MORENO AND REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

INTRODUCTION

In 1980, Moreno wrote an important article which outlined his understanding of contemporary revolutionary Marxism. It is my task to critique this article in order to establish what is both principled and problematical. However, it is necessary to put the article into context, because it was written before the onset of the offensive of capital against the gains of the working class within the major countries. Hence it could be argued that the primary perspectives of Moreno are optimistic and imply that proletarian revolution could be an imminent possibility. Instead of that prospect the last forty years have increasingly concerned the triumphalism of the forces of reaction and the related view that the threat of socialism has been marginalised or even overcome. Thus it could be argued that Moreno's views are old-fashioned and even irrelevant. But to rashly reach this view would be premature and dogmatic. This is because Moreno has outlined one of the most eloquent and systematic arguments for revolutionary Marxism. Thus his standpoint requires respectful consideration and reflection. He outlines the understanding that capitalism can never be able to overcome the threat of the revolutionary challenge of the working class. This is why the task of the Fourth International is not irrelevant, and instead its historical mission is to lead the struggle to overthrow capitalism and to encourage the alternative of proletarian revolution. Unfortunately the ability to become the necessary leadership of the working class has been undermined by the strength of revisionist views within the forces of the Fourth International. This has meant that the Fourth International has diluted its principles and politics in order to adapt to Stalinism and petty bourgeois progressivism. Only when intransigent Trotskyism defeats this orientation towards centrism will it become equipped to express the ability to promote itself as a valid leadership of the struggle for proletarian revolution. In this context, Moreno has written this article in order to provide the arguments as to why his current should express the historic interests of the proletariat and the aim of world revolution. Hence his article has tremendous importance and should be studied by any serious students of the history of the Fourth International.

What we have to determine is whether Moreno has written a convincing defence of revolutionary Marxism despite its understandable inability to understand the important events since 1980. Moreno has not been content to argue in a complacent manner why his current is the most principled within the forces of Trotskyism. Instead he outlines in terms of the history of the 20th century why his organisation is the most able to provide the most explanatory and principled understanding of world events from a Marxist standpoint. In this context he is suggesting that his tendency represents the inheritance of the legacy of Lenin and Trotsky. He does not attempt to deny that his group is tiny when compared to the superior forces of Stalinism and Social Democracy, and nor does he deny the fact that his interpretation is a minority viewpoint within the forces claiming to be the Fourth International. But he has confidence that the analysis in his document will become the basis of future events and that world revolution will occur. This means he has tremendous faith in the conception of historical progress and so tends to underestimate the durability and strength of capitalism. He also underestimates the importance of class consciousness and so effectively denies the complexity of the tasks involved in developing the social forces for revolution. But the strength of his approach is that he recognises that Stalinism cannot represent some distorted instrument of world proletarian revolution, and instead only the Fourth International can express the aims of overthrowing capitalism. The major problem is that he outlines the complexity of the class struggle in terms of his own arguments, and so does not accept that reality is outside of the consciousness of any given individual. This means that capitalism has proved to be adaptable and able to withstand the challenges to its domination, and the task of its overthrow has been shown to be more complicated than envisaged by the founders of Marxism. So, the faults in Moreno's document are similar to those that have been regularly expressed by the evolutionary optimism of its major theorists.

MORENO'S INTERPRETATION OF THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME

Moreno outlines his views in the document: 'The Transitional Programme Now'(1) His starting point is the crisis of Stalinism and Capitalism, and the return of the working class to the stage of struggle and opposition to the status quo. This perspective may seem to be optimistic given that he is writing not many years before the onset of the offensive of capital against labour in the major countries, and the demise of the Soviet bloc and its replacement by a collection of bourgeois regimes. However, it is necessary to remember that he is also writing in the aftermath of the French general strike, the Portuguese revolution of 1974, and the mass workers movement in Poland begins in 1980. Thus it is not surprising that the context of his article would be the development of militant class struggle and the onset of serious challenges to capitalism. Consequently, it is understandable that he suggests the crisis of leadership has become a primary political tasks for the principled forces of the Fourth International. The assumption being made is that the spontaneous limitations of these mass struggles has undermined the possibility of a successful conclusion to these developments, and so the leadership of the Fourth International is vital if capitalism is to be overthrown. Moreno could point to events like the Portuguese revolution, when the activity of the workers continually questioned the validity of the capitalist system, and yet it was not overthrown because of the failure to develop principled leadership in this instance.

However what is problematical is that he considers the development of so called bureaucratic workers states as part of the process of the class struggle in the post war years: “The most important of these problems of the post war years is the existence of the new workers states, that emerged from the fact that mass mobilisations forced the counterrevolutionary bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships to break with the bourgeoisie, expropriate it and seize power.”(2) This comment implies that the formation of Stalinist states was the result of mass pressure, and so resulted in a distorted form of proletarian revolution. Such a standpoint was very dogmatic and ignores the fact that the involvement of the working class in the overthrow of capitalism by Stalinism was minimal. Instead this reactionary process was generally the result of the extension of the power of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy, and was caused by the beginning of the cold war and the end of good relations between the USA and USSR. Hence what had occurred was a counterrevolutionary overthrow of capitalism, and the role of the working class in this process was closely controlled by the agencies of Stalinism. But Moreno also contradicts his own view of the character of the formation of bureaucratic workers states because he also describes Stalinism as being 'completely at the service of the imperialist counterrevolution'. (3) How is it possible for an agency of imperialism to carry out a distorted type of proletarian revolution? The point is that Moreno's definition of the social overturns in Eastern Europe is illogical. These events were counterrevolutionary because the working class was not involved in what occurred, and instead the nationalisation of the economy led to the power of a reactionary bureaucracy which had no relationship to the role of any type of workers state. Instead the bureaucracy exploited the working class in terms of the advent of a new social formation. The only type of proletarian revolution that was possible in these circumstances would have been if the working class ended the social domination of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Moreno justifies his standpoint by suggesting that the distorted workers state is subject to the domination of imperialism. This is true to the extent that capitalism is still dominant on a world scale, and is expressed by the role of the most powerful country, the USA. But the Soviet Union still has the ability to establish its own empire in Eastern Europe, which was based on the social system in the USSR. Furthermore, there is genuine conflict between the USA and the USSR because of the tensions of the cold war. The USSR also had an ideology of the triumph of communism via the dynamics of peaceful co-existence. Thus it was never reconciled to the domination of capitalism, and during the detente period the USSR expanded in contrast to the decline of the USA after the defeat in Vietnam. Furthermore, the USSR proved to be capable of repressing any threat to its rule, as in 1956 and 1968. This meant there was a genuine tension and conflict between the USA and USSR. This global rivalry seemed to represent a genuine challenge to the domination of capitalism. Only the internal contradictions of the USSR and Eastern Europe led to an end to this situation between 1989 and 1991.

It is also problematical for Moreno to contend that world capitalism is based on the inherent decline of the productive forces. This view ignores the importance of the post-war boom and the economic supremacy of the USA. It was this very situation that explains the domination of capitalism in this period. The period after 1945 was one of protracted economic expansion, and expressed the ability of the USA via the Marshal Plan, to be able to provide important support for various countries. This meant it was possible to develop the welfare state and the possibility to provide concessions to the working class. This was the period of the affluent society and the increasing role of reformism in order to provide the political basis to sustain the economic boom. This situation lasted until the 1970's when the situation changed into one of increasing inflation and unemployment. The ruling class decided to resolve the impasse by a systematic undermining of the material conditions of the working class. What was required was an effective defensive strategy in order to mobilise the trade unions against this attempt to lower the standard of living of the workers. What this brief analysis indicates is that it is difficult to challenge the power of capital in periods of both boom and depression. There is alternative which is to try and enhance the class consciousness of the working class, and to gain support for a Marxist programme of change.

But Moreno actually underestimates the complexity of this task because he defines the situation in terms of the process of transition from capitalism to socialism. In this context he considers that the formation of supposed degenerated workers states still represents an advance in terms of the prospects for world socialism. This point is elaborated in terms of his view that February revolutions have been realised which have posed the possibility of socialism. (We will discuss this issue later on) As a result of his perspective he underestimates the durability and resilience of world capitalism and its ability to oppose the prospect of change. Instead he tends to outline the process and dynamism of mass struggle, and so glosses over the importance of defeats and the overall ability of the system to be generally stable and able to oppose the possibility of change. Thus there has not been a forward march of world revolution contrary to the expectations of Moreno. Instead the situation is generally characterised by the domination of bourgeois ideology between 1945 and 1980, and the limited development of class struggle, apart from important dynamic exceptions such as France 1968 and Portugal 1974. Primarily, Moreno does not recognise the ability of world capitalism to promote the growth of the productive forces and to be able to improve the material situation of the working class in the major countries. This means his conception of the class struggle must to some extent represent what he would like the situation to be like, rather than what it is. He is unable to outline a process of the stabilisation of world capitalism in the post-war period which would provide a more accurate and perceptive understanding of economic and political developments.

What are the reasons for his tendency towards dogmatism? It is because he imposes the premises of the Transitional Programme onto the post-war period. Thus when this programme was written its context was the intensification of the class struggle, economic decline and the necessity of opposition to fascism. In contrast, the immediate period after the war was different. Europe had been divided into spheres of influence, and the two major powers were able to establish their domination which meant the threat of international proletarian revolution was overcome in the short-term. In contrast, Moreno insists on developing a methodology which he argues is based on that of the Transitional Programme. This means he contends that there is a tendency for the productive forces to decline, there will be a tendency for wars, crises and revolutions to occur, and 'we enter the most revolutionary epoch of history'.(4) The result of this optimistic analysis is that the crucial issue will be whether the crisis of leadership will be resolved. In other words there is no difference between the pre-war and post-war situation. Hence the emphasis of his analysis is to indicate the possibility of what is conceived as a revolutionary process, and to ignore or deny the importance of the overall stabilisation of world capitalism. In order to sustain his approach he has to effectively consider the Stalinist counterrevolution as a form of bureaucratic revolution, which means he distorts the conception of genuine proletarian revolution. He also has to reject the importance of outlining the balance of class forces in the most objective and reflective manner and instead in a one sided manner places emphasis on the development of proletarian revolution, which means events in the Third World become important in this context, and the situation in the major capitalist countries is not analysed objectively and reflectively. Primarily, Moreno does not accept that the period 1945-80 is one of reform and not revolution, and he ignores the fact that it has been possible to uphold the interests of the working class because the welfare state has been introduced in many countries. Instead in a dramatic manner Moreno presents the situation in terms of either crisis or revolution, and the role of stability is ignored. He has to outline the economic situation in a dramatic and one sided manner in order to sustain his perspective that revolution can be a general feature of developments between 1945 and 1980. The methodological problem is that he is trying to uphold what he considers to be the truths of the Transitional Programme rather than introduce important modifications. Indeed, it could be argued that a new programme is needed. This would mean that the question of revolutionary change would be placed within the context of the ability of capitalism to develop the productive forces and raise material standards in many countries. Thus the events in Portugal 1974 would be considered as the beginning of a new period of the intensification of the class struggle, and which led to the counterrevolutionary offensive of capital in the period 1979-80.

In other words the new programme would explain why capitalism was able to withstand the revolutionary impulses of the Second World War, and instead promote economic boom and stability. The expansion of Stalinism would be located within this context, because its domination was at the expense of the prospect of genuine proletarian revolution in Eastern Europe. This situation meant that the issue of resolving the crisis of leadership was actually an underestimation of the tasks confronting Trotskyism in the post-war period. Instead it had a far greater task which was how to promote the class consciousness of the working class and so provide the influence of a socialist ideology which was able to oppose the political domination of Stalinism and Social Democracy. But the activism of Trotskyism meant that this task was neglected and instead there was an emphasis on the view that the next strike or mobilisation could resolve the crisis of leadership. It was not recognised that what was required was developing the influence of revolutionary Marxism within the working class. This meant the elaboration of a form of Marxism that was not content to rehash past truths and views and instead was prepared to innovate. Instead of successfully achieving this task there was an emphasis on providing the latest form of the Transitional Programme. Such a dogmatic conception of Marxism could not be sufficient in relation to the necessity of developing class consciousness. The result of this neglect of complex theoretical tasks could only be to gloss over the importance of the stabilisation of capitalism and instead to exaggerate any instance of revolutionary advance. This is why the Cuban revolution became glorified as a genuine proletarian revolution. Moreno to his credit rejects this development as opportunist, but he does not oppose the perspective of the forward march of the revolution. He is also inclined to over-emphasise the promotion of change, and so in this manner suggests in an over-generalised manner that the present era is the most revolutionary in history. This understanding is idealist and is imposed in a subjective manner onto events. The result of this one-sidedness is to insist that solving the crisis of leadership will bring about the victory of revolution against capitalism.

