

JUL 30 1975

John Barzman  
Chicago

July 27, 1975

Attn: Barry Sheppard  
SWP Political Bureau  
New York

Dear Comrade Barry,

Enclosed you will find a better copy of the IT Newsletter of June 30, 1975, as well as a copy of the IT Newsletter of June 14, 1975.

July

At a meeting on/19, the coordinating committee of the IT new faction decided to approve the dropping of John E., who had been listed as a member of the IT in the Bay Area (San Francisco), to admit Emily F. into the IT (she has applied in Oakland), to note the transfer of Greg L. from St Louis to San Jose where he will apply to the San Francisco SWP branch, and of Judy H. from Madison to Chgo (she has already had an interview with Joel B.). Also we received the following letter from Cathy M., in Chicago, addressed to Joel B.:

"You will probably remember that during our conversation regarding my activity in collaboration with the SWP in Chicago, I briefly discussed with you my health situation and the time spent with doctors and in clinics. Recently that situation has become such that I will have to limit that activity even more, certainly more than I would like to. I will continue to participate in all the party functions that I can; of course my sustainer will also be sent regularly. If you would like to discuss any details, give me a call. Comradely."

What is the reason that comrades of the IT are given only three documents of the party pre-convention discussion? What is the reason for the delay in informing comrades of the IT whether they will be invited to the Oberlin convention so that they can make preparations to come, and get leaves from work? Perhaps a brief letter on these points might clarify your view of the collaboration process.

Comradely,

John Barzman



## INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY NEWSLETTER

June 30, 1975

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2. THE INTERNATIONAL, FROM THE FRENCH CALL COMMISSION TO THE IEC OF JANUARY 1975, by ROMAN.

### THE IT, THE S.P AND INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

The article printed below was originally published in the internal information bulletin of the French section as part of an effort to inform the membership on developments inside the FI. The bulletin also included the resolution adopted by the IT at its October 1974 plenum, known as "Lakhdar II", and an exchange of articles between comrades Carapace and Michaloux on the evaluation of the S.P's work around the Boston events of last fall. We have translated and republished the article by Roman because we think it is of particular relevance to the IT. This is because most of the organizational disputes between comrades of the IT and the S.P leadership have revolved around the question of centralism in the world Trotskyist movement.

This question of centralism does not involve a matter of discipline of course, since the S.P is prevented by reactionary laws from being a section of the FI. What is involved is a question of political coincidence, because although the S.P is not a section of the FI, this is only so because of reactionary laws, and the S.P is still supposed to start from the same programmatic premises as the FI and to respect its moral authority. Whether or not the S.P's line on a series of political and organizational points would coincide with that of the FI was the issue, then, in a series of disputes: whether there would be a special pre-world congress S.P convention; whether the IT would get representation on the IC; whether the decisions of the world congress would get reported in party branches; whether the S.P press could attack activities of sections of the FI because it considered them ultra-left or popular frontist; whether the S.P would have a Chile solidarity campaign as called for by the United Secretariat; whether the S.P would finance international projects decided upon in common by the world movement, in a parallel although dissimilar way to the payment of dues by sections which was voted by the world congress; whether the S.P would accept the United Secretariat's opinion that the collective expulsion of the IT was wrong; whether it would accept an international codification of democratic centralist norms; whether it would be morally persuaded by the IEC recommendation to collectively reintegrate the IT, and so on.

For many different reasons, some good and some bad, comrades of the IT had come to defend a rapid centralization of the International while the S.P leadership advocated a more decentralized conception. For the IT, there was the fact that the S.P's claim to quasi-infallibility seemed to be more easily attacked if it was put in the context of being that of an international minority; there was also a search for protection against organizational harassment by the S.P leadership through the recognition of the world movement as a higher authority which could be appealed to; then there was the hope that international centralism could mean a rapid reversal of the S.P's erroneous orientation through a world discussion and decision.



On the other hand the LTF leadership opposed centralism in order to protect its factional activities as a minority in the International, and to perpetuate its unchallenged supremacy in the USA. This position nicely dovetailed with the absence of a worked out international line, evidenced in the vacuousness of the LTF world political resolution, which would have required international centralism to be implemented. Finally, it was necessary for the SLP to continue its public disassociations from various actions carried out by sections of the FI. But beyond these factional and conjunctural alignments, there lurked deeper political stances. For the IT had paid close attention to the development of the International in Europe, was aware of the need to universalize norms of democratic centralism first made obvious by the 1970 East-Finding commission on the IIG, and was aware that there was a new international situation (opened by May 68 in France and the beginnings of the world economic crisis, themes which were already apparent in the POT) which required that sections' experiences of turning to the working class be synthesized and internationally directed. With the reading of the document by Krivine and Frank "Once Again on the International", those notions began to be theorized and were central in the pre-world congress discussion (see report on 11th World Congress by Barzman and Massey in SLP IL).

On the other hand, the LTF leadership had a long, although contradictory, tradition of theorizing the continuity of the SLP leadership, the power of the American proletariat, and the hegemony of US imperialism, into a form of SLP Messianism which made the American party at least as important as the rest of the FI. This political tradition combined with the fact that at that particular moment, the SLP leadership was in the right-wing of the FI, in a bloc with various national-Trotskyist formations which opposed the 9th World Congress turn from propagandism to initiatives in the class struggle.

Thus the needs of the day intersected with more long-standing political problems to give an explosive character to the whole discussion. This explosive character was aggravated first by the still empirical approach of the IT to moving what had been a loose gathering of groups propagandizing for Trotskyism toward a democratically centralized International capable of elaboration and coordinated intervention on a world scale, and second by the IT's very mechanical presentation of the problem to the SLP. Thus the IT was initially unable to clearly distinguish the purely factional and episodic factors in the SLP's opposition to international centralism from those relating to deeper political deformations, and to polemize in a precise political way against the latter. Because the need for centralism appeared so obvious in Europe, the SLP's refusal to see it was looked upon with suspicion by the IT as preparations for a split-- and rightly so in large part, although we will not know exactly how much so until the hidden story of the LTF is revealed. This refusal on the part of the SLP was alternatively met with temporizing actions and threats of disciplinary measures.

