

M A R X I S T S T U D I E S

number 1

"III. THE PROGRAMME OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
FOR THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION"

(Excerpt from "The Decline and Fall of Stalinism", Resolution adopted at Pablo's "Fifth Congress of the Fourth International" reportedly held October 1957 in Italy. Reprinted from Fourth International magazine, No. 1, Winter 1958.)

for cadre education

Reprinted December 1973

SPARTACIST
Box 1377, G.P.O.
New York, N.Y. 10001

25¢

10 March 1969

Dear Comrades:

Attached you will find the first number of a new internal cadre education bulletin, Marxist Studies. The purpose of this series is to deepen and broaden each comrade's understanding and appreciation of the dialectical method of historical materialism. It is basic to the perspective of the revolutionary Marxist that only the revolutionary vanguard party, guided by the theory of scientific socialism, can lead the working class to the overthrow of imperialism. But the vanguard of the proletariat must constantly revitalize Marxian theory through study of the history of the world working class movement and application of the dialectical method to past and contemporary history. Engels summed this up this way:

"It is the specified duty of the leaders [of the working class--W.G.] to gain an ever clearer understanding of the theoretical problems, to free themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old conception of the world, and constantly to keep in mind that Socialism, having become a science, demands the same treatment as every other science--it must be studied."

Lenin was even more succinct--"Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."

The Marxist Studies series will make available to all comrades reprints of scarce and out-of-print materials which would contribute to the above goal. Examples of such materials are little known contributions of classic theorists, theoretical contributions by SL members, competent articles from academic journals, or documents reflecting the point of view of historically significant socialist or working class groups (in the broadest sense of both terms). [See letter attached to PB Minutes, 16 December 1968 for elaboration of these categories and the program.] It should be emphasized that distribution does not imply the endorsement of the theories or analysis of each bulletin by the editor or the Central Committee of SL. For example, a detailed historical analysis of a particular situation by a competent bourgeois historian may provide valuable background information (especially in those areas where nothing else is available), but the historian may also draw utterly unscientific conclusions from his analysis. In general, each number will be prefaced by a note indicating the nature of the study and, if necessary, an indication will be made of possible limitations of perspective from the vantage point of revolutionary Marxism.

The first study is an excerpt from a resolution of the Fifth Congress of the Pabloite International held in October 1957. The relevance of this document lies in its attempt to formulate a revolutionary program for the working class of degenerated or deformed workers' states, that is, "a programme for the building of soviet democracy in the state and the economy..." (page 1) What is most surprising about the document is the evident distrust of the authors for the Leninist vanguard party. Presumably, the Leninist party would play a most crucial role in the re-establishment and development of soviet democracy. But the Pablocites confine themselves to a sterile

recitation of what the Leninist party must not do, instead of attempting to demonstrate the crucial role of such a party in defending both soviet democracy and the proletarian dictatorship. Contrast both the tone and content of this document with Trotsky's forthright defense of Bolshevism:

"The proletariat can take power only through its vanguard. In itself the necessity for state power arises from an insufficient cultural level of the masses and their heterogeneity. In the revolutionary vanguard, organized in a party, is crystallized the aspiration of the masses to obtain their freedom. Without the confidence of the class in the vanguard, without support of the vanguard by the class, there can be no talk of the conquest of power. In this sense, the proletarian revolution and dictatorship are the work of the whole class, but only under the leadership of the vanguard. The Soviets are only the organized form of the tie between the vanguard and the class. A revolutionary content can be given to this form only by the party. This is proved by the positive experience of the October Revolution and by the negative experience of other countries (Germany, Austria, finally Spain). No one has either shown in practice or tried to explain articulately on paper how the proletariat can seize power without the political leadership of a party that knows what it wants. The fact that this party subordinates the Soviets politically to its leaders, has, in itself abolished the Soviet system no more than the domination of the conservative majority has abolished the British parliamentary system." (from Stalinism and Bolshevism, 29 August 1937, page 14)

A similar ambiguity permeates their concept of the world party of the proletariat, the International. In Pabloite eyes the International will merely be "an instrument for the co-ordinating and encouraging of all the activities of the revolutionary vanguard in the workers' states...." In spite of these and other obvious limitations, the document has an intrinsic interest for the attempt to formulate a program for soviet democracy.

