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Political Platform

- * *Changing the world!*
- * *Drawing lessons from our failures*
- * *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*
- * *Revolutionary violence*
- * *World revolution*
- * *Marx, Lenin & Mao*

Booklet # 2

Communist marxist leninist Organization VOIE PROLETARIENNE

FRANCE, April 1994

Contents of the 4 booklets of our platform:

Booklet #1: Failure in the East!
Imperialism and dominated countries
Failure in the West ?

Booklet #2: Changing the world!
Drawing lessons from our failures
Dictatorship of the Proletariat
Revolutionary violence
World revolution
Marx, Lenin & Mao

Booklet #3: Revolutionary situation ?
Reform & revolution
The worker's leadership
Immigration & imperialism
Sexism & feminism
Democracy & revolution
Our tactics
Our lines of struggle

Booklet #4: Against reformism
Building the Party
Where are we up to today ?

ORIENTING, STIMULATING THE POLITICAL DEBATE

This political platform comes in time. Indeed, we are living in a period *of great confusion*.

A confusion brought by the collapse of so-called “socialism”; by the failure of the reformist left, by the withdrawal of labour movements, by the transformation of national liberation movements into dictatorships over the people, by the unending capitalist crisis, by the rise of religious fanaticism, of nationalism, etc.

We had to contribute to the reconstruction of a working class policy. In order not to be on the defensive, not only to be *against*, and to open real revolutionary outlooks, we have above all to *clear things up*.

Our previous platform, published in '77, was getting old on several points: our reflexion and our experience had shown us the errors and the shortcomings it held. We had to take into account our evolution.

For two years, we have been working on a synthesis of our political achievements and we debated publicly on the platform project. Which were our basic aims ?

We needed to gather our viewpoints scattered in our publications; to take stock of our achievements and of our shortcomings and errors. We needed to present in a few dozen pages the general line of our organization, so that it could be judged and debated.

It is also a necessity that all anti-capitalist militants can find their *position* in regard with our orientation. This is how we want to play a unifying role and to do so, the first thing was to outline our own position. Indeed, we wish that a clear debate should open concerning the essential matters in today's class struggle.

We want to smash the sectarian withdrawals, and the desperate curling up of certain militants, their self-cocooning, useless but full of good conscience.

We didn't want to elaborate a *theoretical* program, but a *political* platform, answering today's questions. This is why the analysis underlying our political line and tactic will not be found here. Readers, please refer to our other publications (Unfortunately only available in French, so far !).

This platform, as you see it, with its strong and weak points, is a *necessary and sufficient* tool for the political and organizational unity of all who wish to be real communists.

Necessary to have a common political practice. Necessary to fight sectarianism. Are we not witnessing today, among the dominant individualism, the falling back to their narrow entrenchments of many a political organization, or "mass" organization, and even of many an isolated militant ? Are we not witnessing localism consolidate, its partial activity continues on unruffled, though we are convinced that, sooner or later, it will have to widen ? But what miracle could help us build a global fight without finding the means to do so ; and especially the main one: the Revolutionary Party ?

Sufficient today to answer the essential problems of the class struggle. This is not the time to stress the details that could divide us, but it is to unite on an orientation, to implement and develop it.

The Executive Committee of Voie Prolétarienne.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKLET #2

Booklet #1 of this platform describes the main characteristics of the former Eastern Countries, of the countries of the so-called "Third-World", and of the imperialist mother-countries, and meanwhile draws some lessons out of this description.

Booklet #2 (the one you are holding in your hand) starts taking stock of the so-called socialist countries. It shows how revolution has degenerated into its opposite and how a new bourgeoisie came to existence in the economy, the State and the Party. It shows that the most important thing that must be done after the revolutionary seizure of power is to understand that a period of transition begins wherein the class struggle continues in all fields of the economy and of politics, toward the abolition of all privileges.

Therefore, it deals with what democracy is in a society full of upheavals; with the importance of a vanguard party which shows the way to go, though without substituting for the masses, for it is the masses who must rule.

In the end, it deals with the necessary bond between all anti-imperialist revolutions and with the role of a new International to be rebuilt.

As a conclusion, it explains why Voie Prolétarienne claims to be Marxist, Leninist and Maoist.

Booklet #3 brings the attention back to the situation in France and on the responsibilities of revolutionaries in this evaluation. What kind of tactical axis ? What kind of slogans for the main matters ?

Finally, Booklet #4 deals with the means to reach the following goal, and to implement the following policy: the reconstruction of a truly communist party. It is the logical conclusion of this platform.

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WHICH SOCIETY DO WE WANT ?

410 - WE DO NOT WANT CAPITALISM ANYMORE

411 - A global and radical struggle

This divided world, where abundance for the few is strikingly contrasted with the exploitation and poverty dictated to the many; this world where the capacity to produce seems to have no limit, and where the majority of the people live with great shortages and often starvation; this world where peace is the

fragile privilege of a minority... **this very world owes nothing to chance, nor to the calculations of a few individuals. It is molded by a mode of production: capitalism.**

Capitalism invests from now on in **every society, and every region of the world**. It dictates to these its economic laws — competition and profit. The planet is ruled by a handful of countries which are responsible for the main movements of commodities and capital, which plunder the main part of the resources, which monopolize techniques and knowledge, which ensure their domination by force.

And within these very countries, capital subdues every sector of activity for the benefit of one class: the bourgeoisie. Capital relentlessly intensifies exploitation. The economic power is retained by a small number of industrial and financial societies. *They are* **the true owners of political power**.

Imperialism is therefore not only affecting the relations between nations; it upsets not only the societies it rules; **it also shapes the whole of social relations**, within its very mother-countries.

The fight for independence in colonies or for land reforms, the struggle against the military and industrial complex, against nuclear plants or ecological risks, the questioning of the technological choices made by the bourgeoisie, the resistance against the worsening of the exploitation of labour... are many **partial oppositions** to the capitalist and imperialist domination.