As for the IT's mechanical presentation of the problem it flowed from the failure to take up a whole series of intermediate logical steps and problems which arise when you attempt to go from the abstract and totally healthy aspiration toward a world party to the concrete steps needed to transform the FI as it exists today. At the most general level, a discussion is needed on the nature of the International, on what makes for the unity of an International. We have to deal with the elementary notion of the difference between primary internationalism which is based on the need for solidarity of diverse struggles against a common enemy, and the internationalism of the Communist Manifesto which is based on the need to

give a conscious expression to the universality of the proletarian condition in an expanding world market. This is the difference between awareness of the need for an alliance against US imperialism, for example, and the consciousness that the struggles of the working class under different conditions and sometimes against different enemies (imperialism, colonial bourgeoisie, workers state bureaucracy) are all striving toward the same goal of world communism and need programmatic/organizational expression in a world party.

But beyond this generality, we have to take into account how the concept of a Leninist party applies on an international scale when there is no world state comparable to the national states, as well as problems of communication, repression, and material resources, which only mass parties or a workers state have so far been able to muster. How much interaction (discussion, common interventions, etc.) is necessary before an international leadership can adopt orientations to be followed by various sections in their country and expect that the orientation will be understood, capably implemented, and in case of disagreements, be accepted anyway on the basis of giving the international leadership the benefit of the doubt? These are also questions which have to be worked out in the concrete.

One problem in dealing with the elaboration of political lines on an international scale, is the need for a deep understanding of the various socio-economic formations and political traditions that are encompassed in a world perspective. This problem is alluded to in Roman's article. The S.P. leadership, fully confident of the superiority of its own experiences, approached the international debate by extrapolating its own sectoralist line to Europe wherever possible, and where this proved impossible by reverting to dogmatic quotations from the classics. Thus, it came to oppose the EPD as ultra-left and workerist on a totally superficial basis, i.e. on the basis of a comparison with the US and of a comparison with the books, rather than on the basis of a deeper study of the European experience. Similarly, the IT tended to advocate the introduction of European tactics into the US in a gimmicky way, while discarding some US traditions without fully examining their function in the particular American reality.

Finally, the IT's advocacy of a Chile solidarity campaign in the US was presented in an ultimatic way. A number of points should have been made at that time and still deserve discussion. Besides its function of defending the program, and applying it to the new world reality, the International now must take responsibilities in the class struggle itself. International campaigns are necessary on a number of bases. First because some struggles cannot be won within narrow national boundaries but require international mobilizations in order to be won. Trade union action against a multi-national corporation is one case in point. Defense of political prisoners can often not bring sufficient forces to bear in the country where the repression is in effect to insure their freedom, hence the need for international campaign. Local struggles which suffer from unusual odds, like the liberation struggle in Vietnam, called for mobilizations around the world. In the case of Indochina, the International played a key role in several internationally coordinated protests. Sometimes, a continental or sub-continental coordination is more adequate (for example, the Asian Youth Conference in Tokyo to coordinate movements against Japanese imperialism.)

But international campaigns can also have a specific FI building function, in that they allow the Trotskyist movement to dwarf its smaller competitors (centrists, sects) by bringing into action all of its forces on a world scale. This demonstrates the actual weight of the FI and its sup-

erriority on the level of being a really functional international organization..

But these campaigns require a uniform international line which must be worked out by an authoritative international leadership and fitted into the line and priorities of the sections operating in different circumstances. The Chile solidarity campaign could have been an excellent opportunity for the International to tackle this problem. Unfortunately, the USFI's appeal was never followed up with an explicit call for world-wide implementation. However, it was carried through all over Europe, in Latin America, and in a distorted way in North America. The magnitude of the problem involved is apparent when one looks at the repeated but unsuccessful efforts to achieve merely homogeneization of the line in the different European countries (debates on the nature of the IIT, and line of Chile committees between Scandinavia and France) and a continental coordination (Frankfurt conference project thwarted by a bloc of various centrists).

In the case of the US, of course, it is clear that an early and energetic intervention in the field, on an "anti-imperialist/solidarity with the struggles" line could have regrouped large sections of the Chile movement which eventually fell under CP hegemony. However, this did not automatically flow from the fact that the USFI had called for a world-wide campaign on that same line. This needed to be demonstrated, and our wish to achieve a test case of international control of international campaigns actually obscured our efforts to explain the point.

The article by Roman poses these problems in a synthetic form and indicates the concrete means at our disposal to begin grappling with them. It demonstrates the need for a continued and prolonged struggle for international democratic centralism, and the IIT's continued willingness to fight on the question.

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intervention even though a limited one. And today the programmatic role of the International is as important as yesterday. But this doesn't change the fact that the type of center we needed had changed and that the ninth world Congress had not provided for its setting up. It thus became a decisive task of the Tenth world Congress.

The problem had already been theoretically raised by the theses of the ninth world Congress, and its analysis of the period which had opened. But means of resolving it were few. Above all, we were at that time enjoying the benefits of the appearance of new generations of militants; of their rediscovery of internationalism, and of the French "breakthrough". The International at that time was undergoing a sort of "spontaneous organic growth". Today, there is no longer any possible spontaneous building of the International, given the difficulty of the problems which are posed, it is no longer sufficient to "dare to struggle", one must know "how to struggle". The existence of an active political center of the International has become an urgent necessity.

#### b. The Clarification of the Majority's Orientation

Insofar as the "geography" of the tendencies remained fundamentally the same between the ninth and the Tenth World Congress, one can say that the latter allowed for both a deepening and a correction of the majority's orientation. The majority's orientation seeks to answer the specific tasks of this period. Nonetheless, it had to approach this new period in a relatively empirical fashion - and if only because the present conditions of building the International and its sections, are, in respects, new when compared to the past situations which led to the development of the Third International and to the foundation of the Fourth International. Hence the need to progressively draw out the implications of the present situation and to frequently correct the orientation which was adopted.

At the ninth world Congress, the debate on the "growing over" of the International was focused on the discussion on Latin America. This was so because it appeared that, given the perspectives of decisive showdowns on that continent, and given the existence of Trotskyist organizations, our ability to build ourselves through action would be tested over there in a special way. Four or five years later, the Tenth world Congress not only had to re-evaluate the general evolution of the class struggle (Uruguay, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile...) It also drew a critical balance sheet of the previous orientation (refer to the document and report on armed struggle of the Tenth world Congress - International Press special issue).