Due to peculiar circumstances this first number is being handled from the N.O. in New York. Subsequent numbers will be mailed from Boston by the editor. Due to difficulties in obtaining a post office box, all letters should be addressed to the editor:

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All comrades are encouraged to send in suggestions--articles, book chapters, etc.--for the series.

Bill Grenzebach

Editor, Marxist Studies

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III. THE PROGRAMME OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL FOR THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION

The development of the Polish and Hungarian revolutions, the rapid ripening of both the objective conditions for a political revolution in the USSR itself, the appearance of oppositional currents in the Stalinist parties of the other "People's Democracies" as well as the whole international discussion started by the present crisis of the bureaucratic dictatorship, make the formulation by the Fourth International of a more detailed and precise programme for that revolution an urgent necessity. It is not a question of immediate or transitional demands that might be able to lead to the first mass actions against the bureaucratic dictatorship. Such demands, following in general the line of the demands incorporated in the Transitional Programme for the USSR, must be worked up by the revolutionary Marxists of the Soviet Union and of the "People's Democracies" on the basis of the concrete conditions existing in those countries. The programme sketched out below is the one that revolutionary Marxists present to already awakened and politically active masses, on the eve of, during, and on the morrow of, the outbreak of the political revolution. It is the programme for the building of soviet democracy in the state and the economy, a crucial problem of the political revolution, around which the discussion among advanced workers is concentrated, as the Polish and Hungarian examples have proved.

Such a programme can no longer be based merely on generalization of the experience of the democratic workers' state of the first years after the October revolution. It must at the same time base itself on the numerous experiences that the working class movement has accumulated since then: that of the degeneration of the Soviet bureaucratic state; that of the Third International and of the Communist Parties; that of the Spanish revolution; those, whether positive or negative, of the Yugoslav, Chinese, Polish, and Hungarian revolutions; those of the so-called "People's Democracies," as well as the demands put forth by the proletarian vanguard and the revolutionary youth in struggle against the bureaucratic dictatorship, for the establishment of a true soviet power (in particular in the days of 16-17 June 1953 in East Berlin and throughout the whole of the DDR; at the end of May 1953 in Czechoslovakia; the revolts at Vorkuta and other forced labor camps in the USSR since the second half of 1953; those of the June 1956 strike at Poznan, etc.)

13. The organization of the workers' state must be reviewed in the light of classic Leninist theory on the subject, that is, the theory of soviet democracy conceived as the broadening and not the limiting of democratic rights and freedoms of which the whole of the toiling masses may partake, as compared to those they enjoy even in the most democratic bourgeois states. The dictatorship of the proletariat and soviet democracy are synonymous in that the granting of unlimited political freedom to the toiling masses can and must be

accompanied by the limiting or even the denial of political freedom to all representatives of the hostile classes, to all those who aim at the overthrowing of the workers' state based on the suppression of the private ownership of the major means of production.

Practically speaking, the real exercise of power by the soviets, the freely elected councils of the manual and intellectual workers of the towns and country--organisms that are both legislative and executive and for this reason represent a higher form of democratic organization--is possible only if the following guarantees exist:

(a) The freedom to organize all parties that place themselves within the limits of Soviet legality and the framework of the Constitution of the workers' state.

(b) Genuine freedom of press and assembly, i.e., the right for each tendency supported by a legally established minimum of manual and intellectual workers, or by a decision of the soviets, to dispose of meeting halls, broadcasting time on the radio and television, paper and printing presses proportional to existing available supplies.

(c) The election and periodical re-election of the members of the central legislative organisms and of the principal central, provincial, and local functionaries, by secret ballot and with multiple candidates or lists, representing the various soviet parties; and the recall of those elected when those who elected them so wish.

(d) The limitation of the salaries of all functionaries in the administration, especially the state administration, to those of a skilled worker.

(e) The election and periodical re-election of judges by secret ballot, thereby guaranteeing their complete independence with regard to the organisms of state administration. Open trial with full hearings, and with the defense's rights guaranteed in each case, and on the basis of written law.

(f) The disbanding of all permanent secret organisms of internal security. These must be replaced by public workers' militias that function, when necessary, with the help of auxiliary organisms constantly under the public control of the soviets.

(g) The generalized arming of workers and the setting up of arsenals of automatic arms in the plants and working-class quarters.

