Despite the extraordinary practical opportunism that makes it, in its daily politics, the pure and simple flank-guard of the counter-revolution, contemporary Trotskyism nonetheless continues with a beautiful constancy to claim itself as belonging to Marx and Lenin, to the October Revolution and to the first years of the International.

These claims to orthodoxy, bordering with the most disgusting cowardice before Russian imperialism and the most lamentable “critical” support to the various bourgeois workers parties which still depend on it or more or less claim to it, made it our duty once again to stand out with the greatest possible clarity from a political current which is an obstacle on the road to revolution.

To do this, we will not go into the details of the quarrels which oppose the epigones, but we will be interested in three theories which fall into what we will call the "historical Trotskyism" which ends in August 1940, when the former head of the Red Army falls under the blows of an agent of Stalin: the theory of permanent revolution, the theory of the degenerated workers state, the theory of the transitional programme.

During his lifetime, Trotsky was much greater than Trotskyism: during the revolution and the civil war, he became with an admirable rigour the fierce defender of Marxist party doctrine, civil war and terror against the class adversary. However if the personal theories that he had defended before 1917 against Lenin and that he developed in all their consequences in his struggle against Stalin and in exile did not prevent him from having a glorious conduct in October nor from resisting intractably the flood of capitulations that carried away many Russian oppositionalists, they have very little to do with the authentic Marxist doctrine and systematically oppose it not only in the field of strategy and tactics, but also in that of economic theory and program.

This is what we intend to demonstrate here.

Critique of the theory of permanent revolution

A fundamental question: invariance

Throughout his life, Trotsky believed in the correctness of "his" theory of permanent revolution. In his "History of the Russian Revolution" he notes that he and Lenin were on the same line in the struggle against the Kerensky government. In an appendix to "The Revolution Betrayed" of 1936. he quotes the moving last letter of Adolf Joffe, forced to suicide by Stalin: "I have never doubted the correctness of the way you have pointed out, and you know that for more than twenty years, ever since the “Permanent Revolution”, I have been with you. But I have always thought that you lacked the inflexibility, the intransigence of Lenin, his resolution to remain at the task alone, if need be, in the road that he had marked out, sure of a future majority, of a future recognition by all of the rightness of that road. You have always been right politically, beginning with 1905, and I have often told you that with my own ears I have hear Lenin admit that in 1905 it was not he, but you, who was right. In the face of death one does not lie, and I repeat this to you now."

Pathetic as the testament of an old militant who urges a comrade to intransigence, this letter is not distinguished by its political precision. Trotsky himself does not claim to have been "always right in politics" against Lenin since 1905; he knows well that, in his terrible polemics against the author of "Our political tasks", the artisan of the August block, the quasi-centrist of "Nache Slovo", it was the founder of Bolshevism who had been right, and since 1917 he claims and defends himself, with energy and against his past errors, the Marxist conception of the Party.

The very outrage of Joffe's letter significantly diminishes its scope, and since Trotsky himself did not lay claim to his pre-1917 positions on the party question, all it can mean is that Lenin would one day have declared that Trotsky's other characteristic position, namely the theory of permanent revolution, was correct. However, this is nothing more than a simple anecdote, and this anecdote seems to us to directly contradict
Lenin's positions. Our choice is therefore quickly drawn between a simple anecdote and years of Marxist reflection.

It is an irrefutable fact that Trotsky always believed that the Russian revolution posed a particular problem, which had to be solved by an original theory, and that his prognosis had been the most clairvoyant. In an article dating from the very last period of his life and published as an appendix to his book on Stalin, "Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution", he writes:

"The revolution of 1905 became not only 'the dress rehearsal of 1917' but also the laboratory from which emerged all the basic groupings of Russian political thought and where all tendencies and shadings within Russian Marxism took shape or were outlined."

If the conception of the Russian revolution had to be "elaborated" during the revolution of 1905, it would mean that Marxism does not exist as a complete theory, completed in its essential lines, which describes communism in advance and makes it possible to rigorously determine the tasks of the proletariat in all situations. This would mean that there was, in advance, in Marxist theory no definite line to follow in the Russian revolution and in all those that can take place in backward countries. In this case, one should simply consider that Marxism is a very general ideology, from which particular theories are elaborated, with more or less personal "talent", theories which must await their sanctification from "experience".

It is indeed to this second opinion that Trotsky has been associated all his life. He considered that he had discovered the theory of permanent revolution, and affirmed that the October 1917 revolution had proved its validity. Likewise, at the end of his life, Trotsky affirmed, with a lightness unworthy of a materialist and characteristic of a militant who does not have the doctrinal certainty that only communism can destroy capitalism, that, if the Stalinist bureaucracy survived the Second World War and if revolution did not break out, Marxism would have to be revised. Throughout the final summary that he wrote to defend his theory once again, Trotsky considered that the Russian revolution, as such, posed a particular problem, and that the "permanent revolution" had given the most adequate solution: "The perspective of Menshevism was false to the core: it pointed out an entirely different road for the proletariat. The perspective of Bolshevism was not complete; it indicated correctly the general direction of the struggle but characterized its stages incorrectly."

And Trotsky to explain how he discovered - together with Parvus - the theory of permanent revolution. In his polemic against the Stalinists, Trotsky tried to hide behind Marx's authority by quoting the 1850 "Address" of the Central Committee of the Communist League. Note that unlike Lenin's theory, his theory had nothing in common with that which Marx defended in the year 1848 except the term, used by the latter for the first time, of "revolution in permanence".

Trotsky's theory was born in 1904, in a pamphlet written during the winter and which, appearing after Bloody Sunday in St. Petersburg, was entitled "Before the Ninth of January". Parvus wrote the preface: "On becoming acquainted on the second day after the bloody events in Petersburg with my pamphlet, then in manuscript, Parvus was captured by the idea of the exceptional role which the proletariat of backward Russia was destined to play. (...)". In his preface, Parvus, after having denied that the peasantry could form "a tight revolutionary army", states in conclusion: "The Social Democracy will be confronted with the dilemma: either to assume the responsibility for the Provisional Government or to stand aside from the workers' movement. The workers will consider this government as their own regardless of how the Social Democracy conducts itself .... The revolutionary overturn in Russia can be accomplished only by the workers. The revolutionary Provisional Government in Russia will be the government of a workers' democracy. If the Social Democracy heads the revolutionary movement of the Russian proletariat, then this government will be Social Democratic. The Social Democratic Provisional Government will not be able to accomplish a socialist overturn in Russia but the very process of liquidating the autocracy and of establishing the democratic republic will provide it with a rich soil for political work." Trotsky comments: "His prognoses indicated, therefore, not the transformation of the democratic revolution into the socialist revolution but only the establishment in Russia of a regime of workers' democracy". And he adds: "Beginning with the pamphlet, Before the Ninth of January, I returned more than
once to the development and justification of the theory of the permanent revolution”. We will return to Parvus' theory, but it is not possible to fail to notice here that Trotsky makes no reference to the "Address" of 1850, nor to the classical Marxist positions, long established, on the attitude of the proletariat in the democratic revolutions. Trotsky believes and affirms (until then, it is quite true), that he then developed an original theory whose validity was then proved by experience.

Lenin’s position was quite different. Here, no claim to originality. The author of the "Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution" is guided throughout his presentation by the already defined and unchanging line of Marxism in democratic revolutions. Not only does he not claim to "develop" any original theory, but he affirms and demonstrates that the tactics of Martynov and the Mensheviks who follow the liberal bourgeoisie, is in open rupture with the tactics of Marx and Engels of 1848. A whole chapter of the postface, "The vulgar bourgeois representation of the dictatorship", is devoted to recalling the classical positions, and Lenin explicitly claims for the Russian revolution the tactics of the first communists in Germany in 1848: "Thus, the tasks which Marx set before a revolutionary government or dictatorship in 1848 amounted in substance primarily to a democratic revolution: defence against counterrevolution and the actual elimination of everything that contradicted the sovereignty of the people. This is nothing else than a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship". Hear: I, Lenin, under the name of revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants, defend the tactics of Marx and Engels in 1848. And to explain why Marx, who knows as well as anyone what the classes are, uses the term "people", he continues, quoting the "New Rhineland Gazette": "The upper bourgeoisie, ever anti-revolutionary, concluded a defensive end offensive alliance with the reaction out of fear of the people, that is to say, the workers and the democratic bourgeoisie". Hence the following explanation: "There is no doubt that the chief components of the people, whom Marx in 1848 contrasted with the resisting reactionaries and the treacherous bourgeoisie, are the proletariat and the peasantry”. There is not the slightest sign that Lenin was, like Parvus, "seduced by an idea" or that, like Trotsky, he "more than once" set about "developing his theory" and "securing its foundations". On the contrary, he found his property in the classical texts, which contained all the theses on which the theory of the "democratic dictatorship" was based, which Trotsky persisted in considering as Lenin’s own, and which is nothing other than the one and only Marxist theory. Lenin is so little "original" that after carefully studying a passage from the "New Rhineland Gazette", after methodically breaking it down into theses, he concludes: "all these propositions can be fully applied to Russia in 1905. There is no doubt that by learning from the experience of Germany, as elucidated by Marx, we cannot arrive at any other slogan for a decisive victory of the revolution than: a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry".

