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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

(The following resolution was passed by the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International at a meeting held in December 1969.)

The Algerian Revolution from 1962 to 1969

* * *

I

Six months after the coup d'etat that overthrew Ahmed Ben Bella, the Eighth World Congress of the Fourth International, meeting in December 1965, analyzed the situation in Algeria in a resolution, "Progress and Problems of the African Revolution." This analysis singled out the following aspects in the development of the Algerian revolution from 1954 to 1965:

1. Before independence, the Algerian revolution took the form of a deep-going mobilization of the masses. The political instrument of the revolution, the FLN [Front de Libération Nationale—National Liberation Front], took form as a politically ill-defined multiclass front.

2. Following independence, the FLN literally burst into fragments at the time of the crisis in the summer of 1962, which developed along very unclear lines.

3. A new stage, characterized by a dynamic of growing over into socialism, opened with the exodus of the French *colons*. The rising curve in the revolution reached its highest point with the March 1963 decrees and continued up to the expropriation measures in October of the same year. Observing this process, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International took note of the fact that a workers and peasants government had been established in Algeria. At that time the process had already slowed and a pause had set in.

4. Algerian society remained marked by the coexistence and conflict of different and antagonistic forces and sectors. A significant Algerian private capitalist sector continued to exist, including in the countryside, as well as a powerful foreign capitalist sector (oil and gas). Furthermore, imperialist aid continued to be important and Algeria remained dependent on the franc zone. An administrative, economic, and military state bureaucracy developed which enjoyed a privileged share of the national income.

5. The coup d'etat of June 19, 1965, was the outcome of the deterioration in the situation which Ben Bella could no longer forestall. The coup d'etat was supported by the most well-known representative of the state and army bureaucracy. Its result was to encourage those forces most hostile to a socialist conclusion to the Algerian revolution.

In adopting these conclusions, the world congress, however, left discussion open on the Algerian question.

II

Immediately after June 19, 1965, two factors favored a temporary misunderstanding of the nature of the coup

d'etat and some hesitation among the revolutionary vanguard in designating the character of the Boumédiène regime.

(a) The fact that the coup eliminated only a relatively small number of figures, while a whole series of ministers in the Ben Bella government joined Boumédiène's "Council of the Revolution."

(b) The support which the Chinese leadership gave to the Boumédiène regime in the weeks following the coup and which was motivated by considerations of a factional nature linked to the way in which Ben Bella and his team had been preparing the Afro-Asian conference.

Today these factors are no longer operative. The nature of the Boumédiène government became clear to the revolutionary vanguard when Boumédiène adopted a completely different orientation from that of the Ben Bella government.

Other changes should be noted. Moscow, and not Peking, is making conciliatory moves toward the regime, accompanying this with an attempt on the ideological level to paint up the Boumédiène regime as "anti-imperialist." This line is being followed by the PAGS [Parti de l'Avant-garde Socialiste—Socialist Vanguard party, formerly ORP (Organisation de la Résistance Populaire—People's Resistance Organization) founded after June 19] in which former members of the Parti Communiste Algérien [PCA—Algerian Communist party] are active. In addition, after the Algerian leaders assumed verbal "leftist" positions in the Israeli-Arab conflict, Fidel Castro, who had very severely condemned the authors of the coup d'etat, went back on his condemnation, doing this in the form of self-criticism.

In view of possible confusion from these sources, it is necessary to reaffirm the position of the revolutionary Marxists on the present regime in Algeria without any ambiguities.

The June 19 coup d'etat marked the destruction of the workers and peasants government. The molecular changes for the worse, which had been accumulating both in the consciousness of the various classes and in the government personnel and organization, had ended in a qualitative change. Having seized power with relative ease, owing to the previous deterioration in the situation, Boumédiène and his army had little trouble in putting down the opposition. The new power represented a reactionary resolution of the contradiction that had existed between the capitalist state and the workers and peasants government with its socialist orientation.

In the following period extending from 1965 to the end of 1967, there was an increasing drift to the right although centers of resistance still remained. At the end of 1967, a second period opened, which continues to the present, with the rise of Kaïd Achmed (former Commander Slimane) to the second highest political post in the country, the position of head of the "party."

In this shift, a dual phenomenon should be noted:

(a) The development of a state capitalist sector in the economy in close osmosis with imperialist interests.

(b) The steady loss of momentum by the UGTA [Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens—General Union of Algerian Workers] trade-union apparatus. This apparatus thought it could maintain its independence and serve as a center for a new mobilization of the masses by limiting itself in the interval to a defensive struggle to preserve self-management, if not to a purely economic struggle.

The attempted counter coup d'état of El Affroun, led by Tahar Zbiri in December 1967 and supported by a section of the trade-union militants, was a desperate attempt to reverse the trend to the right. The masses did not intervene in any way.

III

The essential feature in the changes which have occurred in the Algerian economic structure has been the strengthening of the "mixed" (state capitalism and foreign capital) fuels sector of the Algerian economy. This is the main sector of the economy from the standpoint of export and has undergone constant expansion (39,700,000 tons produced in 1967 as against 26,100,000 in 1964). The fuels sector is dominated by Sonatrach [Société Nationale Algérienne pour la Recherche, la Production, la Transformation et la Commercialisation des Hydrocarbures—National Algerian Company for Research, Production, Conversion, and Sale of Hydrocarbons], a state company which was created originally to manage the third Hassi Messaoud-Arzew pipeline completed in 1966 but which has developed into one of the principal petroleum producers. The activities of Sonatrach, which is aided by American and Soviet experts and collaborates closely with foreign interests, have expanded to such a degree that this enterprise constitutes a veritable state within a state. The basis for the collaboration between imperialism and the state sector is still the 1965 oil agreement concluded shortly after the June 19 coup d'état and ratified in the French parliament by a UNR-PCF [Union pour la Nouvelle République—Parti Communiste Français—Union for the New Republic (the Gaullist party)—French Communist party] majority. Algerian state capitalism has been collaborating with imperialism without any major conflicts. The "nationalization" of the American oil companies' distribution network in September 1967 was, in appearance, an anti-imperialist measure in response to the Israeli aggression. In reality it was a purchase agreed to by the companies involved. The same was true of the purchase of the other distribution centers in May 1968. While collaborating with imperialism, the state sector seeks to assure its control over the transfer of currency and to impose its conditions with regard to export prices. These are minor conflicts in which the primary objective is "getting into position" for the renewal of the 1965 agreement in 1969.

It must be added that the Algerian left forces have never advanced specific demands for this sector, limiting themselves to declaring that nationalization of mineral and energy resources was a "long-term goal" (1964 *Algiers Charter*).

As against the constant expansion of this sector, the modest self-managed industrial sector, composed in gen-

eral of old plants, is steadily losing momentum. Its social weight is minimal. The workers in this sector are calculated at less than 15,000 (6 percent of the Algerian working class). Moreover, the new investment code freezes the limit of development of this sector. It guarantees that there will be no nationalization of the foreign capital invested in Algeria for ten years' time and that after that it can be nationalized only with payment of 100 percent compensation.

The nationalization of the French plants in June 1968, planned by American and Swiss "experts," was carried out according to this schema. These plants were turned over to state companies that were not self-managed. Some of them were previously self-managed plants returned to their former owners (Norcolor). In other cases, the "nationalization-purchase" was made long after these concerns had brought the enterprises in the self-managed industrial sector to their knees (oil works, soap factories).

Parallel to the industrial sector, peasant self-management has had to struggle constantly against sabotage by the authorities combined with difficulties on the French wine market (wine import quotas).

As for the "agrarian reform," adopted in 1966 but left unimplemented, it itself is nothing but a caricature of the reform drawn up under the Ben Bella government. Matching the appetites of the state bureaucracy, it is limited to an area producing a net annual income equal to the state payroll.

IV

In Algeria the bourgeoisie was exceptionally weak both socially and politically. It lacked the capacity to meet the revolution head-on at this stage. The immediate source, therefore, of the counterrevolutionary initiatives was the state bureaucracy.

In order to understand the reasons for the behavior of this new bureaucracy, we must examine the elements making it up, its international context, and the international social forces on which it bases itself.

We can define three layers in the Algerian state bureaucracy. These layers are based on the social interests they have represented in post-1962 Algeria, independently of the social origins of the bureaucrats themselves. According to this criterion, a bureaucrat may drift imperceptibly from one stratum to another.

1. A layer that made it possible to maintain a "well functioning" state apparatus between the cease-fire and the formation of the first Ben Bella government. It is composed of a certain number of functionaries, who were former or recent collaborators of the colonial regime, coming from the famous "Lacoste promotion." It is made up both of Algerians and reformed and cooperative *pièdes-noirs* [French persons born in Algeria]. This stratum is the most faithful supporter of the leaders who want to maintain a state of the bourgeois type. By its inertia and its sabotage of revolutionary measures, this layer plays an important braking role. It hides behind the mask of "technical competence" in order to maintain itself. But it is being subjected to criticism by the most conscious cadres, who demand that it be purged. The continually promised removal of this stumbling block is always indefinitely postponed. This stratum takes ad-

vantage of the delay to consolidate its privileges and it exercises a pernicious influence on the opportunistic nationalist cadres who are slipping into reactionary positions.

2. The national bourgeoisie was extensively represented in the first Ben Bella government. These cadres based themselves in the state apparatus on a bureaucratic layer of high functionaries (cabinet members, prefects) whose actions then and since have been guided by the same class interests. Khider, the secretary of the FLN, worked in the party apparatus to consolidate the power of these strata, if not for a seizure of power by them. Representatives of this layer were to be found in the successive Ben Bella governments. A few were unmasked, but these bourgeois bureaucrats remained throughout the machinery of state. Certain bourgeois technocrats remain also in the Boumédienne government.

3. The third layer in the state bureaucracy, and the most numerous, formed as a bureaucratic layer in the FLN administrative apparatus during the war. It emerged from the agrarian and urban petty bourgeoisie which flocked to the FLN and the ALN [Armée de Libération Nationale—National Liberation Army]. This layer rallied first to Ben Bella and then to Boumédienne. It includes the majority of the army and men in the ministries whose opposition to the June 1968 "nationalizations" tends to show that some of them, too, have slipped into the first group. The vast majority of the intermediate-level functionaries in the ministries and the local administrations have come from different strata of the petty bourgeoisie—small and middle tradesmen, middle peasants, petty functionaries of the colonial era. The ANP [Armée Nationale Populaire—National People's Army] officers are almost entirely representatives of the petty bourgeoisie.

A part of this stratum came from the working class in the cities or in emigration. Former working-class cadres in the MTLD [Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques—Movement for the Achievement of Democratic Liberties] and former CGT [Confédération Générale du Travail—General Confederation of Labor] or UGTA unionists have risen to positions of responsibility in the state apparatus. Boumaza, Alia Yahia, and Zerdani represented this element. But in the context of the alliance that the petty bourgeoisie has concluded with the national bourgeoisie, this layer of the working-class bureaucracy, which is rather weak, has vacillated between the government and the masses to the extent that it experiences the political pressure of the masses. This layer will never be capable (with very rare exceptions) of conducting a proletarian policy. It is being totally rooted out of the state apparatus.

The most characteristic feature of this state bureaucracy is its heterogeneity. Representatives of the national bourgeoisie are found side by side with representatives of the working class, in the same ministerial and government commissions, in the Political Bureau.

The question which arises continually for each of these strata is, whom to serve. Such a heterogeneous bureaucracy becomes conscious of its social role only through constant confrontation with the social forces and classes which it claims to serve as a whole. This is why since 1962 all government bodies have been torn by clique infighting and struggles over immediate interests.

