none of it being of any use to the masses.

The bureaucrats arrange to have all these things whilst the workers must travel in overcrowded buses. Instead of private cars, it is necessary to build more overland and underground trains, to improve collective transport and solve its problems.

Trade Unions independent from the bureaucrats will insist upon this!

When the bureaucracy suppressed the Soviets, it took care to suppress the independent functioning of the Trade Unions. Of course, this was to stop them resisting; but above all, it was to stop the Trade Unions exercising – on a par with the Soviets but from the workplaces – their role of organisers of the masses.

Functioning Trade Unions stimulate and encourage the masses to develop all their qualities - to think, resolve, discuss, judge, analyse, assim-

ilate and teach. They help the masses to take up, as a body, their role of leader of society.

This is how the masses of the Workers State learn to exercise their own and permanent control over society.

This 'control' is of the sort that defends and impels the world Socialist revolution.

It uses the Workers State as a springboard for the greater development of the world Socialist revolution.

***Question 21. What differences are there today between the Workers Parties and the Trade Union Centres?***

There is very little difference today between the Workers Parties and the Trade Union Centres. They all play the role of deceiving and restraining the masses. None of them upholds the programme of the revolution. Their actions hardly go beyond a dispute with capitalism; they want a bigger slice of the national cake and little else.

The bureaucratic leaderships of the Communist and Socialist parties have lost confidence in Communism or Socialism. They have given up on the revolutionary struggle. Consider all the leaderships - not only of the Communist, Socialist, Christian Democrat or the Nationalist parties, but of the Trade Unions and the Trade Union Centres as well - bureaucracies all, with little difference between them.

For these bureaucracies, the struggle is a dispute to make capitalism 'cough up'. They see no way of replacing capitalism other than through parliamentary, electoral or judicial means. Submitted to the conflicting interests of various social camps, they spend most of their time in squabbles. Nobody is there to transcend the particular interests.

Still something marks out the Communist parties from all parties and Trade Unions: The Communist membership aspires consciously to Socialism and Communism - and fights for it. Of 'revolution', the leaders do not want to hear, but the Communist masses do not let them drop the Socialist perspective.

Long ago the Socialist parties abandoned the Socialist programme. And for their part, the Christian Democrats and the various Nationalists never had it. The Left Christian Democrats aspire to an improvement in society, but not to Socialism.

In our work, we recognise the need to make a distinction between all these organisations on a one hand, and the Communist parties and Communist-leaning Trade Union Centres on the other.



The Communist leaderships no longer wish to build Socialism. Because they are afraid, their project is to conciliate with capitalism until it disintegrates. But the Communist masses know better: They know that they will one day lead the exploited masses in revolutionary struggle, and that they will overthrow capitalism. They also know that when this happens, these leaderships will stay behind and be destroyed.

The Socialists, the Left Christian Democrats and the Nationalists will eventually enter the revolutionary struggle too. Only, it will be hard for them at first. Today, they do not match the Communist workers in understanding or staunchness, and 16 Workers States leave them cold. But as the revolution progresses, their more conscious sectors will step forward.

When the revolution starts, the Communists, Socialists, Left Christian Democrats, Nationalists and others will draw closer together around a greater common sentiment. The objective superiority of the Communist goal will influence them all. It is a fact that revolution eliminates the differences between people and opens their minds to anti-capitalist solutions.

The IV International has a clear influence in the Nationalist movements, the Leftwing Christians, the Socialists and the Communists. It is true that the latter do not have the Marxist programme. But as they soldier on, they find that they cannot do without the Marxist viewpoint.

At the moment, many Leftwing Nationalist and Christian movements feel more repelled than attracted by the Socialist and Communist parties. They observe that these parties never invite them to take part in any struggle to overthrow the capitalist system.

For this reason, the IV International influences the vanguard of these movements rather more than the Communists and the Socialists.

***Question 22. In a Soviet Workers State, how do the Workers Parties intervene in the Soviets?***

The Workers Parties intervene in the Soviets as Parties. They gain authority and influence through their delegates in the Soviets. In the formation of the Soviets, all the parties have their delegates and their representatives. And still, they have representatives also in the form of Trade Union delegates from the workers' areas, peasant delegates, neighbourhood delegates, etc. The Soviet has representatives from every category, every profession and every walk of life.