Before going back to the presentation of the issue itself, let us also draw a simple but irrevocable conclusion. When Trotsky wrote: "The revolution of 1905 became not only ‘the dress rehearsal of 1917’ but also the laboratory from which emerged all the basic groupings of Russian political thought and where all tendencies and shadings within Russian Marxism took shape or were outlined", he put forward three theses that we reject. One that claims that the tactics of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry had been "elaborated" by Lenin. One that considers Menshevism (in 1940!) and the permanent revolution as tendencies of Marxism (Marxism has no tendencies). One that attributes the 1905 revolution the character of a laboratory. To the great sorrow of all lovers of opportunistic concretism and theories of experience, Marxists like to recall that the "Manifesto of the Communists" was written in 1847. Similarly, the date of publication of the "Two Tactics" is worth noting: July 1905.

Trotsky was proud to innovate, while Lenin was only concerned with being faithful.

Lenin and Parvus

At the moment when Trotsky takes up and "develops" Parvus' theory, when he is about to explain it in more detail in "Results and Prospects" (1906), Lenin is in struggle against Martov and Martynov, theorists of the Mensheviks who now hold the "Iskra". And Lenin reads Trotsky's booklet prefaced by Parvus. Here is what he says in an article of 1905 (March-April) entitled "Social Democracy and Provisional Revolutionary
Government": "Parvus managed at last to go forward, in stead of moving backward like a crab. He refused to perform the Sisyphean labour of endlessly correcting Martynov's and Martov's follies. He openly advocated (unfortunately, together with the windbag Trotsky in a foreword to the latter's bombastic pamphlet Before the Ninth of January) the idea of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship, the idea that it was the duty of Social-Democrats to take part in the provisional revolutionary government after the overthrow of the autocracy."

To understand the above, the reader must know that Menshevism theorists were opposed to the proletariat attempting to take the lead in the struggle against tsarism and to participate in the provisional revolutionary government if the latter were to be created on the ruins of autocracy. It is therefore not paradoxical that Lenin should congratulate Parvus for having broken with Menshevism on this point. "Parvus is profoundly right in saying that the Social-Democrats must not fear to take bold strides forward, to deal joint "blows" at the enemy, shoulder to shoulder with the revolutionary bourgeois democrats, on the definite understanding, however (very appropriately brought to mind), that the organisations are not to be merged, that we march separately but strike together, that we do not conceal the diversity of interests, that we watch our ally as we would our enemy, etc". Here is the pas en avant that Lenin takes up with Parvus. But precisely because he recognises that Parvus is making progress, he immediately begins to explain to him how far he still has to go. And it is the "original" forecasts of Parvus, which Trotsky welcomed, that he criticised: "Equally incorrect, for the same reason, are Parvus' statements that “the revolutionary provisional government in Russia will be a government of working-class democracy”, that “if the Social-Democrats are at the head of the revolutionary movement of the Russian proletariat, this government will be a Social-Democratic government”, that the Social-Democratic provisional government “will be an integral government with a Social-Democratic majority” This is impossible, unless we speak of fortuitous, transient episodes, and not of a revolutionary dictatorship that will be at all durable and capable of leaving its mark in history. This is impossible, because only a revolutionary dictatorship supported by the vast majority of the people can be at all durable (not absolutely, of course, but relatively). The Russian proletariat, however, is at present a minority of the population in Russia. It can become the great, overwhelming majority only if it combines with the mass of semi-proletarians, semi-proprietors, i.e., with the mass of the petty-bourgeois urban and rural poor. Such a composition of the social basis of the possible and desirable revolutionary-democratic dictatorship will, of course, affect the composition of the revolutionary government and inevitably lead to the participation, or even predominance, within it of the most heterogeneous representatives of revolutionary democracy. It would be extremely harmful to entertain any illusions on this score." Such is Lenin's position with regard to Parvus: he congratulates him for speaking out for the leading participation of the proletariat in the democratic revolution, but warns him against the illusion of believing possible a "workers government".

Trotsky and Parvus

Trotsky defended Parvus' theory (some of whose statements, such as "only workers can carry out a revolutionary uprising in Russia", are absolutely false) in an even "improved" version. He wrote: "The theory of the permanent revolution has usually been linked with the names of 'Parvus and Trotsky.' This was only partially correct". And he explains this in detail. At the same time he "considered at that time that the 'Social Democratic Provisional Government will not be able to accomplish a socialist overturn in Russia.' His prognoses indicated, therefore, not the transformation of the democratic revolution into the socialist revolution but only the establishment in Russia of a regime of workers’ democracy of the Australian type, where on the basis of a farmers’ system there arose for the first time a labor government which did not go beyond the framework of a bourgeois regime. This conclusion was not shared by me." With a care which was dictated to him by the concern to refute the Stalinist ideologues, who accused him of having "wanted to skip the stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution", and for which we are grateful to him, Trotsky continues: "... it is necessary to present it here [the theory of permanent revolution] in the form of exact quotations from my works in 1905–06".
"In a country economically more backward, the proletariat may come to power sooner than in an advanced capitalist country. The assumption of some sort of automatic dependence of proletarian dictatorship upon the technical forces and resources of a country is a prejudice derived from an extremely oversimplified "economic" materialism. Such a view has nothing in common with Marxism ... Notwithstanding that the productive forces of industry in the United States are ten times higher than ours, the political role of the Russian proletariat, its influence upon the politics of the country, and the possibility of its coming influence upon world policies is incomparably higher than the role and significance of the American proletariat.

The Russian revolution, according to our view, will create conditions in which the power may (and with the victory of the revolution must) pass into the hands of the proletariat before the politicians of bourgeois liberalism get a chance to develop their statesmanly genius to the full ... The Russian bourgeoisie is surrendering all the revolutionary positions to the proletariat. It will have to surrender likewise the revolutionary leadership of the peasantry. The proletariat in power will appear to the peasantry as an emancipator class ... The proletariat basing itself on the peasantry will bring all its forces into play to raise the cultural level of the village and develop a political consciousness in the peasantry."

By quoting this passage, Trotsky wants, as we have just seen, to refute the Stalinist accusations that the "permanent revolution" consisted in leaping over the democratic stage. At the same time, he shows how his conception exceeded that of Parvus. "The struggle for the democratic renovation of Russia," I wrote at that time, "has wholly grown out of capitalism and is being conducted by the forces unfolding on the basis of capitalism and is being aimed directly and first of all against the feudal-serf obstacles on the path of the development of capitalist society." The question, however, was: Just what forces and methods are capable of removing these obstacles? "We may set a bound to all the questions of the revolution by asserting that our revolution is bourgeois in its objective aims, and therefore in its inevitable results, find we may thus shut our eyes to the fact that the chief agent of this bourgeois revolution is the proletariat, and the proletariat will be pushed toward power by the whole course of the revolution ... You may lull yourself with the thought that the social conditions of Russia are not yet ripe for a socialist economy – and therewith you may neglect to consider the fact that the proletariat once in power, will inevitably be compelled by the whole logic of its situation to introduce an economy operated by the state ... Entering the government not as impotent hostages but as a ruling power, the representatives of the proletariat will by this very act destroy the boundary between minimum and maximum program, i.e., place collectivism on the order of the day. At what point the proletariat will be stopped in this direction will depend on the relationship of forces, but not at all upon the original intentions of the party of the proletariat". The essentials have been said. Not only does Trotsky adhere to Parvus' thesis, but he also boldly goes beyond it: there will not only be a "workers democracy" government in Russia, the ruling proletariat will be forced to adopt measures of socialist transformation of society; thus was born the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution, according to which "the democratic revolution, in the course of its development, is transformed directly into socialist revolution and thus becomes a permanent revolution".

To claim that Lenin rallied in 1917 to such a conception, on the allegation of a letter from Joffe, is to strike off with a stroke of the pen all the struggles of the Bolshevik fraction. In an article of 1909, "The Aim of the Proletarian Struggle in Our Revolution," Lenin refutes Trotsky's view that the coalition of the proletariat and peasants presupposes "that one of the existing bourgeois parties will establish its sway over the peasantry or that the peasants should form a powerful independent party". In this article, while affirming that it would be necessary to devote a long work to the refutation of Trotsky, Lenin confines himself to formulating a lapidary judgement, which we immediately make our own: "Trotsky's major mistake is that he ignores the bourgeois character of the revolution and has no clear conception of the transition from this revolution to the socialist revolution".

Lenin and the Mensheviks

Within the Social Democratic Workers Party of Russia, the militants knew well that the coming revolution would be bourgeois: it was against the people who claimed that it could be directly socialist, on the basis of
the "mir", that the Marxist current had been formed, around the group of "Struggle for the Liberation of Labour". From Plekhanov's "Our Disputes" to Lenin's "Development of Capitalism in Russia", Marxists first had to fight populism. It is for having won against it great polemical victories, that they made admit that the revolution to come would be bourgeois. But the acceptance of this thesis was in no way enough to define Marxists, as the existence of the bourgeois current of "legal Marxists" testifies. It was still necessary to be faithful to Marx's classical positions on the attitude of the proletariat in the democratic revolution. And the Mensheviks weren't.

