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Amendments and Motions

by Hoffman - Heredia International Tendency

Proposed motion for the 12th World Congress

The definition 'degenerated or deformed workers states' with respect to the USSR and similar countries must be abandoned.

There are both theoretical and political reasons for doing so.

Theoretical reasons

This definition is linked to certain dated analyses of Trotsky, which have been disproved by history. Stalinism, far from being a dramatic short-term episode, survived the terrible test of the war. The USSR's isolation (decisive factor in the victory of the Stalinist counterrevolution) no longer exists, but the social system lives on.

Moreover, far from exerting its dictatorship over society the proletariat today is subject to relations of oppression and exploitation. Political power is the product of the domination of a minority, privileged social group. The latter maintains its stability through pitiless repression aiming to deny the working class the possibility of asserting itself as a class. The ruling ideology of these societies strives to legitimate as well as to perpetuate these mechanisms of domination by leading people away from or deforming any references to the revolutionary workers movement. The proletariat does not have any more power on the economic level. On the contrary it is locked into production relations that are contradictory with any process of socialist transformation, that is facilitating the control by the producers themselves of all the levers regulating the development of society. Society as a whole is therefore in the hands of a bureaucratic class entirely turned against the immediate and historic interest of working people. Such a state is not a 'workers' one but a 'bureaucratic', counterrevolutionary and anti-working class one.

Political reasons

The political reasons are more immediately decisive than the theoretical ones. Maintaining our attachment to the definition "degenerated workers states" implies that we think these societies are an image — a distorted one no doubt but an image nevertheless — of what we are fighting for. That erects an occasionally unbridgeable barrier between us and forces breaking with Stalinism and Social Democracy.

But it is in bureaucratically dominated countries that reference to this definition has the most serious consequences. A series of experiences of revolutionary mass struggle (Berlin '53, Hungary '56, Czechoslovakia '68, Poland '80) shows that nowhere has the proletariat limited its struggle to a battle against 'deformations'. On the contrary the direct target of popular struggles was the anti-working class nature of these systems.

The International's delay in analysing historical development and the mass movements cannot last any longer without exposing us to serious dangers of ossification.

For these reasons the debate should continue inside the International.

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Amendments Proposed to the Draft Theses on the International Situation (see IIDB, Vol. XIX, No. 4)

A. The Overall World Situation

Thesis 1:

Paragraph (henceforth para.) 2

Add after . . . "the most serious crisis of its history."

Although many negative factors, relating to the workers movement and the national liberation movements limit the possibilities of a short-term revolutionary victory and provides the ruling classes with broad possibilities of action:

Replace para. 4 with:

The deterioration in the international relationship of forces for capitalism, which reached its maximum with the US defeat in Indochina. Although partly overcome, the consequences of this failure are still being felt.

Replace para. 6 with:

The unprecedented organic growth of the proletariat, a product of the post-war boom; the new *potential* flowing from that is however far from being concretised politically; there are many obstacles to the development of revolutionary class consciousness. Only with such consciousness can we envisage a victorious working class offensive in the advanced capitalist countries.

Thesis 2:

Para. 1 replace with the following:

2) This crisis deepened sharply in 1979 with the overthrow of the Shah's dictatorship in Iran, the revolutionary victory of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the civil war in El Salvador. The anti-bureaucratic struggle of the Polish workers contributed to the destabilisation of the overall world relationship of forces. The imperialist countries have been able to use the absence of liaison between these different forces to take advantage of the limits of their leaderships and to play on the contradictions between the bureaucratic states in order to attenuate, at least momentarily, the impact of these movements. They have not been able to annihilate them. Given this inability to carry the counterrevolutionary offensive right through these regimes are permanently unstable. This weighs over the world situation as a whole.

The extension of the socialist revolution in Central America is a major challenge to imperialism. It is unfolding in what used to be American capitalism's "private" territory. It opens revolutionary perspectives for the mass movement which in the 'southern cone' of Latin America is shattering the ruling dictatorships. All this explains the violence of American imperialism's reaction and the consequent difficulty the revolutionary movements have of winning a decisive victory. In many semi-colonial countries — particularly in Africa — the economic disaster and structural crisis of bourgeois rule creates the possibility of social explosions. Also in these countries the predominant objective and subjective conditions are likely to hold back for a long time the development of a revolutionary process. This allows imperialism to combine repression (when it sees fit) with concessions when confronted with the destabilising effects of the crises that do break out.

In the advanced capitalist countries the consequences of the crisis are being felt inside the workers movement. Whole sectors demonstrate a remarkable will to resist (British miners) or even an offensive capacity (German steelworkers). But we have to take note of the symptoms of decline in the organisational capacity and political consciousness of working people. It is not pos-

sible to say that everywhere the big battalions of the working class are resisting step for step capitalism's austerity and militarisation offensive. On the contrary, breeches have been opened in the class front.

In Poland and in all Eastern Europe Solidarnosc's example is still alive, in spite of the difficulties caused by bureaucratic repression. The confirmation of the working class's revolutionary potential is a direct threat to bureaucratic hegemony. Even if there are no new upsets in the short term, the crisis of the bureaucratic states will continue and, along with the workers resistance there, this is an important element in the international conjuncture.

Thesis 3:

Replace para. 1 with the following:

The deterioration in the international relationship of forces on which world order is based must be correctly evaluated. It does not mean that imperialism is incapable of reacting.

(the thesis then continues as it is, but add at the end of it the following:)

Imperialism's margin of manoeuvre is generally determined by the present state of revolutionary and working class forces in the world. The capitalist states can draw advantage from:

- the counterrevolutionary policy of the bureaucratic states;
- the division between the Soviet Union and China;
- the immaturity or the reactionary character (e.g. Iran) of movements for national freedom;
- the policy of all the leaderships of the workers movement in the advanced capitalist countries;
- the disarray and decline in working class consciousness caused by the economic crisis as well as the weight of previous defeats.

In these conditions we must avoid any simplistic vision of the general tendencies of the world situation. The contradiction between the deterioration of the bases of the world system and the workers' level of revolutionary consciousness is loaded with real dangers. It determines an uneven development of struggles and revolutionary crises and constantly produces the risk of the most advanced struggles being isolated. The tactics and strategy of revolutionary marxists must take into account this unevenness in the rhythm of developments in the three sectors of the world revolution.

Thesis 4:

Replace thesis with the following:

No long term solution to the capitalist crisis is possible without the achievement of two fundamental objectives: a general reorganisation of the process of production around new technologies and a thoroughgoing modification of the international division of labour. It is thus a case of sweeping structural changes:

- decline of certain industrial sectors;
- transformation of work skills and qualifications;
- massive long term unemployment;
- modification in the composition of the working class in the advanced capitalist countries;
- formation of new industrial sectors;
- changes in the relationship of forces between capitalist states.

This overall reorganisation requires that the rate of profit be restored, particularly in industry, so as to permit indispensable investment. This cannot take place without a challenge being made to gains made by the workers in the advanced countries during the postwar boom.

The European, U.S. and Japanese bourgeoisies have to carry out the following key tasks:

- cut living standards (particularly through eliminating the indexing of salaries on prices);

- reduce welfare state spending to the minimum;
- organise unemployment at the lowest possible cost.

They cannot do this without bringing about a *qualitative deterioration of all forms of organisation of the workers movement*. The limitation of, or according to circumstances, the putting into question of democratic rights (right to strike, meet, demonstrate etc) will necessarily accompany any such attempt. In the same way it is indispensable for them to maintain control over all the semi-colonial countries which are a major asset for the bourgeoisies in the restructuring of the world market. This is also necessary for creating an environment facilitating all effective forms of pressure for integrating certain bureaucratic states into capitalist circulation.

This worldwide offensive can only be successful at the cost of sweeping defeats of the masses in a whole series of countries.

(Keep the second para. beginning "The safety valve etc up to ... the rate of profit".

Drop the last sentence)

(Keep all of the next para)

Then replace rest of thesis with the following:

It would be wrong to think that the imperialist offensive will unfold uniquely in the form of frontal assaults against the positions of the toiling masses. On the contrary it will be a *combination* of open counterrevolutionary action (like the establishment of the Turkish military dictatorship in 1980, the blows struck against the Palestinian and Lebanese masses, the intervention in Grenada and the operations of the South African state) and manoeuvres tending to transform an accumulation of partial defeats into a decisive setback.

The difficulties imperialism has of carrying through its offensive to the necessary objectives must not be underestimated, such problems are at the root of the possibilities for action inherent in the present situation. But it would be catastrophic for revolutionary marxists to draw the conclusion from this state of affairs that, since imperialism has not yet inflicted decisive defeats on the workers movement of the capitalist countries, nor stabilised bourgeois rule in most of the colonial countries, then it has no possibility of creating a future for itself. The conjunction of counterrevolutionary blows in the key sectors and a step by step demoralisation of the workers movement in Europe and the USA is a real threat that we must take into account in order to fight it, for it would result in a longterm deterioration of the relationship of forces.

Thesis 5, end of first para of pt. b (page 4 end of 1st and top of 2nd column).

Replace the last sentence with:

Therefore there is a crisis of the whole workers movement, a crisis of strategic orientation and leadership which tends to determine and speed up a structural crisis of the representative organisations of the working class.

B. The Crisis in the Imperialist Countries

Thesis 7 end of second para.

Replace the last sentence with:

The bankruptcy of a few big debtors from the 'third world' could provoke a chain reaction culminating in a massive withdrawal of deposits and the bankruptcy of the banks themselves. The ruling circles of imperialism are conscious of this and have sought to put off such a day of reckoning. Whatever the efficiency of the means at their disposal they cannot succeed in removing the roots of this worldwide credit crisis. So in the next period we will see an increasing amount of grave tensions caused by the indebtedness of a great many countries. At the same time the 'policing' role played by the international bodies (above all the IMF) controlled by the big powers, will be strengthened. The

struggle against capitalist solutions for the debt crisis is consequently one of our essential tasks in the future. It can provide us with the opportunity of fighting for the formation of broad united fronts on an international scale.

Last para, end the last sentence after . . . sharp conflicts." then add the following: We cannot rule out the risk of a banking crash. While we should be wary about believing in the inevitability of a 'black Thursday' on a world scale, it is advisable to take into consideration what this ongoing risk implies for the actions of the most advanced capitalist states and for the evolution of the worldwide relationship of forces.

Thesis 10, 2nd paragraph.

Replace the last sentence and the rest of the thesis with the following:

As the crisis deepens and the social security system is attacked by austerity measures movements of resistance will arise in the key sectors of the working class.

a) However we have to take note of the limits of the working class fightback. Without doubt working class militancy exists. But it is above all in sectors threatened with liquidation (French steel industry, British miners). Fierce resistance from these workers sparks off active solidarity of all workers only with great difficulty. More general fightbacks (Portugal 1982, Belgium 1982/3, Spain, Italy, Germany 1984) do not result in an overall offensive movement able to modify the relationship of forces between the classes. On the contrary, divisive factors inside the working class itself hold back the battle to generalise struggles against the bourgeois regimes.

b) In this context, there is a tendency, uneven from country to country, for a fall in the membership of workers organisations. The trade union movement has been broadly affected by this. Indeed with the exception of Northern Europe and to a lesser extent West Germany, the big confederations have been weakened in most countries (UK, France, Spain). In certain cases (Spain) their votes in workplace elections have been maintained. But more often the confederations have lost their ability to mobilise and their calls to struggle only have a weakened impact.

c) *This crisis of the workers movement* is shown, also in an uneven way, on the political level. Several organisations which have been *the* organisations of the working class in their country are going through historic crises: this is the case with the Labour Party and the French Communist Party. Those parties that have more or less retained their general influence, notably in elections, are having great difficulties in keeping up daily membership activity on a mass scale. This near general decline shows that new relations between workers and their traditional organisations are in the process of being set up. Most of the political parties of the workers movement are electoral machines, used as such by the masses at electiontime. They are less and less organisers of workers' daily lives and activities, in the way they were for a century.

This fundamental crisis in its first stages brings with it a weakening of the working class's collective capacity for action. This helps explain the difficulties revolutionaries have in creating a left alternative in the workers movement.

d) The reformist parties' periodic electoral success (France, Greece, Sweden, Spain) does not contradict this observation. True, Mitterrand's or Felipe Gonzalez's election victories express in a deformed way the basic social relationship of forces. It is also quite certain that they reflect an acceptance by broad working class layers of the parliamentary road. The difficulty of winning victories through mass struggles, the disillusion caused by reformist sell-outs and the memory of past defeats increasingly spur workers to hope for a solution to the crisis through elections. The arrival in power of reformist governments is not always an obstacle to the outbreak of workers struggles. But the

experience of these last years shows that the disillusion engendered by the social democrat's practical policies also strengthens workers' demoralisation. Abstention in elections and withdrawal from political activity are the normal consequences. This tendency is even more clearly seen when the electoral victory takes place as in France in 1981 after a period of working class setbacks and division.

e) The present difficulties of the workers movement are the consequences of *the 1975/6 turn in the European situation*. From this period workers saw their possibilities for action diminish, not only because of the economic crisis but also due to political factors, not the least of which were the reformist leadership's policies. Evidence of this turn in the situation is the victory of the "democratic counterrevolution" in Portugal, the peaceful transition from Francoism to the monarchy in Spain and the stabilisation of bourgeois regimes after the first shockwaves of the crisis. Whereas after the 1968/69 crises there was a possibility of a generalisation of struggles bringing about the emergence of a pre-revolutionary situation, since then such perspectives are temporarily excluded. On the whole the ruling classes have the initiative. The forms of struggle used by the workers vanguard from 1960 to 1975 have lost their effectiveness. For all these reasons it is legitimate to say the workers movement is losing ground.

f) This partial regression has more longstanding causes. On the strategic level the trade union and political organisations have been incapable of standing up to the diversified capitalist offensive during the period of economic growth. They allowed the introduction of divisions inside the proletariat that emerge starkly with the economic crisis. At the same time the masses have seen the advantages won as a result of big struggles (1953, 1968 in France, 1960-61 in Belgium etc.) rapidly put into question since these gains had not been consolidated by lasting political victories. At the same time, these setbacks have produced a mistrust of the leaderships and a certain scepticism about general struggles. The great exposure of the counterrevolutionary nature of the Bureaucratic States is an additional factor for discrediting the idea of a sharp rupture of social equilibrium.

g) At least two consequences flow from this:

(i) The working class is approaching a long period of crisis *in a state of increased division*. This division is not only political but also social. Division between different categories of workers, conflicts between workers with a special status and those without such security, the gulf between workers and the unemployed, the isolation of immigrants, women's inferior status in relation to employment and youth employment are all obstacles to a general mobilisation today. Such obstacles cannot be rapidly overcome.

(ii) Among significant layers of workers we are seeing a *decline of political consciousness*. A distrust of political action and scepticism about "existing socialism" exist on a wide scale and produce unpredictable fluctuations in political behaviour. Consequently we must pay the greatest attention to the development of nationalism and racism which also affects the working class. If this tendency is maintained — as we have observed in France and in Great Britain — it can have serious political consequences and provide a certain mass base to far-right movements.

h) Listing the factors behind the crisis of the workers movement does not mean closing off all perspectives of workers struggles. To note the relative decline in the class front does not mean concluding that the proletarian movement is crushed. There are still contradictions which hold back the development of the bourgeois offensive.

(i) The downturn is far from being universal. West Germany is for example less affected at the present time than the rest of Europe. Everywhere else the dynamics of the crisis are uneven.

(ii) The national bourgeoisies are having serious difficulties

in stabilising long term political teams able to efficiently carry out anti-working class policies. Some of their regimes undergo crises and in the best of cases they are obliged to accept "alternating" right wing and left reformist-led governments.

(iii) Thus socialist parties periodically have a period of growth in influence which opens the door to government. In spite of the political character of these organisations and the consequences of their governmental record, their election victories are a destabilising factor for the existing order and can facilitate workers mobilisations.

For all these reasons the coming years will be characterised by great instability. In certain countries there could be important struggles which, even if they do not result in a decisive transformation of the class relationship of forces, can bring about renewed political militancy throughout Europe.

i) However one of the most important and promising factors is linked to the very crisis of the workers movement. A vanguard is maturing slowly (due to the difficulties of the situation). Caught up in a contradiction between the difficulties of day-to-day struggles and the inadequacy of reformist policies, vanguard militants are looking for a different political line. They can be won to a revolutionary orientation. The crisis of all the political organisations (the Labour Party and the Spanish CP are just extreme examples of this) and the weakness of the responses given by the trade unions also fuels this process. A great number of organising cadre of the workers movement are moving away from their leaderships and new layers are looking for new forms of activism (in this respect the experience of the West German Greens is particularly important). It is a decisive task of *revolutionary marxists to address themselves to this vanguard*. They must be conscious that they can only hope to influence this vanguard in a lasting way after a long period of common experiences — a period in which they must respect its rhythms of political development and accept the forms of regroupment of this vanguard without seeking to impose their organisational hegemony.

It is through the political clarity of the solutions revolutionary marxists propose that they can compete with the influences of reformist "modernisers" within this emerging vanguard.

j) In capitalist Europe today a decisive alternative is on the agenda: an anti-capitalist solution to the crisis or a lasting defeat of the workers movement. The struggles of the coming years will give the answer. Mass struggles will take place in that period. The deep crisis of the workers movement means we cannot assert with certainty if they will result in overturning the relationship of forces.

We need to be wary of any mechanical vision of the future — the bourgeoisies have the means to take advantage of the enemy's difficulties in order, through violent blows, partial defeats and intimidation, to break up the working class. The accumulation of gradual defeats leading to a rout is a concrete possibility.

The decisive struggle is in front of us — it is a struggle of revolutionaries for a radical recomposition of the workers movement. The future depends on their ability to continue the most massive resistance to the capitalist offensive along with political initiatives aimed at the vanguard.

C. The bureaucratised states

Thesis Point 22 (page 12 IIDB XIX No. 4), first sentence:

Replace "Its main cause . . . on the other." with:

"The main cause lies in the contradiction between the expansion of the productive forces achieved on a world scale by the capitalist system since the Second World War and the inability for societies ruled by the bureaucracies to decisively go beyond the stage of primitive accumulation at the level of raw materials extraction and heavy basic industry. This incapacity is particu-

larly shown in the field of the integration of science and technology in production and in producing consumer goods satisfying social needs."

Thesis 22 3rd para. line 5 (p. 12 *ibid*)

After . . . "productive forces" add "in the phase of accumulation at the level of basic heavy industry."

Thesis 23 2nd col. last para (p. 12/13 *ibid*),

Add at end of para after . . . "productivity gains."

"The present impasse of societies ruled by bureaucracies of a Soviet origin shows that rational and conscious planning of the economy can only demonstrate its superiority over the laws of the capitalist market on condition it bases itself on a powerful social network, formed by workers self-management councils, functioning within a broad social and political democracy.

"The degree of mastery of science and technology and their application to production expresses the level reached in the development of the productive forces. This mastery necessitates and pre-supposes a great amount of research and experimentation, as well as the unrestricted circulation, exchange and transmission of knowledge and culture. Fulfilling a coherent plan requires a free transmission of social, political, economic, and cultural information permitting the adjustment of planned targets to constantly changing social needs. The self-management councils must also be the means of expressing these needs both at the level of the workplaces and in all social activity.

The aspiration for self-management, so powerfully expressed in the Polish revolution, is not just a democratic response to the bureaucratic dictatorship but also sketches out the outline of a decentralised yet coordinated organisation of society by which the proletariat will ensure the transition to socialism, where the growth of the productive forces will prove to be greater than that permitted by capitalism.

Such a system based on the self-management of the workers in all fields and all sectors, aiming to establish the maximum direct power and independent decision-making at each social level, will be necessarily accompanied by the expression of contradictions arising from the heterogeneous character of the proletariat. But the expression of these contradictions will be the condition for their resolution in the transitional society, which must be conceived as a social and political dynamic process and not as a static model. The persistence of commodity relations and certain forms of consciously controlled forms of competition will be one of this process's obligatory features during the period of transition to socialism.

D. Latin America

The 12th World Congress will discuss a document on Central America. Obviously we need a specific resolution on the Central American revolution (Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala). But we also need to have a document and debate *on the whole* of Latin America. For the following reasons:

1. The Fourth International is (unfortunately) absent from Central America. On the other hand it has sections which play a real political role in several countries: Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, etc. It is not logical to vote on an exclusively Central American resolution and to leave sections *really rooted in the struggles* in Latin America without a concrete orientation. If not we will regress to the level of an International of *commentators of the class struggle* (or at least we will give that impression). To take a position on the Central American revolution, the advanced post of the Latin American and world revolution is essential, but it is no less important to discuss our intervention *there where it exists*.

