

# Only Workers' Revolution Can Stop Capitalist Restoration

Resolution by the Revolutionary Trotskyist Tendency on the Historic Developments in the U.S.S.R.

1. August 1991 will go down in history as one of the most important months in the 20th century. The Stalinist bureaucracy was crushed in the Soviet Union. It is dead, finished. While Trotskyists should not shed any tears at the funeral of Stalinism, its death does not automatically signify a revolutionary and progressive transformation in the U.S.S.R. Stalinism was crushed by capitalist restorationists, who represent some of the most reactionary forces in the 20th century, determined to set the clock back. Unless the working class acts quickly to stop them, they will subject what was the Soviet Union to imperialist and native capitalist exploitation.

2. *Dual power between the bureaucracy and the restorationists is over.* The capitalist restorationists, who include many of the Stalinists who did not participate in the coup, have smashed what was left of the bureaucracy and seized state power. At this point they clearly control the state, or more accurately, the disintegrating segments of the U.S.S.R.

3. The Stalinist bureaucracy has also been defeated in several Eastern European countries. But its death in the Soviet Union is a different matter altogether. The Soviet Union, unlike Eastern Europe, originated as a revolutionary and healthy workers' state under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. The U.S.S.R. degenerated in the 1920's and was usurped by the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Soviet Union was always the heart and center of Stalinism. The Stalinists were defeated and crushed so easily in many Eastern European countries because the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union declined to mount any resistance on their behalf.

The death of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union signifies and symbolizes the death of Stalinism worldwide. The Stalinist bureaucrats are transforming very rapidly into Social Democrats (the standard traitors and representatives of the labor bureaucracy) or openly capitalist politicians (as in the case of the Yeltsinites and many "new-born" nationalists in the Soviet republics).

Without the Soviet bureaucracy (the mother of Stalinism!) the rest of the Stalinists cannot survive for a very long. It is just a matter of time (perhaps a few years) before the Chinese and the other Stalinist bureaucracies in Asia (Vietnam, North Korea) collapse. The Chinese and Vietnamese Stalinists are already committed to the idea of "market economy", that is, capitalism. The only bureaucracy that is committed to the old Stalinist ideology is the Cuban. But we think it is unlikely that it will survive the pressure for very long.

Stalinism in the last analysis is a bourgeois ideology; it rests on the acceptance of capitalism worldwide and collabo-

ration with imperialism, that is, on the systematic betrayal of the working class. For these very reasons, the Cuban bureaucracy is likely to capitulate and join the Stalinist stampede into the restorationist camp. Cut off from its source of survival — the Soviet Union — the Cuban bureaucracy cannot endure. (However, if world revolution gains ascendancy, the Cuban workers are more likely than others to fight to defend the gains of their revolution.)

4. The coup was a desperate and most likely the final attempt by the Stalinist bureaucracy to stay in power in the Soviet Union. The so-called conservatives did not object to capitalist restoration and did not even pretend that they were defending the workers' state. After arresting Gorbachev, the coup's leaders assured everybody (primarily imperialism) that they would continue the "reforms" of market economy.

What the "hard" Stalinists mainly objected to was the Union Treaty between Gorbachev and the majority of the republics. The effect of the treaty would have been to dismember the Soviet Union, by giving substantial power to the republics at the expense of the center. The implementation of the treaty would have pulled the rug under the feet of the bureaucracy at the center. Many would have lost their jobs and privileges. Thus, they had to act fast. It was their final chance.

5. Some sectors of the imperialist press contend that the coup failed because the coup leaders were inept and the coup was ill-conceived. There is only a grain of truth in that. The prime reasons why the coup failed have little to do with competency. The bureaucracy was half-dead before the coup started. It was terribly and irrevocably split. Even before the coup started, top Stalinists in the army were shifting to the restorationist camp like ants marching off a dead body. After the coup started, the air force shifted to the side of Yeltsin. Key army commanders allied themselves secretly with Yeltsin behind the back of the coup leaders. The majority of the middle brass in the army was clearly on the side of the restorationists.

On Tuesday night, the second day of the coup, senior army commanders met secretly and decided not to storm the Russian Parliament. According to Time: "By agreement with Yeltsin, Major General Alexander Lebed, a commander of airborne troops, on Tuesday afternoon ordered the tanks and armored personnel carriers from his Tula division parked around the building to turn their turrets around so that they could not fire at Yeltsin's headquarters." (September 2, 1991.)