While the debate on Latin America witnessed a re-orientation, that on Western Europe allowed for a deepening of the majority's line. This was because Europe was the scene of some major developments in the international class struggle. Because the practical experience of building sections of the International in the present period was broader there than any where else - and thus, the synthesis which the European document presented was richer than that of other documents.

The Tenth world Congress thus represented a step forward in the maturation of the majority's orientation; its documents reflect a definite progression in relation to those of the ninth world Congress. But, as with the organizational "growing over" of the International, the world



of programmatic elaboration which is needed today, is only in progress. This explains why, in a series of national sections, sometimes deep debates on orientation take place among those very comrades who support the international majority.

### C. The Broadening of the Minority/Majority Debate

At the Ninth World Congress, the minority/majority debate was already a debate on the tasks of construction of the International in the period of rise of struggles. But this debate had remained focused essentially on Latin America. A certain number of other issues in debate were discernable - on work among school youth, etc. - but they had not yet been fully explored. The resolution on the world situation had been adopted jointly and the debate on China had remained over "nuances."

At the Tenth World Congress, there were contradictory resolutions and reports under each point under discussion. Beyond particular regional questions, (Europe, Latin America), there clearly appeared a difference on the method of construction of the International and its sections. The majority insisted on a struggle to strengthen the centralization of the International and the orientation toward intervention that our development should be based upon; it proposed a new orientation for the building of sections in Europe (which had previously been widely implemented on an empirical basis). The minority emphasized the objective centralization of the International, defined the present and next stages of development of the International as essentially propagandistic; denied any need to elaborate a specific orientation for the building of sections in Europe, and rejected that proposed by the majority. Tied to this central debate, a whole series of disagreements both over orientation and of a theoretical nature, were clearly demonstrated. In particular, in relation to the conception of the Transitional program and the role of the Marxist vanguard in the ripening of the class struggle.

In order to understand why the debates broadened progressively, one must remember that in their present form, they were born of a new period, that they occurred after the reunification of 1963 which had witnessed a programmatic drawing together take place, and that our political generation was largely "empirical". The Tenth World Congress was above all the full awakening to the orientation problem which defines a policy of building the International today raises.

### D. A Dual Conclusion to the Tenth World Congress

The Tenth World Congress ended on a dual conclusion :

1. A political majority was clearly confirmed, an orientation was adopted, a political framework of leadership of the International was defined. This majority was politically homogenized, but only relatively. and, within the International, the Tenth World Congress did not allow the differences to be overcome. On the contrary, it witnessed their broadening. The continuation of the minority/majority differences had become a problem of construction of the International. Thus a dual conclusion.

2. The nature and breadth of the differences, the weakness of the International's centralization, allowed an organizational crisis to break out - which was reflected by numerous national splits. But a common political will allowed a framework for joint political work to be defined whose purpose was to allow both the building of the International to be

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pursued and a subsequent clarification of the differences to be prepared. Here again, a dual conclusion.

This was the contradictory framework (political and organizational strengthening of the International and prolonged crisis) within which the new United Secretariat was to act.

## II. TASKS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE NEW UNITED SECRETARIAT

The Tenth World Congress had assigned a dual task to the new IEC and the new U.S.

### 1. To make external activity and the building of the International the priority.

The survival and broadening of differences could have led some to want to continue the general debate. This would have been suicidal. The International was coming out of a year and half of mainly internal life, during which essentially all human and financial resources (that is, in relation to the international life) were dedicated to the pre-congress discussion. This was indispensable. But it could not go on without deeply deforming our development and risking a qualitative worsening of the crisis, by a transition from a crisis of development (even though a very deep one) to a crisis of decomposition. For example, this was quite visible in Europe. We can engage in really European activities if we allocate human and financial means to it. If we do, we can make a great stride forward in the construction of sections and of the International as such. If we don't, other currents (centrists) will take the initiative in this field alone which could only have very negative consequences. We do not have the means to simultaneously conduct a complete debate in the International and to release the forces needed to practically and politically direct its external intervention and its elaboration.

Therefore, the priority was on the building of a permanent political center and on the external intervention of the International as such.

### 2. To prepare the ultimate clarification and eventually moving beyond the minority/majority differences.

The priority defined above does not negate the need to continue the debate. On the contrary, it is an attempt to create the conditions for it. Simply pursuing the previous debate would have rendered it repetitive and frozen. Only the pursuit of the debate which had heretofore not been explored in depth in combination with the re-opening of others on the basis of new experiences in the class struggle and in the building of the International could enable it to move into a new stage.

Thus, the new IEC and the new US were mandated to do the maximum to integrate the minority into the leadership of the International, and to organize the continuation of the debates on China, Vietnam, etc... while preserving in practice the priority on the building and external intervention of the International, and keeping the discussion on questions settled by the Tenth World Congress provisionally closed.

How did the new US fulfill its tasks?

e must distinguish two periods, of approximately six months each, the first in which progress predominates, the second in which the internal crisis once again tends to paralyze international life.

1. Real progress, albeit still not enough
  - a. The formation of the Bureau

After the ninth World Congress, some efforts had been exerted to build a permanent center (bureau of the US). They had failed on the whole. The building of a new center had begun a few months before the tenth World Congress, but it was to be actually undertaken immediately after it. On the eve of the ILC, there were five to six members of the US, and three comrades of Inprecor, working on a daily basis, to which must be added a few others who made almost weekly trips.

It was the first time and it meant that the embryo of an international team had been installed. But still insufficient.

What are the tasks of such a center? Political elaboration first of all, which calls for time to work on it for collective discussions (see the documents on the world economic crisis). Aid for the sections, which normally implies a regular correspondence, repeated visits to the sections, and trips to the centers by leaders of the sections for important discussions. To be done well, this also requires a lot of time. Special support to a section in an exceptional situation: numerous trips, raising funds for subsidies, organizing international campaigns etc. (see Portugal, for example). Discussion with those leading up work areas (regional or issue-oriented), and control of the international activities conducted by other countries (especially in France). This implies a regular link with the cities from which international work is conducted. (Paris, London, ...) And trips by those heading the work to the center for specific discussions. Preparing the publications of the International (e.I., Inprecor). Thus a large amount of writing, and publishing work. Organizing campaigns or international or regional initiatives (Chile, army, workers' struggles) This implies an internal and external coordination of our mass work, often on a permanent basis. Preparing the United Secretariat meetings. Publishing the International Internal Bulletin. Presently, the priority is on preparing and teaching a cadre school.