The pressures of imperialism on this bureaucracy must not be overlooked. French imperialism has brought pressure to bear through economic cooperation, continuation of the Evian accords, and the 1965 hydrocarbon agreements; British imperialism through mixed companies. American imperialism has exercised pressure through its not inconsiderable economic aid. And West German imperialism as well as others have been present. No less important is the considerable economic aid provided by the bureaucracies of the workers states—the USSR, China, and Yugoslavia heading the list. Far from being provided in accordance with the principles proclaimed by Che Guevara at the Algiers Afro-Asian Economic Seminar, this aid has been accompanied by declarations favorable to the regimes in power and in the last analysis has favored stabilization of the state structures and the status quo. The same effect was produced by the ideological default of the former PCA (especially in the newspaper *Alger Républicain*) and later, after Harbi's arrest, of the ORP-PAGS which assumed that a "socialist state" or a "non-capitalist road" had been achieved or was in the process of being achieved (and still speculating, even today, on conflicts in top government circles).

Enmeshed in this international context, the state bureaucratic structures have become allied with the retrograde social forces.

V

The general political resolution of the Second Congress of the UGTA in 1965 pointed to the "bureaucratic layer being formed" among the "forces of counterrevolution," alongside the feudalists and exploitive bourgeoisie.

But the Oumeziane leadership of the UGTA, elected at the Second Congress, timidly avoided drawing the necessary conclusions from this analysis. It tried to counter the dismantlement of self-management by a defensive struggle, seeking support in the government. Its paper has been repeatedly prevented from coming out (May 1966, December 1967, and up to the present).

In Algeria today, the workers' right to determine the rules under which their unions function, to elect their representatives freely, to formulate their program without interference from the authorities, and to decide their actions in complete independence—that is, the four necessary criteria of trade-union independence from the state apparatus—have been deprived of all semblance of reality.

VI

At the present time, despite Cherif Belkacem's and then Kaïd Achmed's "reorganization," the "FLN party" is still nonexistent.

But on the side of the opposition organizations, the picture is not a reassuring one.

(a) The CNDR [Conseil National de la Révolution—National Council of the Revolution] or ex-PRS [Parti de la Révolution Socialiste—Party of the Socialist Revolution] was never able to develop after its initial "Menshevik-type" positions condemning the Ben Bella government's revolutionary measures as "premature."

(b) The PAGS or ex-ORP became nothing but a vehicle of the Kremlin's foreign policy, under Alleg's leadership

after Mohammed Harbi and Sahouane were arrested. This was shown by its turn on January 26, 1966, toward the formation of a broad "people's democratic" front demanding even the release of Ait Ahmed, who was imprisoned at that time, and proposing a front with the FFS [Front des Forces Socialistes—Front of Socialist Forces]. It has no mass base.

(c) Ait Ahmed's FFS and Mohamed Labjaoui's OCRA [Organisation Clandestine de la Révolution Algérienne—Clandestine Organization of the Algerian Revolution] represent factions in the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois wing of the old apparatuses.

(d) The RUR [Rassemblement Unitaire des Révolutionnaires—Movement to Unite Revolutionists], which was born of splits from the ex-ORP and the OCRA, represents, from the standpoint of its program and its analyses, the tendency closest to revolutionary socialism. Its base in Algeria, however, is as limited as that of the other movements.

VII

1. In this context the fundamental strategic task remains the organization of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard and the subsequent formation of a party of the urban and rural workers which would struggle for the overthrow of the Boumédiène regime and the establishment of a government of the worker and peasant masses.

2. Inseparably bound up with this task is the necessity of struggling to revitalize the trade-union movement and gain its complete independence from the state.

3. This struggle can only be waged through and parallel to a revival of the mass movement. And the mass movement can be revived only through struggle for:

(a) Stimulation of the noncapitalist sector of the economy by putting the entire nationalized industrial sector under self-management and giving priority to this sector as regards fiscal advantages and the development of trade relations, etc.

(b) The establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade and the introduction of mandatory national planning to avert strangulation of the self-managed sector.

(c) Nationalization of the petroleum-producing enterprises belonging to all the imperialist countries involved in the June 1967 aggression against the Arab revolution, and the establishment of workers control exercised jointly by representatives of the oil workers and the socialist industrial sector over Sonatrach and the other oil companies.

(d) Abrogation of the pseudo-agrarian reform of 1966 and implementation of a radical agrarian reform by means of expropriation of the large landowners and severe limitations on the right to hold property in land. The starting consideration must be that it is of course incorrect to call only for the restriction of large and middle landownership independent of seeking the most productive use of the land. But it is not correct either to envisage agrarian reform as an attempt to put the most land possible under cultivation according to abstract criteria of economic efficiency, independent of social relationships.

(e) Amendment of the 1966 law on municipal government for a new definition of municipal boundaries guaran-

teeing that the municipalities will be economic units and eliminating interference by the FLN apparatus.

(f) Defense of the revolution by the creation of workers and peasants militias based on the big farms, the big factories, and the municipalities.

(g) Renovation and purging of the state apparatus, the creation of organs of people's power, and promotion of equalitarian tendencies in the struggle against bureaucratic privileges. Revival of the struggle for democratic demands—emancipation of women, the struggle to keep Islam out of public affairs, the struggle against illiteracy and for education, the struggle against regional particularism.

4. Particular importance must be accorded to work among the Algerian workers in Europe as well as work for the release of all the interned militants and leaders, especially Ben Bella, Ben Allah, Zahouane, Harbi, and Hadj Ali.

VIII

Today the Trotskyist movement is unanimous in its assessment of the current situation in Algeria. After the June 19 coup d'état, however, the limited extent of the change in the government makeup led some militants to ask whether the character of this coup had not been exaggerated; since, after all, it did not exceed the dimensions of a palace revolution. Subsequently the majority agreed that the coup was the qualitative expression of a molecular deterioration which had occurred in the last period of President Ben Bella's regime. But in view of the rapidity with which the state bureaucracy accentuated its right turn, a second question arose: Did the Trotskyist movement exaggerate the advances of the Algerian revolution in February 1964 when it characterized the Ben Bella government as a workers and peasants government? This is the question that must be answered now.

There is no reason to minimize the real advances that marked the development of the Algerian revolution during the first years after independence. Real anti-imperialist and anticapitalist actions were taken by the Ben Bella government and, more precisely, the limited team around Ben Bella, which in important instances went beyond the institutional framework, legalizing the conquests of the masses by decrees. The Fourth International was correct in giving critical support to the Ben Bella team from the time it conquered power in July 1962.

It is, however, likewise necessary to take into account the fact that the masses in movement who won self-management were the permanent workers on the large estates that later became self-managed farms; that is, the agricultural proletariat in the true sense of the word. After the summer of 1962, this agricultural proletariat was the only sector of the masses in motion. This was the social base of the Ben Bella team. Its relative narrowness constituted a most serious weakness. The masses of poor peasants could have offered a broader social base, but they were atomized during the crises of the summer of 1962. They could have been mobilized through immediate implementation of a radical agrarian reform. But the Ben Bella team did not do this.

The Fourth International did not correctly estimate the narrowness of the social base on which the Ben Bella

team rested and therefore failed to see the major difference between the situation in Algeria and the situation which led to the establishment of a workers state in Cuba less than two years after the Castroist team took power.

In this situation, a revolutionary leadership possessing an adequate instrument, a revolutionary party, could still have mobilized the peasant masses. But in Algeria, the FLN was never a "party" in the class sense. Moreover, it no longer existed after 1958, except as an organization in the federation of France and as a government in the GPRA [Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne—Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic]. For all other purposes it had abdicated in favor of the ALN.

In its early stages, the Algerian freedom struggle had served as an inspiring example throughout the colonial world. The Cubans, especially, were influenced by it. After the victory of the Cuban revolution and the establishment first of a workers and peasants government and then a workers state in Cuba, this reciprocal influence continued, with Cuba now becoming an example for the Algerians. It was legitimate in Algeria to hold up the example of Cuba and to struggle for a similar outcome.

However, the dynamics of the Algerian revolution was determined by important differences from the developments that led to the establishment of the Cuban workers state. French imperialism had drawn a lesson from the victory of the Cuban revolution; it followed a different course from the one taken by U. S. imperialism toward Castro. The mass mobilizations were much more limited in Algeria than in Cuba. The Ben Bella team was of much lower revolutionary political stature than the Castro-Guevara team in Cuba. It failed especially to smash all surviving elements of the bourgeois army—which in Cuba were smashed upon Castro's entering Havana. Instead, in accordance with one of the main provisions of the Evian agreement, Ben Bella allowed these elements to be integrated into the ALN. In view of these differences, which became evident in the course of the struggle, it was a mistake to expect an outcome analogous to the one in Cuba.

This error in estimate was made worse by a wrong assessment of the nature of the ALN, especially after the application of the Evian agreement, and by the conception, maintained primarily by the Pablo tendency, that in the concrete Algerian situation of 1962-63 the army could play the role of the party. The grave consequences of the delay in organizing an Algerian revolutionary vanguard were seriously underestimated.

The Pablo tendency, which was in charge of the work in Algeria and which also controlled the journal of the French section of the Fourth International for at least two years, tended to develop its own independent line. It advanced confused and incorrect formulas with regard to the Algerian state, calling it an "anticapitalist state" or "semiworkers state." It did not grasp the contradiction between the workers and peasants government and the bourgeois character of the state apparatus. It therefore assigned to mass mobilizations essentially the role of supporting the Ben Bella tendency and carrying out the program of the FLN, failing to appreciate that it was crucial for the urban and rural proletariat and poor peasantry to set up independent organs of power, and

clinging to the utopian and non-Marxist concept of the possibility of a gradual change in the nature of the state.

From this, various consequences followed such as minimizing certain serious events; for example, the gangster-like attack committed by the Khider apparatus at the UGTA congress, which was explained away by calling the UGTA leaders "left Mensheviks."

The Pablo tendency eventually split from the Fourth International.

* * *

The Fourth International never used the category of workers and peasants government in the Algerian context as a synonym for a dictatorship of the proletariat. The state structure was always correctly analyzed as bourgeois.

But although the International correctly applied the designation of workers and peasants government to the Ben Bella regime, it did not sufficiently stress the imperious necessity of establishing independent organs of political power by the urban and rural proletariat. Such bodies, moreover, would have been the best instruments for a general mobilization of the masses and the sole means for making the process of permanent revolution irreversible.

A concomitant error was committed in May 1964 when the International Executive Committee set the task for the revolutionary Marxists of collaborating in the formation of a revolutionary socialist left "led by the FLN" (the IEC resolution, "The International Situation and the Tasks of the Revolutionary Marxists," *Quatrième Internationale*, July 1964) instead of stressing the need to work among the ranks first to create a revolutionary Marxist organization linked to the Algerian masses.

The lesson of the events in Algeria is of considerable importance. The victory of the socialist revolution in Algeria was possible. But a decisive factor was lacking: the revolutionary party.

Within the frame of this self-criticism it must be added frankly that if the participation of the Trotskyist movement in the Algerian revolution, including its material support to the struggle and its backing of the most progressive tendency after 1962, was considerable, too little was done in carrying out the specific function of the Trotskyist movement—to form the nucleus of a future Algerian revolutionary party. The work of training and recruiting Algerian militants was neglected for work at the top.

Doubtless, during an initial phase, in view of the smallness of our forces, it was correct to concentrate on a campaign of practical support for the revolution which was creating a climate favorable to the spread of our ideas. But after a given point, the formation of an organized nucleus should have been given priority and all work at the top subordinated to this goal. The International recognized this at its Sixth World Congress. It did not, however, make the necessary effort to carry out this line. Thus, it shares the blame for this error with the comrades of the Pablo tendency, who were the main ones responsible for this work and for the false orientation as regards building a revolutionary nucleus.

POLITICAL REPORT AT THE DECEMBER 1969 MEETING
OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

by E. Germain

The United Secretariat decided that the political report to this plenum should consist of five points:

An analysis of the world economic situation; the development of the Vietnam war and the antiwar movement on a world scale; the upsurge of working-class struggles in capitalist Europe; the current stage of the crisis of Stalinism; and the expansion of the activities of the International.

Obviously these topics do not cover all of the important developments since the world congress. Several subjects will be taken up in the Latin-American discussion -- the workers uprisings in Argentina, the developments in Peru and Bolivia, and so on. Other items have to be dealt with by comrades in the discussion such as the growing prerevolutionary crisis in India, the important strike wave in Ceylon in which we are playing a key role, the new position of Japanese imperialism in East Asia, the latest developments in the Arab revolution. We all hoped that our Palestinian comrade, Saïd, would be here; and I must inform the IEC that he is absent because of repressive measures taken by the Zionist state. The Zionist government has banned a whole group of Arab leaders in Palestine from leaving the country, from even leaving the districts where they live. That is why Comrade Saïd is not here.