But every partial fight remains truncated, if it does not lead to the will of fighting the roots of the evil, to the struggle against the system **as a whole**. Today's humanists and reformists, such as NGOs or ecological groups, are refusing this. Okay, they are protesting against such or such aspect of our society. But they think that it could work in another way, **without upsetting its foundations**.

Nevertheless, all these evils clearly have **a common origin in the laws of capitalism**, and in the domination of monopolies. This is the basis for the unity between the proletarians of the whole world against exploitation and for the people's struggle against oppression. They all have the same enemies. The ones who fire workers in France and the ones who send troops to the Gulf are the same ones. And they all act for the same goal: the preservation of their interests and profits.

This is the society **as a whole** that we don't want anymore. And this society cannot be merely reformed, perfected. Many reformist parties and governments who thought otherwise have experienced bitterly it. This society is bound to endure radical upheavals — **a political and social revolution**.

412 - Changing society: this old idea is still up to date

The yearnings for social equality came along with the societies based on exploitation. But the emergence of capitalism could only strengthen them, and give them **a new meaning**. Its development has increased the number of those who had only their chains to lose, and who yearned for their liberation. Besides, by developing the productive capacity of men, it prepared **the material conditions for the emancipation** of proletarians.

Marx has given to these yearnings, and to the struggles that they have nourished, their first theoretical means. Socialism has then emerged among what were only Utopias, and has become **a revolutionary social project**, whose goal is **communism**.

The abolition of classes and of the wage-earning system; the disappearance of the State as the machinery of the domination of one class on another; the well balanced development of Man in all fields — intellectually, manually, physically, socially, etc... —; the well balanced development of society to answer the needs of the masses; the end of shortages; the abolition of frontiers and of wars; the liberation of labour, becoming a free activity; the end of racism and of sexism... such were, and such are still the aims of the true communists. Not an ideal society, a kind of eden on earth... but a society where contradictions, though there will still be some, **will have lost their aspect of class antagonism**.

The history of the labour movement is the history of the struggle to make these liberation hopes true, the history of its victories and of its failures, met during the fight. The Paris' Commune in 1871, the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the Chinese and Albanian revolutions, the Cultural Revolution are its most striking stages. Each one of them has brought **an enrichment of the revolutionary theory**.

In the same way, the seizure of power by Castro in Cuba in 1959, the victory of North Vietnam in 1975, the victory of the sandinistas in Nicaragua in 1979, have led, at least for some time, to **withdrawals of imperialism**, and an encouragement for the struggle of the people of the whole world.

420 - TO CHANGE THIS WORLD, LET US DRAW THE LESSONS FROM FAILURES !

But the experiments to build socialism, supported by these yearnings and led by parties referring to Marxism, have been **diverted from their goals**. It is not enough to acknowledge it. We have to explain how revolutionary parties have become the instruments of the dictatorship of a State-bourgeoisie, to the contrary of the communist project they were referring to. This took place until their recent conversion to economic liberalism, in the USSR and in the other Eastern countries.

421 - This was not socialism...

If the bourgeoisie may insist that the collapse of the State-capitalist regimes are the sign of the failure of socialism, it is not mere manipulation. In fact, the idea according to which socialism was only **the nationalization, the planning and the taking control of everything by the State** was widely shared by the working class. This idea was spread, in France for instance, by the PCF and by Trotskyites.

If nationalizations, economic planning are indeed the first changes to implement after the seizure of power, they are not enough to suppress exploitation. To make revolution is not only **to change the form of ownership, from private ownership to state ownership**. If only the judicial form of property changes, and if workers are rejected from economic and political power, the State property is still the “private” property of a ruling class.

To build socialism is to begin a process of **transformation of the relations of production, of the actual relations between men**, of their relations with the machines and production itself. It consists in changing their relations with power.

As long as workers remain confined in the work of executives without any control on the use of their own labour power and on what they create; as long as a minority controls and leads everything; as long as this minority is granting itself privileges, the exploitation of a class by another still exists.

The diversion of the Bolshevik revolution from its initial goals **has not been the result of a calculation or a coup**, nor the **unavoidable consequence of historical objective conditions** of the revolution. There have been, at first, a certain number of **mistakes made in the conception of the transition**. Since they were not rectified, these mistakes have prevented summoning up and durably orienting all the worker’s strength for the transformation of society.

According to the idea that became predominant in the 20s, in the USSR, the transformation of the social relations should have been **the mechanical and spontaneous result of the suppression of private property and of the development of production**. This development would have created by itself the necessary conditions for the transition to communism: abundance, increase in the knowledge, development of sciences and techniques... **Thus the increase in the productive force of society became the only driving power of its evolution**.

The first revolutionary duty was, in the thirties, to increase production by all means. Everything was subordinated to this aim. Nobody was seeing that the techniques, as well as the relations of production, were still **largely a legacy from capitalism**. The managerial staff’s power was strengthened.

This conception of transition has later been called **“theory of the productive forces”**. Socialism was to prove its superiority in showing its capacity to produce more than capitalism. The USSR thus forged a model which the whole labour movement accepted.

The search for economic performance led to **the accumulation of the means of production**, to the detriment of the living conditions of the masses. The needs of the latter were sacrificed. The new bourgeoisie launched gigantic projects, and showed its expansionist ambitions. Desiring to rival the other great imperialist powers in the armament race, it unbalanced the economy by creating a **military and industrial complex** out of proportion. Thus, it strengthened its economic power. But this led to human and ecological disasters.

This development mode, after a few dozens of years of success, has been slowed down by **a significant decrease in productivity** and an over-accumulation, which led to the crisis of State capitalism and to its collapse.