In the Soviet, the Communists who happen to live in particular areas send their representatives. They have the same power to influence society as anyone else, and no more. In a Workers State with functioning Soviets, it is not possible for the Communists to impose their will on others by using State power. Of course, this is precisely the reverse of what the bureaucracy does in the Workers States today.

When there were Soviets in the USSR, the Bolsheviks had no means of imposing anything. Their only tool was their ability to persuade and convince. They had no means to convince people except through the superiority of their Communist sentiments and consciousness.

But in the Soviet Union today (1968), with its 230 millions inhabitants, the Communist Party has hardly 12 millions members. What a mockery this makes of Communism! In proportion, you have more Communists in Italy than in the USSR – in spite of the fact that the Soviet masses defend the Workers State solidly. Pure deprecation of Communism, this!

Why is it that the Soviet masses do not join the Communist Party?

They do not join because the Communist Party leaders do not want them!

The leaders do not want the Party flooded: What would happen, do you think, if the broad ranks of the proletarian vanguard were to enter the Communist Party? 'Keep them out', say the leaders, 'before they tip the Party over, demand more of everything and raise the hell of a Political Revolution!'

***Question 23. In a Soviet Workers State, what links must there be between the Trade Unions and the Soviets?***

As an organism, the Trade Union forms part of the Soviet. The Unions' concerns are specific and their representatives bring these to the attention of the Soviet.

In a Soviet Workers State there are also mini-Soviets in the factories, where all the tendencies participate.

Lenin used to say that when the Communist Party fails to bring the influence of the revolution to the Trade Unions, the Party is not working.

As Revolutionary organizer, Lenin was quick and sharp on these points - more than Trotsky. When Lenin said this, Trotsky had not yet assimilated all these aspects. In the great Trade Union debate between Lenin and Trotsky, it was Lenin who was right.

Lenin was the genius who assessed the revolutionary instruments at their worth. As builder of the Workers State, he knew the significance of the independence of the Trade Unions. He would periodically reiterate something like: 'Independence of the Trade Unions! It guards the Workers State from the bureaucracy. It stops the bureaucracy forming'. In this, he was showing his limitless confidence in the masses, and in the organisms of the masses.

'Confidence in the masses' is an abstraction until it champions the organisms of mass power, and asks: 'How will the masses be heard if they

do not have a mouthpiece? And if they have a broken mouthpiece, who will hear them?' Today, for instance, 90% of the world masses want the end of capitalism; but in what organism is this opinion represented? None!

The independent functioning of the Trade Unions is a defence organism: It guards the Workers State from its leadership.

Since the Workers State is proletarian in production but bourgeois in distribution, it is a constant battleground for contradictions and anomalies. Let us never forget that these contradictions and anomalies cannot be truly eradicated before the triumph of the revolution worldwide. This makes of the 'independent functioning of the Trade Unions' an even more essential necessity.

Inequitable distribution goes on in today's Workers States. The people who preside over it are of the same sort as those who clambered originally over the others, grabbed control and assumed the power to defend their interests. The remedy? The independent functioning of the Trade Unions!

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The Lenin-Trotsky debate on the Trade Unions was most beautiful; and a simple thing it was, too, in the hand of those two geniuses of history!

The principle of the independence of the Trade Unions is a basic imperative considering that the Workers State is a phase of transition and of construction.

No Workers State can be built without the independence of the Trade Unions.

The Trade Unions of the Workers States gather up and organise the energy of the population. The revolution advances from the moment when the Unions are allowed to pour this energy into the Soviets.

In the factory Soviets, all the political tendencies have the right to express themselves. Nothing impels the revolution better than the workers defending themselves, as workers, from the exercise of power.

At the start of the Workers State, the proletariat does not have all the social and economic means to eliminate administration entirely. This leaves it with no choice but to allow the continuation of some bourgeois relations.

Administrators are not slow at giving themselves powers by usurping their roles. When the revolution is complete, it eliminates administration and the allocation of society's income becomes a simple act of distribution.