What is forgotten in this over-optimistic approach is that it is not the role of the party which is the most important aspect of the process of revolution. Instead this aim can only be advanced in terms of the increasingly ability of the working class to reject the influence of bourgeois ideology and become the explicit defenders of socialist aims and values. Thus resolving the crisis of leadership is primarily about developing increasing mass and popular support for revolutionary Marxism. Ideological change has to be the basis for any political advance of the forces of revolutionary Marxism. But there is a problem. Working people will not support a programme that is dogmatic and avoids tackling the most difficult issues of the class struggle. Thus to suggest the era is revolutionary is not convincing. Instead what is more serious and likely to be accepted is a programme that is open and honest about the difficulties in the class struggle in relation to the tasks of revolution. Moreno tries to develop an understanding that meets this criteria, but his approach is compromised by the problem of dogmatism and the ultimate simplification of the view that the class struggle is intensifying and so socialism will be on the short-term agenda. He is aware of the difficulties involved in the revolutionary process, but this does not mean he is reluctant to predict ultimate and imminent success. His approach is ultimately based on the view that historical development will be realised as socialism. Thus the tasks of the revolutionary process are over-simplified because it is not possible to contemplate ultimate failure or a lack of success. At some point the crisis of leadership will be resolved and therefore mean that capitalism 'will' be overthrown. The immensity of this task is underestimated because the issue of developing class consciousness is ignored, and instead it is implied that workers in struggle will become receptive to the revolutionary message. What is ignored by this rigid approach is Gramsci's view that the promotion of class consciousness will be a long and arduous process that may involve difficult problems and reversals. But primarily, what is involved in this context is the promotion of a new world view that challenges the domination of bourgeois ideology. Thus the question of programme is not merely vital but it is also necessary to develop a proletarian view of history, economics, politics, culture and the role of the nation. The mystique of the nation is one of the central tasks that has to be resolved if the ability to challenge capitalism is to be developed. This means that it is not adequate to suggest that principled Marxists have been formed if they have accepted the programme of Trotskyism. Instead what is vital is that a world view is developed which is able to reject the domination of bourgeois ideology. The problem is does the dogmatic character of Trotskyism mean that it is able to achieve this difficult theoretical task?

The starting point of Moreno is that history has confirmed Trotskyism. But the problem is that history does not in some mysterious manner uphold the standpoint of one of the most convincing forms of revolutionary Marxism. Instead it could be argued that history has instead expressed the victory of reaction in the form of the durability of capitalism and the replacement of Leninism in the USSR by counterrevolutionary Stalinism. In this sense, Trotskyism is actually going against the stream. But its credentials are that its politics is based on the interests of the exploited and oppressed. In this sense its aim is the formation of a classless society, and in this manner revolutionary Marxism has validity because its aim is to end the repressive character of the present world system and instead promote communism. But this justification of having a principled character does not mean that Marxism has the consolation that history is in some manner moving in the direction of socialism. There is no inherent spirit of history that represents communism, but in some sense the role of Trotskyism is to create that spirit in terms of the development of class consciousness. Only if this task succeeds can it can said that through the efforts of humanity it was possible to achieve a process of radicalisation that had the aim of communism. What Trotskyism has to reflect upon is whether its propaganda is up to this task of encouraging the development of class consciousness. Moreno's document is welcome in this context because it is aimed at developing serious arguments as to why people should promote communism. The question we need to ask is whether this attempt is adequate in relation to the tasks established by our argument.

Moreno argues that both Stalinism and Social Democracy are reactionary current that accommodate to the domination of world capitalism. They cannot be the agencies of proletarian revolution. This is generally true but in some sense, Moreno has already contradicted this view by suggesting that the bureaucratic overturns of capitalism by Stalinism were in some sense progressive. Presumably he can reconcile his contradictory view by implying that in general terms, Stalinism cannot advance the interests of international class struggle. This point is made in terms of suggesting that only Trotskyism can uphold the perspective of international revolution and the formation of world socialist republics. We also have to qualify this view and suggest that it is also possible because of the limitations of capitalism that both Social Democracy and Stalinism may generate centrist and potentially revolutionary currents. This does not mean that ideological struggle will not be necessary in order to promote these developments. On the contrary the confused character of any centrist development within Social Democracy and Stalinism would have to be engaged in a critical and yet sympathetic manner by Trotskyism. Open polemic would have to be engaged in if it was to become possible to work with these currents in a principled manner. Moreno made the important point that it was in the USSR that the most reactionary Stalinist current was present because of its privileged and dominant position within the world economy. But this view also implied that it could be possible to work with other Stalinist currents which expressed the ferment within that current because of the very crisis of Stalinism caused by the demise of the USSR. This point has been expressed in France and other countries. It is also possible to engage with sections of reformism because of the increasing crisis of capitalism, and these forces are questioning their traditional role of being agencies of capital. Such a situation has developed within the UK in both the 1980's and in the present moment of time.

However, Moreno seems to deny this possibility when he contends that the only principled task is to build Trotskyist parties and argues: “These Trotskyist mass parties can only be built if they carry on an implacable struggle against the bureaucratic and petty bourgeois leaderships inside the mass movement, independently from the fact that those leaderships may occasionally conduct some progressive or revolutionary struggle, forced as they are under the pressure of the mass movement, and even if they come to break with the bourgeoisie and set up a workers and peasants government.”(5) This comment is contradictory. It implies that the Trotskyists should refuse any genuine cooperation with reformists, even if they become supporters of mass struggles or promote the formation of a workers and peasants government. But these very developments would represent suitable and principled reasons why the Trotskyists should promote discussions with reformists about the formation of a united front, and how to advance the aims of a workers government. In these situations the radicalisation of reformism would mean that they would become receptive to the revolutionary arguments of the Trotskyists and so the possibility of united work would become favourable. This united front could only facilitate the possibility to advance the aim of ending capitalism and establishing socialism. But this process of agreement between the forces of reformists and Trotskyists should not involve ideological concessions to the former. Unity should not mean that the Trotskyists had become political supporters of reformism, and instead they will remain critics of the approach of this current. It will be vital that the independent voice of Trotskyism is still present despite the formation of a united front. Only in this manner will unity express a principled content.

Moreno concludes his first section by suggesting that the Transitional Programme is still valid for the contemporary period of the class struggle. This is a hasty and dogmatic claim. The point is that the Transitional Programme was written when the class struggle was intense within Europe and America. It could be argued that transitional demands represented a valid strategy for the mass mobilisation of the working class and the struggle for power. The central issue was to overcome the problem of Stalinist and Social Democratic opposition to the intensification of the class struggle. Thus the Trotskyists had an important role in this situation. But the situation was changed by the outcome of the world war. The Cold war actually stabilised capitalism and facilitated post-war boom. The development of the welfare state undermined the class struggle and mass developments were generally limited to the Stalinist bloc and the Third world. This complex period called for the development of a new programme. But this was not carried out because the Trotskyists were still content to try and connect reality with the analysis of the Transitional Programme. This meant reality became to be defined in ideological terms of the imposition of a text onto reality. The starting point for theory was not the attempt to describe reality in terms of its characteristics, but instead the understanding of events in terms of the immaculate text. It was not accepted that reality had changed since the Second World War, and instead the dogma of a pre-revolutionary situation was upheld. Moreno tended to uphold this standpoint, as we will outline.

THESIS 2 – A CENTURY OF STRUGGLE OF THE WORLD PROLETARIAT

Moreno denies any important differentiation during the 20th century in relation to the class struggle which is presented as constant and intense: “During the present century it didn't refrain even a minute from struggling against the exploiters, specifically against capitalism and imperialism. Thanks to its struggles, the proletariat and the workers have obtained fundamental minimum conquests, such as the great trade unions, the workers parties, the social rights and since the October revolution and specially after the second world war, revolutionary conquests in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in many countries transformed into workers states.”(6) This comment indicates an avoidance of any significance of the defeats and reverses in the class struggle in both the 1930's and the post-war period, and Moreno also includes the formation of supposed bureaucratic workers states as part of the revolutionary process. Thus in a distorted manner, the Stalinist bureaucracy is considered to be an instrument of the class aims of the proletariat. In this manner a conception of the forward march of world revolution can be tentatively upheld. This understanding is elaborated in terms of the role of the struggle for national emancipation in the third world, the defeat of USA imperialism in Vietnam, and the increased importance of struggles of the oppressed force within society. Such analysis is utilised in order to justify the following conclusion: “Since 1914 and the Russian revolution opens up the epoch we are living in, an epoch of crisis and constant decadence of imperialism and capitalism, and of worldwide confrontation of revolution and counterrevolution. This is the epoch of international socialist revolution.”(7)

The problem with this analysis is whilst the impression of the importance of revolution is outlined in terms of the increasing intensification of the class struggle and opposition to capitalism, the significance of counterrevolution is not explained. Moreno does accept that capitalism is still dominant despite the struggles conducted against it, but he does not elaborate on this point. Instead the significance of defeats of the working class in the 1930's which led to world war and then cold war is not outlined. Thus the inability of the workers to end capitalism is continually reduced to the problem of the crisis of leadership. The major aspect of the defeats of the working class is blamed on the role of Social Democracy and Stalinism, but what is not explained is the role of bourgeois ideology, such as nationalism, which undermines the development of the class consciousness and combativity of the working class. Hence, Moreno's approach is also outdated by the fact that since 1980 it has been the offensive of capital against labour, in the form of conservative politics, which has primarily weakened the strength of the working class. This situation has been worsened by the fact that this very attack on the working class obtained some popular support. Such a development could not occur if the working class was defined primarily by the role of struggle. This view has been an illusion of Trotskyism, and instead it could be argued that often working class consciousness and activity is defined by the role of family, local community, nationalism and concern about the welfare state. The role of struggle has been undermined by the very ability of capital, especially in the recent period, to put the forces of organised labour onto the defensive. The period of renewed struggle in the late 1960's and early 1970's has proved to have been brief. Thus what has been indicated by the century of class struggle outlined by Moreno is the ability of capital to defend its domination, and the working class has become increasingly disorganised by this situation.

Moreno argues that the working class has had opportunities to overthrow capitalism, but failed because of the crisis of leadership. This is an over-simplification that underestimates the problem of class consciousness and the ability of capitalism to oppose any threat to its domination, whether that meant the development of fascism in the 1930's, or the deflationary and austerity measures of more recent times. In actuality, the opportunities for the working class to take power have been brief and limited to situations like Italy in 1920, Spain in the 1930's, or Portugal in 1974. Most of the last hundred years has indicated the ability of capital to be ideologically hegemonic and dominant in terms of its promotion of nationalism, or as a result of conservative deference within the general population. But it also necessary to indicate that the increasing affluence of the working class in the major capitalist countries means that the question of struggle for socialism has become problematical. Why militantly oppose the system if limited gains can be made within capitalism? Only when the working class is at the brink of power does this issue seem to be resolved, as in Portugal 1974 when people spontaneously grasped the opportunity of the possibility to overthrow capitalism. But until that rare situation develops, it seems to be more reasonable and rational to aspire to achieve most gains within the system by means of collective bargaining or self-improvement. Only when it appears possible to end the alienation of the domination of capital does the question of revolutionary change seems plausible. But this possibility is rare and can be quickly be replaced by the re-stabilisation of the domination of capital. This is the true situation of politics in the major capitalist countries, long periods of tranquillity and short periods of change and flux. It would be dogmatic to primarily blame reformism for this situation. Instead the very inertia and traditions of capitalism are also important in explaining the conservative stability of the system.

Moreno was right to suggest that the power of the Stalinist state could not defend the supposed gains of socialism. Stalinism was unable to oppose the domination of imperialism and it was even unable to prevent wars between different workers states such as that which occurred between China and Vietnam in 1979. However, he does not make the conclusion from this analysis that the Stalinist social formation was reactionary and instead insists that it is a contradictory phenomenon that has resulted in the overthrow of capitalism. This is because he effectively argues that it is possible to form a workers state without the actual political rule of the proletariat, but this view ignores that the result of this situation is that labour is subordinated to the domination of what is a bureaucratic class within the relations of production. Such a situation cannot be understood in terms of the importance of a workers state and instead must be defined as expressing either state capitalism or the rule of a new bureaucratic class. Thus the counterrevolutionary role of the bureaucracy which is outlined by Moreno cannot represent a type of workers state. The subordination to imperialism which Moreno outlines is because the USSR ultimately cannot advance the aims of the world working class to achieve socialism. Instead its limited expansionism can only have the goal of extending the power and privileges of the Soviet bureaucracy. This is why the Stalinist bureaucracy accepts the domination of the USA even if it still tries to extend its area of control and influence. In this context socialism means to Stalinism the development of the importance of the USSR within the world situation. This perspective is consistent with both accommodation to imperialism and opposition to it under certain circumstances, but the major aspect which is registered by Moreno is that Stalinism is opposed to the development of genuine world revolution. It represents an important problem in regards to the authentic and principled development of the class struggle. In that manner Stalinism is an agency of imperialism alongside the reformism of Social Democracy.

However, it would be a simplification to suggest that the crisis of leadership is the primary problem of the class struggle. This is because the issues that contribute to the defeats of the working class are more complicated than the following explanation provided by Moreno: “The leadership crisis of the world proletariat is, to say it in another way, the treason of the recognised bureaucratic leadership of the workers and mass movement is the decisive factor for the historic defeats that happen...and that imperialism has not been defeated.”(8) To explain events in such a rigid manner is to ignore the fact that the working class has often internalised its subordination to capital in terms of resigned acceptance of domination within the relations of production and this means labour is unable to recognise its capacity to become the major organiser of the economy, which would occur under socialism. Thus possibly the most important aspect of the submission of labour to the existing situation is a lack of imagination or ability to envisage an alternative to capitalism. The system that is presently dominant seems to be eternal and therefore cannot be considered capable of being transformed by human activity. This is precisely why Marxism is crucial in order to promote the understanding that an alternative to capitalism is possible in the form of socialism. In this context it is vital to argue that the approaches of Stalinism and Social Democracy will not bring about genuine socialism based on the participation of working people in its functioning and development. Thus if socialism is to be realised it is vital that Marxism succeeds in relating the various class struggles to this conscious aim, and therefore the various mass movements become an offensive for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the new society.