On a political level, **the fusion between the State and the Party was complete**. The Party was concentrating the whole of actual power. This fusion was all the more dangerous for the revolution’s future because the soviet state was merely, as Lenin said, the relic of the past State, since it had not endured radical transformations.

The political organizations of the masses, coming from the revolution quickly withered. The urgent tasks of the civil war imposed authoritarian measures on the Party. This was **“War Communism”**. But once this war won, the conceptions that had asserted themselves during this period were not abandoned. We have not yet drawn all the lessons from this process. But it is obvious that **the soviets had been, little by little, stripped of any actual power**. By the thirties, this process had ended. The stifling of the

political debate, within the masses as well as within the Party, was complete. Any contradictor was seen as an enemy, an agent of imperialism infiltrated in the Party's and society's ranks, and therefore was eliminated.

Such an attitude has eased the role of the leaders in place. It led to their erection, at first, to the role of "experts" and bureaucrats who granted themselves privileges, and afterwards they turned into a new bourgeois class. The latter, which was born within the soviet state machinery, **did not have to subdue to any control of the workers.**

What were only mistaken theoretical conceptions in the twenties, became, after the elimination of all orientation debate, and after the systemization of the above-mentioned conceptions, **a political line which encouraged, and then strengthened, a State bourgeoisie.**

This is therefore during the thirties that **the capitalist restoration** took place, under the authority of the Party, which had become the headquarters of the new bourgeoisie.

After Stalin's death, this bourgeoisie was strong enough to get rid of the constraints of the bureaucratic dictatorship and to go overtly further on the capitalist path: attempts to progressively reintroduce the market economy and the profit criterion.

If **Trotsky** developed a certain number of criticisms regarding Stalin's orientation, especially regarding the question of democracy within the Party, **he did not break free from him regarding the general conception of the transition.** After the civil war, he defended a conception stemming from "War Communism", and which had become necessary during this period, which stressed the constraint that was to be exerted on the masses. He was against the NEP, but he supported the intensive industrialization that was implemented by Stalin. When the Party's power became that of a new bourgeoisie, Trotsky, and all Trotskyites following him, refused to characterize the USSR as a bourgeois State, giving as a reason that the economy was a state economy.

422 - There will be no step toward communism without the carrying out of the class struggle

The socialist transition, as it was described in the positions we reject, was appearing as a regular process of the development of production, of perfecting social relations, and of the State's transformation. All contradiction or conflict were absent. The propaganda was insisting on **the absence of any contradiction** as a proof of the step toward communism. In a way, labour's victory was marked with **the end of the class struggle.** This is for instance what the 1936 constitution of the USSR claimed.

Breaking free from this conception of the transition, forged in the USSR in the thirties, has been initiated by the **Chinese Cultural Revolution**, launched in the sixties by a political current to which Mao Zedong belonged. This orientation asserted itself to counter the ruling political conceptions in the Communist Movement and in China itself. Starting at this point, **the reflection on the tasks of the transition** has been revived in the Marxist-Leninist movement, and VP grew on its achievements.

Today, we are taking stock of the Chinese revolution, because we wish to understand the reasons for its failure. So far, four essential points already appear to us as coming out of this experience. These are lessons of what *should* be done, coming in the following of the lessons of what *should not* be done, drawn from the experience of the USSR.

What are these lessons ?

a) The socialist transition toward communism is not a period of stability. It is marked with conflicts and contradictions, with the class struggle, even if the latter takes new forms. The struggle against the bourgeoisie and its older allies is to be continued. And this struggle is all the more difficult because this bourgeoisie is keeping, due to its knowledge and its experience, important positions in the State and society.

b) The economic basis is, at first, only very partially transformed. It evolves along with the class struggle. There is a risk that a new bourgeoisie reappears, since the relations of production are still imprinted with the inheritance of capitalism. And also, this partly perpetuates the alienation and the fetishism inherent to capitalist society. The trade exchange, the wage-earning system, inequalities, etc, are nourishing tendencies toward spontaneous reformism, individualism, and democratism, and they must all be fought.

c) As long as the masses are not directly exerting the whole of political power, the persistence of relations of delegation is favourable to the formation, at first, of a bureaucracy, and then possibly to that of a new ruling bourgeois class.

d) The new social relations can develop only with the conscious mobilization of the masses. The socialist transition is a process of economic and social transformation, supported by a political and

ideological will. This process is carried out under the leadership of a vanguard organization, which orient it toward the communist goal.

The new bourgeois elements are reproducing themselves on the basis of incompletely transformed social relations. The evil must therefore be fought at its root, in insisting on the further transformation of the relations of production — reduction of the differences between manual and intellectual workers, between the leaders and the led, between the cities and the countryside, between agriculture and industry..., elimination of dehumanizing production processes, such as assembly lines. These are transformations that are also carried out through the class struggle, and that are essential to make further steps toward Communism.

Transforming social relations is changing the economic basis of society, changing the way it produces and distributes wealth. Before the complete transformation of economic relations into communist relations, the former relations must be countered by planning, by the setting up of new criterions of management and of wealth distribution. If workers are taking part on every level in management and in power, their experience and their initiative will enable an increase in the production on new bases. This increase is necessary for the improvement of the well-being of all, and to lengthen leisure time. This leisure time is essential to the widening of the worker's participation in power and to the strengthening of proletarian democracy.

VP has given little thought to the economic tasks of socialism. Yet it is absolutely necessary to do so, both by taking stock of past experiences and by studying the nature of the tasks to be carried out and the choices to be made in a country like France, **marked by imperialist relations.**

The seizure of power by the proletariat is the destruction of the power of the bourgeois State, the elimination of the economic power of capitalists... **but it is not the end of the class struggle.** In socialist society, this struggle is continuing between the labour class, prompted by the will to go forward, and those who would like to perpetuate social divisions, as well as the advantages that they draw from them, and who are therefore opposing the transformation of social relations.