As long as there is an administration, power stays with those who administrate because they decide in matters of distribution and finance.

The Trade Unions continue to support the Workers State, but they want to be defended and protected against the management of these people.

See what Lenin and Trotsky were discussing so simply and publicly in the eye of the revolutionary storm! When they held this debate, it was already accepted that Lenin was right; Trotsky had been slow in seeing the developing bureaucracy. But Lenin, who had seen, kept demanding: "What is this Revolution where four bandits decide everything? Where is the dictatorship of the proletariat?"

Lenin was furious on seeing what a short time it had taken for a bureaucracy to conjure itself up, grab hold of the administrative apparatus and usurp the power! Hardly had people been chosen to distribute supplies than they were already deciding where to send them!

You look at the bureaucracies in today's Workers States and you think: So this is the way this lot has arrived! This is how it clawed its way up to where the key decisions are made and where the central power is held.

See how the independent role of the Trade Unions is necessary, from top to bottom, from State to factory!

Where the workers do not watch out, the factory managers take it upon themselves to distribute the goods. This is how the bureaucrats get hold of the products. If wages are determined at national level, there is not much the bureaucrats can do about that; but they still have access to the goods, unless the workers are organised.

Lenin's genius warned against this when he said: "We must suffer no limitation or inconvenience to stand in the way of the functioning of the organs of proletarian power".

Indeed, the organisms of proletarian power are irreplaceable, whichever way you look at it, at every level - from the home to the State, through to the neighbourhoods, the housing estates, the suburbs and the communities.

In the Soviet, everyone can belong, discuss, reason and take part in the decisions. Everything is discussed and decided in a Soviet form, according to the reasons of the revolution and its objective interests. This is Soviet functioning!

It is not because representatives of tendencies, professions and social activities sit around a table that you have Soviet functioning. Soviet functioning begins at home! A family preoccupies itself with what is best for everyone, and organises all its members to act in the best interest of everyone.

This creates an ambiance of confidence where self-development is encouraged on every question. On the national level, the result is the

monolithic concentration of the common will. Shabby self-interest disappears. The loner's 'take' on the world also disappears, along with individual banes like doubt, uncertainty and the fear to see progress evaporate.

Soviet functioning depends, for its continuation, on the existence of organisms where the proletariat can weigh on society and become its guide. It is not by chance, therefore, that the Lenin-Trotsky debate - one of the richest - took place when the revolution was at its height.

Capitalism does everything in secret. But Lenin and Trotsky discussed publicly and the masses of the world listened. This public discussion gave unprecedented education and assuredness to the world vanguard. At this school, the vanguard gained a conscious theoretical and political confidence that was going to be invaluable.

The world proletarian vanguard heard the Lenin-Trotsky debate and watched every moment in the experience of Soviet functioning. It was so edified that it soon created Soviets of its own. All this worked dialectically. The world proletariat judged the USSR as legitimate and viable, and superior to capitalism.

At first, Trotsky had felt that the independence of the Trade Unions might harm the Workers State. What if malcontents banded together with the workers aristocracy and some 'ancient regime' types? Wouldn't they use the Trade Unions to attack the State? Trotsky thought like this, and it was not unreasonable.

But Lenin said: "The Communist vanguard will know what to do". Trade Union democracy was in full swing in those days; and the vanguard had already gained an authority over the rest of the proletariat as a class. Would the vanguard suffice? Would it be necessary to impose things? In view of the consciousness that animated people, Lenin argued for persuasion.

On with learning! Learning how to harness Communist consciousness to the task of organization; learning how to give the example, and to be an example as a Party. The Party had to give the lead in economic management and in distribution, whatever the economic penury. The Communists and the Workers State had to give the answers, whatever the difficulties.

The vanguard understood. It won the main proletarian layers and the peasantry. It even won the middle ranking intellectuals who appreciated the superiority of Communism. They remembered the misery, the destruction, the disorder and the decomposition capitalism had fallen into before the revolution. They saw that in only four years, a capable State and a developing economy had emerged from a country 90% devastated.