What position should be taken with regard to the bourgeoisie? To the Mensheviks of the "New Iskra", it seemed that the most rational would be "to exercise pressure from without" (from below and not from above) "upon the bourgeois provisional government in order to secure a feasible measure" (?) "of democratisation of the state system. The Conference believes that the formation of a provisional government by Social-Democrats, or their joining such a government, would lead, on the one hand, to the masses of the proletariat becoming disappointed in the Social-Democratic Party and abandoning it because the Social-Democrats, in spite of the fact that they had seized power, would not be able to satisfy the pressing needs of the working class, including the establishment of Socialism" (a republic is not a pressing need! The authors, in their innocence, do not notice that they are speaking a purely anarchist language, as if they were repudiating participation in bourgeois revolutions!), "and, on the other hand, would cause the bourgeois classes to recoil from the revolution and diminish its sweep". Citing this resolution, Lenin comments: "The depth of the rift among present-day Social-Democrats on the question of the path to be chosen can be seen at once by comparing the Caucasian resolution of the new-Iskraists with the resolution of the Third Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. The Congress resolution says: the bourgeoisie is inconsistent, it will certainly try to deprive us of the gains of the revolution. Therefore, make more energetic preparations for the fight, comrades and fellow workers! Arm yourselves, win the peasantry to your side! We shall not surrender our revolutionary gains to the self-seeking bourgeoisie without a fight. The resolution of the Caucasian new-Iskraists says: the bourgeoisie is inconsistent, it may recoil from the revolution. Therefore, comrades and fellow workers, please do not think of joining a provisional government, for, if you do, the bourgeoisie will certainly recoil, and the sweep of the revolution will thereby be diminished!"

Mensheviks and Bolsheviks noted the inconsistency of the bourgeoisie: some concluded that it was necessary to support it, not to frighten it; others concluded that it was necessary to wrest the leadership of the whole movement from the liberal bourgeoisie and to take over the revolutionary peasantry. Indeed, the bourgeoisie is not alone among the forces that accomplish the bourgeois revolution, nor even the essential force. It constitutes the top of the pyramid of market production, of which the peasantry, when it owns its plot of land, constitutes the base. Closer to the tsarist aristocracy, aspiring to lead political affairs but ready to settle for mere participation in government, fearing both peasant insurrection in the countryside and workers unrest in the cities, the Russian bourgeoisie, like the German bourgeoisie of 1848, was all ready to betray, to be content with a constitutional rag and to limit the scope of the revolution. Limiting the scope of the revolution essentially meant stifling the peasant insurrection, giving landowners the "right" to maintain their peasants, "liberated" by the 1861 reform, in a state of semi-servitude, to transform themselves peacefully, in the slowest and most painful way for peasants, into capitalist farmers and captains of industry. This meant tolerating the perpetuation of the whole Asiatic social life in Russia, and finally - this too was important for the bourgeoisie - preventing social democracy from imposing, in the democratic revolution, the eight-hour day included in its minimum programme. This meant advocating "revolution from above" by repressing "revolution from below".

The peasantry had an interest not in the peaceful evasion of the bourgeois revolution, but in the insurrection. "For only a completely victorious revolution can give the peasantry everything in the sphere of agrarian reforms—everything that the peasants desire, of which they dream, and of which they truly stand in need (not for the abolition of capitalism as the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" imagine, but) in order to emerge from the mire of semi-serfdom, from the gloom of oppression and servitude, in order to improve their living..."
conditions as much as it is possible to improve them under the system of commodity production”. For the peasantry, the dilemma was simple: either the peaceful transformation behind the bourgeoisie, which would undoubtedly have encouraged by some agrarian reform the appearance of large peasants alongside millions of muzhiks forced to vegetate on land too small, with the prospect of repaying for their "emancipation" for decades, or the insurrection, terror against landowners and the partition of land.

Lenin opposes the "two tactics" as follows: "One side says: advance the revolution forward, to its consummation, in spite of the resistance or the passivity of the inconsistent bourgeoisie. The other side says: do not think of carrying the revolution to completion independently, for if you do, the inconsistent bourgeoisie will recoil from it..." So we see that the Bolshevik and Menshevik fractions have themselves reduced all the divergences to the following alternative: should the proletariat be the "guide", the "leader" of the revolution and "drag along" the peasantry, or should it be the "engine" that "supports" this or that step of bourgeois democracy? Defining the tasks of the proletariat, he writes: "The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie". In 1909, when he wrote a history of the polemic between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, Lenin recalled: "We shall begin with the history of the discussion of this question by the Russian Social-Democrats. It was brought up by the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks at the beginning of 1905. The former answered it with the 'formula': revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. The latter flatly rejected this definition of the class content of a victorious bourgeois revolution."

For the Trotskyists who are deaf, we will again recall the formula: by democratic dictatorship, Lenin means not a form of government, a coalition government, but the "class content of a victorious bourgeois revolution".

It is because they differ on this point that the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks also differ on the attitude to adopt, in the event of a revolutionary victory, vis-à-vis the provisional government. In this question, appearances were against Lenin, and the Mensheviks, paradoxically, accused him of opportunism: he advocated participation in revolutionary government, whereas they themselves were opposed to it. In the atmosphere of the time, when Millerand had just been castigated for ministerialism and when everyone knew (still) that he is no longer a socialist who participates in a bourgeois government, the Mensheviks could give themselves at little cost orthodoxy: Lenin wants to participate in government, we oppose it. All their miserable trick obviously resided in the voluntary confusion of the duties of the proletariat in the countries where the bourgeois democratic revolution has long been accomplished, and in those where it still remains to be done. In the first case, the policy of coalition government with bourgeois parties means the refusal of the proletariat to fight to destroy the state apparatus, the only way to open the way to despotic intervention in production relations. But in the other case, it is abstention that is treason: it means that the proletariat tolerates that the bourgeoisie refuses to bring the bourgeois democratic revolution to an end, thus slowing down the course of history; if the proletariat postpones in advance its participation in the provisional revolutionary government, it means in fact that it renounces the struggle for hegemony in the revolution.

To block this defeatism, the RSDLP, whose minimum program included the democratic republic, the confiscation of the great landed gentry, the eight-hour day, had proclaimed, at its III Congress (London, 1905): "a) that we should spread among the working class the conviction that a provisional revolutionary government is absolutely necessary, and discuss at workers’ meetings the conditions required for the full and prompt realisation of all the immediate political and economic demands of our programme; b) that in the event of the victorious uprising of the people and the complete overthrow of the autocracy, representatives of our Party may participate in the provisional revolutionary government for the purpose of waging a relentless struggle against all counter-revolutionary attempts and of defending the independent interests of the working class".
Before defining the possibilities, the objective tasks of the proletariat in the revolution against the Mensheviks, and defending participation in the provisional revolutionary government, Lenin does not go any further in his theses and does not pronounce on the future of the provisional government brought to power by this coalition of classes that is the "democratic dictatorship". The proletariat will fight without failure for its minimum program. However, if the revolution in Russia thus does not go beyond the framework of the democratic revolution, Lenin never forgets to recall that it will cause a formidable deflagration in the system of states, which will perhaps trigger the socialist revolution in Germany and Europe, which will take in tow the Russian revolution, thus opening the way to the socialist transformation of the economy.

The Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution

Trotsky long stood "out of bounds", between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, convinced that his theory was correct. He wanted to "pacify", to bridge the gap, which led Lenin to depict him with irony as the one who walked "holding an olive branch of peace and a cruse of 'non-factional' unction". In an article in 1905, "Our differences", Trotsky gave the reasons for this conviction. "If the Mensheviks, starting from this abstract conception: "Our revolution is bourgeois", come to the idea of adapting all the tactics of the proletariat to the conduct of the liberal bourgeoisie until the conquest of power by it, the Bolsheviks, starting from a no less abstract conception: "Democratic dictatorship, but not socialist", come to the idea of a self-limitation of the proletariat holding power to a bourgeois democratic regime. It is true that between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, there is an essential difference: while the anti-revolutionary aspects of Menshevism are already manifesting themselves in all their extent, what is anti-revolutionary in Bolshevism threatens us - but the threat is no less serious - than in the case of a revolutionary victory". In the 1922 edition of his Works, Trotsky followed this sentence with the following little note: "Fortunately, this was not so: under the direction of comrade Lenin, Bolshevism transformed (not without internal struggles) its ideology on this primordial question as early as the spring of 1917, that is, before the conquest of power".

Before checking whether this statement is correct, let us now summarise the three conceptions, in order to see how they confronted the decisive events.

The Mensheviks affirm the bourgeois character of the revolution, and recognise the inconsistent character of the bourgeoisie. They deduce from this the necessity for the proletariat to support the liberal bourgeoisie, while remaining, throughout the revolution, an "extreme party of opposition". No participation in the provisional revolutionary government.

The Bolsheviks affirm the bourgeois character of the revolution and the need to fight the inconsistent bourgeoisie. They deduce from this the necessity for the proletariat to take the lead in the political struggle against the tsarism, and thus formulate the "class content of the revolution, in case it is victorious": democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants. Under certain conditions, the party of the proletariat can and must, even in the minority, participate in the revolutionary government.