Denying class contradictions in this period is encouraging the birth of a new bourgeoisie, on the basis of both former bourgeois elements and those who tend to appear in the State machinery and the firms.

The Party's task is to **mobilize the masses,** and especially the labour class, against tendencies that inevitably appear in a society where work division, classes and State still exist. The Party must encourage the initiatives of struggle and the control on social activities, the State and production, so that the masses can learn what direct power, without any delegation, is. Acknowledging the necessity of such a struggle has important consequences regarding the conception of the Party's role, of its relations with the masses and with the State, and of the proletarian democracy.

No revolution can be made without the masses, or against their will; even if their taking control of the whole society cannot be accomplished overnight. Without the **active and conscious participation of the masses,** the construction of socialism is impossible, the State cannot dwindle, communist relations cannot be set up.

Any behaviour leading to **substituting for the action of the masses,** or to dictate a policy on them, is against the communist goal. The new social relations cannot be set up by decrees or orders. The role of the party is to make the masses conscious of the goals of this struggle, and to lead it. It must mobilize for setting up, in a collective way, new social relations.

There is no miraculous solution, nor any guarantee of success. However, three conditions are absolutely necessary for the continuation of the progress toward Communism:

a) The first one is that **the party keeps its vanguard character;** that it knows how to take stock of its failures and successes; that it studies thoroughly and endlessly, thanks to theoretical work, its understanding of the contradictions that lie in the social reality in motion.

b) The second one is that **this party keeps a living link with workers;** that it is able to encourage their creative initiatives, to favour their participation in power.

c) The third one is that the revolution **finds support in the world, among foreign workers,** so that no imperialist blockade can be exerted. In the world work division that rules today, isolation is a lethal trap. The existence of frontiers, unequal development, trade laws, constraints of diplomacy, etc., are weighing heavily on national development.

430 - NO NEW WORLD WITHOUT DEMOCRACY, WITHOUT DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

For several years, the bourgeoisie has carried out **an intense ideological polemic** on the question of democracy, arguing about the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and about the past errors of the communist movement.

431 - Democracy always has a class character

“Pure” democracy does not exist. Democracy is only the form, in the field of law and power organization, under which **one class rules over another**.

In a bourgeois society, **political freedom for the exploited is conditional**. It increases when the threat over the power of the bourgeoisie decreases. Many situations have shown it, such as the repression of the Commune of Paris, that of the grassroots movement in Chile, the massacre of October 17, 1961, or more recently the attitude of the bourgeoisie toward the opponents of the Gulf War.

In factories, this freedom is even less. The bourgeoisie, in all cases, is keeping the monopoly of power. It's the bourgeoisie who is getting itself elected, it's the bourgeoisie who controls the mass media and who imposes its ideological models. It is its economic interests which are imposed on the workers, for whom the right to work is a right without any actual content.

Parliamentarism is a system of electoral representation which strips the masses from any power of decision and action on their own lives. It only allows them to elect, from time to time, “representatives” who totally escape their control. This system is favouring relations where people act like clients toward politicians and parties, and populist demagoguery. The parliament is moreover only a rubberstamping chamber, since **all the significant decisions are taken in ministerial cabinets**. In fact, they are discussed with important financial and industrial groups who retain economic power and therefore actual political power.

432 - Dictatorship of the working class: a condition for the democracy of workers

In the same way that bourgeois democracy exists only as long as it is secured by the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, democracy for workers and the other exploited, which is usually called proletarian democracy, can only last if workers impose their interests against those of the bourgeoisie ; if they impose **their dictatorship on the bourgeoisie**.

The term “dictatorship” is not really popular, but it expresses well what it's all about. To transform society, workers must not **replace** the bourgeoisie in power. They must **crush the machinery** which was serving this class so well: the Bourgeois State. They must build a different power, which allows everybody's participation, but imposes constraints both on the old and on the new bourgeoisie.

But the **liquidation of the former State apparatus** cannot be the result of a decree. It is only the emergence and the development of new state structures, councils, and the suppression of any absolute delegation, a characteristic of the bourgeois parliamentary structure that will ensure its effective destruction. This dictatorship can only thrust itself up thanks to the masses' mobilization, to daily struggle, and to the workers' control on the whole society.

Democracy, in the proletarian dictatorship's State, is based on the Labour Councils, the People's Committees, or any other structures of power named differently: **these very mass structures which appear spontaneously in any revolutionary process**. These councils must allow the masses to progressively take control of all the State tasks themselves, by reducing as much as possible the special apparatus it consists of. This democracy, we are experimenting with today on a small scale in Strike Committees.

Labour democracy is **selective** and **preferential**. It excludes from the state apparatus the former exploiters, by forbidding them for instance any participation in these councils. It must, especially in the beginning, ensure an over-representation of workers and gather the material conditions such as time, training, etc., in order to increase their participation. This democracy is **one of the conditions for the transition to communism**, because, in the end, the labour class is the only revolutionary class.

Unlike the usual practices, both in the East and in the West, this demands **a political debate as open-minded as possible**, in the councils, to be able to find one's way in the transition toward communism. No endless discussions, but a real debate, to analyse, inquire, decide and implement the decisions by a majority. To function in the long run, this democracy demands **the preservation of the rights of the minority**.

As history painfully reminds us, a State – even a labour State – can become an instrument of oppression under the control of bourgeois interests. **The masses' right of expression and of organization, and even the right to protect themselves from the State, must be guaranteed**: union right, strike right, right and power of control on the State apparatus and on the elected representatives...

So that these rights do not remain formal, the State and the Party mustn't impose, neither on the labour organizations nor on the councils, the leaders they consider the best. The designation of the mass organisation leaders and of the council leaders must be **the result of political struggle**, in respect of the democratic functioning of the concerned organizations.