2. Not adopting a Latin American document means leaving it up to each national section on its own to define a line. In that case

how do we explain the utility of the International to the Latin American vanguard? It is obvious that each country is specific but the continental character of the revolutionary process is nevertheless still a fundamental factor, both as objective reality and as the subjective consciousness of the most radicalised popular sectors. Moreover this is the reason why for some decades the Fourth International's congresses have always adopted resolutions on Latin America.

Given it is impossible to have a document and a separate debate on Latin America — resulting from the decision on the congress agenda which seems a mistake to us — we should at least limit the damage by including a specific section on Latin America in the Draft Theses on the International Situation. (See IIDB Vol. XIX No. 4 Dec. 1983) The amendment we are proposing would be Chapter VI after Chapter V on the Imperialist War Drive and the Antiwar Movement and before the section on Tasks (which would become chapter VII).

VI New struggles in Latin America (amendment to the draft theses on the International situation)

1. Despite its undeniable diversity Latin America forms a whole, by its economic structure (underdeveloped and dependent capitalism), by the imperialist domination of all its countries (except Cuba and Nicaragua), by its Iberian-American culture, by its common history and by the continental dynamic of its struggle for liberation (particularly since the Cuban revolution). The liberated future of the continent goes beyond the clearly artificial frontiers of the present states and is situated at the level of a Federation of Socialist Republics of Latin America.

The economy and society of Latin American social formations have been shaped by capitalism's uneven and combined development, whose consequences are profoundly contradictory: on the one hand there is the explosive growth of the towns, the expansion of modern industry, capitalist penetration in the countryside and on the other hand there is the growing mass of poor people (unemployed and underemployed) in the towns, which industrialisation cannot absorb, the persistence of small manufacturing industry, the stagnation of agricultural production and impoverishment of the rural population.

2. The most immediate determinant element of continental unity is obviously imperialist domination (particularly US) whether on the economic level — technological dependence, multinational control of the modern sectors of industry, the debt problem — or the political military level, by intervention into local armed forces, closely linked to the Pentagon. The struggle against the IMF, the concentrated and visible expression of imperialist economic power, is a common axis of mobilisation for all Latin American peoples. The submission of the local bourgeoisie and its state (whether the government is military 'nationalist' or 'social-democratic') to IMF demands makes it possible for this anti-imperialist struggle to take on an anti-capitalist dynamic.

With the arrival in power of the Reagan administration, imperialist policy gave the priority to the 'Big Stick' approach and abandoned or relativised Carter's 'liberalisation' of reformist projects. This means increased military and economic support to dictatorships throughout the continent, and an aggressive policy of direct intervention in Central America and the Caribbean — the invasion of Grenada being the most blatant example of this. Reagan's re-election in November 1984 will signify not only the continuation but the escalation of this policy, with a real risk of "vietnamisation" with the sending of US troops to Nicaragua or El Salvador. This more than ever brings to the forefront the convergent and coordinated mobilisation of the peoples of the continent (including in the USA) against American imperialism and its interventionist policy.

3. The cycle of defeats leading to the 1971 Bolivian coup d'état — and its later repetition — with the coups in Uruguay and Chile in 1973 and the same situation in Argentina in 1976, brutally interrupted the process of rising activity of the toiling masses which, at the beginning of the '70s, was in the front line of the struggle against the system of exploitation in Latin America. At the same time the most developed Castroist formations had to undergo an attack unprecedented in its scope and ferocity.

The mass movements, the political organisations of the workers movement were crushed, their historic gains were quashed. The Castroist organisations disappeared from the political scene in the Southern Cone — with the exception of the Chilean MIR, which, although very much weakened, has managed to survive.

The rising phase of the workers and popular struggle, whose starting point had been the victory of the Cuban revolution was followed by a new period where defeats combined with the beginning of the world crisis of capitalism.

Thus the Sandinista triumph in Nicaragua and the rapid development of the revolution in Central America took place in a new context — structurally different from the previous situation — and have opened up a new period of rising class struggle. The working class and popular mobilisations of the Southern Cone (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Chile, etc.) have just confirmed that in Latin America we are seeing an overall recovery in the activity of the different motor forces of the revolution. But the unfolding struggles are developing this time in a framework of a world capitalist crisis that is deepening all the social and political contradictions on a continental scale.

The crisis of the military dictatorships is one sign of this. Faced with the bankruptcy of their monetarist solution, with a spiralling foreign debt blocking any possibility of development (which has already resulted in the disarticulation of the productive apparatuses of these countries and their insertion as dependent economies in the new 'international division of labor') the Latin American ruling classes are confronted with a generalised crisis of their system of rule.

Military regimes in Bolivia and Argentina have collapsed in front of a growing opposition emerging from civil society and the rise of workers struggles. While taking into account the specificities of each developing situation, the evolution of the situation in Chile, Brazil and Uruguay points clearly to the synchronisation of the crisis of the military dictatorships. Even the longest-reigning dictator, Stroessner, in Paraguay has had to deal — for the first time in thirty years — with the coming together of a democratic opposition during the last few years.

That does not mean that an era of stable democratisation is opening up in Latin America, even if there can be longer or shorter 'democratic interludes' in several countries which must be profitably used for restructuring the workers and popular movement and for building revolutionary parties.

The precarious character of such democratic openings is seen very well in the Bolivian and Argentinian situations. In Bolivia the government has been incapable of advancing coherently as it is threatened on its left by the COB and the revolutionary parties and on its right by pressures threatening to blow up the fragile equilibrium of the government coalition. In Argentina Alfonsín has proved powerless faced with the heavy heritage of the 'dirty war' and has not managed to work out measures to overcome the catastrophic economic situation.

Furthermore nothing in the present situation should lead us to state that the crisis of the dictatorships will always result in an orderly transition — explosive confrontations can break out.

This is particularly the case in Brazil where there is a combination of: mass mobilisations and a very advanced degree of political organisation of the working class; staggering misery in the North East and other regions of the country; and political crises which have mobilised the entire population (direct elections was

the latest example of this). This is also the case in Chile where mass activity is recovering. Forms of struggle are adopted which reveal a deepgoing radicalisation with a growing number of self-organisation and self-defence bodies.

However we should be wary of excessive optimism, since the Central American revolutionary movements are having difficulties, while in the southern Cone the mobilisations have for the moment only set democratic perspectives in most of the countries.

4. The development of capitalism in the towns and the countryside, the accelerated industrialisation and urbanisation of the last decades have produced a *growing proletarianisation* of the exploited population. The weight of the working class is becoming increasingly important in social struggles, anti-dictatorial and anti-imperialist mobilisations. More and more the industrial proletariat takes the head of popular struggles and appears as the leading force within them. Thus work in the factories, intervention in the trade unions and roots in the working class are decisively important for building the revolutionary party.

However, it would be wrong to see the revolutionary struggle in Latin America in exclusively working class terms. Rural workers (rural and semi-proletariat/proletariat, share croppers, poor peasant smallholders, seasonal workers, semi-unemployed) still represent (in 1981) 63% of the working population in Honduras, 50% in Bolivia and even in semi-industrialised countries like Brazil and Mexico they are more numerous than the industrial proletariat: respectively 30% and 24% in Brazil, and 36% and 26% in Mexico. The long tradition of struggle of the rural masses in Latin America and the role they have played in all the revolutions on the continent, from the Mexican to the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions (and this is continuing with El Salvador and Guatemala) means they will be a decisive social force in the coming battles, in close alliance with the urban proletariat. Around this workers and peasants alliance it is a question of bringing together, under proletarian political leadership, all the exploited and oppressed: women — that is the majority of the population! — indians, blacks, shantytown dwellers, students and intellectuals, etc. To achieve that it is necessary for the revolutionary movement to take up the demands of those layers and social categories, beginning with the struggle of women against their centuries-old oppression and for equal rights.

An autonomous women's movement, based on women's specific struggles, is indispensable if the traditional patriarchal mould of Latin American societies is to be broken and if women are to emerge from their conditions of submission and passivity.

5. For the proletariat to become the hegemonic force of this bloc of the exploited and to lead the oppressed masses to the social revolution it has to ensure its *own unity* and *class independence*. Revolutionary marxists should struggle in all countries on the continent for trade union unification and the workers united front, bringing together all forces identifying with socialism or the workers movement. The Izquierda Unida (United Left) in Peru or the Frente de la Izquierda (Left Front) of the Dominican Republic represent positive steps forward in this direction despite their heterogeneous composition. This also applies to unitary coordinations of all the workers organisations, like the Peoples, Peasant and Workers National Assembly in Mexico (ANOPP).

The key problem is to win the workers and popular masses away from the influence of bourgeois populism, which, despite its crisis, is still a powerful force in many countries: Peronism (Argentina), Apraism (Peru), MNRI (Bolivia), AD (Venezuela), PRD (Dominican Republic) etc. In spite of their recent membership of, or rapprochement to, Social Democracy, these organisations are still, given their leadership, ideology and political prac-

tice essentially bourgeois forces which can no longer play the same 'nationalist' role as they did in the 50s. In Latin America, there is no political and social space strictly speaking for social democratic mass movements. Stalinism on the other hand is going through a new lease of life thanks to the failure of 'focoism' and 'maoism' and the pro-soviet turn of the Cuban leadership. Revolutionary marxists must be able to combine their united front tactic with the political struggle against the reformist positions and bureaucratic methods of the Stalinist parties.

Unity and class independence is built first of all at the base through independent control of struggles by workers self-organisation in strike, factory and neighbourhood committees which, in a crisis conjuncture, could be transformed into organs of dual power (cf. the experience of the Sandinist Defence Committees in the 1979 Nicaraguan insurrection).

In the struggle against military dictatorship and imperialism conjunctural and tactical agreements with bourgeois forces can be envisaged. In specific terms, the defence or the winning of democratic rights can be the basis of such types of agreement.

Examples of elements of a programme able to mobilise forces over and beyond the workers movement and to test out the real commitment of democratic sectors of the bourgeoisie are: the direct elections campaign in Brazil; the overthrow of Somoza; the present task of overthrowing Pinochet; the amnesty of political prisoners in Uruguay and Paraguay; and opposition to US intervention in Central America.

But this tactical approach must always be subordinated to a tenacious struggle for preserving or winning total political independence of the workers and popular movement. Thus our political position rules out any strategic alliance or even electoral front with bourgeois forces.

Our concern is to carry out a permanent battle for the workers and their allies to understand that without rank and file unity, without self-management of struggles and without a living workers democracy inside all mass organisations there will always be the danger of their interests being sacrificed on the altar of class collaboration.

Getting rid of Pinochet and other dictatorships is a broadly-felt sentiment due to the repressive character of this dictatorship but also because they represent a horrifying degradation of living standards in Latin American societies. No democratic transformation will bring about the stabilisation of bourgeois democratic forms of rule in Latin America. Particularly during a period of world capitalist crisis.

This is how the self-managed trade unions, the strike committees, the factory and neighbourhood committees and in general all forms of self-organisation, their extension and national coordination, should be presented as the only alternative solution to the re-emergence of new bloody dictatorships with catastrophic consequences for workers' living standards.

We must act on this terrain to show the difference between, on the one hand bourgeois demagoguery and bureaucratic ideas and on the other hand, revolutionary proposals, which are not limited to the bourgeois democratic stage.

Our proposals must, at each stage, help the exploited masses to advance in their understanding of the necessity of imposing a new project of anti-capitalist and anti-bureaucratic society.

6. While in Chile, Peru and Central America, workers parties and forces of a marxist and socialist tradition organise the majority of the proletariat, this is not the case in the majority of countries on the continent — particularly in Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Paraguay, Dominican Republic etc. The struggle for the political independence of the working class in these countries could possibly go through the formation of a workers party of a mass character based on the trade unions, or — which is more likely given the reformism of

the trade union bureaucrats and their submission to bourgeois populist forces — on the basis of a *class struggle trade unionist current*. From this point of view, the *Brazilian Workers Party* (PT) founded by a vanguard of militant trade union leaders and activists, with the support of a certain number of marxist groups (in particular our FI comrades) is an example that can be an inspiration to other countries on the continent, on condition it is adapted to specific local conditions.

The Brazilian PT is a mass party of a new type — neither populist, nor social democratic nor stalinist. It organises several hundred thousand workers and its trade union influence is greater than the stalinists. It represents the greatest step forward towards political independence in the modern history of the Brazilian workers movement. Revolutionary marxists form a current in the ranks which works loyally to build the PT as a mass party while defending revolutionary and internationalist positions. Their perspective is not some sort of “entrism” but the transformation of the PT into the revolutionary vanguard of the Brazilian proletariat.

7. Alongside their struggle for workers unity, for the proletarian united front and for building the mass workers party, revolutionary marxists have a specific orientation towards revolutionary forces which reject national populist, social democratic or stalinist reformism. With these currents, whether they identify with maoism, castroism, mariateguism, trotskyism or any other form of collectivist ideology, it is a question of forming a revolutionary front around concrete and precise tasks. Good examples of this were the Front built around Rosario Ibarra's candidature in Mexico (initiated by the) PRT, Mexican section of the Fourth International) and the FOCEP (Workers, Peasants, Students and People's Front) around our comrade Hugo Blanco in Peru.

On this latter question the Fourth International makes the same self-criticism as its Peruvian section, the PRT, and assumes its part of the responsibility in the break-up of ARI (Revolutionary Left Alliance) in 1981. The errors made by the section and the International leadership flowed from a misunderstanding of the real nature of the Peruvian and Latin American situation and consequently of the crucial importance the consolidation of the ARI as a pole of attraction represented for the Peruvian masses. Today, in particularly difficult conditions, after having thrown away an historic occasion, the PRT must try and end its isolation and carry out the task of bringing together the revolutionary forces. As far as we can with our present forces, we work to influence the evolution of those who were our allies in ARI.

The Salvadoran FMLN and Guatemalan URNG represent a particular form of revolutionary front which could in the future also emerge in other countries of the continent. The place of revolutionary marxists inside these fronts insofar as they are the real vanguard of the struggle for the national and social freedom of working people.

While Cuba remains the central reference point for these currents in Central America, in the Southern Cone on the other hand we see the emergence — particularly in Brazil and Peru — of currents critical of reformism but which no longer identify with castroism.

8. The programme of Latin American revolution is the programme of permanent revolution which combines: the democratic and socialist tasks, the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle, national and social liberation, the workers struggle to expropriate national and multinational capital and that of the peasants for land.

We have to steer clear of both a sectarian conception of a purely working class and socialist revolution and opportunist theses — much more prevalent — of a ‘democratic and national’

or ‘anti-imperialist and anti-feudal’ stage.

The respective weight of the two types of tasks is not the same in all countries of the continent. At least two types of social formation have to be distinguished:

a) semi-colonial countries as classically defined — agrarian structures, raw materials producers, directly dominated by imperialism in alliance with the local oligarchy: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Paraguay, Ecuador, Panama, Dominican Republic etc.

b) semi-industrialised countries — still dominated by imperialism, but whose industrial development gives them a certain economic autonomy with the emergence of a relatively independent finance capital sector: Mexico, Argentina, Brazil.

In between these two categories there is a whole series of intermediary situations: Uruguay, Venezuela, Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru — the first named here being closer to the semi-industrialised category and the last named closer to the semi-colonial one.

Evidently the role of agrarian and national tasks is more important in the traditional semicolonial formations but it would be a grave error to think they are no longer of significance for countries like Mexico or Brazil where the rural masses are still a very important force or for Argentina where the national anti-imperialist demands have mobilised working people for half a century.

In all countries, a programme of transitional demands, starting from the immediate demands of the mass movement and leading them towards an anti-capitalist dynamic, can be a precious instrument for the mobilisation of workers against the ruling classes and their state.

9. The kind of revolutionary strategy adopted necessarily depends on the type of social formation, clearly the methods of struggle cannot be the same in Argentina and in Cuba or in Mexico and Nicaragua. It was an error to think that guerrilla war of the Cuban type was a method that could be generalised throughout the continent. Some of us shared in that error. It cost a whole generation of revolutionaries very dearly (among whom also figure many comrades from sections of the Fourth International) who paid with their lives in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela etc. On the other hand, the triumph of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua and the present development of the armed struggle in El Salvador and in Guatemala shows that guerrilla struggle can nevertheless play an important role in the revolutionary strategy of certain semi-colonial countries — on condition it is not placed in a narrow, focoist or militarist framework. It has to be closely related to the political and trade union organisation of the broad masses of workers, exploited and oppressed in the towns and countryside and in alliance with all forces opposed to established order. The July 1979 FLSN triumph was achieved through combining guerrilla struggle in the mountains and insurrection in the towns, armed struggle and mass mobilisations — above all of workers and peasants but also the urban and rural unemployed and poor, shantytown dwellers, indians, students, youth and women.

On the other hand in countries like Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia and Venezuela more or less ‘classical’ methods of proletarian struggle will be on the agenda in future years: self-organisation of rural and urban workers, building the vanguard party, struggle for transitional demands, self-defence of popular struggles and, in a revolutionary crisis, the development and centralisation of dual power, the arming of the workers, breaking up of the army through political work with the soldiers and lower officers and the insurrection.

In other words we cannot generalise a single, unique method of mobilising the workers or of revolutionary struggle for the whole continent. We must take into account the economic, so-

cial, political, cultural and historical specificities of the different countries and even within the two broad categories outlined above. For example with respect to the semi-industrialised countries, the problems of the workers movement in Argentina, Mexico and in Brazil are far from identical.

10. The 'state of emergency', the military dictatorship serving the interests of the ruling classes and imperialism is not the exception but the *rule* in the modern history of Latin America. In most countries of the continent, bourgeois democracy is more an interlude (more or less prolonged according to the case) between two military coups, than as a stable form of the capitalist state. Violent confrontation with the repressive apparatus is a permanent form of the capitalist state. Violent confrontation with the repressive apparatus is a permanent reality of the class struggle on the continent. To organise, educate and prepare workers for these confrontations is therefore an essential task for revolutionary intervention. We are not here talking of falling back into the mistake of focoism but of understanding that arming the workers, particularly through their own structures (trade unions, strike, neighborhood committees, peasant leagues etc) is an indispensable condition for the overthrow of the dictatorships or the response to military coups and for advancing to the victory of the proletariat.

Elections, whether held in countries closest to the bourgeois democratic model (Venezuela), in states of a bonapartist type (Mexico) or in dictatorships in crisis (Brazil), must always be used by revolutionary marxists to carry out the struggle for the class independence of the proletariat, if possible within the framework of a revolutionary front or (according to the case) of a workers united front. But such participation must be accompanied by the denunciation of illusions in the 'peaceful transition to socialism' (Chile 1973!). The pre-condition for the concrete achievement, not only of socialist tasks but also of all revolutionary democratic, agrarian and anti-imperialist tasks, is the destruction of the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state: this lesson from the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions is valid for the whole continent.

11. In the objective continental conditions it is inevitable that bureaucratic tendencies arise in states in transition to socialism — tendencies powerfully reinforced by the influence exerted by the USSR. To prevent the triumph of these tendencies in future revolutions and to build opposition to the Soviet model of a single party, authoritarian/bureaucratic state and atomised proletarian masses it is essential to educate the masses and their vanguard in the practice of socialist democracy. The presence of forces, like the Fourth International, historically committed to the struggle against the bureaucracy and conscious of the social and political significance of stalinism, in the leadership of future revolutionary movements in Latin America, is an essential condition for socialist democracy to be really established.

The program of the permanent revolution does not include just the struggle to pass from the democratic revolution (or from national popular insurrection) onto the anti-imperialist and anti-bourgeois tasks but requires a program of continuous struggle against natural bureaucratic tendencies, for a socialist, self-organised and self-managed transformation of anti-capitalist power.

Amendment to the Statutes

Presentation of the amendment:

The statutes of the international adopted by the 10th World Congress are excellent and should guarantee the most democratic internal functioning if they are respected.

However violation of these statutes can never be justified neither if one holds them to be invalid nor if one does not correct the weaknesses they can conceal.