1. The World Economic Situation

You will have read the editorial in Quatrième Internationale ["The Turn in the International Economic Situation;" see Intercontinental Press, October 6, 1969, p. 877] which was reproduced in English and several other languages, as to economic perspectives internationally in the coming months. I do not think it is necessary to return in detail to that document. I will just refer to the general outline of the analysis.

The eight-year boom of the American economy is finished. The only question still to be decided is whether the American economy faces a real recession or just stagnation. In Western Europe the boom is still continuing in several countries, especially the most important one, West Germany. But there are many signs indicating that this is now declining and that a considerable slowdown in economic growth will occur in capitalist Europe, too, in 1970. The overheating of the West German economy makes probably a new West German recession. The key question is whether this West German recession will take place in 1970 or in 1971.

This is a key question because a narrow time lag between the U.S. recession and the West German recession could induce a generalized recession throughout the whole international capitalist economy. On the other hand, if there is a considerable time lag then the differing economic conditions in the main countries of the capitalist world can cushion the depth of the recession each one undergoes.

In addition, a recession in the United States would create new supplementary difficulties for the semicolonial countries. It would touch off a down trend in the prices of most raw materials, with all the consequences this would signify for the economies of many semicolonial countries.

The only important capitalist country that seems to be able to escape the consequences of this downward movement in 1970 seems to be Japan. There the boom still continues out of domestic resources and out of the consequences of the Vietnam war. Nevertheless, we should not forget that nearly 20 percent of Japanese exports go to the United States; so that a recession in the U.S. could not fail to affect the Japanese economy, too.

That was how things stood in September 1969. What has happened since then? The first item to be stressed is that definite signs of an actual recession in the United States have already appeared. For several months, industrial production has dipped. Inventories have built up at a very rapid pace. Total expendable income is increasing more slowly than prices, which means that real income is declining. Orders for investment goods have stopped growing at the same rate as before. Because certain fiscal measures favoring investment are being ended, it is forecast that productive investment will decline. One sector, which is a key sector in the American economy, the automobile industry, has already been seriously hit. In some key automobile factories, a serious reduction in current output is to be seen.

Unemployment figures rose significantly as the fall season opened. It is true that unemployment dropped in November, but this was a result of statistical legerdemain. When a recession begins in any capitalist country with a rather high standard of living, one of the first consequences is that a number of people, as the bourgeois economists say, "drop out of the labor market." This means that housewives and young people in particular stop looking for work because they know they won't be hired anyway.

The coinciding of these signs seems to indicate the probability of a recession in the first half of 1970. If I nevertheless advise the comrades to take a cautious attitude, it is essentially because of the following reason: the American capitalist class is still divided as to the seriousness of the danger of inflation and how far to go in ending this danger. There is no doubt that the immediate reason for the current recession is the anti-inflationary measures taken by the government. I say, of course, the "immediate reason," and not the deeper reason. We know that the deeper reasons lie in the classical contradictions of capitalism. But whereas all the bankers and financial authorities of the Nixon administration favor continuing with the anti-inflationary measures, that is to say, making certain that a recession occurs in the U.S. next year, one wing of the capitalist class, particularly the capitalist politicians, favor slowing down these measures. At this very moment, Congress is debating a big tax reduction. If enacted, this would of course increase inflationary purchasing power and the tax reduction would stand in complete contradiction to the general policies of the Nixon administration. The outcome of the debate will be determined partially by the interests of particular politicians who face election contests in 1970 and want to be reelected regardless of the cost to the capitalist economy of the United States as a whole. To grant the concession of a tax reduction is one way of getting reelected, they think.

But behind these very limited sectional interests of the bourgeois politicians there is a more basic difference of opinion in the capitalist class. This difference of opinion is closely linked with what we could call the impending intensification of the class struggle in the United States. The capitalist class has to make a judgment on the relationship of forces between it and the working class inside the United States. As we all know from European experience, a recession is an excellent weapon against the working class under "normal" capitalist conditions. It puts pressure on wages, it creates unemployment, divides the workers, and has a whole series of consequences favorable to the capitalists in the daily class struggle. A whole wing, probably the majority, of the American capitalist class is deliberately moving in that direction today.

But another wing of this same bourgeoisie is afraid that a big increase in unemployment would intensify the radicalization of the Black and youthful sectors of the American working class and would spread the growing radicalization in American society to sectors of the adult white working class that are still apathetic politically today. They are apprehensive that the workers would react

even more violently against unemployment than they have against inflation and the rising cost of living. This is a real dilemma, because they cannot fight inflation without creating unemployment, and they cannot avoid unemployment without increasing inflation.

As for the possible effects of an American recession on the European economy, in general most of the capitalist experts in Europe worry about this, particularly in view of the fact that in a series of European economies, monetary, financial, economic, or social instability has significantly increased in the recent period. I think we can place France, Britain, and Italy in this category today, that is to say, three of the four major capitalist powers of Europe. And any supplementary cause of unrest, already alarming to the capitalist class, could of course very gravely increase the political and social instability in these countries.

I should like to indicate only one factor in this relation that is generally underestimated by bourgeois politicians and especially by bourgeois economic experts and that is a direct result of the long-term inflationary trend. There is something like \$20 billion of European capital floating around in the American stock market system, a not insignificant part of which is in the form of stocks of investment trusts, some of which are operating on a highly speculative and even semicrooked basis. This is a very big sum of money for European capitalism. I'm thinking especially of the so-called real estate investment trusts. Just to give you a point of reference: the total foreign capital investment of all the imperialist powers today is around \$100 billion. So this amount alone is one-fifth of the total international capital investment.

If these capitalists become panicked and start to think that a collapse can occur in Wall Street, or that some of these international investment trusts that have been built on the assumption of a constant rise in stock, bond and land prices might collapse and even go bankrupt, capital will flow out of these schemes and this could have many grave results for international capitalism. I suppose we have no stock market experts in the hall, but some comrades will have read in the newspapers that Wall Street's stock-market index, from a maximum of above 1,000 will probably drop below 700 within the next few days. It is already around 720 and is plunging every day. This means the stock-market speculators confront much knottier problems today than the revolutionists.

Under the third point in this report, I will take up the consequences of this change in the economic climate of international capitalism on the European class struggle. But I want to insist again

on its importance for the developing social crisis in the United States.

The American capitalist class has been dealt a very powerful blow by the successful resistance of the Vietnamese revolution. Inside the United States it has been confronted with three successive waves of mass radicalization: first the radicalization of the Black masses; then the radicalization of the students, and now a mass antiwar movement that has obviously begun to go beyond the limits of a purely student movement. It is clear that in such an atmosphere, the more clear-sighted politicians in the bourgeois camp cannot take lightly the perspective of a supplementary radicalization of the white working class and the opening up, so to speak, of a new home front inside the United States while the Vietnam war is still going on -- not only a Black revolt on the home front, and the antiwar movement, but increasing tension between the white workers and the capitalists.

I say this because my own conviction is that whatever decisions the capitalists may take -- and probably they will decide to continue the anti-inflationary measures; that is to say head towards a recession in 1970 -- it seems hardly possible that they can view the perspective of five, six, or seven million unemployed in the United States lightly. For that reason, I believe that as soon as the recession has reached a certain point, they will revert to anti-recession measures in order to limit unemployment. And we must understand that they still have the resources needed to do this. Such a turn will intensify the contradictions of the world capitalist system. It will deepen the crisis of the world monetary system. It will provoke sharp reactions among the European capitalists. But faced with the danger of an acute social crisis inside the United States, the probability is that "sacred egoism," as the capitalists say, will gain the upper hand over other considerations.

2. The Vietnamese Revolution and the International Antiwar Movement.

It is in the light of these increasing monetary and economic difficulties of American imperialism that we must understand the dilemma it faces in the Vietnam war, a dilemma that expresses all the world contradictions of the imperialist system today in a very concentrated way. I do not have to repeat what we said in the past on the central strategic role the counterrevolutionary war in Vietnam played in the imperialist counteroffensive on a world scale after the victory of the Cuban Revolution. We know that this counter-offensive has failed. In Vietnam itself I do not believe we should doubt the declarations of the provisional revolutionary government of South Vietnam that their people's committees today control three-quarters of South Vietnam. That means, militarily, that the positions

of American imperialism and of Saigon's counterrevolutionary forces have been reduced to strongholds around the cities and along the coast. The political cost of continuing the war is overwhelming today. The war is extremely unpopular in American society. It has divided the capitalist class from top to bottom. It has created the biggest radical mass movement the USA has known since the thirties.

But on the other hand, the political price that imperialism would have to pay for complete withdrawal from Vietnam would not be lighter than the price they have to pay for continuing the war. A military withdrawal of American imperialism from Vietnam, whatever the political camouflage to cover it up, would be seen by all the peoples in the colonial and semicolonial countries as a tremendous defeat for American imperialism and therefore as a tremendous stimulant for revolutionary struggles everywhere -- in the first place in Asia itself, where you already have a strong guerrilla movement in Thailand, where you have the first elements of a growing revolutionary movement of armed struggle in Burma, where the new Indonesian guerrillas have been able to consolidate a few of their strongholds, where you have a new wave of radicalization in the Philippines, which has led to the fact, little noticed by international revolutionary opinion, that the Philippine government was forced to withdraw every single soldier it had in Vietnam. It is the first government to be forced to completely withdraw all its soldiers from Vietnam -- in addition, there are all the consequences such a withdrawal would lead to in Africa and Latin America, which can easily be imagined.

The ideal solution for American imperialism would be a real compromise in Vietnam, that is to say a compromise solution that would precisely avoid the revolutionary effects of their defeat in South Vietnam. The whole purpose of initiating the Paris negotiations was to try to find a way of reaching such a compromise. The Soviet bureaucracy has done everything it could to push the Vietnamese revolutionists in this direction, pressing the claim in all circles that to end the war in Vietnam you have to make it possible for American imperialism to "save face." But contrary to this current of opinion, the area of compromise is practically nonexistent. We must learn not to be hypnotized by words but to understand the reality. On paper, you can work out many formulas, and there are experts who have been doing just that night and day for two years -- free elections under international control with the participation of the NLF in the control commission and even the exclusion of the Saigon government. The Americans have gone as far as proposing that and it is one of the latest proposals to be bruted about in the Paris conference. But when you go through all

these formulas and words, everything comes down to the very simple question: will or will not the NLF give up its arms when American imperialism withdraws from Vietnam? That's the key question.

Well, they did once, in 1954, under the Geneva agreement, and they paid very dearly for that. Thousands of their cadres were killed, put in concentration camps, tortured. And the revolutionary militants had to start all over again, arming themselves in order to avoid being massacred. That's how the civil war in South Vietnam started up again; we should not forget that. The probability that they will give up their arms a second time is not very high in my opinion. And if they do not give up their arms, any wholesale withdrawal of American imperialism from South Vietnam would mean that they would hold power in South Vietnam. That's the essence of the question. It is possible that they will make opportunistic political compromises, that they will use all kinds of formulas from the Stalinist arsenal, but they will hold power. That is the essential thing; for their power is not bourgeois power; it will not be a people's front power; it will be power from another social class. And this sets a completely different political and social dynamism in motion. That is the real dilemma of American imperialism; and they cannot get out of it: either continuous radicalization of broader and broader masses inside the United States, or a big political, social, and military defeat in Southeast Asia.

I think that our American comrades have drawn from that dilemma the correct conclusion that probably the war will go on for a rather long period, which of course implies that the antiwar movement will continue to grow.