The great majority of the rank and file soldiers, who justifiably hate the bureaucracy, understood the

counterrevolutionary nature of the putsch and refused to fire. In fact, the coup leaders knew all this from the beginning. The bureaucracy knew that many soldiers would not fire, and that in case of a civil war the rank and file soldiers could have formed soviets, as in 1917. From the bureaucracy's point of view, power in the hands of Yeltsin was safer!<sup>1</sup> Thus, instead of risking a bloody civil war, in which the direction of the rank and file soldiers would have been unpredictable, they ordered the soldiers not to fire!

The "conservative" Stalinists did not count on the army, but on the indifference of the people. No coup in history has succeeded without the cooperation or at least subordination of the army. Without the will to repeat the Tienanmin Square massacre, the coup was doomed from the beginning.

6. In the last analysis, it was the agreement that the conservatives had with the restorationists on capitalist restoration itself that was fatal for their last counterrevolutionary attempt. There was not enough motivation on the part of many conservatives to carry the counterrevolutionary offensive all the way through. Many top army officers who were educated on the "merits" of the market felt that at this point it was safer to preserve their jobs and privileges by allying themselves with the marketeers.

7. Because the Stalinists were fighting to preserve their privileges and not to stop restoration, it would have been criminal not to oppose the coup. If the Stalinists had succeeded, they would not even have seriously slowed down the restoration process, but they would have attacked the democratic rights the workers have obtained in the last five years of glasnost: the right to assemble, organize, print, etc. Revolutionaries defend these democratic rights.

Pro-Stalinist currents, such as the Workers World Party and the International Bolshevik Tendency, who either supported the coup or *did not oppose it*, are guilty of supporting a dying monster's last assault on the democratic rights of the working class. If the Stalinists had regained power, they would have lashed out like wounded beasts, seeking to re-establish their privileges by instituting a firm dictatorship, utilizing mass arrests and attacks on democratic rights, and generally turning the clock back to Stalin's era.

8. During the coup, only an *independent* working class mobilization could have changed the course of events in a progressive and revolutionary direction and prevented the ascent of the restorationists to power. Working class mobilization against

the coup should have been organized with class struggle methods. United fronts and strikes should have been conducted, governed by principles of workers' democracy and linked to the construction of Soviets incorporating workers, soldiers, women (housewives) and peasants of many republics.

But no united front with Yeltsin and the restorationist leaders was permissible. That does not mean that a common struggle against the coup could not be waged alongside the workers, soldiers and others who had illusions in Yeltsin. Obviously many workers who went on strike had such illusions (workers in Estonia, miners in Russia). But a united front with Yeltsin, and other restorationist leaders — including the business "community" which was defending Yeltsin's "White House" — would have been a criminal betrayal of the masses.

9. The Stalinist bureaucracy was the main danger only for *three days*. During those three days it was necessary to focus working class resistance against the coup. But the Stalinists were impotent tyrants who were disintegrating simultaneously with the coup. Those of the conservative Stalinists who did not like the idea of disintegrating looked for refuge in Yeltsin's camp.

Today the main danger to the workers' state and the working class is Yeltsin and the restorationists. Their *counterrevolutionary* victory marks the beginning of a historical defeat for the working class and every conscious socialist.

The restorationists are not a lesser evil compared to the Stalinists. Having taken power, they are trying to destroy the foundation of the workers' state. They will take away every gain from the 1917 revolution, and subordinate the masses to imperialism and most likely also to the emerging capitalist Russia.

If capitalism is restored by Yeltsin, Gorbachev and the bourgeois nationalists, the workers will once again be at the mercy of the bosses. Their fundamental rights will be denied. They will no longer have the right to a job and to the basic necessities of life — decent medical care, housing, food, free universities, etc. — that they gained from the October Revolution.

While the consolidation of the restorationist forces has been shaping up for years, their seizure of state power has now accelerated the process of restoration a *thousand* times. Nothing short of a civil war waged by the working class against the restorationists can halt the process. The Stalinist bureauc-







Gorbachev and Yeltsin: restorationists at work.

racy (as a "defender" of the workers' state) could not be a significant factor if such a civil war erupts.