Trotsky affirms the need, in the bourgeois revolution, to fight the inconsistent bourgeoisie. For him, the proletariat cannot be content to enter the provisional government, but must refuse to "limit itself" to the accomplishment of bourgeois democratic tasks. The government may be a social democratic workers government, in which case it will have to take socialist measures. As Trotsky later recalled, the theory of permanent revolution "demonstrated that in our time the performance of the democratic tasks proposed by the backward bourgeois countries leads them directly to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and that this puts socialist tasks on the agenda. The whole basic idea of the theory was there".

Now we must answer separately the two questions: Who was right? What was the right doctrine?

Trotskyist Lenin?

Trotsky was always pleased to recall that in April 1917 the rumour had spread that Lenin had become a Trotskyite. In his "History of the Russian Revolution", a whole chapter devoted to "rearming the Party" deals with this episode. Lenin would then have abandoned the formula of the democratic dictatorship of the
proletariat and the peasantry, and would have imposed this abandonment on the whole party. And Trotsky quotes a text of April 1917 in which Lenin states: "The Bolshevik slogans and ideas in general are completely confirmed, but concretely things have shaped themselves other wise than anybody (no matter who) could have expected – more originally, uniquely, variously. (...) Whoever talks now only of a ‘revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry’ is lagging behind Life. He has by that very fact gone over actually to the bourgeoisie against the proletarian class struggle. Him we must put away in the archives of ‘Bolshevik pre-revolutionary curiosities’. This quote, as others like it, would lead one to believe Trotsky’s thesis: in April Lenin abandoned the theory of the "Two Tactics". However, this quotation is itself contradictory, and therefore deserves closer examination. How can it be that Lenin speaks of the democratic dictatorship formula as an "outdated formula" and at the same time declares that "the Bolshevik ideas have generally been confirmed by history"? The solution is not very difficult. Indeed, if we pursue the text quoted by Trotsky in a few lines, we come face to face with the following sentence: "The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry” has already become a reality in the Russian revolution, for this “formula” envisages only a relation of classes, and not a concrete political institution implementing this relation, this co-operation”. It is therefore false to say that Lenin is simply abandoning his old position, under the pretext that he would have realised when the democratic dictatorship was impracticable and that "between Kerensky and the October Revolution, there was no place for the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry", as the sixth of the "Theses on the permanent revolution" says.

Certainly, Lenin affirmed several times in April that "We must know how to supplement and amend old 'formulas', for example, those of Bolshevism, for while they have been found to be correct on the whole, their concrete realisation has turned out to be different", but on April 25, during the St. Petersburg Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), he expresses himself in detail on this question, and explains precisely on what point it is necessary to abandon the "old" Bolshevism: "The Soviet is the implementation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the soldiers; among the latter the majority are peasants. It is therefore a dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. But this 'dictatorship' has entered into an agreement with the bourgeoisie. And this is where the 'old' Bolshevism needs revising. The situation that has arisen shows that the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry is interlocked with the power of the bourgeoisie". It is therefore on this point, and on this precise point, that Lenin considers it useful to "revise" the old Bolshevism. "("No one once thought, and could ever think, of the duality of power.") But Lenin’s "revision" on this point is not in the least an abandonment of his earlier conceptions.

Indeed, what is the task which it then fixes to the Bolshevik party? First of all, that of understanding that the Soviets peacefully handed over power to the bourgeois government, whereas they themselves constituted an organ of power: the apparatus of the tsarist State having been largely dismantled, the Soviets could seize power almost without a single blow on condition that they did not wait for the bourgeoisie to gather its forces; it was therefore necessary "simply" to convince the Soviets to renounce their policy of collaboration with the imperialist bourgeoisie, and to have them take power in its entirety. But how does he define the Soviets? Like the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. Conclusion: far from marking Lenin’s passage into the camp of the permanent revolution, the April Theses mean: the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants must be fully realised!

... Or the Menshevik Bolsheviks?

Quoting Raskolnikov in his "History of the Russian Revolution", Trotsky tells of Lenin’s arrival at the Finnish railway station: "We had hardly got into the car and sat down,” writes Raskolnikov, a young naval officer and a Bolshevik, "when Vladimir Ilych flung at Kamenev: 'What’s this you’re writing in Pravda? We saw several numbers and gave it to you good and proper'”. Lenin’s anger is explained: he was furious to find that the Bolsheviks, or at least a large part of them, had begun to... "support" the interim government. In his report of 29 March 1917, "The Problem of Provisional Government", Stalin had allowed himself to state: "The Soviet actually took the initiative of revolutionary transformations, the Soviet is the revolutionary leader of the insurgent people, the organ that controls the provisional government. The provisional revolutionary
government has in fact taken on the role of consolidator of the conquests of the revolutionary people. The
day after the insurrection, a manifesto of the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks read: "The workers of the
factories and of the plants, as well as all the troops raised, must immediately elect their representatives to
the provisional revolutionary government". Pravda of 15 March had written that the Bolsheviks would
resolutely support the provisional government "insofar as it fights against reaction or counter-revolution".
Raskolnikov tells that Lenin "caustically mocked the famous formula of support for the provisional
government "insofar as"...". When it came time to defend the famous "April Theses", Lenin would find himself
alone in his party, because the old Bolsheviks, having long defended - in a fair way - participation or support
for the future revolutionary government, were now applying it in a false way, because they did not
understand that what they called "provisional revolutionary government" was nothing other than a pure and
simple imperialist government. Lenin says: the "democratic dictatorship" is not the government, but the
Soviet, and it will only really come about against the provisional government.

On April 8, despite these clarifications, Kamenev counter attacked. Under his leadership, Pravda wrote that
the essential task was "to establish a democratic republican regime". Now, against Lenin, he argued: "As for
the general scheme of comrade Lenin, it seems unacceptable to us insofar as it presents as completed the
bourgeois democratic revolution and counts on an immediate transformation of this revolution into socialist
revolution". Trotsky comments in his "History of the Russian Revolution": "The central organ of the party
thus openly declared, before the working class and its enemies, its disagreement with the unanimously
recognized party leader on the crucial question of the revolution for which the Bolshevik cadres had prepared
themselves for many years". He implied: they had stayed on the old line, and Lenin had changed his. Similarly,
Kamenev reproaches Lenin for "relying on an immediate transformation of this revolution into a socialist
revolution", that is, for adopting the theory of permanent revolution. If Trotsky and Kamenev's statements
are correct, we should expect Lenin to reply: "Yes, I have become a supporter of the transition to socialist
revolution".

... and Lenin Bolshevik?

Lenin declares April 4: "The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that the country is passing
from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organisation
of the proletariat, placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie—to its second stage, which must place power
in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants". It is therefore still the policy of
"democratic dictatorship". Moreover, Lenin refutes in a precise way Kamenev's accusation: "In my theses, I
absolutely ensured myself against skipping over the peasant movement, which has not outlived itself, or the
petty-bourgeois movement in general, against any playing at "seizure of power" by a workers' government,
against any kind of Blanquist adventurism; for I pointedly referred to the experience of the Paris Commune".
Lenin at least disagrees with the formula of "workers government", formerly launched by Trotsky; but the
Marxist, who knows in which historical phase the proletariat is allowed to ally itself with the peasantry, and
in which phase it is forbidden to do so, has already understood that for Lenin, it is not at all a question of
"moving on to socialist revolution". But let him continue: "In the theses, I very definitely reduced the question
to one of a struggle for influence within the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Peasants', and
Soldiers' Deputies... Ignorant persons or renegades from Marxism, like Mr. Plekhanov, may shout about
anarchism, Blanquism, and so forth. But those who want to think and learn cannot fail to understand that
Blanquism means the seizure of power by a minority, whereas the Soviets are admittedly the direct and
immediate organisation of the majority of the people". When the reader hears this word of the people ring,
he should remember Lenin's comment about his employment with Marx in the "New Rhineland Gazette".

Kamenev, against Lenin, claimed that "the bourgeois democratic revolution was not complete". Lenin replies
that it is finished. Is he unaware that the peasants did not have land, and that the explosion in the countryside
is still to come? Certainly not. He means, against Kamenev, partisan of "support insofar as..." the provisional
government, that this imperialist bourgeois government will not go any further, will even go backwards. Only
the Soviets will move forward. And he specifies the tasks of the Bolsheviks: “To separate the proletarian
elements of the Soviets (i.e., the proletarian, Communist, party) from the petty-bourgeois elements right now, immediately and irrevocably, is to give correct expression to the interests of the movement in either of two possible events: in the event that Russia will yet experience a special “dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry” independent of the bourgeoisie, and in the event that the petty bourgeoisie will not be able to tear itself away from the bourgeoisie and will oscillate eternally (that is, until socialism is established) between us and it”.