Moreno outlines the counterrevolutionary role of Stalinism, and this was true in terms of the period when it was at its maximum influence. But it important to note that the general demise of Stalinism has not led to the increasing importance of revolutionary Marxism. On the contrary, this is because the end of the state power of Stalinism has only enhanced the importance of the propaganda that the era of 'socialism' has been replaced by the unprecedented supremacy of capitalism. The very ideological association of socialism with Stalinism, however misplaced, has meant that revolutionary Marxism has not been able to increase its influence in these circumstances. Furthermore, the fact that Stalinism has been replaced with various bourgeois regimes has only increased the prestige of capitalism and apparently contributed to the view that there is no historical alternative to this system. Hence this situation indicates that there is a social force that is more important than Social Democracy and Stalinism for upholding capitalism, which is bourgeois democracy. It is the very political character of capitalism which implies that it is democratic and so ultimately based on the rule of the people. It is argued by the ideologues of the bourgeois system that there is no other form of society that is more representative and accountable because of the fact of universal suffrage, and therefore it is argued that socialism is inferior because it is undemocratic and based on the rule of a single party. Thus the standpoint of bourgeois democracy, which is philosophically vindicated by intellectuals like Kant and Thomas Paine, is an expression of a political culture which seems to be unsurpassable. The very repressive experience of Stalinism, which is defined as totalitarianism, seems to be confirmation of the superiority of bourgeois democracy. But the ultimate virtue of bourgeois democracy is that it is the political system by which the electorate provides permission for the economic system of capitalism to continue. In this context, Social Democracy is complicit with this system because it accepts the economic limitations of bourgeois democracy and so does nothing to promote the alternative of socialism. Only when Marxism can present a convincing alternative to bourgeois democracy can it begin to consider that socialism could become a valid possibility for the working class.

Moreno outlines in a sober fashion that the victory of the October revolution was followed by a second stage from 1923-1943 which involved almost continuous defeats for the working class, primarily because of the reactionary limitations of Stalinism. But this analysis becomes idealist when he identifies a new period of world revolutionary developments with the expansion of Stalinism: “The third stage is the actual post-war period where we are in the presence of the greatest revolutionary upswing ever known: it is able to expropriate the bourgeoisie in China and in a third of mankind. But now, because Stalinism keeps on being the dominant leadership, relatively fortified by the military defeat of Nazism, the workers states that come up are bureaucratised workers states and capitalism is able to recover in Europe.”(9) Moreno explicitly outlines the contradictions in his standpoint when he indicates the apparent contribution to the ascendency of world revolution in terms of the ending of capitalism by Stalinism, and yet he also contends that this development was an integral aspect of the stabilisation of the primary economic system! The point is that Moreno cannot establish a consistent view of the character of Stalinism: is it a distorted form of the revolutionary process, or counter-revolutionary? He inclines to the former view when he outlines how Stalinism is able to overthrow capitalism and establish a bureaucratic workers state. This is considered to be a progressive act. On the other hand he also indicates the subordination of Stalinism to capitalism, and that Stalinism has a counterrevolutionary opposition to genuine proletarian revolution. His confusion is similar to that of the world Trotskyist movement in general. The problem is resolved if we consider that the overthrow of capitalism is reactionary if it is not carried out by the activity of the working class and peasantry. The bureaucratic demise of capitalism is not progressive if based on the use of military forces that are not under the leadership of the workers, such as in relation to China and the role of the Soviet Red Army. Even the partisans of Yugoslavia were not acting according to the aims of genuine socialism, even if they were not precise replicas of the Stalinism of the USSR. Hence the regime in Yugoslavia made concessions to the working class, even if that did not mean it was genuinely socialist. The Communist Party, based on Stalinism, was still the dominant force. But the semi-popular character of Yugoslavia meant that it was able to make a genuine break with Stalinism. It became a hybrid state with the interaction of Stalinism and some limited form of popular support.

Moreno tries to resolve his inconsistency concerning Stalinism by suggesting that it is ultimately counterrevolutionary because it lacks the influence of revolutionary leadership, which can only be provided by Trotskyists forces. But the problem is that this aspect is then projected into being the primary aspect of the class struggle. He comments: “The economic processes are no longer the determinant ones and the subjective factor – the leadership – converts itself into the fundamental one. It should be reminded that this is so because the whole epoch is determined by the revolutionary struggle of the masses.”(10) This view implies that the majority of struggles are revolutionary in content, but they are held back from realising the overthrow of capitalism by the lack of principled Trotskyist leadership. If this is what is being suggested it is an over-optimistic misinterpretation of the class struggle. Most struggles are not implicitly revolutionary. They involve defensive actions with modest aims such as strikes for higher wages and better conditions. Only rarely, or in exceptional circumstances, do these struggles become of revolutionary proportions, and only then does the question of the lack of revolutionary leadership become crucial. Thus the major task of the Marxist party in many situations is of a propaganda nature, it is about trying to convince people of the necessity to strive for socialism. This task involves trying to explain why socialism is superior to bourgeois democracy and capitalism. It has to be said that a party will not be immediately successful in this task, many people will reject their message and instead continue to support the existing system. Hence it is not possible to smoothly go from theory to practice, instead it is entirely possible that people will frequently reject the virtues of revolutionary leadership and instead continue to prefer reformism or even conservatism. Furthermore, the most conscious representatives of the capitalist system have consciously tried to discredit the views of revolutionary Marxism, and have even described radical reformism as being too left wing. This means it is a long and patient task to build up support for Marxism. However, if this task is carried out in a principled and consistent manner, it means that even a few individuals can create the conditions in which Marxism can begin to influence the class struggle. In this context the popularity of Marxism could start to interact with the mass movement, as with the leadership of the Militant Organisation at the time of the Poll Tax dispute. But these situations are still exceptional. Most struggles occur without any obvious Marxist input.

Moreno outlines his argument by maintaining that without a Lenin or Trotsky a proletarian revolution became impossible. This contention is only partially true. In 1917 what truly transformed the situation was the role of the Soviets. These were instruments of working class radicalism and which raised the expectations of the working class. If the Soviets had not developed the actions and ideas of Lenin and Trotsky would have been futile. Thus what made the revolution was the interaction of the Soviets with the leadership of the Bolsheviks, and it would not have been possible for the revolution to occur if the workers were not radicalised by their involvement with the Soviets. Hence the actual art of revolutionary leadership is to promote the confidence of the working class that it can change society. Instead of leadership being about dictating to, or instructing the class, it is rather about promoting the belief that collective class action can transform the situation and end thee domination of capital. This process of development is immensely advanced if the workers are able to create institutions that express their popular will such as Soviets. In this context revolutionary leadership becomes relevant and meaningful. But such situations are rare and exceptional. They have not happened in the recent period because of the important success of capital in the class struggle. Hence we have to start from the beginning with the Marxist organisations developing their arguments in favour of socialism.

Moreno clarifies his understanding of the importance of the crisis of leadership in the following manner: “This law may be formulated as follows: the proletariat will not be able to defeat world imperialism as long as it doesn't overcome its crisis of revolutionary leadership, and because of this all its struggles will be full of victories that unavoidably will take us to catastrophic defeats. Nothing better to show it as the post-war boom: its real cause is the treason of Stalinism, which invited the western toilers to work more than ever for imperialism.”(11) The problem with this view is that the crisis of leadership is defined as being the inexorable and primary reason for the defeat of the class struggle in every instance. This is a dogmatic view that denies the importance of other reasons such as the economic improvement of capitalism and the ability of the system to make concessions to the working class. Hence the post-war boom was not merely the result of the betrayal of Stalinism, but was also because of the strength of American capitalism and its ability to create a boom based on the creation of new institutions in order to regulate and develop world trade and finance. This situation also led to the generation of the welfare state which led to increasing support by the working class for capitalism. Hence it was the dynamism of the world economy which primarily meant that the unrest caused by world war two was resolved without the advent of revolution. Furthermore, the cold war led to support for America within the European working class. This situation meant the working class was divided by the cold war settlement and so the ability to develop international unity against capitalism was undermined. Obviously, Stalinism contributed to this situation because of its occupation of Eastern Europe, but the major reason for the undermining of the class struggle in this context was the dynamism of capitalism after the war. Depression had ended and trade increased, and the material welfare of the working class was improved by the stabilisation of capitalism. In these circumstances, the revolutionary perspective of the Fourth International seemed to have been outdated by events. Hence it tried to remain relevant by bestowing Stalinism with revolutionary credentials, and the actual reactionary role of Stalinism was glossed over by the perspective that this was the epoch of the creation of deformed workers states. Moreno is right to criticise this notion and instead outlined how the role of the USSR was part of the economic and political situation created by the cold war. We can also suggest that the USSR was not a genuine opponent of USA imperialism and instead was primarily concerned with its own power and prestige. The rivalry between the USA and the USSR was not about opposition to, or support for world revolution, but instead primarily concerned the confrontation of two expansionist and effectively imperialist rivals.

But is also important to outline how the post-war situation seemed to represent the ability of capitalism to resolve its previous situation of crisis and depression. Far from being unable to develop the productive forces, the system expanded globally in terms of increased growth, trade and the liberation of colonies from imperialist control. It seemed that the very Marxist theory of imperialism was being disproved by the effective end of inter-imperialist rivalry and instead expressed the creation of a united world economy under the auspices of the USA. This situation represented the material reasons why the dynamics of proletarian revolution were effectively overcome for a period of time in the major capitalist countries. Thus the issue of the crisis of leadership was resolved for a period of time by the very favourable material circumstances of post-war world capitalism. Only when the period of advance of the productive forces started to regress did the polarisation of the class struggle re-emerge. But even under changing circumstances it would be dogmatic to reduce all political events to the significance of the crisis of leadership. Instead there were question of the influence of bourgeois ideology, or the limitations of spontaneous struggle as in France 1968. The Communist party was discredited in France in 1968 but a new leadership did not emerge because of the influence of anti-party views and the inability of Trotskyism to become relevant. The events of 1968 were expressed as a celebration of enjoyment, and so the strategic importance of the overthrow of capitalism was not recognised. Workers occupied the factories but they did not connect this development to the aim of challenging the capitalist system. The result of the limitations of spontaneity was that the ruling class could eventually reimpose order, and so undermine any implicit threat to the system. The inability to overthrow capitalism was not in this situation primarily because of the crisis of leadership, but instead as a result of the limitations of class consciousness. Hence the students were always the leaders of developments, and the workers never fully articulated their distinct class interests, and nor did they elaborate any strategic objectives. Only because of these limitations was the Communist party able to have a reactionary role and impose a wage increase for the workers who occupied the factories. Only in the last instance did the question of the crisis of leadership become applicable. Hence the situation was more complicated than reducing it to being an expression of the crisis of leadership. Instead the major problem in 1968 was the limitations of spontaneity which meant that definite objectives were never elaborated, or advocated. In this context the ruling class could wait for the mass strikes to wane and become exhausted. Only in this context could the Communist Party exert its opportunist approach and so bring about an end to the general strike. The workers were not able to outline an alternative to the wage increases being advocated by the Communist party. They could not promote the perspective of political power because their spontaneous actions did not amount to justification of a revolutionary perspective. In this context, the question of the crisis of leadership did become important, but the actual primary problem was the continued low level of class consciousness of the workers. They were not able to form Soviets that could represent a rival power to the institutions of the system. In other words the character of the working class was the legacy of the progress of French capitalism since world war two. This meant they still had a reformist consciousness, even though they were carrying out some very radical actions. The rejection of politics in this situation meant that the strategy of revolution was not supported. Instead there was an illusion that the general strike was the revolution. The aim of undermining the state power of capitalism was not advocated because it was considered that this issue was being resolved by the mass actions. This meant the tasks related to the role of an actual revolution were not supported. The events were more like a festival than a determined attempt to seize power. Only the connection of the power of spontaneity to revolutionary leadership could have resolved this situation. But in order for this possibility to occur would have required a development of class consciousness. There was no significant Trotskyist party that could have promoted this task. The problem was the lack of a party that could related to the dynamic logic of the mass struggles. This meant the lack of unity within the forces of Trotskyism was a problem that was practically expressed during the events of 1968.

Moreno over-estimates the dynamics of the class struggle when he defines the situation in terms of a permanent mobilisation of the working class. (12) This approach represents a caricatured view of the actual situation which is instead generally defined by inertia and the generation of few major disputes. Only in exceptional circumstances do these developments become generalised like in relation to France 1968. This is because the trade union bureaucracy are able to ensure that grievances are generally resolved by negotiation and without the necessity of strikes. Furthermore, the working class is itself influenced by the bourgeois ideological view that strikes are counter-productive and should not occur. The offensive of capital since 1980 has also weakened the working class and so it is less able to carry out militant actions. The defeat of the miners in 1984 seriously undermined the validity of the utilisation of strikes in order to protect class interests. Thus Moreno is imposing a view of reality onto the actual situation which is illusory and effectively does not exist. The result is that he underestimates the complexity of the dynamics of the class struggle, and glosses over its periods of stagnation. This also means he glosses over the importance of the development of a party if the possibility of a mass offensive for socialism is to occur. His optimistic view of the class struggle means that he effectively assumes that its logic will resolve the issue of the creation of a revolutionary Marxist party. In fact this question will require a long period of patient work, and also the necessity of the creation of unity between the various different organisations. Only if this task is successful will the party be able to influence events, and so promote the aim of socialism as the task of the class struggle. Moreno's effective optimism meant that he underestimated the difficulty of this task. The result of his emphasis on the crisis of leadership was that he considered revolution to be imminent. This was an illusion.

THESIS 3-4: THE REFORMIST EPOCH AND OCTOBER REVOLUTION

Moreno describes the period 1870-1914 as a reformist epoch in which revolution was not on the agenda but the working class was able to obtain important concessions from the ruling class. But the outbreak of world war in 1914 constituted a serious defeat for the working class because the parties of the Second International accepted the logic of national defence and refused to oppose the war. The organisations of the working class had become reformist supporters of imperialism. This analysis is effectively correct, but it actually underestimates the scale of the defeat of the working class in 1914. This is because many of the parties of the Second International claimed to be Marxist, and so should have been prepared to oppose the dynamics of imperialism in 1914. They betrayed their internationalist principles and instead became effective bulwarks of the regime. Moreno suggests that the Second International was never really a principled organisation. This view is harsh because it did carry out many anti-war resolutions in its international meetings. Hence we can suggest that the opportunist actions of the Second International were a betrayal of its Marxist aspirations. It deliberately rejected its previous support for proletarian internationalism and instead upheld the social chauvinist approach of national defence. Moreno explains this development in terms of the failure of the Second International to build genuine revolutionary parties. This is partially true because this organisation was led by the Marxist views of Kautsky. The failure of people like Kautsky to decisively oppose the war led to the decay of the Second International in 1914.