Concerning the pluralism of political parties under the proletarian dictatorship, this question has not been settled among Voie Prolétarienne. It is still being discussed. However, we agree with the following assertions:

a) the first one is that the power of the proletariat, being not very well settled for a while, **won't be able to tolerate the activities of parties opposing the revolution**, or who would refuse to limit their activity within the framework of the new political system.

b) the second one is that neither multiple parties nor the system of a single party prevent the seizure of the State apparatus by the bourgeoisie, be it old or new. **Multi-partyism is not a guarantee of democracy for the exploited**. The proletarian democracy is primarily based on the active and direct participation of workers in the management of society and in the transformation of the State apparatus.

433 - The party must lead ; but not administer everything

No revolutionary process, and of course especially no transition to communism, can develop without a party able **to orient, educate and organize the politically conscious workers** for the tasks such a process gives birth to.

The party has a leading role toward the State only as **a consequence of its leading role within the masses**, and not because it controls the administrations, like it has been seen in the Eastern countries. Every decision is taken by an assembly of the councils, or their representatives.

The contradictions between the party and the masses must be solved mainly through **political and ideological struggle**, with the never ending concern to incite workers to actively take part in this struggle. The leading role of the party must not be imposed in an administrative way, nor only from upper levels of the hierarchy. It must be the result of the class struggle, during which the party must constantly show its vanguardist nature.

It is inevitable though that the leading party partly merges with the State apparatus. But this merging must be voluntarily limited, in order to enable the widest participation possible by the masses in the exercise of power. The predominant position of the party in society is inciting it to go in for any state structure which has a decision role. This trend must be fought, and in particular, **the separation between the party and the State must be maintained**. This can be done thanks to the distinction between their offices, responsibilities and members, while favouring the participation of non members of the party in the State's tasks, and thanks to the presence of communist leaders within the masses. If the workers' participation in power does not spread, the State will lose its proletarian nature, and the relations to the masses will not be able to change.

The party must remain linked to production, and maintain **most of the communists within the masses**. It must incite workers to invest the State and to take on its tasks. This may be one of the most important lessons that we must draw out of the Eastern countries' experience.

At last, considering the risks of the reappearance of bourgeois elements in the State apparatus or in the party, as a reflection of the ancient capitalist society, **the control by the masses** must be encouraged in order to struggle against bureaucratization. The decisions must be preceded by inquiries among them, with the aim to mobilize them.

The party must adopt a functioning mode that ensures democracy within its structures. The debate on the orientations must be open-minded. **The line struggle must be allowed and carried out the whole way** whenever it appears, **with the goal of reaching a higher political unity**. The rights of minorities must be guaranteed.

The fact that the party is leading society implies a particular vigilance toward the way of life of its members. **No privilege** must be given to them. And when they are in positions of responsibility, their salary must be limited, even if some bourgeois experts employed by necessity in the same offices will earn higher revenues. Arrogant and conceited behaviours toward the masses, which are so widespread in parties today, must be fought.

440 - WITHOUT REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE, NO LABOUR POWER

441 - Revolutionary violence is inevitable

In the former Eastern countries, in dominated countries, in imperialist mother-countries, violence is an actual **part of the bourgeoisie's power**, both under dictatorial or democratic forms. The army, the police, justice, militias and hired killers, are only the tools of the bourgeois' domination. We've lost count of all the murdered political militants and trade unionists, in Latin America among others. We've lost count of all the exactions and police misconducts in the so-called "democratic" countries. We've lost count of all the acts of military violence by imperialist States, who never fear to perpetrate massacres to ensure their domination and to dictate their interests. The Gulf War (and now the French intervention in Rwanda) has shown it once again.

Pacifism, a protest against bourgeois militarism, is **incapable of bringing to an end the social regime which causes wars – imperialism**. Moreover, its most backward tendencies consider both the violence of the oppressors and the violence of the oppressed at the same level. Thus it contributes to weaken the struggle of the latter. All those who have believed that it was possible to contest the imperialist order, as little as it could be, in a pacifist way, have had in the end to submit to it – or have been slain, like Allende or Sankara.

To face up to the exploiters' violence, workers have always used spontaneous forms of self-defense: illegal land occupation, sit-in strikes in factories, strike pickets or violent demonstrations... But revolutionary violence is **not only a means of defense**. It is the necessary means to snatch power from the bourgeoisie's hands, since it is protected by its armed forces.

The distinction between communists and other revolutionaries, and even reformists, lies not in the fact that they resort to violence, or even to armed struggle. It lies in **the goal for which they carry out this violence**. Armed struggle is only a means, not an end. Politics command the gun, in every circumstance. This principle enables to make the difference between communists and militarist groups, which have anarchist tendencies in Europe, and "focoist" tendencies in dominated countries, and which stress the military element.

442 - The various forms of revolutionary violence are defined by the different social situations

In dominated countries, where non-capitalistic social relations are still ruling, revolutionary violence can develop during a long period, while relying in particular on peasants. The form it most usually takes is the **Prolonged People's War**, like the war that the PCP is leading in Peru. On the basis of a developing revolutionary situation, among social groups where capitalism is still little structured, and where there are zones which can escape the direct control of the State, the prolonged people's war can make the progressive destruction of the former order possible, as well as the construction of the foundations of a new power.

In countries where capitalistic social relations are dominant, and especially in imperialist countries, the form of the revolutionary armed struggle has been **insurrection**. It's to insurrection that workers resorted at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th, in Russia and in Europe. In different conditions, communists today must prepare for revolutionary violence and armed struggle.

But in most of these countries, there is no revolutionary situation yet. Capitalist relations and the strength of the bourgeois State make the existence of any liberated zone – where the bourgeois power could be paralyzed for a while, and where precary forms of another power would appear – impossible except during a revolutionary situation.