The present amendment aims to correct something that has been evident for ten years. It concerns the recognition, after a split, of one of the two factions as the section. Up to now a purely quantitative solution has been chosen: the majority side coming out of a split has been recognised — whatever the grounds for a split. This is political formalism that totally contradicts the measures of control and the political and organisational guarantees applied in the recognition of a section, as outlined in detail in Section 7, article 29 of the statutes. Such a quantitative principle produces a situation in which joining the International is difficult while on the other hand the worst deviations and practices of member organisations can be tolerated, including provoking a loyal minority to split or mass expulsions of opposition members resulting in a de facto split.

The present amendment — which would become article 29 bis or article 30 (with the numbers following being modified) — would make the IEC the sovereign judge (between two congresses) until the following congress for recognising the faction of the organisation remaining the section after a split. Giving such power to the IEC would be a big deterrent to splits by centrifugal currents.

Finally discussing this amendment in our opinion should lead to a return to the strict respect of the statutes after the 12th World Congress.

Amendment to Section 7 of the statutes, a new article 29 bis (30)

In the case of a section splitting between two congresses, the IEC will determine after discussion of the political and organisation grounds for this split whether it should be the majority or the minority which will continue to be the section of the International.

Self critical resolution on Latin America

h) A self-critical balance sheet is indispensable if we want to overcome the errors we made during the 1979-84 period. The two essential factors behind these errors were:

a) continuing the policy of 'unifying the trotskyist movement' meant in certain countries having privileged relations with the so-called 'trotskyist' sects;

b) political concessions made to the SWP leadership.

These two errors were evident in the Latin American resolution adopted at the 11th World Congress. This document contains a lot of correct judgements and had the virtue of emphasising the struggle for the political independence of the proletariat. But it persisted in recommending unity of the 'trotskyist movement' and in extolling completely uncritically (despite their split from the Fourth International before the Congress) the Morenist PST and the Costa Rican OST (Fausto Amador's — the FSLN deserter — small group). The other much more important mistake was the *complete absence of any strategic problematic concerning the seizure of power, arming the workers and preparing the masses* for violent confrontation with the bourgeois state's repressive apparatus (particularly the military dictatorships). The document said nothing about the possible role of guerrilla struggle and/or insurrection in the struggle for workers power, at the very moment when the Sandinista triumph and the revolutionary war in El Salvador and Guatemala were placing these questions more than ever on the agenda. From this point of view the document, a product of a laborious compromise with the SWP leadership, ran quite simply against the current of the Latin American class struggle. A valid self-criticism of the erroneous aspects of

the 9th World Congress led to an inverse error being made.

The second error, with catastrophic consequences, has been the break-up of ARI in Peru. Despite the split-off of the mao-stalinists and 'trotskyist' sects linked to Moreno and Lambert, the Revolutionary Left Alliance (ARI) still grouped together around the figure of Hugo Blanco (the common candidate) the most advanced forces of the Peruvian Left. The leadership of the Peruvian PRT (against comrade Blanco's position) decided to break with ARI in order to form a 'trotskyist front' with the sects. The results, with tragic consequences for our movement, was firstly a breathtaking shrinking of the PRT's electoral base and then a split in the party with its near-disappearance from the political scene. While being very isolated the PRT (after a sincere self-criticism) is now trying, up to now without success, to join Izquierda Unida (United Left). An historic chance to form a Front of the Peruvian Left under trotskyist hegemony was thrown away and the fantastic potential of cde Blanco's popularity was wasted (he won 14% of the vote in 1978). Left unity was later rebuilt around Izquierda Unida but *without* the trotskyists and *against* them. The leadership of the International made a mistake in publicly backing up the sectarian decision of the PRT (see the Inprecor article at the time) by abstaining from criticising it. That not only held up the PRT's development to a less sectarian approach but it very seriously tarnished the International's image in the opinion of the Peruvian left — which even today are convinced (wrongly) that the Fourth International's leadership led the Peruvian PRT to break with ARI.

The third error was the unconditional support to the military-led Argentinian state during the Malvinas war. The document adopted at the 1981 IEC — product of another compromise with the SWP leadership — talks of the Argentine fatherland, its national anthem, the struggle of its army for the Malvinas but without a slogan calling for the overthrow of the military dictatorship. What had to put at the centre of the resolution was the fact that the direct enemy of the Argentine workers and people was the murderous military dictatorship and that its overthrow by the people was the necessary condition for an effective struggle against anglo-american imperialism.

These errors are not the first and will not be the last ones committed by our movement. But what sharply distinguishes the Fourth International from the reformists, the stalinists and the so-called 'trotskyist' sects is *its ability to recognise its own errors, to sincerely criticise them, to rectify them and to overcome them in practice.*

Additions to the Counterresolution on Organisation

(a) Latin America

"By contrast, in the present phase, the revolution in *Central America* and the Caribbean with its three advanced detachments in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Grenada, represents the only revolutionary process that is today set on a course with a definite socialist orientation in the continuity of the Cuban revolution. Imperialism has grasped its full import." (IIDB XIX No. 4 p. 11 first col. third para.)

The evolution of the situation in the Southern Cone,

- synchronised crisis of the dictatorships (Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, beginning of the crisis in Paraguay);
- replacement of the dictatorship in Bolivia, where democratic changes have not dissipated the climate of tension and instability;
- substitution of the dictatorship in Argentina, where it is clear the government has not even been able to count on a 'honeymoon period';

- armed struggle and deterioration of the political/institutional crisis in Peru;

- in a context of a striking and generalised recovery of mass activity, has changed the situation on a continental scale.

The situation in Central America is no longer an isolated process. Imperialism and its local allies must deal with several flashpoints in Latin America. The local bourgeoisies, particularly those who form part of the 'Contadora', perceive the dangerous implications of a deepening and an extension of the Central American conflict for the continental wide stability of the system. This is why they oppose US imperialism's plans of aggression.

In fact Latin America is the region of the world where the best conditions for the advance of the revolution presently exist. However an accumulation of errors has marginalised the International from any possibility of organised intervention in Central America and there is no perspective in the short term of overcoming this situation. This bitter statement of fact must nevertheless not lead us to relax our efforts. While continuing to develop solidarity work which has made it possible for us to earn our place in relation to the struggle of the people of Central America, the International must seize all the opportunities permitting us to spread our ideas and to build up fraternal contacts with revolutionary organisations.

The development of the political organisations in El Salvador and Guatemala indicates that the situation is far from being definitively crystallised. Inside Nicaragua nothing prevents us having an objective of assisting the evolution of Sandinist revolutionaries who are looking for answers to the burning questions posed by the development of the revolution.

In Latin America as a whole, especially where it has organised forces, the International must increasingly step up its efforts to extend its audience around the central axes of its politics: that is, the struggle for the independent organisation of workers and other exploited layers; a united front policy that will very often take the form of a revolutionary front with an anti-capitalist, anti-bureaucratic and anti-imperialist programme. In this sense it is a question of making choices concerning the assignment of our human and material resources. Political and organisational measures should reflect our decision of participating in the coming battles in the only region of the world where, for historical, social, economic and political reasons, it is possible to forecast new pre-revolutionary and revolutionary situations.

But the regrettable decision made by the majority of the International's leadership to exclude a discussion on Latin America from the agenda of the next World Congress does not go in that direction at all.

Nobody can reasonably defend today the validity of the Latin American resolution adopted by the 11th World Congress. Moreover it was not only wrong but out of date even before it was adopted since it could not be implemented. Therefore a new resolution should be worked out after the World Congress. This time round the discussion should above all involve our Latin American comrades. The method to follow should be that of a discussion carried out by our Latin American sections resulting in a special meeting of the Latin American PBs. We should try and associate as much as we can all the forces with whom we are working in Latin America (and those able to be associated in the future). The final approval for such a resolution should be given in the first IEC meeting following the World Congress.

Particular attention should be paid in the discussion and the resolution to:

"... a mass self-defence policy based on the balance-sheet of past experiences, of the recurrence of waves of repression, coups and counterrevolutionary foreign intervention". (P. 21 Theses on International Situation *ibid*)

This is not a general political declaration — its political and

organisational consequences are clear, especially that:

“... the workers and peasants must be prepared to fight back, using as a starting point military preparation inside their own mass organisations”. (p. 21 *ibid*)

Obviously the first people who have to prepare are those making the proposals. Thus the International must take all the organisational, specialised measures necessary for work in this particular domain.

(b) On the building of revolutionary youth organisations

1. Youth is a product of capitalism which turns the process of ‘entry into the adult world’ into a specific, long phase of transition. This permits the capitalist system to model and form labour power according to its needs. So youth is a social state characterised by material dependence and social non-integration. The bourgeoisie’s institutional set-up (Family, School, Army ...) plays an important role in crystallising youth oppression:

Capitalist structural modifications resulting from the scientific and technical revolution of ‘late’ capitalism (great development of education, capitalist penetration of all spheres of society ...) along with the institutional framework provides a structural basis for the unification of young people, over and beyond the social differentiations which exist.

Therefore it is an unstable social layer in transition. These characteristics make it a barometer sensitive to all changes in social relations: its particular social situation also facilitates its constitution into a specific social movement at certain favourable moments. Winning political hegemony over this movement, whose dynamic is anti-capitalist, is one of the central questions for the working class.

2. Consequently the role of the youth organisations is not limited to being an educational school or a militant fringe of the revolutionary movement — as the Young Communists of the 1920s were. They must work for the unification and development of the youth movement, encouraging youth self-organisation and control over its living conditions in the perspective of linking up the youth movement with the working class movement, based on the proletariat taking up the anti-bureaucratic and anti-authoritarian aspirations of young people.

These tasks explain the necessity of building revolutionary youth organisations, independent of the adult revolutionary marxist organisations, in the advanced capitalist countries.

The August 1982 IEC resolution correctly asserts the need to build such organisations. However it makes the central error of identifying young people with ‘young industrial workers’ and fixes the turn to industry as a priority and an unavoidable axis for youth organisations.

The present international capitalist crisis has further accentuated youth’s autonomisation and social marginalisation. It also encourages a retreat to individual situations and a less directly political and internationalist radicalisation than in the first half of

the 70s (which is reestablishing itself around more ‘humanist’ axes human rights, etc ...).

The central task of young revolutionaries is to encourage youth unity, its self-activity as a social movement around the defence of its aspirations (pacifism, anti-militarism, equal rights for men and women, establishing new relations with the environment, anti-nuclear struggle, campaigns against hunger and misery and support for peoples in struggle throughout the world, anti-racism ...). Starting from the way the youth movement expresses itself today and from young people’s aspirations for social change, the youth organisations should work away at popularising the anti-bureaucratic and anti-authoritarian programmatic axes taken up by young people. Faced with the capitalist crisis the youth organisations play a key role in asserting the necessity for another project of society and new social relations.

The activities and functioning of the youth organisations must reflect the consequences we have drawn about the social marginalisation of young people, the character of the youth counter-society in which new social cultural currents can play a big role. Lenin said, “We must dream” — young people should make their contribution to the overall revolutionary programme. The youth organisations must not submerge themselves in the mass movement. Their politicising role is central today and it should not limit itself to recruitment for the adult organisations.

3. The adult organisations should be careful not to intervene as a fraction inside the youth organisations. On the contrary they must provide the best guarantee for the internal democratic life of the youth organisations, letting young people go through their own experience including their own errors. The fraternal links of the youth organisations to the Fourth International and its sections has no sense unless it corresponds to a real experience of confident collaboration, through which the adult organisations provide all the necessary political and financial aid. Without that it would be only formal and at worst manipulative.

While the building of revolutionary youth organisations is on the agenda in all the advanced capitalist countries, the concrete tactic of building them can vary from country to country, in response to the openings produced by developments in the social movement.

In function of such openings it can prove to be productive to develop opposition currents in the social democratic youth organisations or to take the initiative of participating in the building of broad revolutionary youth organisations, not directly linked as organisations to the sections of the Fourth International.

Most youth organisations in political solidarity with the Fourth International have been set up since the 11th World Congress. To help them the Fourth International can advance in two directions:

— setting up an International Bureau of Young Revolutionaries, making possible the circulation of information and common initiatives (cf. the 1984 youth camp);

— publishing a quarterly bulletin for internal debate and exchange of experiences.

On Building the International

by the Hoffman-Heredia International Tendency

Building the International is the most important point on the agenda of the 12th World Congress. To answer the question of how today we build the revolutionary International that is necessary requires a thorough balance sheet of our successes and failures.

The uneven history of the International

When Trotsky decided on the foundation of the International in 1938, his party-building perspective was indissolubly linked to the situation at the time, and the forecast of imminent war that followed from this. In founding the 'World Party of Socialist Revolution', Trotsky's first thought was of the possibility of turning imperialist war into worldwide civil war. An indispensable precondition for this was the existence of an organised nucleus of cadres.

In Trotsky's plan, the small groups of revolutionaries would have to be capable, in accordance with the Bolshevik model, of fusing with the revolutionary mass movements thrown up by the war and bringing them the political and programmatic clarity necessary for successful revolutions. Only this perspective of rapid transformation of the nature of the International could justify calling this new grouping 'world party of revolution', a title that emphasised the continuity of the leadership of the revolutionary movement, although its forces were still very weak. Conscious of the numerous weaknesses of the movement, Trotsky thought that they would be easily corrected by the new revolutionary developments.

The expected fusions did not take place. As Stalinism had not collapsed as hoped during the war years, our movement resolved the problem by putting back the opportunities for building, without changing either the perspective or the tactics for building that derived from it. Nobody in the movement then understood that the path to building a mass International had to be completely rethought, in the light of a completely changed historical perspective. However, the crisis that occurred in 1947-48, although certain sections (United States, Ceylon and even France) had grown significantly, brought the difficulties home with a sharp shock. But organisational solutions were sought without challenging the old framework. In a way, only Pablo two years later saw that the outlook had changed and proposed another way of building, but on the basis of a wrong analysis of the period. Because of his wrong theses, the 'rational kernel' was lost, with the result that the upsurge of the 1960s saw the idea of a rapid fusion of the 'programme and masses' taken up again explicitly, in an unchanged framework. Thus, at the 1963 reunification congress, the thesis of the 'world party of revolution' coexisted alongside modifications to the statutes in contradiction with the conception of *the* nucleus. The whole thing was adopted without a clear balance sheet, although the split had been provoked by fundamental differences.

After 1968 there was a reorientation of party-building perspectives. The perspectives put forward by comrade Mandel, although unwritten, recorded the upswing in the social movement and banked on a definite reconstruction of the revolutionary movement. Building the International at this time was understood at aiming in the short term for a broad International based on partial political agreement, in which the hegemony of the Trotskyist current would be guaranteed by the strength of its

programme.

It is true that at this time there were big possibilities that gave a foundation for such a perspective. This was shown by the rallying of our Argentinian section to the PRT, as well as the formation of the Colombian section from Castroist currents and the fusion of our organisation with ETA VI in Spain. If other opportunities were not grasped, the fault rests largely on the national leaderships, particularly in Europe where the 'triumphalism' was not without sectarianism towards other revolutionary currents. For example, we should make a balance sheet of the German and Italian experiences, or the impossibility of holding a conference of European revolutionary organisations in which we would have been represented by our best implanted sections. Without attributing all the responsibility for our failure to our conception of building the International, we should not hide from it: we should understand what made it possible. Once the enthusiasm of 1968 had subsided, it was mistaken to stay in the perspective of a broad International, and still worse to look for ways forward in more dubious substitutes. The trauma caused by the failure of the PRT experiment certainly played a role in this reverse tendency, but this does not constitute an excuse for the leadership.

Underlying the internal laxity towards the LTF was the identity of organisational principles between the Fourth International and the broad International. After the PRT split, the red carpet rolled out in front of the Argentine PST (a sympathising organisation that rose without problem to the USec Bureau) bore witness to the abandoning of the most elementary international political rigour. What is more, after the LTF fragmented under the pressure of its internal contradictions, the absence of any critical balance sheet was shown by the same laxity towards the SWP. While its previous opportunism in the anti-war, black or women's movement should already have been criticised, its gradual adoption of a campist view of the international situation, far from being fought by the international leadership, was greeted as an improvement on its previous positions, while in fact this was nothing more than the oscillations typical of a centrist organisation.

The culminating point of this wrong course was reached in the run-up to the XIth World Congress, with the line of reunification of the so-called "world Trotskyist movement" (in fact unification with the OCRFI) as a substitute for building the broad International, a substitute that, by abandoning all political rigour, left the way open for the shifts of the SWP, speeded up by the failure of this course.

This quick survey shows the urgency of a redefinition of our perspectives, that, to be useful, must be based on a clearer appreciation of the general political situation, and a serious study of our history.

The most important gain of the International is quite simply that it exists. It has made it possible to maintain the revolutionary-Marxist programme, in a positive way overall. It has continued to bring together revolutionary cadres within an international organisation, and this is of indispensable value in any perspective for building a revolutionary International. This element can be appreciated at its true worth if we compare our progress with the drift of most of the other revolutionary currents that arose in 1960s and 1970s.

Of course, the positive balance sheet of the International is not

limited to its continuity. Its ability to polarise cadres and revolutionary groups in the world is also the result of the struggles that it has been able to lead, in particular in defence and support of the great revolutions of this half-century. There has not been one colonial war where we have not been alongside those fighting for their liberation against imperialists, and we have often been alone in this (first war in Vietnam, the start of the Algerian revolution . . .). The honour of the FI rests on the fact that, unlike any other movement, it has supported and taken part in the struggles of the oppressed and exploited in the East and in the West. Our criticisms go further than this common gain of our movement.

But, although the International today has forces significantly bigger than at its foundation, we have to insist on the non-linear character of its development. Behind this quantitative difference, there is hidden an important change in quality. Before the war, the International was constituted by a few important organisations, and some very small nuclei of cadres with long experience. At the end of the war, although severely tested, because it was our current that had to pay most dearly to keep its revolutionary orientation, the International had several important sections (Bolivia, Ceylon, Vietnam . . .). Their later disappearance demonstrated clearly the cyclical nature of our growth, and was compensated in the 1970s by new strengths (Spain, Colombia and then Mexico . . .). But, we should not allow this organisational homogeneity achieved through our presence in a good number of countries to be a barrier to really taking stock of the situation that existed after 1968. The rapid development of many revolutionary formations took place independent of the development of the International, and our inability to link up with revolutionary currents of non-Stalinist origin, limited the scope of our growth (cf Germany, Italy, Latin America).

There are, of course, first of all objective reasons for this uneven development. The upsurge of the workers movement in the 1960s was not particularly expressed at a political level, and we passed from a situation where we were intervening against the stream of the movement and where we had to confront a retreat or misrouting of the revolution to one of a change in political direction where the relations between reformists and revolutionaries were modified without being completely changed. The crisis of Stalinism in particular, which greatly helped our influence, at least as a general underlying feature if not at the same rhythm, did not only have positive effects. The first effect of the decline of Stalinist influence was often to put into question the communist project itself, to undermine confidence in its very possibility, and still more in its organisational methods, in such a way that the result was a crisis of confidence in parties and politics, that still exists today.

But the factor that undoubtedly weighed the heaviest on the International was the emergence of middle ways as a result of a partial challenge to Stalinism. The different centrist currents born in the 1960s and 70s, which took up part of the revolutionary programme, nearly all came to a sorry end, but an enormous section of the vanguard went with them. Thus Maoism, once revealed, collapsed, but with the same consequences for the vanguard as the crisis of Stalinism brought within the mass Communist Parties. And thus Castroism, this regional, guerrillaist, strategy first of all led to tragic defeats and then to compromises with Stalinism in the launch of the realpolitik of the Cuban state.

The fact that the explosive social contradictions of Latin America gave it new life with the victory in Nicaragua and then the civil war in Salvador, spreading over the whole region, while increasing our duty towards these revolutionary movements, should not remove our critical vigilance. In fact, while we were largely spared the impact of Maoism, the fact of having been at counter current to the Castroist 'regional road' has brought about terrible opportunist deviations in our ranks, in the same way that

the birth of new 'workers states' after the war was not unconnected to the developments of 1951-53.

What is more, it was these opportunist deviations that on each occasion provoked or exacerbated sectarian deviations. After 1953, the Lambertist development; with the "armed struggle" line the formation of the LTF; today the shipwreck of the SWP reinforces the sectarian currents internally (Tendency 1 . . .) and externally.

More serious for us than those that abandon or deny us — who at least have the merit of taking a clear stand — and the repeated formation of sectarian formations 'claiming to be Trotskyist' is the ossification that is attacking us, in the form of a rigid defence of our gains, a lack of balance sheets, a continual timidity in theoretical adjustments.