Moreno argues that the only alternative was represented by the Bolsheviks, which was an organisation of professional revolutionaries. This was partially true because it can also be elaborated how Trotsky's small group upheld proletarian internationalist principles when the war occurred. The vital task posed by the war was unity between Lenin and Trotsky's group. Only the combined talents of both of these leaders could ensure that the necessary leadership was being created which could react to the situation in Russia in an imaginative and principled manner. But above all the generation of Soviets in 1917 transformed the situation. This meant that the working class had become radicalised and was receptive to the ambitious programme of Lenin. Moreno argues that without the role of the Bolshevik party the October revolution would not have happened. This has truth, but it also necessary to emphasise that the role of the Soviets was crucial. Thus the development of revolutionary leadership of the Soviets enabled the overthrow of the bourgeois government to occur. The class conscious working class was organised within the Soviets, and this institution enabled the aims of the Bolsheviks to be realised in terms of its increasingly dominant authority. Lenin and Trotsky also united on the basis of this perspective.

Moreno is right to outline the importance of the creation of the Third International. This could have become the basis to promote world revolution, but its integrity was undermined by the nationalist leadership of Stalin. The Bolsheviks wee right to suggest that revolution in Germany would have transformed the situation. This would have meant the success of the working class in a major capitalist country, and so the balance of forces would have been on the side of the aim of world socialism. But the major opportunity was not realised when a general strike occurred in opposition to the Kapp putsch. This development could have led to the peaceful transition of power to the working class, but the Communist party did not recognise the potential of this development. Instead it organised its own attempts to seize power in 1921 and 1923. These failed because they lacked the support of the majority of the working class. After this period the German Communist Party degenerated because of Stalinism and was no longer a suitable instrument of revolution. In general the Communist International was undermined by Stalinism, and its original perspective of world revolution was diluted by the national orientation of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

THESES 5-6: STALINISM AND THE FOUTH INTERNATIONAL

Moreno outlines the terrible legacy of Stalinism in terms of its opportunist leadership and inability to provide effective policies for the Communist International. Important defeats occurred, and the result was the victory of fascism in Germany. Stalinism was part of the character of counterrevolution in the era of world revolution. But Moreno does not seem to accept that this reactionary development was the logical outcome of what had become a bureaucratic workers state in the USSR between 1918 and 1928. The single party regime led to the domination of a privileged stratum that was increasingly opposed to the emancipatory possibilities associated with world revolution. Stalin repressed any dissent within the party whether it was led by Bukharin or Trotsky. Trotsky made the mistake of not recognising that it could be principled to form an alliance with Bukharin against Stalin, instead he made the mistake of defining Stalin as a bureaucratic centrist. His understanding of Stalinism was more incisive when he defined it as Bonapartism. However, Trotsky refused to accept that the repressive economic measures involved in collectivisation meant an end to the degenerated workers state. He refused to accept that the bureaucracy had become a new ruling class based on extracting the surplus product from workers and peasants. Thus Trotsky came to the strange definition of the USSR a form of workers state despite the fact that the workers had no political or economic power. Moreno does not tackle these issues because he is content to accept the analysis of Trotsky.

But Moreno is right to argue that in opposition to Stalinism, Trotsky had no other option than to form the Fourth International. This organisational action was the only basis to uphold the legacy of Marxism and its perspective of proletarian revolution in opposition to the Stalinists effective rejection of this approach. The formation of the Fourth International meant that all principled Marxists had a common internationalist banner and basis to reject both Social Democratic and Stalinist opportunism. In contrast, failure to form the FI would mean that Marxists being isolated within national countries and the result would be a fragmentation of the principled forces which could only be overcome by the development of an international organisation. However the problem was that the FI was formed on the basis of adherence to a conception of a revolutionary upswing. This perspective represented a dogmatic perspective that anticipated events rather than was able to elaborate a more empirical approach that recognised the contradictions of the forthcoming inter-imperialist war. The point was only if the working class could become the leadership of the struggle against Fascism would the progress of the world revolution be ensured. What was underestimated was the regressive effect of imminent imperialist war on the consciousness of the international working class. But what undermined the FI from its inception was its inability to allow for differences within its ranks without the necessity of splits. Thus differences within the USA SWP over the class character of the USSR led to a serious split, and some of the most experienced leaders of Trotskyism were expelled. The opposition within the SWP was defined as revisionist because it had the audacity to disagree with Trotsky, and so this meant that this current was expelled. This meant a precedent was created in that the Fourth International became characterised by orthodoxy and any dissenting current was likely to be expelled.

Moreno accepts this situation because he defines unorthodoxy as expressing opportunism. Only Trotsky's views amount to being defined as principled and therefore he equates Trotsky’s views with the objective truth. This standpoint means that he effectively favours an international based on rigid ideological homogeneity, but the issue of what constitutes orthodoxy becomes continually contested. Factions within the FI argued about what is the most principled interpretation of the views of Trotsky. Any apparent revisionism is defined as opportunism and the result is constant splits and the formation of new variants of a 'principled' FI. It is not possible to obtain unity because this would mean the acceptance of the importance of diversity and the role of innovation in theory. However, the various oppositional currents are no better than the orthodox because they have their own versions of what is acceptable in terms of the theory of state capitalism or bureaucratic collectivism. The result is continual fragmentation of the FI. It is not possible for anyone to propose the basis of reunification, and so what occurs is the proliferation of many small parties.

THESIS SEVEN: THE ERA OF REVOLUTIONARY VICTORY

Moreno defines the period beginning with the end of the Second World War as an era of revolutionary upswing. But this point is made in a contradictory manner because he also relates this development to the enhanced strength of Stalinism, and the intensification of the crisis of leadership. Thus the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in Eastern Europe and China takes the form of the enhancement of the bureaucratic domination of Stalinism over the working class. But in an inconsistent manner, Moreno implies that the role of Stalinism seems to express a distorted form of the advance of world revolution. Hence he is effectively arguing that bureaucratic counterrevolution is actually a type of proletarian revolution! The ambiguity of this standpoint is unsatisfactory. It has to be emphasised in the most definite manner that the process of extending Stalinist control over society is not a type of proletarian revolution, even if the capitalists are no longer dominant. The working class has not been involved in this process of change, and instead what is vital to this development is the ability of Stalinism to create its own form of elite society. The nationalisation of production may formally mean that capitalism has been ended, but the working class is still being exploited within the new relations of production. Thus this development cannot be considered as an expression of some form of bureaucratic socialism. Nor can it be argued that what has occurred is an expression of a process of world revolution. For this to occur would involve the leadership of the working class, but instead the Stalinist retain strict control over society. Hence Stalinism cannot be some type of agency of world revolution. The adaptation of Moreno to this view implies that he is not able to effectively oppose the views of Pablo, who explicitly defined Stalinism as a distorted instrument of world revolution.

But there are contradictions in the approach of Moreno because he also wants to emphasis the counterrevolutionary character of Stalinism. Thus we arrive at the inconsistent notion that counterrevolutionary Stalinism can carry out the progressive act of nationalisation, and so acts on behalf of the working class. We can only overcome the tensions in this standpoint if we reject any view that Stalinism has a progressive economic or political role and instead affirm that its actions are reactionary in terms of the establishment of a form of nationalisation that does not involve the working class as the administrators of production. What has occurred indicates that the bureaucracy acts against the interests of genuine socialism and has created a new form of exploitative society. Only in this manner can we provide consistency to the view that Stalinism is counterrevolutionary! Any notion that world revolution is occurring in a distorted manner is emphatically rejected. Instead what has occurred is a definite defeat for proletarian forces because the opportunity to overthrow capitalism by genuine proletarian revolution has been ended by the political and military action of Stalinism. The methodological limitation of the orthodox Trotskyists is that in their eagerness to claim that what has occurred under the domination of Stalinism is in some sense progressive, they ignore the complete lack of involvement of the working class in the process of ending capitalism. This is why the Trotskyists consider the bourgeois state as an agency of change, via the role of a popular front controlled by the Stalinists. Furthermore, only with the occupation by the USSR is capitalism ended in Eastern Europe. Moreno cannot provide this type of opportunist consistency in his approach instead he tries to reconcile the contradictory opposites of accepting that Stalinism is counterrevolutionary and yet it advances world revolution in a distorted manner. He is prepared to accept these inconsistencies because he insists that his approach is an expression of the orthodoxy of Trotskyism. Any other standpoint would be an example of revisionism which cannot be contemplated.

Moreno accepts that America has become the most important power on the planet in the post-war period, but he immediately undermines this view by suggesting that colonial revolution has undermined the domination of imperialism within the world. In one sense this view is true in that the process of unrest in the countries that had been controlled by the imperialist powers was coming to an end did mean that the situation had changed to the advantage of the oppressed peoples. But in another sense what Moreno was claiming was exaggerated because whilst the role of imperialism may have been undermined, this did not result in the decline of world capitalism. Instead capitalism adapted to the new situation of the liberation of peoples previously under the control of the major colonial powers. Thus the hegemony of British capitalism was ended by these developments, but America became the new major force in this changed situation. Furthermore, imperialist domination took new forms in terms of the role of the multi-national companies and their ability to determine the character of world production and trade. This meant that world capitalism was adapting to the new situation created by the political liberation of the colonies. Also within the former colonial countries the class that was able to gain most advantage was the national bourgeoisie which developed links with the multi-nationals and in this manner promoted the exploitation of an indigenous working class and peasantry. Only in a few countries was state capitalist development encouraged such as Egypt, Algeria and Argentina.

Thus for Moreno to define this situation as a crisis for imperialism was a dogmatic assertion. Instead it could be argued that anti-colonialism was encouraged by America, and this country gained from its realisation. The world capitalist system stabilised in these new forms, and the effective end of formal imperialism was replaced with neo-colonialism. Moreno is being more accurate when he contends that: “The stage of the imperialist wars, disputing the sharing up of the world has come to an end because of the weakness of all the former empires. The victory of North America in the imperialist war wipes out the problem of ruling over the capitalist world.”(13) He outlines in a realistic manner how the hegemony of America within the world economy has been established, and that this is a new situation in which the role of counterrevolutionary war will replace the previous importance of inter-imperialist war. This point was indicated by the fact that the USA assumed the major responsibility for opposing the national liberation of Vietnam, and eventually became involved in war to oppose the unification of that country. The USA was also the major antagonist of the Cuban revolution and carried out an offensive against the USSR in terms of the cold war. Thus it was a simplification for Moreno to suggest that the USA and the USSR were effective partners in the aim of dominating the world. It would be more accurate to suggest that antagonism defined their relations, and that a genuine cold war took place. The policy of peaceful co-existence was the Stalinist perspective of the attempt to end the supremacy of the USA, and so it is not surprising that the ambitions of the USSR clashed with the USA in relation to the situation in Berlin and Cuba. Whilst the USA opposed the aims of Stalinism in terms of intervention in Korea and Vietnam. These tensions indicated that the social systems in the USSR and the USA were antagonistic rivals and so it is a fallacy for Moreno to claim that there relations are primarily based on the subordination of the USSR to the USA.

The cold war started with the division of Europe into competing blocs, and the USA government disagreed with the denial of democracy to the people of Poland. In this context the Marshall plan was the method by which the loyalty of the people of Western Europe to the USA was obtained. Thus it is dogmatic for Moreno to claim that these events indicated the subordination of the USSR to the USA. Instead the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe was bound to ultimately result in the cold war. The expansionist plans of the Soviet bureaucracy opposed the aims of the USA to create a single and integrated world economy. Hence the interests of world capitalism meant the objectives of the Stalinists could not be reconciled with those of the USA. Churchill proclaimed the beginning of the cold war in 1946, the USSR could either surrender or oppose the USA. Stalin did accept that Western Europe was part of the bloc of capitalism which was why he betrayed the Greek revolution, but he also refused to accept the Marshall plan for Eastern Europe. Moreno emphasises the fact that Stalin accepted the domination of capitalism in Western Europe, but he underestimates the significance of developments in Eastern Europe. In this manner he can claim that Stalinism had a policy of accepting its subordination to world capitalism. This is a one sided view that glosses over the importance of the antagonistic relations of the cold war. The Truman doctrine of 1947 was the ultimate confirmation that the interests of the USA and the USSR were opposed. The opposition of the USSR towards the USA did not mean that it had progressive interests, instead it had its own form of counterrevolutionary objectives that promoted the development of cold war.

Moreno describes this period as one of a 'colossal upswing of the revolutionary mass movement'. (14) This view could only be an accurate description if it was meant to include the forces of Stalinism coming into opposition with American imperialism. But in general it does not accurately explain the situation in relation to the class struggle. This is why Moreno contends: “Until now, the revolutionary upswing has made its way through the traditional organisations of the mass movement, at the point that all the expropriations of the national bourgeoisie have been realised by bureaucratic or petty bourgeois leaderships that led to the bureaucratic workers states, as in the case of Cuba.”(15) Thus it is being suggested that in some distorted manner the process of the formation of degenerated workers states represents the imperatives of the class struggle. However, he also accepts that this development cannot represent a principled form of opposition to imperialism. These tensions in Moreno's approach could be resolved if it was emphatically claimed that only genuine expressions of proletarian revolution represented the dynamics of class struggle. In this context the bureaucratic overthrow of capitalism was counter-revolutionary because of the very fact that it did not involve the role of the working class.