This had the immediate effect of attracting intellectual sectors, technicians and well-intentioned people still steeped in bourgeois mentality.

The Communist ideas were now winning people who had previously served capitalism. They felt compelled and edified on seeing the newly professionalized workers building for the Workers State, and not just for their own class.

This historic revolutionary behaviour of the vanguard won large layers of the peasantry. Through the Soviets, the peasants expressed themselves directly and made themselves heard; and the proletariat had now the means of influencing the peasantry directly. When these two forces combined, they pushed back the rich peasants who were clamouring: 'Glad the Tsar is out. Now we want the land!'

None of these things could have been done without the independence of the Trade Unions. Under Lenin, every revolutionary tendency had the right to full functioning in the Trade Unions, as long as it defended the Workers State unconditionally. The tendencies that opposed the development of the Workers State were rejected as firmly as those who opposed the Workers State itself.

It was a pre-requisite of Trade Union independence that everything could be said, could be heard, and no need to hide your thoughts. This was the reverse of what had happened before, under capitalism, when people's views and opinions had been suppressed and people had never participated in anything, or decided anything.

The Soviet Workers State reversed this. The Workers State was built by the masses; they did this by speaking their minds and by deciding everything. When they saw that distribution was limited but remained as fair as possible, they accepted it. They knew how much their continued advance relied on the independent role of the Trade Unions.

It was not allowed during the first seven years of the USSR for a few grasping people take the lion's share. As long as distribution remained as equitable as possible, people accepted having to wait for society to develop.

There are few things more important than those first seven years of the Russian Revolution. They are the years of Soviet functioning. It is during that period that the world proletarian vanguard, and the world proletariat itself, became convinced that the Soviet Union was justified and logical.

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It will not be long now before humanity turns its undivided attention to the question of its own progress.

When it does, it will remember those first seven years of Soviet activity. It will give to these years their historic due.

By then, the proletariat will have become as capable as Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. This is the future of the proletariat.

The first seven years of the USSR witnessed the proletariat performing its historic role: The role that Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky had foreseen.

Those are the years of the historic role of the Bolshevik Party: The years when the Workers State demonstrated its historic superiority. The years when the proletariat proved that it could build a State. The years when the proletariat felt that it was capable of building a State.

This is the imperishable part of a historic continuity linking together the Russian Revolution, Marx-Engels-Lenin-Trotsky, the Workers State and the Soviet proletariat.

In its centralised and monolithic form, the Workers State summarises the ability of the proletarian vanguard.

***Question 24. Who can succeed in making a Workers Party based on the Trade Unions in Argentina today?***

The Trotskyists. The Posadist *Workers Party* in Argentina. No one else is showing any interest.

But workers leaders, tendencies and workers militants will become interested when the situation arises. At present, these comrades have not the comprehension, the dominion or the confidence. Our activity is fundamental therefore. Our texts also, and amongst these, everything we have written on the nature and the role of the *Workers Party Based on the Trade Unions*.

In Argentina, no one apart from us refers to the idea of the Trade Unions operating as a political organism. Proof is that today, there are three Workers Centres in Argentina, and they all sail in the wake of bourgeois leaderships, capitalist sectors or bourgeois-Nationalists.

Three Workers Centres – and not one to care for the class and revolutionary interest of the masses! Perhaps the Ongaro CGT stands a little closer to Peronism and the masses; but it makes no demand on the bosses, neither for wages, conditions or anything.

These leaders are not interested. They fear the masses at least as much as they fear Communism, giving credit only to apparatuses. For them, people do not count except when they can be used as a battering ram to obtain political advantages from the bourgeoisie.

These leaders do not believe in any *Workers Party based on the Trade Unions* (POBS). This is why they will not even try. For them, the mass

of the people is an item to negotiate with capitalism. They care little for the objective, class or revolutionary concerns of people.

But the Trotskyists are objectively concerned for the masses and their struggles. It is in their interest that the workers should build organisations where they can express their will to fight, influence the rest of the population and overthrow capitalism. This is why only the Trotskyists can lead the way in the organisation for such a task.