10. Unlike in Eastern Europe, there was not and there could not have been a peaceful resolution of the dual power situation between the restorationists and the Stalinists. Although the Soviet bureaucracy was rotting inside, it had to act, since it represents the *heart* of Stalinism. This explains why the changeover in power was not peaceful, and why it was telescoped into a few days instead of spread over a longer period as in Eastern Europe.

The swift change of power created an extreme instability. The restorationists could not rely on bourgeois democracy (as in Eastern Europe) — they had to use undemocratic methods to consolidate their grip. Days after coming to power, Yeltsin issued many bonapartist decrees which are as reactionary and undemocratic as those issued previously by Gorbachev and the Stalinists when they were in temporary alliance before the coup.

The capitalist politicians, once in power, banned the Communist Party and seized its assets. Communist Party (CP) members were arrested or fired from their jobs without proof that they were involved in the coup. We do not object to the leaders of the coup being punished. But we insist that this should be done by working class democratic tribunes, not by the dictatorial decrees of the restorationists. It is up to the working class, not the capitalists and their politicians, to defend its interests against its enemies both within and outside the workers' movement. Both in the workers' states and in capitalist countries, only the working class, via the organs of workers' democracy, can arrest and punish its

traitorous leaders.

The banning of the CP is not simply a justified revenge against the bureaucracy, but an attack against the democratic rights of the working class. If genuine worker militants, including workers from the CP, were to mount resistance to restoration, revolutionaries would not hesitate to form a united front with them and defend their right to organize in the factories. Yet rank and file members of the CP are now being prohibited from assembling anywhere—including the factories. The restorationist attacks are directed not only against the rank and file of the CP, but also against any *conscious* worker who wants to defend the collective property relations and oppose privatizations and unemployment. If, tomorrow, workers strike against attempts at privatization, the restorationists will label those workers "communists" even if they are not members of the CP. Yeltsin and company will not hesitate to use anti-communist hysteria to ban such strikes. We do not think that Yeltsin is very different from Joe McCarthy! We should remember how McCarthy's anti-communism was used to attack the unions in the U.S.A.

The banning of the CP was decreed in all the republics. It was followed by an anti-communist hysteria which include the removal of Lenin's statue. The restorationists and the nationalists in the republics, who directed the hysteria, want to wipe out *the very idea* of communism and socialism.

11. One of the reasons for the sweeping attacks on the CP and on the democratic rights of communist workers is the unstable and tentative support for the restorationists by the working class. The working class supports Yeltsin because it hates the bureaucracy. But there is quite a bit of fear of market

economy, and suspicion about the restorationists' actions. Albeit confused, the majority of the workers want to preserve the gains of the plan, and they do not fully trust the marketeers.

Thus, when the coup took place, *the majority* of the workers stayed home. Some miners responded positively to Yeltsin's call for a general strike, but they were a minority. Only after it became clear that the coup was falling apart did hundreds of thousands pour into the streets. In the early days of the coup, Yeltsin was defended *literally* by battalions of businessmen, stockbrokers, and newly aspiring capitalists, who guarded the streets. It is these same reactionaries who are already complaining that privatizations are going too slowly!

12. At this point, as a practical matter, the Soviet Union barely exists. It is disintegrating into its nationalist elements. Many republics have declared their independence. With the collapse of the central government, there is nothing to stop them except their own recognition that for the sake of their own survival they need to continue their links with other republics.<sup>2</sup>

Should revolutionaries support the break-up of the Soviet Union and the independence of the republics? Under the present circumstances, the answer is no. At present, the drive of the republics to independence is tied hand and foot to capitalist restoration. In fact, it is becoming clear that it is the very *center* of it. Both the old Union Treaty (agreed upon before the coup) and the daily-changing new proposals for confederation among the republics clearly specify that the new independent republics and the possible confederation among them will be *based* on private property and capitalism. Thus today the drive for independence is based on the total *collapse* of the planned economy. The crumbling of the USSR into its nationalist elements has already begun to cause that collapse. Already there is no central planning, and by now the Soviet Union simply cannot be called a "degenerated workers' state."<sup>3</sup>

13. In addition to that, there is nothing progressive or even democratic in the way that the republics are becoming "independent". Many of them will become either a semi-colony at the service of imperialism or a poor capitalist appendage to be exploited by the emerging chauvinistic capitalist Russia. The leaders of the backward "independent" republics (Georgia, Uzbekistan, Moldavia) started to suppress the opposition with a bonapartist fist immediately after the coup, and jailed its members. In Uzbekistan the government arrested members of the Berlik nationalist opposition movement in Tashkent, as the city was preparing for a "pro-democracy" rally. In Georgia demonstrators have been attacked with bullets and members of the opposition have been put behind bars. In the face of growing opposition, Georgia's President gave himself vast dictatorial power by taking direct control of the police and what used to be the K.G.B.