The list of tasks speaks for itself - even if it is presented succinctly. The team which was at work before the ILC (which is still there) was and remains insufficient. It should have definitely been larger. This is all the more so in that the national sections are generally ill-equipped to correctly undertake a series of tasks (specific commissions, publications, etc...)

Thus, the formation of the center signaled a qualitative progress in relation to the past. The number of political discussions with leaderships and commissions, and of trips was multiplied (even though few comrades know of them); some collective elaboration has begun (see Inprecor on the economy). Inprecor was regularly published. An organization like the Portuguese LCI received material aid unmatched since the Bolivia campaign, and numerous trips were organized, seven of which were by members of the US. But the present team remains very fragile and incapable of fulfilling all its tasks. Through lack of strength, very important tasks are delayed,

such as the publication of IIDB's (the lack of strength here is in relation to the technical and administrative apparatus at the disposal of the center and the difficulty which an apparatus like that of the French section experiences in regularly undertaking certain tasks). Others are simply pushed aside for a period (a series of sections are not followed up either physically or through letters, which can mean that they are almost completely deprived of news). Because of its being over-burdened, the present team constantly risks being spread out in any number of places, and being unable to meet regularly, everybody travelling. Because a minimum threshold has not really been reached, any departure by a member of the team can call into question the general stability.

One must understand well the present state of building of the center. Because it justifies the priority which was placed on it by what its formation has already accomplished. Because its weakness shows that its strengthening and stabilization remains a priority task. Because one cannot validly discuss choices of orientation for the building of the International without taking into account the reality of its present centralization, nor define an orientation for the building of our sections without knowing what the International can give its sections and what the latter can provide it with.

## B. Publications

More than any other, an international leadership is political and requires writings. Until the Tenth World Congress, there was no real central organ of the International. The review, Quatrieme Internationale, was one formally, but not substantially; it remained in fact under the responsibility of the sections concerned by the language that was used. (English, French, German). And in the French case, it wasn't even under the responsibility of the PB of the section. "Inter-continental Press" which is of good professional quality, came out every week in the USA and was circulated internationally, but it did not reflect in the main the positions of the International. It is an organ of the minority--or at best of the SWP.<sup>1</sup> So what is the situation today?

\* The publication of Inprecor is one of the major gains allowed by the formation of the new center. It is the first time then that such a central organ exists, and this in three languages: French, English, and Spanish, with a new edition in German projected (already a few issues have been published). It answers an obvious need: the homogenization and the providing of information to militants of the International and to political cadres outside it, on the analysis of world news. Whatever its weaknesses, it is clearly an organ of high quality, which has become indispensable.

\* Quatrieme Internationale. The editorship of QI has begun to be actually taken over. The Bureau of the US has become actually responsible for it. A new equilibrium of publications is tending to emerge between Inprecor and the forthcoming French theoretical review. Nonetheless, the problems of material production are not yet satisfactorily resolved.

\* Under the impulse of the US, a commission has published material in five languages of Eastern Europe.



\* The internal bulletin. It has directly suffered from the organizational weakness of the center and from the political climate within our own movement (we shall return to this). The first two issues only came out in January--i.e. almost one year after the Tenth World Congress. None the less, the pump has been primed.

The balance sheet of the center's work on this aspect is uneven, but globally positive, mainly because of the publication of Inprecor.

### The centralization of International initiatives.

The center began to reintervene in Europe for the centralization of International initiatives, in five ways: Chile, army, workers conference, workers struggles, and struggles in Southern Europe. The overall balance sheet could be thus formulated, as of now: the very fact that the center is intervening once again in this field is a progress, but it has not had the means to do so in an efficient manner and the initiatives under scrutiny were half-failures (the first three).

Behind this half-failure, there is of course the already-examined problem of the weakness and dispersion of the team in the center. But there is also a political problem: relating to the type of international initiatives which we must undertake today.

In the period 68-71, proclaiming the existence of an International or of practical internationalism, was a necessity and corresponded to the first phase of the new radicalization. Hence the role taken by anti-imperialist initiatives (Berlin 68), and conferences and demonstrations of the Trotskyist vanguard as such (demo in Liege in 66, Brussels conference in 70, demo for the Commune in Paris in 71). Today we cannot repeat the same type of mobilizations. Proclaiming our existence and our program is no longer sufficient.

This is one of the key points which demotes the end of the period of "spontaneous organic growth" of the International and the necessary passing into a period of "directed growth". We must now leave the exclusively anti-imperialist and "programmatically-proclamation" field, broaden our scope to include the struggles now unfolding in Europe, and answer in that regard, the question "how to struggle?"

The political situation calls for it as well as the development of our sections. But we are still in a poor position to fully answer this need, because it presupposes that real centralization be in effect, at least among the European sections and work area by work area (workers, women, youth, anti-imperialist, anti-military work); because the implantation of our sections is still too weak to easily achieve what we had wanted out of the European workers conference--to gather a number of the cadres of the most significant struggles which had taken place in the factories of many European countries (see the documents of this conference in Quatrieme Internationale).

Quite symptomatically, we are no longer only confronted with the need to centralize initiatives in the framework of naturally parallel campaigns conducted in several countries (as was the case for Indochina before 1968). Insofar as the mass campaigns are concerned, we are confronted with frequently different choices on priority (taking into account the situation of the country and the stage of development of our groups) and lacking a homogeneous line (flowing from the lack of a



tradition of centralized discussion). This is the source of the objective difficulties we encountered in centralizing anti-military work, solidarity with Chile, and women's work. Objective difficulties which were exacerbated by our organizational problems.

Further, for the first time, a tendency toward coordinating workers struggles has appeared (especially against multinational firms). We are beginning to be involved in them without having the working class and trade union roots that would enable us to respond to them correctly. Here again, the unevenness of working class implantation in each industry in each country is a major handicap. Concretely we have participated in a certain number of coordinated initiatives: Lip (France, Switzerland, especially, organizing solidarity, publication of Breche-Rouge, meetings and demonstrations with international involvement), Rhone-Progil-Azo (France, GFR, trade union links between multinational units producing the same goods), dockers (popularization and appeal not to scab on the Swedish dockers, in particular in Belgium), Glaverbell (France, Belgium, common publication of Rouge-LaGauche Road, and support of the occupation of the BSN headquarters). For more details, see Rouge and the report on the conference of Mole groups in Lyon, and on the international conference.