Past occasions have shown that a POBS can start with only one Trade Union, or a few Unions. POBS are possible and have been made. In Argentina, the functioning of the Trade Unions under Peron led to POBS forms. This recurred when the Party *Accion Provinciana* (17) emerged from the triumphant Tucumán Trade Unions (18).

In the Tucumán experience, the leaders eventually usurped the power of the workers' base. But before this happened, the workers and the masses had time to demonstrate that it is possible to create a political representation from a Trade Union base.

During Perón's exile (1955-73), the tendency of the Argentinian Trade Unions to function politically continued: They defended the nationalizations and stood up to the reaction. They turned themselves into Workers Centres and made these defend their social, political and historic conquests, particularly the nationalizations.

These were true conquests and great blows against the capitalist system; for they reduced the social, economic and organic capacity of capitalism.

***Question 25. If a Workers Party based on the Trade Unions (POBS) were to happen in Argentina, what relations would it have with the Argentinean section of the IV International?***

Should this happen, the IV International would incorporate itself into the functioning of the POBS, taking care to retain its own IV International structure at the same time.

The Posadist section of the IV International would guide the POBS in the direction of a Mass Trotskyist Party.

The Posadists would aim at winning the leadership of the POBS, a thing that should not be difficult since the overthrow of capitalism would be the reason for its appearance; the IV International would naturally be the conscious leadership of this Mass Party.

This is what we would expect our Section to be doing.



***Question 26. Could it happen that the Trotskyist Workers Party of Argentina leads the revolutionary masses to power even before a POBS is set up?***

It is possible. It all depends on the course of history.

It is even possible that we reach power, or that the masses take power with our participation – and all this, without a POBS having appeared.

All manners of things can happen, particularly in conditions such as the present ones. The ongoing struggles show that there is no leadership willing to follow or respond to the interest of the masses; no leadership to identify with the masses or pursue their interests.

The present leaderships in Argentina do not understand the needs of the country. They do not grasp that there is no future for capitalism and that the future is necessarily revolutionary.

Our Party is unique in understanding and interpreting this.

It is not entirely excluded that the masses may come to power in this way - and the Trotskyists with them. But it is difficult to see how this can happen without the appearance of some sort of POBS, even if embryonic

Future forms are difficult to envisage because they depend greatly on processes.

There are remarkably few POBS experiences in the world apart from Britain. They may not have ended in Argentina and Bolivia, but their forms are diffuse. There is a POBS being started in Algeria where the masses use the UGTA as a Workers Party (19). There again, the Trotskyists are involved.

It is possible to take power without a POBS. And once power is taken, it is no longer a POBS that is wanted, but a Revolutionary Marxist Party. In fact, what is truly wanted is *a Revolutionary Marxist Party based on the Trade Unions* - and this is what happened in Cuba.

In Cuba, a non-Communist team from the petit bourgeoisie managed to take power because it based itself on the Trade Unions. It is after the taking of power that it was won to Communism. In other words, history carved the organisms it needed from the materials it found on the ground.

As it proceeds, history draws together pre-existing forces and wields them to its purpose. The conscious leadership emerges only later, when it has become aware of what is happening.

This is how we know that in Cuba, it is not a POBS that is required, but a Revolutionary Marxist Party essentially based on the Trade Unions. This is also why we say that, in Cuba, the power of the Revolution is not yet organized.

In Cuba, the Revolution is still empirical; it is still missing the organic force of the Soviet. Imagine: The Cuban leaders went as far as announcing that they might create a parliament! So far (1968), they have not done it. One must oppose this vigorously! What Cuba needs is Soviets.

Parliament is the usurper of the power of the masses. The Soviet cannot be compared to any parliament because it represents the masses directly. Parliament is a giant manufacture of bureaucrats that are sent far and wide to fill every position, from the upper command circles down to every part of the workers' aristocracy.

Thus parliament and its proxies keep people away from the direct organisation of life. They strip people of power and make sure that no social organisation is set up on the basis of carrying out directly what people want.

The Soviet destroys these structures and does everything itself: It thinks, decides and applies. It brooks no bureaucrat doing these things for it. The Soviet is a body in constant control of itself, from one minute to the next.