In relation to Cuba this was obviously an authentic expression of a popular revolution which was based on mass and popular mobilisations of the workers and peasants. Between 1959 and 1961 the government was a revolutionary regime that relied on its mass support for its development. However, the decision to become a replica of the USSR was taken by a few people, and there was no reference to the role of the popular mass organisations. Hence the process of assimilation into the USSR consolidated what was becoming a single party state and led to the formation of a Stalinist type bureaucracy. What became the Cuban Communist Party effectively supervised the process of transformation of Cuba into an ally of the USSR. The popularity of Castro was utilised in this elitist manner instead of creating any accountability of the regime to the people. In this sense a Bonapartist dictatorship was formed. Thus what occurred had its special features in that a democratic regime was formed which had its potential for the formation of a healthy workers state. But this potential was never realised because the Jul 26th movement became influenced by Stalinism and as a result accepted the process of the bureaucratic overthrow of capitalism via state nationalisation and the formation of a single party regime. This indicated the ideological limitations of Castro and Guevara because they considered that what was occurring was an expression of genuine Marxism. They viewed the actual authentic Marxism of Trotskyism with distrust. In ideological terms they were not opposed to genuine proletarian revolution, but considered that it could be carried out by an elite with mass support. This acceptance of elitism meant that Castro accommodated to Stalinism and regarded the Cuban Communist Party as their most important ally in the process of transition to socialism. Thus the ideological limitations of the Cuban revolutionary leadership, the charismatic mystique of the leader, led to the acceptance of a process that was similar to the transformation that occurred in Eastern Europe. The tragedy of the situation was that the potential for a genuine proletarian revolution was present in the popular character of the revolution. In this context the fact that Trotskyism was not influential was crucial in relation to the bureaucratic trajectory of the revolution. This meant the Soviet leadership was accepted as allies and the political conditions were established to accept the model of the USSR.

Moreno considers that world Stalinism was subordinated to the imperatives of capitalism. This is because the major countries remained capitalist and the periphery of Eastern Europe went Stalinist. This point may have some truth in terms of the balance of power, but it does not explain the antagonism of the cold war. The actual fact is that the creation of the domination of Stalinism in Eastern Europe was primarily because of the occupation of this area by the Red Army as a result of the expansion caused by the logic of the Second World War. In this context the politicians of the USA could only accept this situation. Hence USA imperialism had to accept this development, and it was powerless to oppose the ultimate bureaucratic overthrow of capitalism by the Stalinists. Thus it is a flawed perspective for Moreno to suggest that what happened was because of concessions made by the USA to the USSR. Instead the USA had no other choice than to accept what had happened in Eastern Europe. Thus there was no bargain between the politicians of the USA and the USSR about what had happened in Eastern Europe. Instead Moreno defines these events in the following manner: “Those global concessions were forced consequences of the great revolutionary upswing in the immediate after-math, who transformed a third part of mankind into bureaucratised workers states. They were anyhow colossal victories of the workers movement and the world masses due to the really contradictory combination that forced imperialism to make those concessions. As such, they should be defended against any attack from imperialist counterrevolution.”(16) This formulation contributes to the view that what has occurred is a form of proletarian revolution, or counterrevolutionary overthrow of capitalism. This approach is inconsistent because only authentic and genuine proletarian revolution can end the domination of capitalism in a progressive manner. Instead the bureaucracy has brought about the demise of capitalism in a counterrevolutionary manner in terms of the role of the Red Army and the manipulation of the state apparatus. This process was not accepted by the USA as some form of concession to the USSR. Instead what resulted was the cold war. The leadership of the USA could not accept the promotion of the power of the Stalinists of the USSR, and the result was the Truman doctrine which announced a global opposition between capitalism and communism. Churchill in 1946 had already announced the development of cold war. Hence the US never accepted the social overturns in Eastern Europe and instead developed a perspective of world domination in terms of the military pressure of the USA on the USSR.

The tension between the USA and the USSR did not mean that capitalism was in conflict with socialism. Instead the USSR was ruled by an expansionist bureaucracy that came into conflict with the geo-political and economic objectives of the USA. In this context the principled position of the working class was not to support in a critical manner the objectives of the USSR, but instead to develop its own independent position. However, because the Fourth International considered that the USSR was a type of bureaucratic workers state the result was that it provided the Stalinist bureaucracy with critical support. Moreno accommodated to this standpoint in a contradictory manner, because he also emphasised the reactionary role of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Thus in a contradictory manner they are considered to be both a distorted expression of the world revolutionary process and a force for its suppression. Thus: “The counterpart of these victories, of those bureaucratised workers states, is that they managed to bridle the revolutionary process and to defeat internally the revolutionary and workers movement, preventing by all means the process of revolutionary upswing and permanent mobilisation.”(17) How is it possible for the development of bureaucratised workers states to represent simultaneously the influence and importance of the working class and yet also the limitation and restriction of these forces because of the importance of bureaucratic domination? Moreno tries to answer this question by suggesting that the process of the development of social overturns in one sense represents the permanent mobilisation of the masses, but there is also a limitation to this dynamic impulse because the Stalinists ultimately restrict and limit the change that occurs in a manner that is acceptable to their interests. This view would imply that genuine forms of proletarian revolution occur which are ultimately restricted by the role of Stalinism. If this is the standpoint of Moreno it would represent an impressionistic understanding of what occurred in Eastern Europe. In actuality the Stalinists always had tight control of the state after the occupation of Eastern Europe, and in an elitist manner they acted to end capitalism when relations worsened with the USA. In this process there was not even the semblance of any aspect of proletarian revolution. Instead events were dictated by the relations between the USA and USSR. In this context the impulse for proletarian revolution was defeated by the occupying Red Army. This meant the overthrow of capitalism lacked any working class influence.

It is suggested that Pabloite revisionism developed as a response to the events in Eastern Europe. But this current is not defined by Moreno. Instead we can argue that the whole International was in crisis because it considered the actions of Stalinism as resulting in the formation of bureaucratic workers states. Thus it was being suggested that Stalinism could carry out the tasks of the working class. This view meant that Stalinism was in some sense regarded as being progressive and able to substitute itself for the role of the working class. Hence it was logical that the dispute between Tito and Stalin would mean that Yugoslavia would become considered to be a progressive type of society. Moreno denies the importance of this point and instead outlines the independent interests of the bureaucracy in Yugoslavia and China. He is able to gloss over any limitations in his position by emphasising the importance of political revolution in the Stalinist states with regards to the 1950's and 1960's. But this perspective is connected to an optimistic view that a world revolutionary upswing is related to the defeat of the USA in Vietnam. In fact this defeat only enhanced the importance of detente involving the USA, USSR and China. The development of new diplomatic relations between the major superpowers meant that whilst the cold war continued it took the increasing form of decreasing tensions. This situation did not undermine the involvement of Cuba in Southern Africa and the USSR in Afghanistan. The USSR was at its greatest level of military power, and it seemed that the USA was on the defensive.

Moreno did not recognise this increasing influence of the USSR, which often took the form of Cuba's intervention in Southern Africa. Instead his emphasis was on a new revolutionary upswing which he considered had begun with the defeat of the USA in Vietnam and the development of the 1974 Portuguese revolution. He also assumed that the end of economic boom would imply the generation of international economic crisis. He predicts that the Portuguese revolution would be the beginning of a European socialist revolution. This perspective is extend to a global level of the USA, USSR and Japan. There is no reasons given for this optimistic standpoint. Instead it could be argued that the major superpowers had stabilised the situation in terms of the success of detente, and by 1980 the UK and the USA became dominated by governments determined to undermine the development of the welfare state and increase the power of capital in this manner. In other words, Moreno did not recognise the factors that enhanced the stability of capitalism and Stalinism in the 1970's. Instead in a dogmatic manner he could only predict the possibility of international revolution. The only empirical substance to his perspective was developments in Nicaragua, and this took the form of a petty bourgeois revolution.

However, his standpoint does represent a recognition of reality when he comments in a sober manner that: “Our party, inclusive of Trotsky, didn't foresee that the crisis of leadership of the Fourth International would continue without an onset of solution for over four decades. Hence, it neither did foresee the colossal development, influence and flourishing of the bureaucratic counterrevolutionary apparatuses, principally of Stalinism, nor the extreme weakness, the propagandistic character that our International would continue to have, despite the colossal revolutionary upswing of these past four decades.”(18) This is a generally accurate summary of the situation that has developed in the post-war period. But Moreno glosses over the fact that the very perspectives of the Fourth International have been falsified by the onset of cold war. The ascendency of the USA was never anticipated and the survival of Stalinism was not predicted in the Transitional Programme. What was required was the elaboration of a new programme that could explain why these developments had occurred. Primarily the dynamism of world capitalism was underestimated. This point was connected to the rise of reformism in Western Europe. The result was the formation of the welfare state that was a credible alternative to the perspective of revolutionary change. In general the USA could provide the material basis for the revival of world capitalism. In contrast, the ascendency of Stalinism seemed an unattractive expression of the supposed character of socialism. The international working class was differentiated by the cold war. Hence the situation was unfavourable for the promotion of revolutionary parties. Hence the prediction that mass revolutionary currents would be created in the post-war period was bound to be falsified. This would not have meant that the role of the Fourth International would have become superfluous. Instead its major task would have been to explain this situation. However in a dogmatic manner it tried to deny the importance of the stabilisation of world capitalism. Moreno carries out his own analysis of the post-war situation. He admits that a tremendous economic boom occurred. But he also implies that there was a distorted revolutionary process that resulted in the formation of bureaucratised workers states. The international productive forces have developed and no type of October revolution has occurred. Such analysis is essentially accurate but is not sufficient. It is also necessary to accept that the durability of Stalinism has been underestimated and the same point can be made about the influence of Social Democracy. Hence the prospect for the development of revolutionary class consciousness has taken the reactionary form of thee increasing support for Stalinism and Social Democracy. This point is connected to the modification and improvement of capitalism from the viewpoint of the working class. The very ability of capitalism to realise the material interests of the working class seemed to imply that revolutionary politics was antiquated. The objective basis for Marxism was being replaced by a type of reformism that was content to obtain gains within the existing system. Hence when the events of 1968 and the 1970's occurred, what was still a reformist inclined working class was not prepared for revolutionary change. Furthermore, the revolutionary party was not able to gain influence in this situation and is unable to advocate change in an effective manner.

But the major factor that Moreno develops in order to explain the ineffectiveness of the Fourth International in this period is the influence of revisionism. He argues that the new leadership after Trotsky was adequate in relation to the new tasks that confronted the FI. The accommodation to Stalinism by Pablo meant that Trotskyism was unable to promote a revolutionary perspective. This point has some validity but it ignores the fact that the very conception of bureaucratic workers states is opportunist and implies a progressive role to Stalinism. The whole of the FI, apart from some very small groups, was complicit in this opportunism. In this context, Pabloism was only the most obvious manifestation of opportunism within the FI. But Moreno does define the reactionary character of Pabloism in the following manner: “That capitulation was hidden under a false objectivism: the pressure of the mass movement is so strong that it will force all leaderships to assume permanently a revolutionary centrist course, increasingly progressive, taking them unconsciously to Trotskyism.”(19) This accurate understanding of Pabloism does not recognise that its basis was in the over-optimistic perspectives of the FI which meant that the primary impetus for the class struggle became economic factors and the importance of class consciousness became downgraded. This error was consolidated in terms of the methodology of Pablo. Hence the whole of the FI has some responsibility for the centrist degeneration that occurred. The only basis to overcome these limitations was to develop new perspectives that could have emphasised the importance of the stabilisation of capitalism and the crucial role of principled leadership in order to oppose both Stalinism and Social Democracy. It was the dogmatism and orthodoxy of the FI that was ultimately the primary responsibility for the influence of Pablo's centrism.

Moreno outlines how an aspect of Pablo's opportunism is accommodation to Stalinism. But how could this be overcome? The very problem with the concept of bureaucratic workers states is that it must accept accommodation to what is defined as a progressive role for Stalinism in relation to the demise of capitalism. This standpoint is then extended on a world scale and so Stalinism is given a centrist rather than reactionary relationship to capitalism. Moreno argues that opportunism within the FI led to accommodation to Castro and a result defining Cuba as a healthy workers state. This view was based on the apparently anti-Stalinist impulses of the Cuban revolution. But Moreno does not outline how this view can be opposed. The point is that it is an illusion to define Cuba in terms of its supposed independence from the USSR because its trajectory and character has been based on an apparent increasing dependency on the Soviet Union because of a process of structural assimilation. Hence the Cuban regime may have originally had genuine revolutionary impulses, but these became undermined by the increasing connection of Cuba to the USSR. In other words Cuba did have the possibility of becoming a genuine proletarian revolution because of its mass support and the involvement of the workers and peasants in its development. But the consolidation of the regime without effective organs of popular democracy and accountability of the leadership meant that it underwent a process of bureaucratic degeneration. This resulted in the establishment of the connection with the USSR, and Cuba became a replica of Stalinism. The Fourth International emphasised the development of popular change in Cuba but did not explain its process of decline in terms of the increasing relationship of the USSR. Nor did Moreno outline this connection, instead he was content to outline the creation of a bureaucratic workers state in terms of the limitations of its petty bourgeois leadership. This view has some relevance, but it was the increasing connection to the USSR that was crucial in the trajectory of Cuba.