Some revolutionaries have attempted to experiment in Europe with **new military strategies**. We have always fought against their assimilation to terrorists. The choice of their political targets distinguished them without any ambiguity from the blind attacks carried out by reactionary groups at the bourgeoisie's service. They always aimed at the State, or at notorious bourgeois. Our disagreement with these groups, and especially with those who refer to Marxism-Leninism, does not lie in the necessity of armed struggle or on their military acts. It lies in **the question of the construction of the party, on the politics which commands their guns, on the opportuneness of such actions today**, taking into account today's condition of the revolutionary movement.

Military tactics in an imperialist country are an unsolved question for us – we must admit it. We will have to fill this important gap. Every experience, be it European or not, will then have to be brought under fire by criticism, in order to draw a maximum of lessons out of them, should they be negative or positive lessons.

443 - After the revolution, the arming of the working class is still a condition for its power

The necessity of revolutionary violence **does not vanish the day when the bourgeoisie is overthrown**. After having taken power by force from the bourgeois, proletarians will still have to defend it against them, or against exterior imperialist interventions.

Class contradictions will be alive and kicking in the transition society: attempts of capitalist restoration, advances of the class struggle... The army is a State apparatus. And like the State, **it must be radically transformed**. The control of workers must be exerted on the army – as well as on the other bodies of struggle against the bourgeoisie that the State may create.

In the USSR, the army, and then the police (Tcheka, GPU, KGB,...) quickly became **autonomous**. They became apparatuses that escaped the control of workers, and even partly the party itself. From instruments of repression of the exploiters, they turned into instruments of repression of the dissatisfied, and then into a police within the party. Repression then lost its proletarian nature to become, in the thirties, repression against the workers themselves.

The army and the repressive bodies must not be considered to be apart from the transformation movement of society – **outside of the class struggle**. Weapons are the ultimate resort, when antagonistic contradictions crop up. **The people in arms** is then the only guarantee, though it is only relative, that the special bodies of the army or the police, which would escape the workers' control, would not acquire a decisive advantage right at the start.

450 - REVOLUTION IS A WORLD PROCESS

451 - The victory of the anti-colonial struggles has not made imperialist domination disappear

The national and anti-colonial liberation struggles, which started 150 years ago in Latin America, have almost everywhere imposed **the elimination of direct domination: colonialism**. Political independence has been attained, often by force, and thanks to movements that claimed to be socialist. But **formal independence has not brought economic dependence, and therefore political dependence, to an end**. Both are now indirect, in a semi-colonial framework, according to the definition given by the Communist International.

The regimes that came out of this situation – dictatorial or democratic regimes according to the countries and the periods – **have nothing to do with liberators**. The peasant and labour masses still live in miserable conditions and keep on being exploited. The imperialist domination is maintained, or even strengthened, under forms adapted to the local and international political context.

The national liberation struggles brought with them the necessity of class alliances. In most cases, if there was a reference to socialism, like in Algeria or in the Portuguese colonies, its main purpose was **to obtain the participation of the exploited in a struggle they did not control**. It was not in the interest of the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois elements that led the struggle to mobilize the masses on the social content of this independence.

These struggles led to the modernization of the imperialist domination. Some were violent, like in Algeria or in Nicaragua, others were pacifist, like in India, but the result still is the same. Concerning countries like Viet-Nam, for instance, where the struggle was led by a communist party which remained on the dominant positions of the Third International – theory of productive forces, merging of the State and the party, erroneous relations to the masses,... – these countries did not manage to mobilize the masses after the victory, and they favoured the **development of a State bourgeoisie**. **The fight to end imperialist domination is therefore still up to date**.

It is illusory to base a liberation strategy on a national bourgeoisie, even if it may seem progressive when it opposes imperialism for a while.

In anti-colonial struggles, the national bourgeoisie wants to break imperialist domination. But **it wants to do so only for its own profit**, and never for the interest of the exploited peasant and labour masses.

In formally independent countries, the contradictions between the different bourgeois factions must not deceive us either. Though it is possible **to tactically use** these contradictions, **a strategy cannot be based on them**. The situation is always the same: a faction of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie tries to supplant another clan in power to take its position. It was the case in the Philippines, in Haiti, and for Violetta Chamorro in Nicaragua. To lean mainly on these layers is to give them the lead of the struggle, and it is therefore a certainty that exploitation will continue.

The failure of the radical anti-imperialist struggles is also **the failure of the petit-bourgeoisie factions of dominated countries** that used the civil or military State apparatus to become the dominant class. They adopted the Russian "socialist" model to forge this domination, like in Ethiopia or in Angola... Though they were very radical against the imperialist domination, they did not rely on the masses at all and thought they could transform the dominated society thanks to the bureaucratic State apparatus. They have changed course or have been swept away by the downfall of their model and the vanishing of their support, or have been eliminated, like Sankara in Burkina Faso. In dominated countries, like anywhere else, no revolution can take place without the masses, nor take their place.

Some bourgeoisies have believed that they could build an "independent" capitalism, especially in Arab countries, or that they could find their liberation by **playing on the contradictions between the blocs**, leaning on one country rather than the other. The Kurds have lived this bitter experience, Cuba, Iraq and many other regimes as well.

The anti-colonial or anti-imperialist struggle is only **one stage of the struggle for the liberation of the exploited**. It must be carried out with this outlook. The reflection on the society that must be built cannot be postponed to the day after the victory. Because this reflection already governs the projects and alliances in the anti-imperialist struggle today.

452 - The revolutionary struggle: a unique goal, different paths

In dominated countries where capitalism isn't developed, **the labour class is the leading class of the revolution, but it is not its principal force**. Its principal force is indeed the peasantry, which represents the majority among the exploited. In these countries, the revolution develops according to stages which enable the masses to set themselves free from the imperialist and semi-feudal oppression, if this semi-feudal oppression is still ruling in the countryside.