In previous articles, we analyzed that if the masses of Argentina were to take power without a POBS, it could not be without our more-or-less direct participation. But should this happen, a struggle would ensue to determine the forms of power and who should be represented in power.

In fact, this is still not clarified in Cuba. Crises are bound to come soon in Cuba to remove redundant links between the workers aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. The Cuban Revolution is now strong enough to get rid of these.

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***Your last question, un-numbered, asks what link there is between 'interior entrism' and the POBS.***

There is no direct link between the two things because they belong to separate situations. But there is no reason why 'interior entrism' (13) should not be practiced at the base of a POBS. This may serve to avoid clashing with a leadership around which the masses are centralised at a given moment in a revolutionary situation.

As you say in your letter, the masses are concentrated and centralized; they want to decide things and have the power to do it. They feel grown up and mature. Their determination is constantly reinforced by the progress of the revolution and by the retreats which capitalism and the bureaucracy are forced to make.

The masses want the right to decide, but it is increasingly in their own parties that they want to do this. In Europe where there are large

Communist parties, it is not rare that the masses go on unofficial strikes against the wish of their own leaders. The workers may have obeyed the leaders in the past, but no more. This happened repeatedly in the recent Revolutionary General Strike in France (1968).

In that General Strike, Séguy and Frachon represented the Communist Party leadership in the Trade Unions. They went in person to the occupied Renault factory, told the workers what the bosses wanted and instructed the workers to go back to work. Fifteen thousand workers, mostly Communists, refused like one man.

The Renault workers sent Séguy and Frachon back to the bosses, with mission to repeat to the bosses the workers' demands. This marked the moment when the workers at the base took charge, ready to go over the heads of their leaders. This was an act of 'interior-entrism' if ever there was one!

In Argentina, should the masses create a *Workers Party based on the Trade Unions* without our participation, we would immediately initiate a policy of 'interior-entrism' to sustain the advance of the masses from below.

The very appearance of a *Workers Party based on the Trade Unions* in such conditions could only come from a very high degree of revolutionary maturity. We do not think this is likely without our participation and intervention.

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It is with great happiness that we have replied to you in this way.

We have been moved by your letter. We gave it much importance because we know that there are many professional people concerned in the same way as you are.

Today, few are the technicians, the functionaries and even the bourgeois layers that do not realise that the capitalist regime is in a state of collapse and decomposition.

Only, they are not quite sure what to do about it. Some of them remain passive whilst others contribute financially to political organisations, to Communist Parties or Left Nationalist tendencies.

Once again on the recent military coup in Peru: It is going to stimulate many of these tendencies. Later, this will be felt throughout the whole of Latin America. This is not going to be immediate, but it will go deep.

Nationalists and even Catholic movements are bound to progress and become radicalized. They will want to expropriate Yankee imperialism in the whole of Latin America. In Brazil, [the Right] have tried to sequester Cardinal Hélder Câmara (20); they try to shield the Catholic masses from

the fight and the ideas of progress. They would not trouble to do this if the Catholic masses were not making great advances.

Many intellectuals and technicians aspire to revolutionary change and, like you, they agree with the ideas of the Party. Like you, they may not take part in active militancy, but they serve the revolution by being a bridge, a guide and a conduit for the Party. They connect the Party to other people who are not organically involved with the revolution, or who do not care for Party life and discipline. And you can play this fundamental role.

The questions you asked were necessary. We had already intended to intervene on some of them. At every stage, our sections must learn how to make our programme apply, how to formulate the ideas and how to give examples. This must be done about every event, and not just from time to time.

There are many people today for whom the idea of the *Workers Party Based on the Trade Unions* is new or unfamiliar. This makes it all the more necessary to explain its mechanisms, its structure and its functioning with many examples. One must always choose simple examples that give easy access to comprehension.

We salute you and applaud your constancy towards the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky; and now, towards the IV International.

We believe that you asked all those questions because you need the IV International and want to be a militant in your own way. We reckon you wanted to know all this in order to disseminate the positions, the policies and the strength of the International.