Moreno contends that the Fourth International became dominated by a centrist trend that supported the view that capitalism could still develop the productive forces, and that bureaucratic leaderships could become centrist and so acquire principled type policies. This meant it was not necessary to develop Trotskyist type parties as in Cuba. Moreno is arguing that Mandel has not rejected the policies of Pablo in a principled manner. The original basis of revisionism within Trotskyism was in terms of the followers of Shachtman who refused to defend the USSR. This meant they were unable to differentiate between the counterrevolutionary character of Stalinism and the fact that a workers state had been established. In contrast the modern form of revisionism accommodates to Stalinism, and so deny the necessity for the Fourth International. This analysis of Moreno does not recognise that it was Shachtman's current that was able to explain why the USSR could expand in a reactionary manner and was able to overthrow capitalism in order to establish a new form of exploitative regime. In contrast the orthodox Fourth International had difficulty in understanding the process of developing the domination of Stalinism in Eastern Europe. It was because of these theoretical problems that the tendency for the Fourth International to accommodate to Stalinism was created. Moreno tries to establish an understanding of Stalinism that overcomes these centrist limitations, but it is questionable whether he is able to develop a principled alternative. Instead he outlines an inconsistent approach that is accepts the view that Stalinism in some sense carried out progressive tasks in the process of the overthrow of capitalism. He also suggests that in some manner, the forces of the bureaucracy are the expression of the imperatives of proletarian revolution. It is this very standpoint that explains the tendency for opportunism within the Fourth International.

THESIS 11 – THE STRUGGLE AGAINST REVISIONISM

Moreno outlines how the opposition to centrism within the Fourth International was inconsistent and was undermined by the US SWP accepting the policy of the International Secretariat on the policy of Cuba. He argues that the reason for this accommodation to opportunism was the view that the petty bourgeois leadership in Cuba could create a healthy workers state. Furthermore, Moreno rightly suggests that the alternative of the International Committee to suggest that Cuba was still capitalist was confused and inadequate. However, he also maintains that the accommodation of the Fourth International to the government in Nicaragua has led to a principled alternative, which presumably includes Moreno's current. The problem with this analysis is that the development of immediate factional struggle are not adequate. Instead what is required is a theoretical process of reflection that is able to outline the character of developments since 1940. The point is that Trotskyism continually accommodates to Stalinism because it has a limited and flawed understanding of its character. The result is that there is a constant tendency for accommodation to this phenomena. Moreno does outline an attempt to define the actions of Stalinism. He outlines how it represents an expression of a bureaucratic apparatus that has continued to become stronger. He argues that because of the weakness of the Fourth International the revolutionary upswing of the last 30 years has only enhanced the influence of the various forms of the bureaucratic apparatus within the international working class. This meant the social conditions were created for the formation of bureaucratic workers states. What has been a revolutionary task has been carried out by a counterrevolutionary apparatus. The problem with this view is that it is paradoxical and contradictory to imply that a reactionary force can carry out progressive historical tasks such as creating workers states. Instead the expansion of the USSR, and the creation of national Stalinist forces as in China, meant that capitalism could be overthrown without the role of the working class. The social power of Stalinism meant that its interests could be realised without the involvement of the working class. Hence it would be a wrong to imply that the bureaucracy in some sense carried out the overthrow of capitalism in terms of the influence of the role of working people. Instead it was the geo-political might of the USSR, or the local military importance of Stalinism, which meant that these actions occurred. Thus it would be wrong to characterise these developments as a distorted proletarian revolution. Instead what occurred was the ability of the Stalinists to repress both the capitalists and the working class. This point is not recognised by Moreno who instead contends that: “The expropriation of the bourgeoisie – that great revolutionary victory – has been exploited by the bureaucracy to gain a high reputation in the workers movement of its country and of the world. The fulfilling of that colossal revolutionary task consolidated gigantic counterrevolutionary apparatuses on a planetary scale.”(20) This point is flawed because the very bureaucratic character of what has occurred is based on the repression of the influence of the working class. Hence the bureaucracy has not, even in some reactionary form, carried out the interests of the working class. Instead it has consolidated its power at the expense of the workers and capitalists. Thus the Soviet bureaucracy does not have some organic connection to the working class and is instead expressing its distinct interests in relation to the overthrow of capitalism. Indeed Moreno actually upholds this point when he accepts that the power and privileges of the bureaucracy is based on the opposition of its economic interests to those of the working class: “That unlimited source of benefits and privileges for the bureaucracy make it to be the immediate and direct enemy of the masses of those countries (as long as there are no imperialist attacks).”(21) The very economic power of the bureaucracy is opposed to the interests of the working class. In this formulation, Moreno is making concessions to the view that the bureaucracy is exploiting the working class, and this explains the development of social antagonism. However, this admission should undermine the very concept of the bureaucratic workers state, but Moreno does not make this conclusion. Instead he uphold the standpoint of the degenerated workers state despite its limitations and inconsistencies.

But Moreno makes a realistic appraisal of the reasons that the Fourth International has not been able to become a mass organisation. He comments that “A party can only gain mass influence in a revolutionary upswing, but the opposite is not true: a revolutionary upswing doesn't conduct automatically to mass influence of the revolutionary party.”(22) Moreno is trying to understand why the Fourth International has not been able to become a leading party despite many instances of mass struggles. He could have also suggested that the lack of tradition and inability to challenge the domination of Social Democracy and Stalinism were also contributory factors. But the major reason that he does not mention is that the very tendency to split within the Fourth International undermined its credibility and meant that small rival organisations were formed that had a sectarian reputation. These mini sects were not able to challenge the durable influence of reformism and instead the new organisations were often based on centralised regimes that lacked inner party democracy. Only the converted would consider these authoritarian organisations to be attractive. Thus the very sectarian character of Trotskyism contributed to its inability to become mass organisations. This is why in periods of mass upheavals the mini grouplets did not grow and instead were still limited by their internal problems and rivalries. Furthermore, the most important Trotskyist organisations tended to be centrist and so were unable to provide revolutionary leadership.

Hence the concept of the crisis of leadership extended to Trotskyism itself. This point is accepted by Moreno when he comments: “At the same time the existence of Pabloism was a fundamental additional factor, not only to weaken the Fourth International, but also to disintegrate all its sectors, even in those who resisted Pabloist revisionism.”(23) The tragedy is that any tendency that has attempted to try and resolve this crisis has often been undermined by its own internal problems and disagreements. It has not been possible to resolve the contending claims between upholding internal cohesion and diverse views. In this context democratic centralism has not been successful and the only remedy is to try and develop a form of organisation that is more tolerant and able to accommodate the development of opposition and conflict. Instead what has occurred is the generation of a collection of centralised leaderships with the tendency for authoritarianism. The only way to resolve these unsatisfactory organisational developments is by the promotion of new splits. But each split means that the various groups become less credible to the working class. Instead it seems more sensible to join the relevant reformist organisation.

Hence, whilst Moreno may be right to blame revisionism for the original promotion of splits within the forces of the Fourth International, he cannot explain why this development is also repeated in what could be considered to be more principled organisations. Instead he blames the tendency for splits on the generation of constant revisionist views such as the perspective that petty bourgeois organisations can become proletarian as in relation to the Cuban events and the related understanding of the character of nationalisation. He is right to suggest that this standpoint is opportunist in that it implies the Cuban revolution becomes increasingly progressive and proletarian despite the limitations of its leadership. Hence this means that the act of nationalisation does not automatically imply that a healthy workers state is formed. This possibility would only be realised if the working class was able in a principled manner to establish economic democracy and become the effective ruling class of society. Instead Moreno implies that the Cuban leadership becomes Stalinist and so in that manner cannot establish a healthy workers state: “The petty bourgeois and bureaucratic currents of the workers movement reflect a privileged sector of the mass movement, one that came up in the imperialist epoch and that is antagonistic to the workers and popular base.”(24) But to then suggest that the bureaucracy is a privileged layer within society does not explain its role in the process of the overthrow of capitalism. In this context it is a distinct economic and political force that has its own antagonistic interests and so aims to promote the subordination of the working class within the new economy that is being formed. This is why it is an illusion to suggest that a type of bureaucratic workers state is being created by this counterrevolutionary development. The invasion of Eastern Europe by the Red Army could only result in either withdrawal or the consolidation of a new social type of regime. In this context the new economy could only be established by the bureaucracy establishing new forms of exploitation of the working class.

Moreno contends that the bureaucracy is an agency of imperialism inside the working class, but this is a vague definition which does not explain that the actions of the Stalinists in Eastern Europe was carried out against the interests and objections of the capitalists of the USA and Western Europe. The Stalinists and capitalists are united against the prospect of proletarian revolution, but they were divided in relation to having distinct geo-political objectives. The result of this situation was the formation of rival cold war blocs and the development of genuine international tensions. Hence the role of Stalinism as an agency of imperialist counterrevolution only occurred in the Western capitalist countries. In this context, Stalinism opposed any development of mass struggle against capitalism as in relation to the events of the French general strike in 1968. But this did not mean that Stalinism merely accepted the dictates of imperialism in relation to events in its own power bloc. Instead it was motivated by opposition to the attempt of the USA to control the whole world economy. Thus the subordination of the USSR to the USA was limited. These countries were also rivals. But despite this one-sidedness in Moreno's approach he is right to suggest that Stalinism can never become the progressive expression of the interests of the working class. Thus he is generally accurate that the Stalinist aspiration to defend its privileged status within Western capitalist countries meant that it undermined any development of opposition to capitalism. However, he was wrong to imply that this situation meant the USSR was an agency of imperialism in international terms. Instead we can suggest that there was genuine rivalry at a global level.

THESIS 14 – THE DECLINE OF THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES

Moreno contends that it is a revisionist error to uphold the view that the productive forces of capitalism have expanded in the post-war era. Instead he argues that any development which has occurred is because of the role of armaments. He explains the significance of the post war boom not in terms of the internal dynamics of capitalism but instead because of the division of Europe by the USA and USSR. This perspective is a dogmatic denial of the importance of the post-war boom. The point is that the development of the economies of the USA during the Second World War enabled it to become the most powerful economic country in the post-war period. This meant the expansion of the world economy occurred because of the role of Marshall Aid. This situation stabilised world capitalism and enabled the welfare state to be created in many countries. Hence to argue that it was the cold war that created any aspects of boom is an expression of dogmatic reasoning. In other words to suggest that it was the role of Stalinism which created the world boom is a one-sided view which ignores the dynamism of the USA economy. It was the economic strength of the USA which enabled it to dominate the world. In this manner the USSR was put on the defensive and it had to end capitalism in Eastern Europe in order to undermine any attempts to extend the Marshall plan to this area. Indeed in an inconsistent manner, Moreno accepts this point when he comments: “There is only one world economy, one world market ruled by imperialism. Inside that economy dominated by imperialism there are more or less acute contradictions with the bureaucratised workers state where the bourgeoisie has been expropriated.........The economy of any workers state, bureaucratised or not, is subject to the world economy controlled by capitalism, as long as imperialism continues to be economically stronger.”(25) If Moreno is arguing that the world economy is dominated by capitalism then he must also logically accept that it was capable of developing the productive forces in the post-war period. Only in this manner could it be said that capitalism was able to be economically supreme when compared to Stalinism. Instead in an inconsistent manner, Moreno implies that capitalism is dominant but this is because of imperialism and has nothing to do with economic dynamism!

The limitations of Moreno's approach is that he considers it revisionist to accept that there has been a genuine post-war boom in the post-war period. Instead the concept of economic decline is provided with orthodox credentials. This approach denies the importance of empirical reality in the name of principles, and so cannot accept that the very political stabilisation of capitalism in the post-war period could promote its economic recovery. We can reinforce this point by the fact that both Stalinism and Social Democracy in Western Europe were also motivated by the tasks of economic recovery rather than revolution. They generated the political conditions in which economic boom could occur. Thus the working class was not aiming for revolutionary change in these circumstances, and indeed the workers in Western Europe became pro-American because of its role in the process of economic development. Despite Moreno's scepticism it was possible to end widespread poverty in Western Europe, at least in temporary terms. In contrast, the Fourth International attempted to maintain the dogma of the decline of the productive forces in a vain attempt to maintain revolutionary perspectives. Moreno's views are a modified form of this standpoint. The result is that he considers that it is the rigid truth that capitalism is defined by its supposed decadence rather than dynamism. He denies that the generation of the conditions for profitability will promote the possibility for economic growth. Instead in an illusory manner that ignores the actual basis for the regeneration of world capitalism in terms of the dynamism of the war time economies, he imposes the situation of the 1930's onto the 1940's. His standpoint is not upheld by any empirical references, rather he has tried to uphold a crude form of Marxist economics. This means he rejects any of the innovations of Mandel's work on economics. Mandel is denounced for having the audacity to accept the fact of the post-war boom. This view is rejected as revisionist. The result of this dogma is that at least 30 years of actual economic growth is denied in the name of theoretical principles.

THESIS 15 – THE IMPORTANCE OF FEBRUARY REVOLUTIONS

Moreno outlines the importance of the phenomena of February revolutions. He establishes this aspect in relation to the fact that there has only been one successful transition from a February to an October revolution. The latter development was based on the interaction of the mass organisations of the Soviets with the role of the revolutionary party. In contrast the February revolution, whilst socialist in its character, because it is based on the importance of the role of the working class and undermines the domination of the bourgeois state, does not become consciously socialist due to the lack of interaction of the mass movement with the role of a revolutionary party. Hence the February revolution indicates the mass power of the working class but it fails to realise its maximum potential because of spontaneous limitations: “That combination – a low consciousness together with a revolutionary mobilisation, so widespread that it makes a revolution – makes up a February revolution. The low consciousness of that workers movement, even during the revolution, makes it possible for the counterrevolutionary apparatuses and the petty bourgeois currents (reformist in programme and concepts) to match with the revolution and to conduct it during the stage.”(26) However, there is a difference in that the actual February revolution of 1917 attained the highest level of development because the working class established Soviets that were able to express their aspirations. Hence the counterrevolutionary leadership of the Mensheviks was always in opposition to the logic of the Soviets which was towards the realisation of the power of the working class. In contrast, only the revolution in Spain attained a similar level of development. In contrast, other revolutionary developments such as France in 1968 were characterised by the lack of organisation and instead were influenced by spontaneity and the continued illusions in the view that class interests could be realised without Soviet type organs. Thus the February revolution in Russia was always superior to its imitations in other situations. The Russian working class in 1917 quickly assumed that the Soviets had greater credibility than the bourgeois government, and became increasingly critical of the opportunist leadership of the Mensheviks. In this context the revolutionary perspective of the Bolsheviks could quickly gain support.