If we want to judge the overall aspects of this conclusion, we have to say two things on which it would be irresponsible for us to remain silent. First, the continuation of the war means a tremendous burden of sacrifice, destruction and death for the Vietnamese people. No one in the world has any right to tell them under what terms they should end the war, so long as he has not done something very concrete and very powerful to support them militarily in this uneven fight. Secondly, the Soviet bureaucracy bears tremendous responsibility for not acting in such a way as to make the defeat of American imperialism unavoidable in a short period. It is obvious that in this situation of an impasse for American imperialism even a limited increase of military matériel for the South Vietnamese revolution would tip the scale. Because they want to help American imperialism save face, the Soviet bureaucracy has not supplied that help.

On the development of the international antiwar movement, it is necessary to

deal with one point that has created some confusion in the vanguard and even in certain circles of our own movement. It is necessary to understand that this antiwar movement has two different origins and functions, inside the United States and outside the United States. Outside the United States, it is essentially a political vanguard movement, the expression of the radicalization process, of radicalized anti-imperialist sentiment in a growing sector of the youth and marginally of the working class; but it does not spring from day-to-day immediate material needs of the masses, and it cannot fulfill an immediate practical function except the very indirect function of putting pressure on American imperialism. Inside the United States, on the contrary, the antiwar movement plays an immediate practical role of helping the South Vietnamese revolution. The bigger the antiwar mass movement in the USA, the more people that are mobilized, the more that they mobilize around the specific slogan of withdrawing the American troops immediately and unconditionally from South Vietnam, the bigger becomes the very practical dilemma of American imperialism which I indicated a few minutes ago, and the bigger becomes the possibility of victory for the South Vietnamese revolution in the immediate or near future.

In other words, I think that the whole movement has to understand that the policy of our American cothinkers is absolutely correct, that it is a thousand times more important to have one million people in the streets for the immediate withdrawal of the American troops from Vietnam than to present a more radical image of ourselves before a few hundred persons. American revolutionists who do not understand that in reality fail in their internationalist duty of helping the victory of the South Vietnamese revolution. They place foremost a factional interest in trying to increase their own forces by appearing in the most radical image possible among the small radicalized circles in the United States. It is clear that in the United States today you cannot mobilize ten percent of the forces that can be mobilized under the slogan "Withdraw the Troops Now" if you were to replace that slogan by "Victory to the NLF" or "Solidarity with the South Vietnamese Revolution" or any other slogan correct in itself but not capable of bringing about a large-scale mobilization at this stage given the fact that the immediate material impact of the war awakens layers upon layers that are still miles from having a revolutionary socialist consciousness. And I repeat, it is the international duty of the American revolutionists to mobilize the maximum number possible of people who can be mobilized against the war today. It is also obvious that the immediate withdrawal of the American troops from

Vietnam in reality means the victory of the South Vietnamese revolution, as I indicated before.

But in the rest of the world -- with the possible exception of those countries that have sent soldiers themselves to Vietnam (and in view of the limited size of these contingents, not even that is absolutely certain) -- the situation is basically different. The antiwar movement in these countries is not a product of the immediate needs and demands of the broad masses, but a result of a process of political radicalization of the vanguard. For French revolutionists, Italian revolutionists, German revolutionists, there does not exist any possibility of making an immediate direct contribution to the victory of the South Vietnamese revolution, except by making an immediate victorious socialist revolution in their own country. For them, the key question is therefore the one of inserting themselves in the general trend of political radicalization, and contributing to the maturing and political clarification of that vanguard.

They have to fight the Khrushchevist and semi-Khrushchevist tendencies; they have to fight the pacifist tendencies; they have to identify themselves clearly and fully with the South Vietnamese revolution; and they have to try to do this not only in words but also through certain specific forms of struggle that indicate clearly they are revolutionists and not reformists or pacifists. That is why most of the sections of the Fourth International outside of the U.S. have correctly taken the lead in using slogans like "Victory to the NLF," "Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution," and giving the antiwar movement as militant forms of action as possible.

We have gone through the experience in many European and also in a few Asian countries, that not only for building the revolutionary movement and educating the vanguard, but even for assembling a stronger antiwar demonstration, these clear-cut radical slogans were more effective. In Britain, as well as in Denmark, and West Germany and Italy, tens of thousands of people demonstrated for victory to the NLF; you wouldn't have assembled the same masses with more defensively formulated slogans.

It is necessary to understand the reasons for this. They lie in the different relation of the Vietnam war to the immediate needs of broad unpoliticized masses in the USA and in Europe. They lie in the different level and dimensions of the revolutionary youth vanguard in the USA and in Europe. The duality of tactics between the comrades in North America and the comrades in the rest of the world is a result of this difference in the objective roots and function of the antiwar

movement, as well as the difference in mass consciousness inside the antiwar movement in these two parts of the world.

3. The Strike Wave in Europe

On this question, too, we have had an editorial in Quatrième Internationale. Since we held a long discussion on this strike wave the day before yesterday at the European conference, I shall limit myself to just a few remarks. We understand that the reality in capitalist Europe is a very complex combination of general trends that hold true for the whole continent, and of factors that hold true specifically for only certain countries. Different comrades in the discussion at the European conference stressed either one or the other side of this reality. It is nevertheless very significant that certain common trends, which we indicated in the editorial in Quatrième Internationale, are continuing to show up even in countries where one would not have expected them to appear so soon. This holds true, for instance, in the general trend of the struggles of the European workers to be directed against wide wage differentials and hierarchization [job classifications]. The Italian comrades were absolutely correct in saying that this in reality represents an embryonic attempt to challenge capitalist relations of production. Because what is behind this is not just a specific formulation on wage demands but a challenge against the whole organization of labor in the factories today.

Obviously in countries where you have had or have a prerevolutionary situation, like Italy and France, this will be much more explosive than in countries where the situation remains more stable. But the fact that you find it also in more conservative countries like West Germany or Sweden is extremely significant. And without exaggerating and without losing sight of the great differences between various countries, we have to understand that a turn really has occurred, and we must understand the historical importance of this turn and its dynamics. In West Germany this will probably last for years, but it is of decisive importance for our movement to understand that something has begun to change in the attitude of the workers.

Another aspect, which we indicated in the editorial, is the appearance of autonomous working-class organs. We had the pleasure of hearing yesterday from the Swedish comrades that even in Sweden, where the integration of the labor movement in neocapitalism is probably more advanced than in any other European country, with the possible exception of Switzerland, the first important wildcat strike in over thirty years led to the election of a strike committee by the strikers. The Italian comrades have

explained to us all the different forms of autonomous working-class organizations that are appearing in the strike wave in Italy. We were also very pleased to learn from Comrade Daniel that in France, under the direct impulsion of our own comrades in the strike at Sud-Aviation, strike committees and even a central strike committee were elected. I don't want to return to the whole debate on the relations between the building of these autonomous organs and the work inside the trade unions, which we held yesterday and the day before. I only want to draw a general conclusion.

Many things that seemed fixed and stable, including within the working-class movement of Western Europe, are again in flux today. General instability has increased as a result of this strike wave. Our sections should learn to look at the reality of the working-class movement in their country in the light of this appreciation. Even when you make a detailed analysis of the wildcat strikes in Germany, you come to the same conclusion. We have to approach this problem from an overall point of view. The working class has tremendous power in Europe, potential power. The whole economic expansion that has taken place in Europe in the last twenty years has tremendously increased the potential power of the working class. The workers are much more confident than before. When you have ten million people on strike in France, and even fifteen million in Italy, the power of attraction of such a huge mass of strikers on all the other working layers of the population is overwhelming. The normal reaction of intelligent capitalists faced with such a tremendous power is to do nothing, that is, wait and see. It is certainly not to provoke fifteen million strikers by starting to shoot at them. A Swiss newspaper, one of the most intelligent in Europe, commented on the strikes in Italy by saying: "Some people think you could have a Greek development in Italy; they are very wrong. If some right-wing elements took up arms what would happen would not be a Greek but a Spanish development." It is obvious that today in Italy you do not have an atmosphere in which the arrest of 10,000 people would create apathy in the whole Italian working class. There would be thousands upon thousands who would shoot back, not to mention other reactions on a mass scale.

Nevertheless what Comrade Peng said yesterday is true. This situation cannot go on forever. As long as the working class is very militant, the possibility of a right-wing coup is out of the question. But this militancy cannot continue endlessly. There is a certain time limit that has to be taken into account. It is impossible for us to fix that time limit exactly in advance. But it is certain that inside the capitalist class of Italy the

desire for revenge on the working class is accumulating, especially against the most militant wing of the workers. As soon as a decline in the mass struggle sets in, this desire for revenge could come to the fore and bourgeois reaction would take an active line. There is no basis in Italy for a mass fascist movement today; but the possibility does exist of a strong-state initiative, of military dictatorship of different forms, of military-police action, once the mobilization of the masses declines sharply. That is the danger we have to watch for. Once a decline sets in, things could move backward rapidly.

One additional factor in the present crisis in Europe is the crisis Comrade Pierre referred to the day before yesterday, that is, the big crisis in bourgeois leadership. We would probably have to go back a long time in the past to find a situation in Europe in the main capitalist countries -- perhaps with the partial exception of West Germany, and even there it is now appearing -- characterized by a crisis in bourgeois politics, bourgeois political parties, and bourgeois parties comparable to the one existing today. This is an important objective factor. It reflects of course basic contradictions in bourgeois society. It is undoubtedly an element that increases the self-confidence of the masses, that is to say, it is an element in the relationship of forces that weakens the capitalist class. Any complicated political maneuver that a bourgeois government in Europe has to make -- and you can draw up a whole list of them: maneuvers between bourgeois allies in Europe; maneuvers with American imperialism; maneuvers with the middle classes, especially the peasantry in Europe; maneuvers with the Soviet bureaucracy; maneuvers with bureaucratized working-class organizations in their own countries -- all this becomes so complex and creates so many sectional differences amongst bourgeois politicians and so many divisions among them, that in Europe today for the first time since 1948-49, large mass circles have the impression that the bourgeois politicians are rather helpless and unable to find any answers to the complex situations with which they are confronted. In France this is very striking, and the result of the downfall of de Gaulle should not be underestimated from this point of view. You have the same situation in England. You have the same situation in Italy. And even in West Germany, where the situation is a little bit better from the point of view of the capitalist class, you had a very stable and powerful capitalist government during the Adenauer era that is now finished. You have many elements of instability among the German bourgeoisie today, instability, division, and doubt. We think that the German comrades should take this aspect of the change in government in Germany into consideration.

4. The Deepening Crisis of World Stalinism.

It has been said that the dynamics of the crisis of world Stalinism is determined by the fact that the crisis in each sector of the world Stalinist movement -- that is, inside the Soviet Union, inside the East European bureaucratized workers states, and inside the Communist parties in the capitalist countries -- interacts constantly with the others. During recent years, the main stress was on the crisis in Eastern Europe, in the first place Czechoslovakia, of course, and on the crisis inside the Communist parties. The process of installing direct agents of the Soviet bureaucracy in power in Prague is now being finished and the consequences for society in the CSSR have been tremendous. The figures given by experts show that the industrial output in the CSSR has fallen to 40 percent of the normal level. This means that in Czechoslovakia for the past six months in the factories a latent permanent general strike, if you could call it that, has been carried on. That is to say, the workers go to the factories but they hardly work. The official figure given by the Stalinist leaders in Czechoslovakia is that in the year 1969 fourteen million man days of labor have been lost through "open" strikes. This is only a small part of the truth.

Of course this is not a strike of the classic kind. It is possible that some of the observers have exaggerated the figures on the decline in output, as they stated it in a secret document that advocates taking repressive measures against the strikers and the "slow down" movement. But you must understand the difficulties they are up against. We got a report from contacts in Czechoslovakia that since the elimination of the Dubcek leadership there have been three successive replacements of party leaders in the factories. Party committees were eliminated; new committees were elected; then they were eliminated in turn, and a third round of committees was elected. The central leadership of the party in the factories; i.e., those who are in power there, bow to the pressure from the workers more than to the directives from the Central Committee. This can be changed only by massive expulsions from the party -- some give a figure of more than 50 percent of the party members in the factories who will have to be expelled.