This is the first hypothesis, the happiest, that will come true in October. It would be wrong to believe that Lenin is speaking here of a "democratic dictatorship" between February and October, as the theorists of the "bourgeois revolution in February" and the "socialist revolution in October" believe. It would also be wrong to believe that the demand for the absolute independence of the proletariat, the refusal of any concession to petty-bourgeois illusions means that we are going to "move on to socialist revolution": if Lenin considers them indispensable, it is always for the victory of the democratic dictatorship. And the best proof that he does not envisage the "transition to socialism" at all, he gives it himself. "This brings me to the second mistake in Comrade Kamenev’s argument (...) He criticises me, saying that my scheme 'builds' on 'the immediate transformation of this (bourgeois-democratic) revolution into a socialist revolution'. This is incorrect. I not only do not 'build' on the 'immediate transformation' of our revolution into a socialist one, but I actually warn against it, when in Thesis No. 8, I state: 'It is not our immediate task to 'introduce' socialism...’" Is it not clear that no person who builds on the immediate transformation of our revolution into a socialist revolution could be opposed to the immediate task of introducing socialism?"

In “The tasks of the proletariat in our revolution”, Lenin repeats the same thing: "Such measures as the nationalisation of the land, of all the banks and capitalist syndicates, or, at least, the immediate establishment of the control of the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies, etc., over them—measures which do not in any way constitute the “introduction” of socialism—must be absolutely insisted on, and, whenever possible, carried out in a revolutionary way”, after having declared categorically: "The dual power merely expresses a transitional phase in the revolution's development, when it has gone farther than the ordinary bourgeois-democratic revolution, but has not yet reached a “pure” dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.” (point 6). It is here that we understand to what extent the expression "rearming the party" used by Trotsky in his "History of the Russian Revolution" is involuntarily correct: the party had already been "armed" with the line of the democratic dictatorship. It is by putting it back on this line, abandoned by those who supported the imperialist government, that Lenin rearmed it: the Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies must take power "not a state of the type of the usual parliamentary bourgeois-democratic republic, but a...". For Lenin, the general line did not move: full concordance with the doctrine.

The test of facts
From 1905 to 1917, a lot had obviously happened in politics. In Russia, essentially the definitive break between Bolshevism and Menshevism. At the international level, the war and the bankruptcy of the Second International. And it was in the midst of the imperialist cataclysm that the revolution broke out. However, the strength of a theory is measured by its ability to weather great historical storms intact, until its realisation; in April 1917, the Bolshevik theory did not break: it had endured the test. What had become of the different groups at that time?

The Mensheviks had offered to support the bourgeoisie in the bourgeois democratic revolution, and to remain the "extreme opposition party", in the name of their socialist ideal. What have they done? They began by betraying socialism in the imperialist war by pronouncing themselves, like all the traitors of the Second International, in defence of "their" homeland. Instead of "pushing the bourgeoisie forward" in the democratic revolution, as they promised themselves, they support it in a war of imperialist plunder. Once enemies of social-democratic participation in a revolutionary government, they are ready to enter an imperialist government. Lenin therefore accuses them of betraying not only socialism, but also the bourgeois democratic revolution. The populist and Menshevik writers of the Izvestia, he says, "want to be considered socialists, but they don't even know how to be democrats".
The Bolsheviks to whom Lenin will oppose in his "April Theses", had promised themselves to fight to wrest the leadership of the peasant movement from the bourgeoisie, and to lead the democratic revolution to the end, by participating, if necessary, in the government. Faced with the war, they remained internationalist, but after the February revolution, by trying to remain an opposition party to the provisional government and to support it "insofar as" it "moves the revolution forward", they are victims of the petty-bourgeois phrases of this government, and as a result, fall into serious "defensive" hesitations. In so doing, they are not only abandoning the spirit of the "democratic dictatorship", which consists in pushing the revolution to its end, to retain only its appearance, support or participation in the revolutionary government, they are also violating socialist internationalism.

Lenin remained practically alone on the line defined in "Two Tactics". As a socialist, he is an internationalist and a supporter of revolutionary defeatism. As a member of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party, he wants to bring the bourgeois democratic revolution to an end. In the "provisional revolutionary government" of Lvov-Miliukov, he recognised and denounced the government of the imperialist grand bourgeoisie. He recognised and encouraged in the Soviets the alliance of workers and peasants, and fought for the democratic dictatorship in this form. It therefore demands: 1) to break with the imperialist bourgeoisie by opposing revolutionary defeatism to it; 2) to break with the petty-bourgeois parties that incite the Soviets to conciliation with the bourgeoisie, to organise the proletarians separately, in order to force the petty-bourgeoisie to break with the big one so that the democratic revolution can be accomplished; 3) to oppose the reconstitution of the bourgeois state, because the democratic dictatorship will be carried out in the form of the Soviets.

Trotsky remained on the line of permanent revolution, which did not prevent him from being a quasi-centrist in the question of war (as Lenin and Zinoviev demonstrate in "Against the Current"), even if he opposed support for the provisional government in February. Author of an original theory, he believes he has formulated a more precise prognosis than that of Lenin. He believes that in fighting the provisional government, it has moved on to his positions. He is therefore ready to fight for "all power to the Soviets" and for a "workers government" that will immediately take socialist measures.

Lenin did not subscribe to the theory of permanent revolution. To the reader who is not convinced by the historical facts, we still owe the theoretical demonstrations. However, it is important to remember at once that, if we defend Lenin's positions relentlessly, it is not for the "pleasure" of affirming that "Lenin has always been right", but to defend the traditional line of Marxism (which we still need) in democratic revolutions, and to fight the theory of permanent revolution, all the catastrophic consequences of which can be measured today.

Lenin himself does not claim to have foreseen with precision the course of events years in advance: he acknowledges in April that things presented themselves differently than they were expected. If Trotsky, on the basis of a correct theory, had formulated a more accurate prognosis than that of Lenin, there would be no controversy here. Marxists are allowed to conjecture, and it is quite possible that, among different "forecasts", some may be closer to reality than others. But in the question of the permanent revolution, it was not only a question of prognosis, but of defining the tasks of the revolution. On this last level, Trotsky's theory was wrong from A to Z, while Lenin's was correct. On this basis, he made different predictions in different situations. In 1905, thinking of a direct assault on the autocratic state, Lenin believed, in all likelihood, that the provisional government would no doubt be composed of representatives of bourgeois revolutionary democracy in the majority, and social democrats in the minority. When, on the other hand, on the same date, Parvus and Trotsky predicted a workers government, it was at the highest point implausible. Later, when Stolypin, through his agrarian reform, tried to set Russia on the path of revolution "from above", the still possible path of development of capitalism, as witnessed by the history of a large number of countries, and which excluded even the slightest probability of a "workers government", these forecasts were reduced to absurdities. Lenin, who had not bound himself by any metaphysical theory and who was studying the facts scientifically, certainly considered without pleasure, but quite rightly, that the chances of the
"democratic dictatorship" were diminishing more and more. The failure of Stolypin's attempt, then the imperialist war, allowed them to be considered again.

In 1917 unexpected phenomena appeared: the dual power and the commune-state. Under these circumstances, the strength of the proletariat - the only internationalist class and thus capable of practising revolutionary defeatism to the very end - was multiplied tenfold, and this class was gaining new weight in Russia. Moreover, the convulsions of the war made the Commune-State appear. And Lenin's great strength was to recognise that this could be the democratic dictatorship. Conditions had changed, but the line remained the same.

Lenin did not foresee what could not be foreseen, and any "forecast" of the Russian revolution of 1905 must be rejected because it could not rely on the conditions that only the imperialist war created, twelve years later; but he knew how to find the permanent line of Marxism in unpredictable events.

Radek, Trotsky, Lenin

When he wrote the "Permanent Revolution," Trotsky was engaged in a polemic with counter-revolutionaries, whose historical role he never understood. In the opposite camp, Radek was polemical with him as a real mercenary, but he arrives at the worst liar to say the right things. At the beginning of his book, Trotsky replied: "Far too presumptuous, not to say light-minded, is Radek's contention that only people 'who have not thought through to the end the complex method of Marxism and Leninism' could raise the question of the party-political expression of the democratic dictatorship, whereas Lenin allegedly reduced the whole question to the collaboration of the two classes in the objective historical tasks". Unfortunately for Trotsky, Radek was right about that. Trying to reduce his disagreement with Lenin to a question of "precision in prognosis", Trotsky claimed that Lenin had given an algebraic formula of the Russian revolution to an unknown, while he himself had given the mathematical formula, specifying in advance the relations between the proletariat and the peasantry: "Such a historical analysis, however, is all the more necessary because never in history has there been a regime of the 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry'. In 1905, it was a question with Lenin of a strategical hypothesis still to be verified by the actual course of the class struggle. The formula of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry bore in large measure an intentionally algebraic character. Lenin did not solve in advance the question of what the political relationships would be between the two participants in the assumed democratic dictatorship, that is, the proletariat and the peasantry (...). Yet I came out against the formula 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry', because I saw its shortcoming in the fact that it left open the question of which class would wield the real dictatorship."