This latest suppression and denial of democratic rights to the minorities is not even covered up with the due process of bourgeois democracy. In fact it is becoming clear that at least some republics will not emerge with bourgeois democratic regimes. The political and economic backwardness of

many republics (which the bureaucracy did not and could not overcome) is more likely to yield a bonapartist dictatorship.

As capitalist states, the independent republics will *oppress* their minorities. As Yeltsin and Gorbachev are trying to forge together some sort of confederation, they are encountering sharp opposition from the oppressed minorities in the republics. According to the New York Times: "*One of the autonomous regions most upset by the current developments is the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic, situated within the Russian Republic in the northern Caucasus. There were reports of street demonstrations in Grozny, the Capital.*"

"Another area that has had troubles in the past is the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, in Azerbaijan but populated mostly by Armenians." (September 5, 1991.)

And the list goes on. The oppression of minorities within the republics is developing very fast. One of the reasons why the restorationists encountered opposition to replacing the Congress of People's Deputies with direct representatives from the republics is the fear of many minorities that such replacement would constitute a legal basis for the denial of their rights — an endorsement of what happens daily.

Revolutionaries must oppose in principle the independence of nations that oppress their minorities. As Karl Marx said: "*a nation that oppresses others cannot be free.*" It is thus clear that the renewed nationalist drive is not progressive. Since it is linked to the counterrevolutionary restorationist process, it lacks the progressive democratic elements of oppressed nations which fight imperialism. Marxists must be clear that not every nationalist wave is progressive, and revolutionaries must learn in such cases how to swim against the current.

14. The worst chauvinism comes, of course, from the Russian Republic. Yeltsin and his new-old ally (Gorbachev!) are working tirelessly to forge a confederation that will guarantee the economic and political domination of Russia. Yeltsin did not even wait for the dust from the withdrawing tanks to clear before he issued dictatorial decrees that de facto attempted to steal what was left of the U.S.S.R. for Russia.

A decree by Ivan Silaye, the Russian prime minister, brought all currency transactions and the sale of gold under the control of Russia. In fact, Yeltsin and company literally tried to steal the central banks days after the coup failed! Ultimately, faced with mounting opposition, they were forced to announce that the Soviet Bank for Foreign Economic Relations (Vneshekonombank) would function "as envisaged under its rules." (Financial Times, August 30 1991.) But they did not forget to make the necessary replacement of the bank's top managers in order to guarantee Russian control of the bank!

After the attempt to steal the economic heart of the country, Yeltsin declared that Russia will not hesitate to adjust its borders with its neighboring republics, ostensibly to "defend" Russian minorities. Yeltsin's appetite for dominance was curbed only by denunciation and outcry from republics complaining of Russian chauvinism.

Because of tension over Russian domination, the alliance between the restorationists in Russia and the other republics



is tentative and fragile. The resistance by many to a confederation with Russia is understandable. Russia dominates the natural resources and the industry of the Soviet Union. Even those republics who want to jump on the imperialist bandwagon (the Baltic states) will not be able to do so for a long time. Until then they depend — uneasily — on Russian domination. And for the workers, especially in the other republics, the combination of Russian domination and capitalist restoration can only mean one thing — exploitation. Revolutionaries cannot support independence for such a dominant, chauvinist republic.

15. Joining the Russian Republic is Ukraine. The bilateral pact between them represents an attempt by Ukraine to make a separate political and economic deal between the richest two republics. This will inevitably come at the expense of the weaker and smaller republics. It shows that independence, when combined with capitalist restoration and narrow nationalist interests, can easily lead to a “confederation” in which the biggest and richest dominate the weak. Marxists cannot support such a confederation of “sovereign” nations.

16. After the “independence” of the Baltic republics was recognized by the imperialists and the restorationists in the USSR, the truly reactionary nature of the nationalist governments in the Baltics was revealed.