Some of the liberal bureaucrats think that this passive resistance is so great that the Russians will be forced to capitulate and put them back into power. I do not believe that. I believe that the only way the Stalinists can go on now in Czechoslovakia is through a very big repression. And I think that they have already started. Of course, this is no way out in the long run. But by using unemployment, they can for a certain time break passive resistance at the factory

level. That is what they have started to do. They fire people on a very large scale and don't give them any new job; that is, they don't give them any possibility of making a living. If they carry this far enough, I think they will be able to register certain results. But at the same time, all this greatly intensifies the crisis faced by the international Stalinist movement.

The desperate attempt of the Kremlin to finish the discussion on Czechoslovakia in the international Communist movement is doomed to failure. As Comrade Pierre indicated in his report to the European conference, we have already witnessed a series of violent discussions and splits in several Communist parties on the Czechoslovak issue. At the last meeting of the Central Committee of the Austrian Communist Party just a month ago, twenty-three members of the Central Committee and three members of the Political Bureau walked out, including the editor of the party's daily paper. They had to dissolve the whole youth organization because it was opposed to the Kremlin's intervention in Czechoslovakia. From Australia we heard that a similar division is developing in the Australian Communist Party, and I remind you in passing about what happened in Switzerland, Finland, Sweden. A supplementary example: in Holland, the Soviet bureaucracy has completely lost control over the Dutch Communist Party, and the only people there who are defending the Moscow line are a small group expelled from the CP, probably not more than a couple of hundred. They are maneuvering with some left Social Democrats outside of the party organizations. They do not even have a formal organization. This trend is continuing, having appeared in several other countries. We should say something about the last congress of the British Communist Party, where a big faction fight occurred; and we know what is happening in France and Italy.

It is interesting to note that in contrast to what happened in the past, this differentiation has become a process that follows its own logic. In the British Communist Party, for example, there were two tendencies in the beginning: the one in favor of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and one against it. Today there are already four tendencies. There are those who are in favor of the occupation. There are those who are against the occupation but who are for Husak and who take the position that anything the formal leadership of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia does is okay. There are those who are against the occupation and against Husak. And finally there are those who, while being against the occupation and against Husak, say it is not enough to oppose the occupation -- it is necessary to examine the reasons that led to this occupation; that it is necessary to explain how one socialist country could occupy another socialist country. They push criticism against the Soviet

bureaucracy the farthest. In nearly every European Communist Party, these four tendencies can now be found. The report sent by the Austrian comrades on the speeches made by the leaders of the Austrian Communist party in the Central Committee indicates that those who are now expelling the pro-Dubcek minority are the ones who themselves opposed the occupation of Czechoslovakia.

Today, after the "normalization" in Czechoslovakia has succeeded in temporarily destroying organized mass political resistance, the center of gravity of the crisis of world Stalinism is shifting back towards the Soviet Union. The greatest attention should be paid to all signs of growing political differentiation inside the Soviet Union, including the appearance of openly oppositional tendencies inside the Soviet bureaucracy. These are all signs pointing toward a political crisis that can open the road to a political revolution inside the Soviet Union. Oppositional tendencies in the Communist movement inside Eastern Europe have come to the conclusion that a new wave of mass uprisings against the bureaucratic rule is improbable in Eastern Europe as long as a decisive turn does not occur in the Soviet Union itself. They say: "Soviet tanks crushed the uprising of the East Berlin workers. Soviet tanks crushed the uprising in Hungary. Soviet tanks crushed the political revolution in Czechoslovakia. Who would start a fourth one with such a perspective?" I do not think we need to speculate on this; but it is obvious that any rise of large-scale political opposition in the Soviet Union would be the most decisive factor in changing the situation in Eastern Europe.

For some time now we have had the feeling that this is closer than most people think. We reported to the United Secretariat that at the last congress of the CGT in France, in a private conversation he had with some journalists, Séguy, the general secretary of the French CGT, said in passing, as if it were an obvious fact, that a very grave crisis exists in the Soviet Union today, and that the only thing to be hoped is that it can be solved without much bloodshed. That Séguy would say something like this before a rather large, be it private, audience is significant. Perhaps it is not indicative of the real situation in Russia, but it is indicative of what the CP bureaucrats think about the situation there.

Many people who study the politics of the Soviet bureaucracy feel that the leadership exhibits tremendous weakness if not near paralysis. Even on small questions it is very difficult for them to reach a decision and to act. We have no indication of large-scale mass movements in the Soviet Union, as occurred

on the eve of the downfall of Khrushchev, but there are many indications of a growing articulate opposition among the intellectuals, students, and young members of the party. In addition to all the information that we have already cited in the past to explain the reasons for the occupation of Czechoslovakia, and the well-known documents of Yakhimovich and Grigorenko, which are documents of real Communists, a new document is now available, which our world press must publish. This is the extraordinary letter against the rehabilitation of Stalin signed by many sons and daughters of old Bolsheviks, including famous ones like the son of Bukharin, the children of Shliapnikov and of Radek, the grandchild of Kalinin. The document carries the most signatures of any document yet put out by the new opposition inside the Soviet Union.

Clearly many things are going on in this field in the Soviet Union that we do not know about. But we are convinced that the most decisive factor operating in the crisis of leadership in the world Stalinist movement is the internal crisis in the Soviet Union. There is no other possible explanation, because all the other factors one can cite are either marginal, or run counter to it. (Just to mention one indication: the American experts are of the opinion that today the military relationship of forces between the Soviet Union and the United States favors the Soviet Union to a greater extent than before the early sixties. They seem to have reestablished an equilibrium on intercontinental ballistic missiles and nuclear submarines. So it is the internal political and social crisis that underlies the paralysis of leadership, and not other, external factors.)

I don't want to start a discussion on China in this IEC. This is not on the agenda. But I believe that the one factor that best explains the hatred of the Soviet bureaucracy for the Maoist leadership--which has nothing to do with diplomatic maneuvers, or the price of machinery, or any other elements of trade, which can only play a secondary role in that hatred--is the fact that Radio Tirana and Radio Peking are appealing every day to the Soviet people to revolt. We do not like the wording of these appeals; very often they are filled with confusion, although I must say that Stalin is mentioned less and less in these appeals. (One of the latest arguments used by these radio stations is that Soviet "imperialism" betrayed the world revolution already in 1939 when it made a pact with Hitler. This is not exactly an argument in favor of Stalin.) But however that may be, the fact that a radio station appeals every day to the Soviet people to rise and

make a revolution has a basic connection with the hatred of the Kremlin bureaucracy for Mao Tse-tung. You can be sure, if you know the psychology of these bureaucrats, that they will be ready to do many things to stop these appeals-- concessions, if they can stop them with concessions; and if they cannot stop them with concessions, they will be ready to do many bad things.

5. The Expansion of the International.

The expansion of the International since the last world congress has been in general along the lines forecast by the world congress resolutions themselves. I cannot give a full activities report in behalf of the United Secretariat, and I am certainly not ready to report on the activities of the most important sections. I would like to take up only a few aspects of those activities in order to draw from them some conclusions.

First of all, the geographic expansion of the world Trotskyist movement is continuing. We have established contacts in several new countries since the world congress, and we will try to put out modest publications in several new languages in which Trotskyist literature up to now has not appeared.

All the comrades know that in the field of publications we are making a real breakthrough on a world scale. But I will give you an indication of what is now possible by indicating the languages in which the world congress documents have already been translated: French, English, German, Swedish, Japanese, Italian, Danish, Greek, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Dutch. And they are in process of being translated now into the following languages: Polish, Czech, Russian, Serbo-Croat, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, Sinhalese, Tamil, Indonesian, and Bengali. These include practically all the widely spoken world languages with the exception of Portuguese, and I hope that even in Portuguese we will be able to solve the problem in the year to come.

This is linked to the expansion of a series of publications which the International must now assure penetrates into new areas. We have started a Spanish bulletin and we have to resume publication of a Spanish magazine. We have an Arabic magazine that was not openly a magazine of the FI but that has to become one. We have started publication of bulletins in several East European languages and we are preparing to publish a regular bulletin in Persian. The possibility of doing something in the Turkish language is also envisaged. All this is linked with the fact that we have recruited a certain number of comrades who are willing to undertake this work, but who are still too weak

to undertake it with only their own forces. It is of course preferable if, as in the case of Pakistan, the comrades are able through their own efforts to publish a Trotskyist bulletin, a revolutionary Marxist paper directed toward a new country. We will have to take some initiative with regards to Portugal. We will then have covered practically every European country, since in Finland there is already a group of Trotskyist sympathizers, in Ireland there is now a group sympathetic to the FI, and in Norway we are also building a nucleus.

But this geographical expansion of our work cannot be seen outside of our general political analysis. We have to have certain centers of gravity in this work of expansion in relation with the analysis we make of the main focal points of revolution in the world today. I am not speaking now about Latin America because there will be a special report on this question. I will insist now only on two such fields, the Arab world and Eastern Europe.

If we take our own analysis seriously, if we consider that there has been a new upsurge of the Arab revolution as a result of the guerrilla resistance struggle of the Palestinian masses, if we consider, in addition, that there is a mounting crisis among the bureaucratic regimes in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union, we must do something about it. We cannot sit and wait for the spontaneous generation of Trotskyists. So one of the first decisions that was taken by the United Secretariat elected after the world congress was to set up an Arab commission and an East European commission in order to do two things essentially: assure regular publications of our material in these two parts of the world and form initial nuclei of comrades. We have created a series of other commissions; I have spoken about some of them already yesterday. Suggestions were made by comrades during the European conference, and I think the United Secretariat has to take all these proposals into consideration.

What does this mean in practice? It means strengthening the central apparatus of the International, which is still very weak. This can only be achieved by a series of cadres of different sections devoting themselves to international work. That is the basic function of these commissions. If these commissions are only composed of United Secretariat members, they are useless. Setting them up must be the occasion to add to the number of comrades already doing regular work for the International, under the control of the United Secretariat, a whole series of cadres of the sections. We have already had a certain modest success in this field and we have to have more. The commissions we pro-

posed to create yesterday will only be able to function if that condition is fulfilled. I must say that in the field of the Arab work we have succeeded in making a real impact. We have become well known in Jordan and in Lebanon, and several comrades have been making trips there. We have recruited new comrades, and there is now a real possibility of overcoming the weakness we had in our Algerian work. This means that the possibility exists of creating nuclei of members of the FI in different Arab countries.

The comrades have to understand

that the realization of all these tasks makes very urgent the expansion of financial means for the International. In this sense, too, we have made real progress. The treasurer, who will speak immediately after me, will give you concrete indications. But, as generally happens in times of expansion of the movement, the needs have increased faster than the means. In order to have the commissions function well, and to make it possible to assure the penetration of Trotskyist literature and Trotskyist organization in all these new fields, it is absolutely necessary to strengthen by manpower and by money the Center of the International.

AGAIN, AND ALWAYS, THE QUESTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL

By Alain Krivine and Pierre Frank

The next World Congress of the International will discuss its statutes. This discussion cannot deal only with formal questions, the revising of this or that article relating to this or that body. It cannot fail to include the main question: the nature of the International, more particularly the relations that must exist between the International and the national sections. It is all the more necessary to do this inasmuch as, in the period that has elapsed since the last World Congress, the problem has been raised. This occurred in the "protocol of agreement" signed by the Ligue Communiste (French section of the Fourth International) and the Lutte Ouvrière group. It has likewise been raised in a way affecting the very course of our movement, as we shall show later. Both for the present state of our movement as well as for its future, it is of the greatest importance that there be clarity on this question, which is decisive to the highest degree.

Let us recall the pertinent terms of the "protocol of agreement" referred to above:

"The united organization is to be the French section of the Fourth International. The members of the two fused organizations are to participate in working out policies in the leading bodies of the Fourth International (World Congress, International Executive Committee, United Secretariat), in the international discussion among the organizations belonging to the Fourth International, in the construction of the International.

"On the basis of this agreement, the United Secretariat pledges not to modify the leadership of the French section democratically elected by a congress. It likewise pledges to respect the orientation adopted by a majority at a congress, or by leading bodies of the united organization. Its representative is to make a declaration along these lines at the unification congress. This pledge is to be published as an annex to the statutes."