Combined with a deformed view of how to build ourselves, this sclerosis makes it more difficult for us to swing in to the new revolutionary upsurges. The Nicaraguan revolution is the best and most recent example of this. Despite a consistent and correct propaganda support internationally, the political credit of our current was first of all ruined by the support given, under the pressure of the SWP and on the basis of secret bargainings, to the traitor Fausto Amador, then by opportunism vis a vis the corrupt PST in the pathetic Simon Bolivar Brigade operation, and finally by the uncritical support of the SWP. The laxity of the international leadership this time led us to almost ignore a revolution, while up till now such an accusation revealed more calumny or injustice than understanding of our mistakes.

Since that period there has been a succession and systematisation of errors, on Afghanistan, the Malvinas crisis, on Lebanon and the PLO, on the turn in the Iran-Iraq war. Our International does not know what it is doing.

To Reorient the Building of the International

Regroupment of the vanguard

The departure point for any reappraisal of the role of the International and our perspective for building is the consciousness of what we really are.

The Fourth International certainly remains the only international nucleus of revolutionary cadres. But this nucleus is not *the nucleus* of the mass International to be built, in the sense that its growth by the winning of successive layers would be enough. The specificity of the Fourth International is that it had, unlike the three other Internationals, to build itself through a long period of retreat and, because of this, it remained limited to a small group of cadres and has never been a mass International. The International has only too much of a tendency to behave as if it was 'the mass International in miniature', as if there was only a quantitative difference in its situation. This leads us to balance between two contradictory errors: to act as if the International was the "world party of socialist revolution", and to give in to laxity because the International is far from having that strength. This is the source of the demoralisation affecting significant sectors, given the threat of a break with the SWP. This loss is however less significant in its consequences than in what it is symbolically, because of the historic role of the SWP and its implantation in the heart of the imperialist fortress, and above all because this symbol of our failure awakens the bad conscience of the International.

Although we have to insist that the Fourth International is not an International in the same way as the first three, that *it is not the World Party of Socialist Revolution*, that *it is not the nucleus* of the needed mass International, neither is the International just one "Trotskyist" current among the rest. We must abandon this term "Trotskyism", the use of which Trotsky himself only reluctantly accepted. Now perverted by the birth of sects calling them-

selves by the same name it nourishes the confusion of the 'world Trotskyist movement'. The International stands for the continuity of revolutionary Marxism.

Our objective is still a mass International, but we mean by that a *new International* (the Fifth in short), different from numerical growth of the Fourth, and that cannot be simply a 'fusion of our programme with the masses'.

How do we go forward in this perspective? Our growth has been the result of both the objective conditions and their consequences on our activity: the tendencies towards ossification reinforce our objectively minority role. This has therefore changed our reality subjectively and objectively and the perspectives for building.

First of all we have to correct our own deformations. This could be done to a large extent by reorienting our work, but requires the theoretical courage to junk some old dogma, to assimilate new ideas and to move forward theoretically. After that we have to agree to have a clear vision of the objective conditions for the mass International, which means that we have to reject dead forms (WTM-world Trotskyist movement) and turn towards those really active today such as in Poland or Salvador. Our positive results guide us because they show the necessity of the unity of the international struggle against imperialism and Stalinism, it is this unity that is our strength against the drift to regionalism or campism. In fact, the rupture in the international struggle for socialism caused by Stalinism has placed each regional movement either on the road of principally anti-imperialist struggle, in fact compromise with Stalinism, or a mainly anti-bureaucratic struggle ready to make agreements with the bourgeoisie. It is in overcoming this situation that the way will be opened for the way to a mass International. The forces that exist today mean that this is not at the moment on the agenda, and there is no question of dissolving what we are today.

On the contrary, we need to be flexible, there is room for a number of different party-building tactics within the political unity of the International. Thus, participation in regional revolutionary gatherings, which is indispensable for linking up with new revolutionary forces, should not mean a break with international unity within such 'regional stepping stones' to the mass International. Just like our participation in developing forces such as the PT in Brazil, it should be seen as participation as a 'current' keeping its links with the International.

The main thing is to reach a regroupment of the vanguard by linking up with all the emerging forces, through our intervention in the revolutions taking place.

A first form of these regroupments — which must not be rejected on the basis of previous unhappy or mistaken experiences — is that of "revolutionary fronts", intermediary stages that can be extremely valuable and could well turn out to be indispensable in overcoming the programmatic differences that would make it impossible to cohabit in the same mass organisation without going through the experience of many joint actions.

The possibility of such fronts and their extreme effectiveness has now been demonstrated by the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran examples. A rise in struggles in Europe will open up this perspective. It is only the classic faintheartedness of dogmatics that can reject this possibility or the attempt for it. In Eastern Europe, and Poland in particular, and very definitely in Yugoslavia as well, it is probable that it is only formations of this type that would make it possible to overcome the very great distrust that Stalinism has caused, even with regard to the best forms of 'communist party'.

Trotsky, before *deciding* on building the International in the isolation of our cadres gave us the example, with the formulation of the "Declaration of the Four" of a step towards regroupment based on a limited but rigorous programme. Today the conditions are more favourable for regroupments of this type. Our In-

ternational leadership must take this up as a priority. The Kienthal-Zimmerwald regroupment was a lot less clear, was even more limited. However, it was this that finally gave rise to the Third International.

What sort of organisation for the International today?

Our organisation must today avoid two symmetrical pitfalls. To become a loose federalist grouping, or to try to be the mini-world party of socialist revolution constructed on the Leninist model.

The first conception has been rejected in theory, but in fact we have fallen back into it because the SWP is able to participate in the International always on the basis of creating a certain relationship of forces and blackmail about a split. As for the world party, given our strength we would obviously only be a caricature, giving rise to the same deviations as in the 1950s.

In our conception of political organisation we have — paradoxical as it might appear — suffered from the influence of Stalinism, at least from a certain conception of "Bolshevism" inherited from its leftist period. We have to stop identifying ourselves with a mythical "Bolshevik-Leninist" type of party, the model of which is too much everything that is most dubious in a party that was directly influenced by conditions that do not apply today. The resolution of the problem of democracy and centralism, or elaboration and action, must be reconsidered in the light of what the proletariat is today, of its experience (in particular the unhappy experience of Stalinist centralism), and of its capacities. On the other hand, all the parties of the International must have statutes ensuring the same rights for all members, and in no case in contradiction with those of the International.

International political centralisation, which is desirable, must be based on the correct principles of the reunification congress: each section decides its national policy, there is only one general orientation for the International. This means that no hasty decisions taken by the peak of our pyramid must get in the way of this. For theoretical positions and the broad orientation this is always possible, and the discussion on these points should be public. We have nothing to be afraid of in an open discussion, and much to learn from the vanguard.

As for how these general orientations should be applied, this can only be decided by completely representative bodies. And such decisions should be the end product of the broadest possible discussion. We must put an end to the substitutionism in three stages (IEC, USec, USec Bureau) that, for example, led to the fact that a wrong decision taken by the United Secretariat was imposed on the International as a whole and that then, in the shift of position, the IEC vote was opposed on several occasions by the USec Bureau.

Between World Congresses there must be only one body responsible for developing the line: the IEC. This must be the case even if it means that this body must be smaller than it is today, although continuing to respect all the currents of thought within the International. Between two meetings of this body the decisions of limited bodies should not stand for the whole of the International; the executive must remain an executive. The USec decision on Afghanistan should not have been imposed on all the sections before a democratic discussion. When there are big disagreements they should be publicly discussed or we fall back into political federalism.

Finally, in the case of national splits, the decision on which faction should be the section should not be a simple numerical principle. When it is a split on international questions, it is the faction in agreement with the positions of the International that is the section. Only in the case where the split takes place on national questions that the majority should be recognised, in the final instance (that is to say after everything has been done to re-

solve the disagreement) as the section. The IEC, if there is not a congress, will decide this on the basis of a political report, which will force the sections to take seriously their responsibilities.

Expulsions should only be resorted to in cases of clear-cut class collaborationist attitudes (as was the case of the PST and the Frente Amplio) after publicly taking note and discussing it; or in the case of very grave deviations (the attitude of the HKE in Iran towards the repression of the Kurds and Mujahedin). When divergences reach the level of a break with our fundamental programme, a split — particularly if one is capable of stripping it of all emotional, legalistic and formalist elements — is not only preferable to internal degeneration and the paralysis in action that that brings about, but it is even a precondition for healthy relations with all other revolutionary forces, including

those that develop within the expelled currents. Good united front relations are more worthwhile than being unable to reach internal agreement on action.

Perhaps it would be possible to come together with an SWP, rid of all links to us, in joint actions on Salvador, while its opposition to the principles of permanent revolution presently make it the worst handicap to our international activity in solidarity with the revolution in Central America.

As an instrument of the world revolution, our movement must see itself not as the *party* of the revolution, but as *part* of the revolutionary forces that its first task is to renew. This task depends less on our numerical strength than on theoretical/political rigour, the worldwide unity of how we appear, and the correct attitude of our organisations.

In Defense of the Fourth International, Its Programme and Integrity

(An answer to the report by Larry Seigle "The Leadership Crisis in the Fourth International", adopted by the August 1984 Socialist Workers Party (USA) National Convention.)
Adopted by majority vote of the United Secretariat, November 11, 1984.

I. A real problem — the evolution of the Socialist Workers Party

The real problems facing the Fourth International today are the opposite to those indicated in Larry Seigle's report (The Leadership Crisis in the Fourth International) adopted by the SWP convention this year.

Since 1981 the Socialist Workers Party of the United States has been following a course which has step by step led to a withering away of normal organisational and political relations to the point of a *de facto* split inside the Fourth International. In summary, this course can be outlined as follows.

Immediately after the 1981 convention of the SWP, the incoming leadership began to raise a number of theoretical and historical items, which placed in question the theory of permanent revolution and important parts of the programme of the Fourth International, including parts of the Transitional Programme. At no stage were these fundamental differences raised at the congress which had just taken place. In fact, explicit assurances to the contrary were made by SWP leaders, assurances that were to become null and void immediately after the convention.¹

The SWP leadership began to take a number of organisational measures that excluded any normal democratic discussion on these matters. These measures eventually came to include: bans on the right to organise tendencies, expulsion of all those who opposed the new positions on organisational questions and the postponement of any party convention until the vast bulk of these expulsions (well over 100 comrades) had been carried out.

These measures taken together meant that a new SWP line on certain programmatical questions and related political problems was introduced in an authoritarian way and a repressive climate, alien to free thought and free discussions, was created inside the party.²

At the international level, the SWP leadership has tried to block and obstruct the international discussion *around the political questions that the 1982 International Executive Committee meeting adopted for the pre-world congress debate*. Despite the

fact that the pre-world congress discussion began in 1982 the SWP leadership has not proposed a single text for voting at the congress on those items. Instead during this time, it has constructed an international grouping on an undeclared basis. This grouping consists of leaders of some sections of the International who meet on a regular basis with the leadership of the SWP. The meetings of this *de facto* faction take place behind the cover of SWP plenums and conventions. This is one of the main reasons behind the exclusions that have taken place from these meetings of representatives of the United Secretariat and representatives of the leaderships of sections who are not supporters of this undeclared faction.

These exclusionary and discriminatory activities of the SWP leadership are directly contrary to the statutes of the Fourth International, the ground rules that defend the organisational integrity and coherence of the International. The SWP itself in the past has agreed to be guided by these statutes by its votes for them. This includes also the following passage of the statutes: "... the ... statutes of national sections must be in general conformity with the statutes of the Fourth International." This should also go for the *application* of the statutes.

The withholding of tendency rights provided for in the Fourth International statutes,³ the political expulsions that have been carried through, the contemptuous attitude to the decisions and arguments of the United Secretariat,⁴ the policy of depriving the international leadership and leaders of sections of their right of information and their right to attend SWP plenums and engage in democratic discussions with SWP members,⁵ the unilateral and public attacks against a certain number of sections and leaders of the Fourth International,⁶ all these acts are against the letter and spirit of the statutes of the Fourth International.

It is such acts of the SWP leadership that are responsible for the tensions and break-up of normal organisational and political relations in the Fourth International today.

The reactions of the United Secretariat and the United Secretariat Bureau to these actions since the SWP engaged its pre-

sent course after 1981 have had one guiding principle and one only: *to defend the integrity of the International, its sections and members, and to defend their equal rights inside the International*. Only under such conditions can grave political differences be handled in the best possible way.

II. Reality turned upside down

In order to arrive at the conclusions drawn in the SWP report, comrade Seigle not only distorts the political positions of the United Secretariat, he also turns reality completely upside down on a series of other points:

- The United Secretariat and its Bureau, including comrades who hold minority points of view — that have honoured the decisions of the International Executive Committee and prepared reports and resolutions covering all political points that the International Executive Committee decided should be on the World Congress agenda — are portrayed as enemies of the key political pre-world congress discussions. The USec, that has many times tried to meet the concerns of the American party and deal with them in as objective a way as possible in spite of all difficulties, that has agreed to add one point to the World Congress agenda on their request, that has prepared and organised a special United Secretariat debate on permanent revolution, that has tried to react to other questions of special concern to the American comrades and placed them on the agendas of United Secretariat meetings — these bodies are accused of blocking the legitimate requests by the SWP for clarification of key issues.

- The United Secretariat that has provided for the big bulk of translations of resolutions, reports and debating articles — including all translations into French and most into English — is attacked for placing administrative obstacles in the way of the pre-world congress debate. At the same time, the SWP comrades who have even failed to provide their minimal portion of translations of documents into English are supposedly the defenders of internal democracy.

- The United Secretariat that has refrained from any disciplinary actions and resorted exclusively to debates in order to convince other comrades with arguments should, according to the SWP, be blamed for “bureaucratic and super-centralist” attacks against sections and opponent views. But those very comrades who expelled well over 100 comrades from their party and thereby tried to put them outside the pre-world congress debates are supposedly the ones who try to safeguard the democratic rights of the members of the International.

- The activities of the United Secretariat Bureau — whose existence and composition has been challenged by nobody at any United Secretariat meeting, and whose work has been covered by innumerable reports at United Secretariat meetings since the last World Congress, whose functioning has been raised for debate at the United Secretariat by this very body itself in the framework of efforts to restructure the international leadership organs — this body is denounced as a “secret faction.” But the SWP leadership — which has organised meetings and consultations with comrades of other sections without any declared political platform, which has engaged in trips and discussions with comrades of sections behind the back of their leaderships — this SWP leadership is supposedly acting in a frank, open, healthy and comradely way.

- When the SWP leadership informs the United Secretariat representatives that they will not be admitted to the SWP convention and cannot follow and participate in the proceedings, then those United Secretariat representatives are denounced as boycotters. Their crime? They did not know that the SWP leadership would retroactively modify its exclusionary policy to allow the United Secretariat representatives to address delegates to request that they be accorded their statutory right to attend the conference. So, for refusing to go through the procedure of paying

thousands of dollars to arrive at the conference, to ask for the right to attend the conference, and then have it rejected in line with the SWP leadership policy — a procedure that the United Secretariat representatives were never informed of — the United Secretariat is accused of a boycott.

- The special information bulletin on the “Organisational Situation in the SWP (USA)” edited by the Bureau after a decision by the United Secretariat is referred to in comrade Seigle’s report (p.23). The table of contents is given in an attempt to show how factional the selection of material was. The fact of the matter is that equal space with the expelled comrades’ material was reserved for material of the SWP leadership’s own choice. *But the SWP comrades never collaborated with this project, never made any proposal, and never submitted any material*. Despite this, equal space was accorded to the SWP leadership and the SWP reports on the matter considered most authoritative by the Bureau was selected.

One could go on like this. The sad truth of the matter is that the SWP report is a tissue of distortions, designed to cover up the real course of the SWP leadership. More than once while reading this document, one cannot help remembering George Orwell’s *1984*, which takes place in a world where “peace” means “war,” “freedom” “slavery” and where “ignorance is strength.” It is the “black-white” world where “black” means “white” when needed and vice versa. It is the world of “double-think” and “double-speak”.

III. Problems and solutions

It is now regrettably necessary to devote some time to examining some of the main issues raised in the Seigle report. We want to demonstrate that these problems have arisen as a result of the actions of the SWP leadership. It is therefore in the hands of the SWP to resolve them by reversing their course.

a) *The myth of the “secret faction”*

The nonsense about the “secret Bureau faction” ought to be stopped immediately. There is not an ounce of real seriousness behind these accusations. A simple test could verify this assessment. If the SWP considers that the Bureau is operating behind the backs of their party and of the international leadership as a whole — let them send a comrade to assist in the running of the Bureau, to take their responsibility for its daily work and the international centre — and thereby replace comrade Doug Jenness who was a (fraternal) member of the Bureau until 1980; when he left through a unilateral decision and contrary to many urgings of the Bureau and the United Secretariat up till this very day.

And let the SWP representatives participate in a full and *collective* way in other activities, to share the responsibilities of *collectively* preparing the regional leadership meetings, the Amsterdam school, to jointly lead the international campaigns, and so on (to the extent that all this is compatible with American law).

This would immediately reduce the tensions inside the International — but it would also immediately prove the charge of the SWP groundless.

It is absolutely certain that there are big problems in the running of the daily international centre, that meetings of the United Secretariat are not prepared as we wish and as they ought to be, that a lot of initiatives that are objectively necessary are not taken, that the world congress and international leadership bodies have not functioned within the time limits foreseen by the statutes of the Fourth International, etc.

These problems have nothing to do with the existence of a “secret Bureau faction.” They have nothing to do with the intentions of the Bureau members. They have first and foremost to do with the personnel and material resources available to the international leadership and the structure and function of the international leadership organs.

It is not true either, as the SWP comrades claim, that these

leadership organs meet less frequently now than before, that important information is withheld from the United Secretariat members, and that the Bureau and the United Secretariat intervene more and more in the "democratic functioning of the sections."

There is no real difference between the frequency of the IEC and United Secretariat meetings now compared to between the Ninth and Tenth and Tenth and Eleventh World Congresses. If there were more United Secretariat meetings in some of these earlier years compared to the most recent years compared to the most recent period, this is immediately compensated for by the prolongation of the meetings of the last couple of years.

If you compare the press plus the circulars and other informational material made available to all USec members and leaderships of all sections there has been a steady increase of such material, contrary to what is claimed by the SWP comrades.

The "super-centralist Bureau" and United Secretariat that the SWP comrades repeat many times through their document is nothing but a myth and a deliberate distortion.

The problem for the SWP however is, of course, that the United Secretariat — *yes* — has acted *politically* to defend the normal, elementary, democratic rights of members of the International, beginning with the SWP and the right not to be expelled because of their political convictions and because of their wish to see the statutes of the International applied, and to defend the programme of the International.

In this respect, the SWP comrades prefer a completely paralysed and passive Bureau and United Secretariat. They have done what they could to help paralyse the international in this respect. Fortunately, they have not succeeded.

Supercentralist? Perhaps for someone who questions the organisational integrity of the International, who is weakening the organisational links between the International leadership and their own organisation and members and who wants to reserve for himself or herself the *absolute* (absolute!) right to pick and choose which decisions of the United Secretariat, IEC and World Congress should be followed and which should not, and replaces the statutes of the Fourth International by unilateral decisions of its own leadership.

That is the problem, and that is what is behind the myth of the "super-centralist Bureau."

b) *The political purge in the SWP*

The question of the purge in the SWP in the last couple of years is an item that has been well covered by the documents that have been made available to the members of the International, for example by the SWP comrades themselves or through the material contained in the special February 1984 International Internal Information Bulletin on the "Organisational Situation in the SWP (USA)."

The purge process in the SWP started based on two accusations:

1) that opponents of the official "party positions" on different programmatic and political questions had attempted to "reopen" branch and membership discussions on questions that had been settled by the 1981 convention;

2) that a growing number of acts of indiscipline of oppositionists amounted to self-provoked expulsions by minority comrades, which then also indicated that the minority was organising a split from the party.

As is clear from any analysis of the development of the SWP's programmatic and political positions in the last couple of years, the official party positions have been changed on a whole series of subjects over these years. What the comrades who opposed these changes wanted to do was to be able to discuss these changes through the opening of internal discussions and eventually a convention.

As we know the opposite happened through a whole series of

administrative and bureaucratic interpretations of statutes and organisational principles.

Through a whole series of commandments a number of new norms were introduced and introduced in a retroactive way. Many comrades who wanted to use what they thought were the democratic rights according to the statutes of the Fourth International and SWP and SWP traditions became the victims of disciplinary actions based on norms that they did not know existed.

Thus the main purge started, accelerated, and then was consummated last winter.