Trotsky's reasoning was simple: the peasantry is not capable of forming an independent party. The Social Democratic Party will have the majority in the provisional government. And there, if they refuse to "limit themselves", they will necessarily take socialist measures. In the "Permanent Revolution", based on the October experience, he claims to have been right: the democratic revolution was transformed into a socialist revolution. As early as 1909, Lenin had already refuted Trotsky's reasoning: "A coalition of the proletariat and the peasantry "presupposes either that the peasantry will come under the sway of one of the existing bourgeois parties, or that it will form a powerful independent party". This is obviously untrue both from the standpoint of general theory and from that of the experience of the Russian revolution (...). The experience of the Russian revolution shows that "coalitions" of the proletariat and the peasantry were formed scores and hundreds of times, in the most diverse forms, without any "powerful independent party" of the peasantry (...). every joint action between them undoubtedly represented a “coalition” of classes". And Lenin goes on a little further: "It is not true that 'the whole question is, who will determine the government’s policy, who will constitute a homogeneous majority in it' (...). The question of the dictatorship of the revolutionary classes, however, cannot be reduced to a question of the “majority” in any particular revolutionary government, or of the terms on which the participation of the Social-Democrats in such a government is admissible". From these long extracts taken from "The Aim of the Proletarian Struggle in Our Revolution" (1909), any common sense man will deduce that Lenin knew Trotsky's theory and rejected it,
and any Marxist will understand the fundamental difference between the one who wanted to "foresee" according to the composition of the governmental majority "to whom would belong the real dictatorship" and demonstrate that one could thus begin to enter into economic socialism, and the one who clearly distinguished the problem of the governmental majority from that of the dictatorship of the revolutionary classes in the democratic revolution.

For Trotsky, a social-democratic majority (which he expected, given the incapacity of the peasants) was enough to shift the revolution from "democracy" to "socialism", because the proletariat would then be forced to take "objectively socialist" economic measures. If Lenin had been told at the time that the proletariat could, in the course of the democratic revolution, form a homogeneous social-democratic government and had then been asked whether, in his opinion, the revolution would thereby become "socialist", he would have responded without hesitation: no. Lenin did not expect economic socialism in Russia; for him, it could only be introduced by the victory of the proletariat in the advanced countries.

"Either... or", Comrade Trotsky.

Trotsky's theory is heterogeneous and contradictory, for he wants both the transition to economic socialism and the alliance with revolutionary peasants. Radek and Stalin having accused him of having sabotaged the democratic revolution by advocating the direct passage to the socialist revolution, Trotsky, without denying his theory, takes out all the quotations he can to demonstrate that he understood the importance of democratic tasks. That is what is wrong. He couldn't have been right on both counts.

Or, in certain historical circumstances, Marxists must ally themselves with the revolutionary peasantry, and in this case they cannot consider moving to economic socialism. Or, they may consider it, and in this case it is inconsistent for them to claim to ally themselves with the peasantry, which can no longer be anything other than a brake. Either one, or the other.

The very existence of a mass of landless peasants, revolutionaries who aspire to share the domains of landowners, is proof that, in a given country, capitalism has not yet fully developed, has not led everything into the whirlwind of mercantilism. If it had, this mass of peasants, farming with rudimentary tools, could no longer exist. In the countryside, the antagonism would no longer be that between small farmers and an absentee class of landowners, but that between agricultural workers aspiring to the socialisation of production and the capitalists of agriculture.

Even led by the proletariat, the bourgeois democratic revolution cannot jump over the process that leads to this result, but only accelerate it. What is this process? Markets are created in all the small villages, important boroughs are formed. The division of labour is constantly deepening and changing, while those who concentrate the means of production and those who become sellers of the labour-power commodity appear face to face, more or less rapidly. The increase in agricultural labour productivity, as a consequence of the development of capitalism, allows large cities to permanently drain what now appears to be rural overpopulation.

The large production units of the cities, which have long functioned as capitalist enterprises, are then necessarily linked to agricultural production, since they now provide its tools, while agriculture provides in exchange the food necessary for the reconstitution of the labour force. This perpetual exchange of goods between industry and agriculture, where industry develops for development, where surplus value is produced for surplus value, and where agriculture is subordinate to industry is proper to capitalism; and industry then cannot not develop faster than agriculture as a whole.

When a bourgeois democratic revolution has just taken place, it is impossible for the huge mass of new small owners not to produce commodities on their homogeneous, undifferentiated farms. It is impossible that this mass does not exchange commodities with the big industry, and that the big industry does not develop according to the agricultural market, supplying it with fertilisers, ploughs, sold on the market to those who can buy them, while the others vegetate and become employees. But, for Marxists, it is clear that the summit
of society (the big industry with associated work) cannot begin to take the "first socialist measures" while at
the base of it, among millions of small producers, the fire of market production and trade gains more and
more ground. Only the direct and massive external intervention of a non-market economy, thanks to
the proletarian victory in an advanced country, can lead to the appearance of such a phenomenon, which
would not immediately put an end to bourgeois progress in the countryside, but only considerably shorten this
phase.

It is only much later, that is, when it can rely on a wide diffusion of the associated work in the countryside,
when science is already applied en masse to agricultural production, that the proletariat - assuming it has
been able to retain political power - can, both in the cities and in the countryside and of a concerted
movement, tackle the task of socialisation, that is, the destruction of commodity production.

Between the two phases, when the needs of the development of commodity production in the countryside
prevent the advent of socialist forms in industry itself, and when nothing stands in the way of their birth and
generalisation in the two sectors, there is a difference in historical direction. It was only during the transition
from the former to the latter that this transcendence of bourgeois democratic revolution into communist
revolution was verified that Trotsky recklessly placed at the moment of the political seizure of power by the
proletariat.

**Lenin: self-limiting?**

That is the heart of the matter. There is the "little mistake" which, with the party question, kept him for a
long time away from the Bolsheviks until 1917. At this point the whole of Trotskyism is illuminated as a
distinct body of doctrine, to which Trotsky remained remarkably faithful since his polemic of "Our Disputes"
against Lenin. "Lenin draws a distinction of principle between the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat and
the democratic (that is, bourgeois-democratic) dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. He believes
that this logical, purely formal operation can act as a perfect protection against the contradiction between
the low level of productive forces and the hegemony of the working classes". In this refutation that we have
undertaken of Trotsky's theses, we have remained faithful to the method of textual commentary: this
method has its weaknesses; it does not allow the mind, sometimes, to rise above particular circumstances,
to make a synthesis, while it always has the merit of precision. Here, however, it has both advantages, since
we are in the presence of a statement which is regularly repeated in Trotsky's texts, and which constitutes
the core of his theory. We read again: "Lenin draws a distinction of principle between the socialist
dictatorship of the proletariat and the democratic (that is, bourgeois-democratic) dictatorship of the
proletariat and the peasantry. He believes that this logical, purely formal operation...". Thus, the distinction
between the exit from feudalism, thanks to a democratic revolution of the workers and the mass of the
peasants, and the exit from capitalism, thanks to the revolution of the socialist proletariat, appears to Trotsky
as a "purely formal" distinction! For Lenin, the distinction of principle between these two dictatorships is so
important that he establishes, in "Two tactics", that in the first, the alliance with the peasants as such, is
admissible, desirable and necessary, whereas in the second it is excluded. "The proletariat must carry to
completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force
the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must
accomplish the socialist revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the
population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the
peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie". His conclusion is clear: if we are at the stage where we are coming out
of feudalism, if it is still necessary to ally ourselves with the peasants, it is because, as a matter of principle,
it is not possible to start taking socialist measures. But Trotsky does not show the same rigour on this point:
"Because Russia's social conditions are not ripe for a socialist revolution, political power would be the greatest
misfortune for the proletariat. So say the Mensheviks. They would be right, says Lenin, if the proletariat were
not aware that the point at issue is only a democratic revolution. In other words, Lenin believes that the
contradiction between the proletariat's class interests and objective conditions will be resolved by the
proletariat imposing a political limitation upon itself, and that this self-limitation will be the result of the
proletariat’s theoretical awareness that the revolution in which it is playing a leading role is a bourgeois revolution. Lenin transfers the objective contradiction into the proletariat’s consciousness and resolves it by means of a class asceticism which is rooted, not in religious faith, but in a “scientific” schema. It is enough to see this intellectual construct clearly to realize how hopelessly idealistic it is” (“Our differences”).

Trotsky does not see why the proletariat would not take socialist measures, if it succeeds in having the reality of power. Better still, he affirms that it must do so, and that it will be forced to do so: "I have demonstrated in detail elsewhere that twenty-four hours after the establishment of a “democratic dictatorship” this idyll of quasi-Marxist asceticism is bound to collapse utterly. Whatever the theoretical auspices under which the proletariat seizes power, it is bound immediately, on the very first day, to be confronted with the problem of unemployment. An explanation of the difference between socialist and democratic dictatorship is not likely to be of much help here. In one form or another (public works, etc.) the proletariat in power will immediately have to undertake the maintenance of the unemployed at the state’s expense. This in turn will immediately provoke a powerful intensification of the economic struggle and a whole series of strikes. We saw all this on a small scale at the end of 1905. And the capitalists’ reply will be the same as their reply to the demand for the eight-hour day: the shutting down of factories and plants. They will put large padlocks on the gates and will tell themselves: “There is no threat to our property because it has been established that the proletariat is at present in a position of democratic, not socialist, dictatorship.” What can the workers’ government do when faced with closed factories and plants? It must re-open them and resume production at the government’s expense. But is that not the way to socialism? Of course it is. What other way do you suggest?"