Some comrades have seen in these lines, if not a departure from our conception of the International as a world party based on democratic centralism, at least a softening of it. To the remarks made along these lines, we replied that the acceptance by the Ligue Communiste of the demand made by Lutte Ouvrière on the point in question did not constitute any modification whatsoever of our concept, the statutes governing the International (which will be discussed at the next World Congress) being in conformity with such a demand: the powers of the United Secretariat and even of the International Executive Committee are strictly delimited and do not authorize any intervention by these bodies in the elected leadership of a national section. Being in conformity with the statutes of the International, the signature of the Ligue Communiste consequently did not breach in any way the conception on which the Fourth International was founded.

But it is true that the intentions of the comrades of Lutte Ouvrière in this matter were evidently opposed to that conception. They have written more than once that since the international leadership has not "proved" itself, they deny that it possesses any authority. It is true that the particular clause in question was included in the statutes because of an error committed by the International Secretariat with regard to the Parti Communiste Internationaliste in 1952. This error (the suspension of a national leader-

ship because of repeated violations of discipline) was all the graver inasmuch as the subject under debate at the time was displaced by it, and inasmuch as the split then had graver consequences than it would have had if that measure had not been taken: because we are convinced that the split would have occurred in any case. It is sufficient to measure the depth of the differences that we have on a whole series of political and organizational questions with the Lambertist group in order to understand that the debate in 1952 already contained the germs of these very profound differences. Thus it would have been an immense gain to have brought these out better. In addition, the international consequences of the split in France would have been quite different from those that it provoked at the time.

It is necessary to add that the error also favored the development of false and erroneous views on the question that is the subject of this article. Because of an error committed by the highest international body, some have had a tendency to question the fundamental principle of the organization as a whole. It should be noted that the mistakes or errors committed by national leaderships (and there is no lack of them), do not lead anyone to dream of questioning democratic centralism on the national scale. That this is done on the international level proves that the revolutionary Marxist concept of the world party is not as solidly anchored as it should be.

One can easily write correct generalities on the question of the International as we conceive it (a world party) and . . . take them but little into account in practice. Because important happenings in daily political life contribute to perturbing the relations that ought to exist between the International and its sections.

First of all, in a general way, most of the members of the sections cannot participate in the daily life of the International as they do in that of their respective section. The daily problems, the problems of language, do not even permit them to follow the life of the most important sections. Our comrades frequently mobilize in carrying out tasks of international solidarity, but it is only from time to time that they come to know the problems of other sections; it is only every two or three years that they participate in the preparation of a world congress (which, moreover, necessarily deals much more with big political problems than with the problems of the International's daily functioning). Material difficulties are likewise troublesome in the life of the International: the international documents are written initially in French or English. Translation problems are very heavy above all for the small sections. The very promising current recruitment poses considerable problems of education and assimilation, which cannot be resolved as rapidly on the international level as on the national. By the very force of circumstances, international work, properly speaking, tends (outside of providing information) to be the prerogative of comrades knowing one or more foreign languages. We need only mention the obstacles set up by all the bourgeoisies to international relations and also the fact that we are steeped in a milieu in which ideology, except for us, is normally fostered in a "national" direction.

Another example which shows how material conditions favor the tendency to place national above international

considerations: The members of our international bodies are elected as individuals (naturally, taking into account national organizations) so that each person in these bodies is, must be, an international leader in the first place, a national leader in the second. However, comrades elected in this way participate mainly as leaders of their section first of all, in an accessory way as a leader of the International. Practically, how many times are we not obliged to accept between two congresses, at sessions of the International Executive Committee, the replacement of a member by another comrade of his section? The statutes, moreover, take this possibility into account, by submitting the replacement to ratification by the international body. Yet, in contrast to the past when going to an international meeting could separate leaders from their section for long periods, air travel makes it feasible today, provided the International has sufficient finances, for all the members of the International Executive Committee to meet more frequently and to make that body more homogeneous and better able to play a genuinely leading role, instead of being a too infrequent gathering of national leaders.

We know how much existence can determine consciousness, even among those who deliberately swim against the current. That is why we must be careful not only to formulate our conception of the International correctly but also to call attention to anything that can pull us in an opposite direction and to ceaselessly search out the means required to make our movement, despite everything, a genuinely world party.

It is hardly necessary to take up the central argument of Lutte Ouvrière, according to which democratic centralism on an international scale is not possible, presumably because the international leadership has not proved itself. Such an argument holds with equal force on the national level where they are careful not to advance it. Those who advance it on the international level do so not because of its intrinsic worth, but in reality as a practical defense of some prerogatives of national leadership. Besides that, the "argument" leads to a vicious circle: if no international leadership can be had until it has proved itself, no "proofs" can be had until an international leadership first exists.

In other words, the "argument" made by Lutte Ouvrière condemns any effort to organize a world party.

The argument made by Lutte Ouvrière is not the most dangerous; there are others that are more subtle or more specious. For example, the one according to which the international leadership can work only on the strategic level and that it should have little or nothing to say on the level of tactics, these being solely the responsibility of the national sections. For example, the argument according to which the International means above all the coordination, the collaboration of national sections undertaking actions in common or in parallel. We will quote in this respect a recent article by Comrade J. Barnes, the last sentence of which we have underlined:

"From the time of Marx and Engels on, the revolutionary party has always been conceived of as an international party, not just a national party. That is because the revolutionary struggles in different parts of the world are inter-related, not simply parallel. This has been richly verified in the last few years, as we have seen the obvious coincidence and mutual interaction of the colonial revolution, the political revolution in the workers states, and the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries. Most obvious of

all has been the crucial role that the colonial revolution has played, not only in affecting the mass movement in the United States, but in reversing the entire international political situation.

"The principal condition for international organization is international collaboration between leaderships developed out of the experiences of real organizations fighting to build mass revolutionary Trotskyist parties in every country." (J. Barnes, *International Socialist Review*, April 1971, page 35.)

Let's examine these points of view then to see to what degree they correspond or do not correspond to our conception of the International, a world party based on democratic centralism.

It goes without saying that democratic centralism on an international scale cannot be identical in every respect to democratic centralism on a national scale, if only because of the fact that the national situations differ from each other to an incomparably greater degree than do the regional situations within a country. It would not occur to anyone to make decisions on specific actions from a center located several thousand kilometers away. The international leadership has never abused its role as the center; to the contrary, it can be accused much more of having too often taken a reserved attitude toward the national leaderships. The arguments mentioned above tend rather to maintain if not to encourage such a state of affairs whereas the leadership of the International as well as the leadership of sections ought to act in an opposite way.

The distinction between strategy and tactics would appear to hold, the first flowing above all from an international analysis, the second from specific national conditions. But, like all distinctions, this is often very relative; in more than one instance it is not easy to draw a line separating strategy from tactics. In addition, the initiatives undertaken by a section can have serious consequences for other sections and even for the entire International. It is obvious that no statutes, however well designed, can meet all the situations, all the strategic or tactical problems that life may throw up. We repeat once again, what is involved is our conception of the International, and the danger facing us today does not lie in an abuse, in an excess of the "authority" of the International, but in the opposite situation and in all the arguments going against this authority, which favor transforming the International into a federation of national sections.

As for thinking that the International, aside from the most general theoretical and political elaboration of positions, is essentially the coordination of sections and more particularly the leaderships of sections born out of real experiences, this in reality reduces the International to a common denominator so narrow as to throw the door wide open to federalism. Whether one likes it or not, such a conception in practice repudiates the International because it would give predominance today to certain sections, to certain national organizations and give them a privileged position in the International. Who can guarantee that in certain sections we now have leaderships that have passed all tests? We live, let us not forget, in an extremely chaotic world, in which the stability of no leadership, no organization can be absolutely guaranteed; to permit ourselves to be guided by con-

conjunctural considerations in defining the base of our international movement is to condemn ourselves to not acquiring the least existence. Moreover this argument amounts to saying that there is no International as long as there are no national leaderships, and that goes against not only everything we have learned from Trotsky, but against everything he did from the time he was expelled from the Soviet Union—the construction of the Trotskyist movement was not done by first of all creating a base, on the national scale, in order to perfect it on the international scale, but simultaneously internationally and nationally, and always with the conception of an international organization based on democratic centralism. We could easily provide several pages of quotations from Trotsky condemning the conception of constructing the International along the lines of building a house by first setting up the walls (the sections) and then the roof. Here is one, picked at random:

"It is necessary to understand first of all that really independent workers' parties—*independent* not only of the bourgeoisie, but also of both bankrupt Internationals—cannot be built unless there is a close international bond between them, on the basis of self-same principles, and provided there is a living interchange of experience, and vigilant mutual control. The notion that national parties (which ones? on what basis?) must be established first, and coalesced only later into a new International (how will a common principled basis then be guaranteed?) is a caricature echo of the history of the Second International: the First and Third International were both built differently. But, today, under the conditions of the imperialist epoch, after the proletarian vanguard of all countries in the world has passed through many decades of a colossal and common experience, including the experience of the collapse of the two Internationals, it is absolutely unthinkable to building new Marxist, revolutionary parties, without direct contact with the self-same work in other countries. And this means the building of the Fourth International." ("The ILP and the Fourth International," in *Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1935-36*, Pathfinder Press, p. 67.)

We likewise mention that this conception of first the walls and then the roof was strongly opposed during the preparatory discussion for the Foundation Congress of the Ligue Communiste, in order to obtain the vote for affiliating with the Fourth International. (See *Cahiers Rouge, Documents de formation communiste No. 8-9*.)

We are as conscious as anyone of the weaknesses of our movement on the level of the international leadership, but these weaknesses likewise exist on a national level, and we dispute any claim of a national leadership or organization at possessing greater political or organizational solidity than that of the International. The question, moreover, is not one of appreciation or the comparative capacities of forces, but of the function, of the existence of the International. Either you recognize its necessity and you act like an International, whatever its dimensions may be, or, while recognizing its necessity, you declare that it cannot exist unless certain conditions are fulfilled and in that case you postpone the existence of the International in practice . . . to the Greek calends. For you create an association, a federation of national parties that can have amicable, cordial relations with each other, but only as long as a community of views exists among them on one or

several given questions. The existing relations then are bilateral or multilateral relations like those existing at present among the Communist parties, which in substance are similar to diplomatic relations such as exist in the UN. On the basis of such a situation you can never develop an International as we conceive it.

Up to this point we have taken up arguments that to us appeared to be dangerous. Unfortunately we have to add that since the last World Congress things have likewise gone in practice in a direction opposite to that of reinforcing the International, most particularly with regard to Latin America. On this question, there was a majority and a minority at the World Congress; it was decided that while acting in accordance with the orientation voted for, the discussion would be reopened at a date to be decided on by a plenum of the IEC; this was done at the end of 1970. The comrades of the SWP of the United States supported the minority point of view. We must regret that they did not limit themselves to defending their point of view in the discussion—which was obviously their completely unquestionable right—but also through multiple interventions in the field encouraged those who shared their point of view to pay no attention to the vote of the World Congress and to go against those who were applying the orientation adopted by the majority. Matters reached greatest sharpness in Argentina. No one had ever thought of asking the members of the "sympathizing group" to apply the line voted for, because they would not have been able to do so. They should at least have had a genuine "sympathizing" attitude toward those who were carrying it out and who were risking their lives each day. In Argentina and several other countries in Latin America, the support of the SWP went, both in the press published under their control and in the interventions of members of their leadership, to groups or to comrades who openly fought the orientation decided on at the World Congress. We will not dwell more on this subject since it is a notoriously known fact and no one can deny it.

Obviously we cannot accept the "argument" according to which the "sympathizing group" of La Verdad had a correct policy, a Leninist concept of party construction, while the Argentine section of the Fourth International is presumably an ultraleft formation. First of all because we do not share this point of view (but this is another subject for discussion.) Next, because it is not possible for a national organization no matter who it is to take upon itself to decide on the international level who is and who is not Trotskyist. Finally because, in the case in question, it was undeniable that *in intervening against the Argentine section, the intervention in fact was against the decision taken by the World Congress*. It will be possible at the next World Congress to confirm or to reverse the decision of the preceding Congress, but whoever does so at present on his own authority simply repudiates democratic centralism on an international level, and places in question—more than the "rights" of this or that elected international body—the vote of the World Congress and by that the obligations that this vote imposes; in other words it is the very existence of the International that is put in question.