The **People's Democratic National Revolution** is an objective necessity, since it is impossible for the masses to immediately achieve the socialist tasks. Its aim is to accomplish the non socialist tasks which enable to break away from foreign domination and feudalism: agrarian reform, democratic rights... Its duration is variable: it depends on the historical conditions and the situation of the country: importance of the labour class, international context, etc...

In such a revolution, **two paths are possible**: one which tends to limit the revolution to its bourgeois democratic and national content, the other which wishes to further this stage and prepare the transition to socialism. The role of the Communist Party is to organize the labour class, before all, and to preserve its political independence in the class alliances that are necessary during these stages. Without this, the party would not be able to lead this complex process, nor further the democratic tasks and orient the masses toward the socialist transformation of society.

During this struggle, the source of failures lies, on the one hand, in **the misunderstanding of the necessity of a democratic revolution** in semi-feudal and semi-colonial countries, and on the other hand, in **the absence of articulation of this struggle with the socialist revolution**.

In these dominated countries, **the matter of land** is always primordially sharp. In Africa, in Asia, in Latin America, this matter concerns hundreds of millions of peasants. The mobilization for a democratic agrarian reform is a lever able to set the exploited masses going. All the local or imperialist bourgeois regimes, all the NGOs, are systematically avoiding this necessity, in order not to be in opposition with the land owners who are now modernized and part of capitalism.

453 - Revolutions must back each other up

The imperialist domination today seems to have no flaw. The recent developments of the international division of labour are leading to an analysis of the possible link between the revolutions in various countries, in order to define which are **the weaknesses**... since these revolutions are governed by the same world reality: imperialism. This is an important gap in Voie Prolétarienne, which has not tackled this question.

The interdependence between imperialist countries is strengthening, particularly in **Europe**, with its economic and political links, its police and military links, interwoven between the bourgeoisies implied in the EEC. Though this question was brought up during VP's second congress, the theory on this point did not progress.

There is, at last, an interdependence between revolutions and struggles in imperialist countries, and revolutions and struggles in dominated countries. Beside the solidarities that have become necessary, this interdependence leads to **specific tasks for workers in imperialist countries**, both before and after the revolution. Before the revolution, beside the tasks of revolutionary solidarity, we must acknowledge the unconditional right of the peoples of dominated countries to reappropriate their own resources. After the revolution, the workers of imperialist countries will have to establish new economic and political relations with these countries.

Communists must especially persevere to **rebuild an International**, able to analyse and lead the struggle on a world scale.

454 - The necessity of an International

Revolution is a **world process**. Therefore, it has to be carried out on a world scale by an international organization with **a minimum unity regarding ideological, political and organizational matters**. This does not necessarily imply the existence of communist parties or organizations in every country at the

same time. However, there has to be a significant number of such parties or organizations in different countries.

Since the **dissolution of the Third International**, in 1943, in the name of the alliance with certain imperialist countries against nazism and of the defense of the USSR's national interests, there hasn't been any creation – even formally – of another International that would have been a leading center of the world labour's struggle, on **Marxist-Leninist foundations**.

The political and ideological struggle carried out by the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) and the ALP (Albanian Labour Party) against the revisionism of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) and its allies during the 60s was indeed the sign of a qualitative leap regarding revisionism's criticism. But it did not lead to the reconstruction of an International.

To cope with this political void, **Trotskyists have created a IVth International**. But its demarcation with social-democrat and revisionist theses is insufficient, or even absent, and it prevents this International from filling the political gap, and from taking upon itself the role played before by the Communist International.

During the 80s, **the split between the CCP and the ALP**, consecutively to the restoration of capitalism in China and to the polemic on the **"Theory of the Three Worlds,"** and then the opportunist drifting and rout of Albania, have led to a great ideological disarray and an almost general political bewilderment. The result has been the weakening, the vanishing, or the reformist reconversion of many parties or organizations that referred to Marxism-Leninism. They became ecologist, alternative, social-democrat, and so on... Today, **with the notable exception of the PCP in Peru**, the communist movement is reduced to the existence of a few parties and organizations.

In 1984, the creation of the **Revolutionary International Movement** occurred, thanks to the impulse of the RCP-USA. The RIM regroups many parties and organizations, including Peru's PCP. We have criticized this process since it has avoided debates on important questions, such as the analysis of the labour class in imperialist countries, the strategy of revolution in dominated countries, and the lessons of the Eastern countries' failure. The results of this approach is the relative paralysis of the RIM, because of the fundamental divarications existing within it ever since its constitution.

In spite of its shortcomings, the RIM is still the regrouping pole which has the most advanced bases. Other regroupings can be found on a European scale or on a world scale. They are characterized by **insufficient analysis regarding the errors of the Communist Movement**, and remain in one way or another with opportunist positions: giving up class positions in the democratic or anti-imperialist fight, simplistic analysis of the restoration of capitalism in the USSR, defense of the theory of productive forces, pacifism, etc...

Taking into account today's confusion, and in accordance with well-defined priorities, some contacts have to be maintained with these political streams, and the line struggle must be carried out with them in order to clarify the main questions of the revolution.

The absence of an International does not prevent the carrying out of an internationalist policy, though its existence would make this policy really efficient. Therefore, in an imperialist country like France, where the labour class is multi-national, our approach consists of:

a) carrying out **the struggle against chauvinism**, especially among the French workers, as part of the construction of a Communist Party in France;

b) **creating links, carrying out discussions and polemizing** with organizations of various countries; and also showing a concrete political solidarity toward the labour class' struggle in other countries, and toward oppressed peoples.

460 - MARXISM, LENINISM AND MAOISM: TOOLS TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Voie Prolétarienne refers to **Marxism, Leninism and Maoism**: the three great stages of the development of a **dialectical materialist conception** of the world. They define the goals to be reached to transform it and the paths to take in order to reach them.