Measures currently undertaken to meet these tasks are the following:

1. A political coordination of European PB's, on an episodic basis, is in process. Two meetings have been held (on social-democracy and the Stalinist parties). Two important documents came out of them (see Quatrieme Internationale and Inprecor). A third is being prepared on centrism.
2. Given the political importance of workers work to the development of the European sections, the center has undertaken to publish a European workers bulletin which is geared to accelerate the regional centralization of elaboration by our movement and to help future initiatives in this field, while supplying information to the activists.
3. A coordination for each work area is tending to be set up. Meetings between European sections have been held in this respect (women, army, Chile). They must be broadened and strengthened. They allow for comparing experiences, debating, elaborating, and preparing initiatives.
4. The International is politically prepared to intervene on Spain, given the situation in this country (see circular to European PB's, the use of Inprecor and the holding of preparatory meetings to decide the type of intervention needed in case of a change in the situation or of important trials).
5. The center is presently preparing to set up an international cadre school (length: 6 weeks) to begin next fall. It is designed to step up the education of leaderships of national sections, and thereby to prepare the strengthening of the international leadership.

All this is on the way, but slowed down by the general difficulties which we have encountered. Furthermore, it is obvious that Europe is mainly concerned by these initiatives (Europe = Western Europe). There

are no true international initiatives in the works (except for Chile in certain respects). Neither are there initiatives in regions of the world other than Europe which are launched by the center. We shall return to this problem. Nonetheless, the work of commissions towards other regions of the world has progressed, such as that of the East commission (publications, educational in Paris, etc.)

### III. THE EVOLUTION OF THE INTERNAL CRISIS

Most of the gains made toward centralizing the International date back to the first six months after the Tenth World Congress. Come the summer, a deep crisis of the International relatively paralyzed the center. Its chronology must be reviewed here.

While the Tenth World Congress had ended with an organizational agreement, the first IEC held immediately after, had been marked by a problem relating to the composition of the United Secretariat and its bureau. The minority had proposed a large slate for it. But the SLP had not proposed the participation as observers of any of its most responsible leaders.

(1) Footnote: The American law prohibits membership in an International. The SLP is not a section of our movement. It is nonetheless associated with its activities in the capacity of an observer. All designated numerals 1 refer to this footnote.

The IEC asked that comrades capable of taking full responsibility for the functioning of the US and its bureau be presented. An incomplete slate was elected, with a few seats reserved for SLP observers.

The first US which followed took place in good conditions, by contrast. Two leading comrades of the SLP were present as observers. The organizational report (including setting up the bureau, publishing Inprecor in three languages, etc.) was adopted unanimously. It was later that the situation gradually became tense again until it reached an explosive point.

Here are the main elements of this evolution (not a complete listing) The problem of the composition of the leadership combined with the problem of the financing of the center; sections or sympathizing groups of the minority did not pay their dues with one exception (New Zealand). Given the financial situation of the International - and its statutes - this was very serious. On two occasions, Internontinental Press and the Militant (the organ of the SLP), publically attacked sections or groups led by the majority tendency. In the pages of Internontinental Press the LCR-EPAVI was branded as an organization that had left the path of Trotskyism, and the Militant explained that to vote for Ritterband in France was a vote for a popular front. This was a breach of both the usual norms of functioning of the International and the specific agreement of the Tenth World Congress (see IIE, 1 and 2) When came the proclamation of the Argentine PSI's orientation toward the bourgeois opposition, the request by the US for a debate on the matter, the failure of the PSI to come, the SLP's silence on the essence of the problem, and then the opening of a public debate (see Inprecor). Finally the expulsion of the comrades of the Internationalist Tendency was announced at the beginning of July, without their knowing that such a move was to be taken against them, and without the US being informed of it beforehand in any way, shape, or form. Here again, a double breach, of

a very serious nature, of both the statutes, and the agreements of the 5th World Congress, American law prohibits the SWP from membership in the International; it is therefore not bound to follow them. But involved in the matter is a "moral obligation", which has traditionally been accepted (see IIDB #2, and next IIDB on the IEC).

With the brutal news of the expulsion of the IT, international tensions obviously reached their culmination. This expulsion was unacceptable and it posed the problem of a break in the International.

From this point on, the center went on assuming its general tasks to the best of its abilities (Inprecor, some trips to Portugal, Greece, etc.) But its political energy was once again essentially absorbed by the internal crisis, in its least interesting form, that of a factional crisis. This was the framework the IEC was prepared in. An explosion was only averted because a certain number of measures were unanimously accepted at the September US: setting up of the International Control Commission to deal with the expulsion of the IT, preparing and defining the agenda of the IEC, etc.

#### IV THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Under these circumstances, the IEC which was held had little to do with the one which had been planned to deal with a certain number of open debates (China). It was to be dominated by the internal crisis. The agenda was: - the world economic situation, the debate on Argentina, the report of the Control Commission, a debate on the norms of functioning of the International.

##### A. The orientation of the majority at this IEC

Defining a policy for the majority toward this IEC was difficult. For the attitude of the minority on the most important question could not be predicted. During the many meetings of the U.S. which discussed Argentina, neither the SWP (1) observers nor the members of the minority ever gave a political opinion on the orientation of the PST (except for Hugo Blanco who defended the logic of its line). They had confined themselves to discussing the "facts" (the signing of the document with the bourgeois parties) or the timeliness of a move (publishing the documents of the U.S.). On the very eve of the IEC, it still was not obvious to many of us that the SWP would solidarize with the latest PST document, which was even more wrong than the first, and which inaugurated a revisionist course on some important points of our program. On the very opening day of the IEC, one could still not say what document the minority would present. Similarly with the Internationalist Tendency, it was impossible until a few days before the IEC to begin getting an idea of what the SWP leadership wanted.

While it was difficult under such circumstances to predict the unfolding and the results of the IEC, the majority made the following choices relating to the battle it would wage:

1) to fight for the preservation of the unity of the International given what a break-up on the basis of the organizational measures taken by the minority would mean for the development of the International.

Also because we need a political framework to insure the pursuit of a necessary debate and a common experience. But this battle could only be won on two conditions:

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In this respect, the tendency debate is a part of the task--an essential task today--of defining more precisely the orientation for the building of the International.