We will add that when a leadership permits itself to bypass democratic centralism on the international level, to violates the rules and the relations that must exist in the International, *ipso facto* it encourages everyone (national leaderships, national sections, individuals) to do the same.

If for any reason whatever, someone replaces the principled relations that must exist in accordance with our conception of the world party, by the question of the relationship of forces, everyone will be incited to improve the relationship of forces in favor of his own positions, thus encouraging tendencies leading to the disintegration of the International.

It is necessary finally to be fully aware of the fact that there is no third position between a world party and a federation of national parties. This does not depend on the size of the forces of this one or that one, etc. If a federative or semifederative position is taken, disengagement from it can be achieved only at cost of a grave crisis. If, on the contrary, the conception of the International as a world party is accepted, it is necessary to demonstrate it by organizing and acting in accordance with this conception without deferring it—in this case, the power of example will be attractive as well as educational for those who, outside our ranks, are attracted by our ideas in general but do not understand the importance of the existence of the International. Under present conditions, this is a question involving not a few individuals but groups in various countries.

It is not sufficient to condemn the absence of internationalism among the Social Democratic parties or the looser and looser links among the Communist parties. It is necessary to understand that if we do not redress the situation that has begun to develop among us, we run grave dangers.

We want to hope that the next World Congress will bring to an end some practices that are contrary to our conception of the International. But we know that a Congress decision is not sufficient to do so. In raising the question we want to help alert all the members of the Trotskyist movement, above all the youngest members who have not yet had much chance to become familiar with it, to make them understand the importance of the question. We thus hope to bring about a retreat from erroneous positions and practices, and help to advance correct conceptions and practices.

With relation to a more effective internationalist practice the question of the International center is posed, both of the IEC and of the US. Because the role of the center in this question is quite decisive. For reasons that are both objective (unequal development of the revolution in the world) as well as subjective, the sections necessarily undergo uneven development which can have troublesome consequences at certain times. For example, although the development of the political revolution in the workers states is proceeding at present stronger than ever, the formation of even small groups in these countries is not conceivable at present without considerable political and material support from the International as a whole. On the other hand, this unequal development can become a combined development in the sense that a serious advance or even a breakthrough of our movement in a given country would have important repercussions in several other countries if not in the International as a

whole. To a certain degree this was seen in Europe with Thus it is indispensable for the international center to receive from the sections more cadres and more material means (financial, etc.), for only it, on the basis of planning objectives determined by an analysis of the objective and subjective situation, can undertake the necessary initiatives so that the development of the Fourth International does not remain essentially that of national sections rather independent from each other, but becomes a development in which the forces, unequally divided at the beginning, are combined to bring a maximum return on the international scale. The question of the international center is thus something essential; it must be more representative than ever of the present development of the sections, but must also be something more, a genuine international leadership rich in men and means.

It is only with this conception of the International that we will prove capable of utilizing all our resources to construct new sections and reinforce the others. It is in accordance with this conception that the strongest organizations like the SWP or the Ligue Communiste must understand the necessity of making financial sacrifices in their interest, for the International. Concretely this signifies making choices, cutting certain expenses, in order to make it possible to provide financial aid to regions where this is indispensable (Latin America, India, etc.). It is only in this way that we can avoid unsound debates linked to a lack of internationalist education, to the desire to apply to others the national conditions of one's own field of action. The construction of the International in the extremely favorable conditions that we find today thus entails more education, more information, more centralization, and more resources with a center capable of functioning and genuinely representative of the present development of our sections. The absence of a strong center injures not only centralism in the International, but also and perhaps even more democracy within it, because without a strong center, the sections cannot be informed on the life, activities, the points of view of the national organizations, indispensable for assuring democracy. Now, while the national Trotskyist organizations have multiplied numerically often by four, six even ten times since the last World Congress, while new organizations have been formed, the international center has not even doubled in men and in means. The next World Congress must seriously envisage measures to remedy this situation.

Also, so that this will not remain only in the domain of ideas, so that it can begin to be put into application, we will ask the World Congress to take measures aimed at *immediately reinforcing the international center in personnel and in means*. For a long time it was extremely difficult if not impossible for our movement to have a center corresponding to our actual needs. Difficulties still exist, but it is possible and thus urgent to overcome those that depend only on us. To do that requires bringing our acts into consonance with our principles.

June 10, 1971

LETTER TO THE 1971 SWP CONVENTION
FROM PIERRE FRANK

Dear comrades,

It would have been a great pleasure for me to bring the fraternal greetings of the United Secretariat and those of the entire F. I. to your convention of the S. W. P. Unfortunately the citadel of the "Free World" has prohibited me and I must ask a comrade to read you what I would have liked to say in person.

First of all I express to you the attention and the passion with which the international Trotskyist movement in its entirety follows the action against the Vietnam war waged in the U. S. A. and in which you, the S. W. P., play such an important role. It is this mass mobilisation increasingly large and increasingly firm to "Bring the GIs home now" which, after the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese people, contributed decisively to sap at the determination of American imperialism and to paralyse its forces. This anti-war activity must not stop for one minute, even if the victory of the Vietnamese revolution seems imminent. It must continue in the U. S. A. as in the whole world to prevent American imperialism from making an orderly retreat, to insure that its defeat henceforth inevitable should be the worst possible.

Your anti-war activity and your other activities (Afro-American movement, Chicanos, women's liberation) inscribe themselves in the turn that the international Trotskyist movement began to effectuate since May 68. Because of the changes in the objective and subjective situation we are ceasing to be the mere propaganda groups as we had been constrained to be for decades, we can finally make the test of our ideas in actions still partial and limited, but in actions which in the eyes of the masses are a verification that even the best formulations of our ideas has not carried.

It is not possible for me to give you a complete slate of the activity and progression of our sections. Thus I will limit myself to several remarks, but in the months to come you will have the possibility during the preparation for the next World Congress of the F. I. to become aware of these activities and the results already attained.

It is in Europe, and not only in France, that the sections of the F. I. have known a development which contrasts with the situation that existed during the years of political apathy. All the sections are growing, multiplying by 2, by 3, sometimes by 8 or ten times. It is the case with England, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Switzerland. New sections are built in Scandinavia and Luxemburg. In Spain the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (former group "Comunismo") recently organised in four large cities simultaneous demonstrations gathering more than a thousand people. You are certainly aware of the two large demonstrations organised under the banner of the F. I., at Brussels for a red Europe against the Europe of the trusts with 3,500 participants, and the demonstration for the centenary of the Paris Commune at the Mur des Federes with 30,000 demonstrators, a political event of such importance that the bourgeois press in many countries mentioned it.

In Japan, our section is making comparable progress to those of Europe. In other Asian countries our movement knows difficulties, notably in India and Ceylon but this is because it is involved in the great struggles of these countries. In Latin America where the general situation is more than ever chaotic, in a number of coun-

tries militants draw lessons from past and painful experiences, and groupings issued from various revolutionary groups, from formations having led armed struggles, discuss the ideas of the F. I. and are attracted toward it. In some countries far from the center and where the Trotskyist movement is recent, as in New Zealand, we note a political awakening of youth directed towards our movement. In the Arab countries the heavy defeat of the Palestinian resistance weighs substantially, but political clarification is going on and we are gaining militants who will be tomorrow's cadres.

I can only mention our intervention in the workers' states. A recent conference registered the results obtained in six of these countries. You also know that in two important political trials, in Poland and recently in Czechoslovakia, in the trial of Peter Uhl and his comrades, the activity of the F. I. has been denounced by the Stalinist prosecutors.

The advances we have made are still small in relation to the needs of the world situation. But we must not forget that our movement found itself reduced to very little forces for decades, and that with the decomposition of Stalinism a considerable confusion has set in which is still far from being dissipated. In spite of all these difficulties the F. I. has completely justified itself in finding the way toward new generations, in helping them against confusion to build Marxist revolutionary parties.

We attach the greatest importance to our next World Congress, not only because a World Congress constitutes the highest instance of our movement, that which assures its unity, but above all because this time the largest part of the members of our movement will take part for the first time at a World Congress. Our new members will be able to understand internationalism not only as a theoretical concept but in the most concrete form, that of belonging to a one and single world party, thus being responsible for what is done at antipodes as well as in their own country.

The next World Congress will have to make an important analysis of the world situation, all the more that at the time it will convene the defeat of American imperialism in Vietnam will be clearer than today. The present right turn of the Chinese is very important, but the consequences of the defeat of the most powerful imperialism by a small people fighting for a socialist revolution will be more important. They will be enormous, especially in the U. S. A. The growing economic difficulties in your country will unavoidably transform themselves in political difficulties, and we can be almost certain that your working class will also begin to enter the political field.

At the next World Congress will also be discussed the divergences at present existing between the S. W. P. and the majority of the International, and as you are discussing some of them at this Convention, allow me to speak about them. I would like to start with a preliminary remark. We have noticed in the last year a tendency to add new divergences to those which existed earlier. It is possible that the objective development of the discussion needs it, but it is also possible that, for some of the differences, it is only the product of an hasty generalization. We all know the example given by Trotsky in his struggle against Burnham and Shachtman, but we should not forget that he was in presence of a tendency on its way of breaking with Trotskyism. None

of us, I hope, think that that is the case to-day. We think that it is dangerous to accumulate the matters of differences for, instead of helping to find answers to the various questions, we would risk to reduce the basis of our common activity. We think for example that on questions like China or the youth, the differences if they ever do exist are not decisive. Even on the question on the Near East we don't think that they are so decisive. Thus, if we all support the actual struggles, including these of the Fatah, we do not understand why your document supports also their proclaimed aim of a "democratic and secular Palestine." This is not our aim. We support all real struggles against imperialism without ever necessarily identifying ourselves with those who conduct them. We reject any conception of a democratic revolution, of a revolution by stages; we are in Palestine as everywhere for a socialist revolution. As for the question of the right of the Israeli Jews to self-determination, this discussion can take place without being arbitrarily associated to the other questions which appear to us of a much more decisive importance for the International. These questions are for us our orientation in Latin America and the structure of the F. I.

On Latin America I cannot avoid to deal with the text of my friend Joe Hansen, though I rather would have liked to forget it. I will put aside all kinds of digression, as the martyrs of Chicago, entryism, and so on, as they do not bring much to the discussion. I wish to deal with the essence of his argumentation, and I think that I am not distorting it if I summarize it as follows:

—a) the majority of the International, in accepting the strategy of armed struggle for Latin America, renounces the building of revolutionary parties—this dilemma is even posed in the title of the article;

—b) the orientation of armed struggle for Latin America cannot, in the logic of those who defend it, avoid to be extended to other countries than Latin America;

—c) the adoption of this policy is the consequence of ultraleft pressures on our movement, particularly on its European leaders;

—d) we see no necessity, says Joe, to oppose another policy to that of armed struggle, we remain in favor of building revolutionary parties in Latin America as elsewhere, after the 9th World Congress as before it.

A document of 62 pages is not easily summarised in a dozen lines. But I think that I have put the light on the pillars of Joe's text, and if they do not stand up—as I wish to prove—then 60 or even 600 pages will not add anything to the validity of its contents.

First of all, is it true that the policy of armed struggle is in opposition to the building of the revolutionary party? If we read carefully Joe's article we will see that he "proves" it only through quotations of Bejar, Dowbor, Bustos and other Weathermen. No doubt many ultra-lefts to-day fight the idea of building parties to lead the struggle for socialism and oppose to it the idea of armed struggles. But since when have these ultra-lefts become political authorities for our movement? Since when have *their* dilemmas become dilemmas *for us*? Do we share for example their dilemma between trade-unions and committees of a soviet type? If one wishes to have a discussion and not a dialogue of deafs, one has to discuss the positions of the majority of the International, not those of our common opponents. You cannot attribute to the International the positions of the ultra-lefts.