The Leninist principle held by the Fourth International is that, if violence is necessary in the relations between the proletariat and its class enemy, it must be eliminated from the relations which, within the working class, bring into conflict different tendencies in the labor movement, and from those among various currents, tendencies, or fractions within the revolutionary party. The dictatorship of the proletariat means the use of violence against the class enemy, according to the resistance of the enemy. Soviet democracy means the refusal to use violence within the workers' movement, and the use of only persuasion and experience by the revolutionary party in its

relations with the working class and the other toiling strata of society.

Since in practice the boundaries between the toiling classes and their enemy are not sharply drawn, and since various objective conditions can lead the class enemy to seek support among the most conservative currents within the toiling classes, the revolutionary vanguard may sometimes be called upon to make a painful choice: either to accept the development of a dangerous situation within the workers' state, or, in order to overcome this danger, to use methods that may seriously undermine the workers' trust in this vanguard and in the state. Without wanting to emit absolute truths or dogmas, the Fourth International declares that, on the basis of past experience, it is absolutely clear that a workers' state must always face two dangers as long as the world victory of socialism is not ensured: the return of a capitalist counter-revolution, and the development of bureaucratic degeneration. The weaker the state, the stronger the pressure exerted by the enemy, the more the trust and the political initiative of the great majority of the workers are lacking, then the more any coercion used against sections of the working class drains their confidence in the state and opens the gates to bureaucratic degeneration. That is why it is the duty of the revolutionary party to submit itself to the democratic verdict of the soviets, even when they make serious mistakes that the working masses by experience will recognize and right sooner or later. It is only in this spirit that the principle, ALL POWER TO THE SOVIETS, as the basis of organization of the workers' state, acquires its full meaning.

In developing the programme of the political revolution for the re-establishment of workers' democracy in the workers' states, the Fourth International unshakably maintains the principle of the defense of all workers' states against imperialism. It will fight against every effort by imperialism to exploit the political revolution in its own counter-revolutionary interests. These efforts will become more accentuated as the political revolution goes forward. This renders that much the more urgent our task of permanent explanation of our traditional position on this matter to the masses and the communist cadres.

14. The bureaucratic degeneration of the USSR has proved that the roots of the power of the bureaucratic apparatus lie in its more or less arbitrary disposal of the state production machine. The relations among the state apparatus, the apparatus directing the economy, and the revolutionary party, are for this reason decisive in guaranteeing the increase in soviet socialist democracy. These relations must be governed by the following principles:

(a) A fundamental differentiation between the workers' state and the revolutionary party, one being quite distinct from and in no way subordinated to the other. This means in particular that under no condition can any state organisms--and even less so any security organizations--intervene in the discussions or the struggles of tendencies inside the party. This also means that no state organisms elected by the masses (or the soviet) may be modified in its composition by a party decision.

(b) The election and democratic control over party leaders by the members of the party, by the strict observance of all rules of democratic centralism: congresses and conferences at fixed periods; the election of local, regional, and national leaders by secret ballot; the right to organize tendencies and even to print internal tendency bulletins; as complete information and discussion as possible in the rank and file before important differences are settled by the central organisms; no sanctions against members without the agreement of the rank-and-file organisms to which they belong; etc.

(c) Democratic control of the state apparatus and that of the economy, respectively organized in local soviets and factory committees. The election and revocability of the principal members of this apparatus by these organisms. The active participation of the different existing political tendencies in the choice of leaders and of alternative action programmes.

(d) The lack of material privileges in connection with leadership activities, there being no exception other than in the case of technicians not belonging to the party; such cases must be subjected to the close control of the soviet rank-and-file organisms.

(e) The principle of maximum information on and publicity for all controversial issues within the party, the state organisms, or those of the economy. This is an indispensable condition if the proletariat is to direct the state effectively and acquire in the shortest possible time the necessary experience to govern with the maximum efficiency.

15. The organization of the socialist economy, during the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, is the touchstone for either the extension of socialist democracy in the workers' state--until such a time as democracy itself withers away as the last form of state--or towards the various bureaucratic deformations of the state and the appearance of fresh social inequalities that can lead to a monstrous bureaucratic degeneration.

As Marxists, we know that the bureaucratic degeneration of the state can be only a transitional phase in the history of the struggle for world socialism, a phase rendered possible by the lack of a sufficient material basis in any workers' state (or group of workers' states) and by its (or their) isolation. But, while recognizing this basic cause of degeneration, Marxists nowise accept a mechanistic and automatic determinism, i.e., the inevitability of an extreme degeneration of the Soviet type. They recognize only that the poorer the material basis of the workers' state, the greater the risk of bureaucratic deformations of the Soviet Union that cost the Soviet and international proletariat avoidable slaughters, defeats, and sacrifices, they understand that it is an imperative necessity that the revolutionary vanguard oppose insofar as possible, as a subjective factor, the play of spontaneous objective forces determined by need, pressure of a hostile milieu, lack of culture and skills, etc.