Your activity is unequal but it is combined, in the sense that you are not a full Party militant but you send a letter showing a very high level of political interest. You demonstrate in this way that your preoccupation is militant, and that it seeks to improve the IV International.

On behalf of the International Secretariat, we congratulate your good disposition and we look forward to your greater participation in the Party activities, when possible. We salute your companion. We hope she will make a quick recovery and that we shall soon see her again.

In the name of the International Secretariat, we send you our fraternal and revolutionary greetings.

**J. POSADAS**

10th October 1968

# NOTES



## NOTES:

In the context of the author's writings, 'human spirit' and 'spiritual relations' refer to the life of intelligence and of sentiments at every stage of human development. In this translation, the word 'mind' was chosen to replace the word 'spirit' (Editorial).

- (1) Refers to the Argentinian Section of the Trotskyist-Posadist IV International in 1968, led by J. Posadas. Paper: *Voz Proletaria*. Elsewhere, the text refers to the Bolivian Section of the Trotskyist IV International in 1947, known as the POR, led by Pablo and others, and to which the author belonged. In size, the POR was second only to the MNR as a mass Party. Its huge authority was primarily due to its immense political superiority. Its main leaders eventually became anti-USSR, subjective and uncertain as to the Socialist future of humanity. In 1962, J. Posadas separated himself from them, creating the Trotskyist-Posadist IV International, whose Bolivian section was the POR (T).
- (2) Nuclear Science and how it could be used was much talked about in 1968.
- (3) POBS – *Partido Obrero basado en los Sindicatos* – Workers Party based on the Trade Unions.
- (4) The author may be referring here to the empiricism and the discontinuity of the revolutionary experience caused by the lack of a Communist International.
- (5) Gualberto Villarroel Lopez, came to power in 1943 through a military coup with Paz Estenssoro. As a nationalist, Villarroel made an alliance with the MNR which was still only a small anti-USA grouping (and contained pro-German sectors as well). Villarroel took measures against the feudal bourgeoisie, allowed some Trade Unions and introduced limited social reforms; but when the peasants seized latifundias and the miners rose for nationalisation, Villarroel started repressing them. The undaunted masses stepped-up the fight. In July 1946, the US allowed Villarroel to fall, hoping to replace him with a more amenable agent. The revolution thwarted this particular plan, however, and three weak governments followed in quick succession: Olmos, Gutierrez and Hetzog. The military coup of 1951 was rolled back by the masses, and the MNR took the government in 1952.

- (6) Workers Centre: 'Central Obrera' which we call **CO** in this text, for short. It became the 'Central Obrera de Bolivia' or **COB**, in 1952. In 1946-47, the CO was mostly the Tin Miners Federation, but it soon attracted other workers. In the CO leadership, there were only two mass political organisations: the MNR and the POR. The Parliamentary Representation of the Workers Centre - el Bloque, was a 'parliamentary block' through which the CO stood in elections. The Block's electoral results were outstanding, particularly considering the conditions of near total illiteracy and gerrymandering.
- (7) The Pulacayo Programme (or Theses), Nov. 1946: It was the Trotskyist programme of the POR. It was adopted by the Tin Miners' Trade Union Federation (FSTMB) - the POR having won the greatest political authority there - and then by the Workers Centre (CO). At Pulacayo, the CO linked up with the University students & professors, and with an intellectual vanguard. It retook the work started by the MNR in the peasantry, where a peasant organisation *Bolidia* had been suppressed by Villaroel just before his fall. Pulacayo called for the setting up of *Workers and Peasants Militias*. It demanded a minimum wage, the end of contract work and the 40 hours/week. To this, it added the demand for the nationalisation of the mines, workers control, Agrarian Revolution and the expropriation of the landed oligarchy.  
*The Pulacayo Theses* adopted Trotsky's basic principles of the Permanent Revolution in the following terms: "[...] Bolivia's backwardness comes from its place in the world capitalist chain. The combination of its national traits represents nothing but the main features of the world economy. Bolivian particularity lies in not having brought to the political stage a bourgeoisie capable of freeing it from the imperialist yoke. Now, the unfulfilled bourgeois tasks and democratic-bourgeois aims can no longer be put off and must be realised. In the semi-colonial countries, the central problems are Agrarian Revolution and National Independence – namely, the shaking off of the imperialist yoke. These two tasks are inseparable [...]". *The Pulacayo programme* made history in the creation of proletarian organisms for social transformation like the *Workers and Peasants Militias*.
- (8) The MNR became the government in 1952. After the Workers and Peasants' Militias defeated the 1951 counter-revolution, the MNR took the government. When the MNR removed the POR from the COB's leadership (1952-53), the MNR was left in sole charge of the COB.  
MNR: Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario: Petit bourgeois nationalist movement in Bolivia, with a Left that came close to the revo-