Before the ink on the documents recognizing Lithuania’s independence was dry, the prosecutor’s office in that “democratic” country issued certificates of rehabilitation exonerating fascists who participated in the genocide of Jews and other ethnic minorities during the Second World War.<sup>4</sup> It is clear that within the capitalist-restorationist/nationalist government in Lithuania there is *at least some* sympathy for fascism.

In Latvia, the nationalists in power are debating whether or not to give Russian and Ukrainian minorities (which are 48% of the population!) citizenship rights. A considerable number of nationalists are willing to keep the Russian and Ukrainian minorities within Latvia, but only if they are without citizenship rights, including the right to vote. A minority wants to follow the model that extreme Zionists propose for the Palestinians, and throw the minorities out of Latvia altogether!

Socialists must mercilessly denounce fake independence that is linked to the oppression of minorities, and possibly to fascist and anti-semitic nationalist movements. Independence which brings oppression to minorities and denies their democratic rights cannot be recognized by socialists. *The extreme right-wing backlash in the Baltic states and other republics is not simply an understandable reaction to years of Stalinist oppression. It is an inevitable consequence of the linkage between capitalist restoration and bourgeois nationalism.*

The working class should denounce the undemocratic actions of the pro-capitalist governments in the Baltics. Workers must build their own soviets and/or other independent organs and counterpose them to the semi-elected bourgeois governments and parliaments. We must fight for a federation of independent Socialist Baltic states, linked economically to the Socialist Soviet Union and not to imperialism!

17. While revolutionaries must fight to preserve the U.S.S.R. as a workers’ state, they cannot ignore that it barely exists as a single state. Socialists do not encourage the break-up of the Soviet Union. But it is impossible to ignore de facto reality. Moreover, Marxists cannot merely denounce capitalist restoration and nationalism. They must come out with an alternative program that is capable of winning the workers from the nationalists.

Therefore, we cannot totally reject the idea of political and to some degree economic independence, particularly for the *oppressed* republics. In opposition to the idea of a confederation of capitalist states, Trotskyists should call for a *federation of workers’ states*. We must insist, however, that in such a federation, economic ties between the new states and central planning be maintained and democratically approved by the independent republics. Under such a federation the republics could have political and cultural independence.

Thus, in the current situation, we must support independence only *conditionally*. Revolutionaries should tirelessly tell the workers that the linkage of independence to capitalist restoration will only bring dependency on imperialism and the destruction of *all* their fundamental gains from the planned economy. As time progresses, the restorationists will attack the workers. Many workers support independence because they believe that it represents freedom from Stalinism. But they do not want to lose the gains from the workers’ state, and will be receptive to our slogan that calls for a federation of workers’ states.

18. At this point the Soviet Union can no longer be called a degenerated workers’ state. Trotsky developed the term “degenerated workers’ state” because the Stalinist bureaucracy took power from the working class and created a distorted planned economy that fitted its parasitic needs. Today, the Stalinist bureaucracy is removed from its position of state power, and the term “degenerated workers’ state” is not scientifically correct any longer.

But is the U.S.S.R. still a workers’ state at all? The centralized planned economy has essentially gone. Even before the restorationists took power it had been savagely disrupted. Without the economic mechanisms for a functioning capitalist economy in place, the country slid into a pre-capitalist barter system of exchange between the republics and different regions. After the coup failed, central planning *collapsed within days*. The Gosnab, for example — one of the ministries at the heart of the old centralized Stalinist command-and-control for the economy — was curtailed immediately after the coup. The bartering between the regions and the republics has now multiplied many times over! According to the New York Times, for example: “Leningrad’s [now St. Petersburg] city officials have been roaming the Soviet Union making barter deals for food and a steady supply of raw materials with various republics and locales. For instance, the officials can provide a far-off Central Asian republic with a few thousand television sets made in Leningrad for the equivalent value in cotton or food.” (New York Times, September 4, 1991.)

A former director of a large factory said that “There is no

stability in the system that supplies us. Nobody can guarantee deliveries of flour, pipe, metal, chemicals, the basics for manufacturing. So, we're going to move to individual economic agreements between various regions. . . ." (Ibid.)

Thus, the rapidity with which the centralized planning collapsed created total chaos. Without a market mechanism to replace central planning, we are witnessing today an incredible combination totally unique in history: a **workers' state that functions by means of pre-capitalist bartering**. Partially for the lack of a better term — and mainly because the capitalist restorationists have not yet instituted the economic and political state apparatus for a capitalist state — the U.S.S.R. at this juncture in history can be only called: a **collapsed workers' state**.