Such an internal situation was created that it was in the end virtually impossible for *any* minority to exist in the party without breaking some rule that had been or was going to be instituted.

The SWP leadership claims that the organisational decisions taken through this whole purge are just the application of its statutes and organisational principles. But, everybody knows that statutes and principles can be "interpreted" in different ways in real life up to a point where they in reality are given a meaning that is completely different from the original intentions and the overall context. By twisting and turning a certain paragraph a leadership can give it varying contents.

Throughout the whole purge the SWP leadership referred to certain paragraphs of its constitution and organisational principles but gave them a meaning that was absolutely opposite to other key sections.

Consider that fact that all SWP organisational resolutions from 1938, 1940, 1953, and 1965 contain one and the same sentence:

"Party membership confers the fullest freedom of discussion, debate and criticism inside the ranks of the party, limited only by such decisions and provisions as are made by the party itself or by bodies to which it assigns this function."

In the same way as the SWP leadership has interpreted the right by a leadership to "regulate tendencies" to mean the right to abolish the right of tendencies, it has used all its possibilities to "limit" discussions to the point where the "fullest freedom of discussion, debate and criticism" has disappeared.

Consider also the following passages in the 1965 resolution elaborating on the earlier sentence:

"To safeguard party unity in debating and deciding policy, a conscious effort is made to teach comrades to argue out problems on the basis of principles and to act always from the standpoint of principle. Along these lines the party has developed in a free and democratic internal atmosphere. All individuals and tendencies have a full chance to contribute to the development of the party and to the shaping of its leading cadres.

"We are guided by the Leninist concept of relative internal homogeneity based on loyal adherence *to the party's programme and principles* and voluntary acceptance of its discipline. These qualities enable the party to maintain internal stability and to function dynamically in its public activity, even though conjunctural political differences arise. Ample room is provided for the expression of dissident views, even major ones of serious import. The right to organise tendencies and factions is safeguarded. All the leadership demands is that every member be loyal to the party's programme and principles and be disciplined.

As a combat organisation the party strives for political homogeneity in the sense that admission to its ranks requires fundamental agreement with its *programme and principles*. (emphasis added)

Note "loyalty to the party's programme and principles" (not "certain leaders")! And note also that admission "requires fundamental agreement with this programme and these principles" (not with "certain positions of these leaders")!

The United Secretariat has discussed and expressed its opinion on these matters a number of times. It has heard reports from different sides and formed its opinion on the basis of a voluminous documentation.

It has issued protests against the way comrade Pedro Camejo was punished for organisational mistakes through methods that amounted to a political expulsion. This United Secretariat opinion expressed in October 1982 was taken irrespective of openly existing political differences between the United Secretariat majority and comrade Camejo. It was a strict organisational defence of the democratic rights of comrade Camejo. This can also not be invalidated because of the later political trajectory of comrade Camejo, in which the actions of the SWP leadership have played no little role (including a cynical manoeuvre to first decide to support his inclusion in the IEC as a full member and then immediately deny him reintegration into the SWP)!

- The United Secretariat further defended the elementary democratic rights of 18 SWP minority comrades to collaborate in order to participate in the international pre-World Congress debate (October 1982). (See the special IIIB on the "Organisational Situation in the SWP (USA)" page 15.)

- The United Secretariat issued its strong protest against the suspension (not exclusion) of the 4 minority NC members (October 1983). (See the special IIIB page 18.)

- And it finally also adopted a resolution in relation to the exclusion of United Secretariat representatives from the SWP meetings, the last big wave of expulsions and the formation of Socialist Action and related matters (January 1984). This latter resolution ends with the following conclusions, which also should serve as the basis for the decisions at the World Congress on these matters:

"This January 26-29, 1984, United Secretariat meeting decides:

- to reiterate the positions adopted at the October USec meeting: to regard all victims of the political purge of SWP oppositionists as members of the FI (to the extent that this is compatible with American law), maintain political collaboration with them including giving them all rights as members of the FI when it comes to fully participating in the pre-world congress debate:

- to regard the decision by the USec Bureau to open collaboration with the comrades who later formed Socialist Action (SWP) and then with Socialist Action itself as completely within the framework of the October USec resolution;

- to reiterate the urging made in that resolution that the SWP leadership 'reverse its organisational course and immediately and collectively reintegrate the expelled comrades';

- to characterize the decision by the SWP leadership to bar the USec Bureau representative at the November plenum as an act of overt hostility to the International and its leadership and request to the SWP that this not be repeated;

- to urge the SWP leadership to return to a normal form of collaboration in the International and fully present its views to the ranks through written documents." (See the special IIIB, page 29.)

c) Provocations

One of the most serious charges raised by the SWP against the United Secretariat is that the leadership of the International is guilty of "provocations" against the SWP.

This matter was raised in the April 1984 letter of Malik Miah that is attached to comrade Seigle's report. The organisations formed in the USA by expelled members of the SWP, Socialist Action and the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, are also accused of provocations against the SWP. According to a letter sent out to all SWP members on March 8, 1984, a provocation is defined as a "deliberately hostile act that makes a workers organisation vulnerable to police action." That letter goes on to say "some actions are instigated by police agent provocateurs; others are the work of forces so blinded by factionalism that they are willing to subordinate to their factional goals the fact that they are playing into the hands of the cops."

The United Secretariat is accused of making provocations

against the SWP. In fact comrade Malik Miah's letter claims that the United Secretariat is guilty of "an even more serious provocation than the act of Socialist Action."

The charge that the United Secretariat is guilty of "provocations" was first made in relation to the circumstances surrounding the publication of the transcript of Jack Barnes' speech that was circulated to United Secretariat members. The United Secretariat of November 1983 discussed this matter, adopting a motion that demanded that the insinuation made in the editorial of *New International*, that the United Secretariat was somehow manipulated by "Cointelpro"-style (i.e. cop-inspired) disruption be either proven or publicly withdrawn. It was the SWP who first raised this matter publicly and internally. It is now their responsibility in their hands to ensure that the matter be dropped.

The accusation that the United Secretariat is guilty of provocative acts was raised again in a different context. This was the charge that the United Secretariat was guilty of a serious provocation by using the title Socialist Action (SWP) in its minutes.

The United Secretariat adopted the following position in relation to this charge at its May 1984 meeting. It said: "The United Secretariat condemns the slanderous amalgam used by the PB of the SWP in its letter of March 1984 to SWP members which states:

"By falsely portraying themselves as organisationally linked to or part of the SWP, Socialist Action/In Defence of Marxism is giving a weapon to the government for use in legally justifying infiltration, harassment and disruption operations against the SWP. The FBI and other cop agencies are given ammunition with which to argue that they need to use informers to infiltrate the SWP because there is more than one "SWP" position and organisational structure."

"Socialist Action and FIT were set up by expelled members of the SWP. By calling themselves 'public faction of the SWP' they only want to insist on the fact that they consider their expulsions unjustified and that it is not recognised, but on the contrary condemned, by the Fourth International. They call for their reinstatement.

"The PB's positions really means that the comrades expelled from the SWP have no right to call publicly for their reinstatement in the SWP without automatically becoming partial tools of the police. This preposterous position that, by innuendo, also extends to accusations against the United Secretariat, has to be rejected out of hand."

To meet the point raised by the SWP delegation to that United Secretariat meeting, the United Secretariat however also decided to refer to Socialist Action as Socialist Action (SWP) in the minutes. At the same time it was clarified that this in no way changed the characterisations of these comrades as unjustly expelled members who ought to be immediately and collectively integrated into the SWP and meanwhile retain their status as members of International to the extent that this is compatible with American legislation.

Finally, the United Secretariat is accused of aiding another provocation by refusing to expel Gerardo Nebbia at its May 1984 meeting.

The FIT decided on its own responsibility to set up an enquiry into the Nebbia case. The United Secretariat decided not to intervene in the process at this stage, beyond urging FIT leaders not to set up an independent commission of enquiry but to proceed through the normal organisational channels of the Fourth International.

The FIT carried through the investigation of Nebbia, who had eventually turned out to be a member of the FIT. Its enquiry resulted in the expulsion of Nebbia. Nebbia appealed to the conference of the FIT and this appeal was rejected.

In all three cases where the United Secretariat has been accused of "provocations," the charge is false. The only function of

such charges is to raise the heat inside the International to further justify the course being pursued by the SWP leadership.

Comrade Malik Miah in his letter demarcates himself from any "agent baiting." If the SWP leadership is seriously interested in resolving the crisis inside the International, it should drop these charges of "provocations" too.

d) *Exclusion from the SWP convention*

The decision under different pretexts to systematically exclude representatives of the United Secretariat and leaders of sections from National Committee plenums and then also the 1984 convention is a fundamental challenge to the very existence of the Fourth International as a united organisation. It can have as its only function — and intention — to prevent a real political discussion about the positions of the United Secretariat among the ranks of the SWP. As such it is part of the same policy that led to the expulsion of well over 100 militants from the SWP and the refusal to hold a congress of the organisation until this split was perpetrated by the SWP leadership.

Comrade Malik Miah's letter annexed to the Seigle/SWP report from April 1984, justifies the exclusion of representatives of the United Secretariat from the leadership meetings in the following way.:

"The policy of respecting the integrity of SWP NC meetings applies as a condition of attendance to *anyone* invited to them. This has been the case since its founding. Anyone who violates this policy by reporting discussions or decisions against the decision of the NC will not be invited to observe future leadership meetings of the SWP or have access to the record of its decisions and proceedings or of those of its subcommittees."

We will have to deal with this matter in detail. The SWP leadership claims that this matter was raised by comrade Stateman at the January United Secretariat but allegedly no action was taken "nor was there any discussion" of the problems we were raising.

This is not true. A motion proposed by comrade Walter to the following effect was passed unanimously:

"That no information given in the framework of point 2 on the agenda (organisational problems in the USA) be public without prior consultation and approval by the United Secretariat."

Comrade Stateman raised *no other motions* on the question and expressed his agreement with Walter's motion.

This is in line with the policy held by the United Secretariat that reports made to the United Secretariat can be kept at the level of the Secretariat if that body decides to do so.

It is in dealing with these matters that the report made by comrade Seigle again makes a number of unjust attacks against the United Secretariat Bureau and comrade Frej.

As we shall demonstrate comrade Seigle and the SWP rewrite history and criticise comrade Frej for having broken norms that are not norms until long after they are allegedly broken. This is parallel to the disciplinary actions against all those SWP comrades who were attacked for breaking norms retroactively.

Comrade Seigle's story goes back to the SWP National Committee plenum in 1982. Comrade Frej attended as United Secretariat representative. After the plenum he reported back to the United Secretariat Bureau, which decided, as a body, to act on a certain number of grave problems relating to relations between the American and Mexican parties that had been expressed in the report by comrade Larry Seigle on Central American solidarity at the plenum.

A letter was sent to the Mexican leadership asking for their explanation of a certain number of accusations made. The matter was placed on the agenda of the January 1983 United Secretariat meeting.

The minutes from that meeting under point 5 read:

"Information report on Tijuana border conference (USA/

Mexico)

"Jacobco reported

"Stateman gave a counterreport

"Discussion

"Summaries"

No decisions were taken, except one under a later point to continue the discussion after further documentation at the next, March, United Secretariat meeting (a meeting that the SWP leadership did not attend, for which reason the documentation of that meeting was sent to them including a translation of a written report on the Tijuana meeting by the Mexican comrade Alvaro Lain, a report that the SWP comrades now falsely claim has been circulated all over the world by the Bureau.)

No protest was made about the Bureau letter to the Mexican PRT at the meeting. No criticism was made about breaking norms.

Two other charges against comrade Frej that are now raised in comrade Seigle's report were raised then.

This is for one obvious reason: nobody then questioned the right of United Secretariat members to handle information to the best of their ability and in accordance with decisions of the bodies that nominated them as their representatives.

Comrade Seigle says in his report:

"Frej's letter did not report (to the Mexican PRT) that the National Committee voted to keep the discussion of the disagreement with the PRT fraction within the National Committee."

Such a decision is not registered in the minutes. Comrade Frej has stated that he is not and was not aware of any such decision and that he would have protested if the USec representative was not allowed to report back from the proceedings and would not have attended the plenum under such conditions.

Moreover, comrade Seigle states a couple of lines before:

"The comrade attending the session on the request of the PRT gave a report to the PRT leadership immediately upon returning to Mexico."

Was not he as bound by the alleged NC decision as the representative of the United Secretariat?

Further, do not comrades of the SWP P.C. attending United Secretariat meetings and leadership meetings and conventions of different sections report back to their leading bodies? Have not they also felt completely free to distribute whatever material they receive, in their organisation? Of course they have done that. Nobody has stated a principle that this could not be done (although comrades from the sections concerned have several times disagreed with the contents of reports back and the lack of consultation preceding reports). The SWP comrades have also felt free to print up oral remarks made by United Secretariat representatives at their leadership meetings and distribute them around the world without the least consultation or right for these comrades to edit their statements before publication.

Why these double standards?

The United Secretariat Bureau simultaneously sent a copy of the letter to the PRT to the SWP comrades in order to get any necessary correction of its contents before the matter was discussed by the January United Secretariat. That was an obvious and normal consultation.

If the United Secretariat Bureau had been factually wrong, this could easily have been demonstrated. It could have been taken up at the United Secretariat meeting. The false facts could have been refuted and the United Secretariat caught in the act.

This was never done. The fact of the matter is that the same type of accusations against the PRT were repeated by comrade Stateman on behalf of the SWP leadership at the January United Secretariat meeting and in an even sharper form, and a following Central Committee meeting of the French LCR to which he had been invited.

This is reflected in the minutes of the March 1983 United Sec-

retariat meeting under a procedural point:

4. "Report from the PRT (Mexico) CC on debate between the PRT and SWP (USA) on Salvador solidarity work

"Procedural motion by Segur"

"Given:

● the oral attacks against the line and activity of the Mexican PRT in its solidarity work with the Salvadoran revolution, made in the report by Larry Seigle to the December 1982 SWP plenum;

● that these attacks were repeated by comrade Stateman at the January 1983 United Secretariat meeting and at the LCR (France) CC in January 1983;

● that the SWP comrades were invited by the PRT comrades to their January CC meeting in order to clarify the matters in dispute;

● that the SWP comrades have not replied to this invitation, nor to the written Mexican CC resolution of February 6, nor to the questionnaire sent by the Bureau on Salvador solidarity work to prepare the present United Secretariat, while at the same time they had stated that there are two class lines on this question — to the point of justifying their refusal for any joint meeting with the Mexican comrades before the Tijuana conference.

"The United Secretariat decides:

"To keep this point on the agenda and requests that the Bureau sends a letter to the SWP leadership asking for a written answer to the PRT CC's resolution as soon as possible."

(The minutes from this meeting also contains a lengthy appendix, with the above-mentioned resolution from the Mexican PRT's Central Committee, protesting the actions of the SWP at the Tijuana conference and afterwards against the PRT.)

The whole accusation against the United Secretariat Bureau and comrade Frej, which has now been used as a pretext for excluding United Secretariat representatives from SWP plenums and conventions, is in fact smashed by the account of the SWP leadership itself.

That the "integrity of SWP leadership meetings" is a pretext for excluding United Secretariat members is made clear by the fact that completely different reasons were given when comrade Smith was barred from attending the November 1983 plenum of the SWP NC under consciously humiliating conditions; namely the existing relations between the United Secretariat and Socialist Action and other comrades expelled from the SWP for political reasons:

"The establishment of Socialist Action (. . .) undertaken at the urging and with the full support of the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. The Bureau sent representatives to participate in its founding conference. This was done without the agreement of the SWP leadership and with the full knowledge that the SWP was not told when or where such a meeting would occur. The Bureau thus shares full responsibility for the course carried out by Socialist Action.

"Pending a decision by the January United Secretariat meeting as to the character and limits of the relations that the United Secretariat intends to establish with this publicly declared opponent of the SWP, including what information it intends to share with Socialist Action:

"1. no sessions of the November 16–20 National Committee meeting will be open to the representatives of the United Secretariat Bureau;

"2. in accord with the spirit of the statutes of the Fourth International, a representative of the Bureau will be given time at the opening of the NC meeting to represent motions adopted by the United Secretariat at its October meeting in relation to the SWP;

"3. in order to avoid any potential misunderstandings and minimise centrifugal tendencies in the world movement, no member of the SWP leadership will have any individual or infor-

mal meetings with representatives of the United Secretariat Bureau prior to the full discussion and resolution of this matter at the January United Secretariat meeting."

The January United Secretariat took a discussion of its relations with Socialist Action in which it reaffirmed the position of the October United Secretariat of continuing to regard those unjustly expelled from the SWP as members of the Fourth International (to the extent this was compatible with U.S. law).

But the position of the October and January United Secretariat is not mentioned at all in the Seigle report in relation to the matter of excluding representatives of the United Secretariat from SWP leadership meetings.

It is crystal clear that the pretexts for barring United Secretariat representatives from SWP meetings have shifted. The dishonest way to rewrite history in order to serve the present aims is revealed in all its nakedness. The meaning of the attacks on individual United Secretariat members in order to give cover to these distortions is shown in absolute clarity.

It shows the type of methods today applied by the SWP leadership when it serves its purposes. It throws new light on the handling of the opposition in the SWP 1981–1984. It calls for a strong reaction by the whole International.

In fact the flimsiness of the SWP case is directly attributable to the fact that the true reason for its policy of exclusion has nothing to do with the "disruptive acts" of any individuals or body. It is purely and simply to bureaucratically prevent a discussion of political questions in the SWP leadership as a whole and its membership.

It is precisely this right, guaranteed by the statutes, for the leading bodies of the International to carry out their functions on behalf of the whole world movement that is being denied by the SWP.

The act of the Socialist Workers Party in excluding the United Secretariat members from its plenum is not only factional policy aimed to prevent a political discussion in the organisation as a whole, but is explicitly contrary to both the spirit and letter of the Fourth International's statutes.

To end this sad chapter, let us repeat the real policy of the United Secretariat when it comes to its representatives reporting back from plenums and conventions:

"Representatives of the United Secretariat attending leadership meetings of national sections are responsible to, and report back to, the United Secretariat and its elected bodies.

"The United Secretariat reaffirms its right to attend such meetings and to discuss such reports and also its right to reserve discussions on such matters at the level of the United Secretariat, at the request of the section concerned."

This position answers the legitimate concerns of sections but it gives them no veto on reports of United Secretariat representatives. This is also completely in accordance with the word and spirit of the statutes of the International. (see note 4 above)

e) *Shall there be a world congress?*

It's no secret that the American SWP leadership doesn't want a world congress to be held at the time decided.

At several times they have proposed the holding of future IEC meetings, which then would postpone the world congress to some later undefined future.

The United Secretariat position has consistently since the 1981 IEC meeting been to have the earliest possible world congress, where "earliest possible" be decided by the time needed to prepare the political documents and discussions decided by the IEC.

It is obvious that a world congress is badly needed, both for formal and substantial political and organisational reasons.

The right of the membership to decide the line of the Fourth International on key class struggle events and the methods of building the International; the need to resolve a number of deep programmatical and organisational differences as well as the

necessity to rally the members of the International for the important tasks ahead — all these are obvious arguments for this standpoint.

The SWP/Seigle report is self-contradictory here. Especially since the grave situation in the International makes an early solution necessary. If an IEC is allowed to take the place of the world congress, the situation would become worse in all respects and disrupt the activities of the FI on all levels. It would exclude the membership from deciding the issues after three years of debate.

That's why the September United Secretariat meeting decided to uphold the earlier decisions on timing of the world congress.

Here enters the question of the "workers and farmers government debate." It has taken until the Seigle report was available (just before the November 1984 United Secretariat meeting) to know what the American comrades wanted to propose in relation to their report at the world congress.

Now it's stated that it should be put to the vote. Okay, it's the right of the comrades to demand this. The following decision adopted at the May 1984 United Secretariat meeting formally grants them this right.

"1. The United Secretariat notes that at its May 1983 session, it rejected a motion of comrade Stateman asking that the United Secretariat present a resolution or report to the 12th World Congress on the question of the workers and farmers government.

"2. In order not to prevent a minority from raising issues at the World Congress and in the pre-World Congress discussion which *they* consider vital for the movement, the May 1983 United Secretariat had decided to put the 'workers and farmers government' issue on the World Congress agenda in the precise sense that it deferred to the minority's desire to submit a *document* of their own on that question to the World Congress vote.