It is hard to say how much of the minority faction's common endorsement of the ICF's document is based on essential agreement and how much on a factional bloc. Are the comrades of the Spanish EC really convinced that the Spanish civil war was a conflict between fascism and bourgeois democracy? The essential function of the debate opened by the IEC will precisely be to clarify the nature of the minority's programmatic cohesion or of each one of its component parts toward the problems raised by the ICF's orientation. We hope--and we will fight for--the minority's rejection of this political course. Finally, it can be an educational debate for the whole International: it leads us to deal systematically with questions which up to now have been approached by recent Trotskyist generations in their practical activities only on a limited scale.

### 3. The organizational equilibrium

Three key measures were taken:

- a) the active participation of members of the minority in the center. The proportion of the ICF on the U.S. was increased and ICF leaders were assigned to participate as observers. Similarly, with the Bureau. However, this participation cannot be solely "ideological". It must imply taking responsibility for the practical implementation of decisions (both political and material ones) taken collectively by the center. Otherwise, it would be nothing more than an alleged factional "right to oversee". The problem is settled in principle, but not yet practice.
- b) on the report of the control commission two reports were given by members of the Control Commission, which contradicted each other on many points, but included a common conclusion. Based on this common conclusion, the IEC took a unanimous position (see forthcoming IICC on the IEC),

This resolution was important for us in that it recognized the IF's full fraternal association with the P.I., and implied that the only correct solution for the crisis in the USA was the reintegration of the IF into the ICF. We agreed to take into account the remark of ICF comrades which stated that this reintegration had to be decided by a plenum, that is to say in April. But it nonetheless contained a danger, since we considered this reintegration to be very important for us.

It is clear that if it did not take place, and this at the time of the plenum, very serious problems would arise. One cannot ask comrades to remain inactive for a year or more. One cannot exclude them from the forthcoming pre-convention discussion. The content of the IEC decisions therefore implied a rapid reintegration.

Within this context, we accepted that the IEC would not rule on the expulsion of the IF by the ICF leadership. It is obviously unhealthy for a body like the IEC not to express its opinion on a question of this kind after a report by the control commission. As for the majority tendency, it felt compelled to state its agreement with the report of comrades Karl Anderson and Tantalus, which was endorsed by cde. Hoffman.

### 4. The presence of a ICF member on the U.S.

The minority had asked that a member of the ICF be elected to the U.S. This was impossible for statutory reasons, the ICF being a sympathizing organization, a distinction which we uphold. Furthermore, we considered the measures taken by the 11th World Congress in this respect as exceptional ones, justified only by the crisis. We nevertheless accepted that these "emergency laws" adopted by the U.S. for the IEC (consultative member status) be extended to the U.S.; this, because the minority had made this point into a key issue, given the importance of the ICF, and to aid in decrease of factional tension in the International. This is

why a comrade of the IEC was elected as a consultative member (with a vote which was neither decisive nor recorded in the minutes, and, thus, a comrade who would not be able to weigh in the decisions of the leadership of the International), a status which was different from both that of regular members of the IEC and that of the observers from the ICF and the IY.

### c) Conclusion on the IEC

These decisions taken as a whole were to allow the pursuit of the struggle for the goals set by the majority tendency. This IEC denoted a very important turn in the internal debate by its opening of the discussion on the ICF's orientation and the underlying questions. The political/organizational measures which were taken should prevent factional behavior from running rampant from now on. But the outcome of the debate as well as the day to day functioning of the International remain at stake. In order to better wage this fight, the international majority tendency adopted three leadership bodies at this IEC: a steering committee, an enlarged bureau, and a restricted bureau. The minority (LTF) did the same.

## V. FOUR PROBLEMS

The construction of the International raises numerous problems which are not all reducible to the internal debate. Here are four examples.

### a) The nature of the period of tension in the building of the International.

At bottom, the tension that goes along with building the International today does not flow from the beginning crystallization of the tendency debate. This crystallization is only one of the consequences of a period of "already more, but not yet enough", of a hiatus in our development whose importance must be underscored.

The International has three functions: programmatic elaboration, centralization and coordination of international initiatives and struggles, and correcting our natural development by strengthening weak but important points and homogenizing in our midst a very diverse world political reality. In all three of these fields, important loopholes exist today, no longer only between our "historical tasks" and our means, but also between our immediate needs, those necessary for our possible development, and our actual state.

This has already been referred to several times.

The generation of cadres formed before or during the war, bearers of the program and its concretization until the sixties, has joined with the new generation of cadres coming out of the recent development of our sections. In almost all cases (except the ICF); this encounter implied a deep recomposition of our sections, in those places where they existed. The young generation had to assume the leadership of the sections from the onset.

The matter is of importance. For the generation thus projected into the leadership of new sections was politically young and moulded by activism. It was "empiricist". Yet, the nature of this empiricism must be understood. It benefitted from a real theoretical frame of reference inherited from the Fourth International and tested in the debates of the crisis of the Union of Communist Students where most of the present leaders of the ICF were active. This frame of reference was decisive in saving us from political backslidings of a dangerous character (on the nature of the USSR, of the PCF, of the colonial revolution...).

hence the importance of the 1969 fight for the new Ligue Communiste's membership in the International. Without this membership, only empiricism would have remained.

But this solid theoretical frame of reference could not prevent the fact that the orientation chosen in building the ICR, and then the Ligue Communiste proceeded from an empirical beginning. To realize this fact, it is enough to see that the previous framework within which the building of sections in Europe had been conceived (entryism) had been abandoned while the new one was only fully defined by the world congress in 1973 (drafting of the European document) after a 1972 resolution on the balance sheet for Europe had prepared it.

Before 1966, we had members who tasted in a certain type of theoretical debate, and then thrown into the activism that went with the building of the ICR and the rise of struggles before 1968.

Thus after 1966, activism prevailed. So that at the onset of the 70s, when we attempted to adopt a new programmatic approach to define our orientations, we were to be confronted with great difficulties (the lack of a "theoretical training"). This was one of the problems that occupied our congress. Going beyond our former empiricism was decisive to answer the present tasks of leadership which our political generation must confront. But we are dealing with a gradual process, which needs time.

We have seen how the task of centralizing initiatives (not to mention struggles) raised new problems. The same applies to the political generation coming out of the new period of development of our sections assuming its full responsibilities in the leadership of the International. The case of the French section is especially clear in this respect. We must, with a very narrow leadership team, all at once assume the leadership of the French section, insure the renewal of the present leadership by a deliberate policy of turning it over to a still more recent generation of cadres, and relieve ourselves of our responsibilities in the building of the International. The ability of the International to build itself also depends on this process.