Trotsky is so unconcerned with precision here that, clumsily, or rather inadvertently, while the substance of his thought is clear, he uses an expression, "the way to socialism", which is acceptable to Marxists, and, in context, perfectly orthodox. The passage of industries into the hands of the proletarian state is indeed the "way to socialism". But the substance of his thought is that this is socialism. The following passage proves it unequivocally: "Once it achieves power, the social-democratic party will be faced with a profound contradiction which cannot be resolved by naïve references to “democratic dictatorship.” “Self-limitation” by a workers’ government would mean nothing other than the betrayal of the interests of the unemployed and strikers – more, of the whole proletariat – in the name of the establishment of a republic. The revolutionary authorities will be confronted with the objective problems of socialism, but the solution of these problems will, at a certain stage, be prevented by the country’s economic backwardness”.

Trotsky, 1905: “Lenin makes a purely formal logician distinction between the socialist dictatorship and the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry”. Lenin, 1909: "Trotsky's fundamental error lies in the ignorance of the bourgeois character of the revolution, in the lack of clear ideas on the transition from this revolution to socialist revolution". Who is "right”? Or, more precisely, who is Marxist? Lenin, a thousand times. Who defends a "naïve formula"? It is Trotsky when he says that the state taking care of the unemployed, the expropriation of capitalists, the state directing the economy constitute "absolutely objective socialist problems". It is enough to visualise clearly this theoretical construction to understand from which idealism it proceeds and how insubstantial it is.

Idealism, because government policy, the will of a handful of communist leaders is enough to change the nature of the revolution, which from democratic, strictly necessary to open the way to mercantilism, becomes "socialist", that is, destined to destroy mercantilism. One only has to look at the measures he cites, defying the "naïve formulas", to "represent clearly" that none of them has the slightest socialist character, and that the argument lacks substance. "Socialism," assistance to the unemployed? But no Marxist could seriously assert it. It is at most an assistance measure, like those taken by "bourgeois socialism", like those that appeared in all their splendour with the "Welfare State". Admittedly, taking state power and eliminating the suffering caused by unemployment was no small feat for the Russian proletariat, but to describe this assistance measure as an "objectively socialist" measure is to create deadly theoretical confusion. "Socialism", the elimination of private owners in big industry? But all Marxist doctrine, Book III of "Capital" among others, shows that it is capitalism itself that leads to the nationalisation of productive forces and that
there is not, in the disappearance of private owners taken in itself, an ounce of socialism. And this remains true even when the agent of this transformation is the victorious proletariat. A stateisation of capital is and remains a stateisation of capital. Economic socialism begins with the destruction of capital.

We could turn the problem in all directions: for a supporter of communism such as he was defended by Marx, only one conclusion is necessary: the measures that Trotsky presents as socialist are not socialist. Trotsky believed that Lenin, by doctrinarism, "forbade" socialism, and that the willingness of the social democrats to take the most radical measures would be sufficient to enable them to accomplish "objectively socialist" tasks. Lenin, on the other hand, knew (and the texts of 1917 prove this sufficiently, in particular "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It") that, while he proposed the seizure of power by the Soviets, there was no possibility of "introducing socialism".

After the October Revolution, he would not refrain from any of Trotsky's measures, and if he sometimes allowed himself to call them "socialists" in a political sense (abuse of language that contributed greatly to subsequent confusion), he knew full well that they were not outside the framework of market production. Who, then, of the two, was making "formal logic"? Trotsky, and literally. He likened the elimination of private capitalists to an initial "absolutely objective" socialist measure. The formal logic here consists in this: state capitalism and socialism are similar in that they eliminate private ownership of the means of production in large state industry; they differ in that one exacerbates commodity production, while the other suppresses it; one extends wage labour, while the other destroys it; one is uncontrollable, while the other is planned. Trotsky disregards the relationships of production, the meaning of economic development and considers statehood as an "absolutely objective" socialist task. That is the "formal logic".

To sum up, one can say that everything that Trotsky had just said has already been said by Lenin. Everything he said in the original was wrong. In reality, Lenin had never intended to "self-limit" the power of the proletariat, he had always been a supporter of the most radical bourgeois democratic measures, but was aware of their bourgeois character, while promising himself, in the programmes of social democracy, not to lose sight of the final goal, socialism.

Some insufferable chatterboxes (after Trotsky who believed the same thing, but who had a different stature) repeat today that the theory of permanent revolution was more "radical" than that of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, which of course allows them to engage a posteriori in a grotesque judgment of Solomon: "On the question of the Party, it is Lenin who was right; on the perspective of the revolution, Trotsky". In reality, Trotsky defended his theory not because he was more "radical" than Lenin, but because he merely baptized socialists with simple measures of economic interventionism. Allegedly more "bold" than Lenin, he was ultimately infinitely more... modest than he was in defining the ultimate goal, socialism.

The Spirit and the Letter
We therefore consider as radically false the eighth of the "Theses" on the permanent revolution, which founds the whole edifice: "The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and, very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfilment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a permanent revolution".

It is a fact that, on the one hand, the exasperation of the Russian proletariat's struggle, provoked by the imperialist war and the economic catastrophe that followed, pushed Russia's double revolution to "the most radical measures". Only the proletariat and the semi-proletarianised peasants could, as classes that were not limited by the defence of any privilege, take such measures. This is why, in addition to the fury of the great bourgeoisie, they had to arouse the unanimous disapproval of all the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties that withered them as a brutal manifestation of "communism" and that the Communist Party of Russia,
taking up the challenge, claimed them as such in the political sense, he who, formed at Lenin’s school, knew since 1905 that there was no question of introducing "socialism" by decrees into backward Russia.

It is also a fact that despite its clear awareness of the limited economic objectives of the double revolution, the Bolshevik party, under pressure from this struggle, endorsed measures it would not even have dreamed of taking in 1905 when Lenin outlined the minimum program of the democratic revolution in Russia.

Finally, it is a fact that the international leadership role which fell to the Bolshevik party because of the bankruptcy of the Second International and the reactions of left-wing minorities, and because of its own insurrectionary victory, had a consequence which, fifty years later, is not to be welcomed, since it contributed to the obscuration of Lenin’s clear Marxist doctrine, but which was historically inevitable: to put at the forefront of the struggle and propaganda of the Bolshevik party not the scientific restrictions on the limited nature of the economic program of the bourgeois democratic revolution, but the socialist purposes of the proletarian party that led it; not the undeniably "bourgeois" nature of the transformations accomplished or to be accomplished while waiting for the help of the European revolution, but their meaning as a "step forward towards socialism" in a historical way that rapid proletarian victories in Europe could really have made if not short, at least direct, and that only the counter-revolution could have cut off more than forty years ago.

None of this prevents the fact that, as Lenin clearly states in "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It" (1917), none of the measures taken in 1917 went beyond the framework of capitalist production relations and thus, from the economic point of view, beyond the framework of the bourgeois democratic revolution. Beyond the measures provided for in the old minimum programme of 1905, they nevertheless remained within the framework of a minimum programme, since their main aim was, on the one hand, to encourage the transition from the petty-bourgeois economy to capitalism and, on the other hand, as far as possible, to concentrate the capital reconstituted in the hands of the State and, in any case, to submit it to its control, in order first to ensure the proletarian dictatorship a material foundation which was cruelly lacking at the end of the civil war, at the bottom of the fall of the productive forces, and then to create the economic and social conditions without which, even in the event of proletarian victory in the advanced countries and massive aid from them, even the passage to the lower stage of socialism would have remained impossible.

And politically, have we moved on to the "socialist" dictatorship of the proletariat? Yes and no. Yes, if we mean that a single monolithic, centralised political party based on the communist programme has emerged. Yes, if we recall the Soviet electoral law which does not respect formal equality and gives more weight in principle to workers’ votes than to peasant votes. Yes, if we mean that the Bolshevik party ends up being the only political party in power in the democratic dictatorship. Yes, if one concludes from this that the power of the dictatorship was not reinforced by the backwardness of the country, but diminished by the presence of the enormous peasant mass.

No if the term socialist dictatorship is used to ignore the characteristics impressed upon the Soviet government by the immense peasant mass. No if it is to make us forget the term "republic". No if it is to present socialism in general as the "government of workers and peasants".

The yes and no method is most often an eclectic method. But we’re not eclectics. The previous explanations were made necessary precisely because Trotskyism wanted to make the formula of the "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants" look like a "renunciation" of the proletariat. In reality, the democratic dictatorship is nothing more than the political power of the proletariat in a backward country, or exists an enormous bourgeois democratic revolutionary mass, and where communist political power cannot ignore the peasant mass.

That said, it is certain that one who reads the texts without solid theoretical points of reference and without the understanding of the conditions of the political struggle of the time, may well believe that Trotsky’s thesis on the "direct transformation of the democratic revolution into a socialist revolution during its development"
has been historically confirmed. Not only hundreds of pages from Bolsheviks and dozens of pages from Lenin himself, but also practical measures such as "war communism" and all those which, even after Lenin denounced the illusions created by the latter, and which aimed at controlling the development of capitalism (such as banning the employment of paid labour in the countryside), will reinforce it in his error. To stick to the texts, on the economic level, he will see, for example, the "incursions" of Bolshevik power "into bourgeois property rights" and, in the first place, the nationalisation of big industry presented as "socialist" and the struggle which, pending the world revolution, was necessary and which opposed "state industry" to "private industry", defined as a struggle between "socialism" and "capitalism". On the political level, he will see denounced the naïve illusions of the "revolutionary Soviet democracy", of the commune state of the first few months, and energetically reminded of the general characteristics of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a centralised, non-parliamentary power, animated by a single party, absolute necessity in the struggle against the infamous European social-democracy that has passed to the defence of "pure democracy" even in the countries of direct socialist revolution.