lutionary positions of the Trotskyist POR, but with a Right that periodically helped capitalism regain the upper hand. The Left wing of the MNR understood and defended the POR; it fought bravely in defence of the programme of Pulacayo and for the Land Reform. But every time the process ebbed, the weight of the Right-wing MNR would increase and turn violently against the Left. Overall, the MNR nationalised only when forced; and when proletarian power loomed, it 'sold' the masses to the bourgeoisie. The POR, on the other hand, was the vanguard of the proletarian vanguard.

- (9) '*Soviets and Communes*' by J. Posadas, can be ordered.
- (10) Gerardo Machado y Morales – 1871-1939, a general in the Cuban War of Independence and 5<sup>th</sup> President of Cuba 1925-1933. Used death squads. Was brought down by Batista.
- (11) *Mabay Soviets*, near Bayamo, 1933.
- (12) *Soviets of Béla Kun* – so called after Kun Béla, 1886-1938, Communist leader who proclaimed the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919.
- (13) *Interior Entrism*: action at the base of a political party aimed at changing its leadership.
- (14) Juan Perón was President of Argentina 3 times, 1946-52, 1952-55 and 1973-74. He was exiled 1955-1973, first in Paraguay, then Panama where he met Isabel, marrying her in Spain. In 1963, five years before this text was written, an *Aramburu* decree declared the simple naming of Juan Perón illegal. It is worth noting here that in 1945, the Argentinian Labour Party was formed by the Argentinian Trade Unions under British influence. When Peron sought support for his election in February 1946, he encouraged Trade Unionism. In October 1945 the workers mobilised and formed '*El Comité Provisional del Partido Laborista*' from rail and glass-making workers, entertainers, journalists and others. They also mobilised for Peron and got him out of jail. Later, Peron's Party eventually absorbed the Labour Party. (The latter was re-constituted in 1955). Shop Steward Committees were set-up and continued until 1949. In 1947, Eva Peron became Secretary of Labour. She created Old People's Homes as well as Sports and Holiday Centres; and women gained the right to vote. Peron became Head of the National Directorate for Labour which conceded a National Insurance Scheme, paid holidays and pensions for the first time.

This history explains the peculiar tie that links Peronism and the Trade Unions. The form of the *Workers Party based on the Trade Unions*, however, was not brought about by the Peronist leaders, but by the Peronist masses.

- (15) Read: *The Development of the Political and Social Crisis in Argentina* – J. Posadas, August 1959, published in the 'Revista Marxista Latinoamericana' No. 9.
- (16) CGT – Confed. Gen. del Trabajo. One of the Argentinian Trade Union Centres.
- (17) Accion Provinciana – Left bourgeois Nationalist Party in Argentina. Sought "a climate of peace, love, harmony, fraternity and solidarity, between all the sections of the people". It formed part of a cultural aspiration, shared in part by Peron, of national unity and integration, social justice and a kind of populism. It tended to be anti-imperialist at the time.
- (18) Tucumán Trade Unions – The Trade Unions of a sugar-producing province with a strong proletarian tradition. In the 1980's, artists painted the area with the human shadows of the 30,000 Argentinian 'disappeared'.
- (19) UGTA – General Union of Algerian Workers, founded in 1956.
- (20) Hélder Pessoa Câmara – 1909-1999, Brazilian Roman Catholic Archbishop of Olinda & Recife. Precursor to the Latin American Liberation Theology. Was victimised for his progressive stance.

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