This loophole in our development is one of the parameters in the building of the International. To be overcome, it requires a threefold process of social implantation of our movement, programmatic training of our leaderships, and organizational centralization of the sections and the International.

#### b) Center and Regions

The international situation (and that of the International) is such that we cannot hope to at one and the same time experience a homogeneous development, fully fulfill our tasks, and respond to our needs all over the world. The problem is made acute by our very real international scope. We must prioritize our interventions, specify and establish a gradation of our tasks. Until now, these choices have been quite pragmatic, and therefore partially irrational. A discussion must be held on this topic. Otherwise, we are threatened with scattering of our forces, or the implementation, as a result of natural laws of gravity, of a de-facto Euro-centric policy. In the first case, this would mean the failure to centralize the International; in the second, a retreat in other regions compounded with increasing programmatic errors. Our tasks can be defined as follows, while recognizing the need for a debate:

I. The priority of priorities must be given to the building of a political center, which is the cornerstone and the pre-condition of all else.

Hence the efforts required from some sections. Hence also the possibility that we may have to refuse to fully provide what a section may ask for in order to avoid the political dispersal of the center and the complete scattering of our financial means.

II. Our potential is presently greatest in Western Europe. It is one of the key sectors of today's international classstruggle. It is the area where the number of sections in a relatively homogeneous setting is the highest, where their impact on the developing class struggle is the deepest, and their (potential) ability to intervene is most genuine. Western Europe takes the most responsibility in the concrete creation of the center. That is where a real regional centralization can be experienced. The center must therefore pay very special attention to setting up this coordination of European sections and to organizing European initiatives.

Of course, the problem of regions is posed for other sub-continent. But in several of them, we have not reached the minimum threshold in the number of sections or groups (Black Africa, Eastern Europe) or in the building of "pivotal" sections (Latin America) for real outward oriented regional work to be feasible. In the Arab world, an activity of propaganda and building of nuclei is in process, based on the national unity of the region and on our Middle Eastern development (see the role of a newspaper for the Arab world such as "El Munadel"). In Asia, (at least its eastern part: the Southeast and Far-East), the Japanese section has assumed responsibility for regional work with the Hong-Kong militants and, at least at the level of principles, for the Australians. Both in order to create nuclei in countries where we do not exist, and to impulse a united front of organizations and movements capable of conducting regional campaigns (formation of centers of information on political prisoners in Asia). But neither of the latter two regions can presently play the same role as Western Europe.

III. Lest this second priority overwhelm all others--including our elaboration on a world scale--the (realistic) tasks of the center for each region involved must be specified. And the assignments must be made with regard to this: both those of the center and those of the particular section. For Eastern Europe, a work of penetration which requires elaboration, finances, particular responsibility from the European sections, and centralizing the activity internationally. For Latin America, tasks of clarifying the orientation, organizing solidarity, and support. For Black Africa, tasks of information, analysis, defining a line, building or coordinating the first nuclei. Help in expanding and regionally centralizing our groups in the Arab world, and coordinating the Middle Eastern development with the formation of groups in the Maghreb. Tasks of orientation and re-development of our current (India) or solidarity (Sri Lanka) for South Asia. Tasks of helping the Japanese section's regional work in South-Eastern and Eastern Asia, of solidarity (Indochina and South-East Asia, Korea), of elaboration (China, Vietnam, regional dynamics). Tasks of contributing to a political solution of the crisis of the International in North America.

This debate on the orientation for building the International must take place. It is the only way of avoiding misunderstandings flowing from empirical choices, incoherent or irrational moves, the games of "pressure groups". But we must understand that at the present stage, we are incapable of fulfilling efficiently even the most reasonable and realistic tasks of building the FI. Hence the priority of priorities: the strengthening of the center as a political center, which alone is capable of conceiving and applying an orientation for the building of the International.



This priority on the building of a political center implies an actual and increased effort at centralizing the International: concentration of human and financial resources, strengthening the ties between the sections and the U.S. and its bureau, effort toward politically homogenizing the movement and its analyses, etc... This is one aspect of the majority's orientation which was adopted by the Tenth World Congress. However, it does not settle the necessary debate on the exact nature of this centralization, on the exact form of democratic centralism in the International today. For they cannot have exactly the same character as they would in a national section. An IEC or a U.S. do not have the same powers--objectively and by the statutes--as a C.C. or a P.B. The movement toward a higher centralization of the International has begun. It remains to be clarified.

### c) Understanding the Tendency Debate

Understanding an international tendency debate is particularly difficult. For it does not only flow from differences of analysis of the same reality or from programmatic differences. It is also the product of an objective world reality and of an uneven development of the international class struggle. But this uneven and diverse reality of the world situation is complex and little known by the militants. It does not only refer to more or less advanced stage of development of the class struggle; but also deeply different historical and cultural traditions, and frameworks of civilization. The degeneration of the Third International had a particularly negative role in this respect, by preventing the pursuit of a synthetic elaboration as well as an understanding of the specific national realities. Our weakness prevented us from doing much in this field. And the wave of new militants is particularly ill-equipped in this respect.

Two symmetrical pitfalls are to be avoided: "objectivism" which would explain the differences only by uneven development and would underestimate the political and programmatic source of the differences; the very international character of the tendencies is a reminder that this is not the case (similarly, moreover, as the uneven distribution and date when the tendencies were formed in different regions would prove, if it still needed to, that the objective situation is not irrelevant). And a sectarian "subjectivism" which by comparing the orientation defended in another country with what it would logically imply for its own country, would simply deduce that it is a line "alien" to our movement.

Let us take the example of the SWP (and not the LTF in general) to illustrate the complexity of the factors involved (and without claiming to exhaust the topic here).