In this respect it is essential to understand the necessity of a division of economic functions and powers so as to ensure a severe

limitation of bureaucratic arbitrariness, and at the same time producing the best guarantees for the most harmonious possible development of the productive forces. This sharing out of powers should be schematically established according to the following plan:

(a) Central decisions (in a national Congress of the soviets or workers' councils) to be taken after democratic discussion of alternative plans, insofar as the main lines of distribution of the national product (investments policy, rate of progress, price-and-wage policy) are concerned. The Fourth International rejects as antidemocratic and anti-communist the anarcho-syndicalist myth of the complete autonomy of enterprises, that can end only in the competitive fight for a market, more or less free or more or less monopolized, with all the injustices that this brings about (the appropriation by the workers of the more modern factories of part of the product created by the workers of more backward enterprises, etc.), with the danger of dislocation of the planned economy.

(b) The running of enterprises by the workers' committees, within the framework of the general plan elaborated by the elected representatives of the whole of the proletariat. These councils must control and, if necessary, modify the plan during its execution, and they must defend the specific interests of the producers (working and wage norms in their concrete application, dismissal and hiring, organization of work, etc.). They must elect the director and at the same time become the great management school in which a growing number of workers will each in turn become familiar with the exercise of administrative functions.

(c) The trade unions' role of control must be mainly to defend the interests of the workers as consumers and citizens with given cultural needs, against the workers' councils (mainly representing the production point of view) and the central organisms of planifications. The union must discuss general work and wage norms and their application to the various branches of industry and the factories within the framework of collective fixed-term contracts; they must watch over all forms of workers' social insurance, without playing an administrative part (this belongs to the state, i.e., to the local organisms of self-administration); they must try to reduce working hours, increase the possibilities of paid holidays and the participation of the workers in all aspects of cultural life, etc. They must be based, like the party, on the strict rule of voluntary membership, contrary to the workers' councils and the soviets in which every wage-earner of the enterprise or locality automatically has the right to vote.

The effective guarantee of the right to strike is at the same time an effective and not merely formal guarantee of this division of economic powers.

By insisting on the importance of the dividing up of economic powers, the Fourth International also affirms that, however ideal any organizational structure may be, it remains but a framework void of content as long as political working-class democracy and effective participation in the political life of the country by an ever-increasing number of workers are not flourishing. In a planned economy,

the decision as to how the national income is to be shared out in major proportions is a capital factor that sets up a more or less rigid framework to all administering organisms from which they cannot dissociate themselves without disrupting the whole system of planification. So long as the majority of the working class does not participate in taking this decision, either directly or indirectly (through its freely elected representatives) and does not itself--in full knowledge of the facts--establish the limits of the sacrifices it is willing to make in order to develop the productive forces, it is not possible to speak concretely of a genuine and fully developed soviet democracy. So long as different workers' currents are not allowed to present general or partial alternative plans for the choice of the workers themselves, this participation will remain more fictive than real.

16. Socialism is a form of social organization based on abundance. When the proletariat conquers power in any given country, including the most highly developed ones, the existing productive forces are not sufficient to ensure this abundance for all citizens, and even less to all the citizens of the globe. The period of transition between capitalism and socialism is therefore in any case a period during which the proletariat cannot be satisfied merely by a new and more equitable distribution of the already existing wealth of the earth. The proletariat will have to ensure a considerable increase in the current production of wealth, and in the stock of means of production that are at the disposal of society, in order to attain its goal: the organization of a society that ensures the full and complete satisfaction of the needs of one and all, without calculating this satisfaction according to the work that each has contributed in exchange.

In the light of this thesis one might suppose that there exists only a quantitative difference between the problems of developing production posed in a workers' state or a group of such states which have scarcely started industrialization, and for workers' states created in countries where capitalism had already ensured an important development of modern industry. This, however, is not the case: there are qualitative differences between these two types of countries, insofar as the problems set by the development of a socialized industry are concerned:

(a) From the social point of view, in the first group of countries industrialization--even when it can avail itself of the help of an international socialist economy--develops in a hostile milieu (the majority of the population composed of small peasant producers). In the second group of countries, the workers' state can count on the support of the majority if not 2/3rds of the population for its economic policy.