The dilemma armed struggle versus building the party does not exist for us. No more, shall we say, as the syn-

dicalist dilemma "general strike versus building of the party." For us the building of the party is a *permanent task*, be it for a group of 5 or 500, be it for a party already linked to the masses and even, as history has shown, a party which has already conquered power. Experience has shown that a revolutionary party has never been created once for ever. But the building of the party is not a thing in itself, it is done among other things by determining policies, which are function first of objective conditions, second of the forces of the organisation at a given moment. Propaganda and agitation are constant political tasks. But, *at given moments*, our political tasks include actions which can extend from meetings, demonstrations to more or less large actions for the defense of the working class organisations, to armed struggles which can lead to the struggle for power.

The building of the party is a permanent problem, armed struggles can only become the policy of an organisation at a given period according to circumstances. If comrade Joe wishes to combat the policy of armed struggle for Latin America, he must show that in the actual given conditions in Latin America, another policy is to be followed, for example as suggested by comrade Peter Camejo at the last Plenum of the IEC, a propaganda activity in elections. Let me say in passing that our Bolivian comrades shortly after the revolution in 1952 put up a candidate in a presidential election. If they no longer do it today, though they do not neglect propaganda, it is because their analysis of the situation in their country has led them to the preparation of armed struggle as an immediate task and not merely as an item of a programme for an indeterminate future.

The second argument of comrade Joe, i.e. that the logic of those who today advocate armed struggle for Latin America must lead them to extend it to other countries, has surprised me even more than the first one. Not that the policy of armed struggle is not relevant to other countries. I suspect that the Bengalis, the Ceylonese, for example, are giving some thoughts to armed struggle. What surprised me is first that Joe makes again his "demonstration" with quotations of ultra-lefts, and second that he places himself in tow of these ultra-lefts in raising the question of armed struggle for countries like the USA, Canada and Great-Britain. I really cannot understand how Joe could bring up such an argument: if you say that armed struggle is today the policy for Latin America, you will have to say that it is also valid for Great Britain. Haven't you forgotten, Joe, the numerous examples of uneven development presented by comrade George Novack? Haven't we rejected the caricatures of the permanent revolution as signifying revolution at any moment and in every country? Of course if you place yourself in the same dilemma of the ultra-lefts "armed struggle versus building of the party", you either accept armed struggle for all countries or accept building of the party for all countries. But as I have already said, *this dilemma is not ours*. For the F. I. there is an *international unity* of revolutionary struggles all over the world, but *unity does not at all signify identity*. The F. I. knows that what is good for Latin America is not necessarily good for the U.S.A. and vice-versa what is good for the U.S.A. is not necessarily good for England or Brazil. Armed struggle as a policy can be determined for a country or a group of countries only after a concrete analysis of the situation in this country or group of countries and is not conveyable to other places. I am really amazed

that Joe took for good such a dogmatic argument of ultra-lefts, only to put it inside out. That such an argumentation takes so many pages in Joe's text should give thought to the political validity of it.

Let me come to the ultra-left pressures on our movement. From the day when the radicalisation of the youth began to show, we have been very conscious of ultra-left pressures in Europe. Every section has had and still has to fight them every day, also the reflections of these pressures in our own movement. We fought for the necessity to work in the unions against those who opposed to them committees which could be only of a temporary nature in present conditions. We know when to participate in elections and when not. But I do not support at all the idea that ultra-lefts are petty bourgeois who are the image on the left of the petty bourgeois opportunists of the right. Neither do I think that to advocate armed struggle, even its particular form the guerrilla, is evidence of ultra-leftism.

To say that opportunism and ultra-leftism are petty bourgeois currents symmetrical in relation to a proletarian Marxist line may be correct if one can place himself on the plane of a pure spirit, with no links to such contingencies as men and organizations. In any case I distrust such an affirmation not only because it is too often used by bureaucrats of all ilk (see Chou En-lai's letter to Mrs. Bandaranaike) but also because it does not correspond neither to Lenin's analysis in "Left wing communism, an infantile disorder" nor to reality. For Lenin ultra-lefts are in first instance revolutionaries who errors are false reactions to the opportunism of the traditional organisations. Our aim is to eliminate from the workers movement by political means the opportunist leaders and organisations, but to cure the ultra-lefts and win them to our program and organisation. This is certainly not an easy task, in many cases we know it is hopeless. But there is no symmetry built up on pure ideology between opportunists and ultra-lefts. There is no symmetry for us between Marighella and other Brazilian revolutionaries and the Chilean president, Allende. The former have the right to our support, also to our criticism but I deplore those which were published made by Brazilians who are not in actual struggle. Whilst Allende must be denounced by us so that the working class loses confidence in him and gets rid of him.

On the label ultra-left put on those who advocate armed struggle, I would advise to be prudent, even if those who do it do not share our ideas and program on some points. Let us suppose that in the middle 50's two men had come to the office of the S. W. P. and said "Our names are Castro and Guevara, we are preparing the landing of a fistful of men in Havana to engage in guerrilla struggle against Batista. Can you help us?" How would you have qualified them *at that time*? Perhaps as some petty bourgeois ultra-lefts? Isn't it worth pondering some minutes on this question?

We in the International haven't open our arms to all those who advocate armed struggle, we have had some examples not only of ultra-lefts but also of unstable people. Yet is impossible under the pretext of fighting dogmatic ultra-left conceptions to surrender to no less dogmatic conceptions. When it comes to armed struggles it is more than ever necessary to make a concrete study. Let me first give an example, that of the Ligue Communiste in regard to the meeting of the fascist organisation

"Ordre nouveau". You are certainly up to date concerning the facts. After all, this was an armed struggle, a punctual one certainly, not linked to a general political line, but to a propaganda campaign. There was a difficult delimitation with ultra-leftism, so much more that ultra-left groups participated in this action. Moreover there was the danger of a banning of the Ligue. Didn't we risk a reversal on our building of a revolutionary party? It wasn't an action linked with large masses, only with a vanguard.

Concerning the activities of our comrades of the Argentinian section, the P. R. T. and its armed organisation, the E. R. P., we don't look at them as being ultra-left. We think that their policy corresponds largely to the present needs of the class struggle in their country. It is true that in armed actions which involve only small numbers there is always the danger of tending to be separated from the demands and needs of the masses. This can be for example reproached to many revolutionary groups in Latin America. But all the actions led by our comrades in Cordoba, Rosario and Tucuman have shown their preoccupation to link their actions with the needs and demands of the masses. A bourgeois paper as careful and informed as *le Monde* and some Argentinian bourgeois papers have seen it a propos the Rosario affair. We are convinced that these actions, especially the latter, will be studied by revolutionary groups in Latin America and make them understand that armed struggle is only a means, that it needs a political program, which is the first step to understand the necessity of a revolutionary party.

Let me mention you on this question of armed struggle a discussion which took place in June 1938 between Trotsky and the leadership of the S. W. P. about the transitional program. I cannot read the full ten pages, but only two short excerpts:

"There are two dangers in the elaboration of the program. The first is to remain on general abstract lines and to repeat the general slogan without real connection with the trade unions in the locality. That is the direction of sectarian abstraction. The other danger is the contrary, to adapt too much to the local conditions, to the specific conditions, to lose the general revolutionary line. I believe that in the United States the second danger is the more immediate. I remember it most especially in the matter of militarisation, armed pickets, etc. Some comrades were afraid that it is not real for the workers, etc."

And further, concerning something that happened then in New Jersey:

"Now I think the example of New Jersey is very important. We should utilise everything, but this especially. I will propose a special series of articles on how the fascists became victorious. We can become victorious the same way but we must have a small armed body with the best discipline, organised workers, defense committees, otherwise we will be crushed and I believe that our comrades in the United States don't realise the importance of this question. . . . we must begin very modestly, that is, with defense groups but it should be launched immediately."

There is certainly no question for us to mechanically

apply to the present situation what Trotsky said at that period, but one can see that Trotsky did not oppose the building of the party or the transitional program to armed struggles in some given conditions. He did not see in such struggles the manifestation of ultra-leftism, he showed their importance in given conditions. We do not hold to the letter of each quotation of Trotsky, what we look in them as well as from other Marxist masters are guidance for thinking and action, their dialectics removed of dogmatism, mechanism, to approach new questions, new situations.

I come now to the most important question of all, the centralist and democratic structure of the International. Its importance is double. First it reduces the risk of errors without eliminating them, second it gives the best conditions to rectify collectively the errors which have been made. You certainly read the discussion article of comrade Alain Krivine and myself against the danger of introducing federalist conceptions in our movement. We wrote this article before having to read carefully comrade Hansen's article, and in reading it our fears were more than justified. Let us read page 59:

"To take full advantage of the openings now appearing they [the larger sections in the advanced capitalist countries] must concentrate all their resources, both in cadres and finances, on the struggles in their own areas. . . . In Latin America and similar regions, sections should clearly understand that engagement in guerrilla struggle is a tactical problem to be weighed in the light of their own resources without being able to count on anything requisite to their needs from abroad."

These lines, alas, lend themselves to no equivocation. Thus, if a section of the F. I. on the basis of the analysis of the situation in its country decides to engage in armed struggle, it is warned in advance that it will do so on its own with no aid whatsoever from another Trotskyist organisation. *This is not possible.* By the way, how could you give support for example to petty bourgeois nationalists like some of the Palestinian organisations and take a negative attitude to militants and sections of the F. I.? If a section takes the decision to engage in armed struggle and if, in addition, the majority of the F. I. approves it, it follows that this section will receive a support without any reservation, even at the expenses of some of our other activities. To do otherwise is not a matter of cents or dollars, it is to oppose the decision of a given section and it would be the negation of the world party. It would be leaving the door wide open to federalist conceptions, because it would mean acting together only on questions on which we are in full agreement. You wouldn't accept that in your national organisation, it cannot be done in a world party. So we hope that the next World Congress will not agree that the richest organisations concentrate only in their own areas but will devote men and means to the center of the International.

To conclude I hope that our international discussion will get rid of arguments which are not relevant to the

situation in Latin America. Obviously after having to use so much time about them, I cannot begin here to make a deep analysis of the general situation in this continent. But in order to understand the revolutionary potentialities contained there, let me remind you of the Rockefeller report "Quality of life in the Americas" written after his last trip in Latin America. He mentions the perspective of one or many more Fidel Castros—these are his own words. They characterize greatly the situation in Latin America. We don't draw from it mechanical conclusions: the differences are sometimes big from one Latin American country to another. For the time being, but for how long no one can say, the armed struggle is not to-day on the agenda in Chile or in Bolivia, but the trend of the situation in these countries leaves no doubt: there will be no broadening of bourgeois democracy. We should make a very concrete analysis of the situation in each country. But what is for us certain is that in most of these countries, the main bourgeois party is the army, and the mass struggles of the workers, the peasants, the students, cannot be conducted without organisations of armed defense among other things. If anyone does not share this point of view, it is his full right to defend it in the International, but it is then necessary for him to make another analysis and to present another political orientation.

We are sure that our discussion will not continue from abstract and dogmatic views. We ask you with urgency and insistence to reject all that could bring injury to the structure of the F. I. as the world party of the socialist revolution. Because of a reactionary law, you cannot formally belong to it, however you are linked to it all the more stronger by our common ideas. Any danger for the F. I. is also a direct danger for the S. W. P. itself. No Trotskyist organisation can without danger for itself take a federalist type of distance, even only on some questions. The present discussion between us has to develop, but it cannot by its very existence stop the application of the F. I. decisions taken by a World Congress. Your country if it knows to-day a political retardation of its working class movement, receives in its midst the contradictions of the whole world. The revolutionary struggles in your country will in the final instance be decisive for the world. The entire F. I. recognises the importance that the S. W. P. represents for the future of the world socialist revolution; reciprocally you will understand how directly you depend on the development of the F. I. and all its sections. You and we do not follow convergent or parallel paths, we can only constitute a single International movement.

Long live the Socialist Workers Party!
Long live the Fourth International!
Long live the World Socialist Revolution!

July 26, 1971.

s/Pierre Frank