One cannot understand the nature of the SWPs orientation without placing it back in the country in which it was formed. The USA is not only the main imperialist power in the world. This fact has important political implications: the historic youth of the country and the economic might of the bourgeoisie have combined to establish a powerful bourgeois political domination over the working class and the absence of any independent party of the working class with a real mass influence (even a reformist one). In this framework, and whatever the magnitude of the social movements which have taken place, the problem of state power has never been practically posed as it was during the revolutionary or pre-revolutionary crises of Europe. This explains in part



both one dimension of the SWP's orientation (a certain gradualism and a definite messianism) and its particular place in relation to, for example, the Argentine PST (which means that the SWP has deadlines to meet which could change its situation). Similarly, one cannot understand the source of the orientations of the SWP which seem erroneous to us without returning to its history. For the SWP's orientation is characterized by an original combination of sectarian dogmatism and of opportunist tail-endism. In order to fully grasp its nature, one would have to re-analyze the original line of the SWP, at that time working-class, the role played by Cannon--a historical leader of the American workers movement--and the political breaks which characterized its evolution: the period of extreme isolation under "McCarthyism" (a probable source of dogmatism) and the form taken by the change in the political climate, the explosion of the mass movement on campus and among Blacks while the white working class remained passive (a probable source of tail-endism).

But the SWP also possesses the strongest continuity in relation to its pre-war past of any of the sections of the International; it did not experience the deep organizational cuts which we did; it resisted degeneration by its knowledge of how to link itself to struggles as they appeared (from the pre-war workers' strikes to the anti-war movement) despite the difficulties of the American scene; and it has dominated and continues to dominate the living history of Trotskyism in the USA.

Thus, its reality is a complex and moving one, and cannot be bypassed or forgotten.

The organizational reality of the SWP (with its hypertrophic apparatus needed because of the country's immense expanses) and its current orientation are doubtless negative factors. But the opening of very new political and social events, accompanied probably by a resurgence of workers' struggles will also pose very new questions for the militants of the SWP. A different relationship between the national discussions on the USA and the debates which we are presently holding in the International will exist.

The best tool for clarifying such international debates, in addition to educating the membership, is this very political and programmatic debate. For only in and through this debate can one understand what flows from the uneven development of the world revolution and our movement, and what flows from real programmatic differences.

This context enables one to understand why we constantly strive to avoid a factional and organizational crystallization of the internal tensions of the FI in favor of an actual debate on orientation and theses. It is also the reason why we make the future of the component parts of the LTF a stake in the debate itself rather than an already entirely predetermined quantity.

#### d) Building the LCR and the International

The role of France in the building of the International in the recent period was very important. Although now more relative in relation to this recent past, it remains central. A special and very particular responsibility is thus thrust upon us. Yet we assume this responsibility very unevenly.

During the post-68 years, "international work" developed rather spontaneously. It was not controlled, given the channeling of efforts into the leadership of the French section. There thus developed a network

of "specialists" of this work, members of the US or of French commissions, barely accountable for their work, and compelled to work as free-lancers.

A gap thus opened in day-to-day activity between the said "specialists" and the mass of militants--including the leadership--who were ill-informed and removed from the responsibilities involved. This was doubly dangerous, because it aided and abetted the under-information, misinformation, disinterest, and ill-feelings of the French section toward the problems of the International. This in turn made the carrying out of international work more difficult, because this work calls for militants who have fully experienced our process of "growing over", an experience which the organization, being poorly motivated, is ill-prepared to "pass on"; because this work must now be partially assumed by the leaderships as such (international tendency debate, European coordination); and finally because this work calls for the intervention of the organization itself (immigrant work, solidarity campaigns).

Around the Xth World Congress, we were able to move forward in several respects: integration of the French leadership into the debates, the acquaintance of the membership as a whole with the debates, full-time involvement of new comrades of the leadership. In order for these steps forward not to become conjunctural advances, we must apply the directives of the first congress of the ICR:

--full and responsible involvement of the leaderships as such in the tendency debates, the coordination of European PBs, and the centralization of work areas.

--at last regularly informing the membership as a whole so as to provide life to a debate and a real education on the problems of building the FI. We could have done much better in this field. But we must avoid demagogy. A full political assimilation --especially in an organization such as our own--is linked to a practice. This "international and internationalist" practice will remain weak. For a long time to come, it will still be difficult for comrades to master the problems of building the FI. But we must from now on avoid these questions being among those that are discussed only on the eve of world congresses.

--on this basis, a reorganization of international work is in progress, with the election of an international commission by the Central Committee, in charge of aiding to centralize the work, of speeding up the training of those who are directly responsible for it, and of providing the membership as a whole with information for discussions.

--to prepare an increased French participation in the center.

We are, of course, dealing with problems whose resolution is tied to the development of the FI as a whole, but which must be well understood. Indeed, the very success of our implantation in one country can, in a first stage, foster the dangers of the emergence of a narrowly "national" consciousness in relation to international affairs, as could be seen in other groups after 1968 (such as some laoist currents which abandoned all international activities).

### Conclusion

One of the hallmarks of our movement is its insistence on the simultaneous building of national sections and a centralized International. The Second International is reduced to vague and episodic meetings of socialist "powers". The Third, to a tool of Soviet diplomacy, undergoing a crisis. China and Cuba have given up the attempt to formalize currents on a continental or world scale. The DRV never aspired to do so. The centrist formations of Western Europe have barely begun to assemble a loose coordination of heterogeneous groups. The Pabloist

current, by diluting its organizational frontiers, 'has diluted its international reality. The Lambertist current, despite systematic international work, witnessed a deep division of its movement along lines which were more sectarian than political. Lutte Ouvriere" and other "national-Trotskyist" formations have decidedly opted to postpone the task of building the International.

Despite our deficiencies--a lot more glaring on the level of the International than on that of the ICR--the formation of the Trotskyist current, as a world current from the onset, probably was one of the decisive factors that enable it to overcome the period of "the crossing of the desert", to integrate the post-world war two developments of the world revolution (many of which were completely unforeseen by Marxist thought) into its program, and to experience its present renewal.

We nonetheless experienced this policy of simultaneously building "the roof and the walls" (the International and its national sections) as a partially contradictory one, even if only from the aspect of the distribution of comrades' assignments. More importantly, the very development which the FI is experiencing since the mid-sixties, aggravates, at least in a first stage, this contradiction. Furthermore, subjective deficiencies, of the leadership, were added to this objective difficulty. The process which should enable us to overcome this contradiction is now in gear. But time will be needed, both in order to overcome our subjective deficiencies and to bypass the objective difficulties. We have "means" to accomplish this which are definitely greater than formerly, especially with the basis provided by the Xth World Congress. A center exists. So does the first political organ of the US (Inprecor). A common political understanding (European document) and a common framework of development are developing in Europe. Similarly in other regions of the world. This is what motivates our belief that we can actually go forward.

ROMAN