(b) From the economic point of view, industrialization in the first group of countries must correspond to combined aims: the specific interests of the workers, the raising of their level of living and culture, etc., and the need to differentiate the peasantry (from which must be detached a stratum of poor peasants that can be freely integrated in a socialized economy, and a stratum of middle peasants

that can be neutralized against the primitive accumulation of the rich peasants). In the second group of countries, the development of the economy can be fundamentally oriented towards the satisfaction of the growing needs of the mass of producers, while reserving an important segment of the national product, during a long transitional period, to help the less industrialized workers' states.

The Fourth International affirms not only the principle that it is impossible for a workers' state to impose on the workers a margin of sacrifices above that which they freely accept; it also affirms that any attempt systematically to increase the rate of accumulation over a long period of time has negative repercussions on the productivity of labor and on the self-discipline of the producers, and thus creates enormous losses and waste that to a great extent cancel the advantages thought to be gained by such an accumulation. Only a plan planification that establishes harmonious proportions in the development of the different sectors of the economy--industry, agriculture, and transport--and of the different branches of industry itself, pays off in the long run. The basis of such a system must be an increase in production together with a more or less equivalent raising of the standard of living of the producers. The easier it is for the producers to measure this parallel progress, the more conscious and enthusiastic their creative participation in a harmonious development will become. The requirements of such a harmonious development of all branches of the economy rule out from the start any policy of forced collectivization in agriculture, which is the source of stagnation if not of falling off in agricultural production, and of serious disruption in the cities' food supplies.

These requirements, on the other hand, are compatible with the creation of agricultural producers' co-operatives in all strata of the peasantry that are socially and economically ready to accept such a means of production, on condition that such co-operatives bring them concrete material advantages.

Without excluding the necessity, which might arise even in the future, for a workers' state isolated on a given continent to start building up a socialist economy on its own, all experience has shown that international division of labor and mutual aid among workers' states on a basis of equality, constitute a factor that aids and stimulates the upsurge of the economy, a factor that is in any case indispensable to catching up with and surpassing the level of productivity reached in the most advanced capitalist countries, this being the only criterion of the final victory of a socialized economy over a capitalist economy. The idea of achieving the construction of an autarkic socialist economy in one country or in a small group of countries must be rejected as a reactionary myth.

17. Soviet democracy, goal of the political revolution in the degenerated workers' states and of the social revolution in the capitalist countries, is inconceivable without the free development of artistic creation, scientific work, and all the cultural activities of mankind. Such a development is more and more proving to be an indispensable condition for the full and complete exploitation of the tremendous reserves of the technical and productive creative forces that the revolution puts at the disposal of the new society.

Such a free development does not mean that the party and the revolutionary vanguard refrain from expressing their own views with regard to the numerous controversies that may arise in theoretical fields. It means:

(a) that the revolutionary party engages in militant action through propaganda and persuasion in favor of the theses of Marxism and of dialectic and historical materialism; that it demands the widest possibility for teaching all these without the state's imposing the adoption or the exclusive presentation of these theses on the body of teachers or on the youth;

(b) that no scientific, artistic or cultural tendency that is not considered to be progressive, or the most progressive, by the revolutionary vanguard, can be repressed or sanctioned administratively or hindered in its productive and creative efforts;

(c) that the state does not give its official approval either in the form of material advantages or by distribution of hierarchic posts to any tendency in the fields of science, the arts, or cultural activities--fields which are the ripest for the integral application of the principle of self-administration;

(d) that the party establish clear distinctions between the choice of the social, economic, or cultural aims that have priority (for example the priority of the solution of the housing problem over that of the needs of urbanist aesthetics and the need to defend on a theoretical level (that of planification, in the long run) the correct principles that appertain to these aims, even if it is not possible to implement them immediately.

Soviet democracy is equally inconceivable without a radical elimination of all the obstacles that today prevent a majority of citizens from enjoying the material and cultural gifts of civilization.

It must guarantee completely free education at all levels, selection being made strictly according to individual capacity; it must guarantee every citizen the right to free medical care without social discrimination. It must ensure the full and autonomous participation of youth in political life. It must completely apply the principle of "equal pay for equal work," give maximum encouragement to the emancipation of women from thousands of years of submission, and at the same time permit professional selection according to the physical peculiarities of women. It must revise the marriage laws in the spirit of the October Revolution, as well as the right to divorce and voluntary maternity (free distribution of the means of contraception, and the right to abortion), children's rights, the self-administration of schools, all of which must bring about the absolute equality of men and women, and a complete absence of coercion by one person over another.