19. Despite their nationalist rhetoric, many bourgeois nationalist leaders from the republics are realizing that they cannot, at least for the time being, become truly independent. They cannot create "independent" restorationist states that are not tied in some way to the rest of what is left of the Soviet Union. Even if their long-term aim remains linkage with imperialism (that is, to become semi-colonies!) it will take years to accomplish it. A survey, for example, made by the New York Times, shows that none of the republics can make "an easy leap into capitalist Europe, and none, save perhaps the Russian Federation, has an internal market large enough to support large-scale industry." (September 5, 1991.) Thus, the majority of the republics' leaders are following Yeltsin and Gorbachev's<sup>5</sup> attempts to create the political and economic mechanisms for a new federated or confederated capitalist state.

With maneuvering that was not much more democratic than the coup, Yeltsin, Gorbachev and the leaders of the republics, after intense pressure and threats, forced the deputies of the Congress of People's Deputies to vote themselves out and essentially be replaced with an unelected Council of the Republics and Council of the Union. Members of the Council of the Union will be selected by the leaders of the republics and from among the current members of the Congress of People's Deputies.

The bourgeois nationalist leaders of the republics are becoming the center of the political process of restoration. Together with Yeltsin and Gorbachev, they are working around the clock to create a new bourgeois constitution and new political and repressive bourgeois state apparatus for the capitalist confederation. It is too early to determine the exact shape of the political apparatus of the restorationist state. It is clear, however, that before attempting to create the economic mechanisms for restoration, they have to create at least a temporary "stable" state machinery.

20. With total chaos governing the economy, we should expect to see massive workers' resistance or at least discontent with the situation. The *workers' resistance* will determine the shape of the new state. If the restorationists are able to contain it quickly, it is possible that the final constitution will evolve in a bourgeois "democratic" direction. On the other hand, massive resistance could give rise to a bonapartist type of state which will rest on the military and the new police. Such a state will issue decrees against strikes and violently try

to smash resistance (like in the old days). We also cannot exclude a second coup in which a strong man (Yeltsin? Gorbachev?) will take direct dictatorial power. For the time being, however, the restorationists are feeding the workers bonapartist decrees and promising them a dessert of bourgeois democratic chocolate.

21. The restorationists say that once again "the ideals of the 500-day program<sup>6</sup> are alive" — this time without any opposition from the Stalinists. But without a resolution to the national rivalries the restorationists' tasks are extremely difficult; they cannot create the mechanism for a capitalist state in a short time.

Thus, the vacuum created by the collapse of the centralized planned economy has opened a crucial window for the political revolution. While the workers celebrate the downfall of the hated bureaucracy, their support for the newly constituted coalition of ex-Stalinists, restorationists and bourgeois nationalists is tentative at best.

With the total collapse of the economy, the workers' suffering is great. On the other hand, the restorationists are caught on the horns of a dilemma. If they delay the 500-day rush transition to capitalism, they could face a revolutionary workers' uprising. But if they implement the 500-day program on the backs of the workers, they could face the same revolutionary response.

Thus, the potential exists that workers' resistance could be transformed into a revolutionary assault. But the time window for the realization of that potential is *very narrow*. Gigantic revolutions and counterrevolutions (if the revolution fails or does not take place) are condensed into a very short time. If the working class does not act *decisively* within the next weeks or at most months, the restorationists will be able to create the political, and later on the economic mechanisms for state capitalism, which will inevitably be the first stage in capitalist restoration.<sup>7</sup> At that point the U.S.S.R. will no longer be a workers' state at all.

22. There is no time to waste. The **collapsed workers' state** with shattered central planning can exist only for a short time. The working class has to defeat the pro-capitalists, take state power and restore the planned economy — or the restorationists will consolidate their grip and establish the mechanism for state capitalism. Each day in which workers' resistance is delayed brings the completion of the restoration process closer.

Many illusions in capitalism, and in the new capitalist politicians in power, will be shattered in the coming months. But to transform this disillusionment into real working class opposition, the workers will have to create *real dual power* — a pre-condition for a successful revolution. They must create soviets or other institutions that will fulfil the rule of soviets (factory committees, etc.) that will initiate genuine dual power between the working class, with its allies (soldiers, peasants), and the restorationist governments in the U.S.S.R. and the republics.