461 - Voie Prolétarienne is a Marxist organization

Marx, with Engels, is the author the **Communist Manifesto**, which draws the main lines of the national and international tasks of communists, in a way which is still up to date. He has conceived the theoretical foundations on which the development of the revolutionary theory can still rely.

Confronted with capitalism's world evolution, he has unveiled **the mechanisms of exploitation, of accumulation and the set of contradictions of this mode of production**. He has shown how they shaped the whole of society, and its political and ideological structures.

He has developed the **dialectical materialist philosophy**, and has set up the foundations of a science of the evolution of societies, called **historical materialism**.

On the basis of the criticism of capitalism and of the social division of labour, Marx has stated **the conditions of liberation of Humanity from exploitation and alienation**. He has shown, in a class society, what **the role of the State** was – an instrument of the dictatorship of a single class. Confronted to the rich experience of the Commune of Paris, he has detailed the contents of **the dictatorship of the proletariat**: a half State which must dwindle along with the realization of the social transformation.

He was involved in an intense internationalist activity and took part in the creation of the **first Labour International**.

462 - Voie Prolétarienne is a Leninist organization

Lenin has had to struggle hard against opportunists to found a revolutionary organization, a **party**, able to guide the working class until the seizure of power. He has defined the functioning modes of this party: **democratic centralism**, and its modes of action – legal, illegal, peaceful and military modes. He insisted on **the importance of theory for the formation of a vanguard party**. It was while studying the flaws of the working class movement, and especially those of the Commune of Paris, that the conception of the Leninist party has been elaborated – a party completely different from traditional parliamentary parties.

He showed that the preparation of the labour class for the seizure of power imposed to bring the **political struggle** to the forefront, instead of spending all its strength in an immediate exciting struggle.

He played a decisive role in the political preparation of the Bolshevik party for **the seizure of power** with the means of insurrection, and specified the political conditions necessary for it.

He developed the analysis of **imperialism, highest stage of capitalism**, which invaded the world at the beginning of the 20th century. He therefore promoted the integration of the dominated peoples' struggle to the outlook of the progression toward communism. He defined for these peoples the principle of an uninterrupted revolution progressing stage by stage.

He defended the necessity of **revolutionary defeatism** against imperialist wars. He fought, even inside the Russian communist party, against chauvinism, characteristic of great powers. He imposed **the unconditional acknowledgement of the peoples' right to self-determination**. He contributed to the construction of the **Third Communist International** which held high, for 10 years, the light of internationalism all over the world.

During the first years of the Russian Revolution, Lenin succeeded in sorting out the dangers that were on the rise: **bureaucratization of the State, a tendency to put constraints on the masses...** He has shown, already, the necessity for the workers to protect themselves from this State. He also fought against the petit-bourgeois trends and against democratism which are opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat; against spontaneism, which favours the return of the bourgeoisie and of the development of capitalism.

463 - Voie Prolétarienne is a Maoist organization

Mao Zedong led the **first victorious national and democratic revolution**. In these conditions, he detailed the communist tactics: the **prolonged people's war**, the possibility of liberated zones, the role of the peasant masses under the direction of the communist party, tactics of alliances (United Front), and the utmost necessity of the proletariat's independence within these alliances.

He made a link between the materialist theory of knowledge and the communists' organizational activity, he insisted on **practice**, on the **masses' line** and on **direction methods based on inquiry**.

In the middle of the 50s, Mao renewed the reflexion on the tasks of the transition, on the basis of a criticism of the USSR's development; this reflexion had been interrupted 20 years before. But it was during the **Cultural Revolution**, which was initiated by him in order to fight against the bourgeois line in the party, that this criticism became more systematic – it stressed that **the class struggle still exists in the transitional society**, that debating broadly and carrying out a line struggle within the party is necessary, it stressed on breaking away from the economist conceptions of socialism's construction, and **on the criticism of the "theory of productive forces"**.

Mao and the political campaigns at the beginning of the 70s in China contributed to a more thorough study of Marxist theory, thanks to the study of capitalist restoration in socialist countries, bringing back to the forefront the **transformation of relations of production**, and throwing light on the process of the reconstitution of a new bourgeoisie within the State apparatus and the party.

470 - RETHINKING REVOLUTION

471 - According to Voie Prolétarienne, Marxism, Leninism and Maoism are not dogmatic references which would be used to veil an incapacity to think by ourselves

Every thought has its own **limits**. Marx could not analyse the development of imperialism, and he, at first, saw colonialism as a positive evolution. Lenin understood the dangers of bureaucratism, but considered eliminating it only by improving of the party's work. Mao under-estimated the role of the labour class in the first stage of the Chinese revolution. These limits are not making their contributions to the theory of revolution less worthy; even though they must always be verified during political activity. Today's and tomorrow's communists will have to enrich them.

Both in imperialist countries and in dominated countries, the failures of the communist movement have been a treasure of lessons. We have started taking stock of them. This work must continue. Because it is impossible to remain in the present situation, where imperialism is ruling everywhere. We have to go back to communist goals, think about all the experiences of the labour movement, study them in a critical and self-critical way. Thanks to theoretical work, our knowledge of today's society must be completed, in order to understand better the conditions of its revolutionary transformation.

Socialism failed so far but it is not a reason to abandon it. Not only are we assuming the communist past, but we are asserting it, along with both its successes and its failures. The theory of revolution, of socialism, was born only one century ago. We have to **make it live**, and not bury it.

Against some currents pretending that we do not know anything anymore, that everything must be started from scratch, we affirm that this would be **the best way to liquidate all the positive achievements** of the international communist movement, and to prevent us from drawing lessons out of its failures. Besides, such statements are only veiling bankrupt opinions. They are leading straight toward impotence.