18. The Soviet bureaucracy usurped power under the banner of "socialism in one country"; it is under the banner of true proletarian internationalism based on strict equality between all nations, that the political revolution against the bureaucracy will triumph.

The bureaucracy has poisoned the relations among the various workers' states, as well as those among the various nationalities inside the USSR, by its brutal Great-Russian chauvinism and its narrow petty-bourgeois prejudices.

The Fourth International condemns the Stalinist conception of the subordination of the interests of the world proletariat to those of the Kremlin bureaucracy as a criterion of proletarian internationalism. It also rejects the centrist, anti-Leninist thesis according to which the chauvinism of a great oppressing nation should be condemned in the same way as the nationalism of the small nationalities. While raising the banner of international solidarity everywhere, it makes a clear distinction between Great-Russian (and Great-Han) chauvinism, which are unconditionally reactionary, and the nationalism of small nations oppressed by the bureaucracy, which is often only a deformation of the just revolt of the masses against the national oppression they suffered, and that can in no way modify the objectively progressive nature of their struggle for emancipation.

That is why the Fourth International defends the slogan of the independent and sovereign Soviet Socialist Republics of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, while at the same time advocating the confederation of all these workers' states on a strict basis of equality, in one or several democratic federations of workers' states.

A democratic workers' state will educate the workers and youth in a spirit of complete respect for the cultural personality of all peoples, for whom it will ensure an unlimited development. It will untiringly combat any manifestation of chauvinism, national or racial hatred, antisemitism, etc. It will try to increase whenever possible the solidarity, interest, and conscious participation of the workers of the workers' states in the struggles of every country throughout the world.

Any nationalistic tendency toward the subordination of the interests of the international revolution to the defense of the workers' state, however important and progressive be this state, is always a clear sign of bureaucratic deformation.

19. The Fourth International conceives the problem of the Workers' International in the same spirit as the revolutionary party. An International which includes one or several parties that hold power in workers' states can no more "dictate" policy to the citizens or the governments of these states than can the party to the workers organized in soviets. It can only bring weight to the conviction and prestige of the arguments it submits to the decision of the workers--and even this only insofar as experience has proved to the workers that it has systematically defended the collective interests of the proletariat against particular or nationalist deformations of these interests.

Conceived in this spirit, a revolutionary International, far from being outdated or losing importance due to the conquest of power

by the proletariat in one or several countries, remains an absolutely indispensable instrument for resolving the tasks set by the building of world communism:

(a) Leaving aside the indispensable diplomatic manoeuvres that one or several workers' states may be obliged to make, the International co-ordinates the struggle of all the revolutionary parties, including those that have already conquered power, in order to achieve the victory of the world revolution in the shortest possible time.

(b) After the victory of the revolution, the International will make every effort to co-ordinate and encourage the best possible international economic planification, thus preceding the practical possibilities of federation or confederation of workers' states.

(c) The International will be an instrument for the co-ordinating and encouraging of all the activities of the revolutionary vanguard in the workers' states, in the process of permanent revolution, until world communism is brought about. This is all the more important since in these fields complete theoretical generalization has to be accomplished, and this cannot be done on the basis of fragmentary national experiences.

Given the disastrous experience many communist militants had with the Komintern, then with the Kominform, during the Stalinist era, these militants have become wary about the very idea of an International based on democratic centralism. This wariness is in no way justified, and to give in to this tendency is to abandon an essential element of revolutionary Marxism. It is not through the degeneration of the Communist International that the world crisis of Communism began. It was in a party, the Russian party, that the bureaucracy first destroyed democracy, thus departing from the Leninist road. The stronger the International, and the more it is out of reach of the predominating influence of one section or of a small group of sections, the easier becomes the struggle against the danger of bureaucratization in a party of a workers' state, by the transfer of the full weight of the healthiest sectors of the international workers' movement towards the country most in danger.

For this very reason any idea of "polycentric" international organization or of purely "bilateral" relations between CPs must be rejected. Far from guaranteeing a healthy evolution to the workers' movement, the aim of such opportunistic formulas is to protect the national bureaucracy from the influence of the international revolution.