But if we take this difference into consideration the analogy with the February revolution acquires validity. For example the anti-fascist revolution of the working class in Spain in the mid 1930's implied that the possibility of the overthrow of capitalism had become an immediate issue. The role of anti-fascism was to place proletarian revolution on the agenda. But the Stalinists utilised the very fact of the anti-fascist or February revolution in order to suggest that the process of change should be limited to this development. The very success of the February revolution was used in order to contend that the process of movement to an October proletarian revolution was not required. This strategic problem is the very point being made by Moreno, because of the lack of influence of a Bolshevik type party in the realisation of a February revolution, the domination of opportunist organisations would be utilised in order to oppose the transformation of the situation by a new October revolution. The completion of the proletarian revolution would be undermined and instead the very revolutionary process would be changed and distorted by the influence of reactionary forces within the working class. Menshevism within the working class, or Stalinism and Social Democracy, would be able to limit and ultimately curtail the process of change. In this situation the impulse for the full realisation of proletarian revolution would be limited and then ended. Moreno rightly suggests that in a situation in which the logic and dynamism of the February revolution is opposed by the reactionary influence of the reformists and Stalinists, the revolutionary forces should uphold the perspective of the workers and peasants government. The problem is that the workers and peasants government could be formed by opportunist parties that would want to limit the development of this process to the acceptance of capitalism. In that situation the revolutionary party would criticise the moderation of the opportunist form of this administration.

But what of Cuba? Did this not suggest that the February revolution became an October one? Certainly the February revolution was realised in Cuba in terms of the influence of workers and peasants that established organs of power similar to Soviets. In the February aspect of the revolutionary process the bourgeois state was destroyed, as occurred in some other instances, and the mass power of the working class was established. But tragically the July 26th movement was not an expression of revolutionary Marxism. Its original ideology was petty bourgeois democracy but it become increasingly influenced by the Soviet Union and its conception of socialism. Thus the process of nationalisation did not result in the realisation of workers control and the mass organs became subordinated to the role of the dominant party. Cuba became structurally assimilated into the USSR and so in this manner the logic and potential of its February revolution was not realised. Instead the process of change meant that the democratic mass movement was undermined by the influence of Stalinist ideology and the popular organs of power became unaccountable expressions of the domination of a party elite.

Unfortunately the overall usefulness of Moreno's perspective of February revolution is undermined by the fact that he over-extends its importance and it becomes a term that explains an apparent generalised revolutionary upswing in the post-war era. He comments: “We may state that the actual after-war is the stage of the unconscious socialist revolution, of a generalised February all over the planet......The revolutionary struggle of the masses go on to obtain great historic conquests and making victorious revolutions despite their lack of maturity.”(27) This perspective appears to suggest that the world situation becomes defined by some objective dynamic of world revolution despite is apparent lack of consciousness and concrete results. The result of his standpoint is to claim that the onset of February revolutions in generalised and increasingly regular forms will increasingly result in the success of new October's: “The February's mature in the consciousness of the proletariat and that maturation, by the way, will be in support of the strengthening of our parties. Both processes will lead unavoidably to the October revolution, just as the 1905 and the February revolution led to the Bolshevik October revolution. It is an unavoidable sequence of the revolutionary upswing.”(28) This is a dogmatic claim based on a crude and non-empirical view of an apparently irreversible and inevitable conception of a revolutionary process. Instead it should be acknowledged how complex and rare is the prospect of proletarian revolution. In this context even the possibility of a February type event is not a regular occurrence and instead is still essentially occasional and exceptional. Furthermore, to claim that February will result in October is an example of over-optimistic reasoning. Only the highest levels of class consciousness combined with the role of an influential revolutionary party can even begin to generate this possibility. Moreno justifies his perspective by implying that it is pessimistic to suggest that the October revolution was an exceptional event. But it is his view that is illusory. The October revolution was historically unprecedented and was quite unique and rare. Thus it is dogmatic to claim that a February revolution will inherently result in an October. Instead history has indicated that Februarys are far more frequent than an October. It is only being realistic to suggest that another October revolution will also be unique, but once it has occurred the possibility for its emulation becomes on the historic agenda. This was the situation between 1917 and 1938 in Europe, and a new October revolution could generate a revival of world revolution.

It is illusory for Moreno to claim that a revolutionary upswing occurred in the post-war period. Instead what occurred was the consolidation of imperialism and Stalinism. He vaguely define what has occurred as objective revolutions with immature subjective factors. This view is so over-generalised that it becomes meaningless. Instead we can suggest with precision that a February revolution occurred in Hungary 1956, Cuba 1959, France 1968, Portugal 1974, Nicaragua 1979 and a few other instances. These developments do not amount to a process of world revolution. Instead capitalism and Stalinism was generally stable in this period. To claim that the formation of February revolutions was a characteristic of this period is an illusion. Instead they were still exceptional, but when they did develop the potential for a new October became real. Moreno has outlined an important perspective in his concept of the February revolution, but it has also become devalued by being over-utilised. Instead it should be realised in a concrete and precise manner in order to indicate its genuine importance and significance.

THE WORKERS AND PEASANTS GOVERNMENT

Moreno outlines how the slogan of a workers and peasants’ government should be utilised during a process of February revolution in order to demand that the reformist and opportunist parties should break with the bourgeoisie and lead the struggle for power. Moreno outlines how this slogan does not represent illusions in the opportunist parties but instead is meant to indicate their limitations and the fact that they will not act in accordance with the increasing revolutionary aspirations of the masses. But Moreno also argues that this perspective has also been realised in terms of the formation of bureaucratic workers states. This development would suggest that the slogan of a workers and peasants government no longer has agitational meaning. Instead it should be replaced by a different slogan. What would be more appropriate would be to call for the formation of Soviets in a pre-revolutionary situation and then if created to demand that the Soviets seize power. In this context a genuinely revolutionary situation would be developing and it would be expressed by the generation of mass organisations that can realise a genuine and democratic overthrow of capitalism. However with the decline of Stalinism it could be argued that the slogan of a workers and peasants government has acquired renewed relevance. But as Moreno argues if this slogan resulted in the formation of a reformist workers and peasants government it would be necessary to argue that this government break with capitalism via the promotion of soviet power. Under no circumstances should Trotskyism conciliate this type of reformist or Stalinist workers government.

However, the problem with Trotskyist orthodoxy is that there is a tendency to capitulate to a bureaucratic workers government that breaks with capitalism. This is the very limitation of the perspective of the degenerated workers stats theory. The only manner in which this accommodation can be rejected is by suggesting that only authentic proletarian revolution, via the role of Soviets, can bring about a genuine demise of capitalism and advance to authentic socialism. There is a tendency to accommodate to the process of bureaucratic social overturn because the result is defined in progressive terms as creating a workers state. Formally this development is defined as counterrevolutionary but the very act of establishing a workers state implies that this situation is defined in terms of an advance from capitalism. Moreno has to accept that this change is contradictory and that there has been an interaction of revolutionary upswing and the role of the counterrevolutionary apparatus: “That combination has given rise to an extremely unstable phenomena, due to the combination of two poles clearly antagonistic but united by an exceptional, provisional circumstance, in a bureaucratised workers state.”(29) But in actual fact, with the possible exception of Cuba, there is no working class mobilisation. Instead the working class are politically expropriated in order to ensure the success of the formation of a bureaucratic state. The important aspect in this process of change is the counterrevolutionary apparatus. Indeed, Moreno accepts that what was important in most circumstances was the role of the Stalinist apparatus of the USSR, or the role of national Stalinist parties as in China. Only in relation to Cuba can we accept that differences occurred in terms of a democratic impulse of a revolutionary upswing and the role of a petty bourgeois leadership.

An important problem with Moreno analysis is that he defines the social character of Stalinism as a hybrid between capitalism and socialism. This implies that it has progressive aspects, such as nationalised property relations, which are capable of generating socialism under different political circumstances. This type of view is an illusion. The nationalisation of production is the manner in which the bureaucracy was able to extract a surplus from the working class. Hence the character of nationalisation would have to be totally transformed in order that it becomes the expression of different class interests. The illusions of this view is because the approach that results in the understanding of Stalinist society is that it is a combination of a revolutionary upswing and the role of the bureaucracy. Hence this confusion means it is not possible to recognise that the working class has no influence in relation to what was created in terms of the character of society. There was not a mass movement that in some sense interacted with the bureaucracy in order to create a degenerated workers state. Instead any independent working class activity was repressed when Stalinist states were formed. This development was the pre-condition for the exploitation of the working class. Moreno cannot outline the process of change because his understanding of the formation of bureaucratic workers states has to suggest that aspects of this development was progressive.

Moreno generalises when he suggests that the bureaucratic Stalinist states become an agency of world imperialism. This perspective is not outlined in empirical detail and instead it is asserted. It would be more accurate to suggest that these states are subordinated to the greater economic and military power of imperialism, but the USSR has the ability to assert its own interests. This is the very reason for the cold war which can only be explained in terms of the rival assertion of power by both the USA and the USSR. This situation does not meant that the USSR is in some sense progressive and pro-socialist but instead that it is upholding the interests of a distinctive form of reactionary social system. This explains the tension between the USA and the USSR. This tension does not mean that the process of world revolution is being promoted, and instead that there is a bi-polar system based on the antagonistic opposition of two major powers. Moreno cannot explain this situation because he defines it in the dogmatic terms of the Soviet bloc being an agency of imperialism. This formulation cannot explain the actuality of the tension between the two major super powers. If the USSR was literally an agency of imperialism it would not be able to assert its own distinctive interests. It would not be able to oppose the USSR in any manner. Instead various events such as the crisis in Cuba indicate that the Soviet bureaucracy was often prepared to defy the domination of the USA. The Soviet bureaucracy opposed any attempt to undermine its control of Eastern Europe as with the Red Army intervention in Hungary in 1956. Such developments could not be understood if the USSR was merely an agency of imperialism.

THESES 21 THE BUREAUCRATIC DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

When discussing the class character of the Stalinist states, Moreno describes them: “As social economic phenomenon, it is a proletarian dictatorship, even if this is expressed in a distorted way through a bureaucracy and although the working class doesn't have the benefit of democracy at all.”(30) This definition is problematical because it describes a situation in which the working class lacks genuine economic and political power and yet is still considered to be the ruling class. This view must implies that in some sense the bureaucracy is the instrument of the interests of the working class. In other words the character of the development of the bureaucratic workers state is considered to be a specific expression of socialist revolution, which means the state is distinct from the bourgeois character of capitalism. Moreno upholds his view by suggesting that the only alternative to a dictatorship of the working class would be the domination of the bourgeoisie. This choice is false. This is because it is possible that the process of degeneration of what had been a proletarian state could result in the rule of a new type of social formation in which the exploitation of the working class occurs. The alternative view is to imply that the working class rules within a bureaucratic dictatorship. Such a standpoint is contradictory because how can the working class be subordinated to the dynamics of production established by a different and ruling stratum and yet still be in some sense dominant? The point is that the class which organises production and ensures that the working class carries out the dictates of the five year plan is the state bureaucracy via the role of the party. The working class is not able to influence this process of production. The relations of production are based on the ability of the bureaucracy to instruct the working class in the aims of the economy. This situation is confirmed by the political system in which the people are not able to form their own parties, and instead have to vote for organisations that are approved by the state.

Instead Moreno contends “There is no bourgeoisie in the SU so to have a bourgeois dictatorship. The dictatorship is carried on anyhow with many variants, through the class that rules economically; and in the bureaucratic dictatorships the class which rules, in a social economic sense, is the proletariat.”(31) This definition is contradictory. The working class has no possibility of being able to influence the character of the economy or politics and yet is defined as the ruling class. Indeed Moreno admits that the system is based on the domination of a counterrevolutionary Bonapartist system, and that the Soviet bureaucracy has overall domination of the Stalinist system. In these circumstances how can the social system be defined as an expression of the rule of the working class? The point being made is that the concept of the 'Bonapartist bureaucratic proletarian dictatorship' is a contradiction. It is not possible that counterrevolutionary Stalinism can somehow rule on behalf of the working class. Instead a genuine working class state would mean that this class has direct and the most important expression of economic and political power. It is not possible for Stalinism to rule in some sense on behalf of the working class because it is only able to exercise power in terms of the exploitation of the working class within the relations of production. This situation may be ideologically justified as socialism, but the actual relations of production mean that the attempt to extract a surplus from the working class is being made by the Stalinists. Hence it would be untenable to describe this situation in terms of the indirect rule of the proletariat. The point being made is that it is not possible to have some type of distorted socialist society. The bureaucracy is able to be dominant because it has the most important role within the economy. It is able to direct and organise the process of production on its own behalf. In this context it is not possible for the proletariat to be a ruling class if it is actually being exploited within the relations of production.

Despite his problematical conception of the character of the Stalinist states, Moreno describes quite accurately how opposition to them will develop in the form of democratic opposition which unites society against the Stalinists. This process could be effectively spontaneous and involves no distinctive forces of political leadership. This replica of the February will need to be continued and realised in the form of an October revolution. Moreno implies that this perspective will need to be opposed to any generation of support for capitalist restoration. But his emphasis is on the possibility of a new October revolution led by a Trotskyist party. What Moreno underestimates in his perspective is that the regressive ideological effect of the role of Stalinism means that anti-socialism develops to become a popular expression of discontent with what is considered to be a repressive socialist society. The population accept the Stalinist view that the society they have been dominating is actually socialism, and does express Marxist characteristics. Thus the popular struggle for democracy also takes the form of opposition to socialism. In this context, Moreno's perspective of the development of an October revolution becomes very problematical. Instead Moreno's contrasting perspective that the struggle for democracy could generate pro-capitalist currents actually became the most important variant in 1989. The problem is that he tries to connect these impulses to that of political revolution. Instead it would be more accurate to describe them as being part of a counterrevolution because the aim that is connected to these developments is that of capitalism. This is considered in popular terms to be the only alternative to what has been understood to be socialism. In this context it is not possible to differentiate socialism from Stalinism.