The United Secretariat proposes to the World Congress to reject the Jack Barnes document because its orientation stands in contradiction to the general line expressed in the established programmatic documents of our movement.

"3. A thorough discussion on the question of the seizure of power, the destruction of the bourgeois state and the consolidation of workers power (construction of a workers state) is made even more necessary given the unfolding developments in Central America. This type of discussion requires a real exchange of views and cannot be resolved by a simple vote at the next World Congress."

The SWP comrades are not satisfied with this decision. They want the United Secretariat to write a counter-document or something like that to their document. The answer has been NO.

The United Secretariat has prepared the documents it sees fit for the World Congress. Other comrades have the right to make other proposals. But a minority cannot force a majority to write a type of document that it doesn't agree with.

The United Secretariat has declared that it's against the SWP "Workers and Farmers government document" — both its form and contents. The SWP comrades cannot impose another position on the United Secretariat.

The debate on the theoretical issues will be taken at the World Congress. What the World Congress *has* to do though is to pronounce itself on the burning issues of the international class struggle and draw the necessary strategic and political conclusions of them.

The material prepared by the United Secretariat for the IEC provides for a framework for that debate and the ensuing decisions.

It is not too late for the SWP leadership to present written counter-reports to the delegates at the World Congress on the topics on the agenda. These agenda points cover the burning questions of world politics, including the Central American revolution. And yet the SWP are presenting documents already voted

on at the 11th World Congress, and a document on the question of the workers and farmers government slogan in the USA.

The main obstacle to the democratic preparation of the World Congress has been this refusal of the SWP to engage in real discussion. They still have time to change course at the congress itself.

Conclusion

In this report we have tried to demonstrate how the SWP's evolution has provoked a real crisis in the International — to the point of a *de facto* split. We have shown that they have attempted to disguise this fact by inverting reality, and presenting themselves and their co-participants in their undeclared international grouping as the aggrieved party, and not the large number of fine militants expelled from the SWP for reasons which are, in reality, political.

We have also shown there is a way out of this crisis, by the SWP leadership reversing the course they have been pursuing and adopting a number of definite measures to this end.

In particular:

- They should cease their nonsensical campaign against a "secret Bureau faction" and fully integrate themselves within the leadership of the International.

- They should, in line with decisions of the United Secretariat, "reverse their organisational course and immediately and collectively reintegrate the comrades expelled from the SWP."

- They should drop all charges of "provocations" against the United Secretariat.

- They should integrate themselves within the Fourth International by conforming to the statutory requirements to make their leadership and conference meetings open to representatives of the International and ceasing to exclude representatives of section leaderships with whom the SWP leadership is in political disagreement.

- They should present counterreports or documents to the agenda points for the World Congress.

These measures taken together would, despite the very deep political differences in the Fourth International, provide the basis for removing all the organisational obstacles to a political discussion and democratic resolution of the debate. But for this to happen the SWP must reverse the disastrous course outlined and promoted by the Seigle report.

* * *

Notes:

(1) For example, in an article in the 1981 SWP pre-convention debate by Steve Clark, member of the SWP Political Committee, the following was stated:

"Comrade Weinstein concludes his 'letter to a member of the National Committee' with the question: 'Is there any rethinking going on in the PC concerning our view of the permanent revolution, that Trotsky was perhaps wrong after all?'"

"The answer is no. Trotsky's writings in his last exile on the dynamics and interrelationship of the three sectors of the World Revolution read more and more like contemporary history as it is unfolding today. He wasn't fundamentally wrong, he was fundamentally correct." (Socialist Workers Party Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 37, No. 9, June 1981, p. 19)

This should be compared with what is said by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes in an article in the party theoretical magazine, *New International* two years later:

"Permanent revolution does not contribute today to arming either ourselves or other revolutionaries to lead the working class and its allies to take power and use that power to advance the world socialist revolution.

"(. . .) our movement must discard permanent revolution."

(Fall 1983, p. 13)

(2) On this question, see the special United Secretariat International Internal Information Bulletin on "The Organisational situation in the Socialist Workers Party (USA)" (February 1984), especially "Letter to the SWP Political Committee on 'the 18' (comrades who wanted to form a tendency for the discussion in the International)" by Jones and Segur on behalf of the Bureau of the United Secretariat, October 21, 1982 (page 16).

(3) Cf. the following passage (point 29 g) from the Fourth International's statutes:

"g. Decisions are reached by majority vote. Minorities are duty bound to carry out majority decisions. Minorities, however, have the incontestable right to constitute themselves into tendencies or factions on the basis of a stated platform and to enjoy democratic rights such as:

"To present their views to the membership of their national section during the preparatory discussion period before national congresses.

"To present their views to the membership of the International through the Internal Bulletin during the pre-Congress discussion period.

"To be represented in the leading bodies with due consideration to their political and numerical importance. This does not mean that every minority, no matter how small, is entitled to representation on a leading body. Nor does it mean proportional representation for minorities. The Fourth International abides by majority rule and this includes the right of the majority to assure itself a workable majority when sharp differences are involved. But it is also the duty of the majority to safeguard the rights of the minority and this means that a minority is not to be penalized for holding a minority position."

(4) Cf. the following passages (points 14 and 19) from the Fourth International statutes:

"14. The International Executive Committee cooperates with the national sections in helping to raise the theoretical, political, and organizational level of their internal life. However, intervention of this kind, carried on by such activities as tours and visits by members of the International leadership, is qualified by the resources of the Fourth International in personnel and finances. This qualification operates with equal force in instances where

differences have developed between a national section and the International Executive Committee. Nevertheless, the International has the right to send a representative to present its views. Such representatives are responsible to the United Secretariat and the International Executive Committee. The national leadership should do its utmost to cooperate closely, giving representatives of the International Executive Committee voice (but only consultative vote) in all leading bodies, enabling them to discuss freely with the membership, and permitting them to present motions if they wish."

"19. In the intervals between sessions of the International Executive Committee, the United Secretariat acts in its name and with its powers except that it cannot organize subsecretariats or commissions. Its decisions are binding on the sections. Appeal can be made to the International Executive Committee, but pending consideration of the appeal decisions must be carried out."

(5) Cf. the preceding passages of the statutes and point 29, i and j:

"i. All members are entitled to complete, honest, and impartial information on the problems and activities of the International, especially on questions under debate among the leaders of the International and the national sections.

"j. Full and free international discussions must be held in the periods preceding world congresses, or congresses of national sections, and each time that historic events of exceptional importance require special discussions. A national section can make an exception to this only when it is working under conditions of severe repression (i.e. fascism, military dictatorship, or a sweeping witch-hunt)."

(6) Cf. the following passage of the statutes (point 32):

"32. To help achieve the best possible international coordination, national sections must conduct relations of special importance with each other through the United Secretariat. In case of urgent necessity, such relations can be carried out directly on condition that the United Secretariat is rapidly informed of the details. National sections are encouraged to extend fraternal aid to each other and to strengthen fraternal bonds through visits and other forms of cooperation. In all this, bearing in mind the risk of setting up centrifugal tendencies, they should consciously strive in their fraternal work to strengthen the International center and its authority."

Renewing the International

by Jaber, Revolutionary Communist Group, Lebanon

Draft counterreport on the building of the International

I — A Critical Balance Sheet

It is indispensable to draw up a preliminary balance sheet of the Fourth International (FI), before any discussion about its prospects. Yet the balance sheet of such an enterprise can only be in relation to the objectives it sets itself. From this standpoint, it is obvious — after nearly half a century of its existence — that the role the FI assigned itself at its birth, that is the solution of the crisis of the leadership of world proletariat, but even the crisis of humankind ("Transitional Program") proved to be totally delusive and out of proportion. The militants of the FI have since given up this youthful immoderate ambition, for a more realistic and mature definition of their world organization and its tasks.

The FI only defines itself nowadays as a *component* of the world revolutionary movement, without any messianic and sectarian ambition. Although a minority numerically, it has two advantages which combined make its singularity over the other components:

1) it upholds a program that expresses the objective interests of the proletariat *in the three sectors of world revolution* (dependent capitalist countries, imperialist countries, post-capitalist societies). The objectivity and globality of this program allowed the International to place itself, constantly and everywhere, by the side of the *real movement of the proletariat*, without ever denigrating its partial conquests, deformed though they could be, in the name of the entirety of its historical interests, and without

ever subordinating it to the occasional interests of any "guide-state."

2) it is really *international*, in the sense that it groups together in the same *organizational framework* organizations and militants from all sectors of world revolution. It has a significant implantation in the revolutionary movement of several backward and advanced capitalist countries, allowing a real exchange at world level on an equal footing with no "mother-organization."

As a *modest component* of the world revolutionary movement, the FI does not claim today to be the embryo out of which will develop organically the mass revolutionary International that must be built in order to lead the decisive battles of the proletariat on a world scale. The future International will not be the result of a linear evolution of the present FI; it will not be built through the mere arithmetic progression of the forces of the present world organization. It will only be realized by the rallying and integration of the lively forces of a world revolutionary movement considerably expanded on the occasion of a major advance of world revolution, in the same way the Third International was erected.

As a *singular component* of the world revolutionary movement, due to its programmatic and organizational internationalism, the FI makes however one claim which it considers to be legitimate and justified: that of being the *privileged framework for the construction of the future mass revolutionary International*, if not the only framework, in the sense that the construction of an International involves more than the mere building of national revolutionary organizations, "each in its own country." The future International, whatever the historical modes of its emergence, will owe much to the FI: it will not be able to form itself without integrating the programmatic and organizational inheritance of the latter. It ensues that *the more rich and valid this inheritance, the more rapid, easy and healthy will be the future mass revolutionary International*. Such is the meaning of the FI militants' present action, which makes all its importance; such is their specific historical responsibility within the world revolutionary movement.

The deficiency of the FI

It is impossible to deny that the FI today is not up to its historical responsibility, not that of its youthful ambitions but that indeed we have just described. The first expression of this deficiency, the most obvious, is of course the *weakness* of the FI. It is true that this weakness is in line with the general weakness of the world revolutionary movement, that it expresses the backwardness of the level of organization and centralization of this movement on a world scale, that it illustrates the enormous contradiction between the degree of maturity of the world crisis of social oppression systems and the immaturity of the vanguard of world proletariat, in short, that it sums up the leadership crisis of the world proletariat. It is true; but the fact remains nonetheless that the FI is particularly weak in the midst of the general weakness: it has not succeeded in emerging as the *main* component of world revolutionary movement, and remains handicapped by its globally marginal minority status. It is not recognized as the "vanguard of the vanguard," and remains unable therefore to act as such and permanently as a pole of attraction for the revolutionary vanguard on a world scale. Yet the FI — insofar as it claims to hold the authentic tradition of Marxism, the inheritance of Bolshevism and of the Third International in Lenin's time, and all the more so since it is by far the oldest of the present components of world revolutionary movement — was "logically" the best armed to emerge as the main and leading component of that movement.

There lies a question one cannot evade, a question that our friends like our opponents, ask us constantly and that we ask ourselves: *why is the FI, after nearly half a century of its existence, still so weak, why is it such a minority in the world workers'*

movement?

To this question we have chosen up to now the answer most comforting for ourselves and, thus, the least convincing for others, that is the *objectivist* answer. We have explained that the deficiency of our International was due mainly, if not exclusively, to reasons of an objective nature: consequences of WW2, consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR, low level of activity of the proletariat in its main world concentrations, in particular the USA and the USSR, etc. The self-satisfaction provided by such an answer is harmful to our International, for it can only justify a sterilizing conservatism at a time when a renewal is more necessary than ever. We must therefore question ourselves about its validity.

Now there is an eminently objective criterion which constitutes an initial test of the validity of the objectivist answer: it is the fact that — insofar as no current whatsoever could be the exclusive depository and the unique expression of social radicalization — whenever the objective conditions of this radicalization exist in a country, they find inevitably one or various forms of expression, more or less close to revolutionary Marxism, more or less centrist or spontaneous. This is to say that the weakness of a section of the FI is in no way in itself an indication of the backwardness of objective conditions in its country; only the general weakness of the revolutionary movement with every current included, in that country, constitutes a true indicator of the said backwardness. In other words, if the objective conditions are really responsible for the weakness of the FI in an area of the world, this weakness should then be shared by all other revolutionary currents in the same area, since they feed necessarily on the same objective conditions. Inversely, if in a country or area, the revolutionary left — whatever its specific form — has witnessed a real expansion, or even won victories, then the eventual weakness of the FI in that country or that area can only be imputed to itself. The objectivist answer is then disqualified.

Let us examine in the light of this elementary criterion the present situation of the FI in the three sectors of world revolution. In the *post-capitalist societies*, the weakness of the International appears as an integral part of the extreme weakness of revolutionary left, almost nonexistent in certain countries. This is particularly true in the case of the USSR where the depoliticizing effects of Stalinist degeneration are far from being absorbed. It is equally true in East European countries where the expansion of the Stalinist model has had similar consequences. In these countries, the development of a revolutionary Marxist current is handicapped by the profound aversion of the anti-establishment current to regimes claiming officially to be Marxist. It is no more true in the cases of China, Vietnam, or Cuba where Marxism remains linked in the eyes of broad masses to their social and political conquests. The absence of any current or tendency close to the FI in the latter countries, where there was, can be or still exist leftist currents, loyal or oppositional according to the degree of bureaucratization of each country, like the Left Opposition that formed in the USSR during the twenties, does not result therefore from objective conditions, but indeed from the profound discredit that strikes Trotskyism in those countries, because of its historical deficiency and its attitude during the revolutionary process which unfolded there (while the members of the "Trotskyist" opposition in the USSR had played an eminent part in the victory of the Bolshevik revolution).

In the *advanced capitalist countries*, the situation of the FI merges with that of the whole revolutionary movement. It is true that the long phase of economic expansion and rise in the standard of living witnessed by these countries after WW2 has objectively prevented for a whole historical period the massive development of left revolutionary currents. It is also true that with the new radicalization which these countries have experienced very unevenly for 15 years, the FI managed to progress, so that

on the scale of imperialist world, it is actually a major component of a globally marginal revolutionary movement. But this global vision is distorting in fact, insofar as it allows to compensate for the relative weakness in one country with the relative strength in another. Yet, the FI alone can benefit by this compensation, since it alone is truly present in all advanced capitalist countries. On the other hand, a detailed examination of the situation in these countries will show that in many of them, including some of the most important, the section of the FI is a minority component of the far left. What is worse, this is particularly true precisely in the countries that have known the best objective conditions in recent years! The role played by the FI in the French radicalization of the end of the sixties has had no equivalent anywhere: neither in Italy, nor in Portugal, nor in Spain, nor presently in Great Britain. In France itself, the French section losing ground is hardly equal today to the "Lambertist" PCI. And it is surely not the relative strength of the Swiss section that will compensate for this state of affairs!

In the *backward capitalist countries*, the objectivist answer does not stand up anymore to the least serious examination. Not only could the revolutionary movement develop considerably in many of these countries, but several revolutions have even triumphed there since WW2. Yet, the FI today only exists in an embryonic state in some African or Oriental countries, whereas revolutionary organizations of several thousands, nay tens of thousands of members have existed during the last 15 years in countries such as Turkey, Iran, India, Sri-Lanka, Ethiopia and, of course, Southeast Asia. Even in Latin America, the only region of the third world where the FI has benefited from a long historical tradition, it has remained a minority within the revolutionary movement of the last 15 years, save rare exceptions like that of Mexico today. Worse is the fact that the FI is almost nonexistent in the main present centre of Latin American revolution, namely Central America, which can only increase its handicap on the scale of the continent.

Thus then, at the end of this rapid examination, one can only note that the objectivist answers proved to be of a very restricted validity. It is valid for Stalinist Europe and some imperialist countries, insufficient for other post-capitalist societies and imperialist countries, and definitely unacceptable in regard to backward capitalist countries. Its partial validity in the imperialist and post-capitalist sectors gave an illusion of absolute validity, in the eyes of "believers". But even the most inclined to exculpate by incriminating the objective conditions could not ignore that the FI was absent or marginal in areas of our planet where revolutionary advances and victories were taking place. Although the temptation to denigrate those progresses of world revolution existed, by denying their proletarian character as did some sectarian "Trotskyist" groupings, the FI did nothing of the sort, which is much to its credit. It recognized — often with some delay indeed — the proletarian nature of the new states, stemming from revolutions to which it was totally external. However, the International found another way to exculpate, to explain why it has failed where others have succeeded. The victorious revolutions were described as exceptions (sic) which confirmed the rule (the necessary leadership of world revolution by the FI). There was talk about a "centrist initial phase of world revolution" (sic again) while announcing on many occasions the advent of the higher phase ("revolutionary-Marxist", i.e., Trotskyist). A theory was elaborated, the famous theory of the "detour of history" which turns itself away from Marxism through a Hegelian type of explanation postulating the existence of a predetermined path of History in regard to which there would be a "detour." These various theorizations, besides their apologetic character and their falseness, have had the harmful effect of comforting the International in its marginality, giving it the illusion of sufficiency instead of inciting it to seek first in itself the reasons for its

deficiency. It was not the FI that marginalized in relation to world revolution and history; it was the latter that turned away from it. The International had then only to wait patiently until its time has come, when History will be back on the straight and narrow! After 1968, it believed naïvely that its time had come, only to reap 15 years later disappointment and crisis.

The reasons for deficiency

Disillusion was as great as illusion had been. It is not a coincidence that the most dogmatic and sectarian organization of the FI since the end of the sixties, the one which denigrated the most the "exceptions" in the name of the so-called "classical model", is precisely the one which shows today the greatest disillusion. It is of course the SWP of the USA. The champions of dogmatic Trotskyism have finally yielded to the stubbornness of facts. But they yielded all the more brutally since their resistance had been strong and rigid. They ended up with a "stick bent in the other direction": the pure and simple abandonment of the central theory of Trotskyism, the theory of permanent revolution, to adhere to the pre-1917 Bolshevik conception. In so doing, the leadership of the SWP was driven by a praiseworthy intention, that of getting rid of "dogmas" in order to find the reason for the success of other revolutionary currents, whereas the FI had accumulated failures. But they have made a serious mistake in diagnosis, like a physician who would be mistaken regarding the organ that should be replaced in his patient's body.

As a matter of fact, the theory of permanent revolution does not imply in regard to the old-Bolshevik conception any difference in tactics or organizational building method. The replacement of one by the other has no effect whatsoever on the building of a mass revolutionary party: Trotsky explained enough that the only advantage of his own conception was to be clearer, whereas that of pre-1917 Lenin was algebraic and problematic. On the other hand, in regard to tactics and organization, Trotsky considered himself after 1917 to be Lenin's humble follower. In the same way, back to our epoch, it is as much clear that the conception of the social nature of revolution conveyed by the Castroist current is so slightly different from the one of the FI that it is totally absurd to see in it the key to the victories of the first and the reverses of the latter.

The FI had every opportunity to affirm that all revolutions which have taken place up to now, far from invalidating the theory of permanent revolution, confirmed it. It is true, as these revolutions themselves acknowledge it indirectly when some of their leaders take up on their own account formulas identical to those of Leon Trotsky. On the other hand, who could seriously maintain that the Chinese, Cuban, or Nicaraguan revolutions have unfolded in accordance with the Leninist schema: workers party, Bolshevik tactics, soviets? Where did these fundamental ingredients of the "Russian model" (the so-called "classical model") reoccur victoriously since 1918? Nowhere! Thus if a revision of the conceptions of the FI is necessary, in the light of the revolutions that were victorious since the Russian revolution, it is indeed in relation to the dogmatic attachment to the sacrosanct "classical model" — i.e. specific Bolshevism — that it should be done, and not in relation to a theory the key ideas of which are very broadly shared nowadays. That is why — whatever its proclaimed intention, its declared motivation — the "return to Lenin" of the U.S. SWP appears much more as an opportunist adaptation to the most retrograde expressions of the Castroist current, those which wink at Moscow, than as a real and earnest effort to draw the true lessons of the victories of this current to assimilate what constitutes its *specific contribution*. To do so, the SWP should have repudiated a dozen years of fierce factional fight within the FI against a majority precisely accused of adaptation to Castroism! That is to say that the leadership of the SWP should have transcended its factional attitude, a difficult task if ever.

Let us then not throw the baby out with the bath water. Let us not incriminate for our deficiency those parts of our inheritance which stood best the test of history: permanent revolution or the analysis of the USSR and Stalinism. That would be shunting toward dead-ends. Let us rather seek the reasons for our deficiency at the level where it stands actually: our relation to real revolutionary processes.