And from all this, our theoretically disarmed reader, and therefore more attentive to the letter than to the spirit, will conclude that "in its development", even confined within the national borders of Russia by the withdrawal of proletarian revolution to Europe and by its final defeat, "democratic revolution" has "directly transformed itself into socialist revolution". However, it happens that after having been the "original" thesis of the revolutionary Trotsky who could not submit to the authority of the invariant program of the proletariat in the bourgeois democratic revolution, this thesis became (on this point and for Russia) the official thesis of the Stalinist state. As a result, it has become the most colossal state lie in history, a lie based on all the violence inflicted on the unfortunate Russian "people" during the second "accumulation of capital" in Russia and, on the other hand, on all the crude doctrinal falsifications and laborious political flip-flops that the Stalinised party of Russia carried out with unequalled cynicism and tried to impose on the communist elite of Europe and the world.

It is therefore not a pedantic concern for "doctrinal purism", but for formidable events and the need for the proletarian party to decipher not so much the "texts" as history itself that led our current to oppose the Trotskyist doctrine of permanent revolution with the following characteristic of Russia's double revolution, "socialism in politics, capitalism in economics". To understand what must be understood, one must read the texts, always keeping in mind both the theoretical distinction between "double" revolution and pure revolution, to which Lenin remained indefatigably attached, and the vision of the final goal, the destruction of mercantilism, too forgotten in the practical struggle, whereas it had been written in full in the maximum programme of 1905, the realisation of which could not even be addressed in Russia's national frameworks. As for those who, not understanding this requirement, indulge in a stupid literal interpretation of the texts, they remain desperately far from communism.

Later confirmation

When in 1921 Trotsky called for the militarisation of trade unions so that the pressing work of economic construction could be accomplished with the maximum discipline and speed, Lenin replied as follows: "...Comrade Trotsky falls into error himself. He seems to say that in a workers’ state it is not the business of the trade unions to stand up for the material and spiritual interests of the working class. That is a mistake. Comrade Trotsky speaks of a “workers’ state”. May I say that this is an abstraction. It was natural for us to write about a workers’ state in 1917; but it is now a patent error to say: “Since this is a workers’ state without any bourgeoisie, against whom then is the working class to be protected, and for what purpose?” The whole point is that it is not quite a workers’ state. That is where Comrade Trotsky makes one of his main mistakes. We have got down from general principles to practical discussion and decrees, and here we are being dragged back and prevented from tackling the business at hand. This will not do. For one thing, ours is not actually a workers’ state but a workers’ and peasants’ state. And a lot depends on that”.

Although Lenin himself, pressed by the demands of reconstruction (a condition for maintaining the Bolshevik party in power), admitted that, as participants in power, the trade unions could not confine themselves to a
role of pure and simple defence of the workers, he here openly rejects the conception of the "socialist state" which would have had legitimacy only in a pure socialist revolution. In particular, Lenin makes a clear distinction between the common state born of the 1917 insurrection and that of 1921 which, on the basis of commodity production, can only be, as Lenin has repeatedly said, a "workers state with bureaucratic distortions", i.e. deprived of the main characteristic of the Commune-State, which is the tendency to wither away. And Lenin indicates why in his written resolution on the occasion of the 1921 Congress of Trade Unions: "In particular, a free market and capitalism, both subject to state control, are now being permitted and are developing; on the other hand, the socialised state enterprises are being put on what is called a profit basis, i.e., they are being reorganised on commercial lines, which, in view of the general cultural backwardness and exhaustion of the country, will, to a greater or lesser degree, inevitably give rise to the impression among the masses that there is an antagonism of interest between the management of the different enterprises and the workers employed in them". Apart from the fact that in good doctrine state-owned enterprises "reorganised on commercial lines" at the end of the phase of war communism cannot be said to be "socialised", this quotation from Lenin proves that he was perfectly aware of the persistence of class antagonisms generated by the persistence of wage-labour in Soviet society in 1921, and of the need for employees to defend themselves against their employers, including the State. Hence the following seemingly paradoxical position: "We now have a state under which it is the business of the massively organised proletariat to protect itself, while we, for our part, must use these workers' organisations to protect the workers from their state, and to get them to protect our state". A paradox only in appearance, because in reality this formulation is in full continuity with the dual revolutionary line: the economy is capitalist and the state is led by the communist party; the workers defend themselves against the encroachments of capital, while supporting their political power, achieved by the Bolshevik party fighting for world revolution.

The theory of permanent revolution, for which the proletariat, from the conquest of power, takes "objectively socialist" economic measures, would be hard pressed to explain this.

Automatic socialism

While Lenin's position on the trade union question, which constituted an implicit recognition of the economically capitalist character of large state-owned industry, is objectively in contradiction with the assertions on the transition to "socialism" to which he indulged himself for all the reasons stated above, Trotsky nevertheless drew from the whole Russian experience the conclusion that his theory had been fully verified. He therefore made it a universal theory, valid for all countries. In "What is the Permanent Revolution", a set of theses published in 1931 as a summary of his conceptions, one can read in point 3: "Without an alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry the tasks of the democratic revolution cannot be solved, nor even seriously posed. But the alliance of these two classes can be realized in no other way than through an irreconcilable struggle against the influence of the national-liberal bourgeoisie."

The second part of this thesis is absolutely correct. But the first is formulated metaphysically. It seems here that, just as the proletarian government in a backward country could only find itself "forced" to take measures "objectively socialist", a blind necessity makes that only the alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry can accomplish the tasks of the democratic revolution. But there is no fatality there; Marxist theory is not some philosophy of history but the understanding of the real conditions of struggle at different stages and in different areas. To the extent that the development of mercantilism is irresistible, it happens every day that in the absence of a revolutionary alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry in backward countries, the tasks of the democratic revolution are gradually not only "posed", but even end up being in the long run, in one way or another, entirely resolved. It was necessary to say: the duty, the perspective of the proletariat in backward countries is to struggle to lead, with the peasant masses, the democratic revolution to its end. But it should not be excluded a priori that in the absence of the proletariat as a class, this bourgeois democratic revolution could be accomplished, with more or less energy, by parties quite other than those of the proletariat. As it is formulated, Trotsky's thesis has therefore led to the burlesque consequences that his contemporary followers, or at least most of them, have gladly drawn from it. The reasoning is simple: in China
and Cuba, the essential tasks of the democratic revolution have been accomplished. But Trotsky says that only the proletariat can accomplish a true democratic revolution in backward countries. So in China and Cuba, it was the proletariat that took power to found a workers state. The perspective of the Marxists' struggle thus becomes a stupid fatalistic monkey house. In this way, Trotskyist theorists, in defiance of all theoretical decency and historical probability, discover ever-new developments in the "permanent revolution" and enthusiastically welcome the more or less energetic constitution of a few new bourgeois states as victories of socialism. Reversing the right method, they superimpose on real history a fictitious story deduced from their "theory", and summons the first to fade before the second, whereas it is to real history and to it alone that Marxism worthy of the name has always entrusted the confirmation of all its theoretical forecasts.

**Conclusion**

Today more than ever, the proletariat needs a political party that has a clear vision of the final goal, the stages that lead to it, and is devoid of illusions. But the theory of permanent revolution sows the most fatal confusion.

First, it makes us forget that in countries where the bourgeois democratic revolution has not yet been fully accomplished, insofar as there are masses of revolutionary peasants aiming at a democratic revolution in land ownership, the only programmatic perspective of the communists remains that of "Two Tactics": struggle of the proletariat for alliance with this revolutionary peasantry against the more or less inconsistent bourgeoisie in order to destroy from top to bottom the pre-capitalist structures; struggle for political power and, pending international revolution, concentration of capital in the hands of the state. This does not mean that in the present state of the international proletarian movement dispersed and defeated by counter-revolution, one can expect the emergence of a proletarian party capable of defending this program, where it is needed.

Secondly. Trotsky's determination to define as "socialists" (not in the political sense, as Lenin often did, but in the economic sense) dirigiste measures, aimed only, in the Russian context, at state capitalism, although fighting with justified fury Stalinist nationalism, led him to admit a little "socialism in one country", in Russia, and to defend in politics (including in war) the "degenerated workers state". It is on this question that we will return in the following article.

Thirdly. By contributing to spreading the mortal idea for the proletariat that economic socialism can take the hideous face of wages and bonuses, of the race for productivity and labour medals and of all the grating and painful fanfare of capital accumulation, he destroyed for his party the possibility of objectively formulating the maximum programme of pure socialist revolution, confining it to a so-called "transitional programme" perpetuating and aggravating the old fatal social-democratic opposition between "minimum programme" and "maximum programme". And it is this question that we will address in our final article.

*Source: "Programme Communiste", No. 57, October-December 1972*