Moreno, because he considers that Stalinism is a distorted form of a workers state upholds the call for their democratic federation. This is entirely unrealistic because the leaders of such states would suggest they are already in this type of federation, and it could be argued that the USSR dominated this situation to its own advantage. Hence the reasons that Moreno provides in favour of a democratic federation such as a genuine international development of the productive forces and the transcendence of national limitations can only be realised if Stalinism is overthrow in a genuinely revolutionary manner. The tragedy is that discontent with the system is expressed in reactionary terms that means the influence of nationalism and pro-capitalism is significant. This means that an international socialist revolution is unlikely to occur and instead Moreno advocacy of the formation of revolutionary workers states was an underestimation of the problem of the popular support for capitalism in Eastern Europe. This is because his overall standpoint is based on revolutionary optimism and he underestimates the possibility of historical regressions.

THESIS 25 – THE REVOLUTIONARY SITUATIONS

Moreno concludes from the significance of the Portuguese revolution: “That the meaning of the category of imminent revolution, that ranges over all countries of the world, capitalist or workers countries.”(32) This is an extraordinary conclusion to make about the historic significance of one particular revolution. The point is that he does not allow for the specific conditions that led to the Portuguese revolution such as the overthrow of fascism and the rapid ascendency of militant working class organisation. These type of factors were not generalised in relation to other countries which was still based on a situation of capitalist stabilisation. The increasing class consciousness of the working class and the influence of a revolutionary party was not being generated on a world scale. This mean that whilst Moreno was able to describe the character of a February or October revolution he could not outline in terms of reality situations in which these events were being realised. Only the Portuguese revolution conformed to a February type revolution in terms of the increasing importance of the working class and the possibility of the overthrow of the capitalist system. Instead of this realistic recognition, Moreno seems to equate an ideal situation with the potentialities of reality. What is actually crucial for the revolutionry parties was to describe reality as it was instead of what we would like it to be. In this context the perspective of either a February or October revolution was unrealistic in most instances. Only Poland and Nicaragua in 1980 would relate to the perspective of Moreno. But these very specific instances of revolutionary developments were limited and restricted by the role of ideology, such as the influence of Catholicism in the former and petty bourgeois radicalism in the latter. The point is that the circumstances of both these situations was very specific and with their own problems, but both were united by their opposition to the promotion of proletarian power. In Poland the mass movement wanted to establish new relations with the Stalinists, whilst in Nicaragua the aim was not socialism but instead to limit the revolution to the aims of bourgeois democracy. The problem was that a revolutionary party did not arise in both situations in order to influence developments. Instead the spontaneous limitations of the mass developments in both instances imposed a limitation on events. Moreno seemed oblivious to this development because he seemed to uphold a dynamic of transition from February to October.

However despite the above limitations, Moreno seems to have discovered an immensely important perspective for advancing to a February revolution in every country, which is the call for the formation of a Constituent Assembly. This is the demand which could connect the aims of democracy with that of socialism. But this is not just an aim for the mobilising of the working class and the peasantry in favour of democracy and for its connection to socialism, we should also advocate the role of the Constituent Assembly as being vital for the purpose of establishing a popular and credible institution of universal suffrage within the socialist society. It could express the possibility of the accountability of the institutions of socialism to the principles of universal suffrage and the issue of whether the system is genuinely popular. Hence the demand for a Constituent Assembly is more than a temporary and mobilising demand it should instead express the organisational character of the socialist society and its ability to truly be able to express the wishes of the people in truly democratic terms.

The unrealistic aspect of Moreno's approach is his conception of European revolution based on the importance of the German proletariat. He does not recognise the influence of bourgeois ideology in both parts of Germany, and that people are limited by the understanding of unification in terms of the formation of a capitalist Germany. His approach of a socialist Germany indicates the elements of a lack of realism in his international perspectives. This problem is connected to the overall one-sided revolutionary optimism in the approach of Moreno. He does not recognise the extent of the problem of trying to generate revolutionary consciousness on a world scale. This issue is connected to the fact that the forces of Trotskyism are small and likely to fragment. But primarily the issue is about the limitations of class consciousness, and the fact that people cannot envisage a future beyond capitalism. Instead Moreno defines the situation in terms of the imminence of revolution, which is very unrealistic and over-optimistic.

THESIS 31 -BUILDING TROTSKYIST PARTIES

Moreno accurately indicates that the strength of the counterrevolutionary bureaucratic apparatus has undermined the possibility to promote the strength of Trotskyist organisations. But he optimistically argues that the objective situation is starting to favour the aim of developing the parties of the Fourth International. The problem is that this perspective is connected to the false belief that the decline of capitalism is creating this possibility. He ignores the possibility that the forces of capital may undergo an offensive in order to maintain this system at the expense of the working class. The necessity of the working class to go onto the defensive in this situation did not necessarily favour the attempt to increase the influence of the Fourth International. Hence in an over-optimistic manner, Moreno considers that it is feasible that the Fourth International can begin to dispute the leadership of the working class by the bureaucracy. This is a prediction that is completely false. It would be more constructive and effective to instead analyse how the Fourth International could undergo modest growth in the present circumstances of its small size and the related lack of influence of the ideas of revolutionary Marxism. Despite his one-sided view, Moreno correctly identifies a central task of Trotskyism which is to encourage the militant and independent capacity of the trade unions to defend the interests of the working class and promote their ability to oppose the attempts of the ruling class to weaken these organisations. This is the principled and correct perspective in a situation in which the forces of capital are attempting to undermine the post-war gains of the working class in the form of ruling class opposition to the importance of the trade unions. He also outlines how it would be a mistake to create new red trade unions. Instead it is vital to organise the existing trade unions so that they become an effective opposition to the aims of capital, and of Stalinism, where necessary. It is a pity that Moreno does not extend this analysis so that it is developed into a strategy for the realisation of the aim of obtaining working class power. It is necessary to connect the defensive tasks of the trade unions with the offensive necessity to develop the tactic of the general strike so that it becomes a vital aspect of the struggle for power. Instead Moreno only makes brief comments about the importance of the trade unions in relation to the tasks of class struggle.

Moreno outlines correctly how the necessity of Trotskyist and revolutionary parties has been caused by the opportunist standpoint of reformist and Stalinism. Only a principled Fourth International can strive to aim to realise a perspective of world socialist revolution. But he blames entryism for undermining the independence of the revolutionary programme. This is a mistake because there may be important reasons why entryism should be practiced in order to develop the relationship between revolutionary Marxism and the mass movement. The issue of whether any particular expression of entryism is principled or not concerns whether the integrity of the revolutionary programme has been upheld. If there is any suggestion that concessions to reformism have been made in order to maintain an entryist relationship to reformism then this development should be rightly criticised as being an expression of opportunism. The point is that the prevailing circumstances should be analysed in order to ascertain whether entryism should be practiced, or rejected as an accommodation to the forces of reformism. It is interesting that despite his general reservations about entryism, Moreno also contends that a revolutionary party will generally only be built if it has connections to mass movements within reformism. This point would seem to be true. For example, the leftward process of movement within the current Labour party would mean that the forces of Trotskyism should orientate themselves towards this development. This does not necessarily mean entryism, but instead that the programme of the forces of revolutionary Marxism should be dedicated to bringing about a transformation of the Labour party in principled socialist terms. This possibility would not be promoted if the Marxists ignored what was happening within the Labour Party.

Moreno suggests that entryism should only last a short period of time in order to avoid adaptation to the reformist or centrist organisation which the revolutionary Marxists have joined. This would seem to be a sectarian position and would imply that the organisation that the Marxists had joined was being considered in instrumental terms. Instead if the entryist tactic is to be principled and consistent it would have a long term character, and would not be of a brief period. Only in that manner would the Trotskyists be considered to be loyal members of the reformist organisation. But Moreno is right to contend that participation in the trade unions is a priority for the Marxists. This is because the trade unions have been at the forefront of the necessity to oppose the offensive of capital against labour. However, at certain moments in the class struggle it is also important to recognise that political parties become important participants in the class struggle. This is true when reformist organisations are becoming left wing and have developed a mass appeal. In these circumstances the Marxists should orientate towards them.

Moreno wrongly rejects the importance of propaganda and instead emphasises the importance of slogans in order to encourage the masses into action. This one-sidedness is an expression of the false view that the situation was becoming favourable for the development of class struggle and the possibility of a revolutionary upswing. He argues for his standpoint in the following manner: “It's our principle activity that gives the character to our parties: if that activity is propagandistic, not orientated to the mass movement, not for action, our parties will also go on being propagandistic sects and not mass parties.”(32) This one-sided view ignores the fact that at many moments in the class struggle the level of the class consciousness is low, and so it is vital that propaganda efforts are developed in order to expand the influence of Marxists ideas. Only in exceptional moments of a more favourable upturn in the class struggle should the emphasis be given to agitation and slogans for immediate action. The importance of propaganda is that it opposes the influence of bourgeois ideology within the working class and so rejects the various reactionary influences that encourage the subservience of the forces of labour to those of capital. If successful, the role of propaganda will be to encourage the process of transition to an emphasis on action. Hence propaganda is not an abstract exercise that has little relevance for the mass movement. Instead by opposing bourgeois ideology it can encourage the necessity of mass action. Thus propaganda has an integral connection to agitation and its practical emphasis. Theory is related to practice.

Moreno also has a confused understanding of the relationship of tactics to strategy. Hence he comments: “No revolutionary party may be bound hand and foot stating that its permanent activity may, its strategy is the general strike, or the unique front, or the workers and peasants government, or the partial strikes, or the workers control, or the occupation of factories, or the participation in elections, or entryism.”(33) Some of these proposed actions may be tactics and not strategically important like the general strike, but workers control does have strategic importance because it refers to the important economic character of the organisation of socialism. Hence its development within capitalism means that important movement has been made towards the formation of a new type of society. In this context the occupation of the factories is the initial action that makes workers control possible. Hence some tactics are more important than other because they represent the possibility of advancing towards socialism. Other tactics are less important. The point is, which Moreno does not outline, is that the issue of what is a tactic and what is strategy is defined by the tasks of the international socialist revolution. In this context the character of workers control is both a tactic and strategy because it can be of tactical importance in advancing the aims of the class struggle against capital, but it is of strategic and historical importance in that it expresses the organisational principles of a socialist society. In contrast, the general strike is a tactic because it may not be of importance in relation to the aim of ending the domination of capital. But some tactics may be of more importance than others. For example, Moreno outlines the significance of the united front of workers parties which may have immense importance in the promotion of the class struggle.

Moreno is in favour of democratic centralism and the right of discussion within organisations. But he seems to consider it disruptive if this situation results in the formation of fractions and tendencies. This is a rigid standpoint because it is logical that discussion should take the form of the development of fractions. However, the problem is to bring about a situation in which this does not result in splits. The problem is that differences have led to splits. Moreno provides no policy that would undermine this possibility. He does not consider that it may be necessary to reject democratic centralism and instead embrace democratic diversity.

Moreno argues that a bureaucratic formation of a petty bourgeois or Stalinist character can carry out in a distorted manner the role of permanent revolution. This is an accommodation to opportunism. Trotsky in his writings on China outlined how a principled and valid form of permanent revolution requires the interaction of party and class, in the form of Soviets. Hence if this interaction was not present then the process of permanent revolution was not being carried out. Thus there is no elite or bureaucratic form of this strategy and it is instead about genuine proletarian revolution in third world countries. The model for this process was Russia of 1905 and 1917. In contrast, what occurred in China in 1949 was the occupation of the cities by a bureaucratic Red army and the carrying out of land reform under strict party control. This development could be more accurately defined as a military Stalinist act of the overthrow of capitalism.

Despite the various criticism of what can be considered to be another variant of orthodox Trotskyism, it can be argued that the standpoint of Moreno could have provided the basis of the reformation of the Fourth International. However, since that time, with the demise of Stalinism, and the connected challenges to Marxist theory, we would suggest that the tasks that confront revolutionary Marxism are far greater than the being reduced to the organisational and political rejuvenation of the Fourth International. Instead we have to tackle the challenge of low class consciousness, the structural decline of the working class and the rise of temporary workers, the continued and reactionary influence of nationalism and the continued low level of influence of Marxism. Indeed we would have to suggest that Marxism itself is in a situation of crisis and seems unable to tackle issue of contemporary relevance and significance. Instead Marxism seems to be a dogma in which its participants talk amongst themselves, but nobody else is listening. These are the task that have to be tackled if Marxism is to be rejuvenated and made relevant for any re-emergence of the class struggle. In this context the contribution of Moreno to the development of revolutionary Marxism could assume an importance to which we must understand, whilst also being critical of any dogmatic rigidities.

FOOTNOTES:

(1)Moreno: The Transitional Programme Now (1980) In Marxist Internet Archive

(2) ibid p1

(3) ibid p2

(4) ibid p3

(5) ibid p4-5

(6) ibid p6

(7) ibid p6-7

(8) ibid p7

(9) ibid p8-9

(10) ibid p9

(11) ibid p10

(12) ibid p10

(13)Section 2 page 4

(14) ibid p5

(15) ibid p5

(16) ibid p6

(17) ibid p6-7

(18) ibid p11

(19) ibid p15

(20)Section 3 p8

(21) ibid p8

(22) ibid p9

(23) ibid p10

(24) ibid p11

(25) ibid p19-20

(26)Section 4 page 1

(27) ibid p5

(28) ibid p5

(29) ibid p16

(30)Section five page 1

(31) ibid p2

(32) ibid p10

(33)Section 6 p14

(34) ibid p15