It is usual to say — even our friends recognize the fact — that the main role played by the FI since its foundation has been the preservation of the theoretical and programmatic asset of revolutionary marxism, the preservation of “ideological inheritance.” It is quite true, but here lies the problem. The FI is the only International that was founded “against the stream”, on the *defensive*. It was profoundly marked by this birth. For several decades, it set itself up as a guardian of the dogma, a curator of the museum of revolutionary marxism and in particular its leninist variant. Far be it from us the idea of denigrating this role: it is fundamental, insofar as we remain convinced that authentic leninism, as well as the essential contribution of Trotsky, are fundamental elements of the program of world revolution. However, when the main role of an organization becomes one of preserving assets, there should be no wonder that from such an eminently *conservative* role, after 50 years, nothing more results than a sect-looking organization with an anachronous aspect. Never did orthodoxy engender a revolution: there is almost a contradiction between the two terms. All revolutionary victories went beyond orthodoxy; they were all the products of an *innovative boldness* on the part of the revolutionary leadership. Lenin, Trotsky, Mao Ze Dong or Castro-Guevara, all went off the beaten track. At this price only could they lead revolutions and enrich — even if objectively — the patrimony of revolutionary Marxism.

Yet, not only did the FI add nothing fundamental to this patrimony after the death of its founder — its only notable contribution has been the analysis of the development of the forms of capitalism following WW2 — but it has been unable to assimilate truly the contribution of the revolutions that went victorious afterwards, to integrate those contributions into the corpus of revolutionary Marxism which it knows much more thoroughly than innovators like Mao or Guevara, not to mention Ho Chi Minh or Castro. The FI took an interest in the postwar revolutions only to seek in them what could confirm the dogmas it guards, and particularly the all-purpose theory of permanent revolution. It ignored the specific contribution of these revolutions, under the pretext that it was a matter of exceptions and that it could content itself with the only rule it acknowledges: the eternal Russian model labelled “classical.” The FI excels as much in the knowledge of the latter — which is quite easy, for the protagonists of that model, revolutionary Marxists themselves, have expounded its lessons, notably Trotsky in his monumental “History” — as it has remained almost ignorant of the lessons of the greatest revolutionary epic of our century: the Chinese revolution.

This deficiency is all the more serious since the Chinese revolution was anything but a repetition of the Russian model, since its contribution was as considerable as fundamental. How could there be any wonder then that the FI remained extremely weak and inefficient in those areas of our planet where the Chinese model matters as much — objectively or subjectively — as the Russian model, if not more? How could there be any wonder, for instance, that it remained ridiculously weak in the most populated capitalist country of the contemporary world, India? How could there be any wonder that it did not take part (not to say lead) in any of the postwar revolutions, when no one of these was similar to the Russian model? How could there be any wonder about its many reverses in Latin America, when it has been unable to assimilate and appropriate in due time the lessons of the Cuban revolution, leaving the task of expounding them to a

Régis Debray who shot in passing poisoned arrows at the Trotskyists (without being entirely wrong: Debray’s criticism of the Trotskyists’ attachment to the Russian model was relevant)?

From the 9th to the 11th World Congress

If that was the matter, some will say, then how to explain that the resolution on Latin America of the 9th World Congress (1969) of the FI had disastrous consequences, whereas it consisted precisely of an adoption of the Cuban model, generalized to the whole continent? The answer is obvious: it is in no way a matter of replacing a dogmatism by another, the universal generalization of the Russian model by the continental generalization of the Cuban model, or any other. It is a matter of assimilating the original lessons of all revolutionary experiences *intelligently*, that is in relating them to the specific features of the countries where the said experiences took place, so as to grasp their *concrete conditions of application* and be able thus to be inspired by such and such model, or element of model, according to the *concrete conditions* of each of the countries where we struggle. History has proven enough that there could not exist a universal model, or even a continental one, of proletarian revolution. Should not the role of an International be precisely to manage to grasp the relativity of any national experience, to prevent from any arbitrary and *improper generalization* of a national experience to other countries, notwithstanding their specific features? In this regard, the famous line of the 9th Congress was really a caricature: repeating the assertions of the most narrow-minded Castroists, it affirmed that “the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare,” while believing that it would get through that type of impressionistic adaptation a visa for “integration into the historic revolutionary current represented by the Cuban revolution and the OLAS.” Note in passing that it is the same motivation which incites today the U.S. SWP to practice another form of adaptation to the Castroist current, after having denounced for many years the majority of the International on this very same ground!

Furthermore, and in the stride of the “1968” euphoria, the 9th World Congress — through another improper generalization of the impressionistic analysis of a national experience, that of France in this case — inaugurated a long period of illusions about the new imminent “revolutionary upsurge” of the proletariat in the imperialist countries, up to and including the USA where “the development of the world revolution could be the most deeply affected by interaction with the Black liberation struggle, with the youth vanguard and the re-awakened working class” (Resolution on “The new rise of the World Revolution”).

Though the SWP had joined the unanimous vote on this last resolution, it was going to dissociate itself very soon from it within the framework of the accentuation of its dogmatic withdrawal provoked by its opposition to the resolution on Latin America. The illusions were perpetuated by the international Majority with the errors and reverses that they lead to in the building of sections in capitalist Europe and Japan, as well as the demoralizing bitterness of the ineluctable disillusion which were to occur sooner or later.

In fact, the whole recent history of the FI has been marked by the struggle and oscillation between two poles: *dogmatic withdrawal and impressionist adaptation*. The origin of these two tendencies goes back moreover to the beginning of the fifties: they are already discernible in the split at that epoch, the impressionistic adaptation with Pablo and the dogmatic withdrawal with the International Committee. After the 1963 reunification, these two traditions coexisted again within the International, to fight once more while crystallizing from 1972 onwards in the guise of two tendencies, then later two factions. The dissolution of factions in 1977 opened a third period: it was made possible by the swing of the impressionistic majority to the position of the

dogmatic minority.

Confronted with numerous failures and disillusion in Latin America and Europe (Portugal!), in a climate of general ebb of the early seventies radicalization, the international Majority was going to adapt, this time to the dogmatic withdrawal of the SWP. The latter triumphed at the 11th World Congress in 1979, which adopted a new resolution on Latin America that threw overboard the minimum positive gain contained in the line of the 9th World Congress, a gain which had been cleared of its main adaptationist excesses by the 10th World Congress (1974) resolution on the "Armed struggle in Latin America" (which was not, we should remember a general resolution about the continent, but indeed a specific resolution on armed struggle). The 11th Congress resolution went back, in the purest tradition of "classical" dogmatism, to a continental line for building based on a schema certainly more valid for the USA than for a lot of Latin American countries, that of the mass workers party based on the trade unions — not without bowing in passing before the "Transitional Program" and advocating a method for building more suited to evangelical propaganda than to the revolutionary one in repressive countries. Not that everything contained in the 11th Congress resolution should have been thrown away outright; but it reproduced symmetrically the defect of that of the 9th Congress: it generalized as the main axis for the whole continent in an utterly improper way, a line for building hardly valid as a partial approach in certain countries. It was moreover based on the illusory premise of a protracted period of peaceful struggles, contrarily to the 1969 resolution which was based on the correct premise of the ineluctable bloody repression of any important step forward of the mass movement in the countries of the continent.

Another expression of the dogmatic withdrawal sanctioned by the 11th World Congress: the line of unification of the "world Trotskyist movement", defended by the U.S. SWP during the years of fight against the "Pabloist" Majority, which is the logical corollary of an orientation for which agreement on dogmas takes precedence over the relation to reality (even though this line had a rough time when the 11th Congress met!)

Triumph of the SWP finally, and above all, in what constituted the main axis of the 11th World Congress: the famous "turn to industry". This turn initiated by the SWP fitted in with the zig-zags of the sectarian policy of its leadership: itself too confronted with a series of reverses in the LTF operation (Portugal, Spain, Angola) up to the break with Moreno's Bloc, after believing for a moment that it had an international dimension equal or superior to that of the IMT, the SWP leadership had found at first a distraction in the "dissolution of international factions" and its engagement with the IMT. For its own rank and file, educated in a profound contempt for the latter, it had found later a more stirring distraction: a "turn" announced with much fuss, which prevented any earnest balance sheet of the past in order to turn towards the new exalting task. The SWP went sinking into *workerism*, not that of the spontaneous kind souls, but that of sects which think they win in this manner the stripes of a workers' party and call from then on all those who correspond to their former image, petty-bourgeois. The international Majority, already led by its own reverses to adapt to the dogmatic withdrawal of the SWP, went following the latter in its "turn" which became the magic answer to all the problems of the FI in a climate of collective autosuggestion that could not be disturbed by the mumbling of a sceptical and critical minority.

The "turn," of course, was going to be rationalized (a posteriori) in order to mask its semiconscious derivative character. An attempt was made, with the help of selected figures, at giving it a "scientific" aspect: the "turn" was not so much anymore an answer to a subjective crisis as the logical consequence of a turn in the objective situation: the increasing proletarianization and industrialization of the planet which were rediscovered ingenu-

ously and to which was added the renewal of erstwhile illusions.

The "majority caucus" (SWP & ex-IMT) of the 11th World Congress considering that the situation of the sections of the International was "abnormal" because they were not composed in their majority of industrial workers decided to remedy it through what the Jack Barnes report itself described as an "abnormal response":

"New opportunities have now opened up for gains in the industrial proletariat. Success in utilizing these opportunities requires special efforts, including mobilization of cadres recruited in the previous period. In many countries these cadres have not yet become rooted in the industrial working class. They should be led to make a turn in this direction without further delay." (Resolution on "The world political situation and the tasks of the FI").

It was not a matter of long term orientation that would have been relatively banal: it goes without saying indeed that the objective of any Marxist organization is to build a party implanted in its majority in the determining sectors of the proletariat of its own country. Though even at this general level, there would be grounds for strong contention in what preceded, for it refers *exclusively* to industrial workers through a new *incorrect generalization*, whereas even in advanced capitalist countries, there exist some fundamental and highly concentrated sectors of the proletariat out of industry strictly speaking. Not to mention backward countries nor the layers and classes which do not belong to the proletariat in a restricted sense: the FI was falling again into that "workerism" which Lenin had already fought.

"Class-political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is only from outside of the economic struggle, from outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships between *all* the classes and strata and the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between *all* the classes. For that reason, the reply to the question as to what must be done to bring political knowledge to the workers cannot be merely the answer with which, in the majority of cases, the practical militants, especially those inclined towards Economism, mostly content themselves, namely: 'To go among the workers.' To bring political knowledge to the *workers* the Social-Democrats must *go among all classes of the population*, must dispatch units of their army *in all directions*." (Lenin, "What is to be done?", emphasis in the original).

The famous "turn" was yet much more than a long-term orientation, erring through a workerism and an universalism both of which were erroneous. It was viewed as an immediate orientation ("without further delay") for building the sections of the FI, not aiming anymore at "implanting" them in the industrial working class as much actually as at *transplanting* them in it, at transforming them into organizations of "established" (*establis*) as they call them in France. Ignoring the numerous misadventures of the many experiences of this kind carried by various currents, the FI was going to repeat them in turn without omitting any. It would be tedious and useless to describe them all here.

We must on the other hand go back on a particular postulate which has underlain the "turn": the description according to which the situation of the sections of the International would be "abnormal", being "a situation in which the big majority of our members in every section have not been industrial workers" (Barnes' report). Besides the improperly universalized industrial workerism that it contains, this assertion rest on two other improper generalizations (a real record!):

- on the one hand, it completely eludes any consideration of scale.

Now "to bring more adequately into alignment the proletarian programmatic definition of the sections and their real social

base" gets meaning only if there exists a "real social base", that is to say if the concerned section has reached the dimension of a "small party", in the sense of a number of adherents significant *in relation to the population total of the country* and of a consequent mass mobilization capacity. Otherwise, it becomes utterly absurd to require an "alignment between the programmatic definition and the "social base" of an organization that groups hardly, or does not even group one hundred thousandth ($1/100,000$) of the population of its country . . . and that is the case of a majority of the organizations of the FI, including the USA! How can one find it "abnormal" that such embryos of the vanguard of the vanguard (this is not a typing error) are not composed in their majority of workers?! By which hypervulgar materialism that has nothing to do with Marxism has it been decreed that such ultra-minority groups of "representatives of the historical interests of the whole of proletariat" should "normally" be composed not of "revolutionary intellectuals" (in the broad sense of the expression), but of proletarians?! This amounts to losing any sense of proportions!

- on the other hand, the above quoted assertion completely eludes any national peculiarity as to the ways and rhythms of social and political radicalization. It disregards entirely that famous "dialectics of center and periphery" which nourished the debates of beautiful days. It assigns to all sections the obligation to invest themselves in majority at the centre of the proletarian masses of their countries, not as a *strategic prospect* for building the revolutionary party — which is an elementary truth of Marxism (will it be enough to repeat it once again to avoid false debates?) — but as an *immediate universal "tactical" prospect*, notwithstanding the fact that in many countries, particularly among the most industrialized, the mass of the working class is still lethargical, moderately reformist, if not squarely conservative, whereas the social and political protest develops in layers and movements on the periphery of the workers' movement strictly speaking. By which dogmatic abstraction would one want to impose a same revolutionary party building *tactics* to countries as much different structurally as the USA and India, nay even to countries as much different in their circumstances as Western Germany and Great-Britain or Italy?! Have we forgotten the considerations — which remain entirely valid, until there's proof to the contrary — according to which (1) it is often much easier for a revolutionary organization to acquire a strong position in certain sectors and movements on the periphery of the working class; and (2) this strong position once acquired facilitates considerably the implantation in the working class, particularly in its young layers that are often in narrow osmosis with the peripheral movements? It is neither here, of course, a matter of replacing one universal building tactics based on the center with another universal building tactics based on the periphery. It is a matter of getting rid, once and for all, of improper generalizations and universal models, to tackle questions such as the method for building revolutionary organizations, the "dialectics of intervention sectors", entryism, the youth organizations, etc., not anymore with universal or continental answers, which are thus inevitably wrong, but on the basis of that quintessence of marxism which is according to Lenin THE CONCRETE ANALYSIS OF THE CONCRETE SITUATION. Without an apprehension of the *specific* features of each national situation, one gets to what Trotsky called "bureaucratically abstract internationalism":

"It is false that the specific features are 'merely supplementary to the general features' like warts on a face. In reality, the national peculiarities represent an original combination of the basic features of the world process. This originality can be of decisive significance for revolutionary strategy over a span of many years. (. . .) it is absolutely wrong to base the activity of the Communist parties on some 'general features', that is, on an abstract type of national capitalism." (Trotsky, Introduction to

the German edition of "The Permanent Revolution")

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The "turn" decided by the 11th World Congress of the FI was not so much "an abnormal response to an abnormal situation" as an *erroneous reponse to a crisis of growth*. What is worse, this third period of the evolution of the FI since its reunification in 1963, which was inaugurated by the dissolution of factions in 1977, brought to a crisis determined largely by the improper generalizations on a continental scale of the second period inaugurated in 1969, a remedy much worse than the disease it was supposed to cure: an improper generalization on a planetary scale! It is hence quite normal that this third period, far from allowing to resolve the crisis and surmount it, did only aggravate it: the International never knew such a disarray; *the crisis of the FI is deeper than ever!*

This crisis may be salutary as it may be fatal. All will depend on our capacity to react to it, to bring it radical solutions. For that, we shall have *first of all* to embezzle for our own account this watchword with which Lenin finished his "What is to be done?":

Liquidate the third period.

II. A NECESSARY MUTATION

It is absolutely indispensable today that the FI is metamorphosed in order to be able to overcome its crisis first, and then the challenges of our epoch. It should break radically with its past full of zigzags, hesitations, errors and turns. It should put through the riddle of criticism the various programmatic and organizational elements on which it based itself until now, to retain only those of which the validity has been proved by history. It must innovate in order to fill in its immense deficiencies.

Which program, which line(s), which press?

After 40 years of programmatic conservatism, considerable efforts should now be engaged in to make up passed time. The International should get down with its modest means to this fundamental task which consists in looking again into the main developments that occurred in the three sectors of world revolution since 1939 (and even before, when the logic of retrospective examination requires it), with *a new spirit*: it is not anymore a matter of seeking *confirmations* of ancient theories, as it has been the case most often beforehand. It is rather a matter of drawing the *new lessons* of history, "new" being here a very relative description, for these lessons are new in regard to our inheritance, even if some of them are many decades old. The program of the FI should be updated:

- at the level of the *backward capitalist countries*, where our misses are most considerable, we should set to study revolutionary experiences, to draw new lessons in the fields of the social dynamics of revolution, revolutionary strategy and tactics, and the methods for building the revolutionary movement, relating each experience to the national peculiarities in the framework of which it unfolded, so as to determine the conditions of their reproduction, that is the limits of applicability of the lessons that emerge from them. We need also an overall analysis of the structural transformations that occurred in the system of imperialist relations and in the backward capitalist countries, since WW2, and to examine their eventual implications in the field of revolutionary strategy. In all cases, we should be careful not to fall in the fault symmetrical to conservatism, which consists in founding improper generalizations on impressionistic and superficial analyses.

- at the level of *advanced capitalist countries*, where we are much better-equipped, we need to complete (and discuss, of course) the economic analysis of late capitalism that we have at our disposal thanks to the work of comrade Mandel, with a systematic sociological analysis which will allow us to better grasp

the transformations in the composition of the proletariat in Western countries (tertiary sector, immigrants, etc), as well as the present forms of the social and moral crisis of capitalism, and the implications of all this for our revolutionary strategy and tactics. It is also necessary to reappraise with more boldness our analysis of social-democratic and Stalinist parties, and the tactics that should be followed in relation to them, taking into consideration that the centrifugal and nationally differentiated evolution of each of the two movements since 1945 brought about such disparities between their various national components that it is vain to cling in regard to them to continental, if not worldwide appraisals and tactics.

● at the level of *post-capitalist societies*, we have followed relatively well the various historical experiences from the standpoint of the consolidation of the workers state, its bureaucratization and the construction of collectivist economy. We need however an updating of "The Revolution Betrayed", that is a new reference work on the USSR which brings up to date our theory of the bureaucratic workers' state and settle the various contemporary countertheories. We need also — on the basis of the lessons from China, Czechoslovakia and especially Poland — to think in a creative, nondogmatic, way about the specific conditions for the emergence of a revolutionary workers movement in the bureaucratic workers' states, and in particular about the validity and practicability, for the political revolution in the various concerned countries, of the Leninist conception of organization, in contrast to the Marxian or Luxemburgist conceptions.

These are the broad lines of the important work of programmatic renewal to which the FI should get down without delay. It should provide itself with the means of this work which can only be collective, given its dimensions and the complexity of contemporary world. It is absolutely necessary for its success that comrades from each of the sectors of world revolution participate in it, and that a special attention is given to the contribution on each determined sector of the comrades who are militants in that sector (like Petr Uhl on the antibureaucratic revolution). Yet, this effort which should involve all the "theoretician" cadres of the sections of the International would be efficient only on condition that it is centralized, or else it will produce only scattered, parallel articles with no consequences. Theoretic elaboration should be planned along from the central bodies of the International, which will determine priorities and orient researches, and eventually get some comrades to specialize, even by freeing them temporarily from their daily responsibilities, just as certain institutes grant research scholarships. The international cadre school of the International should be a pivot in this field. It will also be necessary to centralize the publication of the various contributors in a bi-monthly theoretical review which should be published in English, French, and Spanish and be a real theoretical organ, contrary to the present "*Quatrieme Internationale*," which is rather a heterogeneous rag-bag. Finally, reference works should be prepared on items such as the USSR today, and could be written collectively — through distributing the topics — under the responsibility of the International center. These works could put together articles already published in the theoretical review.

The fortnightly press system *Inprecor*/I.V. must also be radically reformed. Today, these magazines tend towards becoming more and more journalistic, less and less partisan. Moreover, they follow only very partially world events and serve more as regional magazines than as international ones. They do not reflect always the point of view of sections, not only concerning their region but sometimes even of their own country, and come rather under a conception of the International in which the center substitutes itself to the sections instead of precisely centralizing their efforts. In this field thus, as for theoretical elaboration, the sections should be made responsible. The International needs not

a second-rate journalistic magazine, but a first-rate partisan one. Its fortnightly organ — identical in the three aforementioned languages — should be the *mouthpiece* of the International as a whole; it should publish, besides the central resolutions of the FI, articles written specially by the different sections about their country or their region, including articles or resolutions published by these sections in their own press and having a particular importance. The present journalistic argument according to which official texts of the sections cannot be reprinted in the fortnightly organ, has no value at all from this standpoint. This organ should, on the contrary, be a real reflection of the positions and activities of the sections of the FI, which interest more indeed its potential readers than journalistic commentaries. This organ should contribute to unify the International, inform its rank and file of the positions of its different sections. It goes without saying that the fortnightly organ should, at the same time, follow world events, even if it does mean filling centrally the gaps that no section is able to fill.