There must be a Trotskyist Party *rooted in the working class* for this to happen successfully. Such a Trotskyist Party must counterpose workers' democracy to the new bonapartist



(and even bourgeois democratic!) instruments of the restorationists; it should sharply pose the preservation, or rather the reinstatement of the planned economy — this time, governed by genuine workers' democratic organs — against the misery of the market. These are the crucial tasks of the political revolution. Given the short time that remains, such a party will practically have to be built overnight.

23. The political earthquake in the Soviet Union is creating an earthquake within the so-called Trotskyist movement. The great majority of the movement lapsed into centrism a long time ago and is therefore confused and totally unprepared. In the past many of the so-called Trotskyists have tailed the restorationists. They endorsed bourgeois democracy in the workers' states and gave unconditional support to the demands raised by bourgeois nationalists for independent capitalist states. Other so-called Trotskyists have tailed sections of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Today, the shock-waves from the Soviet Union are moving through the spines of those who consider themselves to be revolutionary Trotskyists. Those honest revolutionaries who want to fight Stalinism without capitulating to the restorationists will have to make a sharp break with the mistakes of the past. The events in the Soviet Union will inevitably cause splits and regroupments within the Trotskyist movement. The RTT is open and committed to do everything possible to take advantage of these developments and fight for the re-creation of the Fourth International on a truly revolutionary basis. There exist renewed opportunities today to use Trotsky's method, and to build a new Trotskyist International and a new Trotskyist program over the dead body of Stalinism. We must not let history bypass us; we must take advantage of these opportunities. We call on the groups and individuals who agree with the method outlined in this resolution to start discussions with us.

September 11, 1991

• **Down with Yeltsin and capitalist restoration! For workers in the U.S.S.R. to organize to resist the restorationists!**

• **Workers' control of the U.S.S.R.'s mass media! No censorship by ex-Stalinists or Yeltsinites!**

• **Preserve and extend the gains of October! For workers' struggle to defend and expand the rights to housing, education, health care, reproductive freedom, childcare, and full employment!**

• **Preserve the central plan and defend state ownership of the enterprises under workers' control! Transform collective farms into genuine democratic cooperatives! Resist privatization!**

• **For an emergency plan to reorganize the economy under democratic workers' control! For councils of workers' and farmers' delegates union-wide to ensure speedy, equitable distribution of food, fuel, clothing and necessities through the winter!**

• **For an armed workers' and collective farmers' militia to defend the emergency plan against the ex-bureaucrats, restorationists, and racketeers, and to defend minorities against national chauvinists, pogromists, and fascists!**

• **For the creation of a democratic workers' state as an instrument of socialist construction and international revolution against capitalism and imperialism!**

• **For the foundation of a revolutionary workers' vanguard party based on the principles of Lenin and Trotsky!**

• **Down with capitalist restoration! Forward to the political revolution!**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> They did not even bother to cut off the Yeltsinites' phones.

<sup>2</sup> See section 19.

<sup>3</sup> See section 18.

<sup>4</sup> It is outrageous that Gerry Foley, one of the top writers for the United Secretariat, is trying to cover up for the disgusting actions of the Lithuanian nationalists. The hostile reaction to the news in the West has forced even Landsbergis to "investigate" the accusation that his government is rehabilitating fascists (although the man he has requested to undertake the investigation is Artusas Paulauskas, the prosecutor who issued the exonerations in the first place!). Yet Foley told the audience at a public forum of Socialist Action (San Francisco, September 6, 1991), in response to an intervention by the RTT, that the government of Lithuania had not intended to rehabilitate pro-fascist elements, but only those who were wrongly labelled as such by the Stalinists. The United Secretariat,

which promoted illusions in the "progressive" nature of Baltic nationalism, is willing today to cover up its most reactionary elements.

<sup>5</sup> The fast-moving events of recent weeks have compressed human transformations that normally take months and years into a few days! Since his return from captivity, Gorbachev has rapidly evolved from a Socialist Democrat into a plain bourgeois politician. Now he agrees with most of Yeltsin's positions. In their common maneuvers to create a new political state apparatus, they compete with each other to see who is a better Bonapartist.

<sup>6</sup> The 500-day plan was a shock program, outlined in the summer of 1990, to convert the Soviet economy into a capitalist economy with a speed approximating the tempo of the Polish big bang.

<sup>7</sup> See article on Poland, this issue.