We need then a real *centralizing decentralization*, which must also show itself in the elaboration of the line resolutions of the International. There is no need to go back over the improper generalizations: we have talked enough about them above. We shall nevertheless add that it implies abandoning for ever continental organizational line resolutions, not to mention worldwide building tactics (entryism, turn, etc)! It should be understood, once and for all, that a building tactic is defined first of all, and above all, in relation to the national peculiarities, taking of course into consideration the present size of the organization being built. Central resolutions of the International must essentially be concerned with *political* analyses and taking of stands, taking themselves also into account national specificities. When they will have to tackle *tactical* or *organizational* problems, they will do it on the basis of *national peculiarities* on the basis of concrete and *specific cases*. Even a general political tactics resolution, that establishes general orientation and limits, is valid only if it enumerates specific *variants*, as used to do the resolutions of the first congresses of the Third International. The latter, let it be said in passing, despite its hypercentralism, paid much more attention to national specificities than the FI did up to now.

"The Communist International, working in conditions of acute civil war, must be far more centralized in its structure than was the Second International. *Consideration must of course be given by the Communist International and its Executive Committee in all their activities to the varying conditions in which the individual parties have to fight and work, and they must take decisions of general validity only when such decisions are possible.*" (16th condition of admission to the C.I.—1920).

A necessary condition for a resolution to be truly concrete and specific is that it is elaborated, totally or mainly, by the militants most directly involved in the region it deals with: such must be the rule for all the regions where the FI has a minimum implantation.

2 — Which centralism?

Centralizing decentralization is a formula which, paradoxical though it seems, corresponds exactly to what the FI needs badly today. As a matter of fact, the situation of the International combines in reality, for over 10 years with ups and downs, an official centralist theory with a real federalist practice. Hence this organizational anarchy which keeps getting worse and which can be overcome only by making adequate a conception of centralism adapted to the FI, that is revised downwards, with a more and better centralized practice.

Leninist centralism has long been considered a fundamental and inviolable *postulate* for structuring the FI, taking as a reference model the centralism of the Third International, slightly re-touched. Now, if the universal validity of Leninist centralism as

a model for national organization may itself be questioned (in particular, for the antibureaucratic revolution), it is obvious that this centralism never pretended to have a *timeless* validity as a model for *international* organization. This is what the FI failed to see, blinded by a Leninist faith with the Zinovievist rigidity of which the pressure of Stalinism had something to do. That was forgetting that Lenin himself had fought for a long time certain centralist temptations within the Second International; that until 1914, he was as much in favor of federalism in the international social-democracy as centralism in its Russian section. There was no contradiction there: centralism has never been for Lenin an end in itself, but indeed a means adapted to an end, revolution. Yet, if the latter was actually on the agenda of Russian social-democracy, it was far from being the same for international social-democracy. And if Lenin founded later a centralized Third International, it was indeed because he considered *then* that revolution was on the agenda in all the advanced capitalist countries of that epoch. This consideration is very clearly expressed in the "Manifesto of the Communist International" (1919) written by Trotsky:

"If the First International predicted the future course of development and indicated the roads it would take, if the Second International rallied and organized millions of proletarians, then the Third International is *the International of open mass struggle, the International of revolutionary realization, the International of action.*" (We underline.)

The FI at its foundation was much more similar to the First than to the Third. Its means allowed it nothing more than to "predict the future course of development and indicate the roads it would take." If nevertheless it was conceived as a "single worldwide organization, under a centralized international leadership, and a single discipline" (article 1 of the 1938 statutes), it was not only out of mimicking the Comintern (particularly after its "Bolshevization": it should not be forgotten that centralism was much more theoretical than practical during the first years of the Third International), but also for strategic and tactical considerations: the messianic illusions as regards the short-range role of the FI and the necessity in a period of profound reaction and great isolation of closing ranks and fighting against centrifugal tendencies. Only the latter consideration was realistic; as for being sufficient, it is a question we shall not discuss here.

The fact remains that none of the two considerations above was yet possible at the time of the Reunification Congress in 1963 (save perhaps the illusions for some unshakeable "optimists"). Fifteen years of experience had even abundantly demonstrated how much the disciplinary centralism of the FI was not adapted and a source of permanent crises. And yet, the preamble to the statutes submitted to that Congress reiterated no less the attachment to "the firmest discipline in the application of the line" and affirmed: "the FI remains unequivocally on the Bolshevik conception of a single world party and a centralized international leadership." That was not there a description of the historic goal, but indeed a line of action for the "really existent" International! Very soon however, after the years of grace of the reunification, the development of factional struggles within the International was going to take apart the unitary centralist framework, for a factional bicentralism. The FI was going to look more and more like a federation of factions; each faction on its side was going to evolve towards a less and less democratic centralism: it is the case of the LTF to which the U.S. SWP will extend its methods of bureaucratic centralism which developed within it, stirred up by factional dynamics. It is also the case of the international Majority (IMT) the leadership of which will have a more and more substitutionist behavior, especially after the 10th World Congress (1974). Thus, the internal life of the FI was going to be reduced to a confrontation between blocs, with the constitution of "cliques", maneuvers, schemes, decisions behind the scenes,

and opportunistic alliances (cf. the successive rapprochements of each faction with Moreno's bloc) typical of the kind. The internal debate of the FI was going to be lowered to the level of a dialogue of the deaf eminently sterile and impoverishing (both intellectually and materially!) . . . until the two main factions, exhausted, decided to make peace in 1977, and then to unite in a "caucus" which was something of a bad marriage of convenience, the kind which leads very quickly to divorce.

The two factions had nevertheless reiterated, in the course of their wedding at the 1979 Congress, their attachment to "the norms of democratic centralism both nationally and internationally," asserting that majority decisions of world congresses "are binding on all sections," to precise afterwards that each section had the right "to interpret (sic) and determine for all members of the section the national application of decisions made by the FI." (This centralism calls irresistibly to the mind the famous aphorism of "the knife without blade which has no handle"!.) After the break-up of the marriage, because of the attitude of the SWP determined by its revision of Trotskyism, and after the features described above had reached new lows, the crisis that broke out then left no centralism and no center!

This crisis may be salutary, as we have already said, on condition that it is the occasion for going beyond the prior situation which led ineluctably to it. It would be showing a singular shortsightedness to pretend today to go back to the conception of centralism that prevailed yesterday with the type of practice it engendered. The problem should be treated at its root: the FI is still essentially a propagandistic International (very few national exceptions confirm this rule); it is of course not a mass International, and even less an "International of revolutionary realization." If it can *convince*, it remains quite far from having the necessary prestige for exerting an *authority*, which can only be then a source of split or not function. For a minority to implement loyally a majority line which it does not approve, it should consent to a discipline in which it sees a condition for revolutionary *efficiency*. In other words, it should find more to lose in a breach of discipline than in the application of the line it contests. This condition does not exist in the FI: it has neither the prestige, nor the authority, nor the efficiency necessary, and for good reason! It is therefore utterly vain to want to impose a *discipline in action* on it, at this stage of its development. It is, on the other hand, possible, indeed necessary, that it be based on a *programmatic discipline* and a *relative political discipline*, which are the indispensable conditions of its efficiency as a propagandistic International.

The limits of the centralism presently desirable and possible for the FI are the following:

1) The affiliation to the FI must meet *conditions of admission*. It could not be, in any case, an established right: the International must exert its *power of dismissal* in case of violation by a section — or the majority of a section — of the conditions of admission. These should be of these orders:

• *Programmatic*: the 13th World Congress should adopt a new *Program of the FI* which must record the valid and fundamental elements of its programmatic assets. Not a program of demands of the "Transitional Program"-type, the principle and usefulness of which are questionable when it is a matter of international program; but rather a kind of credo of the FI, expounding the broad lines of our analysis, our strategic objectives and our general tactical considerations — concisely but didactically enough — for the three sectors of world revolution. The approval of this Program will be a necessary condition for adherence to the FI; no *public* expression of divergences with this Program, no violation of the principles it contains will be tolerated from a section. The propagandistic efficiency of the International is at this minimum price. Moreover, the adoption of this Program will allow avoiding the systematic repetition of programmatic consid-

erations which make cumbersome needlessly the political resolutions, as is the case nowadays.

- *Organizational*: the 13th World Congress will also have to adopt new *statutes* taking into account the considerations put forward in this report. These statutes will have force of law in the FI. They will have to take up again — specifying it — the exposition of the *democratic rights of minorities*, already included in the draft statutes of 1963. The International will strictly see to the application of these statutes and to the respect of the rights of national and international minorities. It will have to intervene to prevent any violation of these statutes and rights and will have to dismiss any majority of a section committing such a violation and refusing to amend in conformity with the decision of the International. At the time of the foundation of the Third International, a time of “acute civil war” when the fascist and federalist traditions of social democracy prevailed, it was natural to insist on an “iron discipline” (12th condition of admission to the C.I. — 1920). In our time, when civil war is still far from being generalized and when the bureaucratic traditions of Stalinism prevail, it is as much natural to insist on the democratic functioning of revolutionary organizations.

- *Practical*: the new statutes will define minimum activity conditions, necessary for admission to the FI. These conditions will turn about the existence of a regular publication, a regular organizational functioning and a real involvement in the local form of the masses’ movement. The International will have to dismiss any present section which does not meet these criteria.

2) Besides the conditions required for affiliation to the FI, as described above, the centralism of the International will show itself in the following obligations which the new statutes will stipulate:

- “All leading party press organs in all countries are obliged to publish all important official documents of the Executive Committee of the C.I.” (18th condition of admission — 1920). We shall say today that all sections of the FI will be under an *obligation to publish, in their main organ, all the resolutions of the central bodies of the International* — World Congress, International Executive Committee, International Secretariat, Bureau — specifically pointed out for general publications by these bodies. This obligation means in no way the duty to adopt these resolutions or defending them publicly. Any section in disagreement with a political resolution — within the limits of the Program of the FI — will express and defend publicly its own position, if it feels it necessary. It will however have to make explicit its divergence with the position of the International and publish the latter, so that the majority line of the International can reach all the members and close or remote sympathizers of all its sections. This is what we mean by “relative political discipline.” It should be noted, however, that for this discipline to be materially applicable by *all* the sections, from the point of view of translation and publication, it will be necessary to see to it that political resolutions be brief and concise as much as possible, and to avoid the commonly practiced confusion between a resolution and a detailed analytical text.

- All the sections will be under an obligation to distribute effectively to the best of their objective abilities, the central publications of the International — the bi-monthly theoretical review and the fortnightly political organ — in the languages readable by their members and sympathizers. In return, these publications will be opened to the contributions of the different sections. In particular, the fortnightly organ — about which we have already said that it should be the true reflection of the positions and activities of sections — will have also to make known the minority positions expressed publicly by a section in its own country. The International has nothing to lose in so doing; it has rather much to win, in so far as its majority is in no way infallible — as its recent past has demonstrated it, if still needed — and as the FI has to

convince the world revolutionary vanguard that it is precisely the privileged framework, if not the only one, for the international exchange of revolutionary Marxist points of view. The example of the publication of the various positions on Afghanistan, the balance sheet of which is totally positive, must be generalized. This does not imply at all that the political organ is transformed into an internal bulletin; the point is not to publish texts of direct debate, but only divergent positions in their positive expression.

These are the limits of the centralism presently desirable and workable in the FI. Any international discipline that is more advanced, notably in action, can only be freely consented at this stage of our evolution. It is particularly the case of forms of *regional or continental coordination*, such as the meetings of delegations of European or Latin American Political Bureaus which should be institutionalized. The 1963 draft statutes dealt with this possibility haunted by the protection of centralism, the International being obsessed at that time by the Posadas and Pablo affairs. Submitting any regional body to the decision of the IEC, the draft added: “The danger of fostering a dual center and breaking down the practice of democratic centralism should be borne in mind in considering the advisability of forming commissions or subsecretariats in parts of the world other than the International center.” In so far as we shall get rid of this cramped and unadapted conception of international centralism, there would be no reason anymore for having such apprehensions. If the sections of a part of the planet consider that it is in the interest of their construction, determined by a set of common geopolitical factors, to coordinate and even to centralize to a degree or another their efforts, it is utterly absurd that the rest of the International opposes it under the pretext of avoiding a dual center. With such an argument, there would be all the more reason for opposing any constitution of tendencies or factions grouping together majorities of sections for they carry much more “the danger of fostering a dual center.”

Regularly meeting bodies for continental or regional coordination or centralization do not endanger at all centralism in the limits that we have defined. On the contrary, they can improve the efficiency of the International, discuss more concretely the problems of their area which they know better for sure than the rest of the International, have — for the same reason — a greater authority on the sections of their area (what credit a line for Latin America elaborated and voted by a majority of Europeans can have?). A last advantage of such bodies, and not the least is that they allow to better internationalize the central bodies of the International, in particular the International Secretariat. As a matter of fact, the present USec being constituted for obvious reasons of a majority of Europeans devotes a good part of its meetings to problems which could as well, if not better, be treated in a European body; in which case, the Secretariat could better devote itself to questions of a really international scope, as well as to regions where the FI is underrepresented.

3 — Which functioning?

Until new statutes are adopted, the International must as from now clear and modify its organizational functioning which is presently in a state of decay. The broad lines of this reorganization, as from the 12th World Congress, should be the following:

- the *World Congress* must convene imperatively after an interval of *three years*, at the latest. The practice of successive postponement, instituted since 1972, result only in accumulating the questions to be dealt with, preventing thus the organization of serious debates and feeding a growing lack of interest from the rank and file of the sections toward world congresses. It should also be seen to it that the latter do not be transformed into mass rallies, by fixing a maximum limit to the number of delegates of a same section (not to be confused with the number of mandates), whereas the absence of such a limitation favours automat-

ically the European sections close to the place of the Congress. Besides, the criteria for allocating the mandates should be modified in order to favour the representation of illegal sections, by allocating to them one mandate per numerical bracket lower by half than the one required for a mandate of a legal section (eg: 1 mandate for 75 members of an illegal section to 1 mandate for 150 members of a legal section). This is a compensation entirely justified by the objectively much more rigorous selection that works in countries with no democratic freedoms, where moreover the possibilities for propaganda and agitation are much more limited. This compensation will contribute at the same time towards correcting the present imbalance of World Congresses in favor of sections of imperialist countries which all enjoy legal conditions.

- the *International Executive Committee* must convene imperatively every six months, for the reasons explained above concerning the word congress and to be able to fulfill its role of "Central Committee" of the International, whereas it tends presently to look like a congress. With this aim in view, the IEC should be restricted numerically while taking care to increase its worldwide character by favouring the participation of members of backward countries' sections. The IEC is not a federative body; it is not based on proportional representation of the sections. It must ensure as much as possible, in its composition, the representation of various areas of the world.

- the *International Secretariat* will meet every two months, as is generally the case presently. The above mentioned considerations apply also in its case: numerical restriction, favouring the representation of various areas of the world.

- the IS will elect a *Bureau of the IS* responsible to it, which will designate among its members a limited *organizational committee* of full-timers, ensuring the daily administrative work

(correspondence, follow-up of decisions implementation, preparation of the meetings, etc.). The ISB will hold a plenary meeting every two weeks, and special meetings in urgent cases. Its European members will be able to carry on partially their activities in their sections; its members from other areas will have to be sent by their sections to reside in the town of the headquarters of the International, where they will devote themselves mainly to activities (theoretical, political and organizational) directed towards their sections and their areas to where they will have to go frequently. The participation in the ISB could thus be an opportunity to better the formation of its members; it will play incidentally the role of a formation period which will be all the more useful since it will benefit many comrades through the partial renewal of the composition of the ISB — as well as the IS — every six months, on the occasion of the IEC meetings. The tasks of the ISB will be: editing of the theoretical review and the political organ, the publication of political statements on urgent matters, directing the international cadre school, following-up the development of the International, helping the sections which ask for help, preparing the meetings of the IS and any other task that the latter will assign to it.

* * *

This functioning should be instituted as from this 12th World Congress. The next world congress — which will be that of the fiftieth anniversary, since it ought to convene in 1988 — will adopt a Program and new statutes which together will define the conditions of affiliation to the FI and govern this latter.

The Fourth International does not need to be "reconstituted"; it needs however to be seriously renewed.

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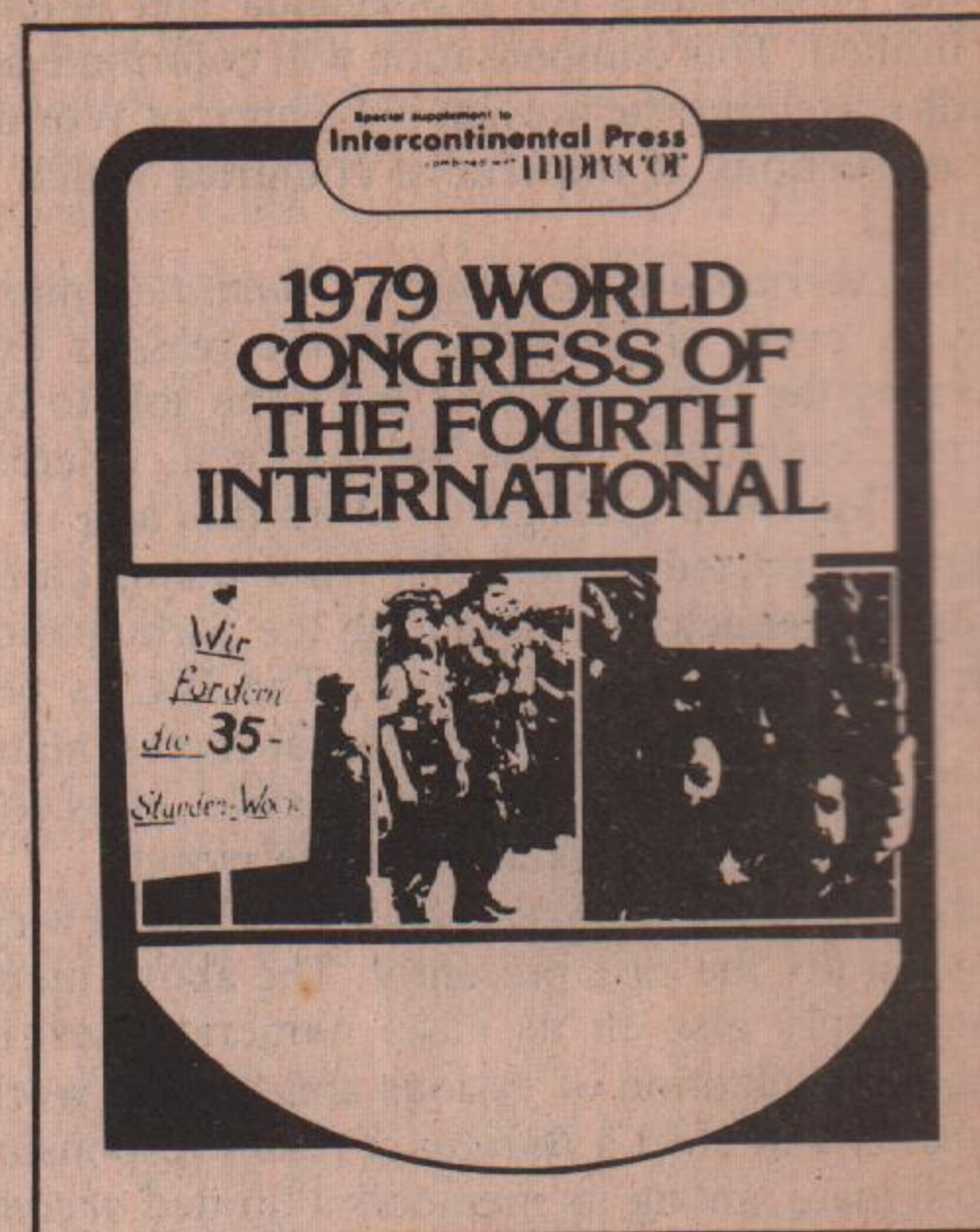
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